

2021

## Strategies for Retaining Employees in the Trucking Industry

Dionne Bell- Pursley  
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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Dionne Bell-Pursley

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2021

Abstract

Strategies for Retaining Employees in the Trucking Industry

by

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MPA, Keller Graduate School of Management, 2005

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Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

September 2021

## Abstract

Employee turnover is a recurring problem in organizations, affecting performance and productivity while depleting organizational resources. High driver turnover rates raise a company's operating costs and reduce driver productivity, service quality, and highway safety in the trucking industry. When trucking industry leaders understand such factors, they can develop and implement strategies to increase truck driver retention. Grounded in Herzberg's two-factor theory and supported by Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, the purpose of this single case study was to explore strategies trucking company leaders use to increase truck driver retention. The participants included eight executives from trucking companies in the southeast United States. Data were gathered through semistructured phone interviews, a review of company websites, and member checking. Yin's five-step analysis yielded five main themes: improved working conditions, job circumstances, work and employee environment, employee feelings, and relevant operational factors. A key recommendation is that business leaders collaborate to ensure that the trucks have installed safety equipment to ensure employee safety while transporting goods. Leaders who identify factors that could improve, limit, or hinder drivers' abilities, attitudes, and overall job satisfaction while performing their jobs may benefit trucking companies by improving the effectiveness of their supply chain. Positive social change implications include the potential for organizational leaders to enhance the air quality, boost company growth, improve social and economic fairness, and reduce job loss in communities to foster a supportive environment for the franchise and individuals.

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## Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral study to my husband, Shennard (my BEAR), I LOVE YOU. Thank you for the support, encouraging words, text messages, phone calls, and our late-night truck driving runs, especially when we are singing and you sing all the parts (soprano, alto, tenor, male, and female), and the many times you counted my references for accuracy. To my son, Ma'Kiell (BUBBA), thank you for the social media shout outs, text messages, and calls to encourage and make me smile. I LOVE YOU BOTH.

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## Section 1: Foundation of the Study

In this research, I explored strategies trucking company leaders used to increase truck driver retention. There are professional truck driver turnover and shortages in the trucking industry. The estimated current driver shortage remained more than 50,000 drivers (Costello, 2017). Employees are critical resources in an enterprise's success (Alkahtani, 2015). High employee turnover is a reoccurring incidence in organizations, affecting performance and productivity, diminishing organizational resources (Zulu et al., 2017). Because organizational leaders' practices directly influence an employees' job satisfaction and commitment to a business (Mittal, 2016), leaders shoulder the responsibility to create an enabling environment for retention. For example, organizational leaders implement training programs for employee success, performance, and employee retention (American Transportation Research Institute [ATRI], 2017). These practices include recruitment and hiring, compensation and benefits, training and development, supervision, and evaluation. There is a relationship between developmental training programs for new employees and their retention in an organization (ATRI, 2017). Employees perform better when trained than when they feel their ways around corporate expectations. Job satisfaction and motivation improve employee retention through organizational strategies (Mathieu et al., 2016). Thus, the main contributor to an organization's success is retention strategies (Kumar & Mathimaran, 2017).

### **Background of the Problem**

The trucking industry provides transportation services throughout the United States (U.S. Department of Transportation, 2016). The trucking industry's purpose is to

function as a transporter selected for organizations that depend on these carriers to meet businesses' transportation and logistics needs (U.S. Internal Revenue Service, 2016). However, the trucking industry deals with severe operational issues (Costello, 2017).

Turnover affects the profitability and security of the trucking business (Costello, 2017). Employee turnover costs organizations over \$25 billion a year in the United States, which fluctuates frequently (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2016). Such fluctuations reveal a systemic imbalance inherent in the companies within the industry. In the trucking industry, high driver turnover rates increase a company's operating costs, reduce driver productivity, and result in reductions in service quality and highway safety (Faulkner, 2016). Hiring, recruiting, training, and retention can range from \$10,000 to \$30,000 per truck driver (Nadler & Kros, 2018; Zolfagharinia & Haughton, 2016). In 2040, freight from the trucking industry reached about 21.5 billion dollars (U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics, 2017; U.S. Department of Transportation, 2016). Further, the 40-year struggle for the trucking industry has continued due to shortages and turnover despite financial success (Costello, 2017; Sersland & Natarajan, 2015; Williams et al., 2017). Consequently, business profitability has continued to elude industry operators. In this study, I explored strategies trucking company leaders used to increase truck driver retention.

### **Problem Statement**

Driver turnover and driver shortages have continued to interfere with the trucking industry's global supply distribution (Costello, 2017). Truck drivers have left jobs for several reasons, ultimately costing organizations over \$25 billion annually to find newly

qualified drivers (Mittal et al., 2018). The general business problem was that truck driver turnover and driver shortages continued to disrupt the trucking industry's economic viability, which affected the productivity and security of all sectors. The specific business problem was that some trucking company leaders lacked strategies to increase truck driver retention.

### **Purpose Statement**

This qualitative single case study was aimed to explore strategies trucking company leaders used to increase truck driver retention. The research population for this study comprised five trucking company leaders in the southeast United States who successfully implemented strategies to increase truck driver retention. The implications for positive social change include the potential to provide leaders with new data on retention strategies to increase truck driver retention, thereby reducing unemployment rates in the southeast United States. When voluntary employee turnover decreases, employment security increases, producing social and economic opportunities in the local communities (Acikgoz et al., 2016). Improving job satisfaction and security for truck drivers can advance their professional and personal lives. When applied, this study's results may also increase companies' productivity and profitability, improve job creation, financial improvement, and new and enhanced local programs, activities, and services within local economies and communities. Job creation occurs in communities with already thriving businesses (Mohammed et al., 2017). This study could also help company leaders worldwide change their focus, attitudes, and work practices to benefit their companies and local communities.

### **Nature of the Study**

Research studies usually require systematic execution, which involves identifying appropriate methods and designs for interpretive investigation of a specific topic (Paré & Kitsiou, 2017). Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods are the three different research methodologies available to researchers (Levitt et al., 2017). For this study, I selected the qualitative research method, which is beneficial when exploring and understanding perceptions and experiences (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). Researchers have used qualitative methodology to understand complex human experiences (Englander, 2016; Liao & Hitchcock, 2018; Moustakas, 1994; Silverman, 2016). In contrast, quantitative researchers test hypotheses, analyze numerical data, and measure variables statistically to examine phenomena (Bernerth et al., 2017). The quantitative research method was not appropriate for this study because I did not gather numerical data for statistical analyses or test hypotheses. Mixed methods research is a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methodologies with analytical procedures (Saunders et al., 2016; Skalidou & Oya, 2018; Turner et al., 2017), which was also not appropriate because I did not include the quantitative components.

There are four research designs in qualitative methodology: case study, ethnography, grounded theory, and phenomenology (Saunders et al., 2016). I considered three qualitative research designs for my study on strategies increasing truck driver retention: (a) single case study, (b) ethnography, and (c) phenomenology. Ethnographic researchers immerse themselves in the unique cultures of individuals, societies, or a group of people to describe identifiable events (Bamkin et al., 2016; Pernecky, 2016). I



did not select ethnography because I did not focus on descriptions of specific people groups, ideas, cultures, or aspects of society. In a phenomenological design, the researcher depends on an individual's insights into the phenomenon (Cohen et al., 2016; Willis et al., 2016). Phenomenological research was not an appropriate design for this study because I did not focus on a life-altering experience.

Researchers use a case study design to contemplate theoretical perspectives exploring the causes and underlying problems through a multiple or single case study (Collins & Stockton, 2018). Using a multiple qualitative case study approach allows researchers to understand the problem under investigation by exploring several foundations of evidence to generate quality data collection and analysis (House, 2018; Yin, 2018). Multiple case studies consist of researchers analyzing each situation's data across diverse conditions (Yin, 2018). A multiple case study was not appropriate for this study because I did not analyze each situation at various sites. A qualitative single case study was the best approach for this study because I sought to gain a comprehensive understanding of the strategies trucking company leaders used to increase truck driver retention. Researchers use case studies when the research objective was understanding the indicated phenomenon over time (Yin, 2017).

### **Research Question**

What strategies do trucking company leaders use to increase truck driver retention?

### **Interview Questions**

1. What specific strategies has your company used to increase truck driver retention?
2. How do your driver retention strategies relate to business profitability?
3. What innovative ideas did you discover while implementing your strategies to increase truck driver retention in your organization?
4. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of your strategies to increase truck driver retention?
5. What innovative approaches have your drivers adopted to contribute to increasing truck driver retention?
6. What are some reasons employees elect to stay with your organization?
7. What motivational strategies work for you in increasing truck driver retention?
8. What other information about increasing truck driver retention rates would you like to share at this time?

### **Conceptual Framework**

A theory is essential to set boundaries that readers may consider and understand phenomena (Islam, 2019). This qualitative single case study's first conceptual framework was Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory, also acknowledged as the motivation-hygiene theory. I also incorporated Maslow's (1943a) hierarchy of needs as a supporting conceptual framework for this study. These theories supported the research to understand leaders' retention strategies in trucking companies.

Herzberg (1959) originated the two-factor theory based on a connection involving employee attitude and workplace motivation. Herzberg wanted to identify what caused employees to feel satisfied and unsatisfied in the workplace, which led to developing two factors: hygiene factors and motivators. Hygiene factors and motivators can influence an employees' job satisfaction experience, leading to employee retention (Grigaliunas & Herzberg, 1971). Organizational leaders must implement hygiene factors such as job security, salaries and benefits, clean and safe working conditions, the balance of work and life, and exemplary leadership, which can lead to improved job satisfaction and decreased dissatisfaction (Grigaliunas & Herzberg, 1971). The absence of positive hygiene factors may result in job dissatisfaction in the workplace (Herzberg, 1959). Motivational factors or satisfiers include work, achievement, advancement, recognition, responsibility, and individual growth (Herzberg, 1966). Motivational satisfiers encourage intrinsic motivation, satisfaction to an extreme degree, and a strong job commitment (Grigaliunas & Herzberg, 1971). Leaders should balance hygiene and motivational factors in organizations (Ogunnaike et al., 2017), lessening job dissatisfaction and encouraging employees to stay and remain productive (Dubbelt et al., 2019). Herzberg's two-factor theory's foundation is that managers try to find and address factors that affect employee job satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1959).

Herzberg's two-factor theory has helped researchers determine factors that motivate individuals to work and cut job dissatisfaction to retain employees and decrease employee turnover (Damij et al., 2015; Msengeti & Obwogi, 2015). The Herzberg two-factor theory supported this study in understanding some trucking company leaders'

strategies to increase truck driver retention. Organizational leaders must implement strategies to increase job satisfaction and decrease dissatisfaction to keep employees. Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation was a suitable conceptual framework for this study, as truck driver turnover centers on how leaders in trucking companies used Herzberg's theory's principles. Business leaders should recognize and concentrate on factors that affect job satisfaction, dissatisfaction, ways to increase job satisfaction, and job performance (Herzberg, 1959). Therefore, I chose the two-factor theory to explore strategies that trucking company leaders used to increase truck driver retention.

### **Operational Definitions**

*American Trucking Association (ATA):* The ATA is a hands-on vocal leader, representing the trucking industry in the legislative arena before regulatory organizations and petitioning on behalf of the industry that transports life's vital possessions to all businesses and customers (U.S. Internal Revenue Service, 2016).

*Job satisfaction:* Employees have a mind toward the job (Sailaja & Naik, 2016).

*Turnover intention:* When employees explicitly state they want or plan to leave their present occupation (Buzeti et al., 2016; Liao et al., 2017).

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

#### **Assumptions**

Assumptions are necessary for a study's relevance (Schoenung & Dikova, 2016). Assumptions refer to what researchers believed to be correct without certifiable proof (Cunliffe & Scaratti, 2017). There were five assumptions in this study. The first assumption was that the participants would be honest about their managerial experience,

opinions, and strategies to increase truck driver retention. The second assumption was that leaders felt safe and comfortable sharing their actual life experiences and strategies concerning truck driver retention. The third assumption was that I would accumulate enough data to answer the research question. The fourth assumption was that I would reach data saturation by interviewing five participants. The final assumption was that leaders would supply the proper company records for methodological triangulation.

### **Limitations**

Limitations are elements that can limit the scope of research and are beyond the researcher's control (Yin, 2018). Researchers have suggested that each research study has limits that supplied an assessment of the findings' reliability (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). There were four limitations to this study. This study's first limitation was that I trusted the data received from participants as truthful with no misleading statements or exaggerated responses beyond my control. The second limitation was the geographic region of this study. The third limitation was that participants might not understand the questions. This study's final limitation was using interviewing as a data collection technique.

### **Delimitations**

Defining boundaries and concentrating on the study's scope are delimitations (Crossman & Kazdin, 2016; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Pan, 2016). Delimitations are characteristics that limit the size and define the boundaries of a study (Gutiérrez et al., 2016). A delimitation of this study was that I focused solely on the strategies to increase truck driver retention. The second delimitation for this study was selecting leaders in

trucking companies who knew employee retention strategies. The third delimitation was a single case study participant sample with five leaders from the trucking industry operating in the southeast United States. This study's final delimitation was that leaders had at least 2 years of managerial role experience.

### **Significance of the Study**

Employee turnover is costly to organizations, affecting their financial viability (Holtom & Burch, 2016). Truck drivers' high turnover has been a concern for business owners in the trucking industry (Costello, 2017). Management has continued to face employee turnover (Caillier, 2016). The shortage of professional drivers in the industry may cause a domino effect and roll over into other sectors (Costello, 2017). Employers attain increased revenues, stabilize the workforce, provide better benefits packages and workplace policies for their businesses if they reduce employee replacement costs accredited to voluntary employee turnover (Costello, 2017). The study findings could permit leaders in the trucking industry to develop strategies to increase truck driver retention while increasing economic profitability.

### **Contribution to Business Practice**

The trucking industry is an essential part of the U.S. economy (Costello, 2017). Truck driving is a large occupation, and the services truck drivers provide are essential to the U.S. economy (Burks & Maraco, 2019). Organizational leaders continue to work hard to find and keep qualified employees (Mittal et al., 2018). Identifying factors that could improve, limit, or hinder drivers' abilities, attitudes, and overall job satisfaction while performing their jobs benefits trucking companies by improving the supply chain's

effectiveness (Costello, 2017). This study could contribute to the trucking industry's competent business practice since truck drivers experience many uncertainties and challenges while performing their jobs. Managers could retain truck drivers' by understanding and addressing their personal and professional concerns. Organizational leaders who implement successful retention strategies help decrease turnover, reduce recruiting and training costs, and expand organizations' profitability (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017). This study's results could allow managers to increase retention, boost morale, and improve business performance.

### **Implications for Social Change**

Real-world implications based on action and ideas come from positive social change, which results in better societal conditions (Komives, 2016). Reducing employee turnover promotes job security (Acikgoz et al., 2016), which might decrease monetary strain between communities and individuals. Positive social change implications include companies' potential to improve communities' health and safety by implementing innovative development and economic enhancement strategies, reducing driver turnover and costs. Further implications for positive social change include better air quality influences, boosted company growth, improved social and economic fairness, and diminished job loss in communities to engender a supportive environment for the franchise and individuals.

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

Employee retention is essential to the growth and sustainability of businesses (Johennesse & Chou, 2017). The purpose of this qualitative, single case study was to

explore strategies that trucking company leaders use to increase truck driver retention. I used Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory, also acknowledged as the motivation-hygiene theory, as the conceptual framework.

Researchers conduct literature reviews to identify gaps in the literature for specific topics to address research questions (Gaur & Kumar, 2018). Researchers who conduct well-organized literature reviews can enhance scholarly work by providing a clear, restructured synopsis and analyzing the practices applicable to a specific subject (Bliss, 2016; Wee & Banister, 2016). The literature review includes highlighting employees' perceptions in the trucking industry concerning employee voluntary and involuntary turnover. The academic and professional literature review comprises a discussion of theories that affect turnover, policies, and strategies leaders can implement to reduce the trucking industry's high turnover rate.

### **Organization of the Literature Review**

The literature is scarce regarding applying Herzberg's two-factor theory specifically for discussions of retention of truck drivers. In the literature review, I provide nine themes connected to increasing truck driver retention: (a) conceptual framework for study Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, (b) a supporting conceptual framework for study Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, (c) supporting theories: job satisfaction theories, and (d) Vroom's expectancy theory, (e) transportation industry, (f) employee retention challenges, (g) job satisfaction, (h) motivation, and (i) causes of turnover. Throughout the literature review, Herzberg's conceptual framework and the supporting conceptual framework of Maslow's motivation theory explicate and justify additional



researchers' views on strategies company managers need to retain employees.

Understanding the origins of turnover is essential for organizational leaders when addressing the antecedents of turnover. I will also introduce other topics, such as discussing the trucking industry, employee retention challenges, job satisfaction, motivation, and turnover causes.

### **Research Strategy for Literature**

To locate scholarly peer-reviewed sources on the research topic. I used Google Scholar and other publications from databases like ABI/INFORM Global, EBSCOhost Business Source Complete, SAGE Journals, ProQuest Central, Academic Search Complete, Walden University's online library, Hospitality and Tourism Complete, Emerald Insight, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, Eric Emerald Management, Science Direct, PsycARTICLES (EBSCO), ScienceDirect, EBSCO Open Access Journals, Project Muse, Wiley Online Library, ScienceDirect Subject Collections – Business, Management, and Accounting. I used the following keywords: *employee commitment, employee retention, cost of turnover, voluntary turnover, employee turnover, turnover intentions, recruitment, retention strategies, organizational culture, leadership, strategic leadership, systems, motivation theories, motivators, involuntary turnover, executive leadership, leadership management, performance management, leadership effectiveness, employee growth, pay, performance, regulations in the transportation industry, challenges, organizations, employee engagement, job satisfaction, workplace stress, training, working conditions, work-life balance, job dissatisfaction, profit, attrition, productivity, truck drivers, managers, DOT, IRS, opposition, change, human resources,*

*government relations, organizational commitment, leadership skills, Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory (two-factor theory), Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and employee motivation.*

I collected information from 232 sources, of which 215 (93%) are scholarly peer-reviewed articles, 227 (98%) have publication dates less than 5 years from the anticipated completion date of 2021. There are 12 (5.2%) government websites, five (2.2%) books, and six (2.6%) doctoral dissertations. The total number of references in the study consists of 416 sources and 387 (93%) sources published within 2017–2021, confirming the required 85% of the total sources with a publication date 5 years or less from my expected graduation date.

### **Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory**

Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, known as the two-factor theory, was the conceptual framework for this study. Herzberg's two-factor theory has helped researchers find factors that motivate individuals to work, cut job dissatisfaction, retain employees, and decrease employee turnover (Alshmemri et al., 2017). The two-factor theory contains valuable information for addressing organizational problems connected to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Damij et al., 2015).

Herzberg's theory contains intrinsic (motivational) and extrinsic (hygiene) factors (Shaikh et al., 2019). He described intrinsic motivational factors (e.g. personal achievements, accomplishments, professional growth, and a sense of pleasure) as an inner need for satisfaction, whereas extrinsic (hygiene) motivational factors (e.g., relationships, work environments, supervision, compensation, and company rules) meet external needs

or demands that impact job satisfaction and dissatisfaction (García et al., 2019). When employees' commitment increases, their job satisfaction increases (Agarwal & Sajid, 2017). Though job satisfaction does not keep employees from being unsatisfied (Poissonier, 2017), job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are critical to organizational leaders' abilities to understand contributing factors to retention (Thakre & Shroff, 2016). Job dissatisfaction is related to employee motivation and increases turnover intention (Jadoo et al., 2015). Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory can be used to influence employee job satisfaction (Holmberg et al., 2016). Based on the theory, specific organization features lead to job satisfaction, and other factors lead to dissatisfaction. For instance, customer satisfaction influences employee satisfaction (Rahman et al., 2017).

Rewards that apply to achievement, advancement, recognition, responsibility, and labor are motivating factors known as satisfiers (Herzberg et al., 1959). Herzberg asserted that dissatisfaction, relevant to job dissatisfaction, applies to supervision, relationships, working environment, compensation, and company policies. These intrinsic motivational factors are the groundwork for understanding employee behavior. The work can alter employees' job satisfaction levels (Herzberg, 1966), which relates to turnover intention (Colorafi & Evans, 2016). Job satisfaction is significant with salary and education, but employers may benefit more by focusing on increasing workplace motivation (Amiri et al., 2017). Motivation positively impacts employees' performance but does not significantly impact job satisfaction (Irwan, 2018). Further, in organizations, the people meeting the standards set the example for the individuals around them, the workers, customers' expectations, and meeting values (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

### **Factors Affecting Satisfaction and Stress**

Many authors have documented the relationship among employee satisfaction, work performance, and retention. For example, Lu et al. (2019) suggested that employee retention and job satisfaction intermingle. Kossivi et al. (2016) further expressed how leaders increased employee retention with proper motivation or support levels. Additionally, Ahmad (2017) examined how intrinsic and extrinsic factors affect job satisfaction in employees, noting the reciprocal relationship between the employer and employee. Employees who think they are receiving something from their organization tend to stay with their organization, and they have a positive perception of the organization. Thus, employee attitude changes through a reciprocal relationship with the organization. Reciprocal links may help human resource managers create new and improved employee reward systems to retain employees.

Stress also has a significant effect on performance and professional development (Datt & Washington, 2015). Suffering (negative tension) is associated with displaying eustress (positive pressure). The main kinds of distress include (a) behavioral issues, (b) medical illnesses, and (c) psychological disorders (Grégoire & Lachance, 2015). Tensed employees lack motivation, which leads to un-motivation, resulting in a reduction in production and incomes, and turnover increases. Therefore, to manage stress, leaders and employees must work together. Business leaders can decrease the tension by presenting motivation factors and conducive work atmospheres to enhance employee retention (Datt & Washington, 2015).

### **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory**

This qualitative single case study's supporting conceptual framework is Maslow's (1943a) hierarchy of needs theory. I selected Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory to explain why the strategy used by trucking company leaders has been successful in increasing truck driver retention. Maslow created the hierarchy of needs theory grounded in how individuals satisfy personal requirements based on the workplace. There are five types of conditions individuals must meet, according to Maslow. The demands ranged from the priority of required achievement, such as (a) physiological, (b) safety, (c) love and belongingness, (d) esteem, and (e) self-actualization. The need for safety and security is behind the need for belongingness and love and self-esteem needs (Maslow, 1943a). At the bottom of the pyramid, the most vital are physiological needs. The primary survival essentials like air, food, water, and shelter are physiological conditions. Satisfaction takes place before the individual moves to the next level to maintain satisfaction and achievement.

#### ***Hierarchical Applicability***

Maslow (1943b) declared that motivation was goal based and happened when individuals encounter physical and basic needs. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory explains that employee performance and retention are related to employee feelings regarding their conditions. Leaders can use the tenets of Maslow's hierarchy of needs to create, design, and implement effective systems to respond to employees' needs (Najjar & Fares, 2017). For example, Men and Robinson (2018) used the theory to study business leaders who identified a psychological need for mutual respect to contribute to

workers' organizational relationships. Another example is finding ways to support teacher's needs. A basic need would be teachers having suitable, appropriately equipped space, both indoors and outdoors; examples of safety needs for teachers include job security and insurance (Risher & Royce, 2016). Organizations that apply Maslow's hierarchy of needs to retain employees confirm that fulfilling the lower order of needs takes precedence over the higher order of needs (Singh & Holmstrom, 2015). The well-being part of Maslow's hierarchy of needs is the foundation of the motivational theory that stipulates those needs are essential (Wu et al., 2017). Maslow's self-actualization need that enhances employees' performance on the job is higher, but the basic needs must come before the higher requirements.

The theory has been practical in assessing employee motivation (Clegg et al., 2016). Employee motivation is a critical element for managers to encourage workers to implement organizational goals with dedication, honesty, and enthusiasm (Hitka & Balážová, 2015). According to the theory, motivation occurs when individuals satisfy all psychological and self-actualization needs (Chiniara & Bentein, 2016). Psychological need is a basic need to help individuals' mental health (Islam et al., 2016; Jamal et al., 2017). Once satisfied with it, it leads to the functioning and coordinating of other requirements and thought processes. Therefore, organizational leaders must pay attention to employees' environment, personalities, and behaviors (Cornell et al., 2017). Motivated organizational leaders are the key to employee performance and commitment (Teryima et al., 2016). The hierarchy of needs by Maslow (1943b) relates to many parts of job

satisfaction. The human factors manifest in all situations, either helping or hurting job functions.

### ***Job Satisfaction Interface***

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory created the groundwork for understanding job satisfaction (Thomas, 2015). Organizational leaders should pursue understanding factors that drive satisfaction in organizations (Ahmed et al., 2017). Satisfying basic psychological needs is necessary for employees to perform at work and be content without thinking of departing the organization (Chiniara & Bentein, 2016; Smith & Mari-Amanda, 2016). Physiological needs shared with other requirements such as psychological and environmental circumstances help employees reach the satisfaction threshold with their jobs (Crawford, 2016; Rastogi et al., 2018). In other words, an employee's satisfaction with the environment, atmosphere conditions, and other job configuration elements contribute positively to results at work.

Organizational leaders must also understand that employees have set goals to fulfill their heart desires (Lin & Liu, 2017). Leaders must effectively communicate with employees by displaying trust and, in return, leaders will receive the employees' commitment (Ogbonnaya et al., 2017). Employees' motivation is essential for organizational leaders to meet employees' self-esteem, respect, and recognition to help employees improve their work ethics, interest, and individual health on the job (Crumpton, 2016). Employee motivation predicts performance and commitment as it is the force that energizes, directs, and sustains employees on the job (Crumpton, 2016). According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, motivators and hygiene factors are sources

for satisfaction, which is different from Herzberg's theory in which hygiene factors are causes of unhappiness. Herzberg's (1959) two factor theory and Maslow's (1943a) hierarchy of needs theory are job satisfaction theories. Job satisfaction is the degree to which the needs, desires, and expectations are met to bring to the job (Agarwal & Sajid, 2017). Job satisfaction plays a significant part in voluntary turnover.

### **Satisfaction Theories: Different or Similar**

The two theories contain components that vary in how they communicate job satisfaction. Thibodeaux et al. (2015) explained Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory and Herzberg's two-factor theory are suitable for defining whether workers are satisfied. But in contrast to Herzberg's two-factor theory, Maslow's theory permits the factors to coincide. According to Thibodeaux et al., the two-factor theory explains job factors (unsatisfying or satisfying to employees). Employees abide in stimulating and pleasurable jobs that let employees attain success. Employment and wage satisfaction are motivational drivers that affect employee satisfaction (Mabaso & Dlamini, 2017). The intent to stay affects job satisfaction and retention (Gholipour Soleimani & Einolahzadeh, 2017). Like Maslow's hierarchy of needs model, Herzberg thought individuals consume two kinds of conditions (Thibodeaux et al., 2015).

### **Vroom's Expectancy Theory**

According to Vroom's expectancy theory, employee behavior results from conscious selections that lessen pain and increase pleasure (Chopra, 2019; Vroom, 1964). Employee job performance is related to experiences, knowledge, and personality. Employee empowerment and teamwork have positive effects on employee performance



(Ahmad & Manzoor, 2017). Vroom's theory centered on (a) force, (b) value, and (c) expectancy. Employee values motivate their actions. Vroom suggested that employees placed value on money, promotions, and intrinsic satisfaction. He also indicated that managers might give rewards to satisfy the needs connected to the benefits of employees. Vroom referred to expectancy as the positive association between effort and performance and noted the importance of a performance-reward relationship.

Expectancy theory in previous research explored employee motivation and retention factors of employee turnover (Chang et al., 2015). Employees placed value on money (intrinsic satisfaction). Vroom noted that employees established reward systems to satisfy needs and foster a productive workplace. Chang et al. (2015) identified that rewards could be intrinsic or extrinsic and that rewards are recognized as kinds of motivation. Vroom's expectancy theory emphasizes results. Alderfer (1969) and Maslow (1943b) concentrated on human necessities. Unlike Herzberg et al. (1959), Vroom (1964) provided a system of cognitive variables that replicates individual differences in work expectations but did not define variables that motivated employees. Herzberg et al. (1959) and Vroom successfully justified an individual's incentive and job satisfaction by focusing on two distinct motivation methods. The expectancy theory concerns the relationship between motivation, performance, and salary (Baumann & Bonner, 2016).

Munoz et al. (2016), to reinforce the expectancy theory, justified why the anticipation of rewards might motivate students. Similarly, Ayranci and Ayranci (2017) and Rajak and Pandey (2017) stated that employees with experience and high skill levels became more dissatisfied and less motivated if not vastly rewarded for their work.

Expectancy theory has important implications for employee motivation. Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory impacted employee motivation. Exploring Herzberg et al. (1959) two-factor theory as the conceptual framework is more appropriate for this study because it explains why the strategies used by trucking company leaders have been successful in increasing truck driver retention.

### **Trucking Industry**

This section discusses the trucking industry, including the history, statistical data, economic impacts, issues, and the necessity for highly skilled truck drivers. According to the U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics (2018), truck drivers are responsible for transporting over 11 billion tons of freight, generating over \$66 billion in the United States. Although the revolving door exists, the trucking industry employed over 3.5 million professional drivers (U.S. BLS, 2018). The specific business problem is that some trucking company leaders lack strategies to increase truck driver retention. The main contributor to an organization's success is retention strategies (Kumar & Mathimaran, 2017).

Truck driving is a large occupation, and the services truck drivers provide are essential to the United States economy (Burks & Maraco, 2019). The trucking industry aims to function as a transporter selected for organizations that depend on these carriers to meet businesses' transportation and logistical needs (U.S. Internal Revenue Service, 2016). Professional truck drivers experience many challenges while performing their jobs. The trucking industry continues its' 40 years of struggle with driver turnover and driver shortages, despite financial success (Costello, 2017; Williams et al., 2017).

Alkahtani's (2015) review of factors influencing employee turnover in the trucking industry found that employees are critical resources in an industry's success.

Trucking is an industry comprised of small businesses, with 91% of motor carriers operating six or fewer trucks and 97.3% run less than 20 (ATA, 2018a). Over 7.4 million Americans employed in trucking-related jobs include 3.5 million truck drivers, and 6% of those drivers are women, with 38.7% being minorities (ATA, 2018b). The drivers operate commercial vehicles that move billions of tons of freight in the United States (ATA, 2016). The work of these professional drivers is significant to the United States economy.

United States commerce depends on large trucks to transport billions of goods (Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration [FMCSA], 2016). The country's commercial vehicles pay billions in state and federal highway operator charges and taxes. In 2016, the FMCSA (2016) stated that the average five-axle tractor-trailer paid an extra \$5,600 in annual taxes. However, truck fleets' workforce declined recently, and truck freight is rising faster than new-hire drivers' pace (FMCSA, 2016). Subsequently, the ATA (2016) predicted that there would be a shortage of professional truck drivers. According to ATA (2016) and FMCSA (2016), the trucking industry's revenues were \$676.2 billion, or 79.8% of the country's freight bill. However, the FMCSA (2016) suggested that the freight volumes projected growth to 2.8 percent with a 3.4% annual growth by 2023 but trailed by a 2.3% yearly rate in succeeding years. The ATA (2017) suggested that the report listed 15.18 billion tons of freight moved using all methods with the expectancy of 20.73 billion tons, a projected rise of 36.6% in 2028. Employee

commitment towards growth may emanate from leadership commitment to the employees.

The trucking industry provides transportation services throughout the United States (U.S. Department of Transportation, 2016). Truck drivers are often the first point of contact between current and potential customers and organizations. ATA (2016) noted that without the trucking industry, the economy would stop. ATA (2015) distinguished that truck drivers transport over 10.5 billion tons of freight annually, but it takes over 38 billion tons of diesel fuel to haul all the cargo. Without trucks, the United States will stand still (ATA, 2016, 2017, & 2018a). ATA (2018) stated that the statistics need substantial attention from researchers regarding retaining and recruiting the best truck drivers for the impending shortage. Employee turnover in organizations has become high, and trucking companies struggle to find qualified drivers (Mittal et al., 2018). Zolfagharinia and Haughton (2016) and ATRI (2017), and Nadler and Kros (2018) stated that recruiting, hiring, training, and retention costs can range from \$10,000 to \$30,000 per truck driver. Mittal et al. (2018) mentioned that in the first quarter of 2017, the truck driver turnover rate for United States truckload companies increased slightly but remained at an overall low level. If the freight economy increases significantly, turnover will increase, and the apprehensions about the driver shortage. According to ATA (2018a) and Mittal et al. (2018), the annual turnover in 2017 for large truckload fleets with yearly revenues of more than \$30 million increased three percentage points to 74%. A minor increase in turnover in the first quarter, even with reduced freight capacities, suggests narrowing the driver marketplace, often monitored.

The trucking industry is facing a scarcity of drivers (ATA, 2016). Despite the stated 5% job loss rate, the industry struggles to discover adequate skilled drivers. ATA (2018a) reported that back in 2015, there was a shortage of 48,000 drivers associated with several reasons, such as demographic, regulatory, and drivers away from home extended periods. The ATA (2018a) noted that the trucking industry still requires about 40,000 drivers and continues to face high turnover rates, although an update on driver shortage remains necessary. Truck drivers' performances influence how customers distinguish trucking companies and are fundamental to the truck companies' success (ATA, 2016). Therefore, company leaders have the responsibility to motivate the drivers toward high performance.

Pryce (2016) determined that employers can attain increased revenues, stabilize the workforce, provide better benefits packages and workplace policies for their businesses if they succeed in reducing employee replacement costs accredited to voluntary employee turnover. Pryce stated that the article deals with logistical concerns about truck driver management concerns and how motor carriers might better manage drivers to increase operational performance and the bottom line. To enhance operational performance, trucking companies employed a mixture of formal and informal controls more than other organizations (ATA, 2016). The recruitment process must start with an effective retention strategy. Furthermore, turnover is vital in administration since employee turnover can be detrimental to an organization's success.

ATA (2018a) indicated that the data in the first quarter of 2018 is the rate of turnover for big truckload carriers is 94%, which increased from 74% based on the data

from the first quarter of 2017. Data reports from the ATA noted that by 2026, estimates of driver shortages would reach 174,000 (Costello, 2017). For organizational leaders, retention is a concern. This concern is mainly at the managerial level (Miterev et al., 2017). Organizational leaders must create and implement innovative retention strategies in the trucking industry (ATRI, 2017). With the entrenchment of innovation, a corporate leader may secure employee buy-in and achieve results.

### **Employee Retention Challenges**

A challenge for any leader is to retain talented and valuable employees. Employees leave organizations for many reasons (Bake, 2019). Letchmiah and Thomas (2017) suggested an organization's ability to maintain employees is specified as employee retention. In the transportation industry, employee retention, often handled in unusual ways, depends on the influence of human capital, the organization's size, and the job marketplace's overall health (U.S. BLS, 2016). Employee turnover is a constant task for leaders who concentrate on retaining their appreciated and talented employees (Lyria et al., 2017). The employee recruitment process reduces turnover with operative reviewing procedures for picking skilled workers (Kam & Meyer, 2015). Beyond such recruitment efforts, company leaders would forecast employee retention factors and set the tone for retention.

### ***Work–Family Conflict***

Pandey et al. (2019) cited that the work-family conflict found that employees' behaviors in the office changed because of absenteeism, organizational strategies, lateness, and organizational commitment. Work and family conflicts negatively

influenced workplace productivity (Giauque et al., 2019). Providing flexible work times reduced work-family friction (Olubiyi et al., 2019). When employees do not have sustaining experiences within their organizations, there are elevated levels of voluntary turnover.

Herzberg et al. (1959) noted that motivators must be present for employees to experience job satisfaction and that hygiene factors help prevent employee dissatisfaction. Many variables play a part in retention, such as job satisfaction, compensation, the specific place of employment, and organizational commitment. Reed et al. (2016) explained that job satisfaction and organizational commitment are essential concerning employees' turnover intent in organizations. A substantial positive impact on affective organizational commitment is job satisfaction (Chordiya et al., 2017). Mittal (2016) found that corporate leaders' practices directly influence an employees' job satisfaction and commitment to a business. Furthermore, the influence of the leader must be positive to elicit job satisfaction.

Vidal-Salazar et al. (2016) stated that retention improves when organizational leaders make better recruitment efforts, review job specifications and descriptions continually, offer more promotions, communicates effectively, and implement turnover policies. Grissom et al. (2016) reported several factors related to the low retention percentage of retail industry employees. However, Mertil and Brill (2015) conducted a case study of healthcare organizational leaders. Retaining employees remains an ongoing task within organizations, as Mertil and Brill noted. Using Maslow's hierarchy of needs

theory model, these authors found that training programs in the organization support employees, show reductions in employee turnover, and increase employee retention.

Organizations attained success with retention when their most fabulous employees remain in the organizations due to the work atmosphere (Delic et al., 2017). Industry leaders regularly compete in recruiting and keeping the best talent by suggesting excellent opportunities to employees (Chakrabarti & Guha, 2016; Guha & Chakrabarti, 2016). Influences that generate interest among employees could decrease turnover rates and increase employee performance and organizational productivity (Friebel et al., 2017). Consistent with Vroom's (1964) theory, these insights included knowing that motivation rests on employees' expectations. Employees' motivational levels depend on their expectations for advancement and recognition for success (Brawley & Pury, 2016). While employee inspiration affects employee satisfaction, employee inspiration does not affect employee loyalty (Cahuc et al., 2016). This phenomenon might vary from company to company, depending on the specific dynamics of each company.

### ***Retention Strategies***

The main contributor to an organization's success is retention strategies (Bibi et al., 2018; Kumar & Mathimaran, 2017). Employee retention is safeguarding current employment relationships (Michael et al., 2016). Developing retention strategies remains the most efficient solution for reducing turnover rates (Lin & Liu, 2017). Trucking company leaders who address the current truck driver shortage employ many retention strategies (Cole, 2018). Employees enhance their performance when their job satisfaction level is worthwhile their contribution (Muskan & Lakshmi, 2018). Organizational leaders



who implement successful retention strategies help decrease turnover, reduce recruiting and training costs, and expand organizations' profitability (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017). There are five elements needed to attract and retain employees in an organization (Ng, 2016). The five elements consist of meaningful work, growth opportunities, excellent management, inclusive/flexible, fun working environment, and leadership. Organizations with high employee turnover experiences are less productive than organizations with high employee retention, and leaders implement strategies (Al Mamun & Hasan, 2017). Attracting employees to the company would need a follow-up action to ensure retention rather than attrition. Organizations with a decent and clean work environment positively affect retention (Lee et al., 2019; Tian & Gamble, 2018; Wang & Brower, 2019).

Maloni et al. (2017) agreed that truck drivers' pay is a primary extrinsic need. Trucking company leaders can positively influence driver turnover by meeting and satisfying the truck driver's needs (Maloni et al., 2017). Park and Shaw noted that human resource management systems should focus on those strategies that shape employees' interpersonal skills (i.e., faith, communication, and mutual respect). These generally have a beneficial effect on decreasing employee turnover. Hale et al. (2016) applied Mobley's Employee Turnover Model to examine employees' perceptions of the external labor market (such as expected helpfulness of search and evaluation of substitutes) and their intentions to explore actual job-search activities.

### ***Leadership***

Leaders leading in the 21st century have distinct leading abilities than leaders who teach in the 20th century (Celik et al., 2016). The definition of leadership differs on the

leadership importance to individuals (Dong et al., 2017). The process of influencing others and get them to achieve goals and tasks for organizations in leadership (Allen, 2017). Leaders play a significant role in creating a better work environment by addressing employee concerns and organizations' interests (Ivanov et al., 2018). In organizations, leaders must understand the importance of necessary changes from an existing routine to a possible culture that endorses productivity, performance, and increased job satisfaction (Baro et al., 2017). The capability to motivate employees and get them to use their skills and resources to execute tasks hinges on leadership (Lindblom et al., 2016). Organizational leaders must establish what duties are mandatory (Han et al., 2016). Employees who see an organization's overall goal feel the excitement in the workplace and have higher performance levels resulting in fewer turnovers for the company (Babakus et al., 2017). A leader's leadership style is crucial when developing organizational learning processes and achieving innovation, high performance, and competitiveness (Kim et al., 2017). Competent transformational leaders have high levels of emotional intelligence.

Muenjohn and McMurray (2016) stated that leadership affects organizations and individuals. Ahmed et al. (2016) and Silingiene and Skeriene (2016) reported that to increase organizational commitment, leaders must understand employees (their bodies, minds, and spirits). Job satisfaction has a significant positive impact on affective organizational commitment (Chordiya et al., 2017). Training creates a positive effect on employee commitment (Hakimian et al., 2016; Johnson et al., 2018; Ocen et al., 2017). In organizations, engaged employees are passionate and productive leaders. Sadat et al.

(2016) cited that the quality of work life influences employees' commitment. An involved employee is conscious of the business atmosphere and works with associates to increase job performance.

Dempsey and Reilly (2016) suggested that when organizational leaders learn how to engage their employees, they may be more likely to implement creativity and resources to address retention in the industry. Leadership development should not be a short-term assignment but a learning philosophy for organizations. Organizational leaders' ability to be committed and render their support to employees serves as motivating factors for employees, enhancing employee participation in the organization, thus reducing the employee's turnover intention (Kantanen et al., 2017). Other things to become satisfied with the job are opportunities to use their talents and be creative, the chance to take up their work responsibility, and a healthy working environment that supports employee security (Barry et al., 2018). Using up-to-date technology that enhances faster work achievement, flexible benefits, and exciting work that offers various challenges to the employees are great motivators (Wu et al., 2017). Employees' motivation with adequate support reduces employee turnover intentions (Kantanen et al., 2017; Victor & Hoole, 2017). To deter employees from leaving their jobs, organizational leaders have natural ways to keep them (Sun & Wang, 2017). This study's benefits include providing information to help leaders in the hospitality industry learn how to retain trained employees and decrease their high employee turnover rates.

Chen et al. (2016) recommended that organizational leaders provide training and other resources to their employees. For example, training allows them to improve their

job performance and increases motivation and overall morale since employees believe that their leaders are concerned about their success (Chen et al., 2016). Also, improving leadership skills increases the effectiveness of interpersonal rapport with employees. Leaders should build a foundational and trusting relationship with the employees (Northouse, 2018). Leaders must recognize what motivates employees to achieve employee success and increased productivity. Production decreases when employees lack engagement and costs organizations financial gain (Jiang & Luo, 2018; MacLennan, 2017). Huselid (2017) suggested that employees' expectations and attitudes toward their jobs contribute to their job satisfaction. Leaders must lessen job dissatisfaction, encourage employees to stay on their jobs, and remain productive (Dubbelt et al., 2019). Ćwiklicki (2016) noted that educational leave, tuition incentives, and flexible work hours (i.e., flextime and pay) are measures of these activities.

Menguc et al. (2016) posited that employee motivation and satisfaction could indicate how significant supervisory influence creates positive employee outcomes. In other industries, like hospitality, leaders need strategies and policies to maintain an adequate workforce and improve employee motivation, engagement, job satisfaction, and work environment within the industry (Frederiksen, 2017; Marshall et al., 2016). Boehe (2016) suggested that Fiedler formed and established that the least preferred coworker contingency model in Fiedler's 1967 focused on relationships between traits and leadership success. In the research study, Boehe noted that leaders' most satisfactory working conditions included quality working relations with followers. In a thoroughly developed system of employee productivities and incentives, human resource

development identified by Abba (2018) found that training supported and provided employees with daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly tasks have a positive relationship with job satisfaction, which leads to employee retention.

These relationships start on growth, respect, trust, achievement, and confidence-building (Jiang & Luo, 2018; Poole, 2016). Leadership effectiveness could transform the viability of an organization and endorse job satisfaction among workers. Once leaders have the authority to identify employees' concerns, take responsibility for anything that happens to everyone in the organization, and improve workplace settings (Ciulla et al., 2018). Employees who fail to understand their job duties and expectations can become disappointed and frustrated with the jobs. Disappointment and frustration can result in employee turnover (Solaja et al., 2016). So, as a result, the employee turnover rate increases. Integrating transformational leadership into small trucking companies could help business owners influence truck drivers to stay in the trucking industry.

Effective communication is essential to the success of organizations (Zakaria, 2016). Page et al. (2016) suggested that active listening eradicates the behavioral barriers that inhibit effective communication. Goal-setting research conducted by other experts such as Eunmi and Joseph (2016) noted that when employees are at work, they are incredibly productive when they know their expectations. Also, Eunmi and Joseph identified that feedback from performance management takes place in several ways. Henderson et al. (2017) and Zakaria (2016) stated that as the business environment changes into a global market, practicing effective communication may require managers to change their established worldviews. Holmes and Parker (2017) noted that leaders use

behavioral integrity and credibility to motivate language or a way to talk to individuals. Leaders should adequately create exciting ideas to improve productivity, services, and promote profitable returns (Hakimian et al., 2016; Han et al., 2016). Leadership styles are critical to organizations (Kara et al., 2018). Transformational leaders contribute to keeping employees in the trucking industry. Leaders with different leadership styles are decent and thought-provoking features. Transformational leaders are critical managers of organizational success (Bormann & Rowold, 2016). Transformational leaders reduce turnover intentions among employees (Alatawi, 2017).

Leaders with multiple leadership styles must address organizational issues (Hakimian et al., 2016; Hale et al., 2016; Henderson et al., 2017; Zakaria, 2016). In similar studies, Bercu (2017) and DeClercQ and Belausteguigoitia (2017) noted that managers need to develop their transformational leadership skills as empowerment to motivate employees, as well as deliver valuable knowledge that will make employees' trust, be happy with what they do, and build a career. Managers are the closest to employees, and they must understand and cultivate rapport with employees to facilitate their interest and build trust for the organization (Ju et al., 2016).

Organizational leaders must understand that employees have set goals; they need to meet those fixed goals and be with an organization to fulfill their heart desires. Through understanding, employees have set goals and need managers to implement effective strategies, reducing employee turnover intention (Lin & Liu, 2017). Employees' motivation is essential for organizational leaders to meet employees' self-esteem, respect, and recognition to help employees improve their work ethics, interest, and individual

health on the job (Crumpton, 2016). Employee motivation predicts performance and commitment as it is the force that energizes, directs, and sustains employees on the job (Crumpton, 2016). Goal setting, therefore, would be necessary for both the leaders and employees.

### **Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is employees having a state of mind towards the job (Sailaja & Naik, 2016). Job satisfaction and motivation improve employee retention through organizational strategies (Mathieu et al., 2016). Job satisfaction has five key components: (a) benefits, (b) communication, (c) employment satisfaction, (d) training, and (e) pay (Ukil, 2016). Popli and Rizvi (2016) suggested that many variables affect employee engagement and may include HR, organizational culture, and values. Hung and Wu (2016) noted that organizational commitment positively affects job satisfaction. Company leaders attempt to maximize the efficiency in the performance of their employees and the contractual arrangements. Forced attrition necessitates the dissolution of the lowest 20% of workers, which helps the organization grow efficiently.

Vogel (2017) signified that business leaders help maintain sustainability with the challenges of promoting product quality. Leaders responding to sustainability challenges may improve their standing with stakeholders and potentially translate into a more reliable reputation. de Brito and de Oliveira (2016) identified that organizational performance has a significant negative correlation between employee turnover or organizational size. Allison et al. (2016) found that organizations' leaders should commit more time and resources to motivate employees to achieve job satisfaction.

Yi-Feng (2016) conveyed a connection between job satisfaction and an employees' ability on the job. Leaders have the authority to improve employees' job performance by applying decision-making strategies to increase job motivation and satisfaction (Bozionelos, 2016). When leaders employ employee training techniques to improve diversity, turnover decreases (Grissom et al., 2016). Several researchers, Ali et al., noted the relationship explored between leadership and employee job satisfaction. Satisfied employees achieve organizational goals and objectives (Mendis, 2017). Nyberg et al. (2018) and Okwudili and Edeh (2017) stated that compensation or a competitive pay system is a possible motivating measure for an employee, affecting employee turnover intentions. Kuranchie-Mensah and Amponsah-Tawiah (2016) examined the influence of employee work motivation and work performance on mining workers and found that employee motivation curbs industrial unrest and employee turnover intentions.

### **Motivation**

Motivation is a condition or action that inspires a person to do a job or activity as much as possible (Rasmi et al., 2017). Wang et al. (2017) recommended that an employee's motivation is the key to any successful organization because it builds employee morale, increases productivity, and makes organizations stay competitive in the market. Ezam (2018) expressed that a connection exists between job satisfaction and employee motivation. Organizational leaders should note that employees' job satisfaction, management attitudes, and management behavior do not pay employees to stay at their jobs, decreasing their turnover intention. Kubica and Szarucki (2016) explored employee motivation in Poland's family firm, with 70 % of its operating market



entities. They found that employee motivation was vital through education, training, and career development. Organizational leaders offering competitive incentives and feedbacks help reduce the employee's intention to quit their job. Therefore, company leaders must consider motivating the employees through any actual means for their growth and development.

### **Causes of Turnover**

A significant concern for organizations is that employee turnover is costly (Seyrek & Turan, 2017; Potgieter et al., 2018). Employee turnover costs organizations over \$25 billion a year in the United States, and this figure fluctuates continually (U.S. BLS, 2016). Employee turnover can damage an organization and negatively affect the bottom line (Cohen et al., 2016; Kim & Hyun, 2017). High employee turnover is a reoccurring incidence in organizations, affecting performance and productivity, diminishing organizational resources (Zulu et al., 2017). Employee turnover is involuntary or voluntary. Hom et al. (2017) noted that voluntary turnover is the employee willingly leaving an organization for any reason. Involuntary turnover is the organization dismissing the employee because the employee is not qualified or no longer meets the organization's needs. Tan et al. (2019) noted that there are no reasons why employees voluntarily leave organizations despite the current research. An organizational leader's ability to retain talent has a lot to do with employee turnover (Gandy et al., 2018).

Turnover intention is when employees explicitly state they want or plan to leave their present occupation (Buzeti et al., 2016; Liao et al., 2017). Guha and Chakrabarti (2016) noted that employee turnover has been costly to an organization. In the United

States, turnover costs are \$25 billion yearly, and hiring new workers and training them typically cost around 500 times the employees' salary. Schlechter et al. (2016) stated that employee turnover costs range from 90% to more than 200% of the leaving employee's salary. Marasi et al. (2016) and Elmadag and Ellinger (2018) explained that business managers continue to find ways to develop job embeddedness to raise retention and reduce hiring, training, and turnover costs. In the trucking industry, retention thrives on human resource management practices.

The high costs involve the total amount paid to hire a new employee, fees, and job posting in the recruitment processes until the new employee joins the organization (Kumar & Patel, 2017). Uncertainty, Flint et al. noted that calculating turnover costs effectively from an economic point of view is impossible due to the many hidden expenses involved. So, it is vital to identify the cause of voluntary employee turnover and create effective retention strategies. Turnover intention is the willingness to resign from an organization voluntarily and permanently (Xie et al., 2016). Organizational culture incorporates an organization's morals, beliefs, and behaviors (Adams et al., 2016). Incidentally, many employees further their schooling believing additional knowledge and training will increase their possibilities for advancement.

Nevertheless, high employee turnover continues to be a problem in industries with some researchers and new information on the influencing factors of turnover intention. Yigit and Bozkurt (2017) explained that organizational leaders and employees engage in specific roles in companies' sustainability. Narayanan (2016) noted that employee turnover might influence organizational performance through several cost types:

recruitment choice, pre-departure, orientation, and lost productivity. Direct and indirect costs are two types of turnover (Faulkner, 2016; Holtom & Burch, 2016). According to Holtom and Burch (2016), direct prices also include tangible costs such as recruitment and selection. These also include training costs and indirect costs, such as lost production and organization morale. A challenging problem for leaders is employee turnover with a lasting effect (Belete, 2018; Wang et al., 2017). Of critical importance is a leader's understanding that voluntary turnover, involuntary turnovers, and the intent to quit are all costly for organizations.

Wong and Wong (2017) noted that in China, double-digit turnover rates and turnover intention are experienced in organizations after implementing strategies that improve employee performance. Productivity and profitability are essential to the success and survival of organizations (Ugoani, 2016). Ugoani (2016) also stated that employees are significant assets that could affect companies' productivity and profitability. The employee turnover rate and turnover intention are due to a lack of perceived organizational support, affective commitment, distributive justice, trust in the organization, and job security. Appiah-Adu and Amoako (2016), studying marketing strategies, found that employee turnover negatively affected employee productivity. High employee turnover could end in adverse outcomes for an organization's performance and the economy (Ceyda et al., 2016). Organizations may lose money when employees leave the company. Employee turnover could lead to unemployment and hurt financial activities (Mehrnoosh & Jouzaryan, 2016). Business organizations can lose some of their highest resources when well-skilled employees exit their businesses (Narayanan, 2016).

Therefore, company leaders must monitor employee behavior elements that might point to employee exit possibilities.

When organizations invest in ongoing employee training and development, employee loyalty could also increase (Douglas-Lenders et al., 2017; Talwar & Thakur, 2016). Furthermore, skilled, knowledgeable, and trained employees are most valued in an organization (Neerpal & Kidong, 2015). Managers who implement training programs may increase corporate retention rates (Lockwood & Euler, 2016; Ruck et al., 2017). To reduce voluntary turnover and retain employees, managers should consider the strategies in place, what they utilize effectively, and other options. By understanding the common reasons for voluntary employee turnover, managers will increase retention and save their organizations the cost of employee turnover.

Larkin et al. (2016) noted that an employee's decision to pursue voluntary turnover might include numerous factors, such as incentives, the number of times employees worked for the organization, and organizational culture. Larkin et al. suggested that when employees decided that working at a company was not worth the time or effort, they exited the company to pursue new employment. Nuhn and Wald (2016) noted that there are motivational forces behind turnover intentions. Organizational leaders can develop employees' satisfaction through competitive pay, promotional opportunities, and yearly appraisals. Employees' career commitment results from organizational commitment, which is a motivating factor that bridges the gap between task complexity and employee turnover intentions.

Johnson and Friend (2015) noted that job satisfaction positively affects job performance and organizational commitment. An employee's commitment to an organization can significantly indicate how well the organization can retain its most treasured employees. Employees with the intent to quit their jobs had little emotional loyalty. Organizational commitment greatly affected employee performance and permitted managers to control the relationship between job performance and job-related stress (Kumpikaite-Valiuniene et al., 2016).

According to Naik and Srinivasan (2016), job stress is one factor of employees' workplace performance. The researchers suggested that observed job role stress determines employee loyalty to the organization and their intention to remain or vacate the organization. Asiedu et al. (2017) observed the connection between job stress and employee turnover and recognized that job stress predicts an employee's turnover intention. Saratun (2016) stated that two-thirds of employees are exposed to job stress, specified by the American Psychological Association. Employees exposed to emotional labor may result in job stress, lower self-esteem, and an intent to leave, affecting job satisfaction and self-esteem (Yang et al., 2016). Emotional exhaustion is an employees' ability to commit to a job that might influence turnover intention (Cho et al., 2017). To find a more satisfying career, employees voluntarily leave their jobs based on job characteristics, supervisors, and coworker attitudes (Lu et al., 2016). The success of organizational leaders at reducing employee turnover centers on management's role to mitigate any unwanted job stress should include the workers in the work's decision-making of strategies and goals.

Ferreira et al. (2017) stated that occupational stress in an organization acknowledged occupational stress linked to employees' health and safety. Employee work-family-related difficulties contribute to employees' motivational needs, encouraging them to leave their jobs and searching for another one that supports them to balance a work-family relationship and reduce turnover intent (Rastogi et al., 2018). The forerunner of job satisfaction and turnover intention is employee burnout (Amponsah-Tawiah et al., 2016). Leading up to turnover intentions, an employees' poor integration on the job, underemployment, stressful situation, and exhaustive work environment can precede employee burnout (Packirisamy et al., 2017). A company's safety performance may impact truck driver turnover (Miller et al., 2017). Kim et al. (2017) distinguished burnout as a mediating role in employee job satisfaction and performance. A critical element to business performance is sustaining a workable workforce (Sun & Wang, 2017).

Hurley (2015) examined the importance of organizations prioritizing employee well-being in the workplace. He studied whether this strategy was effective in curtailing employee turnover. Hurley researched 275 fast-food and convenience stores to connect the relationship between employee turnover and consumer satisfaction. Through correlational analysis, Hurley identified that full-time and part-time employees varied relative to the link between customer satisfaction and employee turnover. Organizations with higher levels of turnover rates for full-time employees also received low ratings for customer satisfaction. Dissatisfied employees are more likely to commit a voluntary turnover, creating higher turnover rates (Dubey et al., 2016). Hurley noted that employee turnover could directly affect customer satisfaction. There is a relationship between job

satisfaction and turnover intention (Colorafi & Evans, 2016). When job satisfaction is proficient, and the person appreciated for a job well done is job satisfaction. In organizations, the people meeting the standards set the example for the individuals around them, the workers, customers' expectations, and meeting values (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Passion gives subjective feelings through which motivation emerges, and perception serves excitement (Li et al., 2016). When employees are motivated, it helps them prepare their minds towards achieving their goals and that of the organization, thus reducing turnover intention (Lalatendu et al., 2018). To enhance group effectiveness, leaders must be excellent communicators (Dunne et al., 2016). Bonaccio et al. (2016) implied that nonverbal behaviors could serve as an information communication method that signals messages among interacting individuals, just as verbal communication. The problem of employee turnover signifies a critical challenge for organizations, industries, and sectors.

### **Transition**

In Section 1, I used Herzberg et al. (1959) two-factor theory, also known as the motivation-hygiene theory, as the conceptual framework for increasing truck driver retention. Company leaders can successfully retain truck drivers when company leaders' needs are like truck drivers' needs. I also summarized academic literature regarding successful retention strategies reported for truck drivers in all industries.

In Section 2, I will present several parts of the study, such as restating the purpose statement, the researcher's role, selecting participants, a thorough description of the

qualitative research method, research design (case study), population, and sampling. The project section includes a discussion of ethical research, data collection instruments and techniques, data organization technique, data analysis, validity and reliability, data saturation, and the transitional paragraph. Section 3 will contain an introduction to the research study results. Section 3 will include the summary results of the research study findings, presentation of the findings, detailed discussion on the applicability of the findings to the professional practice of business, and the theoretical exploration for how and why the results are relevant to enhance business practices. Section 3 will also contain the implications for social change with recommendations for improvements to businesses, communities, individuals, societies, and suggestions for the trucking industry. Finally, Section 3 will include the recommendations for further research, reflections, and conclusion.



## Section 2: The Project

Section 2 explains my role as the researcher and the selected qualitative research method. I also provide justification for the participants, population, and sampling and proper steps in obtaining approval from the institutional review board (IRB). Section 2 contains a discussion of the participants' safety and privacy, ethics in qualitative research, data collection instruments, data collection techniques, data organization technique, data analysis, reliability and validity, and data saturation. The section ends with a transition and summary.

### **Purpose Statement**

This qualitative single case study was aimed to explore strategies trucking company leaders used to increase truck driver retention. The research population for this study comprised five trucking company leaders in the southeast United States who successfully implemented strategies to increase truck driver retention. The implications for positive social change include the potential to provide leaders with new data on retention strategies to increase truck driver retention, thereby reducing unemployment rates in the southeast United States. When voluntary employee turnover decreases, employment security increases, producing social and economic opportunities in the local communities (Acikgoz et al., 2016). Improving job satisfaction and security for truck drivers can advance their professional and personal lives. When applied, this study's results may also increase companies' productivity and profitability, improve job creation, financial improvement, and new and enhanced local programs, activities, and services within local economies and communities. Job creation occurs in communities with

already thriving businesses (Mohammed et al., 2017). This study could also help company leaders worldwide change their focus, attitudes, and work practices to benefit their companies and local communities.

### **Role of the Researcher**

The researcher's role encapsulates research involvement (Kumar & Cavallaro, 2017). The goal of a researcher is to add to the body of knowledge (Yin, 2016). In qualitative studies, the researcher's role is to recruit participants, gather unbiased data while protecting participants, record and analyze data, and present the findings (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I was the primary instrument for data collection in this qualitative case study (see Yin, 2017). I conducted semistructured interviews with eight individuals at five trucking companies that successfully implemented retention strategies to reduce truck driver turnover. An acute researcher asks questions and interacts with participants to make sense of the experiences that require reporting (McTat & Leffler, 2017). I asked participants to provide detailed descriptions to answer the interview questions (see Appendix A) supported by the research question. Researchers conducting semistructured interviews should allow participants to give in-depth descriptions (Scott, 2016). The process of collecting data included recruiting participants, collecting participant information through interviews, reviewing documents in the participants' company archives, analyzing data, and thoroughly reviewing and synthesizing the findings with recommendations.

The topic of this study was close to me because of my involvement in the trucking industry. However, I had no professional or personal relationships with any of the

organizations or research participants in the study. My work experience in the trucking industry provided insight into truck driver turnover challenges that organizational leaders encountered. I am currently managing operations in a trucking company, with direct knowledge of driver turnover's negative impacts on organizations and their viability. To remain unbiased throughout the interview process, I conducted the study without any personal opinions or actions.

As part of my role, I was also aware that researchers must establish, gain access, and highlight good working relationships with participants to increase objectivity (Peticca-Harris et al., 2016; Srinivasan et al., 2016). The researcher must also protect the participants' safety and interest to ensure that the findings benefit individuals (Bereza, 2017). After receiving the necessary approval from Walden University's IRB, data collection began, which ensured that I complied with the university's ethical standards while conducting research (Adams & Miles, 2018; Morris & Morris, 2016). Additionally, the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research (1979) created the *Belmont Report* to highlight ethical requirements for research involving human subjects and to protect the rights of participants (Pierce et al., 2019). The *Belmont Report* outlines the ethical standards for principles and guidelines that researchers must follow to protect human participants' safety and rights (Chan et al., 2017; Grady & Fauci, 2016). A method to protect the participants in a study is confidentiality (Petrova et al., 2016). Researchers must develop guidelines to ensure participants' protection (Chan et al., 2017). I followed the *Belmont Report's* principles of respect-for-persons, beneficence, and justice. I did not show favoritism when assessing,

sharing, treating, or distributing benefits and risks and adhering to the process of beneficence while acknowledging and respecting independence (Denzin & Giardina, 2016).

Researchers must also mitigate personal bias to achieve integrity in gathering data and the analysis (Lewis, 2015). Carefully listening and understanding the participants' perspectives should mitigate bias despite the researcher's views (Fusch & Ness, 2015). To prevent seeing data through a personal lens during the data collection and analysis, I suppressed my personal views by remaining neutral while exploring the topic's validity. Further, researchers must stay alert and not bring personal bias into the study (Birt et al., 2016). Researchers must be aware of biased opinions during data collection to ensure unbiased findings (Karagiozis, 2018). I remained open to the experiences of each participant's perspective, even if I had opposing views. Researchers reviewing data must shift among inductive and rational thinking to identify the data's bias and remain objective rather than subjective interpretation, not changing the understanding (Strong, 2016).

Finally, as the primary researcher, I facilitated interviews and participated in sampling, data collection, analysis, and data interpretation. Reliable data collecting is essential to ensure trustworthy research findings (Taib et al., 2019). Researchers should develop interview techniques and select the correct method for successful interviews (Yin, 2018). Interview protocols help to set the interview tone, establish order, facilitate uniformity, and help participants understand their rights (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). I created and applied my interview protocol to improve data quality, increase reliability,

and collect detailed, rich data (see Appendix B). An interview protocol enhances data collection and data saturation (Salterio et al., 2016). The interview protocol includes guidelines for the researcher and every participant. Using an interview protocol helps educate participants about the interviewing process and maintain consistency by asking the same set of questions to all participants on successful strategies that trucking company leaders use to increase truck driver retention (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

### **Participants**

Researchers use eligibility criteria to select experienced participants who can provide pertinent and valuable data about the population (Griffith et al., 2016; Latiffi et al., 2016). The eligibility criteria for this study included participants who (a) are older than 18 years old, (b) have 2 successful years of experience as a leader in a trucking company in the southeast region of the United States, and (c) have used successful strategies to increase truck driver retention. Leaders of trucking companies control issues that influence driver retention through purposeful strategy implementation (Douglas & Swartz, 2016; Koç et al., 2016; Williams et al., 2017). Interviewees did not include truck drivers as part of the study, only company leaders.

Several scholars highlighted strategies of identifying gatekeepers who could assist researchers through this process (Peticca-Harris et al., 2016; Richard & Bélanger, 2018). Individuals who introduce the researcher to participants and help participants receive the researcher as an insider are often seen as gatekeepers (Dempsey et al., 2016). To gain access to research, I followed specific steps. I worked with a particular trucking company

leader to identify individuals who met the study's criteria. Researchers can also use multiple sources for gaining access to participants (Amundsen et al., 2017).

I called each listed company to speak to the respective leaders to gain access to the participants. Researchers can monitor prospective participants' behavior and then ask for commitment (Mauceri, 2016). For example, short phone conversations with qualified participants helped explore the possibility of recruiting the business leader. The first step was to identify a high-level leader in the company who could help me identify the company's participants. The next step was to reach out to those identified by the company leader. The plan for gaining access to participants often depends on a researcher's professional and personal characteristics and others' perceptions (Chan et al., 2017).

An internet search was also valuable to find companies operating within the geographic study area of coverage. To identify which company I would work with, I used the internet to identify potential organizations and interviewing participants as an effective way to gain participants' access (see Maramwidze-Merrison, 2016). The North Carolina Chamber of Commerce and Small Business Administration databases assisted in the search for prospects. Listings and publications often included email and location addresses.

To ensure that the participants' characteristics are aligned with the overarching research question, a researcher must employ an appropriate research design (Johnston, 2017). I created and sent in the form of an invitational document to company leaders to introduce me, provide the background and guidelines of the study as well as my

responsibilities during the search process to help participants make an informed decision on whether to participate in the study (Bailey & Bailey, 2017). Emails and postal recruitment letters contained consent forms (see Barringer et al., 2017; Combs, 2017). I made sure that the recruitment letter stipulated the criteria for selecting the study participants. Company leaders who met the required criteria and aligned with the overarching research question participated in the study.

Communication, trust, and respect from the researcher culminates in establishing good relationships with participants (Sandvik & McCormack, 2018). Establishing, gaining access, and highlighting good working relationships with participants increases objectivity (Peticca-Harris et al., 2016; Srinivasan et al., 2016). Respecting confidentiality is vital for building good research relationships well (Dikko, 2016).

## **Research Method and Design**

### **Research Method**

Researchers use three research methods: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods (Major, 2016; Makrakis & Kostoulos-Makrakis, 2016; Mauceri, 2016; Yin, 2017). Selecting the appropriate research method and design improves the research's direction to assist in the best strategies and activities applied to solve a problem (Venable et al., 2016). Researchers must select the appropriate research method to operate as the pathway to seeking solutions to the research questions that formed the study's basis (Scott, 2016; Scholars & Cypress, 2018). The qualitative research method was the appropriate method for the study because of the focus on participants' experiences (see Liao & Hitchcock, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). Researchers use qualitative methodology to

understand complex human experiences (Englander, 2016; Silverman, 2016). Using the qualitative method, researchers seek to explore human behavior in real-life situations using interactive research paradigms to guide data collection (Petrescu & Lauer, 2017). Qualitative researchers investigate the contents of documents, observe behaviors, and interview participants from the target population (Bazeley, 2016). Using the qualitative method and a single case study design, I explored strategies that company leaders used in trucking companies to increase truck driver retention. The qualitative method approach helped improve the research's validity and credibility, identify the problem areas and the necessary directions (Husband et al., 2017).

Researchers use quantitative research to quantify relationships between variables, draw inferences, and use closed-ended questions (Rutberg & Bouikidis, 2018).

Researchers use the quantitative method to examine variables using statistics, test hypotheses, deploy questionnaires, analyze correlations, and quantifies causes and effects (Bernerth et al., 2017; Gummesson, 2017). Quantitative researchers answer closed-ended questions about the relationships or differences among variables in the form of correlation or comparisons (Bilgin, 2017; Taguchi, 2018). The quantitative method is not appropriate for studies when researchers explore viewpoints related to how many. A quantitative method was not appropriate for the study because I did not count outcomes, test hypotheses, and stress the issues.

A mixed-method design contains quantitative and qualitative methods (Fetters, 2016; Hesse-Biber, 2016; Saunders et al., 2015). Researchers use mixed-methods research methodology to make sense of various social phenomena (Skalidou & Oya,



2018). Neither quantitative nor mixed methods approach was appropriate for my research study because quantitative researchers examine relationships, seek to test hypotheses, answer research questions that compare, relate, describe, and find cause-and-effect relationships between variables (Doody & Bailey, 2016; Park & Park, 2016). A mixed-method approach was not suitable for this study because the investigation did not require any form of quantification.

### **Research Design**

I selected a qualitative, single case study to explore the strategies that trucking company leaders use to increase truck driver retention. Researchers use a case study design to obtain evidence from organizations, groups, or individuals (Johnston, 2017; Yin, 2018). A case study is either single or multiple (Yin, 2017). A single case study design was more appropriate for the research study since I sought to gain a comprehensive understanding of the strategies that trucking company leaders used to increase truck driver retention and did not analyze each situation at various sites. A single case study design enabled me to use a data collection method aligned with the study, interviews, and company documents (Yin, 2017). Researchers use case study designs to explore best practices within an industry when collecting data and the how and why a problem transpires (Antwi et al., 2016; Haddock-Millar et al., 2016; Ridder, 2017; Waldeck, 2017). Using such a diversity of organizational leaders gained an in-depth understanding of practical strategies that leaders use to increase truck driver retention in the trucking industry.

There are other qualitative research designs that were considered but not chosen: ethnography, narrative, and phenomenology (Gaus, 2017). In ethnography, researchers observe participants in cultural settings and gather data to understand the participants' social dynamics of shared cultures, motivations, goals, and themes (Bass & Milosevic, 2018; Rosenfeld et al., 2017). Using the ethnographic design requires extra time to gather data, observe, and record individuals within the same groups and environments with day-to-day activities (Tierney, 2017), as researchers must build a relationship to gain trust and certainty with the participants (Bamkin et al., 2016). The ethnographic approach was inappropriate because I did not study trucking company leaders' lived experiences using retention strategies to increase truck driver retention.

Researchers use a narrative design to study the lives of individuals and a personal interpretation of a life event in the person's own words or stories by conducting several interviews throughout a long extent of time (Bolton, 2015). The researcher conducting the narrative research design must establish contextual frameworks to specify specific sequential themes to determine a fundamental comprehension of the participants' experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Choosing the narrative research design would have been counterproductive because the study was not about the life story of a company leader. Data for the impending study did not hinge on the participants' lives; thus, the narrative design did not align with the purpose of this study.

Phenomenology is used to identify events, focus on subjective experiences, and understand how specific individuals experience life events (Alfakhri et al., 2018; Zahavi, 2019). Phenomenology provides researchers the chance to capture various interpretations

in full detail, but everyone's recollection could differ. The phenomenological design was not appropriate for the study because I did not explore common meanings and shared themes of participants' lived experiences.

The single case study research is an appropriate design for this study. The effort to achieve rich data involves interviews, online, digital, and physical document reviews, member checking, and triangulation to achieve data saturation. Data saturation improves the study's validity and dependability (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2018). In qualitative research, reaching data saturation is essential as the outcome of an intelligent interview activity process. Data saturation occurs when no new information emerges or is presented, and no further data is reachable (Boddy, 2016; Yin, 2017). Data saturation was essential in this qualitative research to justify filling the gaps and capturing participant-guided ideas. Researchers must achieve data saturation to accomplish reliable content. When scholars have enough data to duplicate the study, extra coding is no longer possible, and there is no new information, the researcher achieves data saturation (Kline, 2017; Malterud et al., 2016).

### **Population and Sampling**

In a qualitative study, the ideal participant sample size is between 5 and 50 (Simmons, 2016). A qualitative researcher with smaller sample sizes is more apt to gather in-depth and comprehensive inquiries (Lowther et al., 2016). Researchers with a large sample size do not mean that data saturation is reachable (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The ability to recruit and retain adequate participation is significant to the study results (Raymond et al., 2018). The population sample for this single case study consisted of at

least 5 leaders from trucking companies in the southeast region of the United States. The participants successfully implemented strategies to increase truck driver retention.

Researchers can use various sampling methods such as purposeful, snowball, convenience, and random to meet different research needs (Ranney et al., 2015).

Convenience sampling and purposeful sampling are the two most common sampling techniques used because of their alignment with qualitative research designs. Identifying and selecting participants who meet the study's required criteria is purposeful sampling (Abrahams, 2017). Convenience sampling is a nonprobability technique that permits physical closeness, easy accessibility, and specific timeframes (Etikan et al., 2016).

Random sample, also known as snowball sampling, occurs when researchers recruit existing subjects and ask for assistance to get future participants (Etikan et al., 2016).

Researchers use purposeful sampling to recruit individuals who know the topic under investigation (Yin, 2016). In purposeful sampling, the goal is to estimate the appropriate number of participants for the study (Shaw & Anderson, 2018). Researchers extensively use purposeful sampling in qualitative studies to gain meaningful and productive data (Appiah-Adu & Amoako, 2016; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). To attain a target population of participants, I used purposeful sampling.

A researcher should know when they have collected enough data for the study. A critical milestone in qualitative research is reaching saturation, wherever additional data occurs but does not lead to finding newer information about the research question (Lowe et al., 2018). One of the primary qualitative research principles is to sample data until data saturation happens (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). In this study, methodological

triangulation helped conduct a qualitative inquiry on significant cases that focus on the study's research question. Yin (2018) suggested that researchers use methodological triangulation to improve the validity of their research results through the evidentiary process. Methodological triangulation helped to achieve the necessary validity. They overcome weaknesses and biases by using one technique identified as methodological triangulation (Yin, 2018).

Data saturation occurs when additional data no longer provides any new information that could enhance the interview processes or the research study (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Data saturation means that qualitative samples must not assume data saturation (Carmichael & Cunningham, 2017). Data saturation helps a researcher determine the data collection stage and stop collecting data (Boddy, 2016). The sample size must be adequate for the researcher to reach data saturation and perform meaningful data analysis (Etikan et al., 2016). An in-depth interview is helpful in the data collection of each companies' research to verify accuracy and data reliability (Hadi & Closs, 2016).

To achieve data saturation, I used interviewing as a data collection method for this study. I organized the interview sessions to ask each participant from 5 trucking companies' leaders the same 8 open-ended questions. Researchers Basias and Pollalis (2018) stated that asking open-ended questions allowed participants to reflect on the study topic. Researchers who wisely composed interview questions would end up with robust data (Keefe et al., 2016). I reached data saturation when no new information emerged from the participants of the study. Data saturation occurred when I knew that I was not receiving any further information/responses than what I had already received

from methodological triangulation (interviews, documents review, website information reviews, etc.). Choosing participants with vital qualities helped me explore strategies that trucking company leaders used to increase truck driver retention. I used a tape recorder to gather information during the interview. To guarantee confidentiality, I did not disclose any critical information about the participants or companies. I informed the participants that participating in this study was voluntary, and they would be able to leave the study at any time. I used member checking, review of company documents and transcripts, in addition to feedback from Walden University's doctoral study committee, to alleviate bias. I use member checking and follow-up interviews to achieve data saturation.

### **Ethical Research**

As the primary researcher, I was responsible for protecting the participants, researchers, and the prospective organization with an informed consent form that covered all parties engaged in the research process and addressed ethical concerns (Greenwood, 2016; Metcalf & Crawford, 2016). Doctoral students attending Walden University must adhere to established research guidelines, obtain approval from the university's IRB, select individuals who meet the criteria and commence data collection. Following IRB approval, I dispensed the informed consent form (Appendix C) with the approval number 05-11-21-0444105. There were other features of the consent form such as (a) the background of the study, (b) the method that both interviewer and interviewee will follow, (c) the reason for the interview, (d) an introduction of the researcher, and (e) an invitation to participate.

The consent form included IRB contact information to enable the participant to contact the appropriate authorities if the need arose (Walden University, 2016). I asked the participants to sign the consent form by sending back “I consent” in an email to the researcher from the participants reading that they had read and understood the consent form. The researcher must receive the participant’s consent before the interview occurs, while no penalties will happen if the participant decides to discontinue participation (Alase, 2017). Candidates had one week to choose whether to participate. Furthermore, the participants received the information before starting the interviews. They had the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time in writing, verbally, or by email, stating that they did not want to participate in the study without any consequences even after the interviews or until members checking was complete (Blease et al., 2016). Scherzinger and Bobbert (2017) and Yip et al. (2016) noted that researchers should explain that participation was voluntary, and participants could withdraw at any time from the study. The individuals who wanted to join and contribute to the research’s progress were optional, with no intimidation, no promises of compensation, or any other reward for participating in the study in any way. Barton et al. (2016) implied that incentives are harmful and may alter the reasoning and validity of results, thus getting an individual to act against their interests. To avoid coercion, participants will not receive any compensation or incentives for participating in the study. Clarke and Higgs (2016) suggested that participants can permit interviews without demanding monetary compensation.

The entire research activity followed ethical guidelines from Walden University, which included the provisions of the Belmont Report. The Belmont Report contained ethical standards for research involving human subjects (Grady & Fauci, 2016). To demonstrate competency in ethical research, completion of human subject protection was necessary. The National Institute of Health Certification 1858860 served as evidence of preparedness. An additional component of ethical practice involved releasing the research study's purpose and protecting the participants' anonymity and confidentiality (Khasawneh & Al-Zawahreh, 2015). Walden University IRB oversees human subjects' protection in research by evaluating any potential harm to the participants. The entire process was private and confidential (Artal & Rubinfeld, 2017). Participants received an assurance that their personal information would not be released or presented to the public. Yin (2016) noted that researchers must maintain priority care and sensitivity when protecting the participants' privacy in the research study and other participants. Every aspect of the investigation was transparent to the participants. Marshall and Rossman (2016) cited that ethical researchers must balance all participants' rights, keeping the study's social benefits in mind and the researcher's rights to conduct the study. The participants understood that the research contributed to the body of knowledge, and their participation made each of them a contributor to education.

To protect the participants, researchers must keep all written and electronic data with distinguishable data related to participants or their employers in a file on a locked computer, in a secure safe, or locked storage place for at least 5 years and follow established guidelines (Combs, 2017). All data was stored in a secure filing cabinet for



safekeeping to protect participants' confidentiality and all information for 5 years. After the 5 years, all written and electronic data would undergo destruction through erasure, deletion, incineration, shredding, smashing, or otherwise breaking as appropriate for each data receptacle.

By establishing the above steps, this method guaranteed the ethical protection of all participants. When addressing ethical requirements, all case study participants' names underwent camouflaging using aliases. Researchers implement some precautionary measures to protect participants' privacy using (a) an assigned identifier instead of participants' names, (b) given participant identifier to label participant data, and (c) the assigned identifier to reference participants in the results (Scott, 2016). For example, participants received labels such as Participant 1 to distinguish the interview answers for coding and transcribing data. I was the only individual accessing the data to protect confidentiality. Researchers have shown aliasing to protect participant identity in qualitative studies (Alcover et al., 2017). This shrouding of participant information provides the necessary protection to the individuals (Yin, 2018). I assured the participants that the collected data remained confidential and safe due to the safety protocols put into place by Walden University IRB.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

Researchers' tools to retrieve information from participants in the study are data collection instruments (Yin, 2018). During this research study, I was the primary data collection instrument. The researcher is the primary data gathering tool and analysis (Nico, 2016; Yang et al., 2018). Researchers using case study methods use various data

sources such as archival of company data, in-depth interviews, documentation, and semistructured interviews (Arsel, 2017; Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Using the interview questions (Appendix A) and the interview protocol (see Appendix B), I conducted semistructured interviews for in-depth explanations of the phenomenon from participants. Researchers should consider semistructured interviews as a practical approach to gathering valuable data for the study (Brannen, 2017; Simmons, 2016). I used a semistructured interview to collect data from eight company leaders in trucking companies. In qualitative studies data collection activities consist of semistructured interviews, phone calls, email exchanges, and a blend of other approaches (Wilson et al., 2016). Secondary data sources such as documentation may provide researchers with supplementary information that enhances the findings' strength (Yin, 2018). To increase validity and improve data saturation in the research process, I used secondary data. I requested secondary data documents from company leaders. They could better understand the typical operating procedures and techniques used in organizations (Scott, 2016). I explored getting from participants extra copies of business documents and records about truck driver retention strategies, but these documents were not accessible. Sykes et al. (2018) and Yin (2018) specified that secondary data sources such as company documents might provide researchers with extra information that adds strengths to the findings. During the research process, I used secondary information to increase validity and improve data saturation.

Furthermore, the data collection process would cover activities such as interviews, collected data documents, and interviewees' physical objects (Shah et al., 2016).

Therefore, the semistructured interview served to obtain in-depth information. The semistructured interview ensured consistency in data collection in qualitative research. Under normal conditions, face-to-face interviews would place in semistructured environments using open-ended questions. Due to the current global pandemic, researchers were allowed to use telephone conversations, emails pertaining to consent, and video comms (zoom, skype, Microsoft teams, etc.) as needed. Researchers using 10 participants would justify achieving the desired saturation (Yin, 2017). Researchers in qualitative data perform authentication that guarantees an ethical approach to data collection (Davis et al., 2017). To ensure data saturation, participants must respond sufficiently to the open-ended question through a semistructured interview format. The semistructured interview atmosphere enhances complete information attainable and facilitates an adequate time for participants to return (Dasgupta, 2015).

### **Data Collection Technique**

The common types of data collection in a qualitative case study research are interviewing, archival record review of company data, in-depth interviews, and documentation to secure a thorough understanding of the business phenomenon (Arsel, 2017; Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). Researchers collect data through several methods, including company documents and interviews (Kallio et al., 2016). In this study, the data collection techniques used were semistructured interviews and telephone interviews.

For this doctoral study, the interview protocol (Appendix B) entailed semistructured interviews using open-ended interview questions to enhance validity and reliability (Dikko, 2016). The interview protocol contained guidelines for interviewing,

opening dialogues, ending dialogues, auditory recording permissions, and portions of the consent form. An interview is a primary method of collecting the data from the participant (Yin, 2017). Before approaching participants, the informed consent form and recruitment letter must have Walden University's IRB (Combs, 2017). The researcher sent an email recruitment letter (Appendix D) to all participants describing the intent, study's design, and participants' criteria. The participants sent back the signed consent forms indicating their interest in participating in the study. Before conducting the research, the researcher contacted the participants via telephone or email to answer all participants' questions.

For this study, I scheduled interviews for eight company leaders operating in the United States' southeast region. I met the participants at the specified locations, began the talks by thanking each participant, and provided a synopsis of the research topic. During the interview process, the researcher relied on the interview protocol to help guide the interview questions. Interview questions must be in alignment with the qualitative method (Yin, 2018). The technique for collecting data was a step-by-step approach. The activities consisted of participant interviews, company documents, and archival records.

The interview component followed the steps to (a) send emails to the participants to give them the consent form to read and sign by sending an email reply of "I consent" to participate in the study, (b) record each participant's information to validate identities, (c) obtain participant's permission to set up the recording either analog or digital record devices (precautionary back-up system), (d) begins the interview by asking the first question, (e) then ask the follow-up questions if the participant's response creates the

need, (f) conclude the interview session and thank the participant, and (g) hang up the phone. I did not share any personal opinions with the interviewees as the researcher. I scheduled the interviews at each participant's availability.

The interview questions constituted part of the overall interview protocol. Yin (2017) suggested that the interview protocol enables a researcher to maintain a constant flow throughout the interview process, helping the study's reliability (Yin, 2017). Appendix A listed the interview questions and served as interview prompts. The framework for interaction with the research participants was in Appendix B. These tools help obtain content-rich and thick data, identify the themes, and gather enough data from the participants. Yin (2018) stated that the semistructured interview was a valuable technique to collect data in a case study design. The semistructured interview technique underlined the subjectivity of the participants' experience (Bott & Tourish, 2016). The semistructured interview allowed in-depth data collection from identified observations built on the participants' job achievements (Islam et al., 2016). Researchers use the semistructured interview format to give participants comfort in addressing questions (Yin, 2017).

There are pros and cons to the data collection techniques. Using the face-to-face method would allow the interviewer and the participant to understand each other and develop a relationship (Kallio et al., 2016). Interaction with the participant could lead to an understanding of both the participant and the participant's industry. Researchers could find face-to-face interviews simpler to establish a rapport with participants when meeting

in person. In-person interviewing could also permit the researcher to collect extra data by recording non-verbal cues (Seitz, 2016).

Furthermore, conducting face-to-face interviews in a specified place with few interruptions advances the interview process's quality (Park & Park, 2016). When a participant is comfortable with the interview location, such as the office, the comfort level contributes to rich data. The participant would probably volunteer in-depth information in answering interview questions (Yin, 2017). I conducted member checking with the participant to ensure that I had correctly interpreted the participants' responses.

As the primary researcher, I evaluated whether the data quality reflected any limitations. Finally, the semistructured interview method included a lot of groundwork before the data was operational. The researcher-controlled data collection activities to certify quality data management.

Open-ended questions constitute one of the benefits of an interview protocol (Yin, 2017). The use of open-ended questions (Appendix A) in a semistructured interview allowed participants in this study to respond candidly and comprehensively. Every aspect of the investigative process benefited from journal entries and other shorthand quick notes. The method of notetaking during the interview allowed the researcher to adequately prepare for probing questions (Farooq & de Villiers, 2017). I used notetaking and asked follow-up questions to confirm understanding as necessary throughout the face-to-face interview process. The interviews occurred in the private meeting rooms at the company leader's site to ensure privacy. The participants understood and agreed with the plan to record. The interview's process involved analog and digital recorders as

backup systems if one device failed to register. Possible follow-up probing questions that became necessary served a useful purpose during the interviews. After the meeting, I thanked the participants for their time and information.

A significant advantage of conducting semistructured interviews with open-ended questions was that participants and the researcher might connect face-to-face individually, which could help study participants' experiences (Granot & Greene, 2015). Efforts were necessary to capture the possibility of connecting with the participant, as the first-hand contribution to disseminations might arise from the connection. A second benefit of the semistructured interview was that the researcher re-examined responses to the questions to give transparency and accuracy to the participants' answers (Yin, 2017). Semistructured interviews benefited from non-verbal cues; an interviewee's facial expressions and side comments revealed more than just the interview responses. The advantage of using the face-to-face interview for a case study was that the researcher profited from the rich framework with the interviewee and fostered a rapport because of the face time spent in the interview (Yin, 2018). Standard methods of collecting oral data in qualitative research consist of interviews (Wright et al., 2016). The advantage of face-to-face interviews using a semistructured interview technique includes (a) screening participants who met the criteria, (b) catch nonverbal signs and communication, (c) ability to stay focused, and (d) see emotions and behaviors (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). Face-to-face interview advantages were available to this study because of the qualitative methodology.

A disadvantage of the semistructured interviews is that the interviewer could influence the participants' responses and project the researcher's own bias during the study (Kodwani, 2017; Yin, 2018). The power to include participant data and secure marginalized voices in the research process helps mitigate some partiality in a semi-structured interview (Phillips, 2016). Another disadvantage of semistructured interviews is that researchers and participants could also encounter time-consuming interviews, data gathering, and travel costs to meet with subjects in person (Seitz, 2016; Yin, 2018). However, the interview duration was not entirely within my control, depending on the length and depth of responses and follow-up questioning. The disadvantage of using face-to-face interviews is an opportunity for bias (Yin, 2016), and the researcher may impact the outcomes of what happens. Therefore, the investigative process included steps to mitigate bias. Another disadvantage of using face-to-face interviews as the data collection technique was that the participant could provide data to the researcher that would be inaccurate. Steps were necessary to avoid personal opinions. Participants were encouraged to give unbiased feedback. Fischer et al. (2017) and Vogl (2015) highlighted the disadvantages of face-to-face interviews using a semistructured interview technique.

Birt et al. (2016) and Combs (2017) described member checking as a process the researcher used to restate, summarize, or paraphrase the information received from participants in the study to make sure the comments' interpretation was correct. I conducted member checking with participants to verify that I correctly interpreted the participants' answers. Birt et al. (2016) stated that researchers could decide if the data were correct by confirming the researcher's interpretations of the data ensuring alignment



with the participants' feedback. Member checking is significant in determining if interpretations and themes accurately reflect the participants' thoughts. Researchers use member checking to increase the interview process's justification (David et al., 2016). I questioned the participants to see if any changes needed to occur from the participant's perspectives. If I received a 'yes,' I made the necessary adjustments to the participants' responses. I followed the process of restating the participants' viewpoints. In turn, the participant confirmed, denied, or corrected my interpretations. Researchers grant participants the chance to examine any misrepresentation of participants' answers. I ensured that I accurately got each participants' perspectives.

### **Data Organization Technique**

Document tracking is of critical importance to any study. A platform to remove and store vital information to use in practice is a data organization technique (Yadav et al., 2018). Applications such as Microsoft Word, NVivo, Microsoft Access, digital audio recorder, and other items help conduct research studies. Data organization techniques consist of recording, journaling, and reporting different occurrences throughout the investigative process (Min et al., 2017; Yin, 2018). Researchers can use a journal to record observations and jot down information when conducting interviews (Yin, 2018).

Johnson (2015) recommended that researchers assign the data from interviews a code for identification purposes during data collection procedures, data analysis, and critical reflection. I used the following tools: a notepad, Microsoft Word, a cell phone with a camera, and a voice recorder during the interview process. Researchers using MS Word password-protected files ensure the integrity and reliability of the data identified in

records, including nonverbal signs, interview locations, and unusual occurrences. A way to classify the data is to list the participants with a unique code. The coding process created codes for all participants using labels to name and number the data separately. The code name for participants was a *leader* for participants and a letter and a number, for example, P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5.

Post-investigation data storage in this study was critical to protecting the research participants (Simmons, 2016). Jianghong et al. (2015) emphasized that data and interview transcripts should remain securely stored using dependable technology. I gathered and stored the data in an electronic format on a password-protected laptop and flash drive. The researcher ensured that the data were put into the data analysis software was kept in a version of the computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software program, NVivo12, to unify, evaluate transcribe data Microsoft word. Among the various brands and types of software designed to assist in managing and facilitating qualitative research, I used Nvivo12 software to ensure the collected data's systematic organization, coding, and help analyze the data.

The primary analysis process in this study was data transcribing. The raw data consisted of participant responses migrated through data input into the analysis software to execute the associated tasks. Woolf and Silver (2017) explained that Nvivo12 was appropriate for qualitative research. The investigative aspect of this study included the use of NVivo12. An essential element of NVivo was that the software permitted team-based coding, which was not helpful to this study (Robins & Eisen, 2017). NVivo feature provided a robust operational capability that benefited this study, especially considering

that I interviewed eight participants. Critical to qualitative analysis, understanding software mechanics allowed for group coding and established labor division (Robins & Eisen, 2017). However, some of the features were avoidable for the study. NVivo facilitates framework synthesis and provides a clear audit track refining assurance in the synthesis findings (Hakimian et al., 2016; Han et al., 2016; Hung & Wu, 2016). I ensured the capturing of all participants' information and securely storing data in adherence to Walden University's IRB requirements and ethical policy. After 5 years, I will delete all participants' electronic data from the laptop, scan disk drives, and destroy all paper archives according to Walden University guidelines.

### **Data Analysis**

This research activity relied on processes that engendered quality. The procedures supported the pursuit of valuable data. Researchers use various methods to analyze the collected data (Stewart et al., 2017). Researchers use methodological triangulation to enhance the study's credibility and trustworthiness (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The concept of methodological triangulation indicates the pursuit of quality in the data analysis of the study. This study involved using specific data analysis like methodological triangulation, one of the four triangulation types. Denzin (1970) suggested that there are four types of triangulations that qualitative researchers could use such as (a) data triangulation, which include gathering data from several sampling strategies; (b) investigator triangulation, which involves several researchers gather and interpret data; (c) theoretical triangulation is using more than one academic position in analyzing the data; and (d) methodological

triangulation, involves more than one method for gathering data. Yin (2018) stated that researchers used multiple data sources like methodological triangulation data.

Researchers used various data sources to identify patterns in a case study (Yin, 2018). Organizing, reviewing, coding, and developing themes were recognized as the data analysis process (Johnston, 2017). Data analysis starts with the researcher gathering notes, recorded interviews, physical artifacts, and additional collected material connected to the research topic (Yin, 2018). Therefore, all the messages emanating from the investigation, constituting data, will necessitate methodological triangulation in the analysis. In qualitative research, data analysis reviews the data to find meaningful themes and patterns (Guo & Guo, 2016). To search for meaning, the corroboration of information using verbal and written evidence was necessary.

Methodological triangulation is how researchers collect data from several sources to merge the data (Drouin et al., 2015). Researchers use methodological triangulation from the interview data to ensure that as much material as possible arises from the investigation through all potential sources (Perkmann & Schildt, 2015). Case study findings are more convincing and accurate if the study data are from several sources before data convergence (Yin, 2018). In this qualitative study, I collected data from company documents and semistructured interviews. I organized the compiled data in Microsoft Word and then imported the information into NVivo for disassembly. In line with the above scholarly posture, data from interviews, physical document reviews, and archival record reviews converged as input into NVivo12.

Researchers theorized that triangulation was associated with rigor because investigators led the research, using a one participant population or one method of collecting data, which was less rigorous because of a small-scope study that offered no option of comparing numerous viewpoints (Varpio et al., 2017). I reviewed the transcribed data from interview recordings, journal notes, archival records, and physical document reviews to detect patterns, groupings, and reoccurring themes about increasing truck driver retention. Qualitative researchers analyze data using five stages by compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding (Yin, 2018). To analyze the data, I used Yin's (2018) five-step approach to data analysis. I followed Yin's steps in chronological order, starting with organizing and examining the interview data from participants, company documents, and observations.

After compiling the data, researchers begin to disassemble and then reassemble the data based on codes and groups (Yin, 2018). The most critical of the steps for this study is the disassemble, reassemble, and interpret steps. The second and third iterations show that two out of the three iterations offered the same interpretations. Other critical stages of the analysis included identifying themes and interpretations (Yin, 2018).

First, I organized the gathered data. Next, I disassembled the compiled data by selecting the preliminary category based on the literature review results. Castleberry and Nolen (2018) stated that the researcher separates the hidden clues from the original information after compiling the data. A formal procedure of coding data is disassembling (Yin, 2016). Researchers disassembling data should double-check the collected data with transcriptions and research logs (Panteli et al., 2019). I analyzed the data as new

categories emerged. As further information appeared from the initial categories that did not fit but developed during other interviews, I established more categories, reviewed former information, and included new categories.

Yin (2016) stated that data analysis is interpreting the meaning of data. The process of analyzing the data requires the sense-making of emerging information to improve a reader's understanding. I transferred the raw data into NVivo12 software from Microsoft Word. Once the process was complete, I compiled the data. Yin (2016) stated that researchers compile the data by organizing the data. I used auto-coding in the NVivo software to identify similarities in data and prevalent themes. While NVivo12<sup>®</sup> was the latest version of the software, data analysis involved a newer version of the creators releases new version before the analysis stage. Researchers proposed specifying the NVivo12 software name and version used in research because aspects of the software could vary significantly with every new release (Paulus et al., 2017). Some modern versions often have upgrades. At other times, a recent version may have more features than users need. NVivo12 is a computer software program that organizes and facilitates the collecting of qualitative data (Lengses et al., 2016). While identifying codes, the NVivo12 software detects similar words, and sentence patterns help create information themes within the data (Bengtsson, 2016; Yin, 2016). Processing raw data and then disassembling the data into fragments would involve using codes (Firmin et al., 2017). I physically coded and analyzed the NVivo12 computer software program data and identified themes within the coded and grouped data.

I concluded the data, which was the final step in the data analysis. Thematic elements often recurred in the process of research. Some of the occurrences were in the form of words or phrases. Stansen and Chambers (2019) noted that the member checking process supports accurate data interpretation. Analyzing themes is a procedure for identifying repetitive words and phrases in the data (Lewis, 2015). The NVivo computer software helped identify themes from this study's transcribed data (Gibson, 2015). Before closing the process, the researcher continually returned to the central business problem to ensure the results signify a response to the critical research question. Upon completing the research process, the researcher created a cogent summation of the findings. Yin (2018) cited that the final phase of data analysis was to achieve the study's goals and focus by presenting conclusions. The study's outcomes and the conceptual framework of this study were Herzberg's two-factor theory with a supporting framework from Maslow's motivational theory and contrasting theories. I discussed and highlighted how the findings aligned with the existing and current literature. I used the qualitative content analysis to identify themes related to trucking companies used to increase truck driver retention. Assarroudi et al. (2018) stated that qualitative data analysis was an iterative procedure. Researchers use qualitative content analysis to cluster ideas within qualitative data and understand the meaning (Bengtsson, 2016). I ensured that the evolving themes between the company documents, interview summaries, and observations aligned with the central research question.

## **Reliability and Validity**

Haradhan Kumar (2017) and Marshall and Rossman (2016) identified reliability and validity as the criteria for measuring qualitative research studies' quality. Researchers apply reliability and validity to achieve study trustworthiness (Yin, 2018). For contextual analysis, the researcher keeps a chain of evidence to increase data dependability (Yin, 2018). The dependability of the research depends on reliability (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Researchers use validity to capture participants' experiences depends on whether the study method and design are sufficient (Spiers et al., 2018). Researchers could establish reliability and validity by addressing Lincoln and Guba's (1985) broadly accredited criteria. The criteria for dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability were in place. I ensured reliability and validity by addressing dependability, credibility, transferability, confirmability, and data saturation.

### **Reliability**

Reliability is the researcher's ability to replicate a study using the same research methods and collect an equivalent study outcome (B. S. Cypress, 2017). Certifying information accuracy is significant for research reliability (Abdalla et al., 2018; Kelly et al., 2016). Researchers must endorse the reliability of chosen instruments to collect accurate data (Dikko, 2016). Data quality and methodological interpretation depend on reliability (Spiers et al., 2018). I collected reliable data through semistructured interviews to ensure reliability. I built rigor through methodological triangulation and member checking. Using member checking helped researchers ensure accuracy and add credibility



to the data. The researcher used methodological triangulation to show more reliability of the findings by gathering data from several sources (Birt et al., 2016; Yin, 2017).

Researchers allowed participants to engage in evaluating the findings. The interpretations and recommendations of the study included dependability. The researcher must analyze the effects of their decision to study reliability (Yin, 2018). A qualitative researcher achieves dependability by using an interview protocol (Harman & Azzam, 2018). There are different ways to ensure that dependability exists, such as writing research journals, summations, data analysis procedures, and outcomes to validate and record decisions (Yin, 2018). By allowing participants to review interview summations, researchers can accurately capture the participants' ideas involve member checking (Birt et al., 2016). A dependable study can be repetitive if the research backgrounds are alike (Fusch & Ness, 2015). To increase reliability, I ensured appropriate wording for the interview questions. Dependability could be better if the researcher provides rich, in-depth data to address the research question (Birt et al., 2016). The participants saw their responses to interview questions and had the opportunity to validate the interpretations' accuracy. An essential part of this doctoral study was dependability because upcoming researchers can depend on this research and possibly use future research information.

### **Validity**

Research by qualitative researchers signified that validity was an important concept that validates the study's claims (Aravamudhan & Krishnaveni, 2016). The validity of qualitative research refers to credibility, transferability, and confirmability (Yin, 2018). Equivalent to trustworthiness is validity (Vogt & Johnson, 2016). Research

findings that do not have validity are not trustworthy (FitzPatrick, 2019). An essential measurement of qualitative research's quality of research data and reality (Fusch et al., 2018). A benefit that case study researchers realize is using various evidence sources since it improves the data quality (Yin, 2018).

### ***Credibility***

Credibility involves ensuring a match between the original data and the researchers' interpretations (Fusch et al., 2018). Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that reliability is the central principle of trustworthiness, and without it, the findings are not credible. I met the creditability and confirmability criteria by using member checking (Birt et al., 2016). The researcher can use two techniques to increase a study's credibility by using member checking, data, or methodological triangulation (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Researchers use member checking to explain data and validate the researcher's explanations (Caretta, 2016). Researchers like Birt et al. (2016) and Connelly (2016) documented that credibility can include using strategies such as member checking. Member checking helped clarify the participants' responses to the interview questions to ensure that the interview data were credible. Joslin and Muller (2016) noted that triangulation increased research genuineness, and member checking strengthened credibility. At the same time, Fusch and Ness (2015) stated that researchers compared results from different data sources during the methodological triangulation process. Marshall and Rossman (2016) suggested that the use of methodological triangulation

helped a study's validity. Marshall and Rossman used a mixture of interviews and pertinent company information to guarantee the findings' credibility.

### ***Transferability***

Transferability defines how researchers could adequately apply the study findings to other studies (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). Researchers enable readers to support transferability by providing thick in-depth descriptions and detailed context for the sample population (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). Bloomberg and Volpe (2015) suggested that researchers must define the study's framework thoroughly to enable readers to evaluate the similarities to different contexts. Future researchers who contribute to parallel studies could make unbiased resolutions of a study's transferability (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). I adequately documented population, interview questions, sample size, method, design, and sampling techniques to transfer to individuals and groups outside the study sample. Future researchers could also choose to use this study's results to further research increasing truck driver retention and adverse monetary conditions in the trucking industry.

### ***Confirmability***

In qualitative research, confirmability represents the extent to which readers can confirm that others can verify the data in a study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Researchers Tong and Dew (2016) noted that confirmability could improve by describing how the researcher checked for data accuracy during the study. Confirmability refers to the researcher's ability to demonstrate that the research data represent the study participants' actual interpretation and understanding without biases (Bengtsson, 2016).

Researchers conduct member checking to validate the participants' responses use transcripts created from interviews (Connelly, 2016).

Researchers are aware that personal bias could influence the interview results. Therefore, a researcher would reduce personal bias and minimize mistakes using member checking (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Member checking is a procedure to disclose interview data with participants to verify the interview data's accuracy and credibility of the research findings. It would not require a second interview to review the information and verify accuracy before transcribing (Birt et al., 2016; David et al., 2016). I used member checking to reduce the chance of bias and increase trustworthiness. Methodological triangulation served to pursue the requisite research quality. Triangulation effort engendered data comparisons to comprehend findings from business records, interviews, and scholarly researchers' works that could refute or acknowledge other researchers' results. I provided thorough documentation about the steps a researcher must take to perform the research process. Future researchers might have a guide to use the data from this research study to assist other studies.

### ***Data Saturation***

Data saturation describes the point at which no additional information emerges from the data collection efforts (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Researchers reach data saturation when other researchers can replicate, copy the study; no new themes, data collection or sampling, or references appear relevant to the research questions (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Saldana, 2016). Researchers use several techniques to demonstrate data saturation include: (a) selecting appropriate sample sizes, (b) using purposive sampling, (c) asking

the same questions to all participants, (d) data collecting, and (e) using methodological triangulation (Hennink et al., 2016). Heesen et al. (2016) cited those researchers who used methodological triangulation as several data sources from multiple perspectives and noted that methodological triangulation aided in reaching the point of data saturation.

Researchers revisited the participants on different occasions to validate their responses and used small trucking companies' documents to support the data collected. Interviewing five other trucking company managers from 8 companies was enough to achieve data saturation with specific, open-ended interview questions and comparing their answers until the managers offer no additional information or themes. When needed, I asked follow-up investigative questions for transparency. The participants had the opportunity to comment on relevant topics that mattered to them. Researchers used the interview protocol for semistructured interviews to ensure that participants answered the same questions (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Not reaching data saturation would not adversely affect the research quality and lessens validity (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Hancock and Algozzine (2017) noted that the numbers were not significant for data saturation, but the depth of the data, the detailed specific analysis, and in-depth reporting was essential. I conducted face-to-face semistructured interviews with follow-up questions to achieve data saturation. Under normal conditions, face-to-face interviews took place in semistructured environments. Due to the current global pandemic, researchers were allowed to use other telephone conversations, video comms (zoom, skype, Microsoft teams, etc.) as needed.

### **Transition and Summary**

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore what strategies trucking company leaders used to increase truck driver retention. Section 2 included the purpose statement of the research study, a comprehensive explanation of the researcher's role, clear facts concerning the study participants' eligibility criteria, and the population sample size. Section 2 further included the justification for the chosen qualitative research method and design, data collection instruments and technique, data organization technique, data analysis, and the proposed plan to adhere to participants' ethical protection. Also included are the methodological precision for certifying trustworthiness in reliability and validity, data saturation, and transition and summary.

Section 3 contains the research study findings, an application to professional practice, a list of implications for change, offer recommendations for action, and proposed recommendations for further research. There is also a discussion on my reflections as a researcher and a conclusion and relevance of the findings.

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

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies trucking company leaders use to increase truck driver retention. This study's first conceptual framework was Herzberg's (1959) two-factor or motivation-hygiene theory. I also incorporated Maslow's (1943a) hierarchy of needs. Data collection took place by telephone meetings with eight trucking company leaders in the southeast United States due to the current pandemic. Using virtual (video call) or telephone meeting interviews and predetermined questions allowed me to manage the discussion and keep the participants concentrated on the overarching research question. The interviews were semistructured and consisted of eight open-ended questions. Using member checking ensured data validity and reliability. I thoroughly analyzed the collected data and identified the themes associated with the successful retention strategies that trucking company leaders use to increase truck driver retention. I transcribed the interviews and established linked codes created on participants' answers to each question for data analysis. Next, I reviewed the codes and categorized them under specific groups. Finally, I analyzed the groups and identified the emerging themes. I used NVivo 12 pro software to classify the data until I reached data saturation.

The findings included outcomes of participant focus on aspects of the problem of truck driver attrition. Based on participant responses, truck drivers would stay on the job if they found better working conditions, which entailed pay rates, paid vacation, paid sick days, family medical leave, overtime and weekend premium rates, and so on. The

findings also included circumstances surrounding a truck driver's job, peaceful versus toxic working environments, which are physical, and atmospheres that are intangible or psychological. Other findings included the need for trucking company leaders to value the feelings of their truck drivers and show interest in the specific items the drivers would need before, during, and after their delivery activities.

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

### **Presentation of the Findings**

The overarching research question was "What strategies do trucking company leaders use to increase truck driver retention?" Eight leaders from trucking companies in the southeast United States who had 2 successful years as a leader and were 18 and older participated in the research investigation. Data arose from semistructured interviews involving open-ended questions supporting the main research question. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, the interviews occurred over the telephone at a time convenient for each interviewee. The extent of the interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 75 minutes. The activities spanned over 4.5 weeks.

The nature of the trucking industry was extensive for a research study. Trucking is an industry comprised of small businesses, with 91% of motor carriers operating six or fewer trucks, and 97.3% run less than 20 (ATA, 2018a). The vagaries of business climate



often expose the trucking industry operators to uncertainties surrounding route closures, constructions, and driver turnover. Experiences were thus different from company to company, with more being dissimilar than similar. In the areas of variation, the participants also had varying levels of experience concerning the problem under review. Drivers were not the same in demeanor, which fed into the company's formal and informal approaches to organizational occurrences. Consequently, the raw data had richness and integrity.

The phenomenon of hiring and firing truck drivers appeared to be uniquely industry specific. Trucking companies would characteristically hire a truck driver, but rather than fire the truck driver, the truck driver would in several instances quit the job. Truck fleets' workforce has declined recently, and truck freight is rising faster than new-hire drivers' pace (FMCSA, 2016). Subsequently, the ATA (2016) predicted that there would be a shortage of professional truck drivers. The ATA (2018a) reported that back in 2015, there was a shortage of 48,000 drivers associated with several reasons, such as demographic, regulatory, and drivers away from home extended periods. The participants emphasized the need to provide diverse resources for company leadership but also the truck operation managers and the drivers.

The data analysis process occurred in the NVivo12 pro software. The research methodology necessitated the use of open coding, which this process led to the emergence of themes. The process was also successful because of the richness of raw data. The NVivo process helped to capture virtually all elements that the participants

unintentionally included in their significant comments. Through this coding process, the emphases became succinct enough to confirm the emerging themes.

Saturation became noticeable while interviewing Participant 7. Rather than stop questioning, I decided to confirm saturation by interviewing another participant. During the interview with Participant 8, I could have discontinued the interview process because the same themes were recurring with every response the participant provided. However, an interview, once started, cannot be stopped unless the participant wants to. Therefore, the discussion continued to the last question. Interviewing a ninth participant was unnecessary. The five themes that emerged were (a) better working conditions, (b) job circumstances, (c) work environment, (d) driver feelings, and (e) right operational factors. Table 1 illustrates the themes surfaced from the data analysis of this study.

**Table 1**

<i>Themes</i>								
S/NO Themes	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
1 Better working conditions	80%	90%	60%	90%	70%	70%	90%	100%
2 Job circumstances	70%	80%	100%	80%	80%	100%	90%	90%
3 Work environment	100%	80%	90%	80%	80%	100%	100%	80%
4 Employee feelings	90%	80%	50%	90%	100%	60%	90%	80%
5 Right operational factors	100%	100%	80%	90%	100%	80%	100%	90%

*Note.* Levels of importance ascribed to themes by participants.

Percentages assigned to the themes represent the importance of the themes to the participants. For instance, when a theme ranks 8 points out of 10 points to a participant, 80% is used to present that participant's consideration of that theme. NVivo 12 made it possible for identify the extent to which a participant commends or condemns

phenomena. Thus, the percentages help to articulate a participant's position on the theme more succinctly.

### **Theme 1: Better Working Conditions**

Organizational leaders must implement hygiene factors such as job security, salaries and benefits, clean and safe working conditions, the balance of work life, and exemplary leadership for improved job satisfaction and decreased dissatisfaction (Grigaliunas & Herzberg, 1971). However, trucking companies are mostly under the leadership of individuals who previously, or even currently, still serve as truck drivers. Such trucking company leaders might be rather fixated on perfect logistics than aesthetics and perfect hygiene. To such company leaders, working conditions often mean good hiring packages.

Participants 1, 2, 4, 7, and 8 were emphatic about their encounter with truck driver interest in better working conditions; however, Participants 3, 5, and 6 identified that phenomenon but did not focus on it as much as them. According to Participant 4, giving everybody more work is expected in the trucking industry, especially when demand is high. However, working conditions are essential to truck drivers. Otherwise, they begin to look for other companies to think that the grass is greener on the other side. Participant 8 said, "it is essential for leaders to try to match work/life benefits to the needs of the drivers." Participant 2 explained that leaders offered alternative work schedules, such as reduced workweeks and more home time or extra holidays. When organizational leaders correctly structure work–life balance, both the driver and leader will come out ahead. According to Participant 7, "encouraging drivers to set work/life goals, such as spending

more time with their children/family, expressed that company leaders want their drivers to have a life outside of work and achieve a healthy work/life balance.”

Participant 1 also revealed, “if the working conditions do not meet truck drivers’ expectations, they quit working for their competitors. Truck drivers characteristically make concerted efforts to know about the realities of the work ahead of them.” Therefore, to provide incentives, trucking leaders consider the risks associated with job tasks; this means driving long hours and long distances, sometimes navigating unfriendly terrains, and facing the high cost of living. Such considerations make the business leaders provide diverse economic and social amenities alongside the remuneration. Participant 1 recommended, “leaders must work with other department leaders learn the recent figures across the industry for wage packages, health benefit packages, flexible work schedules, and bonus structures.”

According to Participant 3, trucking company leaders may consider handling more work or hiring more drivers. The company would avoid forcing the truck drivers to do work that they did not sign up to do. There appears to be a similarity between a better working condition and a conducive work environment. However, participants presented them as different elements, which emerged as recognizable themes. In recognizing the differences and focusing on better working conditions, the participants shared views that truck drivers appreciate incentives beyond a mere paycheck. Participant 2 said, “You can link performance to data-driven, objective measures such as: consecutive collision-free days, coaching effectiveness scores, the number of safe miles, and the number of positive customer reviews.” Even though remunerations mean much for all employees, the

opportunity of breaks, financial incentives, and discounts are always welcome to the truck drivers. Based on Participant 3's explanations,

Company managers and industry leaders often fixated on fulfilling customer delivery orders and thus tread the fine lines of holding back as much as possible but incentivizing the drivers. In some situations, a trucking company business manager may hold back more than necessary and risk the departure of a driver or give out more than necessary and risk business losses or lower profits. Better working conditions thus remain a slippery slope in the bid to stem truck driver resignation.

Carriers, according to Participant 4,

must design a realistic job preview [RJP] specific to each position to recruit and maintain qualified truck drivers and dispatchers. If they finish the selection process and are hired by the business to fill the role, applicants get a glimpse into their future employment through [RJPs]. The helpful information offered to candidates enables them to make informed decisions.

As an inner need for satisfaction, extrinsic (hygiene) motivational needs (e.g., relationships, work environments, supervision, compensation, and company rules) meet external needs or demands that impact job satisfaction and dissatisfaction (García et al., 2019). Discussing the issues of better working conditions cannot be addressed in isolation. Other elements found in significant themes still constitute identifiable contributors to better working conditions. Participants often alluded to elements pertaining to the other themes while addressing better working conditions. Thus,

according to the participants, better working conditions help to achieve work–life balance. The mutual contribution of well-being factors elicits diligence from both parties. Participant 4 asked the question, “Do you know of any companies that emphasized implementing a thriving recognition-rich culture while having lower turnover rates? Drivers who do not feel recognized are much more likely to quit their job in a year.”

According to Participant 5,

Keeping the flow of work going involves securing the mental commitment of the truck driver, which results in attention to detail and timesaving benefits in all delivery activities. Employees who go beyond normal boundaries give the company reason to increase leadership commitment to employee wellbeing. When both parties contribute with such levels of responsibility, they may not be aware of how their work is helping the organization reach milestones.

Participant 1 referred to this interaction as a mutual benefit.

An employee’s decision to pursue voluntary turnover might include numerous factors, such as incentives, the number of times employees worked for the organization, and organizational culture (Larkin, et al., 2016). Providing a healthy work–life balance contributes to the incentives that prevent truck driver turnover. Participant 1 also suggested that company leaders should organize staff meetings in which employees provide feedback to the leaders and vice versa. Such feedback sessions would throw light on employer and employee performance, thereby highlighting conditions that make for truck driver retention. These elements might not be financial, but the effect might be worth more than money to estimate some truck drivers. Participant 7 stated,

Monetary reward and health benefits are two ways to demonstrate appreciation. Competitive pay, profit sharing, driver bonus schemes, pensions, paid time off, and tuition reimbursement should all be offered by leaders. These advantages give the message to employees that they are a good fit. Employee incentives must be meaningful to match drivers' perceptions of the firm, which significantly impacts leaders' retention efforts. Employees should be rewarded, and employers should follow through on promises.

Participant 8 said, "Organizational leaders must discover effective strategies to show drivers respect, attract new drivers to join the profession, and give them fair compensation. Paying truck drivers has been stagnant in the United States, contributing to the shortage."

Further, driver compensation is increasing, and shippers must acknowledge that giving good salaries to drivers is critical to addressing the industry's workforce crisis. The necessity and desire for meaningful work from the employer and employees in a trucking company that each party perceives as significant and a sense of purpose in work carried out at every step were expressed by the participants. Participant 3 elaborated,

People are four times more likely to stay at work if they believe their work matters. Based on the employer's body language, the truck driver wants to ensure that the job task has a purpose other than delivery. Almost everyone in the room agreed that everyone could feel important in their career. If the employer puts drive into people's work and provides positive meaning, anyone can push the boundaries of loyalty and dedication.

Participant 5 stated,

Work–life balance is a crucial component of job satisfaction. For some businesses, flexible work hours may be a luxury, but changing the hours and arranging response times allows employees to concentrate better and be more productive. Flexible work schedules have been shown to boost employee happiness in research. Employee engagement and productivity improve when managers divide work based on team members' abilities and interests. Employees will feel valued if you consider their requirements, which will inspire them to work better.

Participant 2 made recommendations such as:

Observing what other carriers are doing or intending to do, provide practical mileage, being friendly and smiling when we, the truck driver, visit the administrative offices, offering incentives for hard work, providing safe and comfortable equipment, and training newly hired drivers before sending them over the road are all things that we as truck drivers value.

Employee turnover is heavily influenced by an organization's capacity to retain talent (Gandy et al., 2018). According to Participant 5,

Better working conditions include showing team members how their work benefits others. In other words, when a truck driver recognizes the positive impact of the delivery on consumers in the delivery area, the truck driver's mindset becomes less clogged. When a group of coworkers shares common values as integral members of one entity, the truck driver's condition improves and



continues to improve over time. The company wants to reduce truck driver turnover.

Participant 8 feels that in such an environment,

Truck drivers can perform well and collaborate effectively to provide the answers that the company's clients require. According to Participant 3, such unity allows truck drivers to be recognized for their efforts. Participant 2 believes that leaders must provide open and effective communication, recognition, training, and problem-solving.

Participant 2 mentioned, "it may appear unrelated to work," but as Participant 6 stated,

Managers must determine what draws a driver to a particular job: something unusual keeps them in their positions with companies. While compensation is an essential consideration for potential drivers, it is insufficient to support them. Compensation attracts good drivers, but there is another factor to consider.

Participants agreed that company leaders should identify driver training needs and implement training to put these working condition antecedents into context. The shared emphasis on this factor stems from the leadership's recognition that training opportunities allow truck drivers to communicate with leaders, bridging the gap that develops because of the long hours spent on long-distance routes. Even though the training is part of a different theme, its inclusion in the working condition's theme speaks volumes, according to the participants' views. When truck drivers demand better working conditions, they may be looking for things like paid time off, injury coverage, healthy and safe work tools, and environments, the ability to pick up unexpected financial

liabilities, and so on. There are only a few jobs that meet all the expectations of new drivers. According to Participant 1,

New drivers with prior experience begin new positions, but they discover that the job is not what they expected once on the job. It is particularly prevalent in the trucking industry. Communication is a technique for dealing with expectation stress. Organizations should contact new hires within a week or two, or no later than 90 days. Rather than waiting until a driver quits, leaders should ask them about their expectations early on.

Participant 3 stated,

Creating working conditions that will keep a truck driver truly loyal can be difficult. On the other hand, drivers can only fathom the company's leadership not working until it ceases to exist. Going beyond picturing them would result in a situation that would be counterproductive. As a result, trucking company executives and operational managers only think about the future.

According to Participant 7's assertions, "Specific answers to those questions could land a hefty fine on the CEO's desk." According to the participant, trucking companies would be unable to meet the requirements that a truck driver would list in response to those questions: "Employee turnover may result in layoffs and disrupted financial operations." Participant 7's comments are in alignment with Mehrnoosh and Jouzaryan's (2016) postulation about harsh economic climates that companies could face.

## **Theme 2: Job Circumstances**

Job performance was characteristically crucial to business leaders. According to Pahdey et al. (2019), the emergence of job circumstances was somewhat surprising than expected because job satisfaction has become a household expression. The participants further stated, “Job circumstances thus revealed multiple diverse elements connected with a truck driver’s job. Satisfaction was one of the elements. Performance was another.” The thematic values of the satisfaction and performance elements did not warrant treating them as sub-themes. Thus, they run side by side because of how the participants treated them, especially as elements that circumscribed the circumstances of a truck driver’s job. Still, the participants in this study presented a job performance perspective that showed job performance to mean something specific to the truck driver as it does to the business leader on the other hand.

All eight participants shared standard views of the two elements, job circumstance and job performance, albeit at different levels. Noteworthy is the fact that their differences were minimal. To put that in perspective, the participants gave examples of shared values. Participant 8 stated,

There are ways to reduce truck driver turnover and improve a company’s performance. Leaders must devise a system for sustaining driver satisfaction that works for their organizations. Organizations must improve or expand their workflow, improve communication, increase engagement, and provide driver education or training.

To achieve that satisfaction and performance mutually expected from both sides, the participants generally agreed that the leaders must make transparency and honesty part of the company's operational system, which aligns with the postulations of Friebe et al. (2017). The scholars expressed the expectation that the company leaders should show examples that will beget transparency from the truck drivers. Furthermore, company leaders should ensure the pay was suitable for the job. The leaders should graduate non-pecuniary entitlements based on employment duration from the date of hire. The fact that a driver accepts a job and gets paid does not guarantee loyalty. Truck drivers always want to know what they should expect from their job to make you earn their trust. Participant 1 postulated:

After completing a project, leaders must post a monthly memo outlining the achievements of specific teams. Leaders over peer-recognition programs should always interject positive feedback into their employees. Participant 7 also said that, they should consider reporting accomplishments to their leaders and giving employees a thank you note now and then will go a long way with employees. It is the effort and the recognition that keeps the employees.

Creating favorable circumstances around a truck driver's job is competitively positioned. In other words, the company must know what other competing companies are doing for their truck drivers and endeavor to mimic or set higher standards that can stem truck drivers. Thus, job satisfaction and job performance have modified meanings from what was known in the performance and satisfaction domains. Participant 7 stated,

Providing drivers with adequate salary and benefits are significant components of a good retention strategy. Companies should implement a consistent pay system and transparent processes on how raises must occur. Organizational leaders create a retention plan without separating the compensation strategy, reducing truck driver turnover, and extract thematic variations. Consistent pay, transparent pay increase process, retention plan, compensation strategy could relate to other areas of truck driver retention pursuit.

However, job satisfaction and job performance bring to the fore the circumstances that interest research participants who lead or manage trucking companies. Happy employees, according to Participant 2,

Are essential components of effective driver retention strategies. Money is not the most important factor for drivers, but fleets must provide them with adequate working equipment. Following that, truck driver retention can be increased through safety, appropriate working equipment, communication, effective service, home time, fair compensation, and timely advances. Participant 8 also indicated that by implementing driver retention strategies, leaders can use these efforts to reduce turnover.

The leader must adopt the serial benefit introduction to achieve the feat based on the graduated time from hire. Some may be introduced a week into the job, a month, and three months into the job. All participants agreed that company leadership must listen to the truck drivers and hear them out.

Participants 2, 4, 7, and 8 harped on the importance of viewing job satisfaction through the lens of dignity and what factors contribute to that satisfaction for truck drivers. The warning is that viewing a truck driver's pleasure as simply being happy with the job without determining the satisfaction element may result in a false threat to the component and activation of the quit mode. Participant 2 stated, "Once you have a driver on board, make sure you regularly solicit feedback and effectively respond to it."

Participant 4 said, "In the trucking industry, as in any other, honesty and consistency foster and sustain the level of trust required to improve the organizational climate."

Participant 7 stated,

When company leaders recognize that one of the most effective ways to keep drivers is to ensure they are qualified for the job. Drivers who meet all of the qualifications and have the right personality for the job will be hired because they will learn faster, perform better, and, most importantly, enjoy their driving job.

Participant 8 said,

When it comes to retaining the best employees and reducing turnover in organizations, leaders must remember to be creative. The bottom line is that leaders must devise a strategy and communicate it to all drivers.

Managers allocate tasks to make or mar job satisfaction and job performance (Bibi et al., 2018). One of the reasons this configuration is essential is that a truck driver's satisfaction can arise from a personal or social life event. Consequently, the truck driver's job performance may witness a change. These stimuli and responses could go in any direction. Therefore, the mutuality of expectations becomes critical to comprehend so

that the company leaders may not view performance and satisfaction in this study as mutually exclusive. Participant 3 identified:

Drivers' who work for companies with good benefits often seek to find out what the competitors are offering and stay where they are because of satisfaction. So, they will be even more loyal to their own company because employees know that leaders are treating them right.

In terms of employees who have left their jobs due to burnout, company leaders should understand the possibility of overutilization and manage the remaining drivers to hear those things better at the person he left and return. The demand for new truck drivers often creates the opportunity for returning drivers to be welcomed and embraced as if they never left their jobs in the first place. The company leaders should not wait until the driver begins to look for other job opportunities for growth and development. The company leader or business manager must pre-empt ambitious drivers and put systems in place to keep them on the job. Participant 4 stated, "How much would a 31% reduction in their turnover rate save the company? Identify specific behaviors and results aligned with the company's goals and values and recognize and reward those behaviors as frequently as you can." Participant 7 stated,

Paying drivers competitive wages or per mile will increase their earnings over time, reducing truck drivers' high turnover. Encouraging learning and growth will create a safe and fun atmosphere that goes a long way to building and keeping drivers happy.

Company efforts to situate truck drivers constitute essential aspects of satisfaction, which spills over to driver performance. Truck drivers will perform better if they get more skills or sharpen their skills more. They will be happier also under such circumstances and give the company better results. Participant 1 suggested,

Offer more flexibility where you can. Consider offering more home time and shorter work miles. Participant 1 went on to say unless the company has in-house recruiters and driver training, the carrier has not much control over either. The carrier's responsibility in their hiring process is to be transparent about the pitfalls of the position. Due attention to career goals can improve current job performance. Training facilitates self-growth arising from skills and practice on the job. When the workforce feels that circumstances are unfavorable, the company can begin to witness low morale leading to a drop in company performance.

When the right circumstances surround the truck driver's job, the truck driver's conscientiousness will lead to an on-time commitment to tasks and getting the job done. These circumstances produce employees who go beyond their job description and exhibit leadership. When one looks at this scenario, one would see the interaction of job satisfaction and job performance (Cole, 2018). The employer will be satisfied and perform better as a leader; the truck driver will be happy and serve better as a company driver. These circumstances must not be overlooked in the pursuit of truck driver retention rather than turnover. Participant 8 stated,



Company leaders who implement mentoring programs with a goal-oriented feedback system provides a structured mechanism for developing strong relationships within an organization, a solid foundation for driver retention, and growth. Other participants also stated that with a mentoring program, an organization attracts drivers who are more experienced in a discipline than someone less experienced to develop specific competencies, provide performance feedback, and design an individualized career development plan.

Taking care of the extraneous factors removes the incidences of vague excuses that truck drivers often give when discussing their intention to quit. That is a situation the business leaders do not want to witness. When a truck driver states why they decided to quit the company with circumstances beyond his control, the company leaders should quickly look at the two elements in ‘circumstances’ due to job satisfaction and job performance. According to Participant 5,

The company’s goal or vision should be inspirational for all employees. It is important because the employer could slip by ignoring the little things that matter, and the driver could use that as an opportunity to relocate to a company that is wooing him.

Therefore, even if the compensation is not more than that offered by the other companies, the ‘circumstances’ could do the magic and keep the driver from quitting. One of the top contributors to overall employee job satisfaction is employer body language and sometimes utterances (Lee et al., 2019; Tian & Gamble, 2018; Wang &

Brower, 2019). If those elements are unpalatable, the driver will head on to another company, especially in the face of high driver demand.

The easing of COVID-19 restrictions means that department stores are witnessing an influx of buyers. In such a situation, logistics on both the analog and digital platforms are getting busier and busier. The more active they get, the higher the demand for truck drivers. Participant 8 stated,

To reduce truck driver turnover, companies must implement or improve the work environment, practice more innovative hiring and training strategies, and ensure the organization and its' leaders. Completing these things, turnover remains at a minimum or almost non-existent.

Diverse elements of the job circumstances may include praising the truck driver for each successful delivery, occasionally giving the truck driver light-hearted compliments. Motivating the truck driver to report any diverse information might lead to new delivery orders. Allowing the driver to report the good and bad experiences on the job will also give the driver a high sense of belonging. Once a truck driver believes that the company values feedback, the driver will be looking for areas to commend and condemn. Under such circumstances, the truck driver will also know to criticize self-errors and ultimately avoid committing such errors. Participant 7 stated,

Drivers like being recognized for their hard work. At times, leaders should email everyone the good news and congratulate them on a job well done. This positive recognition is a small gesture that will have a massive impact on company morale.

Fostering favorable circumstances around the truck driver contributes to driver commitment. These circumstances constitute an indirect investment in drivers such as assets, including positivity's foundation on the job. Leaders must ensure transparency with the limits of capitalism.

Hiding certain aspects of the job just to get the driver to apply for the job is disastrous. That is a circumstance. Transparency is critical in finding solid ground for mutual performance (Ivanov et al., 2018). That, also, is a circumstance. In this pattern, the leaders can delineate multiple factors that could constitute circumstances and utilize them in transparently strengthening the job profile so that a driver who accepts the job will have no reason to hop to a greener pasture. Participant 2 stated,

Leaders should help drivers who are going through personal or professional difficulties. Leaders must devote time to ministering to drivers and maintain an open-door policy in which drivers can come sit down and speak with managers.

They were hiring drivers who possess the qualifications and personality for the job because they desire to create appropriate circumstances to surround the position and accept the job offer. When such events take root, truck drivers will have a solid understanding of their job duties and requirements. Drivers so hired are suitable for the job. Leaders selecting drivers with the requisite qualifications attribute obligations to the company a duty to deliver quality in terms of other antecedents of the job. When these circumstances surround the job, the truck driver will feel happier in their driving job. That is also why drivers must have the requisite skills to complete their job tasks more efficiently and effectively. Participant 1 elaborated,

Those employees want to know where to go and how they can get there. Annual reviews or midyear checks are one prominent way to discuss issues or progression, but leaders should urge employees to ask questions about their careers and desires all through the year.

When truck drivers know that their competencies get the job done, their commitment levels increase because they would like to justify the confidence and prove that they genuinely have all it takes. Overusing a driver puts employees under immense pressure and causes burnout, leading to unexpected or unplanned attrition (Johnson et al., 2018). Under these circumstances, employees begin to look for other companies to relocate their talents.

To improve the efficacy of employees and enhance employee engagement, business leaders sacrifice certain conveniences. Participant 5 said managers must implement an Individual Development Plan or IDP to assist employees in reaching their short and long-term career goals, which may improve their job performance. According to Participant 2,

Leaders should care about who their employees are as individuals, speak with them to show that they are essential, and learn new things about them. Drivers are more likely to go above and beyond for you if they feel valued as individuals.

According to Participant 7,

Trucking companies should establish organizational cultures such as honesty, positive attitudes, respect, and teamwork. Companies should foster the right culture to attract and retain good drivers.

The performance and satisfaction antecedents that represent job circumstances contribute to profitability. If employees feel they have made meaningful contributions, it is now up to the leaders to confirm or debunk such stances through leadership utterances or body language. Overall, the well-being of employees overrides other interests in companies where leaders want to stem the tide of truck driver attrition.

Truck driver retention is only achievable when managers consider all the elements surrounding the truck driver. The issue is about keeping the driver or letting the driver go. The forces of supply and demand play their part to keep the business leaders busy with strategies to ensure retention of the truck drivers. According to the participants, there are strategies aimed at surrounding the truck drivers with circumstances that make for retention. Those circumstances are performance and satisfaction circumstances.

Participant 4 stated,

Dispatchers are more effective than they realize because they are critical in a company's ability to retain drivers. Companies with dispatchers who respond to driver concerns are likely to have lower rates of voluntary driver turnover than companies with unresponsive dispatchers. Expecting dispatchers to perform well necessitates appropriate training, tools, and working conditions.

While satisfaction and performance are visible elements of job circumstances, participants have successfully squeezed several diverse elements or nuances into job circumstances (Sun & Wang, 2017). For instance, planning response (or delivery) times gives employees better focus and results if they consider their circumstances and their

driving jobs positive. Favorable circumstances mean situations that enhance the well-being of employees. Participant 7 stated,

Leaders must recognize that while pay is important to drivers, other factors are more important to them by providing methods for increasing commitment and lowering driver turnover. Organizations approach different drivers, such as satisfaction, loyalty, and retention, in different ways.

According to Participant 7 leaders who implement strategies for reducing truck driver turnover in the transportation industry must include keeping promises to drivers, soliciting driver feedback, and addressing driver amenities. When job circumstances are within the truck drivers' control, the drivers show up promptly for work and may even contribute a little extra time into their work in terms of skill, time, and energy. Employees who go beyond their job invariably convey that the job circumstances warrant such performance, and that satisfaction is guaranteed (Abba, 2018). Other events may include sharing constructive feedback with employees regularly, which enables them to see growth areas.

When truck drivers share a common goal with the company, everyone realizes tangible results. These are attainable when the employees view their job circumstances positively. Favorable circumstances are inspirational for all employees to share and teach to colleagues. Under this circumstance, truck drivers become colleagues with the business managers. According to Participant 3,

Before making significant changes to the incentive system, effectively listening to drivers will determine what is essential. And, no, money is not always the solution

to this problem. Setting up advisory councils, suggestion boxes, meeting with drivers regularly, or use apps to conduct surveys.

Participant 6 said, “Leaders must be honest about the expectations of the new drivers. Tell the truth and never sugarcoat or conceal certain aspects of the job to entice a driver to apply.” Participant 1 said, “Make time for open communication consistently and prioritize so that you are not constantly rescheduling. One-on-one meetings are an excellent format for managers and their employees to communicate effectively.”

### **Theme 3: Work Environment**

The emergence of the work environment theme initially seemed to dovetail with other elements found under other significant items. As the analysis progressed, participants talking about the work environment were particular about details different from job circumstances. All the participants agreed that the truck driver’s environment might be slightly different from the regular work environment others would take. An analysis of the trucking industry and its antecedents revealed that the work environment was not the same for truck drivers and business leaders. Overall, the work environment had tangible and intangible aspects. The fundamental elements had to do with the amenities available to make work life navigable and the details related to interactions and human exchanges within the workplace.

However, the participants were facing unrelated or dissimilar truck drivers regarding the types of work environments the truck drivers preferred. According to the participants, some business leaders might be facing high turnover without knowing exactly why. The leader’s confusion might arise from a truck driver’s specific work

environment requirements while the leader is trying to maintain a high standard across the board, the office, and the truck.

The participants suggested that some truck drivers want their truck interior to have a specific feel, but the business leaders would not like the interior of their trucks to have such a feeling. After providing all positive reinforcements and the truck drivers still quit. The leaders would remain surprised without knowing that the standard for office work environment must not be the same and the ideal for truck drivers work environment. Business leaders who learned this lesson the hard way shifted the paradigm and paid more attention to the truck driver's truck interior preference than the office interior work environment.

Participants 1, 4, 5, and 8 appeared to have experienced the interior variations and how they mattered to some truck drivers. Participant 1 said,

Unless the carrier has in-house recruiters and driver training, the carrier has little control over either. The carrier's responsibility in their hiring process is to be transparent about the pitfalls of the position.

Participant 4 said,

One of the significant risks of implementing a new retention system in choosing a plan is selecting a plan. In other words, you are not considering what the truck drivers are worth. Spend time learning about their objectives and challenges.

Participant 5 said,



When they know their leaders are encouraging personal development, it boosts their motivation and increases retention. While providing feedback is essential for helping your workforce grow, it is also critical to receive input.

Participant 5 also stated,

Giving constructive feedback to employees allows them to see themselves through the eyes of the employer. The need for honest feedback extends beyond job activities (like meeting goals, tangible aspects of work life, office settings, social antecedents, job efficiency, truck setting, employee feelings, and overall well-being.

These work environment elements often identified implied throughout the interviews as the participants alluded to one or more of these elements in answer virtually all the questions. In addressing the issue of the work environment, the participants made it clear based on their interview responses that the work environment had tangible and intangible aspects. Truck driver retention could easily hinge on the work environment based on essential and subtle elements. Participant 8 stated, “Drivers are more likely to stay engaged in their jobs and committed to organizations that will invest in them and their career development.”

### ***The Office Setting***

The office environment may serve as a convenient location found where the tools necessary for executing the daily business activities. The ability of workers to find the required tools matters much in the prosecution of business. A typical office setting has a

vibe slanting in line with the office owner's preferences. The office should have all work tools that are appropriate for administration.

Furthermore, the convenience of the office workers is critical to the effective execution of daily tasks in the office. Some such convenience items might be the coffee machine, coffee mug, small refrigerator, vending machine, and other incidental items. Without these convenience items, the office worker may experience difficulties.

Participant 1 stated,

Accountants and business consultants work every day with business owners that practice these methods to sustain the longevity of their employees. These strategies are vital contributors to a business's success and are often an easy solution to pay dividends for years to come.

In essence, an office worker sandwiched between the standard office tools and personal convenience tools. With the two elements, the office worker has a good working environment. The work environment concept in the office setting relates to an appropriate space specifically equipped to facilitate office work. There should be tools such as computers, files, filing cabinets, and reams of paper, staple machines, scanners, printers, and other similar apparatuses.

### ***Social Antecedents***

The human interactions that occur among office workers and individuals who visit the office promote the purpose of the office and contribute to peace and job task completion. The individuals who work in the office need each other to achieve their targets no matter how minimal (Dubbelt et al., 2019). Therefore, social interaction

contributes to the work environment. If the human interactions are unfavorable, job tasks will suffer. If, on the other hand, mutual respect, kindness, courtesy, and practical work knowledge are available, then the social antecedents are positive and will lead to success in the execution of office work. Participant 6 indicated,

Employees will go the extra mile if they feel responsible for the Their work has a sense of worth in their jobs, and they believe that their skills and recognition for contribution make good use of their careers. Rewarded employees often exhibit higher levels of motivation which produces an even higher performance.

Leaders should listen to employees and ask for input on the rewards that might work best for organizations. At times, leaders may conduct meetings so that employees can share information. This element is among the intangible aspects of the work environment. Interactions consist of stimuli and responses. Such interactions like co-workers in the office and outsiders visit the office share in the motivations and reactions. Without a smooth, courteous, and respectful engagement in the office, employees tend to describe the work environment as toxic and capable of producing a setback (Herzberg, 1959). Company leaders usually take steps to forestall any situations that might lead to such breaches in social interactions within the office space.

### ***Job Efficiency***

Carrying out tasks to produce the exact result required is the employer and employee's dream and aspiration. Participant 3 felt, "That most businesses should have a customer service or feedback department for drivers. Companies, for example, may conduct a yearly survey of truck drivers to assess satisfaction against standards and

identify areas for improvement.” Participant 3 also stated that because measuring and enhancing driver feedback is a vital part of their culture, firms with an effective feedback unit may be able to successfully enhance truck driver retention. Colleagues inadvertently generate problems for one another on a regular basis. The participants stated that when a job is incorrectly done by employees, then other workers will have difficulty executing the finished product. As a job scenario, job efficiency becomes crucial to the company’s performance. In perspective, in the case of a late delivery by a truck driver, the dispatcher will have to make unforeseen adjustments because of the late delivery. Conversely, if management does not process permits required to move a truck from Point A to Point B, the driver of that truck will have logistical problems. For instance, the truck driver has told his family that he would be leaving town at a particular time to be back on a specific day (Ahmed et al., 2017; Clegg et al., 2016). On getting to the office to fill out the logbook before going to the truck park, the administrative personnel asked the truck driver to wait for a specific permit or clearance to arrive. The pass takes two or three hours to arrive. That late receipt of permission eats into the driver’s family time. The driver’s efficiency tends to hamper because of a feeling of logistics distortion. One efficiency breach leads to another efficiency breach: both unintended. These examples are all part of job circumstances. Participant 2 stated,

Companies should increase their pay if other carriers raise their income (wage per mile) to drivers; this could attract and retain drivers. Leaders know that money and benefits may attract people to their companies, but other things will keep drivers from leaving. In addition, participant 7 felt the same way as participant 2

that drivers need to feel appreciated, proud of their work ethic, effort, and they want to be recognized for their hard work.

The circumstances of that late receipt were beyond the control of the company's administrative personnel. The events of the late departure of the truck were beyond the power of the company's truck driver.

### ***Truck Setting***

In the work environment, the truck is the driver's second home. The work environment concept means the same thing to both the administrative personnel (in the office) and the truck driver (inside the truck). The truck environment may serve as a convenient location where all the tools are necessary to execute the daily delivery activities. Participant 8 stated,

Drivers are willing to take reasonable pay if they get to control when they go home. One of the main reasons drivers jump from job to job is to have no control over scheduling. Driver schedules are not set in stone; they need flexibility when going home for their home encounters. This strategy will bring more driver satisfaction and ultimately reduce truck driver retention rates.

The ability of the truck driver to find the required tools matters much in the execution of deliveries (ATRI, 2017). A standard truck setting also has ambiance slanting in line with the truck driver's preferences. The truck should have all work tools that are appropriate for delivery. Furthermore, the convenience of the truck driver is critical to the effective execution of daily delivery tasks. Participant 6 stated,

Leaders must hire the correct driver for the company. If a driver who often quit jobs is hired and knows this information but still hires that individual, they should not be surprised if they leave. But when leaders hire the correct drivers, things will flow from the beginning, carry over to other drivers, and everyone will stick around. Make sure that the newly hired drivers are a good fit for the company. Make sure that they have a pleasant hiring experience because it builds a foundation of positiveness on the job.

Some convenience items might be the coffee machine, coffee mug, small refrigerator, snack box, microwave oven, and other incidental items. Without these conveniences, the truck driver may experience difficulties while on the long road for several hours, sandwiched between the truck driver, the regular trucking tools, and personal convenience tools. Some truck tracking tools may include the truck, GPS, spare tires, wheel spanners, jacks, detachable emergency lights, and extended electrical extension cables. With these two sets of elements, the truck driver has a good working environment (Giauque et al., 2019; Olubiyi et al., 2019). According to Participant 7,

Company leaders must adapt a training to meet the drivers' schedule without causing any undue stress by not being flexible with the training schedule, be there for the drivers, and provide opportunities if they want to return. The work environment concept in a truck setting relates to an appropriate space specifically equipped to facilitate extended road trips.

Participant 6 stated,

Leaders of organizations must implement and support strategies that involve giving drivers adequate equipment to get the job done. When drivers feel they have what they need to perform, their job satisfaction increases drastically. Drivers want to excel, so they need adequate resources (moral and mental support) to get the job done.

### **Driver Feelings**

Feelings are essential when human interactions occur. Feelings are usually internal, borne by default. Some people bear positive feelings while others bear negative emotions (Chordiya et al., 2017). Some people feel naturally excited, while others think naturally demoralized. When an individual runs into another person, the feelings they both have (already) may remain the same or change. An altering of those feelings may arise from the interchange between the people. Interaction occurs daily in the office. Participant 7 stated,

Companies must implement different incentives to keep and attract drivers. Leaders should ask drivers some things they would like to see or have that the company can produce. For example, other participants stated that companies should give vacation days to drivers who earn extra miles, have been there the longest, or even additional health benefits after a certain amount of time. Organizational leaders should find out what their drivers want to see.

Companies witness increased negative and positive atmospheres, depending on the flips and flops of those human exchanges. At the heart of negative and positive atmospheres are the individuals' feelings. In a trucking company, the expression

'employee' refers to the administrative and driving personnel. Easy-going compliments between administrative personnel and a truck driver give the office a positive atmosphere. On the other hand, an altercation between them provides the office with a hostile atmosphere. The resulting negativity or positivity arises from the internal feelings of the personnel distorted by the interaction (altercation or compliments) (Chakrabarti & Guha, 2016; Guha & Chakrabarti, 2016). Suppose the dispute mires the job circumstances of both administrative and trucking personnel. In that case, the truck driver is sure to follow the high demand for truck drivers because the greener pasture on the other side is beckoning on the driver.

### ***Overall Well-being***

Everyone wants to be sure that the family is well and safe, especially in the face of the ravaging COVID-19. Consequently, a truck driver is particular about the well-being of the family and the administrative personnel. The difference is that the office became out of bounds to visitors. At the same time, the truck driver would very likely interact with people intentionally or unintentionally at the truck park, diesel station, loading bay, restaurant, discharge bay, and at other incidental stops. Before COVID-19, truck drivers still had concerns about themselves and the families they left behind to conduct a delivery. The roads were usually hectic, which gives the truck driver more responsibility to avoid bad small car drivers who overtake the truck and readily cut into the truck's front. That is an example among several pre-pandemic job circumstances facing the truck driver. With the occurrence of COVID-19, the roads became accessible to a large extent. The ravaging small car drivers have seen few and far between. The



concerns over wellbeing did not reduce; they instead transitioned to COVID-related issues. Participant 6 stated,

If companies do not pay their drivers adequately, they will leave, job hop until they find the appropriate pay, and fit. Managers need to understand drivers, as well as what they want and require. Company leaders should always match or beat their competitors' pay rates.

#### **Theme 4: Driver Feelings**

Participants were interested in the situations surrounding employee feelings. Interview responses showed that the feelings of truck drivers mattered to the employers. Such conclusions by employers stemmed from employer understanding of the environment in which their truck drivers worked. The participants had other occasions to deal with the issues in a more targeted manner. Akgunduz and Sanli (2017) already harped on the need for company leaders to pay attention to the psychological effects of an employee's feelings towards the job and the employer. Participant 3 stated, "When your employees feel their competencies are appropriately deployed, they produce positive results. But overutilization can put employees under immense pressure. That is when unplanned attrition occurs, and employees begin to look to other companies for work." Participant 7 stated,

Companies must be willing to pay their drivers more than competitors. When companies do this, drivers will stay; when they do not, drivers frequently leave. Drivers have a greater incentive to work harder, commit to their jobs, and remain loyal when they are well-paid.

The company characteristically wants to improve the efficacy of employees and enhance employee engagement to achieve good employee feelings. Companies increase profitability if employees feel they have made meaningful contributions.

Another element of good employee feeling is allowing the truck drivers to join in planning delivery projects. When that happens, the truck drivers are often able to pre-determine response times. That gives the truck drivers better focus and results in the enhanced mental well-being of both the trucking personnel and administrative personnel. Furthermore, when managers consider helping the truck drivers reach short and long-term goals, the truck drivers are usually excited (Maloni et al., 2017). It is expected of employees to show up promptly for work and put a little extra into their work. Employees who go beyond their job tasks create positive indices for employee feelings on both sides of the operation- administration, and trucking.

Leaders share constructive feedback across the board that regularly enables everyone to see an accurate picture of the operations. Furthermore, employees must share a common goal to build the company's image and achieve tangible results. Participant 1 advised,

Company leaders must define the problem by critically analyzing printed results from evaluations of the trucking industry and other high turnover industries.

Moreover, when truck drivers are aware of how the events around them (both in the office and in the truck) before such events occur, truck driver feelings will remain positive.

However, surprises are counter-productive if the surprises are not pleasant. For example, a negative surprise from the driver to the office personnel will be counterproductive. A negative surprise from the office personnel to the driver will be counter-productive. Both the administrative personnel and trucking personnel should endeavor to be mutually inspirational for the benefit of all and the company's advancement (Barry et al., 2018). The drivers can get a better feel of who the business manager or overall company leader is. The drivers will feel appreciated if treated as an integral part of the organization's system.

The participants stated that drivers want to be treated with more respect. Appreciation is not reserved for a select group of employees; it is extended to all employees. Drivers, for example, sit behind the 'semi' wheels, and those in the office can feel valued when their coworkers from any department ascribe value to them. Because of the drivers' needs, they believe they are a part of the operations planning and execution. Participant 2 stated,

Leaders should do more than talk to their drivers; they should listen, create feedback surveys and have an open door (email) policy. When they implement changes based on these suggestions, they should tell everyone about them to show that you listened to their requests.

On the other hand, they can feel frustrated, burn out, and delay delivery if their feelings appear to be neglected or intentionally triggered in the negative direction. In such situations, the truck drivers might lose interest and feel their potentials do not count. When truck drivers believe their skills are helpful, they will feel motivated and continue

to work for the company (Dubbelt et al., 2019). Another critical element in employee feelings emerges if employees think they have made meaningful friendships. The experiences, expectations, and happenings make the truck drivers feel valued. An excellent asset to truck drivers is safe at work, creating a safe culture to engage drivers on their daily routes. So, these drivers feel appreciated and rewarded, which delivers an extraordinary profit to companies.

The feeling of completeness that arises from allowing drivers' voices does not go to only the driver but also the company. Drivers want their voices heard. Administrative personnel want their voices heard. Problems begin to arise when one set suppresses the voice of the other. Rather than stop, empower. Solicit feedback from truck drivers and reward drivers for improving unsafe habits. Participant 8 stated,

Organizational leaders must ensure that new drivers understand that they have invested in their professional development. Leaders must provide clear training and development paths for drivers to advance. Suggesting various roles for driver development, from entry-level to management, and the training and development steps and drivers must succeed on their way to this new career path.

They are securing customer official feedback as well as the unofficial through the truck driver. Because the truck driver interacts with loading and unloading personnel at the collection and discharge locations (Jiang & Luo, 2018), their feedback could be relied on unless the company has identified truck drivers who are disingenuous, making their witness invalid.

The feelings of truck drivers are essential because they need to put them in a frame of mind to think no evil. Noteworthy is that a truck driver could be among the best in collecting and safely delivering from warehouse to warehouse but does not bear tales of truth. Participant 4 stated,

Employee appreciation does not have to come solely from the top. It is often more powerful when recognition comes from all sides—from peers and strangers alike. The most effective way to instill honor is through peer recognition. As a result, participant 8 felt the same as participant 4, that everyone should be recognized for their efforts.

Building stronger relationships among coworkers is an excellent way to build a prominent organization. The company should ensure that the truck driver's feelings are not harmed due to the truck driver's unique value. Other drivers may gather the necessary information, some of whom may not effectively collect and deliver. As a result, the dichotomy in employee pedigree is revealed, which a company must not ignore but rather hire based on the applicants' specific values. All participants contributed the following 'employee feelings' tips. It is critical to establish clear communication channels for drivers to share their ideas to achieve the desired employee feelings. The company may develop coaching sessions. More positive results can be obtained when the company engages drivers as problem-solving partners. Achieving positive employee feelings begins with the onboarding process, which connects new drivers with the company's values, policies, and procedures (Kara et al., 2018). Participant 6 stated,

Companies must devote time and resources to training and developing frontline dispatchers for them to become better leaders. Dispatchers must engage with their teams and consistently demonstrate critical behaviors such as trust-building, inspiring teamwork, and effectively coaching drivers.

Participant 7 said,

It is the responsibility of company officials to establish new relationships and inquire about drivers' career goals and desires. Consider incorporating new drivers into existing teams, form groups who perform similar functions, and assist administrative personnel in contacting drivers.

Participant 6 stated,

Drivers should not be forced to use old-fashioned methods. Drivers feel better when routed, and scheduling can get them home faster. Feedback systems are necessary because drivers are pleased that their input contributes to the operation.

Participant 7 stated,

By implementing this strategy, leaders will be able to reduce any potential issues before they escalate and cause attrition. Leaders can meet with drivers and ask them about their needs, allowing them to express any concerns or expectations.

The inputs are possible through the organization's feedback units, which are set up for drivers. Businesses may survey drivers yearly to gauge their progress and feedback. Leaders and drivers can discuss various potential issues that may obstruct the collection of honest feedback from employees (Potgieter et al., 2018). Asking open-ended questions allows drivers to elaborate on problems, assisting supervisors, dispatchers, and

drivers in identifying potential issues to resolve. As a result, the company may use modern technology to assist drivers in avoiding these stresses, streamlining operations, and reducing the paperwork that drivers must fill out.

Participants 1 and 7 indicated that rather than punishing bad drivers, leaders can reward top drivers based on their seatbelt usage, for instance. Gamify the required behaviors to help drivers monitor and adjust their actions in real-time to earn rewards. Sessions involving two-way communication with drivers enable drivers to submit value-loaded feedback. All these nuances play right into the feelings of the drivers. The applicability of these nuances to administrative personnel is valid. However, the mainstay of a trucking company is the truck driver. Therefore, the retention of truck drivers is essential. According to Participant 1 stated,

Organizations that can follow, discuss, and tell the entire story can reduce turnover. Turnover is costly in time, dollars, disappointments, and frustrations. Participants believe that no trucking companies would exist if no truck drivers were on the company's books.

Whether the trucks are owned by the trucking company or rented, company officials must interact with truck drivers to fulfill the company's delivery contracts. Because this is not a joint event due to supply and demand conditions in the industry, a company may reduce driver turnover and find new drivers at a lower cost than usual (Gandy et al., 2018). Drivers frequently have a strong sense of self-importance. As a result, a company must discover what motivates the drivers and capitalize on those positive antecedents. In terms of employee feelings, truck driver wait time, which can

sometimes last an entire day, harms the driver's emotions (Belete, 2018). Companies must avoid this at all costs and under any conditions. To mitigate the effect of penalties, a company would instead award safety bonuses to drivers who do not commit violations and penalize those who do. Drivers must avoid all violations and prevent all breaches from occurring. Participant 8 stated,

Recognizing drivers is a powerful tool organizational leaders can use to implement and improve if they have not already. Implementing or simply improving this tool makes a huge difference in organizations. One step is to increase employee motivation to show them the value of their contribution to the company.

In a similar response, Participant 7 stated,

Drivers must be recognized through praise, pay, and positive feedback, which can be given one-on-one, in groups, or through forums. Leaders must also provide drivers with formal and informal incentives, benefits, and compensation packages. The positive feelings of existing company drivers typically rub off on new drivers, and everyone stays.

Company leaders recognize that ensuring that drivers are suitable for the job is an excellent way to retain drivers. Leaders should choose drivers who are qualified and happy in their driving jobs. Drivers must have the necessary skills, intelligence, and dedication. Paying drivers competitive wages or per mile is an excellent way to attract and retain drivers.



Leaders should endeavor to hire and retain top drivers in the first place. Top drivers will be strong contributors, and organizations want to keep them. Good employee feelings can also come from the ability of company leadership to implement messaging tools between drivers and dispatchers to help reduce errors. Participant 2 stated,

Organizational leaders succeed when implementing the right driver retention strategies by providing competitive benefits, adequate home time, driver incentives, and well-kept equipment. Support these fundamentals by ensuring field managers maintain policies and have mechanisms to identify gaps and address them quickly.

Leaders are providing drivers with efficient equipment, which increases productivity. To accomplish this, organizations must provide drivers with specific tools to perform their duties, such as having Qualcomm units perform routine maintenance checks, install GPS systems and a fuel optimization software program for all trucks.

When drivers experience no errors arising from administrative processes, the drivers feel good and want to stay with the company. Dispatchers and drivers must have continuous communication. Encouraging drivers to set work/life goals makes the drivers feel valued and belonging. Otherwise, many drivers would more likely leave the company. Employees who do not receive respectful treatment are very likely to leave the company. Highlighting needs contributes positively to employees feeling and creates an upward swing in productivity from happy employees (Rastogi et al., 2018). Maintaining healthy relationships with employees cannot be ignored. The excellent treatment creates a good feeling and sustains employee longevity.

### **Theme 5: Right Operational Factors**

The theme, right operational factors, is a mixed bag of surface elements from question to question. The data analysis process initially revealed participants were harping on leadership. Every participant treated all questions from the standpoint of multiple ingredients. However, that treatment appeared to be more evident in the emergence of the theme 'right operational factors.' All the participants identified leadership as one of the right organizational factors. The participants also generally agreed that there would be no trucking business without truck drivers. Leadership is thus central to victory in the trucking industry. According to Participant 4,

By cultivating a loyal customer base, a solid and positive relationship with the drivers fosters respect for the shippers and receivers. Customers who are satisfied with your brand will buy your products and services. The importance of leadership can be seen in creating and deploying resources, promoting job satisfaction, the interaction of drivers with leadership and other personnel, and the appropriateness of the company structure.

Truck drivers would expect company leadership to lead in the right direction. It is up to organizational leaders to connect their employees to resources and good working tools. Leadership helps truck drivers grow. Growth strategies are created and implemented by leadership, enhancing truck drivers' self-esteem (Lalatendu et al., 2018). Leaders should organize and structure driver activities to mirror expected results with driver interest involved. Leaders should take the time to coordinate every operational process to ensure also that the truck drivers receive mental support from the

organizational leaders. Leaders must make sure that a communication system is put in place to engage the drivers every step of the way. According to Participant 3,

Referrals are also beneficial to businesses because they are less expensive and produce higher quality job leads than traditional marketing programs. This leadership factor is a powerful tool for organizing, implementing, and improving the overall organizational process to deploy a driver for every delivery contract. Leadership was viewed as an operational factor by the participants.

Good leadership ensures good compensation packages for drivers as a trucking company can only be in business if it has drivers to operate the trucks, whether owned or rented. Leaders implement mentoring programs. Leaders provide drivers with an adequate job to keep them busy and make them money. Hiring is also a leadership function in which employers recruit the right talent ahead of time. It enables leaders to take the proper measures to mitigate shortages and aid preparations to ensure the right fit for successfully handling the company's trucks and subsequent delivery assignments. Participant 6 stated,

It was proven that fostering strong bonds among colleagues improves employee efficacy and increases employee engagement. Companies that place a high value on employee retention must place a high value on interpersonal relationships.

The participants also indicated that improved communication, lower stress, and increased output were all benefits of cohesive teams. If leaders allocate resources correctly, the outcomes will be good. As a result, maintaining long-term success requires connecting the appropriate people to the right tasks. Leadership is responsible for

utilizing driver talents and assigning them to relevant contracts. The drivers will be inspired to put their skills to work and create income after the project is completed.

Leadership also has the responsibility to be innovative. Deploying a creative solution often involves doing things differently from the norm (Northouse, 2018). Company leaders reserve the right to think out creative solutions that can keep the company afloat while maintaining the truck drivers. While innovativeness varies from company to company, trucking company leaders must determine the specific needs of their respective companies and create innovative solutions. Therefore, innovation should be on the company's plan to implement rather than vacuum when thinking about the right operational factors. The company's marketplace consists of manufacturers, importers, exporters, and cosigners. Trucking company leaders must keep the industry in focus and understand how innovation could add value to the company's interaction with the marketplace. As an operational factor, leadership cannot exhaust different creative ways to attack operational problems.

When considering the operational factors of leadership, resources, job satisfaction, driver quality time, and company structure, the leadership function encapsulates planning, organizing, directing, controlling, and directing. It is in deploying the above-listed tasks that the correct operational factors become visible. The company leaders must, therefore, ideally have innovation as part of the business ethos. Innovation will improve the working process and lead to new solutions to previously unsolved problems. Participant 4 stated, "Before developing a marketing strategy, companies must

first define their goals. It is also critical to understand the current customer retention rate with your company.”

Leaders must, therefore, identify opportunities for innovation, identify opportunities for creation or improvement, identify innovations and adaptations required in the trucking routines, and network with others to learn and teach processes (Ciulla et al., 2018). The innovations could improve or replace business processes to increase efficiency and productivity or enable the business to extend the range of markets to differentiate the company from its competitors and increase. Frequently, the focus on innovations happens inside the business through employees, managers, and developments outside the company, such as suppliers, customers, shippers, and receivers identifying those companies within the industry.

### **Applications to Professional Practice**

This research was conducted to determine the strategies used by trucking company leaders to increase truck driver retention. Because of the study’s qualitative nature, participant interviews were used to collect robust data. Leaders of trucking companies were available and eager to answer interview questions. Data saturation became apparent by the eighth participant. That observation provided the first hint of professional practice expectations. Furthermore, truck drivers in the southeastern United States can use the results of this study to help improve truck driver retention.

The trucking industry’s professionals perform various functions, all of which can benefit from the findings of this study. Leaders in the trucking industry issued stern warnings to administrative and field employees. Professional truck drivers and trucking

administrators must pay close attention to indices relating to the environment in which the business operates, the available tools of the trade, operator wellbeing, mental and psychological health, and the good and bad things around the operator.

When applying the findings of this study to professional practice, business operators should keep the environment in which they operate in mind. Trucking practitioners may have learned from the research participants that their companies should take deliberate steps to create an enabling environment. The professionalism demonstrated by business leaders in improving the workplace environment will align with the hypotheses of the research participants. Trucking company leaders may increase their business mileage by determining which trucking tools are available to their field workers, such as drivers and loaders, in some cases. Professional trucking practitioners should consider deploying social elements to ensure the well-being of their employees. Leaders of trucking companies should be concerned with mental and psychological balance. Finally, the company's leaders oversee hiring and firing field workers. As a result, the circumstances under which employees join the company and perform their job functions contribute to its growth and development.

### **Implications for Social Change**

Because of the revolving exit door, employee turnover remains a constant issue for an organization's viability (Costello, 2017). Truck driving is a large occupation, and the services truck drivers provide are critical to the economy of the United States (Burks & Maraco, 2019). Employee turnover is costly and, at times, unmanageable in all industries (Olson et al., 2018). Profitable businesses can lead to increased business

growth and job opportunities. Identifying factors that may improve, limit, or hinder drivers' abilities, attitudes, and overall job satisfaction while on the job will benefit trucking companies by increasing the supply chain's effectiveness (Costello, 2017). Organizational leaders who implemented detailed specific retention strategies discovered that these strategies intermittently increased truck driver retention while decreasing turnover, recruiting, and training costs and improving the organization's viability (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017).

The study's research focused on trucking company leaders' strategies for increasing truck driver retention. In the grand scheme of things, increased retention among truck drivers contributes to a competitive advantage, improved customer relations, increased production, and supply chains. Reducing employee turnover promotes job security (Acikgoz et al., 2016), which may alleviate financial strain on communities and individuals. Managers may be able to increase retention, boost morale, and improve business performance due to the implications for social change.

### **Recommendations for Action**

Almost all of the research participants made recommendations while answering the interview questions. The data analysis process resulted in findings in which targeted suggestions are either discernible or obvious. The research findings include action items that serve as targeted recommendations. The participating company leaders' trucking industry experience was evident in their interview question answers. Data collection activities resulted in discovering findings that pinpoint the direction a trucking company could take to retain truck drivers.

The findings elicited a wide range of recommendations. Business leaders should ensure that the administrative space is friendly. When truck drivers visit the executive space, office staff should follow a policy of camaraderie. The working environment must be impeccably clean. In terms of employees who have left their jobs due to burnout, company leaders should understand the possibility of overutilization and manage the remaining drivers to hear those things better at the person he left and return. The demand for new truck drivers often creates the opportunity for returning drivers to be welcomed and embraced as if they never left their jobs in the first place. The company leaders should not wait until the driver begins to look for other job opportunities for growth and development. The company leader or business manager must pre-empt ambitious drivers and put systems in place to keep them on the job. Business leaders should work together to outfit the trucks with all the necessary equipment to ensure a smooth journey. The truck drivers should not be stranded for any longer than essential because they are waiting for the office to do something that should have been done from the start. This can be accomplished by allowing truck drivers to create checklists of their expectations while on the road. This provision alone may entice a truck to return to the company after exploring other options.

Truck drivers are likely to have families who rely on them for food. As a result, business leaders should incorporate truck driver well-being into company policy to retain truck drivers. People naturally gravitate toward those who show an interest in their well-being. Furthermore, truck drivers, like many other professionals, have lack mental and psychological confidence. This phenomenon is caused by the words they hear, their



thoughts, and the things they see. Leaders in the trucking industry must prevent or avoid any spoken or body language that may convey truck drivers a denigration of their persons. Trucking companies do not want drivers thinking about their inadequacy on the highways. Finally, circumstances surround both events and people. From their interviews, hiring, onboarding, orientation, and assignments, trucking business leaders should consciously create favorable circumstances for truck drivers. Truck driver retention will become a reality if all of the preceding recommendations are followed.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

My purpose in this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies for trucking company leaders in the southeast region of the United States to increase truck driver retention. The findings of this research may broaden the understanding and foundation of the existing research in increased employee turnover and concentrate on the reasons why employee turnover continues to exist in trucking companies. Further research is necessary to establish a greater awareness of the topic. The first recommendation is the need for researchers to execute a multiple case study that involves various local trucking companies and the ones across the United States.

In this study, there were four limitations noted in Section 1. The first limitation was that I must trust the data received from participants as truthful with no misleading statements or exaggerated responses beyond my control. I focused my study on the perspectives of leaders from trucking companies. My second recommendation is that researchers must conduct studies to explore driver retention strategies directly from the

viewpoints of local and over-the-road truck drivers. Another limitation was that researchers might address the company locations.

The sample size included eight participants featured within this study located within the southeast region of the United States. Furthermore, in future research, researchers should increase the number of participants. Further research should also broaden the scope and include organizational leaders from other businesses to cover a broader geographical area.

The third limitation was that participants could misunderstand the interview questions, which would have necessitated reading the questions before the commencement of interviews to understand the questions better. The study's final limitation mentioned interviewing as a data collection technique during the research process during data analysis interpretation. To increase driver retention, researchers could conduct a quantitative or ethnographic study to determine whether local or on-the-road truck drivers enter the trucking industry through a recruiting program for drivers 21 and older. The researcher discussed exploring strategies; I suggest that researchers conduct additional studies to investigate approaches that truck drivers could use to increase driver retention for more effective truck drivers and recruiting strategies.

### **Reflections**

The doctoral journey was a rigorous process. The Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) was a very intense, tedious, and awe-inspiring learning curve, but substantially a worthwhile accomplishment at Walden University. When I first began working on my DBA, I had no clue what a challenging and satisfying process I had ahead

of me. I never thought I would get to this point, but I did. I felt that I would quit this doctoral journey a couple of times because of the issues I encountered in my personal life and during this program. This DBA process has stretched beyond who I am, and I can honestly tell people if this is what you want. You can accomplish this and whatever else you set your mind to do with consistency, dedication, sacrifice, and the ability to put in the challenging work.

While learning this DBA process, I understood the field of study through the best professors, friends, and colleagues who have a vast knowledge of information and expertise willing to share. During this process, I built long-lasting relationships to produce lifetime friends, ideas, and experiences. This DBA program taught me that you have extra strength and get plenty of rest when you can. Upon completing Section 2, I received constructive criticism from friends, family, classmates, and faculty members. Still, I endured the feedback and received a “met requirements” from my committee members and my URR. My doctoral study in this DBA process is a single qualitative case study to explore strategies that trucking company leaders in the southeast region of the United States use to increase truck driver retention. The study participants were five company leaders who have successfully used strategies to increase truck driver retention.

Interviewing the participants was an excellent experience. I hoped that the participants would be cooperative when participating in the study. I wanted them to truthfully answer the interview questions with open hearts, minds, and all sincerity. I wanted them to have an interest in curtailing truck driver turnover and implementing retention strategies. The participants were cooperative and very truthful.

### **Conclusion**

The truck drivers wield the power of a trucking company. Often, the drivers are the least educated of the company's employees. While truck drivers are eking out a living, company administrators may be preoccupied with thinking negatively about the drivers, which is suicidal for any such company. Every trucking company wants a good and dedicated driver. Every company leader would like to see the priceless expression on a truck driver's face whose hiring package causes the driver to smile. What the company's leaders or managers do to generate such a smile is dependent on their understanding of current truck-driving events. If a truck driver earns a good wage but is treated poorly in the office, they will choose a lower-paying job at a company where the office workers are as pleasant as the people the driver knows at home.

While it may seem absurd to consider brainwashing concepts, training and orientation sessions can be regarded as brainwashing sessions. Thus, a trucking company that wants to keep its truck drivers must instill company spirit, hold training sessions, and incorporate loyalty tenets and freebies that win people's hearts. When truck drivers learn that the next training is approaching, they look forward to it because they know something good will happen at the movement. They could take branded T-shirts and drinking cups home with them. Because repetition is the mother of retention, the contents of the hiring package could be itemized on a leaflet like a flyer and distributed in the trucks. By doing so, a driver would see those items listed at every turn and always have a pleasant feeling.

Truckers understand they are constantly competing with one another. In such cases, a trucking company would administratively identify elements to spice up the drivers' lives at inconvenient times. This element of surprise keeps the truck drivers on the company's payroll indefinitely as they await the next pleasant surprise. A driver may require overtime work from time to time due to family financial emergencies. While the company should keep the balance sheet in mind, no sacrifice is too great if the bottom line is secure. In such a case, business leaders may grant a driver overtime pay.

The only way to achieve truck driver retention is to put all the recommendations into action. This conclusion is because any recommendation that receives less attention may be the deciding factor for one or more drivers. The emerging themes may influence the weight of each recommendation slightly or significantly. This potential is determined by the diverse personalities represented by truck drivers. As a result, because assessing the significance of each recommendation may be difficult, trucking company leaders must recognize all recommendations as equally essential to truck driver retention strategies.

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## Appendix A: Interview Questions

The interview questions are as follows:

1. What specific strategies has your company used to reduce truck driver turnover?
2. How do your driver retention strategies relate to business profitability?
3. What innovative ideas did you discover while implementing your strategies to reduce truck driver turnover in your organization?
4. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of your strategies for reducing truck driver turnover?
5. What innovative approaches have your drivers adopted to contribute to reducing truck driver turnover?
6. What are some reasons employees elect to stay with your organization?
7. What motivational strategies work for you in reducing truck driver turnover?
8. What other information about reducing truck driver turnover rates would you like to share at this time?

## Appendix B: Interview Protocol

For the interview preparation, I will use e-mail as the primary method of contact with the participants. I will introduce myself to the participant, explaining I am a student working on my doctoral study in the Business Administration program in the Management and Technology School of Walden University. I do not have an existing connection with the participants who are managers with the knowledge and skills to provide successful strategies for truck driver retention.

Opening the interview, I will advise the participant that, in my opinion, retention strategies are the leading contributor to organizational success. I will inform the participant that this study might affect social change by providing trucking company leaders with plans for improved employee retention in the trucking industry. I will advise the participant that employee retention strategies might improve the lives of citizens in Fayetteville, North Carolina, by ensuring quality healthcare care is available at the time of need. There will be an explanation for my study; to explore strategies to improve retention. The interview should take approximately one hour at an agreed-upon location in North Carolina. The audio recording device will be a Galaxy Samsung smartphone, and I will take detailed notes in case the smartphone has an audio recorder failure.

Before the participant's data is collected, I will send each participant the informed consent form as an attachment to the invitation letter. I will advise that the interview will be recorded for transcription purposes. The participants must review and sign the informed consent form if they decide to participate. We will discuss any questions the

participant may have. I will ensure the participant understands they can withdraw from the interview at any time without penalty.

After receiving permission to record the participant's interview and informing the participant, the interview is beginning. I will verbally cite the date and time of the interview. Paper and pencil will be accessible at the beginning of the interview for notes and the start of the smartphone audio recorder. Participants will be introduced using an alphanumeric code to ensure the confidentiality of the participant. The beginning of the code will be a "P," and the ending of the code was a number (e.g., P 1). Interviews will be conducted using a semistructured interview. Additional questions may follow to clarify responses.

At the end of the interview, we will discuss the member checking process. I will explain that I will paraphrase the interview responses and provide the participant with a copy for verification of their responses. I will request that the participant review the document and provide any corrections to me within 5 days to ensure accuracy. I will ensure the participant understands that no response to this request will confirm their agreement with my interpretation.

I will thank the participant for taking part in the study and provide any contact information for any questions or concerns the participant may have. End of the protocol.