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The Effect of Competency Modeling on Restaurant Employee Engagement and Turnover Intent

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This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

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Abstract

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MA, East Carolina University, 2013

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Industrial/Organizational Psychology

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Abstract

High turnover and low engagement among restaurant employees cost restaurant owners thousands of dollars per employee each year due to costs associated with training and lost productivity. Competency models are used in many industries to improve employee engagement and reduce turnover, but there is a gap in knowledge surrounding the use of competency models in restaurant organizations. The purpose of this pretest-posttest quasi-experimental quantitative study is to examine if the implementation of a competency model affects turnover intent and employee engagement for restaurant employees. Employee engagement and turnover intent were measured before and after a competency model was implemented. Four sample groups were included in this study: full-time employees at a full-service restaurant, full-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, part-time employees at a full-service restaurant, and part-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant. Paired samples *t* tests were conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between the pre- and posttest employee engagement or turnover intent scores. The competency model implementation had a statistically significant effect on employee engagement and turnover intent scores for all sample groups, except for turnover intent scores for full-time employees at a full-service restaurant. There was also a positive correlation between turnover intent and employee engagement for part-time employees, and a negative correlation between turnover intent and employee engagement for full-time employees. The results of this study promote positive social change through evidence that the use of a competency model positively affects turnover intent and employee engagement for restaurant employees.

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to my loving and supporting family and friends, especially my husband, Peter. Thank you for your encouragement. This study is also dedicated to the restaurant owners that provided data for this study. Thank you for caring about your employees and trying to improve their experiences in the workplace.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The National Restaurant Association (NRA, 2019) estimated that 15 million people worked in United States restaurant and foodservice jobs in 2019. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS, 2019) in May 2019 reported 4.8% of employees in the restaurant and accommodations industry quit their jobs, even when accounting for seasonal employees. The BLS (2019) defines the "accommodations industry" as hospitality, hotels, foodservices, and drinking places. "Quits" are defined as voluntary separations initiated by an employee and do not include involuntary layoffs or discharges originated by employers (BLS, 2017). By comparison, the U.S. quit rate for all industries was just 2.3% (BLS, 2019). Further, the BLS (2019) estimated the quit (voluntary separation) rate for this industry is 55%.

Although the BLS does not report restaurant turnover rates independent of that for the accommodations industry, research from other resources indicated that restaurant turnover is higher than the accommodations sector in its entirety (DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018; NRA, 2016). Turnover rates in fast food and casual restaurants are even higher than for fine dining venues, which is attributed to casual restaurants employing more part-time employees who are less committed to their employers (DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018). Referencing the high cost of turnover, business owners have stated employee retention is their biggest human resource apprehension (DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018). One reason employee turnover is costly to business owners is the time and money spent on training new employees (DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018).

High turnover and low engagement among restaurant employees cost restaurant owners thousands of dollars per employee each year due to the costs associated with training and lost productivity (Brain, 2019; DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018; DiPietro & McLeod, 2011). The current study addressed a gap in knowledge surrounding the effectiveness of competency models to address turnover and engagement issues among restaurant employees. The gap concerning competency model effectiveness was addressed by examining turnover intent and employee engagement at a restaurant group before and after a competency model was implemented. The competency model included leadership and technical competencies that were identified as critical skills to be successful in restaurant jobs. In this chapter, a background of the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, the research questions and hypotheses, a summary of the theoretical framework of the study, the nature of the study, operational definitions, assumptions of the study, and the study's scope, delimitations, limitations, and significance are discussed.

Background of the Study

Many professional industries have used integrated talent management processes to reduce turnover intent, improve employee engagement, and thus improve organizational performance (Omar et al., 2017). Effective talent management processes typically include the integration of an organization's recruiting, personnel selection, onboarding, training, performance management, development, talent planning, pay, and promotion processes (Omar et al., 2017). For example, a technical competency model was effectively used to prepare employees in the information technology field for higher-

level positions (Nair et al., in press) and to provide employees in the healthcare industry with leadership skills (Ravichandran & Mishra, 2018). However, leading practices in talent management have not been implemented in the majority of organizations in the restaurant industry (Mjongwana & Kamala, 2018).

Many restaurant employees cite poor management, lack of training, and perceptions that employee well-being is not a priority as the primary reasons for leaving a restaurant job (DiPietro & McLeod, 2011). Restaurant owners incur high costs due to employee turnover, and there is a gap in current literature surrounding effective methods of reducing turnover in the restaurant industry (DiPietro & McLeod, 2011). Applying methods that have been effective at reducing turnover and increasing employee performance in other industries may also be beneficial in the restaurant industry, but additional research needs to be conducted to test this theory (Brain, 2019; DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018; Pai et al., 2018; Shai et al., 2016). Researchers recommend using competency models and managerial training strategies to improve employee engagement and reduce turnover intent (Canning et al., 2019; Derro & Williams, 2009; Dewettinck & Vroonen, 2017; Fowler, 2018).

Recent studies focused on restaurant employees have produced results showing that restaurant owners who focus on employee engagement and provide training and development opportunities to their employees have higher restaurant profitability and customer satisfaction than restaurant owners who do not emphasize employee engagement, training, and development (Brain, 2019; Mjongwana & Kamala, 2018; Pai et al., 2018; Shai et al., 2016). One way to identify employee training and development

needs is through the use of competency models (Fowler, 2018; Ravichandran & Mishra, 2018).

A competency model is a structured way to define the skill and knowledge requirements of a job (Hatala & Hisey, 2011). Competencies are observable and measurable knowledge, skills, and abilities that define expected job performance. When all the competencies required for success in specified roles are put together, they are known as a competency model. Competency models have been used by organizations to improve employee performance by providing clear guidance about what good performance entails (Fowler, 2018; Hatala & Hisey, 2011). Competency models also help managers provide more effective, objective feedback to employees on their performance because they outline which behaviors should be exhibited by high-performing employees (Derro & Williams, 2009; Ravichandran & Mishra, 2018; Ross & Stefaniak, 2018). Competency models are considered a best practice in human resources management (Fowler, 2018; Ross & Stefaniak, 2018). However, there is a gap in the literature regarding the use of competency models in the restaurant industry. The purpose of this pretest-posttest quasi-experimental quantitative study was to examine if the implementation of a competency model affected turnover intent and employee engagement for restaurant employees.

Problem Statement

Restaurant owners lose thousands of dollars per employee each year due to the costs associated with high turnover and low engagement among restaurant employees (Brain, 2019; DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018; DiPietro & McLeod, 2011). Competency

models that include leadership and technical competencies and are integrated into an organization's talent management processes are effective ways to improve employee engagement and reduce turnover intent (Derro & Williams, 2009; Fowler, 2018; Nair et al., in press; Ravichandran & Mishra, 2018). However, competency models are not frequently used for employees in the restaurant industry (Shai et al., 2016). This study was used to address the lack of knowledge surrounding the effectiveness of using competency models to improve engagement and reduce turnover intent among restaurant employees.

The gap concerning competency model effectiveness was addressed by examining turnover intent and employee engagement at a restaurant group before and after a competency model was implemented. The competency model included leadership and technical competencies that were identified as critical skills to be successful in restaurant jobs. The restaurant group that provided data for this study includes two full-service and four fast-casual restaurants with about 160 employees that are all located in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this pretest-posttest quasi-experimental quantitative study was to examine if the implementation of a competency model affected turnover intent and employee engagement for restaurant employees. Data were collected from employees who work for a restaurant group with six restaurants located in the Northern Virginia region. The restaurant group's ownership team informed their employees of the study and asked them to voluntarily participate by completing a survey. The survey used for this

study measured turnover intent and employee engagement data before and after a competency model that includes leadership and technical competencies was implemented. The survey data were collected and analyzed to examine the effects of the implementation. This study was unique because it addressed an under-researched employee population (Shai et al., 2016).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The independent variable included in this study was the competency model. The dependent variables included in this study were employee engagement and turnover intent. Paired samples *t* tests were conducted to determine if there was an existing relationship between employee engagement and turnover intent before the competency model implementation took place.

RQ1: Is there a statistically significant difference in employee engagement for full-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the Job Engagement Scale (JES), after the implementation of a competency model?

$H_0$1: There is no statistically significant difference in employee engagement for full-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the JES, after the implementation of a competency model.

H_a1: There is a statistically significant difference in employee engagement for full-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the JES, after the implementation of a competency model.

RQ2: Is there a statistically significant difference in turnover intent for full-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6), after the implementation of a competency model?

$H_0$2: There is no statistically significant difference in turnover intent for full-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model.

H_a2: There is a statistically significant difference in turnover intent for full-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model.

RQ3: Is there a statistically significant difference in employee engagement for full-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the JES, after the implementation of a competency model?

$H_0$3: There is no statistically significant difference in employee engagement for full-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the JES, after the implementation of a competency model.

H_a3: There is a statistically significant difference in employee engagement for full-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the JES, after the implementation of a competency model.

RQ4: Is there a statistically significant difference in turnover intent for full-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model?

$H_0$4: There is no statistically significant difference in turnover intent for full-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model.

H_a4: There is a statistically significant difference in turnover intent for full-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model.

RQ5: Is there a statistically significant difference in employee engagement for part-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the JES, after the implementation of a competency model?

$H_0$5: There is no statistically significant difference in employee engagement for part-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the JES, after the implementation of a competency model.

H_a5: There is a statistically significant difference in employee engagement for part-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the JES, after the implementation of a competency model.

RQ6: Is there a statistically significant difference in turnover intent for part-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model?

$H_0$6: There is no statistically significant difference in turnover intent for part-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model.

H_a6: There is a statistically significant difference in turnover intent for part-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model.

RQ7: Is there a statistically significant difference in employee engagement for part-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the JES, after the implementation of a competency model?

$H_0$7: There is no statistically significant difference in employee engagement for part-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the JES, after the implementation of a competency model.

H_a7: There is a statistically significant difference in employee engagement for part-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the JES, after the implementation of a competency model.

RQ8: Is there a statistically significant difference in turnover intent for part-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model?

$H_0$8: There is no statistically significant difference in turnover intent for part-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model.

H_a8: There is a statistically significant difference in turnover intent for part-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model.

RQ9: Is there a statistically significant correlation between turnover intent and employee engagement for part-time employees before the implementation of a competency model?

$H_0$9: There is no statistically significant correlation between turnover intent and employee engagement for part-time employees at a fast-casual or full-service restaurant before the implementation of a competency model.

H_a9: There is a statistically significant correlation between turnover intent and employee engagement for part-time employees at a fast-casual or full-service restaurant before the implementation of a competency model.

RQ10: Is there a statistically significant correlation between turnover intent and employee engagement for full-time employees before the implementation of a competency model?

$H_0$10: There is no statistically significant correlation between turnover intent and employee engagement for full-time employees at a fast-casual or full-service restaurant before the implementation of a competency model.

H_a10: There is a statistically significant correlation between turnover intent and employee engagement for full-time employees at a fast-casual or full-service restaurant before the implementation of a competency model.

Theoretical Framework for the Study

The theoretical framework of this study was the implicit person theory (IPT). This theory was used to develop methods for improving employee engagement and providing training and development opportunities for restaurant employees in this study. Dweck et

al. (1995) defined IPT as a theoretical framework that addresses beliefs about the malleability of human characteristics (e.g., personality, ability, intelligence, and moral character). This theory includes two different types of beliefs on whether human characteristics can be changed: incremental theory and entity theory. Incremental theory states that human traits such as attitudes and behaviors can be changed, while entity theory states that these traits are fixed and cannot be changed (Dweck, 1986). Dweck's (1986) model attests that individuals' inherent beliefs about human attributes define the way they understand and react to human actions and outcomes (Chiu et al., 1997). Research using the IPT framework has shown that individuals who believe personal attributes are fixed (defined as entity theory by Dweck) understand outcomes and actions in terms of these fixed traits (Dweck et al., 1995). For example, individuals who believe personal attributes are fixed may believe, "I passed the test because I am smart," or, "She stole food because she is amoral." Conversely, individuals who believe personal attributes can be changed and developed tend to believe that outcomes and actions have specific behavioral or psychological mediators. For example, individuals who believe personal attributes can be changed (incremental theory) may believe, "I passed the test because of the effort I exerted when studying," or, "She stole the food because she is unethical."

In general, incremental theory and entity theory have been applied to many different factors. The current literature has found that those who believe that they can change their performance on a specific task are more motivated to improve than those who do not think they can change (Chiu et al., 1997; El-Alayli & Baumgardner, 2003;

Plaks & Chasteen, 2013). Individuals who associate more with incremental theory are also more likely to be able to recover and find success after experiencing failure than those who associate with entity theory (Katz & O'Malley, 2016; Renaud & McConnell, 2007; Scott et al., 2014; Teunissen & Bok, 2013).

There is a disagreement among researchers regarding whether incremental and entity theories should be defined as a single personality construct where one end of the spectrum is the belief that the individual can change anything about themselves (consistent with incremental theory) and the other end of the spectrum is that people are born with a certain set of abilities that cannot be changed (consistent with entity theory; Lüftenegger & Chen, 2017). However, other researchers have not been able to find a relationship between these theories and personality traits (Spinath et al., 2003). Some researchers classify these theories as a measurable personality trait (Lüftenegger & Chen, 2017). Managers who believe employee behaviors can be changed lead teams that are more engaged and perform at a higher level than managers who do not believe employee behaviors can be changed (Dewettinck & Vroonen, 2017; Heslin et al., 2005).

Current research results have indicated that restaurant employees who work full-time and have been in the industry for 5 years or more are more committed to their jobs than those who work part-time and have been in the industry for fewer than 5 years (Ogunmokun, 2019; Watson et al., 2018). Additionally, a positive correlation was found between job commitment and restaurant employees who feel supported by their colleagues (Watson, 2018). Current research results also indicate that restaurant employees are intrinsically motivated, so programs focused on motivating employees in

this industry should focus on intrinsic characteristics (Harris et al., 2017; Watson et al., 2018). Focusing on nonfinancial performance measures (e.g., technical training and initiatives focused on improving employee effectiveness and engagement) increases restaurant profitability and customer satisfaction when compared to restaurants that do not engage in these practices (Brain, 2019; Mjongwana & Kamala, 2018; Pai et al., 2018; Shai et al., 2016).

Researchers have used IPT to design interventions used to change behaviors and performance (Heslin et al., 2005; Katz & O'Malley, 2016), which made it an appropriate theoretical framework to use to inform the implementation, a competency model, that was used in the current study. The term "mindset" is typically used to describe IPT in the workplace (Dweck, 2006). Specifically, entity theory is described as a fixed mindset, and incremental theory is described as a growth mindset when applying IPT to employees and organizations (Caniels et al., 2018). Organizational cultures that are perceived to have a growth mindset are associated with higher employee engagement, lower turnover intent, and higher profits than organizations with cultures perceived to have a fixed mindset (Canning et al., 2019; Murphy & Dweck, 2010). The current study attempted to add to IPT literature by exploring the use of this theory to create a growth mindset in an organization in the restaurant industry, which had not been previously studied.

Nature of the Study

The participants in this study were employees at a restaurant group that includes two full-service and four fast-casual restaurants that are all located in Northern Virginia. The participants were full and part-time employees, but seasonal and temporary

employees were excluded from the study. The participants in this study were divided into four samples: Sample 1 is full-time, full-service, Sample 2 is full-time, fast-casual, Sample 3 is part-time full-service, and Sample 4 is part-time fast-casual employees. All the permanent (excluding seasonal and temporary) full- and part-time employees at each of the six restaurants were invited to participate in this study voluntarily. The restaurant group employs an average of 160 permanent employees (excluding seasonal and temporary employees), and the entire employee population was invited to participate in this study. For this study to have statistical power, approximately 100 participants needed to be surveyed in this pretest-posttest study (Faul et al., 2007).

This study used a pretest-posttest quasi-experimental quantitative design to answer the research questions included in this proposed study. A pretest-posttest quasi-experimental quantitative design was the most appropriate format to use for this study because the participants were not randomly assigned to each group as is required for a true experimental design (Gribbons & Herman, 1997). The participants for this study were instead selected for each of the four sample groups based on their work status (full-time or part-time) and the type of restaurant they work in (full-service or fast-casual). The survey method was used to measure turnover intent and employee engagement both before and after a competency model was implemented. Paired samples *t* test analyses were conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in turnover intent or employee engagement scores before and after the competency model was implemented.

The ownership team of the restaurant organization that provided data for this study determined which competencies were critical for the employees in their organization. This was done using guidelines provided by the U.S. Department of Labor (2017) using the Food and Beverage Service competency model. Once the competency model had been defined, the organization's ownership team outlined a plan for implementing the critical competencies into their performance management, compensation, training, development, and succession planning processes. Next, the pretest survey was be administered to the organization's full- and part-time employees (excluding seasonal and temporary employees), and employee engagement and turnover intent were measured. After collecting the pretest data, the organization's management team implemented the competency model into its talent management processes (performance management, compensation, training, development, and succession planning). The organization's ownership team trained the managerial staff on the competency model and the resulting changes to the organization's talent management processes. The managerial staff then trained all the employees on the competency model and new talent management processes. It was estimated that this training process would take no more than 2 months to complete (Fowler, 2018). The posttest was conducted approximately 4 months after the competency model had been implemented to determine if the competency model affected employee engagement and/or turnover intent.

Executing the training and process changes that were required to fully implement the competency model for this proposed study required coordination and cooperation from the restaurant's managerial staff. To gain support from the restaurant's ownership

and management team, Prosci's ADKAR change management model was used (Karambelkar & Bhattacharya, 2017). This model was selected because it has been effectively used to implement similar changes in other studies (Karambelkar & Bhattacharya, 2017). As the competency model was being implemented, any resistance to change was addressed using the tools included in the ADKAR model to gain acceptance from those who were resisting the changes. For example, the information was shared by the ownership team with the managerial staff about the negative impacts of low employee engagement and high turnover, as well as how competency models can be used to improve employee engagement and reduce turnover intent (Fowler, 2018; Nair et al., in press; Ravichandran & Mishra, 2018).

Operational Definitions

This study incorporates the following definitions:

Competency model: The competency model is a structure for defining the skill and knowledge requirements of a job (Hatala & Hisey, 2011). It is a compilation of competencies, or observable and measurable knowledge, skills, and abilities, that jointly define effective job performance in specified roles.

Employee engagement: Employee engagement will be measured by the JES (Rich et al., 2010). The JES was developed using a definition of engagement that includes employees devoting their physical, emotional, and cognitive energy into their jobs and the organizations they work for (Kahn, 1990). The JES is an 18-item scale that measures physical engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement (Rich et al.,

2010). The scale requires respondents to use a five-point Likert scale to indicate their disagreement or agreement for each item.

Fast-casual restaurant: A fast-casual restaurant is a dining establishment that does not offer full table service from a server yet claims to offer higher quality food than a fast-food restaurant (Wheelen & Hunger, 2006).

Full-service restaurant: A full-service restaurant is a dining establishment where customers sit at tables and order food through a wait staff (Wheelen & Hunger, 2006).

Full-time employee: A full-time employee is an individual employed by the organization who is paid hourly or salaried wages who works 30 or more hours per week on a permanent (not seasonal or temporary) basis. This definition was provided by the restaurant owners whose employees will be included in this study.

Part-time employee: A part-time employee is an individual employed by the organization who is paid hourly or salaried wages who works 29.9 or fewer hours per week on a permanent (not seasonal or temporary) basis. This definition was provided by the restaurant owners whose employees will be included in this study.

Turnover intent: Employee turnover intent will be assessed by the TIS-6 (Roodt, 2004). This scale includes one factor, turnover intention, and requires participants to respond to whether each of the six items describes them not at all or completely using a five-point rating scale. Turnover intention is defined in this scale as an employee's plans and the likelihood of leaving their position in an organization.

Assumptions

The definition of the employee types included in this study are based on the qualifications identified by the restaurant owners who are surveying their employees and providing the data for this study. Not all restaurant owners use the same qualifications, so the definitions of full-time and part-time employees may vary across organizations. It was assumed that the respondents to the pretest and posttest surveys were honest and forthcoming with information when answering the survey. It was also assumed that the survey instruments used are reliable for examining engagement and turnover intent. I also assumed that the managerial staff included in this study implemented the competency model as instructed.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this study examined employees who worked varying hours at either fast-casual or full-service restaurants in the Northern Virginia area. Employee engagement and turnover intent were measured for these employees before and after a competency model was implemented, and paired *t* tests were conducted to determine if there was an existing relationship between employee engagement and turnover intent before the competency model implementation took place. Temporary and seasonal employees were not included in this study because they would not have been employed long enough to measure the effects, if any, of the competency model. Full-time and part-time employees were separated into two samples to determine if employee engagement, turnover intent, and/or the effects of the competency model differ depending on the number of hours worked.

Limitations

A limitation of this study was that all the participants came from the same organization and geographic location. However, two different types of restaurants (full-service and fast-casual) were included in the study, as well as full- and part-time employees. This variation helped to make the study more generalizable than if only one restaurant and employee type had been examined.

A possible challenge and barrier to the success of this study which was considered during the proposal stage was the implementation of the competency model in each of the restaurant group's six restaurants. Implementing a competency model requires competencies that are critical for each position in the organization to be identified, then those competencies must be integrated into the personnel selection, onboarding, training, development, and talent identification processes (Ravichandran & Mishra, 2018). It was anticipated that this process would be challenging, but this potential barrier was addressed by gaining buy-in and commitment from the restaurant group's leadership team. Prosci's ADKAR change management model has been effectively used to implement change in organizations in other studies, so the model was selected to gain buy-in and commitment to the changes that occurred as part of this proposed study (Karambelkar & Bhattacharya, 2017).

Significance of the Study

This study addressed a gap in the literature by examining if implementing a competency model affected employee engagement and turnover intention in restaurant employees. Learning more about if the implementation of a competency model affected

turnover intent and employee engagement for restaurant employees could help to establish best practices in talent management for this employee population. Employee turnover is costly to restaurant owners due to the costs associated with selecting and training new employees (DiPietro & McLeod, 2011).

Research has indicated that employees leave jobs because they have more opportunities for upward mobility by getting a job at a different restaurant, so more effort needs to be made to identify, develop, and retain internal talent (NRA, 2016). The current literature also indicates that restaurant employees become disengaged when they do not perceive that they have training and development opportunities in a job (DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018). Researchers recommend that future studies that are focused on engagement and turnover intent for restaurant employees examine which skills are required for this population to be successful in their jobs (Brain, 2019; Harris et al., 2017). It was hoped that a deeper understanding of whether competency models can be used to improve employee engagement and reduce turnover intent for restaurant employees would be gained as a result of this study. Another significant outcome of this study would be that these measures might help restaurant employees to feel more fulfilled in their jobs.

Summary

This study examined if implementing a competency model affected employee engagement and turnover intent in restaurant employees. Low employee engagement and high turnover intent are costly for restaurants due to low employee motivation and costs associated with training new employees (Fowler, 2018). It was hoped that a deeper

understanding of whether competency models can be used to improve employee engagement and reduce turnover intent for restaurant employees would be gained as a result of this study. This study used a pretest-posttest quasi-experimental quantitative design to test 20 hypotheses to show how these variables are related.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Restaurant owners spend thousands of dollars per employee each year on costs incurred due to high turnover and low engagement among restaurant employees (DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018). High turnover and low engagement are detrimental to restaurant owners due to the high costs associated with training and lost productivity (Brain, 2019; DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018; DiPietro & McLeod, 2011). Competency models that are integrated into an organization's talent management processes have been used to improve employee engagement and reduce turnover intent across many different industries (Derro & Williams, 2009; Fowler, 2018; Nair et al., in press; Ravichandran & Mishra, 2018). However, competency models and integrated talent management processes are not widely used throughout organizations in the restaurant industry (Shai et al., 2016).

This pretest-posttest quasi-experimental quantitative study examined if there are effects on turnover intent and employee engagement among restaurant employees before and after a competency model was implemented. The second purpose of this study was to examine if there was a difference in the effects of implementing a competency model for full-time and part-time restaurant employees. A survey was used to measure turnover intent and employee engagement before and after a competency model is implemented. The competency model was implemented within a restaurant group that includes six restaurants. All survey participants were employees of the same restaurant group.

In this chapter, existing studies related to competency models, employee engagement, and turnover intent will be reviewed. The theoretical foundation for this study, IPT, is reviewed, as well as empirical studies examining how these theories have

been used to improve engagement and decrease turnover intent for employees. Studies related to competency models, employee engagement, and turnover intent for restaurant employees are also reviewed in this chapter.

Literature Search Strategy

Multiple databases were queried to identify the material for this literature review. The databases used included ProQuest, PsycARTICLES, PsycInfo, Emerald Research Journals, SAGE Journals, Business Source Complete, and ScienceDirect. The search terms used included *implicit person theory, entity theory, incremental theory, restaurant employee turnover, restaurant industry training, performance management, restaurant employees, talent management best practices, mindsets, growth mindset, fixed mindset, competency model, employee engagement, turnover intent,* and *implicit person theory training.* All the literature included in this review came from peer-reviewed sources or published books. All the articles were found through the Walden Library or Google Scholar.

Theoretical Foundation

Implicit Person Theory

The theoretical framework of this study is the IPT, which was first introduced by Dweck and Leggett (1988) and addresses beliefs about the malleability of human characteristics. This theory includes two different types of beliefs about whether human characteristics can be changed: incremental theory and entity theory. Incremental theory states human traits such as attitudes and behaviors can be changed, while entity theory states these traits are fixed and cannot be changed (Dweck, 1986). Dweck's (1896) initial

model of incremental and entity theories demonstrated how children's goals when pursuing various tasks framed their reactions to success or failure on those tasks, as well as their performance on the tasks. Since its inception, Dweck's model has been used to design interventions that are intended to change behaviors, motivation, and performance (El-Alayli & Baumgardner, 2003; Heslin et al., 2005; Katz & O'Malley, 2016).

Incremental and entity theories were first developed after studying children's reactions after experiencing success and failure (Dweck, 1986). Dweck (1986) studied which psychological factors, rather than ability, predicted how effectively individuals gained and used skills. It was discovered that children who believed they could improve, or associated with incremental theory, were willing and able to make the changes needed to be successful after they had experienced failure (Dweck, 1986). Dweck and Leggett (1988) defined implicit theories as "fundamental assumptions about human attributes which individuals develop to explain and understand their world" (p. 269). Implicit theories are often referred to as "mindsets," "self-theories," "lay theories," or "naïve theories" by researchers (Lueftenegger & Chen, 2017). The term IPT is preferred by many researchers because it best describes the fact that the theories are referring to beliefs that often cannot be observed or are not made explicit. The term IPT is also used to describe the framework individuals subconsciously use to predict and explain the meaning behind various events they observe or experience (Yeager & Dweck, 2012). However, Dweck (2006) published a book titled *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* to bring these theories more effectively to laypersons. The term "mindset" has often been used to describe IPT in industrial/organizational psychology, where a fixed

mindset is used synonymously with entity theory and a growth mindset is used to describe incremental theory (Caniels et al., 2018; Dweck, 2006).

Effects of Association With Incremental or Entity Theory

Since their inception, implicit theories have been described using two different conceptual terms (Lueftenegger & Chen, 2017). Specifically, the theory posited that individuals think of human attributes such as personality, intelligence, or social characteristics as either unchangeable traits (entity theory) or as changeable qualities (incremental theory; Dweck, 1986). For example, those who associate with entity theory likely believe people are born with a certain personality that cannot be changed, while those who associate with incremental theory likely believe personality traits can be changed over time (Spinath et al., 2003). Additionally, individuals who associate with incremental theory likely believe individuals can improve their ability to do mathematics, while those who associate with entity theory would likely believe an individual's mathematics ability is fixed and cannot be improved (Lueftenegger & Chen, 2017). Dweck and Leggett's (1988) research found that associates with entity or incremental theories are not limited to self-beliefs and that they also include beliefs about other people, places, or phenomena.

While IPT is typically described in terms of beliefs rather than observable behaviors, empirical studies identified that individuals who associate with entity theory behave differently than those who associate with incremental theory when faced with challenges (Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988). It was observed that children who believed their ability in mathematics could be improved (incremental theory) put more

effort into learning how to solve mathematical problems to which they did not initially know the answer than children who did not believe their ability in mathematics could be improved (entity theory). In addition to observable behaviors when experiencing a challenge, an individual's association with incremental or entity theories can be measured using a self-report questionnaire (Dweck, 2000). The questionnaire requires respondents to rate the degree to which they agree with various statements that are either associated with entity theory or incremental theory.

Dweck and her colleagues' research supported incremental and entity theories as opposite ends of a spectrum (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Dweck et al., 1995). Studies conducted since Dweck's original empirical work have used factor analysis to identify incremental and entity theories as two distinct factors as opposed to a single bipolar factor (Chen, 2012). Some researchers categorize incremental theory and entity theory as two separate constructs that are modeled together (Dai & Cromley, 2014; Tempelaar et al., 2014). Dweck (2006) also described IPT in terms of "mindsets" so it is more applicable to laypeople. Dweck described those with a fixed mindset (entity theory) as individuals who give up when experiencing failure and those with a growth mindset (incremental theory) as individuals who embrace challenges and critical feedback and view them as opportunities to learn and improve.

Applying IPT to the Workplace

Although IPT was developed by studying children, the theoretical framework has also been examined concerning organizational culture and employee behaviors (Canning et al., 2019; Emerson & Murphy, 2015; Murphy & Dweck, 2010; O'Reilly et al.,

2014). Canning et al. (2019) used three research studies with varying methods to evaluate how organizational mindset can be used to predict organizational culture, employee trust, and employee commitment. Canning et al. also used IPT to categorize organizational mindsets as either fixed (entity theory) or growth (incremental theory). Canning et al. discovered that employees perceive that organizations with growth mindsets have more favorable organizational cultures than those with fixed mindsets. How employees perceive an organization's culture is important because positive perceptions of organizational culture are positively correlated with high employee satisfaction, productivity, retention, and company profits (O'Reilly et al., 2014).

Organizations that are perceived to have fixed mindsets are those that communicate a belief that the abilities and personal qualities of their employees cannot be developed over time. Such organizations will likely hire employees they believe are naturally talented and will reward employees who demonstrate individual success (Murphy & Dweck, 2010). Organizations perceived to have growth mindsets are those that communicate that they believe their employees can develop and improve their abilities and offer mentoring and learning opportunities to help their employees develop (Canning et al., 2019). Organizations with growth mindsets are more likely to reward employees for learning and developing new skills, and view failure as a learning opportunity, than organizations with a fixed mindset (Murphy & Dweck, 2010). Additionally, a study by Emerson and Murphy (2015) found that research participants were less interested in working for an organization with a fixed mindset when also presented with the prospect of joining an organization with a growth mindset.

Canning et al. (2019) examined the mission statements of all the Fortune 500 companies in the United States from 2013 and used that information to code the organizations as having either a fixed or growth organizational mindset. The researchers then used Glassdoor ratings of each company's "culture and values" to determine employee satisfaction with the company's culture. The analysis of these data supported Canning et al.'s hypothesis that employees who work for companies that appear to have a fixed organizational mindset have less job satisfaction than employees who work for companies that are perceived to have a growth organizational mindset. To further validate their research, Canning et al. conducted a second study requiring participants to read the mission statements of six Fortune 500 companies–half were coded as having a perceived fixed mindset and the other half were coded as having a perceived growth mindset. The results of this study supported Canning et al.'s hypothesis that individuals believe that companies that appear to have a fixed mindset will be less collaborative, innovative, and ethical than companies that appear to have a growth mindset, leading participants to believe that trust and commitment will be lower in companies with fixed mindsets than those with growth mindsets.

Canning et al. (2019) also conducted a field study with 538 employees from seven Fortune 1000 companies that required the employees to complete a survey indicating what they perceived their company's organizational mindset to be; to what extent collaboration, innovation, and integrity/ethical behavior were a part of their company's culture; their level of trust in the company; and their organizational commitment. Consistent with the first two studies, the data from Canning et al.'s field study provided

evidence that employees who perceived that their company had a fixed mindset also reported that the company culture was less collaborative, less innovative, and promoted ethical behavior less than employees who perceived their company had a growth mindset. Employees of companies perceived as having a growth mindset reported higher levels of organizational trust and commitment than those at companies with a perceived fixed mindset.

Having an organizational culture that employees perceive to be aligned with a growth mindset, or incremental theory, is associated with high employee engagement, low turnover intent, and a more profitable company (Canning et al., 2019; Murphy & Dweck, 2010). Companies can create organizational cultures that promote growth mindsets through their mission statements (Canning et al., 2019; Emerson & Murphy, 2015) and through communications and training that promote learning and development among people managers and employees (Heslin et al., 2006; Johnston, 2017; Keating & Heslin, 2015). While programs designed to create growth mindsets have been implemented in various organizations (Derro & Williams, 2009; Heslin, 2010), there is a gap in the literature about creating a growth mindset in a company in the restaurant industry and about the effect that mindset will have on employee engagement and turnover intent for restaurant employees.

One purpose of the current study was to build upon Dweck's IPT, or mindset, theory. This was done by testing research questions related to whether the implementation of a competency model causes a statistically significant change in employee engagement and turnover intent among restaurant employees. The competency

model implementation included training and development opportunities for employees in the restaurant organization, which should foster a growth mindset within the organization (Heslin et al., 2006; Johnston, 2017; Keating & Heslin, 2015). Competency models are used to provide employees with information about which skills and abilities they need to improve to succeed in their current roles and to prepare for higher-level roles (Fowler, 2018; Hatala & Hisey, 2011). Organizations perceived to have growth mindsets are those that communicate the belief that employees can develop and improve their abilities (Canning et al., 2019), and the use of competency models provide employees with the tools they need to develop and improve job-related abilities (Fowler, 2018; Hatala & Hisey, 2011).

Competency Models

A competency is a compilation of observable and measurable knowledge, skills, and abilities (Hatala & Hisey, 2011). A competency model is a structure used to define effective job performance by identifying all the competencies required for a specified role. Competency models are used by organizations to provide clear expectations about what is required for employees to be successful in their roles, which improves employee performance (Fowler, 2018; Hatala & Hisey, 2011). Managers who work for organizations using competency models are also able to provide effective, objective performance feedback to their employees because the behavioral anchors defined by each competency clearly state what employees need to do to be considered a high performer (Derro & Williams, 2009; Ravichandran & Mishra, 2018; Ross & Stefaniak, 2018).

Competency models are considered a best practice in human resources management (Fowler, 2018; Ross & Stefaniak, 2018). Specifically, it is recommended that organizations use competency models that include both leadership (and "soft skills" such as collaboration and trustworthiness) and technical competencies (Derro & Williams, 2009; Ravichadran & Mishra, 2018). Competency models that include leadership and technical competencies have been used to improve employee engagement and reduce turnover intent (Fowler, 2018; Nair et al., in press).

After organizations have identified which competencies are required for their roles, the competency model must be implemented into the organization's talent management processes to be effective (Fowler, 2018; Ross & Stefaniak, 2018). Specifically, competency models should be implemented into an organization's talent selection, performance management, learning and development, and succession planning processes (Ross & Stefaniak, 2018). For example, competency models have been used in the technology sector to prepare employees for higher-level positions (Nair et al., in press) and in the healthcare industry to help employees develop leadership skills (Ravichandran & Mishra, 2018). However, human resources management best practices, including the creation and implementation of competency models, are often not used by organizations in the restaurant industry (Mjongwana & Kamala, 2018; Shai et al., 2016).

Using Competency Models in the Workplace

Competency models are often used in organizations to help employees focus on the knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors needed to perform effectively (Campion et al., 2011; Morgeson et al., 2009; Posthuma & Campion, 2008). Effective competency

models should be implemented into an organization's hiring, evaluation, promotion, and employee development processes (Campion et al., 2011; Morgeson et al., 2009; Posthuma & Campion, 2008). The knowledge, skills, and abilities identified through competency models should be linked to the organization's overarching objectives for the model to be effective. Organizations typically require each competency in a competency model to include a title, a definition describing the behaviors required of an effective performer, and a description of the proficiency levels required of each competency (Campion et al., 2011). The specific proficiency levels used in a competency model vary based on the type of competency development required by an organization (Groves, 2007; Posthuma & Campion, 2008). For example, a competency model may define proficiency levels by job levels within the organization, such as "junior engineer," "staff engineer," and "senior engineer," or by the level of expertise, such as "novice," "skilled," and "expert." Effective competency models will define the observable behaviors expected for each competency in each proficiency level (Campion et al., 2011). The behaviors and proficiency levels included in competency models should focus on good to excellent performance, rather than including behaviors indicative of bad performance (Campion et al., 2011; Groves, 2007; Olesen et al., 2007). Using this method will ensure employees know what they should be doing rather than focusing on what they should not do (Campion et al., 2011; Groves, 2007; Olesen et al., 2007). This specific level of detail is required to be able to implement a competency model into all an organization's human resources processes (Campion et al., 2011). When behaviors are defined for each

competency at each proficiency level in a competency model, more effective interviews, performance appraisals, and training programs can be created (Campion et al., 2011).

While the majority of competencies included in an organization's competency model will be similar to what is required for other organizations in the same industry, it is also important that competencies that are aligned to a specific organization's strategy and competitive advantage are included in the model it implements (Groves, 2007; Posthuma & Campion, 2008). When competencies specific to an organization's strategy and competitive advantage are included in a competency model, the model helps employees focus on and accomplish organizational goals (Olesen et al., 2007). Including competencies that are specific to the organization's strategy often leads to the successful implementation of the model because senior leaders will have a high level of buy-in (Olesen et al., 2007). Getting the leaders of an organization to buy into the competency model being designed and implemented is critical to ensuring lower-level managers use the model when managing their employees (Campion et al., 2011).

A best practice of competency modeling is to implement the competencies into all the human resources processes an organization uses so those processes are aligned (Campion et al., 2011; Posthuma & Campion, 2008). To be implemented across multiple human resources processes for all the jobs in an organization, the organization's competency model must include both technical and fundamental, or leadership, competencies (Campion et al., 2011). Technical competencies refer to specific job-related skill or knowledge and leadership or fundamental competencies refer to basic capabilities (Posthuma & Campion, 2008). For example, Microsoft used a competency model that

includes fundamental competencies that apply to every employee in the organization and technical competencies that were identified for each role in the organization (Olesen et al., 2007). Implementing competency models into all an organization's human resources processes may allow the organization to hire, evaluate, compensate, train, and promote its employees using the same elements (Campion et al., 2011). Details about how organizations typically implement competency models into their human resources processes are provided in the following sections.

Employee Selection

Once an organization has created a competency model, the model can be used in the employee selection, or hiring, process (Campion et al., 2011). One best practice is to use the behaviors identified in each competency to create behavioral interview questions and a structured interview rating scale (Campion et al., 2011). Behavioral interviews that use rating scales are more effective ways to select candidates who are a good fit for the organization and the role they are applying for than interviews that do not use behavioral-based questions or rating scales (Campion et al., 2011; Ravichandran & Mishra, 2018). After creating an organization-wide competency model, The Boeing Company developed a structured interview process that included questions based on the behavioral anchors included in each competency (Campion et al., 2011). The interviews were designed so hiring managers were able to identify if candidates were describing ineffective to highly effective behaviors and to identify if candidates are qualified for entry-level or more advanced job levels.

Competency models can also be used to determine which selection assessments an organization uses, because assessments that measure the competencies will be used (Campion et al., 2011). By measuring the competencies included in the organization's competency model during the selection process, hiring managers can assure they are selecting candidates who are a good fit for the needs of the role (Campion et al., 2011). Microsoft used the job-specific competencies the organization identified to determine which selection assessments to implement (Olesen et al., 2007). Selection assessments that measured the most critical competencies required for each specific open role were implemented at Microsoft (Olesen et al., 2007).

Performance and Compensation

Competency models that identify proficiency levels for each competency can be used in an organization's performance process and to make compensation decisions by distinguishing top performers from average performers (Campion et al., 2011; Morgeson et al., 2009; Posthuma & Campion, 2008). Performance and compensation processes based on competency models are more objective than processes that do not use competencies because they allow managers to set clear expectations (Posthuma & Campion, 2008). Specifically, competency models that use proficiency levels and behavioral indicators for each competency allow organizations to distinguish between low, moderate, and high performers, and they can determine how to reward high performers and develop low and moderate performers (Campion et al., 2011; Morgeson et al., 2009; Posthuma & Campion, 2008). Performance appraisal processes are often almost entirely defined by an organization's competency model because the model

contains a description of what effective performance looks like (Morgeson et al., 2009). To be used in a performance appraisal process, all the competencies in a model should be defined such that performance on one competency does not conflict with performance on another (Morgeson et al., 2009).

When competency models are linked to an organization's objectives and performance levels, they can be used to make employee compensation decisions (Campion et al., 2011; Morgeson et al., 2009; Posthuma & Campion, 2008). For example, Microsoft used competency models to identify and reward high-performing employees with monetary incentives (Olesen et al., 2007). Another example of an organization utilizing a competency model to make performance and compensation decisions is Indiana Precision Technology, which is a subsidiary of Honda (Campion et al., 2011). Indiana Precision Technology identified competency models for its office staff, engineering, production, and maintenance roles, and it used the models as a basis for "pay for skills" programs that integrated the organization's training, performance appraisal, promotion, and compensation systems (Campion et al., 2011). Detailed descriptions of the knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors needed at each proficiency level of the competency models were used to evaluate employees, and training was offered to those who needed to improve specific skills (Campion et al., 2011). Indiana Precision Technology also used competency models to create on-the-job skills tests to determine if employees were ready to be promoted and to differentiate pay by paying employees with higher skill levels more than those with lower skill levels. Indiana Precision Technology attributed its competitive advantage in part to the competency

models it created, which were then used to align the organization's human resources processes (Campion et al., 2011).

A study by Moghaddam et al. (2019) was conducted to create a competency model that identified and evaluated nontechnical competencies for head nurses. Moghaddam et al. (2019) were able to successfully identify the nontechnical leadership competencies head nurses need to be successful in their roles. The researchers also defined an effective performance process that was created using a competency model that included all the competencies required to be an effective head nurse (Moghaddam et al., 2019). Utilizing performance and compensation processes that are objective, efficient, and effective is critical for achieving organizational goals. Utilizing effective performance and compensation processes is critical for reducing the costs associated with turnover and lost production from low performers (Moghaddam et al., 2019).

Identifying Development Needs and Providing Training

An effective way to identify employee training and development needs is through the use of competency models (Fowler, 2018; Ravichandran & Mishra, 2018). A best practice within organizations is to train employees using programs that were created to develop specific competencies (Campion et al., 2011). In addition to using a competency-based performance process, one way to identify which competencies an employee needs to develop is through the use of a competency-based 360-degree feedback survey. Organizations can ask various people with whom an employee works to rate the employee's proficiency level on competencies that are specific to the employee's current

role or a role they may be considered for in the future (Campion et al., 2011; Fowler, 2018).

Once an employee's development needs have been identified through the performance process and/or a 360-degree feedback survey, the employee can be enrolled in training programs or on-the-job development opportunities to improve their proficiency on the competencies identified for development (Ravichandran & Mishra, 2018). Microsoft went beyond only identifying the training and development needs for individual employees and collected competency-based performance and 360-degree feedback survey data for all the employees in a specific department or job family (Olesen et al., 2007). Using the department and job family competency data, Microsoft created what was internally referred to as "talent schools" to train many employees on the same competency all at once (Olesen et al., 2007). The Boeing Company used competency models to align its human resources processes by creating competency models for each job family (e.g., Information Technology or Finance) (Campion et al., 2011). The job family-specific competency models contain the competencies that are most critical for current and future performance in that job family (Campion et al., 2011). Employee performance is evaluated on each competency using a behaviorally anchored rating scale (Campion et al., 2011). After the performance evaluations are completed and the competencies each employee needs to improve are identified, training and development opportunities that are aligned to each competency are provided to employees (Campion et al., 2011). Boeing determined this method helped their employees perform better in their current roles, prepared them for future roles (Campion et al., 2011).

Succession Planning

Competency models are a common way to guide succession programs because they often document the competencies and proficiency levels required not only for employees' current roles but for their future roles as well (Campion et al., 2011; Groves, 2007). Competency models utilizing proficiency levels for each competency can use the models to inform their succession programs because they have already defined the promotion criteria for each role (Groves, 2007; Morgeson et al., 2009). Microsoft asked each of their employees and the employee's manager to complete a competency assessment that measured the level of proficiency required for roles that are a higher level than the employee's current role (Olesen et al., 2007). Microsoft then asked each employee to use the feedback from the assessment to work with their manager to identify future roles the employee could be a good fit for based on their competency strengths and career interests.

The U.S. Department of State also used a succession process based on a competency model (Campion et al., 2011). The Department of State identified six foundational competencies applicable to all jobs in the organization and 30 competencies specific to different roles within the department, all of which were defined using three levels: junior, middle, and senior (Campion et al., 2011). The department used the competency model to assess job candidates' skills during the selection process. Once hired, all employees in the department were assessed on the six foundational competencies and any job-specific competencies as part of the annual performance evaluation process. Promotion panels then reviewed the performance evaluations to

determine which employees received promotions. The performance reviews also determined which competency-based training courses employees were asked to complete. Some employees were able to complete a job rotation program that allowed them to develop the competencies required for several different roles. This made the employees good candidates for promotions because they had the skills necessary to be successors for several different roles. The Department of State is an example of how organizations can create competency models and use them to align their human resources processes to ensure the employees they hire, identify as successors for higher-level roles, and promote have the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform those roles at a high level.

Using Competency Models in the Hospitality Industry

The term "hospitality industry" is used to define fields related to lodging, restaurants, event planning, and tourism (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). While competency models are not commonly used in the hospitality industry, some organizations and researchers have successfully created and implemented them (Chung-Herrera et al., 2003; Mjongwana & Kamala, 2018; Shai et al., 2016). Chung-Herrera et al. (2003) discovered that a competency model had not been developed for leadership positions in the hospitality industry, so the researchers conducted a study to identify the competencies necessary to be a successful leader in the field. Chung-Herrera et al. (2003) found it was most critical to identify the competencies needed for leadership positions in the hospitality industry because those competencies would inform the critical skills needed throughout the entire field. Identifying competencies needed for leadership positions would also allow organizations in the hospitality industry to create leadership

development programs to help employees advance in hospitality careers (Chung-Herrera et al., 2003). After surveying 137 participants who were in leadership positions in the hospitality industry, Chung-Herrera et al. (2003) identified eight critical competency groups for leadership roles. The critical competency groups for hospitality industry leaders are communication, critical thinking, implementation, industry knowledge, interpersonal skills, leadership, self-management, and strategic positioning.

The research conducted by Chung-Herrera et al. (2003) was implemented in two organizations in the hospitality industry as part of their study: Choice Hotels International and Marriott International. The researchers found Choice Hotels International used a competency model to perform readiness assessments that identified which employees had the leadership capabilities needed to be successful in the organization's senior-level positions (Chung-Herrera et al., 2003). It was also noted that Choice Hotels used its competency model to guide the selection, promotion, and succession planning processes for its senior-level leadership positions. Marriott used the competency model identified by Chung-Herrera et al. (2003) to guide its Benchstrength Management System. The Benchstrength Management System was used by Marriott's senior leaders to develop leadership capabilities for employees who had been identified as successors to the senior leaders. Marriott's senior leaders were asked to identify possible successors for their roles, and then the Benchstrength Management System was used to identify which leadership competencies the successors needed to focus on developing. The use of competencies in Marriott's Benchstrength Management System provided the organization

with a consistent approach to evaluating and developing its future leaders (Chung-Herrera et al., 2003).

Chung-Herrera et al.'s (2003) work was later used to inform additional research surrounding the use of competency models in the restaurant industry (Bharwani & Talib, 2017; Shum et al., 2018). Bharwani and Talib (2017) used the research conducted by Chung-Herrera et al. (2003) and the job requirements for hotel general managers in the current era to identify a competency model for hotel general managers. Many of the leadership competencies identified in Bharwani and Talib's (2017) research were the same as the competencies Chung-Herrera et al. (2003) identified, but the technical skills needed for the hotel general manager position varied. Shum et al. (2018) used Chung-Herrera et al.'s (2003) research to identify competency models for frontline and director-level managers in the hospitality industry. Shum et al. (2018) identified 15 competencies that were necessary for both frontline and director-level managers in the hospitality industry and grouped them into three categories: business leadership, personal leadership, and people leadership competencies. A survey of 98 managers in the hospitality industry was used to conclude that business leadership competencies were the highest priority for director-level managers, and people leadership competencies were most important for frontline managers (Shum et al., 2018).

Within the hospitality industry, the restaurant field is especially competitive (Shai et al., 2016). Restaurants often face difficulties related to labor shortages due to the high employee turnover, and restaurant owners face high costs associated with hiring and training new employees (Shai et al., 2016). Restaurant employees cited limited

opportunities for training and promotions as reasons for leaving their jobs (Shai et al., 2016). Shai et al. (2016) determined one way to combat these issues was to focus on improving the quality of people managers in the restaurant field. One method of improving managerial quality, according to Shai et al. (2016), was to identify which managerial competencies were critical for people managers to possess. To identify the critical competencies, Shai et al. (2016) asked 49 restaurant managers and 131 restaurant employees to complete a questionnaire, which asked them to rank various technical and leadership competencies from most to least critical for restaurant managers to exhibit on the job. After analyzing the results of the questionnaires, Shai et al. (2016) determined technical competencies such as calculating food costs, serving methods, culinary skills, and menu development are critical for entry-level restaurant managers. More senior-level restaurant managers, such as General Managers, needed to be able to motivate employees in addition to being able to operate day-to-day restaurant activities. The study by Shai et al. (2016) demonstrated the importance of possessing both technical and leadership skills to effectively manage a restaurant. When both managers and employees have the competencies needed to be successful in their roles, their performance and job satisfaction increase, which leads to positive outcomes for the restaurant (Shai et al., 2016). This study supported the importance of creating a competency model for jobs in the restaurant field.

Food and Beverage Service Competency Model

In January of 2015, the U.S. Department of Labor published the Food and Beverage Service Competency Model, which was the first comprehensive competency

model to be created for the restaurant sector (Mannix & Mills, 2015; National Restaurant Association, 2015). Having a competency model that can be used to attract, develop, and retain employees in the restaurant industry is critical (Mannix & Mills, 2015). The industry is comprised of over 980,000 restaurants or foodservice outlets and employs a workforce of over 13 million people in the United States alone (Mannix & Mills, 2015). The purpose of creating the competency model was to set clear and consistent standards for educators and employees in the food and beverage service industry, which includes the restaurant sector (U.S. Department of Labor, n.d.). The competency model was also created to provide employees, prospective employees, and business owners in the food and beverage service industry with detailed information about how to enter, advance in, and be successful in the industry (U.S. Department of Labor, n.d.).

To ensure the competency model accurately encompassed all the competencies necessary for the food and beverage service industry, the U.S. Department of Labor worked with the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (NRAEF) and subject-matter experts in the industry to develop the model and outline best practices for implementing it (U.S. Department of Labor, n.d.). The NRAEF is a sector of the National Restaurant Association whose purpose is to "enhance the restaurant and foodservice industry's service to the public through education, community engagement, and promotion of career opportunities" (U.S. Department of Labor, n.d., "Food and Beverage Service Competency Model," para. 2). After developing the food and beverage service competency model, the U.S. Department of Labor and the NRAEF validated the model with 50 organizations in the food and beverage industry.

The Food and Beverage Service Competency Model, shown in Figure 1, categorized the competencies using tiers: Personal Effectiveness, Academic, Workplace, Industry-Wide, and Industry-Sector Technical Competencies (U.S. Department of Labor, 2017). The model also included management competencies and allowed organizations to identify additional occupation-specific requirements to add to their specific organization's model. The U.S. Department of Labor (2017) published a guidebook including an overview of the model and details about the behaviors, knowledge, skills, and abilities required for each competency, so organizations in the food and beverage service industry can implement the model for their employees. The U.S. Department of Labor and the NRAEF also published guidelines for how the Food and Beverage Service Competency Model can be used (National Restaurant Association, 2015). They recommended that restaurant owners and operators use the competency model when hiring, training, promoting, and evaluating employees (National Restaurant Association, 2015). The U.S. Department of Labor (2017) provided worksheets for restaurant owners and operators to use to identify which competencies in the model are most critical for their specific organization and to implement the competencies into their hiring, training, promotion, and performance evaluation processes.

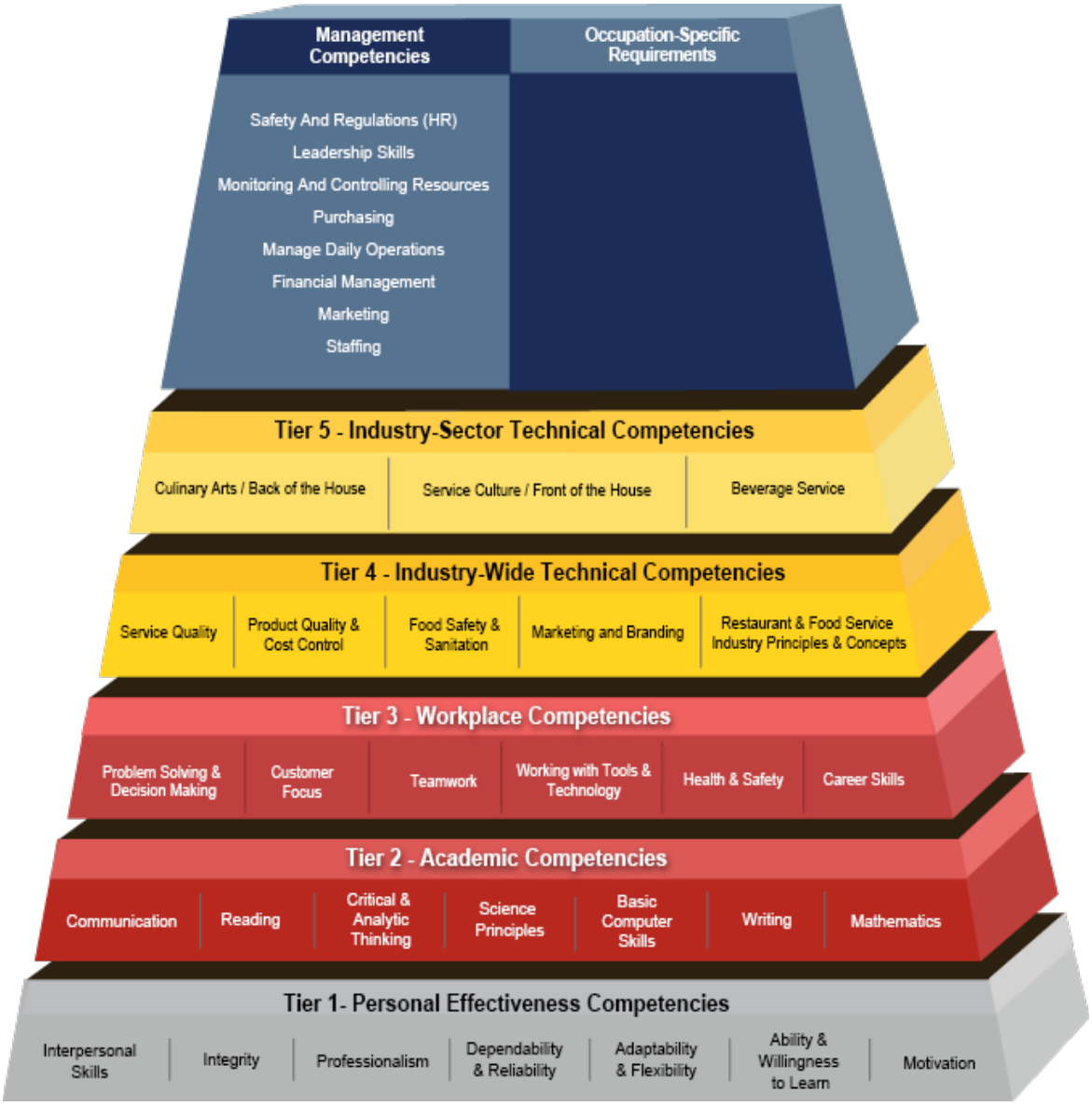

Figure 1. Food and Beverage Service Competency Model. From "Food and Beverage Service Competency Model," by U.S. Department of Labor, n.d. *Competency Model Clearinghouse* (https://www.careeronestop.org/competencymodel/competency-models/food-service.aspx). In the public domain.

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is a measure of the extent to which employees devote their physical, emotional, and cognitive energy to their jobs and the organization they work for (Kahn, 1990). An effective measure of employee engagement will incorporate physical, emotional, and cognitive engagement (Rich et al., 2010). When employees are engaged, they will exhibit motivation and discretionary effort because they are passionate about achieving the organization's objectives (Heslin, 2010). There is an important distinction between employee engagement and employee satisfaction. Employee satisfaction indicates how happy, or content employees are (Omar et al., 2017). Employee satisfaction does not take an employee's motivation, emotional commitment, or involvement into account (Omar et al., 2017). Organizations should focus on employee engagement because it drives organizational performance (Rich et al., 2010).

Mindset is related to employee engagement (Murphy & Dweck, 2010). Organizations perceived to have growth mindsets are those that communicate they believe their employees can develop and improve their abilities (Canning et al., 2019), and the use of competency models provide employees with the tools they need to develop and improve job-related abilities (Fowler, 2018; Hatala & Hisey, 2011). Organizational cultures that are perceived to have a growth mindset are associated with higher employee engagement and higher profits than organizations perceived to have a fixed mindset (Canning et al., 2019; Murphy & Dweck, 2010). Engaged employees are more likely to exhibit prosocial behaviors and to perform tasks that are beyond their job roles, which benefits the organization as a whole (Canning et al., 2019). Engaged employees are more

likely to stay with their current organization longer than unengaged employees, which reduces organizational costs associated with turnover and training (Canning et al., 2019). In the restaurant industry, engaged employees perform better and provide better customer service than unengaged employees (Watson et al., 2018). High performance and customer service in the restaurant industry are correlated with high customer satisfaction and increased sales (Watson et al., 2018).

High employee engagement is not only beneficial to organizations, but to the employees themselves (Hakanen et al., 2019). Engaged employees have better physical health and mental well-being than their unengaged counterparts (Hakanen et al., 2019; Rich et al., 2010). Initiatives designed to improve employee engagement will have positive social impacts by increasing productivity for organizations and improving employee well-being (Rich et al., 2010).

Engagement Differences Between Full- and Part-Time Employees

Levels of employee engagement have not been found to be statistically different between full- and part-time employees when examining employees from many different industries together (Hakenen et al., 2019). For industries where the majority of employees do not have a college degree, there is a statistically significant difference in levels of engagement between full- and part-time employees (Hakenen et al., 2019). In industries where the majority of employees do not have a college degree, part-time employees are significantly less engaged than full-time employees (Hakenen et al., 2019). The majority of employees in the foodservice, or restaurant, industry do not have college degrees (DiPietro & McLeod, 2011; NRAEF, 2014).

Researchers have found that part-time foodservice employees are significantly less engaged than full-time foodservice employees (Jaworski et al., 2018; Joung et al., 2018). Evidence suggests that part-time foodservice employees may be less engaged because they receive less training, less recognition, and fewer benefits than their full-time counterparts do (Jaworski et al., 2018). It was recommended that organizations in the foodservice industry provide the same training and career development opportunities to both part- and full-time employees (Joung et al., 2018). This is especially important because most employees in the foodservice industry are part-time, thus their engagement level has a significant effect on organizational performance (Jaworski et al., 2018).

Impact of Managerial Style on Employee Engagement

While organization-wide initiatives are effective ways to improve employee engagement, direct managers also have a major impact on their employees' engagement levels (Burris et al., 2008; Heslin, 2010). To be perceived as having a growth mindset, organizations must employ people managers who motivate their employees to achieve organizational goals (Canning et al., 2019; Keating & Heslin, 2015). When employees are not engaged, the organization they work for may be negatively affected because unengaged employees may not tell their managers about issues that occurred in the workplace (Burris et al., 2008). Additionally, unengaged employees may not attempt to resolve the problems they discovered within the organization (Burris et al., 2008).

Employees need to trust that they can tell their manager when they are dealing with a problem at work or when they discover and issue that could be solved (Burris et al., 2008). To be engaged, employees also need to believe that their thoughts regarding

how the organization should operate will be considered by their manager (Burris et al., 2008). People managers have been able to keep employees engaged by focusing on transformational leadership (Nielsen et al., 2008).

Transformational leaders are those who inspire their employees to focus on goals that are beyond their self-interests (Nielsen et al., 2008). People managers who are transformational can motivate employees to work toward initiatives that benefit a group or the organization as a whole (Nielsen et al., 2008). Transformational leaders are often described as charismatic, influential, inspirational, and motivating (Nielsen et al., 2008). To become transformational, people managers need to create a vision for their teams and the organization they support, and then share that vision with their employees (Nielsen et al., 2008). Transformational leaders help employees connect to the vision and mission by providing the coaching and training needed to be able to make the vision a reality (Nielsen et al., 2008).

Employees who have a manager considered a transformational leader are more engaged than employees who do not feel connected to their manager (Nielsen et al., 2008; Rich et al., 2010; Watson et al., 2018). This is because transformational leaders provide employees with information about how the work they do affects the larger organizational objectives (Rich et al., 2010).

Effects of Competency Models on Employee Engagement

Leaders are typically attracted to the implementation of a competency model because competency models are used to create positive organizational change (Campion et al., 2011). Specifically, it is recommended that organizations implement competency

models to improve employee engagement (Canning et al., 2019; Derro & Williams, 2009; Dewettinck & Vroonen, 2017; Fowler, 2018). Competency models are effective ways to improve employee engagement because they provide employees with details about the organization's objectives (Fowler, 2018). Competency models also outline what employees need to focus on in their roles, and what will be required for employees to advance their careers in that organization (Fowler, 2018).

To improve employee engagement in an organization, the competency model the organization implements must contain certain criteria, including both leadership and technical competencies (Nair et al., in press). Additionally, the competency model must be integrated into the organization's talent management processes (e.g., selection, performance management, compensation, needs analysis, training, and succession planning; Fowler, 2018). Employees are more engaged when they believe the organization they work for is committed to helping them perform at a high level and when they believe the organization is invested in their careers (Heslin, 2010). Employees are also more engaged when they understand the organization's objectives (Keating & Heslin, 2015). By providing information to employees about the organization's objectives, what is required for their roles, and what behaviors are needed to advance in the organization, competency models can be used as a tool for improving employee engagement (Fowler, 2018; Nair et al., in press; Ravichandran & Mishra, 2018). No peer-reviewed data were found related to the U.S. Department of Labor's Food and Beverage Service Competency Model and its correlation with employee engagement. One purpose of the current study was to add knowledge to that gap in the literature.

Employee Engagement in the Restaurant Industry

The restaurant industry employs over 13 million people in the United States alone (Mannix & Mills, 2015). However, there is a literature gap surrounding employee engagement in the restaurant industry (Harris et al., 2017). Most empirical studies that have examined employee engagement in the restaurant industry were conducted on employees outside of the United States (Mjongwana & Kamala, 2018; Ogunmokun et al., 2019; Watson, 2018; Watson et al., 2018). This literature gap could be due to findings indicating that organizations in the restaurant industry do not often focus on employee engagement or training and development for employees (Shai et al., 2016).

Restaurant owners who do focus on employee engagement and provide training and development opportunities to their employees have higher profitability and customer satisfaction than restaurant owners who do not take these factors into account (Brain, 2019; Mjongwana & Kamala, 2018; Pai et al., 2018; Shai et al., 2016). Engaged employees in the restaurant industry have higher performance and provide better customer service than unengaged restaurant employees (Watson et al., 2018). For organizations in the restaurant industry, high employee performance, and high levels of customer service are positively correlated with higher customer satisfaction and increased sales (Watson et al., 2018). When restaurant employees perceive that the organization they work for supports their development, they are more likely to exhibit behaviors desired by the organization than employees who do not perceive that the organization supports their development (Harris et al., 2017). When attempting to engage employees in the restaurant industry, it is critical to provide them with information about the

organization's objectives and how the work they do helps to achieve those objectives (Watson et al., 2018).

Using the JES to Measure Employee Engagement

The current study measured employee engagement using the JES. The JES was developed using Kahn's (1990) definition of employee engagement. Kahn defined engagement as a motivational construct that refers to employees' willingness to invest their physical, emotional, and cognitive energies into their jobs. Although Kahn developed this definition 20 years ago, it is still widely regarded as the most comprehensive definition of job engagement (Basit & Chauhan, 2017).

The JES measures engagement using three factors: physical engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement (Rich et al., 2010). Each subscale includes six items, and the JES is 18 items total. Respondents to the JES read each item and use a five-point response to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each item. For example, one item used to measure employees' physical engagement is "I work with intensity on my job" (Rich et al., p. 634) Emotional engagement is measured using items such as "I feel positive about my job", and cognitive engagement is measured by items such as "At work, I focus a great deal of attention on my job" (Rich et al., 2010, p. 634). The JES has been used effectively throughout many different regions and industries to measure employee engagement (Basit & Chauhan, 2017).

Turnover Intent

Turnover intent is a measure of how likely an employee is to leave the organization they currently work for (Roodt, 2004). The Turnover Intention Scale

measures turnover intent by asking employees if they have plans of leaving the organization they currently work for (Bothma & Roodt, 2013). Organizations need to measure turnover intent because employees who have plans to leave the organization are often unengaged and eventually do leave their jobs (DiPietro & McLeod, 2011). Turnover and loss of productivity due to unengaged employees are costly to organizations and should be avoided (Burris et al., 2008; Canning et al., 2019).

Organizations in several different industries have used integrated talent management processes to reduce turnover intent (Omar et al., 2017). Reducing turnover intent has been negatively correlated with an increase in organizational performance (Omar et al., 2017). Organizational cultures that are perceived to have a growth mindset are associated with lower turnover intent and higher profits than organizations perceived to have a fixed mindset (Canning et al., 2019; Murphy & Dweck, 2010). Research examining differences in turnover intent between full- and part-time employees and different managerial styles will be examined throughout this section. The existing literature related to turnover intent and competency models and turnover intent in the restaurant industry will also be examined throughout this section.

Turnover Intent Differences Between Full- and Part-Time Employees

Part-time employees have higher turnover intent than full-time employees (DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018). This is true across all industries, including the restaurant industry (DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018; Joung et al., 2018). The problem of high turnover intent among part-time employees is especially pronounced in the restaurant industry

because most of the workforce is comprised of part-time employees (DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018).

DiPietro and McLeod (2011) examined turnover intent for employees who either identified themselves as part- or full-time. All 296 participants in DiPietro and McLeod's (2011) study were employees who worked for a fast-casual restaurant chain in the United States. DiPietro and McLeod (2011) defined part-time employees as those who did not have permanent hours and were subject to be scheduled according to customer demand (i.e., during times the restaurant was expected to be busiest). Full-time employees were defined as those who held permanent positions within the organization with predictable and regular hours (DiPietro & McLeod, 2011). The researchers found that employees who identified themselves as part-time had higher turnover intent than those who identified themselves as full-time. Additionally, employees who identified themselves as part-time displayed fewer positive customer service behaviors than employees who identified themselves as full-time (DiPietro & McLeod, 2011).

Restaurant owners often hire part-time employees in part as a cost-savings measure (DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018). Part-time employees are generally less expensive than full-time employees because organizations in the United States are not required to provide the same benefits to part-time employees as to full-time employees (DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018). However, those costs are often offset by expenses due to high turnover among part-time employees (DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018). To reduce turnover intent among part-time employees, it is recommended that organizations in the restaurant

industry provide them with managerial support and professional development opportunities (DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018).

Impact of Managerial Style on Turnover Intent

Managerial style can affect restaurant employees' turnover intentions. A study by Burris et al. (2008) examined the effects of voice on employees' intentions to leave an organization using data from 269 restaurants located in 21 states throughout the U.S. (Burris et al., 2008). In Burris et al.'s (2008) study, voice was defined as upward-directed verbal communication to managers that was identified by research participants as either intended to improve or criticize. Specifically, the participants in this study were asked questions about how often they provide feedback and input to their manager, what the intention of the feedback was (to be critical or to help the manager improve), and about their intention to leave the organization. Burris et al. (2008) determined intention to leave was significantly negatively correlated to voice and mediated the relationship between perceptions of leadership, which was defined as leader-member exchange or abusive supervision.

When the relationship between an employee and supervisor is poor, employees often think about leaving the organization and invest less time and effort into improving the work environment or sustaining high levels of performance (Burris et al., 2008). This is especially harmful in the restaurant industry because employees may put the organization at risk if they do not inform their managers about food safety issues. Additionally, it is common for restaurant employees to find comparable employment at another organization in a short amount of time, so managers in this industry must develop

open and positive relationships with their employees (Burris et al., 2008). When employees become detached from an organization and stop putting effort into improving their workplace, the organization will suffer due to the cost of turnover and will not have the information they need to resolve issues that could prevent turnover (Burris et al., 2008; DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018).

Effects of Competency Models on Turnover Intent

Competency models and accompanying managerial training on how to use competencies have been used to effectively reduce turnover intent (Canning et al., 2019; Derro & Williams, 2009; Dewettinck & Vroonen, 2017; Fowler, 2018). Specifically, competency models that include both leadership and technical competencies have been used to reduce employee turnover intent (Derro & Williams, 2009; Nair et al., in press). The competency model must also be integrated into an organization's talent management processes to be used as a tool for reducing turnover intent (Fowler, 2018; Ravichandran & Mishra, 2018).

Utilizing performance and compensation processes that are objective is critical for reducing turnover intent (Moghaddam et al., 2019). By creating objective performance and compensation processes, competency models have been used to reduce employee turnover intent (Moghaddam et al., 2019). Using competency-based talent management processes (such as performance and compensation) reduces the organizational costs associated with both lost production from low performers and from turnover due to underpaying high performers who later leave the organization (Moghaddam et al., 2019).

To successfully design and implement a competency model, buy-in and involvement from executive leaders, people managers, and employees within the organization are critical (Campion et al., 2011). Executive leaders need to be educated on the value of competency models, as well as how they can be used to prevent turnover (Campion et al., 2011; Moghaddam et al., 2019). Educating executive leaders typically requires that human resources professionals demonstrate a positive correlation between the use of the competency model in talent management processes and the effect on job performance (Campion et al., 2011). Another method of gaining buy-in for a competency model implementation is to demonstrate the cost reductions that will be realized due to a decrease in turnover (Campion et al., 2011). These methods can also be used to gain buy-in from employees at all levels of the organization. Employees are often quick to buy into a new competency model that has been implemented in the organization they work for because, as a result of the implementation, employees have more clarity about what to focus on to be successful in their roles (Moghaddam et al., 2019).

Researchers recommend that additional research be conducted on the use of competency models in the restaurant industry (Brain, 2019; Harris et al., 2017). Specifically, additional research related to competency models and their effect on turnover intent in the restaurant industry is needed (Brain, 2019; Harris et al., 2017). There are currently no peer-reviewed data on the use of the Food and Beverage Service Competency Model and its effect on turnover intent. One purpose of the current study was to add to the literature in this area.

Turnover Intent in the Restaurant Industry

High turnover intent among employees is costly to restaurant owners due to low productivity and costs associated with training new employees (Fowler, 2018). High turnover intent is correlated with high levels of actual turnover (DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018). In the U.S. accommodations industry, which includes restaurants, the quit rate (voluntary turnover) is 55% (BLS, 2019). The BLS does not report restaurant turnover rates independent of the larger accommodations industry. However, research suggests that voluntary turnover is higher for restaurant employees than the accommodations sector as a whole (DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018; NRA, 2016). Voluntary turnover rates are higher for fast food and fast-casual restaurants than for fine dining venues (DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018). In 2010, the overall turnover rate for fast food and fast-casual restaurants was 110% (DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018). Restaurant owners have stated that employee turnover is one of their largest concerns due to high costs associated with acquiring and training new employees (DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018).

While it is widely accepted that restaurant owners incur high costs due to employee turnover, there is a literature gap regarding effective methods of reducing turnover intent and actual turnover in the restaurant industry (Brain, 2019; DiPietro & McLeod, 2011). Many researchers believe applying methods that have been effective at reducing turnover intent in other industries will also work well in the restaurant industry (Brain, 2019; DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018; Pai et al., 2018; Shai et al., 2016). However, additional research needs to be conducted to determine if this is true. Restaurant employees cite limited opportunities for training and career advancement as the primary

reasons for leaving their jobs (Shai et al., 2016). To provide restaurant employees with additional training and career advancement opportunities, it is recommended that organizations in the restaurant industry implement competency models (Canning et al., 2019; Derro & Williams, 2009; Dewettinck & Vroonen, 2017). After implementing a competency model, it is recommended that organizations in the restaurant industry create talent management processes based on the competencies in the model (Canning et al., 2019; Derro & Williams, 2009; Dewettinck & Vroonen, 2017).

Using the TIS-6 to Measure Turnover Intent

This study measured turnover intent using the TIS-6, which includes only one factor, turnover intention (Roodt, 2004). Turnover intention is defined as employees' plans to and likelihood of leaving their position in an organization (Roodt, 2004). The TIS-6 requires participants to read six items and indicate how well each item describes their feelings use a five-point rating scale ranging from "never" to "always." For example, items included in the TIS-6 are "How often do you look forward to another day at work?" and "How often have you considered leaving your job?" (Roodt, 2004, p. 4).

The TIS-6 was originally an unpublished 15-item scale developed by Roodt (2004). However, reliability studies showed that the six-item scale measures turnover intention as well as the 15-item scale (Bothma & Roodt, 2013). The six-item scale was selected instead of the 15-item scale because of its brevity and internal consistency reliability.

Summary and Conclusions

Voluntary turnover rates (quits) are higher in the U.S. accommodations industry than the national average (BLS, 2019). Within the U.S. accommodations industry, the restaurant and foodservice sector employs 15 million people, so restaurant owners must focus on retaining these employees (DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018; NRA, 2019). High turnover is costly to restaurant owners due to costs associated with lost productivity from unengaged employees and from training new employees (DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018). Additionally, the mental and physical wellness of restaurant employees is harmed when the employees are not engaged in their current roles (Hakanen et al., 2019; Rich et al., 2010).

The theoretical framework of this study is IPT, which addresses beliefs about the malleability of human characteristics (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). This theory uses two classifications, incremental theory, and entity theory, to define differing beliefs. Incremental theory defines the belief that human traits such as attitudes and behaviors can be changed, and entity theory defines the belief that these traits are fixed and cannot be changed (Dweck, 1986). In relation to workplaces, IPT has been applied to organizational mindsets (Canning et al., 2019; Murphy & Dweck, 2010). Organizations that are perceived to have fixed mindsets (entity theory) are those that communicate a belief that the abilities of the personal qualities of their employees cannot be developed over time (Murphy & Dweck, 2010). Organizations perceived to have growth mindsets (incremental theory) are those that communicate that they believe their employees can develop and improve their abilities (Canning et al., 2019). Organizations perceived to

have growth mindsets often offer mentoring and learning opportunities to help their employees develop (Canning et al., 2019). Organizational cultures perceived by employees to be aligned with growth mindsets are associated with high employee engagement, low turnover intent, and higher profits (Canning et al., 2019; Murphy & Dweck, 2010).

Organizations use competency models to define effective job performance by identifying the observable and measurable knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors required for specific roles (Hatala & Hisey, 2011). Competency models can be used to improve employee engagement and reduce turnover intent when they are implemented into an organization's selection, performance, compensation, training, development, and succession planning processes (Campion et al., 2011; Posthuma & Campion, 2008). In 2015, the U.S. Department of Labor published the Food and Beverage Service Competency Model, which was the first comprehensive competency model to be created for the restaurant industry (Mannix & Mills, 2015; NRA, 2015). No peer-reviewed literature was found regarding the implementation of the Food and Beverage Service Competency Model. This study examined if employee engagement and turnover intent were affected after a restaurant organization implemented the Food and Beverage Service Competency Model into its talent management practices.

Highly engaged employees will work toward achieving organizational goals as opposed to working only on aspects of their jobs that benefit their interests (Heslin, 2010; Rich et al., 2010). Within the restaurant industry, engaged employees perform better and provide better customer service when compared to unengaged employees (Watson et al.,

2018). High performance and customer service are positively correlated with high customer satisfaction and increased sales in the restaurant industry, so it is critical to focus on initiatives that will increase employee engagement among restaurant employees (Watson et al., 2018). Restaurant owners also need to focus on decreasing turnover intent among their employees (Omar et al., 2017). Reducing turnover intent has been negatively correlated with an increase in organizational performance for organizations in the restaurant industry (Omar et al., 2017).

There is a gap in the literature regarding the use of competency models and their effect on employee engagement and turnover intent for employees in the restaurant industry. This study sought to add information to that literature gap by using a pretest-posttest quasi-experimental quantitative study to examine if there were effects on turnover intent and employee engagement among restaurant employees before and after a competency model was implemented. The current study also examined if there was a difference in the effects of implementing a competency model between full-time and part-time restaurant employees.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this pretest-posttest quasi-experimental quantitative study was to examine if the implementation of a competency model affected turnover intent and employee engagement for restaurant employees. Employee engagement was measured using three subscales: physical, emotional, and cognitive engagement. Four grouping variables were included in this study to determine if there was a difference in employee engagement or turnover intent for employee type (full- or part-time) or the type of restaurant the employee works for (full-service or fast-casual). Data were collected from employees who work for a restaurant group with six restaurants, two full-service and four fast-casual, located in the Northern Virginia region.

The restaurant group's ownership team informed their employees of the study and asked them to voluntarily participate by completing the JES, TIS-6, and a brief demographics survey. The survey used for this study measured turnover intent and employee engagement data before and after a competency model derived from the U.S. Department of Labor's (2017) Food and Beverage Service Competency Model was implemented. The survey data were collected and analyzed to examine the effects of the implementation. Details about the research design and rationale, methodology, population, sampling, recruitment, data collection, instrumentation, and ethical procedures will be detailed throughout this chapter.

Research Design and Rationale

A pretest-posttest quasi-experimental quantitative design was used to answer the research questions included in this study. This research design was the most appropriate

format to use for this study because the participants were not randomly assigned to each group as is required for a true experimental design (Gribbons & Herman, 1997). The participants for this study were instead assigned to each of the four sample groups based on their work status and the type of restaurant they work in.

The survey method was used to measure turnover intention and employee engagement both before and after a competency model was implemented. The pre- and posttest survey scores were paired, and paired samples *t* tests were conducted to determine if the implementation of the competency model resulted in a difference in turnover intention or employee engagement and if so if the difference was statistically significant. The limitation of this design was that some participants were lost due to turnover or withdrawal from the study between the time the pretest and posttest surveys were administered.

The independent variable that was included in this study was the competency model. The dependent variables that were included in this study were turnover intent and employee engagement.

Methodology

To define the competency model that was used for this study, the ownership team of the restaurant organization that provided data for this study determined which competencies are critical for the employees in their organization. This was done using guidelines provided by the U.S. Department of Labor (2017) surrounding the use of the Food and Beverage Service competency model. Once the competency model was defined, the organization's ownership team outlined a plan for implementing the critical

competencies into their performance management, compensation, training, development, and succession planning processes. Next, the pretest survey was administered to the organization's full- and part-time employees (excluding seasonal and temporary employees), and employee engagement and turnover intent were measured.

After collecting the pretest data, the organization's management team implemented the competency model into its talent management processes (performance management, compensation, training, development, and succession planning). The organization's ownership team trained its managerial staff on the competency model and the resulting changes to the organization's talent management processes. To avoid a conflict of interest involving my role in this study, the organization's managerial staff trained employees on the new competency model and talent management processes. It was estimated that this training process would take no more than 2 months to complete (Fowler, 2018). The posttest was conducted approximately 4 months after the competency model had been implemented to determine if the competency model affected employee engagement and/or turnover intent. Additional details about the methodology that was used to conduct the current study are provided below.

Population

The target population for this study was employees of a restaurant group located in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. The restaurant group that provided data for this study is comprised of two full-service and four fast-casual restaurants and employs an average of 160 full- and part-time employees. Seasonal and temporary

employees were excluded from this study because they were not employed long enough to complete the pre- and posttest surveys.

Sampling and Sampling Procedures

The participants included in this study were divided into four samples: Sample 1 was full-time, full-service, Sample 2 was full-time, fast-casual, Sample 3 was part-time, full-service, and Sample 4 was part-time, fast-casual employees. All the permanent (excluding seasonal and temporary) full- and part-time employees at each of the six restaurants were invited to participate in this study voluntarily. The restaurant group's ownership team informed their employees of the study being conducted and provided employees with the Invitation Letter in Appendix D. The participants of this study did not receive compensation or a reward if they chose to participate in this study.

To have statistical power, 100 participants needed to be surveyed in this pretest posttest study (Faul et al., 2007). An effect size of 0.5 was used, which is considered to be a medium effect size (Faul et al., 2007). An alpha of .05 was used, as well as a power parameter of .8. An equal number of participants were needed for each group (25 participants in each group; Faul et al., 2007). Participants were asked to complete this study until at least 100 pretest and posttest surveys were collected. The restaurant group's ownership team attempted to recruit more than 25 participants in each group to allow the study to have statistical power if participants dropped out of the study between the pre- and posttest.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The restaurant group's ownership team forwarded the Invitation Letter in Appendix D to their employees via email. Anyone who chose to participate in this study did so by using a link to the online survey which was included in the Invitation Letter. The participants were informed that they were being asked to complete the same survey 4 months after they completed the survey the first time. Participants in this study provided informed consent by acknowledging that they read the Informed Consent statement included in the Invitation Letter provided to them. Participants were also informed in the Invitation Letter that they could withdraw from the study at any time. The letter participants received when asked to complete the survey the second time is provided in Appendix E.

Participants completed the survey required for this study using the online survey platform SurveyMonkey. The survey responses were collected by me, and no one in the restaurant group's ownership team had access to the survey data. The survey used in this study asked employees to enter their Employee Identification Numbers so the participant's responses on the pretest and posttest surveys could be identified. I did not have access to the names that accompany the Employee Identification Numbers, and I did not share the numbers with the restaurant group's ownership team to ensure confidentiality.

Instruments

The JES, TIS-6, and a demographic survey were used for this study. The JES instrument was used to measure the dependent variable of employee engagement. The

TIS-6 was used to measure the dependent variable of turnover intent. Last, the demographic questionnaire was used to collect the information needed for the independent variables of employee type (part-time or full-time), restaurant type (full-service or fast-casual), and basic demographic information of the sample.

Job Engagement Scale (JES)

One of the most widely used measures of employee engagement is the JES (Rich et al., 2010). The JES was developed in 2010 by Rich et al. (2010). Permission to use the JES for this study was provided by the authors, as shown in Appendix C. The JES is an 18-item scale requiring respondents to use the following five-point response scale to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each item: 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neither agree nor disagree*, 4 = *agree*, 5 = *strongly agree* (Rich et al., 2010). The score for employee engagement is obtained by summing the scores of the 18 items.

The JES was appropriate to use in the current study because it has been used on many different employee populations both internationally and within the United States (Basit & Chauhan, 2017; Jayanthi et al., 2020; Rich et al., 2010). Additionally, the JES has high internal consistency. A Cronbach's alpha equal to .8 indicates the JES is an acceptable survey measure (Jayanthi et al., 2020). An exploratory factor analysis showed that the JES has good construct validity if it is used as a three-factor instrument, although the scale can also be used as a single-factor instrument (Jayanthi et al., 2020). The three factors included in the JES are physical engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement (Rich et al., 2010).

Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6)

The abbreviated version of Roodt's (2004) TIS-6 has been effectively used to measure turnover intent among many different types of employees (Bothma & Roodt, 2013). The TIS-6 was originally an unpublished 15-item scale developed by Roodt (2004). However, reliability studies showed that the six-item scale measured turnover intention as well as the 15-item scale (Bothma & Roodt, 2013). The six-item scale was selected instead of the 15-item scale because of its brevity and because it measures turnover intent as well as the 15-item scale (Bothma & Roodt, 2013). Permission to use the TIS-6 for this study was provided by the author, as shown in Appendix B. The TIS-6 requires respondents to read six items and indicate how well each item describes their feelings using Osgood's (1964) semantic differential technique of bipolar 5-step response scales defined by two opposites (e.g., 1 = *never* to 5 = *always*). The score for turnover intent is obtained by summing the scores of the six items.

The TIS-6 was appropriate to use for this study because it is a valid, reliable measure of turnover intent among employees in many different industries (Botham & Roodt, 2013). A validation study of the TIS-6 confirmed that the scale has high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha equal to 0.8 (Botham & Roodt, 2013). This is above the recommended cutoff point to estimate internal consistency and reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Additionally, an exploratory factor analysis showed that the TIS-6 has good construct validity if it is used to measure the single factor of turnover intention (Botham & Roodt, 2013).

Demographic Questionnaire

A questionnaire was used to collect basic demographic information of the participants. Participants in this study were asked to provide the following demographic data: age, sex, employee type (part-time or full-time), restaurant type (fast-casual or full-service), job type (front of house, back of house, shift lead, or general manager), and tenure with the organization. The full Demographics Questionnaire is provided in Appendix A. Employee type and restaurant type were necessary for this study because that information was used to identify which grouping variable the participant is part of. The responses to the other demographic data were not used to address the research questions included in this study, but the data was used to identify the demographics of the participants in this study. The demographic items were used as descriptive statistics to detail the participant population. The demographic items are important to include in this study because they provided information about whether there were differences in the employee populations at each type of restaurant, which could affect the study results.

Data Analysis Plan

The independent variable included in this study was the competency model. The dependent variables included in this study were employee engagement and turnover intent. Paired samples *t* tests were conducted using SPSS software to determine if there was an existing relationship between employee engagement and turnover intent before the competency model implementation took place.

RQ1: Is there a statistically significant difference in employee engagement for full-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the Job Engagement Scale (JES), after the implementation of a competency model?

$H_0$1: There is no statistically significant difference in employee engagement for full-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the JES, after the implementation of a competency model.

H_a1: There is a statistically significant difference in employee engagement for full-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the JES, after the implementation of a competency model.

RQ2: Is there a statistically significant difference in turnover intent for full-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6), after the implementation of a competency model?

$H_0$2: There is no statistically significant difference in turnover intent for full-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model.

H_a2: There is a statistically significant difference in turnover intent for full-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model.

RQ3: Is there a statistically significant difference in employee engagement for full-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the JES, after the implementation of a competency model?

$H_0$3: There is no statistically significant difference in employee engagement for full-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the JES, after the implementation of a competency model.

H_a3: There is a statistically significant difference in employee engagement for full-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the JES, after the implementation of a competency model.

RQ4: Is there a statistically significant difference in turnover intent for full-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model?

$H_0 4$: There is no statistically significant difference in turnover intent for full-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model.

$H_a 4$: There is a statistically significant difference in turnover intent for full-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model.

RQ5: Is there a statistically significant difference in employee engagement for part-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the JES, after the implementation of a competency model?

$H_0 5$: There is no statistically significant difference in employee engagement for part-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the JES, after the implementation of a competency model.

$H_a 5$: There is a statistically significant difference in employee engagement for part-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the JES, after the implementation of a competency model.

RQ6: Is there a statistically significant difference in turnover intent for part-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model?

$H_0$6: There is no statistically significant difference in turnover intent for part-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model.

H_a6: There is a statistically significant difference in turnover intent for part-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model.

RQ7: Is there a statistically significant difference in employee engagement for part-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the JES, after the implementation of a competency model?

$H_0$7: There is no statistically significant difference in employee engagement for part-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the JES, after the implementation of a competency model.

H_a7: There is a statistically significant difference in employee engagement for part-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the JES, after the implementation of a competency model.

RQ8: Is there a statistically significant difference in turnover intent for part-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model?

$H_0$8: There is no statistically significant difference in turnover intent for part-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model.

H_a8: There is a statistically significant difference in turnover intent for part-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model.

RQ9: Is there a statistically significant correlation between turnover intent and employee engagement for part-time employees before the implementation of a competency model?

$H_0$9: There is no statistically significant correlation between turnover intent and employee engagement for part-time employees at a fast-casual or full-service restaurant before the implementation of a competency model.

H_a9: There is a statistically significant correlation between turnover intent and employee engagement for part-time employees at a fast-casual or full-service restaurant before the implementation of a competency model.

RQ10: Is there a statistically significant correlation between turnover intent and employee engagement for full-time employees before the implementation of a competency model?

$H_0$10: There is no statistically significant correlation between turnover intent and employee engagement for full-time employees at a fast-casual or full-service restaurant before the implementation of a competency model.

H_a10: There is a statistically significant correlation between turnover intent and employee engagement for full-time employees at a fast-casual or full-service restaurant before the implementation of a competency model.

Ethical Procedures

Details about the measures that were taken to protect the participants of this study were reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board before participants were recruited. An Informed Consent statement was provided to all prospective participants of this study as part of the Invitation Letter (Appendix D and E). The Invitation Letter outlined how the information they provided is being kept confidential.

One potential ethical concern was that those invited to participate in this study may have felt forced to participate because their employer was requesting participation. This risk was being mitigated by the Informed Consent Form, which clarified the voluntary nature of this study. Additionally, the restaurant group's ownership team was instructed to inform employees that their participation in this study was voluntary. Anyone who participated in this study was not rewarded or reprimanded.

Summary

One purpose of this proposed study was to add information to the literature related to the effectiveness of competency models for organizations in the restaurant industry. This gap was addressed by examining turnover intention and employee engagement among employees at a restaurant group before and after a competency model was implemented. This study used a pretest-posttest quasi-experimental quantitative research design.

Data were collected from employees who work for a restaurant group with six restaurants located in the Northern Virginia region. The restaurant group's ownership team informed their employees of the study and asked them to voluntarily participate by completing a survey. The surveys used for this study measured turnover intent and employee engagement data before and after a competency model that includes leadership and technical competencies was implemented. The survey data were collected and analyzed to examine the effects of the implementation. The results of this study are presented in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this pretest-posttest quasi-experimental quantitative study was to examine if the implementation of a competency model affected turnover intent and employee engagement for restaurant employees. Paired samples *t* tests were conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between employee engagement and turnover intent scores after the competency model was implemented.

This study included the following research questions: RQ1: Is there a statistically significant difference in employee engagement for full-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the JES, after the implementation of a competency model? RQ2: Is there a statistically significant difference in turnover intent for full-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model? RQ3: Is there a statistically significant difference in employee engagement for full-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the JES, after the implementation of a competency model? RQ4: Is there a statistically significant difference in turnover intent for full-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model? RQ5: Is there a statistically significant difference in employee engagement for part-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the JES, after the implementation of a competency model? RQ6: Is there a statistically significant difference in turnover intent for part-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model? RQ7: Is there a statistically significant difference in employee engagement for part-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the JES,

after the implementation of a competency model? RQ8: Is there a statistically significant difference in turnover intent for part-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model?

This study also included research questions regarding the relationship between turnover intent and employee engagement: RQ9: Is there a statistically significant correlation between turnover intent and employee engagement for part-time employees before the implementation of a competency model? RQ10: Is there a statistically significant correlation between turnover intent and employee engagement for full-time employees before the implementation of a competency model?

The hypotheses for this study included the null hypotheses that there was not a statistically significant difference between the variables included in the research questions before the implementation of a competency model. The alternative hypothesis was that there is a statistically significant difference between the variables included in each research question after the implementation of a competency model. The research questions included in this study were answered below through an explanation of data collection procedures and methodology, data analysis and results, and a summary of the findings.

Data Collection

Data collection for the Time 1 (pretest) survey began October 2, 2020 and concluded October 25, 2020. The owners of the restaurant group distributed the Time 1 survey link using the email provided in Appendix D. Data collections for the Time 2 (posttest) survey began February 15, 2021 and concluded March 10, 2021. The owners of

the restaurant group distributed the Time 2 survey link using the email provided in Appendix E. The survey responses were collected using the SurveyMonkey platform.

After the Time 1 survey opened on October 2, 2020, the ownership team of the restaurant organization that provided data for this study determined which competencies are critical for each role group in their organization (Back of House, Front of House, Shift Lead, and General Manager). The competencies were identified using guidelines provided by the U.S. Department of Labor (2017) detailing how to use the Food and Beverage Service competency model.

After defining the competency model, the organization's ownership team created a plan to implement the critical competencies into their talent management processes (performance management, compensation, training, development, and succession planning). The plan was implemented on October 26, 2020, after the pretest data were collected. The organization's ownership team started the implementation process by training its managerial staff on the competency model and the resulting changes to the organization's talent management processes. Data collection for the posttest survey began February 15, 2021, which allowed enough time to pass for all employees in the organization to experience the changes associated with the competency model.

Description of the Sample

At the conclusion of the Time 1 collection period, 134 participants started the survey and indicated they had read the informed consent and parameters of the study. Fifteen participants had missing data that prevented employee engagement and turnover intent scores from being calculated and sample groups from being assigned, which

changed the final *N* to 119 valid responses from the Time 1 survey. At the conclusion of the Time 2 collection period, 110 participants started the survey and indicated they had read the informed consent and parameters of the study. Five participants had missing data that prevented employee engagement and turnover intent scores from being calculated or sample groups from being assigned. Two participants had to be removed from the study because they did not complete both the Time 1 and Time 2 surveys, which changed the final *N* to 103 valid responses. After eliminating responses with missing data and incomplete Time 1 and Time 2 responses, 64.4% of the organization's 160 nonseasonal employees were available for analysis. As detailed in Chapter 3, the target sample size was at least 100 participants.

Demographic characteristics of the 103 participants are detailed in Table 1. More women (55, 53.4%) than men (48, 46.6%) participated in this study. This is consistent with the demographics of the restaurant industry in the United States which is 51% female (BLS, 2021). The majority of participants were ages 18 to 29 (87, 84.5%). The median age of restaurant employees in the United States is 29.6 years (BLS, 2021), so the participants in this study were younger on average than the restaurant employees in the United States. A higher number of participants were part-time employees (58, 56.3%) than full-time (45, 43.7%). Participants in each of the four job types (Front of House, Back of House, Shift Lead, and General Manager) were all represented in this sample, with the most in the Front of House (43, 41.7%) job group. The majority of participants in this study (54, 52.4%) had worked for the restaurant group longer than 2 years. The average tenure of restaurant employees in the United States is 2 years (BLS, 2020).

Table 1

*Demographic Characteristics of Participants (*N = *103)*

Characteristic	*n*	%
Sex		
Male	48	46.6
Female	55	53.4
Other	0	0.0
Age range		
18-23	44	42.7
24-29	43	41.8
30-35	11	10.7
36-41	3	2.9
42-47	2	1.9
48-53	0	0.0
54+	0	0.0
Employee type		
Part-time (1-30 hours worked/week)	58	56.3
Full-time (30.1 hours or more worked/week)	45	43.7
Restaurant type		
Fast-casual	54	52.4
Full-service	49	47.6
Job type		
Front of house (Host, Server, Cashier, or Bartender)	43	41.7
Back of house (Cook or Chef)	29	28.2
Shift lead	25	24.3
General manager	6	5.8
Tenure with the organization		
Less than 6 months	5	4.9
6 months to 1 year	18	17.5
1-2 years	26	25.2
More than 2 years	54	52.4

The participants in this study were divided into four samples: Sample 1 was full-time employees at a full-service restaurant, Sample 2 was full-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, Sample 3 was part-time employees at a full-service restaurant, and Sample 4 was part-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant. The number of participants in each sample group is provided in Table 2.

Table 2

*Participants in Sample Groups (*N *= 103)*

Sample group	*n*	%
1: Full-time, full-service	15	14.6
2: Full-time, fast-casual	30	29.1
3: Part-time, full-service	34	33.0
4: Part-time, fast-casual	24	23.3

Results

The research questions included in this study asked if there is a statistically significant difference in the pre- and posttest turnover intent or employee engagement scores for each sample group. The TIS-6 was used to measure turnover intent. The TIS-6 uses six survey items measured with a 5-point scale where 1 equals “never” and 5 equals “always” (Roodt, 2004). Responses to each item are added to get a total score on the TIS-6. The minimum possible score on the TIS-6 is 6, the midpoint is 18, and the maximum score is 30. A total score below 18 indicates the participant desires to stay in their current position in an organization, and a total score above 18 indicates a participant desires to leave their current position in an organization.

The JES was used to measure employee engagement. The JES uses 18 survey items measured with a 5-point Likert scale where 1 equals “strongly disagree”, 2 equals “disagree”, 3 equals “neither agree nor disagree”, 4 equals “agree”, and 5 equals “strongly agree” (Rich et al., 2010). Responses to each item are added to get a total score on the JES. The minimum score on the JES is 18, the midpoint is 54, and the maximum score is 90.

Data from the TIS-6 and JES are ordinal but were treated as interval for this study. Although the difference between Likert scale levels does not meet the requirement for equal intervals between choices, the instruments used in this study had scores assigned to each level, making the data in this study interval for testing purposes (Faul et al., 2007). The findings by hypothesis are reported below.

Research Hypothesis Set 1 and 2

$H_0$1: There is no statistically significant difference in employee engagement for full-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the JES, after the implementation of a competency model.

H_a1: There is a statistically significant difference in employee engagement for full-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the JES, after the implementation of a competency model.

$H_0$2: There is no statistically significant difference in turnover intent for full-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model.

H_a2: There is a statistically significant difference in turnover intent for full-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model.

The data set was analyzed through SPSS using a paired samples *t* test. The sample was full-time employees at a full-service restaurant. The variable for hypothesis set 1 was employee engagement. Employee engagement was measured at two separate times: before the competency model was implemented and after the competency model was

implemented. The mean prior to implementing the competency model, as shown in Table 3, was 44.4. The mean after the competency model implementation was 64.13, indicating a mean difference of 19.733. The standard deviation, calculated by SPSS to indicate individual differences in employee engagement scores before and after the competency model implementation, is shown in Table 5 as 14.124. The *t* score was 5.411 with a *p* value < .001. There was a significant difference in the score before the implementation (*M* = 44.4, *SD* = 11.205) and the scores after the implementation (*M* = 64.13, *SD* = 14.352); *t*(14) = 5.411, *p* = .000. The competency model implementation had a large effect on employee engagement, Cohen's *d* = 1.397, 95% CI [2.105, 0.665]. Upon evaluation of the employee engagement score *t* test, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was supported.

The variable for hypothesis set 2 was turnover intent. Turnover intent was measured at two separate times: before the competency model was implemented and after the competency model was implemented. The mean prior to implementing the competency model, as shown in Table 3, was 15.80. The mean after the competency model implementation was 13.40, indicating a mean difference of 2.400. The standard deviation, calculated by SPSS to indicate individual differences in turnover intent scores before and after the competency model implementation, is shown in Table 5 as 4.867. The *t* score was 1.910 with a *p* value .077. There was not a significant difference in the score before the implementation (*M* = 15.80, *SD* = 6.073) and the scores after the implementation (*M* = 13.40, *SD* = 4.256); *t*(14) = 1.910, *p* = .077. The competency model implementation had a small effect on turnover intent, Cohen's *d* = 0.493, 95% CI [0.052,

1.023]. Upon evaluation of the turnover intent score *t* test, the null hypothesis was not rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was not supported.

Table 3

Results for Employee Engagement and Turnover Intent Scores Before and After Competency Model Implementation – Full-Time Employees, Full-Service Restaurant

	Mean	*N*	*SD*	Standard Error Mean
T1 Employee engagement	44.40	15	11.205	2.893
T2 Employee engagement	64.13	15	14.352	3.706
T1 Turnover intent	15.80	15	6.073	1.568
T2 Turnover intent	13.40	15	4.256	1.099

Table 4

Paired Samples Correlations of Employee Engagement and Turnover Intent Scores Before and After Competency Model Implementation – Full-Time Employees, Full-Service Restaurant

	N	Correlation	Significance
T1 & T2 Employee engagement scores	15	.411	.129
T1 & T2 Turnover intent scores	15	.606	.017

Table 5

Paired Samples Test Results for Employee Engagement and Turnover Intent – Full-Time Employees, Full-Service Restaurant

	Mean	*SD*	Std. Error Mean	95% *CI* of the Difference Lower	95% *CI* of the Difference Upper	*T*	Significance (2-tailed)
T1 - T2 Employee engagement scores	19.733	14.124	3.647	27.555	11.912	5.411	.000
T1 – T2 Turnover intent scores	2.400	4.867	1.257	-.295	5.095	1.910	.077

Note. *SD* = Standard Deviation, *CI* = Confidence Interval.

Research Hypothesis Set 3 and 4

H_{03}: There is no statistically significant difference in employee engagement for full-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the JES, after the implementation of a competency model.

H_{a3}: There is a statistically significant difference in employee engagement for full-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the JES, after the implementation of a competency model.

H_{04}: There is no statistically significant difference in turnover intent for full-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model.

H_{a4}: There is a statistically significant difference in turnover intent for full-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model.

The data set was analyzed through SPSS using a paired samples *t* test. The sample was full-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant. The variable for hypothesis set 3 was employee engagement. Employee engagement was measured at two separate times: before the competency model was implemented and after the competency model was implemented. The mean prior to implementing the competency model, as shown in Table 6 below, was 45.83. The mean after the competency model implementation was 61.17, indicating a mean difference of 15.333. The standard deviation, calculated by SPSS to indicate individual differences in employee engagement scores before and after the competency model implementation, is shown in Table 8 as 14.155. The *t* score was 5.933 with a *p* value < .001. There was a significant difference in the score before the implementation (M = 45.83, SD = 15.785) and the scores after the implementation (M = 61.17, SD = 17.213); $t(29) = 5.933$, $p = .000$. The competency model implementation had a large effect on employee engagement, Cohen's d = 1.083, 95% CI [1.530, 0.624]. Upon evaluation of the employee engagement score *t* test, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was supported.

The variable for hypothesis set 4 was turnover intent. Turnover intent was measured at two separate times: before the competency model was implemented and after the competency model was implemented. The mean prior to implementing the competency model, as shown in Table 6 below, was 17.43. The mean after the competency model implementation was 14.77, indicating a mean difference of 2.667. The standard deviation, calculated by SPSS to indicate individual differences in turnover intent scores before and after the competency model implementation, is shown in Table 8

as 3.346. The *t* score was 4.365 with a *p* value .000. There was a significant difference in the score before the implementation (M = 17.43, SD = 5.211) and the scores after the implementation (M = 14.77, SD = 4.500); $t(29) = 4.365$, $p = .000$. The competency model implementation had a medium effect on turnover intent, Cohen's d = 0.797, 95% CI [0.380, 1.204]. Upon evaluation of the turnover intent score *t* test, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was supported.

Table 6

Results for Employee Engagement and Turnover Intent Scores Before and After Competency Model Implementation – Full-Time Employees, Fast-Casual Restaurant

	Mean	*N*	*SD*	Standard Error Mean
T1 Employee engagement	45.83	30	15.785	2.882
T2 Employee engagement	61.17	30	17.213	3.143
T1 Turnover intent	17.43	30	5.211	.951
T2 Turnover intent	14.77	30	4.500	.822

Table 7

Paired Samples Correlations of Employee Engagement and Turnover Intent Scores Before and After Competency Model Implementation – Full-Time Employees, Fast-Casual Restaurant

	N	Correlation	Significance
T1 & T2 Employee engagement scores	30	.635	.000
T1 & T2 Turnover intent scores	30	.772	.000

Table 8

Paired Samples Test Results for Employee Engagement and Turnover Intent – Full-Time Employees, Fast-Casual Restaurant

	Mean	*SD*	Std. Error Mean	95% *CI* of the Difference Lower	95% *CI* of the Difference Upper	*T*	Significance (2-tailed)
T1 - T2 Employee engagement scores	15.333	14.155	2.584	20.619	10.048	5.933	.000
T1 – T2 Turnover intent scores	2.667	3.346	.611	1.417	3.916	4.365	.000

Note. *SD* = Standard Deviation, *CI* = Confidence Interval.

Research Hypothesis Set 5 and 6

H_{05}: There is no statistically significant difference in employee engagement for part-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the JES, after the implementation of a competency model.

H_{a5}: There is a statistically significant difference in employee engagement for part-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the JES, after the implementation of a competency model.

H_{06}: There is no statistically significant difference in turnover intent for part-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model.

H_{a6}: There is a statistically significant difference in turnover intent for part-time employees at a full-service restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model.

The data set was analyzed through SPSS using a paired samples *t* test. The sample was part-time employees at a full-service restaurant. The variable for hypothesis set 5 was employee engagement. Employee engagement was measured at two separate times: before the competency model was implemented and after the competency model was implemented. The mean prior to implementing the competency model, as shown in Table 9 below, was 46.62. The mean after the competency model implementation was 62.41, indicating a mean difference of 15.794. The standard deviation, calculated by SPSS to indicate individual differences in employee engagement scores before and after the competency model implementation, is shown in Table 11 as 11.625. The *t* score was 7.922 with a *p* value < .001. There was a significant difference in the score before the implementation (M = 46.62, SD = 16.386) and the scores after the implementation (M = 62.41, SD = 13.765); $t(33) = 7.922$, $p = .000$. The competency model implementation had a large effect on employee engagement, Cohen's d = 1.359, 95% CI [1.822, 0.885]. Upon evaluation of the employee engagement score *t* test, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was supported.

The variable for hypothesis set 6 was turnover intent. Turnover intent was measured at two separate times: before the competency model was implemented and after the competency model was implemented. The mean prior to implementing the competency model, as shown in Table 9 below, was 17.00. The mean after the competency model implementation was 13.12, indicating a mean difference of 3.882. The standard deviation, calculated by SPSS to indicate individual differences in turnover intent scores before and after the competency model implementation, is shown in Table

11 as 4.277. The *t* score was 5.293 with a *p* value .000. There was a significant difference in the score before the implementation (M = 17.00, SD = 4.887) and the scores after the implementation (M = 13.12, SD = 4.212); $t(33) = 5.293$, $p = .000$. The competency model implementation had a large effect on turnover intent, Cohen's d = 0.908, 95% CI [0.502, 1.304]. Upon evaluation of the turnover intent score *t* test, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was supported.

Table 9

Results for Employee Engagement and Turnover Intent Scores Before and After Competency Model Implementation – Part-Time Employees, Full-Service Restaurant

	Mean	*N*	*SD*	Standard Error Mean
T1 Employee engagement	46.62	34	16.386	2.810
T2 Employee engagement	62.41	34	13.765	2.361
T1 Turnover intent	17.00	34	4.887	.838
T2 Turnover intent	13.12	34	4.212	.722

Table 10

Paired Samples Correlations of Employee Engagement and Turnover Intent Scores Before and After Competency Model Implementation – Part-Time Employees, Full-Service Restaurant

	N	Correlation	Significance
T1 & T2 Employee engagement scores	34	.716	.000
T1 & T2 Turnover intent scores	34	.567	.000

Table 11

Paired Samples Test Results for Employee Engagement and Turnover Intent – Part-Time Employees, Full-Service Restaurant

	Mean	*SD*	Std. Error Mean	95% *CI* of the Difference Lower	95% *CI* of the Difference Upper	*T*	Significance (2-tailed)
T1 - T2 Employee engagement scores	15.794	11.625	1.994	19.850	11.738	7.922	.000
T1 – T2 Turnover intent scores	3.882	4.277	.733	2.390	5.375	5.293	.000

Note. *SD* = Standard Deviation, *CI* = Confidence Interval.

Research Hypothesis Set 7 and 8

H_{07}: There is no statistically significant difference in employee engagement for part-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the JES, after the implementation of a competency model.

H_{a7}: There is a statistically significant difference in employee engagement for part-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the JES, after the implementation of a competency model.

H_{08}: There is no statistically significant difference in turnover intent for part-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model.

H_{a8}: There is a statistically significant difference in turnover intent for part-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant, as measured by the TIS-6, after the implementation of a competency model.

The data set was analyzed through SPSS using a paired samples *t* test. The sample was part-time employees at a fast-casual restaurant. The variable for hypothesis set 7 was employee engagement. Employee engagement was measured at two separate times: before the competency model was implemented and after the competency model was implemented. The mean prior to implementing the competency model, as shown in Table 12 below, was 45.71. The mean after the competency model implementation was 66.46, indicating a mean difference of 20.750. The standard deviation, calculated by SPSS to indicate individual differences in employee engagement scores before and after the competency model implementation, is shown in Table 14 as 15.002. The *t* score was

6.776 with a *p* value < .001. There was a significant difference in the score before the implementation (*M* = 45.71, *SD* = 17.005) and the scores after the implementation (*M* = 66.46, *SD* = 16.519); *t*(23) = 6.776, *p* = .000. The competency model implementation had a large effect on employee engagement, Cohen's *d* = 1.383, 95% CI [1.939, 0.812]. Upon evaluation of the employee engagement score *t* test, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was supported.

The variable for hypothesis set 8 was turnover intent. Turnover intent was measured at two separate times: before the competency model was implemented and after the competency model was implemented. The mean prior to implementing the competency model, as shown in Table 12 below, was 17.21. The mean after the competency model implementation was 13.67, indicating a mean difference of 3.542. The standard deviation, calculated by SPSS to indicate individual differences in turnover intent scores before and after the competency model implementation, is shown in Table 14 as 6.100. The *t* score was 2.844 with a *p* value .009. There was a significant difference in the score before the implementation (*M* = 17.21, *SD* = 4.908) and the scores after the implementation (*M* = 13.67, *SD* = 5.164); *t*(23) = 2.844, *p* = .009. The competency model implementation had a medium effect on turnover intent, Cohen's *d* = 0.581, 95% CI [0.142, 1.009]. Upon evaluation of the turnover intent score *t* test, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was supported.

Table 12

Results for Employee Engagement and Turnover Intent Scores Before and After Competency Model Implementation – Part-Time Employees, Fast-Casual Restaurant

	Mean	*N*	*SD*	Standard Error Mean
T1 Employee engagement	45.71	24	17.005	3.471
T2 Employee engagement	66.46	24	16.519	3.372
T1 Turnover intent	17.21	24	4.908	1.002
T2 Turnover intent	13.67	24	5.164	1.054

Table 13

Paired Samples Correlations of Employee Engagement and Turnover Intent Scores Before and After Competency Model Implementation – Part-Time Employees, Fast-Casual Restaurant

	N	Correlation	Significance
T1 & T2 Employee engagement scores	24	.600	.002
T1 & T2 Turnover intent scores	24	.267	.207

Table 14

Paired Samples Test Results for Employee Engagement and Turnover Intent – Part-Time Employees, Fast-Casual Restaurant

	Mean	*SD*	Std. Error Mean	95% *CI* of the Difference Lower	95% *CI* of the Difference Upper	*T*	Significance (2-tailed)
T1 - T2 Employee engagement scores	20.750	15.002	3.062	27.085	14.415	6.776	.000
T1 – T2 Turnover intent scores	3.542	6.100	1.245	.966	6.118	2.844	.009

Note. *SD* = Standard Deviation, *CI* = Confidence Interval.

Research Hypothesis Set 9 and 10

H_{09}: There is no statistically significant correlation between turnover intent and employee engagement for part-time employees at a fast-casual or full-service restaurant before the implementation of a competency model.

H_{a9}: There is a statistically significant correlation between turnover intent and employee engagement for part-time employees at a fast-casual or full-service restaurant before the implementation of a competency model.

H_{010}: There is no statistically significant correlation between turnover intent and employee engagement for full-time employees at a fast-casual or full-service restaurant before the implementation of a competency model.

H_{a10}: There is a statistically significant correlation between turnover intent and employee engagement for full-time employees at a fast-casual or full-service restaurant before the implementation of a competency model.

The data set was analyzed through SPSS using a correlation analysis. The sample for hypothesis set 9 was part-time employees. The first variable for hypothesis set 9 was turnover intent (measured before the competency model was implemented), and the second variable was employee engagement (measured before the competency model was implemented). As shown in Table 16, there was a weak positive correlation (.075) for part-time employees between turnover intent and employee engagement before the competency model was implemented. Upon evaluation of the part-time employee score results, the null hypothesis was not rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was not supported.

The data set was analyzed through SPSS using a correlation analysis. The sample for hypothesis set 10 was full-time employees. The first variable for hypothesis set 10 was turnover intent (measured before the competency model was implemented), and the second variable was employee engagement (measured before the competency model was implemented). As shown in Table 16 below, there was a negative correlation (-.475) for full-time employees between turnover intent and employee engagement before the competency model was implemented. Upon evaluation of the full-time employee score results, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was supported.

Table 15

Results for Employee Engagement and Turnover Intent Scores Before Competency Model Implementation – Part-Time and Full-Time Employees

	Mean	*N*	*SD*	Standard Error Mean
PT Turnover intent	17.09	58	4.853	.637
PT Employee engagement	46.24	58	16.502	2.167
FT Turnover intent	16.89	45	5.499	.820
FT Employee engagement	45.36	45	14.305	2.133

Table 16

Paired Samples Correlations of Employee Engagement and Turnover Intent Scores Before Competency Model Implementation – Part-Time and Full-Time Employees

	N	Correlation	Significance
PT Turnover intent & employee engagement scores	58	.075	.576
FT Turnover intent & employee engagement scores	45	-.475	.001

Table 17

Paired Samples Test Results for Employee Engagement and Turnover Intent Before Competency Model Implementation – Part-Time and Full-Time Employees

	Mean	*SD*	Std. Error Mean	95% *CI* of the Difference Lower	95% *CI* of the Difference Upper	*T*	Significance (2-tailed)
PT Turnover intent - employee engagement scores	29.155	16.849	2.212	33.585	24.725	13.178	.000
FT Turnover intent - employee engagement scores	28.467	17.597	2.623	33.753	23.180	10.852	.000

Note. *SD* = Standard Deviation, *CI* = Confidence Interval.

Summary

The competency model implementation had a statistically significant effect on employee engagement and turnover intent scores for all sample groups, except for turnover intent scores for full-time employees at a full-service restaurant. By implementing the competency model, the restaurant group desired for mean employee engagement scores to increase and mean turnover intent scores to decrease. These results occurred for all four sample groups. The conclusions and recommendations of this study are presented in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The purpose of this pretest-posttest quasi-experimental quantitative study was to examine if the implementation of a competency model affected employee engagement or turnover intent for restaurant employees. Data were collected from employees who work for a restaurant group with six restaurants located in the Northern Virginia region. The restaurant group's ownership team informed their employees of the study and asked them to voluntarily participate by completing a survey. The survey used for this study measured turnover intent and employee engagement before and after a competency model that included leadership and technical competencies was implemented.

This study was conducted to address a gap in the literature regarding the use of competency models in the restaurant industry. The null hypotheses included in this study were that there was not a statistically significant difference in employee engagement or turnover intent scores before and after the implementation of a competency model. Paired *t*-test analyses were used to reject or not reject the null hypotheses included in this study. The competency model implementation had a statistically significant effect on employee engagement and turnover intent scores for all sample groups, apart from turnover intent scores for full-time employees at a full-service restaurant. By implementing the competency model, the restaurant group desired for mean employee engagement scores to increase and mean turnover intent scores to decrease. These results occurred for all four sample groups.

The results of this study are consistent with other research related to IPT and competency models. For example, Canning et al. (2019) and O'Reilly et al. (2014) used

IPT as a framework for developing implementations that improved employee engagement and reduced turnover. The current study also used IPT as a framework for developing the competency model that was implemented to improve employee engagement and decrease turnover intent. Additionally, Fowler (2018) described competency models as an effective way of improving employee engagement because they provide employees with details about the organization's objectives. Derro and Williams (2009) found that competency models that include both leadership and technical competencies can be used to reduce turnover intent. In the current study, employee engagement improved, and turnover intent decreased after a competency model was implemented. The results of the current study support the findings of Fowler (2018) and Derro and Williams (2009).

Interpretation of the Findings

The percentage of quits (voluntary separations initiated by an employee) are higher in the accommodations industry than the average turnover rate in the United States (BLS, 2019). Referencing the high cost of turnover, business owners have stated employee retention is their biggest human resource apprehension (DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018). Restaurant owners lose thousands of dollars per employee each year due to the costs associated with high turnover and low engagement among restaurant employees (Brain, 2019; DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018; DiPietro & McLeod, 2011).

The theoretical framework used in this study was IPT. This theory was used to develop methods for improving employee engagement and turnover intent scores. Dweck et al. (1995) defined IPT as a theoretical framework that addresses beliefs about the malleability of human characteristics (e.g., personality, ability, intelligence, and moral

character). This theory includes two different types of beliefs on whether human characteristics can be changed: incremental theory and entity theory. Incremental theory states that human traits such as attitudes and behaviors can be changed, while entity theory states that these traits are fixed and cannot be changed (Dweck, 1986).

Other researchers have applied IPT to design interventions used to change behaviors and performance (Heslin et al., 2005; Katz & O'Malley, 2016), which made it an appropriate theoretical framework to inform the competency model that was used in this study. The term "mindset" is often used to describe IPT in the workplace (Dweck, 2006). Specifically, entity theory is described as a fixed mindset, and incremental theory is described as a growth mindset when applying IPT to employees and organizations (Caniels et al., 2018). Organizational cultures that are perceived to have a growth mindset are associated with higher employee engagement, lower turnover intent, and higher profits than organizations with cultures perceived to have a fixed mindset (Canning et al., 2019; Murphy & Dweck, 2010). Organizations perceived to have growth mindsets are those that communicate the belief that employees can develop and improve their abilities (Canning et al., 2019), and competency models provide employees with the tools they need to develop and improve job-related abilities (Fowler, 2018; Hatala & Hisey, 2011).

Many professional industries have used integrated talent management processes to reduce turnover intent, improve employee engagement, and thus improve organizational performance (Omar et al., 2017). For example, competency models have been used to effectively provide employees with leadership skills (Ravichandran & Mishra, 2018). However, leading practices in talent management have not been

implemented in most organizations in the restaurant industry (Mjongwana & Kamala, 2018). Current research results indicate that restaurant employees are intrinsically motivated, so programs focused on motivating employees in this industry should focus on intrinsic characteristics (Harris et al., 2017; Watson et al., 2018). The literature examined as part of this study indicated that competency models that are integrated into an organization's talent management processes can be used to improve employee engagement and reduce turnover intent (Omar et al., 2017; Ravichandran & Mishra, 2018). The findings in this study are consistent with the existing literature. In this study, a competency model was implemented to increase employee engagement scores and decrease turnover intent scores for employees of an organization in the restaurant industry. Those results were achieved, and this study extends the existing knowledge surrounding the use of IPT and competency models concerning employee engagement and turnover intent in organizations.

The research questions explored in this study were used to address whether employees' devotion to their work and desire to change jobs was different after changes were made to an organization's training and retention processes. More specifically, the questions addressed whether scores for employee engagement and turnover intent significantly change for four sample groups after aspects of the Food and Beverage Service competency model (U.S. Department of Labor, 2017) were implemented. Employee engagement scores significantly increased for all four sample groups, which was the intended outcome. Turnover intent scores decreased for all four sample groups, which was the intended outcome. For one group, full-time employees in a full-service

restaurant, the decrease in turnover intent scores was not statistically significant. However, there were only 15 participants in the full-time employee, full-service restaurant sample group, and 25 participants were needed in this sample group to have statistical power (Faul, 2007). It is recommended that this study, particularly with this group, is replicated with more participants to ensure appropriate statistical power and thoroughly address this.

The relationship between employee engagement and turnover intent scores was also examined as part of this study. The pretest data showed a weak positive correlation (.075) between turnover intent and employee engagement for part-time employees before the competency model was implemented, which was not unexpected. It is possible that before the competency model was implemented, part-time employees had low engagement, but also had low turnover intent because an abundance of restaurant jobs were not available when the pretest data were collected (Baek et al., 2020). For full-time employees, there was a negative correlation (-.475) between turnover intent and employee engagement before the competency model was implemented, which appears to be normal for this group, particularly during a pandemic (Baek et al., 2020).

It is also possible that full-time employees had low turnover intent before the competency model was implemented because of factors related to the specific organization that provided data for this study. The organization that provided data for this study laid off employees in 2020, and most of the laid-off employees had worked full-time. However, the remaining full-time employees that participated in this study were informed that their jobs would not be eliminated. This could explain why full-time

employees had high employee engagement scores and low turnover intent scores when they completed the pretest survey.

Limitations of the Study

A limitation of this study was that all the participants came from the same organization and geographic location. However, two different types of restaurants (full-service and fast-casual) were included in the study, as well as full- and part-time employees. This variation helped to make the study more generalizable than if only one restaurant and employee type had been examined.

Before this study was implemented, one anticipated barrier to the success of the study was that the restaurant group's ownership team may not take the steps needed to successfully implement the competency model. Implementing a competency model that was integrated into talent management processes required buy-in and commitment from the restaurant group's ownership team. The restaurant group's ownership team was very dedicated to this initiative, and they spent the time and effort needed to identify competencies critical to each position, develop an implementation plan, and effectively communicate the competency model to their employees.

This study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced many restaurants to lay off employees. The restaurant group that participated in this study closed its six restaurants from March 16, 2020 through May 3, 2020. During that time, all the employees in the restaurant group were laid off. The restaurant group was able to reopen all six restaurants on May 4, 2020, and they rehired 160 of their original 250 employees. After reopening, the restaurant group that provided data for this study

changed the way their employees interact with customers, the way their food is made, and the operations of their restaurants after reopening. However, the data collection for this study did not begin until October 2, 2020, so the changes made due to the COVID-19 pandemic should not have affected the results of this study. The pretest and posttest data used in this study were both collected during the COVID-19 pandemic, which improves the validity and generalizability of the results of this study.

Recommendations

One purpose of this study was to address the gap in the literature surrounding the use of IPT and competency models for organizations in the restaurant industry. It is recommended that this study is replicated with other restaurant organizations that have different geographical locations. It is also recommended that this study is replicated on a larger scale with more than one restaurant group and ownership team to identify whether the results of this study are generalizable.

For a competency model to effect employee engagement and turnover intent, the competency model must be integrated into an organization's talent management processes (Fowler, 2018; Ravichandran & Mishra, 2018). Therefore, the competency model used in this study may have increased employee engagement scores and decreased turnover intent scores because it was integrated into the talent management processes of the organization that provided data for this study. Additionally, gaining buy-in and involvement from the executive leaders, people managers, and employees within an organization is critical to successfully designing and implementing a competency model (Campion et al., 2011). Executive leaders need to be educated about the value of

competency models, as well as how they can be used to prevent turnover and improve employee engagement (Campion et al., 2011; Moghaddam et al., 2019). The competency model that was implemented in the current study may be correlated with a significant increase in employee engagement, and decrease in turnover intent, because the ownership team, people leaders, and employees that work for the organization that provided data for this study fully supported the usefulness of the competency model and were involved in its implementation. It is recommended that future studies involving competency models focus on gaining buy-in and involvement from the organization's leaders and employees at all stages of the implementation process.

The original design of this study included implementing the competency model into the restaurant group's hiring processes. However, due to COVID-19, the organization that provided data for this study was not hiring employees during the data collection period, so this aspect of the study was not included. It is recommended that future studies of this nature implement competency models into a restaurant organization's hiring processes because competency models have been used to improve the quality of hires in other organizations (Campion et al., 2011; Morgeson et al., 2009; Posthuma & Campion, 2008). Finally, it is recommended that this study is replicated after the COVID-19 pandemic has ended to gain knowledge about the generalizability of the results of the current study.

Implications

This study was unique because it addressed an under-researched employee population (Shai et al., 2016). The current study addressed a gap in the literature by

examining if implementing a competency model affected employee engagement and turnover intent among restaurant employees. The results of this study supported the evidence that the use of a competency model positively affects turnover intent and employee engagement for restaurant employees and could help to establish best practices in talent management for this employee population.

Part-time employees have higher turnover intent than full-time employees (DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018). This is true across all industries, including the restaurant industry (DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018; Joung et al., 2018). In the current study, the competency model implementation had a statistically significant effect on employee engagement and turnover intent scores for all sample groups, except for turnover intent scores for full-time employees at a full-service restaurant. The sample size of participants in this group was lower (15) than the three other sample groups, which could have contributed to the lack of significant results (Faul et al., 2007). Another explanation for these results is that full-time employees at full-service restaurants may have been more negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic than employees in the other sample groups. The restaurant owners who provided data for this study said sales at their full-service restaurants were lower than sales at their fast-casual restaurants during the data collection period for this study, which led to a reduction in wages for full-time employees at a full-service restaurant. Although turnover intent decreased for employees in this sample group, the change may not have been significant because of factors not related to the competency model, such as reduced wages.

Referencing the high cost of turnover, business owners have stated employee retention is their biggest human resource apprehension (DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018). One reason employee turnover is costly to business owners is the time and money spent on training new employees (DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018). High turnover and low engagement among restaurant employees cost restaurant owners thousands of dollars per employee each year due to the costs associated with training and lost productivity (Brain, 2019; DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018; DiPietro & McLeod, 2011). The current study addressed a gap in knowledge surrounding the effectiveness of competency models to address turnover and engagement issues among restaurant employees. The results of this study indicated that positive social change occurred by improving the employee engagement and turnover intent scores of the restaurant employees who participated in this study, which should lead to a cost savings for the restaurant owners. The results of this study have theoretical implications relative to IPT and competency models. Studies related to the use of IPT in the workplace do not often use restaurant employees as research participants (Canning et al., 2019; Emerson & Murphy, 2015; Murphy & Dweck, 2010; O'Reilly et al., 2014). However, the current study demonstrates that the assumptions made by IPT applied to the employees in this setting. This theory includes two different types of beliefs on whether human characteristics can be changed: incremental theory (states that human traits such as attitudes and behaviors can be changed) and entity theory (states that these traits are fixed and cannot be changed; Dweck, 1986; Dweck et al., 1995). The current study used incremental theory as a framework for identifying the implementation of a competency model used to increase employee engagement and decrease turnover

intent. Researchers have used IPT to design interventions used to change behaviors and performance (Heslin et al., 2005; Katz & O'Malley, 2016), which made it an appropriate theoretical framework to use to inform the implementation of the competency model that was used in this study.

Organizational cultures that are aligned with incremental theory (those that believe their employee's attitudes and behaviors can change) are associated with higher employee engagement, lower turnover intent, and higher profits than organizations with cultures perceived to be aligned with entity theory (Canning et al., 2019; Murphy & Dweck, 2010). The current study added to IPT literature by exploring the use of this theory to create a growth mindset in an organization in the restaurant industry, which had not been previously studied.

Conclusion

The ownership team of the restaurant group that provided data for this study was extremely satisfied with the outcome of the competency model implementation. Employee engagement scores significantly increased and turnover intent scores significantly decreased, which was the intended result, for all sample groups included in this study except full-time employees in a full-service restaurant. Implementing the competency model did not require any monetary resources. The competencies were available online for free, and the identification of the critical competencies for each role was completed by the restaurant group's employees and ownership team. The implementation and communication of the competency model were also completed by the restaurant group's employees and ownership team.

Restaurant owners lose thousands of dollars per employee each year as a result of high turnover and low engagement (Brain, 2019; DiPietro & Bufquin, 2018; DiPietro & McLeod, 2011). Many restaurants have struggled to remain viable and profitable organizations during the COVID-19 pandemic, so avoiding the costs associated with training and lost productivity is more important now than ever. The results of this study indicate that providing employees with the clarity, direction, skills, and career opportunities competency models offer can help restaurant owners improve employee engagement and reduce turnover intent among their employees.

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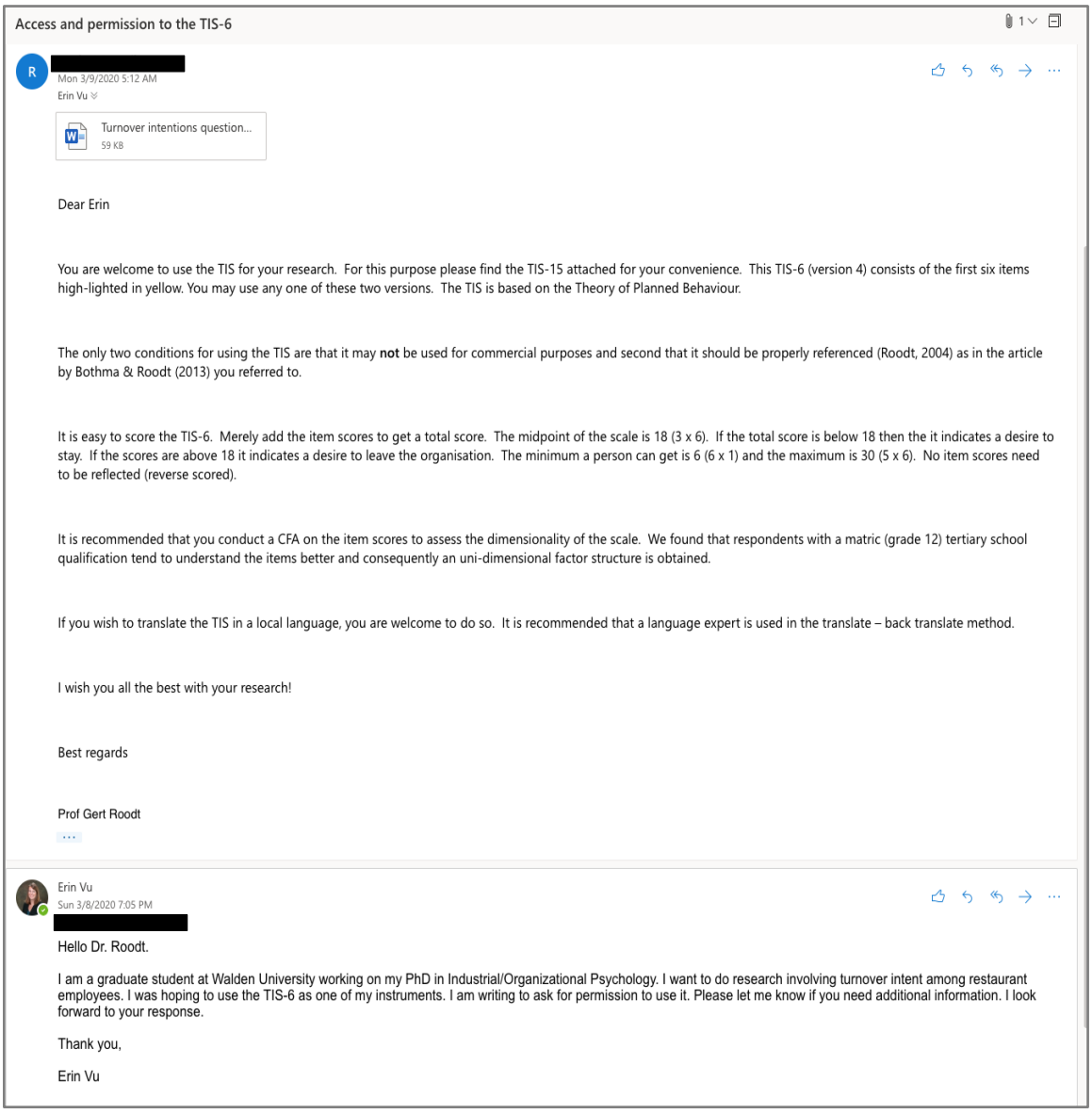
Appendix A. Demographics Questionnaire

1. Employee ID:
2. Age: 18-23 __ 24-29 __ 30-35 __ 36-41 __ 42-47 __ 48-53 __ 54+ __
3. Sex: Female __ Male __ Other __
4. Employee Type: Part-time (1-30 hours worked/week) __ Full-time (30.1 hours or more worked/week) __
5. Restaurant Type: Fast-casual* __ Full-service** __

   **Full-Service Restaurant:* A dining establishment where customers sit at tables and order food through a wait staff (Wheelen & Hunger, 2006).

   ***Fast-Casual Restaurant:* A dining establishment that does not offer full table service from a server yet claims to offer higher quality food than a fast-food restaurant (Wheelen & Hunger, 2006).
6. Job Type: Front of house (Host, Server, Cashier, or Bartender) __ Back of house (Cook or Chef) __ Shift lead __ General manager __
7. Tenure with the organization: Less than 6 months __ 6 months to 1 year __ 1-2 years __ More than 2 years __

Appendix B. Permission to use the TIS-6



Access and permission to the TIS-6

R [redacted]
Mon 3/9/2020 5:12 AM
Erin Vu

Turnover intentions question...
59 KB

Dear Erin

You are welcome to use the TIS for your research. For this purpose please find the TIS-15 attached for your convenience. This TIS-6 (version 4) consists of the first six items high-lighted in yellow. You may use any one of these two versions. The TIS is based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour.

The only two conditions for using the TIS are that it may **not** be used for commercial purposes and second that it should be properly referenced (Roodt, 2004) as in the article by Bothma & Roodt (2013) you referred to.

It is easy to score the TIS-6. Merely add the item scores to get a total score. The midpoint of the scale is 18 (3 x 6). If the total score is below 18 then the it indicates a desire to stay. If the scores are above 18 it indicates a desire to leave the organisation. The minimum a person can get is 6 (6 x 1) and the maximum is 30 (5 x 6). No item scores need to be reflected (reverse scored).

It is recommended that you conduct a CFA on the item scores to assess the dimensionality of the scale. We found that respondents with a matric (grade 12) tertiary school qualification tend to understand the items better and consequently an uni-dimensional factor structure is obtained.

If you wish to translate the TIS in a local language, you are welcome to do so. It is recommended that a language expert is used in the translate – back translate method.

I wish you all the best with your research!

Best regards

Prof Gert Roodt

Erin Vu
Sun 3/8/2020 7:05 PM
[redacted]

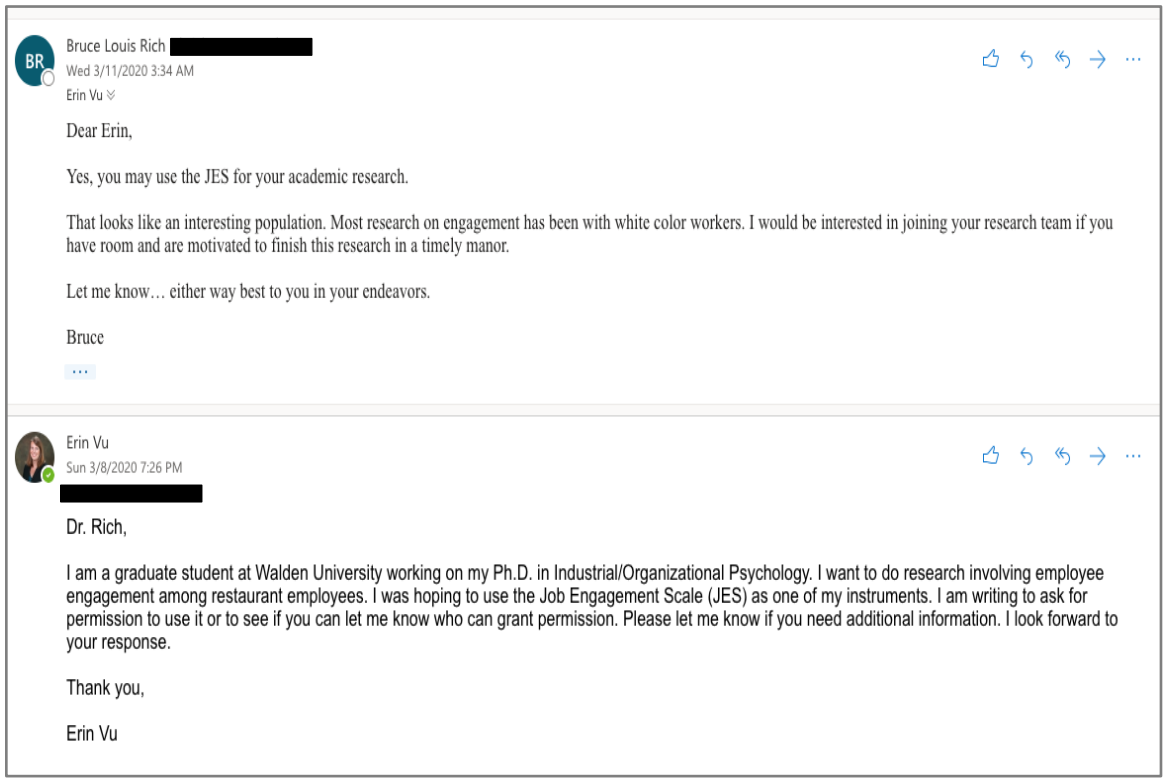
Hello Dr. Roodt.

I am a graduate student at Walden University working on my PhD in Industrial/Organizational Psychology. I want to do research involving turnover intent among restaurant employees. I was hoping to use the TIS-6 as one of my instruments. I am writing to ask for permission to use it. Please let me know if you need additional information. I look forward to your response.

Thank you,

Erin Vu

Appendix C. Permission to use the JES



Bruce Louis Rich [redacted]
Wed 3/11/2020 3:34 AM
Erin Vu

Dear Erin,

Yes, you may use the JES for your academic research.

That looks like an interesting population. Most research on engagement has been with white color workers. I would be interested in joining your research team if you have room and are motivated to finish this research in a timely manor.

Let me know… either way best to you in your endeavors.

Bruce

Erin Vu
Sun 3/8/2020 7:26 PM
[redacted]

Dr. Rich,

I am a graduate student at Walden University working on my Ph.D. in Industrial/Organizational Psychology. I want to do research involving employee engagement among restaurant employees. I was hoping to use the Job Engagement Scale (JES) as one of my instruments. I am writing to ask for permission to use it or to see if you can let me know who can grant permission. Please let me know if you need additional information. I look forward to your response.

Thank you,

Erin Vu

Appendix D. Time One Invitation Letter and Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research study about the implementation of a competency model and its effects, if any, on employee engagement and turnover intent. All permanent (nonseasonal) employees are being invited to be in the study. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part. This study is being conducted by a researcher named Erin Vu, who is a doctoral student at Walden University.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to identify if the implementation of a competency model affects employee engagement or turnover intent.

Procedures:

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete the following surveys once in the next two weeks and again in four months:

- The Turnover Intention Scale-6 (approximately three minutes);
- The Job Engagement Scale (approximately five minutes); and
- A short demographic questionnaire (approximately two minutes).

Here are some sample questions:

- To what extent is your current job satisfying your personal needs?
- At work, I focus a great deal of attention on my job

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. You are free to accept or turn down the invitation. No one at Happy Endings Hospitality will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study.

If you decide to be in the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as concern about how your employer will use the results of the surveys you complete. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing.

Identifying the effects of the competency model that has been implemented by your employer on your engagement and turnover intent will contribute to the overall research related to competency models.

Payment:

No compensation is offered or will be paid as a result of your participation in this study.

Privacy:

Reports coming out of this study will not share the identities of individual participants. Details that might identify participants, such as the location of the study, also will not be shared. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purpose outside of this research project. Data will be kept secure by storing the data gathered in a password-protected computer. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via [redacted]. If you want to talk

privately about your rights as a participant, you can call the Research Participant Advocate at my university at [redacted]. Walden University's approval number for this study is 09-01-20-0752172 and it expires on August 31st, 2021.

Please print or save this consent form for your records.

Obtaining Your Consent

If you feel you understand the study well enough to make a decision about it, please indicate your consent by clicking https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LP2939M to complete the questionnaire.

Thank you,

Erin Vu

Appendix E. Time Two Invitation Letter and Consent Form

Four months ago, you were invited to participate in a research study about the implementation of a competency model and its effects, if any, on employee engagement and turnover intent. If you decided not to participate in the study (if you did not complete the survey four months ago) please disregard this email.

If you elected to participate in the study four months ago, you were informed that you would be asked to complete a survey on two different occasions. Thank you for participating in the first stage of this study. You are now invited to participate in the second and final stage of this study by completing the following surveys:

- The Turnover Intention Scale-6 (approximately three minutes);
- The Job Engagement Scale (approximately five minutes); and
- A short demographic questionnaire (approximately two minutes).

All permanent (nonseasonal) employees are being invited to be in the study. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part. This study is being conducted by a researcher named Erin Vu, who is a doctoral student at Walden University.

Background Information

The purpose of this study is to identify if the implementation of a competency model affects employee engagement or turnover intent.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. You are free to accept or turn down the invitation. No one at Happy Endings Hospitality will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study.

If you decide to be in the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as concern about how your employer will use the results of the surveys you complete. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing.

Identifying the effects of the competency model that has been implemented by your employer on your engagement and turnover intent will contribute to the overall research related to competency models.

Payment:

No compensation is offered or will be paid as a result of your participation in this study.

Privacy:

Reports coming out of this study will not share the identities of individual participants. Details that might identify participants, such as the location of the study, also will not be shared. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purpose outside of this research project. Data will be kept secure by storing the data gathered in a password-protected computer. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via [redacted]. If you want to talk

privately about your rights as a participant, you can call the Research Participant Advocate at my university at [redacted]. Walden University's approval number for this study is 09-01-20-0752172 and it expires on August 31st, 2021.

Please print or save this consent form for your records.

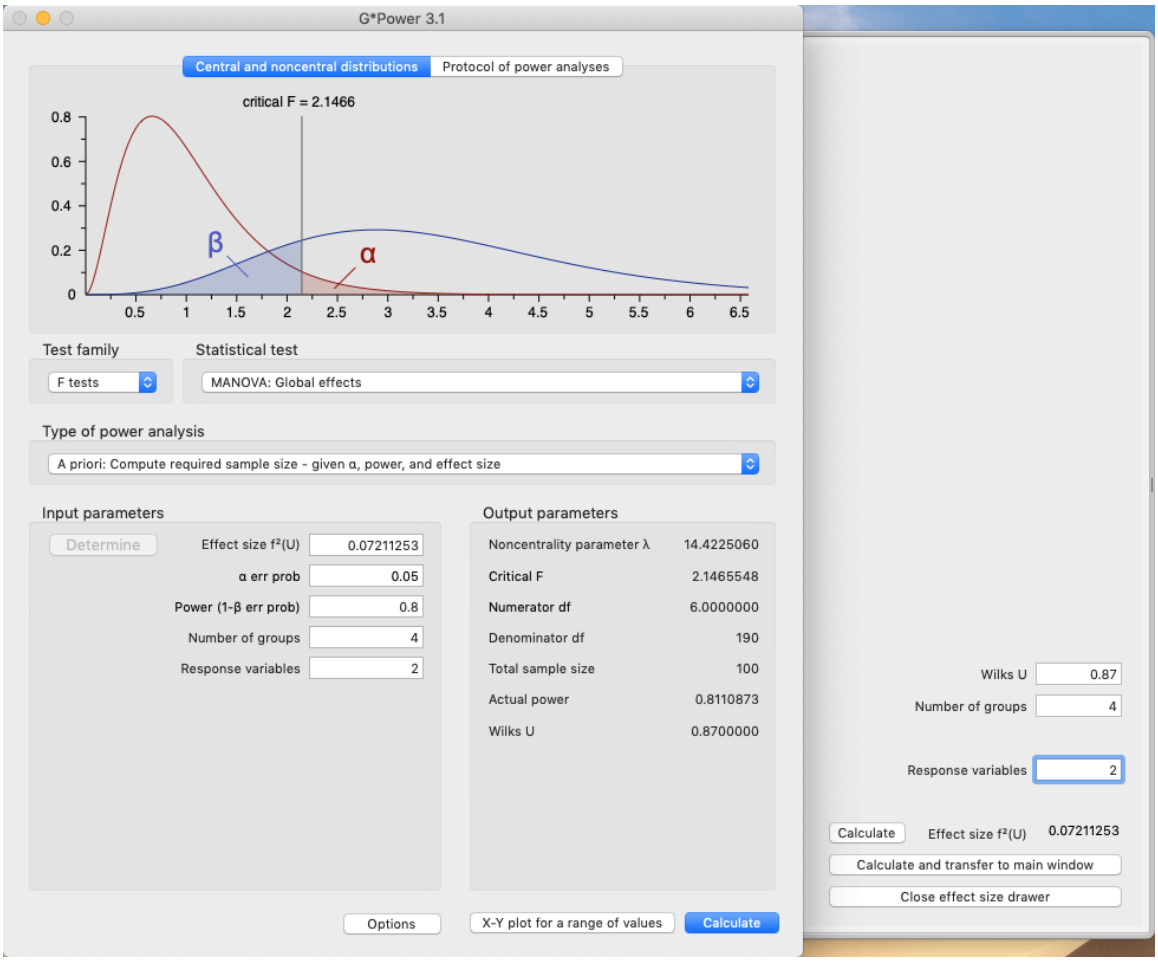
Obtaining Your Consent

If you feel you understand the study well enough to make a decision about it, please indicate your consent by clicking https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LP2939M to complete the questionnaire.

Thank you,

Erin Vu

Appendix F. G*Power Computation of Effect Size



Appendix G. Instruments

Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6)

Scale: 1 = Never to 5 = Always

1. How often do you dream about getting another job that will better suit your personal needs?
2. How often are you frustrated when not given the opportunity at work to achieve your personal work-related goals?
3. How often have you considered leaving your job?
4. How likely are you to accept another job at the same compensation level should it be offered to you?
5. To what extent is your current job satisfying your personal needs?
6. How often do you look forward to another day at work?

Job Engagement Scale (JES)

Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree

Physical engagement

1. I work with intensity on my job
2. I exert my full effort to my job
3. I devote a lot of energy to my job
4. I try my hardest to perform well on my job
5. I strive as hard as I can to complete my job
6. I exert a lot of energy on my job

Emotional engagement

7. I am enthusiastic in my job
8. I feel energetic at my job
9. I am interested in my job
10. I am proud of my job
11. I feel positive about my job
12. I am excited about my job

Cognitive engagement

13. At work, my mind is focused on my job
14. At work, I pay a lot of attention to my job
15. At work, I focus a great deal of attention on my job
16. At work, I am absorbed by my job
17. At work, I concentrate on my job
18. At work, I devote a lot of attention to my job