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Logistics Leader Strategies for Retaining Employees

Sandra Northern
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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Sandra Northern

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2023

Abstract

Logistics Leader Strategies for Retaining Employees

by

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MS, University of Maryland University College, 2010

BS, University of Maryland University College, 2007

Consulting Capstone Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

March 2023

Abstract

Low employee retention can lead to a lack of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for sustainable logistics operations. Logistics leaders are concerned with employee retention because turnover increases business costs, reduces operational efficiency, and decreases profitability. Grounded in Herzberg's two-factor theory, the purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies logistics leaders use to increase employee retention. The participants were three senior leaders from a logistics organization in the northeast region of the United States who possessed knowledge and experience of the research phenomena. Data were collected through semistructured interviews, company documents, publicly available data, and archived records. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, and three themes emerged: competitive wages, growth and development opportunities, and recognition. The key recommendation is for logistics leaders to implement competitive wages conjoined with employee skill development programs supporting career advancement. The implications for positive social change include the potential for logistics leaders to decrease unemployment, improve individuals' financial stability, and enhance communities.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my family and friends, who supported me during this process. A special thanks to my husband, Warren Sr., for sacrificing time to support and encourage me to complete my doctoral journey. To my children, Tlesha, Warren Jr., and Christopher, son-in-law, Nicolas, and goddaughter, Hancy, thank you for your love and understanding over the last 2 years. To my parents, George and Carolyn (late) Wilder, for instilling the drive and dedication in me to finish what I start. To my siblings and siblings-in-law, thank you for loving me through my preoccupation with work and praying for me when I was stressed out. Thank you to my friends who continued to push me to the finish. Each of you was essential to my journey, and I thank Yahweh for you.

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Thank you to my client organization leaders for allowing me to consult for your organization and help you achieve organizational goals. I also want to thank my fellow cohorts for their support and encouragement. Thank you for the emails and messages, checking on me and my progress. Finally, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge Yahweh, my Lord, and Savior, who made all this possible. I would not have started this journey or finished it if it were not for Yahweh's direction and the people, he placed in my life to help me accomplish it. I am forever grateful for what I have learned and the ability to help others grow.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

For this study, I use the 2019-2020 Baldrige Excellence Framework to explore logistics leaders' strategies for increasing employee retention in WDM organization. Following Walden University's Consulting Capstone requirements, I serve as a scholar-consultant and primary researcher. I introduce the business problem, justifying and validating the need for the study through a comprehensive analysis and synthesis of the literature on the topic and aligned theory.

Background of the Problem

Employee turnover creates billions of dollars in direct and indirect costs to organizations (Jannat et al., 2020; Krishna & Garg, 2022), prompting changes in industries, economies, and societies (Kilibarda et al., 2019; Skelton et al., 2020). Employees retain the knowledge, skills, and abilities essential for organizational operations and sustainability (Jannat et al., 2020; Kilibarda et al., 2019; Skelton et al., 2020), making employee retention a primary concern for organizational leaders (Kilibarda et al., 2019; Skelton et al., 2020). The logistics industry has retained a poor image and status that causes employees to leave their employers for better jobs and salaries (Kilibarda et al., 2019; Paché & Large, 2021). Many logistics employees remain in a position for less than 5 years before leaving (Kilibarda et al., 2019), while market fluctuations and competitors provide them with alternative job opportunities (Živković et al., 2021). Logistics employees' frequency of employer movement contributes to abnormal industry turnover conditions that harm operational efficiency and confirms the need for employee retention solutions (Kilibarda et al., 2019).

Jannat et al. (2020) identified that when leaders focus on improving employees' job attitudes, such measures support employee retention and reduce employee turnover. Furthermore, strategies that increase employees' job satisfaction and decrease dissatisfaction motivate positive job attitudes that encourage employees to remain with the organization (Jannat et al., 2020). Thus, increased employee retention enables organizational leaders to retain the skilled and experienced labor necessary for sustainable value creation (Jannat et al., 2020; Kilibarda et al., 2019; Skelton et al., 2020; Živković et al., 2021).

Problem Statement

Retaining skilled and experienced employees in shifting economic markets is essential for organizational operations, and a continual challenge for leaders (Kilibarda et al., 2019, pp. 273–274). From December 2018 to December 2019, the transportation, warehousing, and utility industries experienced high employee turnover with an 11.3% increase in employee quits and a 23.8% increase in employee retirements, transfers, disabilities, and deaths (McCarthy & Akinyooye, 2020, p. 15). The general business problem is that decreased employee retention increases organizational costs and negatively influences organizational efficiency and productivity. The specific business problem is that some logistics leaders lack strategies for increasing employee retention.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies logistics leaders use to increase employee retention. The targeted population was three leaders within different subunits of one logistics organization in the northeast region of

the United States who implemented successful employee retention strategies. The implications for positive social change include the potential for positive economic shifts, resulting in productive community and societal changes. Leaders' employee retention efforts can lower unemployment levels, improve individuals' financial stability and economic independence, and increase tax revenues to benefit communities, citizens, and families.

Nature of the Study

For this study, I considered three methods of study: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method. Qualitative research has traditional value within business management (Lanka et al., 2021). Researchers use the qualitative approach to gain insight into phenomena, explaining what, how, and why of solutions to organizational challenges (Lanka et al., 2021). Quantitative research involves variables and numbers for statistical testing and analysis of hypothesized differences, relationships, estimates, or probabilities (Zyphur & Pierides, 2020). The quantitative method was inappropriate for the study because I did not use statistical testing to examine variables' characteristics or relationships. Researchers using mixed method research combine qualitative and quantitative methods and techniques to explore and examine phenomena (Kansteiner & König, 2020). Mixed method research was inappropriate for the study because I did not use the quantitative method and techniques to examine phenomena. Consequently, a qualitative approach was most appropriate for this study, as I wished to explore logistics leader strategies for increasing employee retention.

I selected a single case study research design for this study on logistics leaders' employee retention strategies. According to Yin (2018), case studies are appropriate for research requiring how and why answers to phenomena. Ethnography, grounded theory, and phenomenology are impractical qualitative designs for their associated time constraints (Saunders et al., 2019). Researchers using the ethnographic research design immerse themselves into participants' worlds, focusing on the phenomenon's cultural aspects (von Koskull, 2020). The ethnographic research design was inappropriate for this study because I did not immerse myself into logistics leaders' worlds, studying their experiences' cultural aspects. Researchers using the grounded theory research design develop theories (Sato, 2019). The grounded theory research design was inappropriate for this study because I did not seek to create a theory for explaining a phenomenon. Researchers applying the phenomenological research design explore the personal meanings of participants' lived experiences (DeHart & Dunn, 2020). The phenomenological research design was inappropriate for the research because I did not explore the personal meanings of participants' lived experiences. Using a case study design allows researchers to develop insights and in-depth explanations of organizations' phenomena of specific interest (Yin, 2018). Single case studies are appropriate for holistic or embedded case study designs having crucial, extreme, common, revelatory, or longitudinal purposes (Yin, 2018). Multiple case studies are appropriate for researchers seeking to combine single cases into one study, replicating and strengthening findings (Yin, 2018). A multiple case study was inappropriate for the study because I collected and analyzed data from different embedded subunits of a single organization, as per the

Walden University Doctoral of Business Administration Consulting Capstone guidelines. Thus, a single case study was appropriate for exploring the strategies logistics leaders use to increase employee retention within their organizations.

Research Question

What strategies do logistics leaders use to increase employee retention?

Interview Questions

1. What strategies do you use to increase employee retention?
2. How do you assess the effectiveness of your strategies for increasing employee retention?
3. What employee retention strategy is most effective for your organization?
4. What key obstacles have you faced in increasing employee retention?
5. How did you address the key obstacles to increasing employee retention?
6. How do you involve your employees in the retention strategy development process?
7. What additional information would you like to share about your organization's employee retention strategies?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework I used in this study was Herzberg's two-factor theory. Frederick Herzberg introduced the theory in 1959, determining two primary factors affecting employees' job attitudes (Herzberg et al., 1959). The theory's key tenants incorporate hygiene factors associated with job conditions and motivation factors that improve productivity (Herzberg et al., 1959). The hygiene factors include supervision,

work conditions, salary, security, status, personal life, company policies and administration, and interpersonal relations (Herzberg et al., 1959). The motivation factors include achievement, the opportunity for growth, responsibility, work, recognition, and advancement (Herzberg et al., 1959). Work fills most peoples' days and comprises experiences that result in temporary or long-term feelings of contentment or distress (Herzberg et al., 1959). Employees' job attitudes affect productivity, commitment, well-being, relationships, and attitudes toward companies, proving the value in leaders focusing on employees' job needs (Herzberg et al., 1959). Thus, Herzberg's two-factor theory was an appropriate conceptual lens for this study, enabling me to identify and understand the strategies logistics leaders used to increase employee retention.

Operational Definitions

Employee retention: The outcome of measures an organization exploits to retain its employees (Andrews & Mohammed, 2020).

Employee turnover: The number of employees who voluntarily or involuntary leave an employer (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020).

Hygiene factors: Factors influencing employees' perception of a healthy or unhealthy work environment (Herzberg et al., 1959).

Job attitude: The general feeling of like or dislike individuals have toward their job (Herzberg et al., 1959).

Logistics leaders: Multiskilled leaders with cross-functional capabilities for managing goods flow from origin to consumption and integrating and managing supply chain activities (Wagner et al., 2020).

Motivation factors: Factors that reinforce an employee's self-actualization needs for maximized performance (Herzberg et al., 1959).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions, limitations, and delimitations affect researchers' ability to achieve research quality (Babchuk, 2019). Researchers identify factors related to these elements that may influence the credibility and validity of their study (FitzPatrick, 2019).

Assumptions

Assumptions are information presumed as valid without verification (FitzPatrick, 2019). There were two assumptions in this study. The first assumption was that the leaders would provide truthful and relevant information. The second assumption was that the participant population was appropriate for exploring employee retention strategies in a logistics organization.

Limitations

Limitations are weaknesses that may affect the study's outcomes and conclusions (Ross & Bibler Zaidi, 2019). In this study, there were three limitations. The study's first limitation was using a single case study design, which limited the research to a single organization in a specific geographical location. The second limitation in this study was my potential biases based on previous knowledge and experience of the logistics industry. The study's third limitation was that the research findings were not generalizable to other organizations or industry leaders in the same or other geographical areas.

Delimitations

Delimitations are the study's boundaries as established by the researcher (Babchuk, 2019). The first delimitation in this study was the sample size of three logistics leaders in one organization. The second delimitation was the location selected for the study. The study's delimitations were based on a single case study design focused on retention strategies logistics leaders from the northeast region use to retain employees.

Significance of the Study

Logistics leaders require a strategy for increasing job satisfaction and retention, as employee turnover harms the organization, market, and economy (Kilibarda et al., 2019). High labor replacement costs cause organizations to lose money, putting them at a financial disadvantage in the market (Molahosseini et al., 2020). This study's findings could aid logistics leaders' knowledge of effective employee retention strategies and help them implement plans that retain employees and increase their competitive advantage. The study's findings might also strengthen labor, market, and trade opportunities for benefiting communities.

Contribution to Business Practice

Research outcomes concerning logistics leaders' strategies for increasing employee retention can provide valuable business practice contributions. Employees are essential assets that directly influence organizational goal achievement, and retention challenges limit the organization's capability to provide customer support, potentially compromising competitive advantage (Molahosseini et al., 2020). This study's findings might help logistics leaders gain insight into employees' job needs and develop a plan

that reduces turnover costs and retains competent and skilled labor. Furthermore, leaders can exploit capabilities and opportunities that create value for the business and its stakeholders.

Implications for Social Change

The implications for positive social change include strategies that can enhance communities' economic development. Logistics organizations generate demands that increase economic activity (Kilibarda et al., 2019). The organizations provide goods, services, and job opportunities vital to market, trade, community, and economic integration (Kilibarda et al., 2019). Thus, the forward and reverse flow of goods and services might meet consumer, community, and economic needs, creating sustainable value and increasing tax revenues.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

Researchers use literature reviews to conduct comprehensive assessments of phenomena topics, seeking current and relevant information for review and reporting (Neves & Brito, 2020; Seuring et al., 2021). Researchers access professional and academic literature through various methods and synthesize the information for reader enlightenment. Well-structured literature reviews generate industry insights (Durach et al., 2021; Magd et al., 2021; Neves & Brito, 2020; Rowley & Paul, 2021; Talwar et al., 2021) and promote research interest and value (Durach et al., 2021).

The purpose of this qualitative, single case study was to explore logistics leaders' strategies for increasing employee retention. Employee retention is vital to logistics organizations' operational efficiency and sustainability (Kilibarda et al., 2019), and the

costs associated with turnover presents challenges for logistics leaders (Kilibarda et al., 2019; Skelton et al., 2020). Using the lens of Herzberg's two-factor theory, the purpose statement, and the research question, I provided a comprehensive analysis and synthesis of the literature on the topic and theory. I presented the literature review under the following topic headings: (a) Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, (b) Contrasting Theories, (c) Logistics, (d) Third Party Logistics (3PL), and (e) Employee Retention. I gathered professional and academic literature from Walden University's library and Google Scholar. I focused primarily on collecting information from databases, such as ABI/INFORM Collection, Academic Search Complete, Business Market Research Collection, Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost, ProQuest Central, and SAGE Journals. The database search terms I used included *employee retention*, *employee turnover*, *logistics and employees*, *logistics and skilled labor*, *warehouse and labor*, *employee productivity*, *warehouse efficiency*, *employee performance*, *supply chain and labor retention*, *employee job attitude*, *employee behavior*, *employee job satisfaction*, *employee job dissatisfaction*, *employee motivation*, and *Herzberg's two-factor theory*. I assimilated information from peer-reviewed and scholarly articles, reports, seminal works, government websites, public websites, and books, searching in-depth for concepts related to employee retention within the logistics industry. I recorded and cited each source used in the literature review, as required for Walden University Doctoral Business Administration (DBA) scholars. A minimum of 95% of the sources gathered were peer-reviewed and current, with references dated between 2019 and 2023. Table 1 shows the academic and professional sources used in the study.

Table 1*Literature Review Content*

Sources	Total #	Pre 2019	2019-2023	% Total (2019-2023)
Books	4	2	2	50%
Dissertations	0	0	0	0%
Government resources	9	2	7	78%
Walden resources	2	0	2	100%
Public databases	2	0	2	100%
Peer-reviewed articles	194	7	187	96%
Total	211	11	200	95%

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

The conceptual framework for this study was Herzberg's two-factor theory. In 1959, Frederick Herzberg introduced the two-factor theory in *The Motivation to Work* (Herzberg et al., 1959). Herzberg et al. (1959) focused on people and their attitudes toward work, suggesting that work is a critical factor that causes most people satisfaction and grief. People's feelings influence their attitudes toward work, affecting productivity, commitment, well-being, and relationships. Herzberg et al. further indicated that employees need optimal job conditions and motivators to improve their productivity and willingness to work, creating practical value for the employer and employee. As such, the conceptual framework was practical for leaders' identification of the job satisfiers and motivators that encourage employee retention.

Leaders are primarily responsible for promoting employees' job satisfaction and motivation. Herzberg's two-factor theory indicates that hygiene factors foster job satisfaction, and motivational factors influence employee performance (Herzberg et al.,

1959). Hygiene factors are concerned with things that cause employees to feel healthy and happy at work, such as supervisor competence, work conditions, salary, security, benefits, policies, administration, and relationships (Herzberg et al., 1959). Motivation factors are concerned with things that cause employees to achieve job goals, such as recognition, growth, achievement, job interest, responsibility, and job advancement (Herzberg et al., 1959). Leadership's ability to manage employees' job satisfaction critical factors promotes the prevention of employee poor performance, turnover, mental health issues, relationship changes, and self-esteem challenges (Herzberg et al., 1959). However, some employees' rankings of hygiene and motivation factors may differ, causing variance in the outcomes (Lai & Gelb, 2019; Zhang et al., 2020). Thus, leaders must gain awareness of the critical factors influencing employees' feelings about their job health, happiness, and goals and create favorable job conditions. Leaders focus on this area increases employee job satisfaction and motivation, achieving retention success in changing labor environments.

When Herzberg conducted the study on work motivation, unemployment and industrial crisis concerns were high (Herzberg et al., 1959). The Great Depression and World War II had ended, causing economic changes that significantly affected the U.S. labor market (Bellou & Cardia, 2021). Men left for war, and women worked to fill their jobs, becoming indispensable workforce members (Bellou & Cardia, 2021). When men returned from war and rejoined the workforce, many women continued working to contribute to household income (Bellou & Cardia, 2021). However, labor market changes prompted negative shifts in demographic groups' employment and wages (Bellou &

Cardia, 2021). U.S. populations increased with workforce surges in age, gender, race, and ethnic labor market compositions (Toossi, 2002), and leaders' opportunities grew for employing diverse multigenerational people (Leupp et al., 2021; Sinicropi & Cortese, 2021; Su et al., 2022). The associated economic and labor changes facilitated cost of living increases that prompted the federal government to establish labor regulations and guidance for work conditions, earnings, and fair treatment (Fishback & Seltzer, 2021). Leaders' ability to adapt to these changes facilitates organizational change toward federally aligned HR practices that meet employees' changing needs.

As the U.S. labor market changes, so do organizations' labor requirements. Globalization and economic change encourage innovation and productivity that build company status, profit, and sustainability (Blagoev & Schreyögg, 2019; Koziol & Koziol, 2020; Sinicropi & Cortese, 2021). Company leaders require synchronized work rhythms that facilitate organizational innovation and productivity goals (Blagoev & Schreyögg, 2019; Delisle, 2020; Sharma et al., 2022). Many employees work more than 60 hours per week to ensure companies achieve their goals, contributing a considerable portion of their time to jobs (Blagoev & Schreyögg, 2019; Delisle, 2020). Work becomes an integral part of employees' conversations involving work gossip, experiences, and problems (Herzberg et al., 1959). Increasingly nontraditional work hours and heavy workloads leave people with minimal time for leisure activities and work-life balance (Blagoev & Schreyögg, 2019; Delisle, 2020; Leupp et al., 2021; Sharma et al., 2022). Such work requirements result in job burnout, dissatisfaction, and increased turnover (Blagoev & Schreyögg, 2019; Delisle, 2020; Leupp et al., 2021; Sharma et al., 2022). Leaders must

realize how an organization's environment dynamics affect its employees (Blagoev & Schreyögg, 2019; Sharma et al., 2022) and work to correct the imbalances created (Blagoev & Schreyögg, 2019; Delisle, 2020; Sharma et al., 2022).

It is vital that leaders maintain awareness of the things that improve employees' retention, as they affect a company's competitive advantage. The logistics industry is widely known for requiring employees to work long hours with minimal pay (Kane & Tomer, 2021; Keller et al., 2020; Vallas et al., 2022). Employees perform repetitious tasks with little opportunity for growth (Baruffaldi et al., 2019; Kumar, 2019; Vallas et al., 2022). As a result, the industry has high turnover rates that affect profitability (Keller et al., 2020). Leaders must recognize and understand the job satisfaction and motivation factors employees need to optimize performance and retention.

The organization's human resource (HR) department's role in this process is crucial (Jannat et al., 2020; Su et al., 2022), as it creates opportunities for a focus on intrinsic and extrinsic factors that drive employee decision-making and influence work motivation. However, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to increasing employee satisfaction or motivation (Ebenso et al., 2020; Mohite & Kumar, 2019; Zhu et al., 2020). Employees are unique individuals, necessitating innovative strategies for achieving performance and retention goals (Lai & Gelb, 2019; Zhang et al., 2020). Hygiene and motivation factors are relevant to logistics industry leaders (Kilibarda et al., 2019; Lai & Gelb, 2019; Madsen, 2020; Zhang et al., 2020), as is the significance of HR employing practices that apply for satisfying employees' needs (Ebenso et al., 2020; Mohite & Kumar, 2019; Zhu et al., 2020). Logistics leaders' engagement of HR managers allows

them to satisfy, motivate, and retain the employees required for mission accomplishment, keeping the supply chain operational and efficient.

Organizations of the 21st century operate in global and dynamic environments with heterogenous workforces more diversified than in the 1960s (Koziol & Koziol, 2020; Sinicropi & Cortese, 2021; Su et al., 2022; Živković et al., 2021). HR leaders have struggled to keep up with the challenges of retaining skilled labor (Kilibarda et al., 2019; Su et al., 2022), but leaders must take care not to override employees' expectations of what is important to them with their own opinions (Jankelová et al., 2021). Leaders must use methods that capture employees' opinions regarding what concerns them and improves their satisfaction, influencing positive job attitudes (Olasupo et al., 2019). Employees require fair treatment and an opportunity to succeed (Olasupo et al., 2019), and involving them in the decision-making process facilitates mutually beneficial value creation (Herzberg et al., 1959).

Herzberg's two-factor theory benefits leaders seeking to increase employees' morale and motivation, which promotes job satisfaction and retention (Herzberg et al., 1959). Times may have changed, but employees' concerns regarding health and happiness at work and ability to achieve job goals has not (Bellou & Cardia, 2021; Blagoev & Schreyögg, 2019; Delisle, 2020; Leupp et al., 2021; Sharma et al., 2022), making this focus more prevalent for industries. Leaders' progressive strategic thinking and diligence for addressing employees' needs are necessary for promoting positive outcome alignment (Chmielewska et al., 2020; Sobaih & Hasanein, 2020; Tran & Smith, 2020). Thus, Herzberg's theory remains applicable, proving the value in leaders focusing

on employees' job needs (see Herzberg et al., 1959). Logistics leaders might apply this theory to retain workers, support industry labor requirements, and achieve a competitive advantage.

Hygiene Factors

Hygiene factors are vital job elements that leaders use to optimize employees' health and happiness at work. They are significant indicators of employees' well-being because of their direct influence on employee morale and job dissatisfaction (Ann & Blum, 2020; Gu et al., 2022; Herzberg et al., 1959). Hygiene factors are extrinsic job aspects that employees consider valuable to their future with an employer (Ann & Blum, 2020; Tran & Smith, 2020). Deteriorating or absent hygiene factors promote negative feelings that lead to job dissatisfaction and turnover (Ann & Blum, 2020; Herzberg et al., 1959; Jankelová et al., 2021). Thus, hygiene factors are essential elements for employee retention.

Researchers conducted multiple studies to confirm the relationship between hygiene factors and employee job dissatisfaction. For example, Staempfli and Lamarche (2020) examined emergency department nurses' satisfaction, finding that chaotic and unpredictable work environments affect employee turnover. Tran and Smith (2020) explored strategies for increasing teacher retention, noting that salary and work conditions influence employee dissatisfaction and turnover. Chmielewska et al. (2020) examined the relationship between doctors' job motivation factors and hospital performance, finding that supervision, status, interpersonal relations, and security negatively affect employees' job attitudes. Živković et al. (2021) explored the effect of

job commitment on logistics employees' turnover intent, discovering that interpersonal relations influence employees' commitment and intention to stay. Each study revealed the intricacies of leaders effectively managing hygiene factors to promote employee health and happiness at work. Logistics organizations employ numerous workers from various backgrounds, so leaders must understand the hygiene factors that encourage job dissatisfaction and turnover.

Logistics leaders should ask employees to disclose the hygiene factors most important to their well-being. However, leaders must assess the hygiene factors employees take for granted because employees often do not consider them when evaluating health and happiness (Park et al., 2020). Leaders must also consider the hygiene factors that may be irrelevant for some employees, such as poor work conditions in underdeveloped native countries (Sobaih & Hasanein, 2020). Job satisfaction varies across cultures, industries, and jobs, and what is effective for one group may not be the same for another (Ann & Blum, 2020; Chmielewska et al., 2020; Gu et al., 2022; Staempfli & Lamarche, 2020; Tran & Smith, 2020; Živković et al., 2021). Logistics leaders must evaluate how supervision, work conditions, salary, security, status, personal life, company policies and administration, and interpersonal relations influence employees' decisions and develop helpful retention strategies for their employees, industries, and locations. Logistics leaders must focus on the most relevant strategy for their organization and its employees.

Supervision. Supervision provides leaders with the opportunity to maximize labor resources. Supervision is vital to an organization and its employees as it contributes

to organizational structure and goal achievement (Avey et al., 2022; Herzberg et al., 1959). It concerns supervisors' technical qualities regarding competence and fairness, or the lack thereof, for work delegation and employee training. Supervisors construct work for employee creative opportunity and recognition that indirectly influence individual advancement within their organizations (Avey et al., 2022; Herzberg et al., 1959). Their competence and fairness in teaching and entrusting employees with tasks have lasting effects on employees' job attitudes (Herzberg et al., 1959). Likewise, supervisors' negligence causes employee sentiments of organizational dishonesty, resulting in job dissatisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). Job dissatisfaction is evident in some logistics companies, where supervisors micromanage employees' time and track their performance for disciplinary actions (Vallas et al., 2022). Logistics supervisors are key to perceiving, understanding, and managing employees' feelings at work, leveraging them to produce positive outcomes (Keller et al., 2020). Thus, effective supervision strengthens employees' job satisfaction and organizations' capabilities. Logistics leaders must understand the significance of supervision in the workplace and how it might affect employee retention.

Supervision positively and negatively influences employees' job attitudes and decisions. Effective supervision often involves a collaborative effort between supervisors and employees, encouraging achievement (Herzberg et al., 1959). Supervisors' investment in employees increases their confidence and trust in management (Haridas et al., 2022). Such actions enhance supervisors' capabilities to address the needs that minimize negative job attitudes, mitigate job dissatisfaction, and encourage employee

retention (Haridas et al., 2022; Herzberg et al., 1959). Logistics supervisors are critical to operational sustainability. Therefore, logistics leaders must recognize supervisory activities that cause job dissatisfaction and adapt management to encourage employees toward goal and objective achievement.

Work Conditions. Work conditions are significant for employees and their organizations. Work conditions are significant factors for employee retention, as they can become vital dissatisfiers leading to turnover (Herzberg et al., 1959; Jankelová et al., 2021). They are concerned with an employee's feelings about a job's physical conditions, a work facility's environmental conditions, and a job's work volume (Herzberg et al., 1959). Work facilities' aesthetics, function, and processes affect work pace and routine, which affect employees' opinions of their organizations (Delisle, 2020; Riratanaphong & Chaiprasien, 2020). Work overload produces stress and health issues that challenge employees to trust their leaders' concern for their well-being (Abolade, 2020; Delisle, 2020; Hills, 2021). Similarly, leaders' failure to assign sufficient work to employees decreases their engagement, negatively influencing job satisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959; Hills, 2021). Misalignment in either of these areas encourages employees' negative job feelings, dissatisfaction, and turnover (Abolade, 2020; Delisle, 2020; Herzberg et al., 1959; Hills, 2021). Leaders' attention to favorable work conditions that aid employee work and mitigate challenges to turnover is preferable for organizational success (Abolade, 2020). This is valuable for logistics leaders, as inadequate work conditions can cause dissatisfaction and turnover. Thus, logistics leaders' strategies for improving work

conditions enhance employees' well-being, increasing productivity and value creation potential.

Salary. Salary is significant because it is the compensation employees receive in exchange for their work. Salary has short-term and long-term implications on employees' job attitudes (Herzberg et al., 1959). People develop beliefs and expectations about salary from early adulthood, using median comparisons to justify salary fairness and equality (Conlon, 2021; Pottenger, 2021; Ziano et al., 2022). Employees know that businesses need them for value creation, resulting in leaders making salary concessions to attract and retain them (Boudreaux, 2021; Pottenger, 2021). However, leaders must recognize that the salary that attracts employees to the organization may not keep them.

Employees want to feel appreciated and know they are valuable assets to their organization. Unfortunately, some employees' earnings rarely align with cost-of-living increases (Mensah et al., 2020; Pottenger, 2021; Seubert et al., 2021). Logistics employees make little more than minimum wage, causing dissatisfaction and turnover (Kane & Tomer, 2021; Keller et al., 2020; Vallas et al., 2022). Although leaders realize that misalignments exist between salaries and employees' expectations, they pressure employees to perform despite their concerns about equitable pay (Alrawahi et al., 2020; Pottenger, 2021). Such actions cause employees to feel unappreciated and undervalued, resulting in job dissatisfaction and retention challenges (Alrawahi et al., 2020; Pottenger, 2021; Ziano et al., 2022). Employees' perceptions of value affect their decisions. Logistics leaders should address employees' salary needs and expectations to increase job satisfaction and commitment.

Security. Security is also vital to employee job satisfaction and retention.

Employees' feelings about job security change their job attitudes and satisfaction levels (Abbas et al., 2021; Ann & Blum, 2020; Benson et al., 2020; Herzberg et al., 1959; Mensah et al., 2020; Shoss et al., 2020). Economic stressors, such as crises, recession, and budget cuts, create uncertainties that manifest as job security threats (Abbas et al., 2021; Benson et al., 2020; Shoss et al., 2020). Dynamic work environments with changing trends and events focused on cost reduction and work efficiency contribute to employees' job insecurity concerns (Abbas et al., 2021; Shoss et al., 2020). Job dissatisfaction results when employees' security perceptions conflict with their tenure and stability expectations (Benson et al., 2020; Mensah et al., 2020; Shoss et al., 2020). The logistics industry has temporary and nonunion employees whose job requirements facilitate unhappiness (Kane & Tomer, 2021; Vallas et al., 2022). As a result, employees' behaviors toward their organization change, and they choose to end their employment voluntarily (Shoss et al., 2020). Organization leaders must reassure employees that their jobs are secure to avoid turnover and value loss.

Leaders' failure to address employees' job security concerns promotes job dissatisfaction. Such neglect or misjudgment of the consequences of job insecurity threats impede leaders' ability to mitigate or prevent negative results (Abbas et al., 2021; Sublett & Penney, 2020). The more an employee values a job, it increases the security threat and its associated consequences (Benson et al., 2020; Shoss et al., 2020; Sublett & Penney, 2020). Employees who are highly satisfied with their jobs are likelier to show dissatisfaction with an agreement breach by seeking alternative opportunities to preempt

their loss (Benson et al., 2020; Shoss et al., 2020). Some logistics leaders need help retaining employees because they set expectations that employees feel they cannot achieve (Vallas et al., 2022). Leaders must avoid ambiguous communications and situations that stimulate employee impressions of job insecurity and strategize measures that alleviate their concerns (Abbas et al., 2021; Sublett & Penney, 2020). Leaders' focus on effective job security strategies enhances employee stability, facilitating leaders' ability to achieve goals.

Status. Job benefits and amenities allow logistics employees to achieve specific status levels. Herzberg et al. (1959) identified status as employees' perceptions surrounding the benefits and amenities provided to them, which improve or degrade work relationships. Companies supply the benefits as tangible and intangible offers to attract and retain labor (Boudreaux, 2021; Herzberg et al., 1959). Employees' status from the distribution of benefits and amenities determines their job attitudes and satisfaction levels (Boudreaux, 2021). Logistics leaders' attention to job benefits and amenities ensures alignment with employees' feelings regarding their social and professional goals.

Status is vital to employees' positive movement and goal achievement. Employees want to maintain or increase their social or professional status, and company benefits allow them to do so (Ann & Blum, 2020; Boudreaux, 2021). Sometimes employees achieve status through title changes and role assignments (Herzberg et al., 1959). At other times, employees achieve status through access to benefits and amenities like healthcare, leave, paid time off (PTO), pension plans, cafeterias, gyms, company cars, stocks, and paid tuition (Boudreaux, 2021; Clemens, 2021). A cost is associated

with supplying employees with benefits and amenities, but leaders can offset it by designing packages that appeal to employees (Boudreaux, 2021; Clemens, 2021). Many logistics employees lack the health and monetary benefits that other industry employees might receive (Kane & Tomer, 2021; Vallas et al., 2022), like benefits packages that increase their potential to promote employee stability, retention, and profit (Boudreaux, 2021; Clemens, 2021). Leaders must focus on this area to ensure employees receive the benefits and amenities that deter job dissatisfaction and turnover (Boudreaux, 2021; Clemens, 2021). It is especially important for logistics leaders to pay attention to employees' status desires, as employees' are the mainstay of such organizations. Logistics employees' access to the status they desire promotes job satisfaction, retention, and mutual goal achievement.

Personal Life. Job situations influence employees' stability, further affecting their personal lives. Employees' personal lives play a vital role in job dissatisfaction (Ann & Blum, 2020; Madsen, 2020). Herzberg et al. (1959) stated that job situations foster negative and positive job feelings. Some situations involve salary, location changes, or family difficulties (Ann & Blum, 2020; Herzberg et al., 1959; Seubert et al., 2021). Adequate wages promote stability, allowing employees to attain and maintain a standard of living (Boudreaux, 2021). However, inadequate wages have the opposite effect on employees' families and personal lives, causing dissatisfaction (Ann & Blum, 2020; Seubert et al., 2021). When employees are underpaid and financially insecure, their personal lives are affected (Kane & Tomer, 2021; Vallas et al., 2022). Therefore, leaders

must pay attention to how wages and other aspects of employees' jobs affect their personal lives and develop strategies to increase satisfaction.

Logistics leaders must maintain awareness of how employees' personal lives influence organization retention. Although leaders cannot change employees' personal lives, they can survey them to understand their needs better (Ann & Blum, 2020). Employees value the things that positively influence their personal lives (Ann & Blum, 2020; Madsen, 2020), and they ponder the advantages and disadvantages of their jobs (Vallas et al., 2022). Logistics employees often evaluate their job safety, pay, and risks deciding whether to continue their employment or leave (Vallas et al., 2022). Some organization leaders use surveys to discover how administrative decisions affect employees and their families, allowing them to develop solutions sensitive to employees' needs (Ann & Blum, 2020). Thus, logistics leaders demonstrating concern for their employees' personal lives encourage employee satisfaction and commitment.

Company Policies and Administration. Company policies and administration provide employees with job rules and guidelines. They are concerned with the ineffectiveness of an organization, its management, and policies that cause employee job dissatisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). Company policies and administration are critical factors in determining employees' feelings about their jobs because of their connection to other factors affecting employees' job happiness and satisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). Companies operate in dynamic environments where competition affects survivability (Koziol & Koziol, 2020; Pasko et al., 2021), and effective management is vital to sustaining employees' positive behaviors and attitudes (Avey et al., 2022; Koziol &

Koziol, 2020; Pasko et al., 2021). Organizations must have effective company policies and administration that establish order and fairness.

Effective company policies and administration ensure compliance and consistency throughout the organization. Leaders develop the policies that guide administrative and management actions in organizations (Madsen, 2020; Selvan et al., 2020), making them responsible for considering the contexts and conditions under which inefficiency and unfairness might affect employee dissatisfaction (Madsen, 2020; Pasko et al., 2021; Selvan et al., 2020). Employee dissatisfaction occurs when a lack of leadership accountability and authority causes chaos within an organization (Herzberg et al., 1959; Koziol & Koziol, 2020) or when company policies reveal unfairness and goal incompatibility between leaders and employees (Koziol & Koziol, 2020; Madsen, 2020). Inefficiency in company management, policies, and administration promote negligent leadership behaviors that negatively influence employees' job situations (Alrawahi et al., 2020; Herzberg et al., 1959; Koziol & Koziol, 2020). Therefore, leaders must ensure that their organizational policies and administration align for employee management, development, and retention.

Interpersonal Relations. The connections and associations people have with one another are essential. Interpersonal relationships involve friendly and unfriendly interactions between superiors, subordinates, and peers that produce feelings of job dissatisfaction (Ann & Blum, 2020; Herzberg et al., 1959). Employees value quality interpersonal relationships and seek to maintain them (Alrawahi et al., 2020; Anjum & Islam, 2021; Pasko et al., 2021; Tran & Smith, 2020). Cooperation and trust between

employees foster mutually beneficial work environments (Ho & Kuvaas, 2020). In contrast, degraded interpersonal relationships cause harm to employees and employers (Ann & Blum, 2020; Avey et al., 2022; Herzberg et al., 1959; Muniz et al., 2020). Employees dislike abusive work relationships, often quitting their jobs because of dissatisfaction (Avey et al., 2022; Muniz et al., 2020). Leaders must concern themselves with employees' sensitivity to interpersonal relationships and develop training opportunities that build and optimize employee relationships (Herzberg et al., 1959; Pasko et al., 2021; Živković et al., 2021). Because logistics involves interrelated warehouse and supply chain activities, interpersonal relationships are vital to daily operations. Logistics leaders' efforts to promote positive interpersonal relationships encourage teamwork and employee stability.

Hygiene Factors in Summary

Hygiene factors are critical to achieving and maintaining employees' job happiness (Ann & Blum, 2020; Gu et al., 2022; Herzberg et al., 1959). Insufficient hygiene factors frustrate employees and cause dissatisfaction, but employees are pleased when leaders address them (Jankelová et al., 2021). Company leaders should focus on the hygiene factors that hold value for their employees, recognizing that needs will change (Ann & Blum, 2020; Chmielewska et al., 2020; Tran & Smith, 2020). Leaders' attention to hygiene factors alone does not resolve employee retention issues (Alrawahi et al., 2020), but achieving a balance between the hygiene and motivation factors facilitates positive job feelings and promotes positive work environments that encourage it

(Alrawahi et al., 2020; Chmielewska et al., 2020; Sobaih & Hasanein, 2020; Tran & Smith, 2020).

Hygiene factors are applicable to the logistics industry because of their relationship to employees' health, happiness, and well-being (see Ann & Blum, 2020; see Gu et al., 2022; see Herzberg et al., 1959). Supervision, work conditions, salary, security, status, personal life, company policies and administration, and interpersonal relations are all vital to employees' morale and job satisfaction (Ann & Blum, 2020; Gu et al., 2022; Herzberg et al., 1959). Many logistics employees leave their employers because they are dissatisfied with work conditions, salary, status, policies and administration, management, and relationships (Kane & Tomer, 2021; Keller et al., 2020; Kilibarda et al., 2019; Vallas et al., 2022). As logistics activities grow to meet consumer demands, employee labor needs increase (Baruffaldi et al., 2019; Borgström et al., 2021; Cavaignac et al., 2021). Logistics leaders require capable and skilled employees to help them achieve a competitive advantage (Keller et al., 2020; Kilibarda et al., 2019; Skelton et al., 2020). Thus, logistics leaders developing strategies to increase employees' health, happiness, and well-being can create value while increasing employee satisfaction and retention.

Motivation Factors

Motivation factors are vital management tools for company leaders. They affect employee satisfaction, performance, and retention (Herzberg et al., 1959; Jankelová et al., 2021; Koziol & Koziol, 2020). Motivation factors are intrinsic job aspects that aid employees in reaching their job goals (Ann & Blum, 2020). When motivators are absent

or insufficiently managed, employees develop negative job attitudes that inhibit satisfaction (Koziol & Koziol, 2020). Thus, leaders must identify employees' motivators and implement them to promote satisfaction and retention (Ebenso et al., 2020; Koziol & Koziol, 2020; Patterson et al., 2020).

Researchers have conducted multiple studies to validate the relationship between motivation factors and employee job satisfaction. For example, Lai and Gelb (2019) explored the factors for motivating and retaining salespeople, noting that recognition and growth are most important for employee satisfaction and retention. Alrawahi et al. (2020) examined the factors promoting employee job satisfaction in Omani hospital laboratories, finding that advancement, recognition, and growth contribute to employee satisfaction. Ann and Blum (2020) explored the key factors affecting senior employees' satisfaction, discovering that work, recognition, and achievement predicted satisfaction. Madsen (2020) explored teacher motivation, finding that responsibility and growth are significant factors influencing satisfaction. Employees are motivated in unique ways (Alrawahi et al., 2020; Ann & Blum, 2020; Koziol & Koziol, 2020; Lai & Gelb, 2019; Madsen, 2020), making it essential for leaders to interact with their employees to learn what motivates them and influences satisfaction (Alrawahi et al., 2020; Jankelová et al., 2021; Park et al., 2020).

Motivation strategies are crucial for employee retention and performance that facilitates productive work environments (Alrawahi et al., 2020; Jankelová et al., 2021; Koziol & Koziol, 2020; Staempfli & Lamarche, 2020). However, organizational constraints sometimes limit the number of investments companies make in employee

achievement, growth, responsibility, work, recognition, and advancement motivators (Ebenso et al., 2020). Motivation investments enhance employee satisfaction (Ebenso et al., 2020; Liu & Sun, 2021), while constraints inhibit it (Ebenso et al., 2020; Liu & Sun, 2021). Therefore, leaders must invest in motivation strategies that positively influence employees' satisfaction.

Achievement. Achievements motivate employees to pursue new challenges. Herzberg et al. (1959) described achievement as employees' success, failure, or lack thereof in the job. Achievements are intrinsic to work performance and influence employee job satisfaction (Jiang et al., 2021; Tran & Smith, 2020). However, employees have differing goals and achievement levels that motivate them to achieve success (Ann & Blum, 2020; Herzberg et al., 1959; Jiang et al., 2021; Lin et al., 2020; van Dam et al., 2020). High achieving employees set learning and performance goals for themselves, pursuing challenges that demonstrate competence (Herzberg et al., 1959; Lin et al., 2020). High achievers do not require recognition to achieve satisfaction but seek happiness in job accomplishments, solutions, vindications, or results (Herzberg et al., 1959). Low achievers may not wish to set learning or performance goals, nor are they likely to pursue challenges involving extra effort or risk (Jiang et al., 2021; Lin et al., 2020). These employees are sometimes unmotivated to seek out challenges for themselves for fear of failure and its consequences (Lin et al., 2020; van Dam et al., 2020). Leaders must develop supportive HR practices that are meaningful for their employees, elevate their happiness, and influence their desire to thrive (Jiang et al., 2021; Lin et al., 2020).

Opportunity for Growth. The opportunity for growth involves employees' satisfaction with the possibility of advancing in skills and professions within a company (Herzberg et al., 1959). Growth opportunities are crucial for employees' self-efficacy and retention (El-Said & Aziz, 2022; Tran & Smith, 2020). Growth is intrinsic to work performance and affects employees' job satisfaction, like achievements (El-Said & Aziz, 2022; Jiang et al., 2021; Tran & Smith, 2020). Employees want to know if growth is possible, evident, or impossible within their organizations (El-Said & Aziz, 2022; Herzberg et al., 1959). When employees cannot grow or have expectations or promises of growth and do not receive it, turnover occurs (El-Said & Aziz, 2022; Herzberg et al., 1959). Leaders must show concern over employees' ability to grow and develop in their organizations (El-Said & Aziz, 2022; Jiang et al., 2021; Lin et al., 2020; Tran & Smith, 2020).

Leaders use various approaches to provide employees with growth opportunities. Training, mentorship, and professional development opportunities provide employees with multiple approaches for promoting progression (El-Said & Aziz, 2022; Jankelová et al., 2021; Jiang et al., 2021; Lin et al., 2020; Tran & Smith, 2020). Skill and competency development is crucial for logistics organizations seeking to maintain a competitive advantage (Keller et al., 2020; Kilibarda et al., 2019). Successful training focuses on employee learning and skill development, facilitating positive job attitudes (El-Said & Aziz, 2022; Jiang et al., 2021; Lin et al., 2020; Tran & Smith, 2020). Organizational support of job complexities and leaders' willingness to address employees' needs enhances employee satisfaction and reduces the likelihood of turnover (Tran & Smith,

2020). Therefore, leaders must ensure employees have the growth opportunities they need to be successful in the organization.

Responsibility. Responsibility and growth opportunities increase employees' motivation (Madsen, 2020). It concerns employees' ability to operate autonomously with authority, control, and accountability in their jobs (El-Said & Aziz, 2022; Herzberg et al., 1959; Ho & Kuvaas, 2020; Madsen, 2020; Otto et al., 2022). Employees take satisfaction in having responsibility for themselves and others (Herzberg et al., 1959; Otto et al., 2022) but dislike not having the freedom to perform their jobs efficiently and effectively (Chmielewska et al., 2020; Herzberg et al., 1959). Employees lacking job responsibility develop negative job attitudes (Ann & Blum, 2020). Thus, leaders must give their employees the responsibility to promote individual, team, and organization growth.

Responsibility is crucial to employees' ability to achieve success (Vallas et al., 2022). Some job responsibilities come with promotions, and others come without formal advancement (El-Said & Aziz, 2022; Herzberg et al., 1959; Otto et al., 2022; Weer & Greenhaus, 2020). Responsibility empowers employees and influences their performance (Ho & Kuvaas, 2020). Responsibility motivates employees to progress and creates organizational value (Lai & Gelb, 2019). As such, leaders' responsibility management is critical for its long-term effects on employees' job attitudes and turnover (Herzberg et al., 1959; Jankelová et al., 2021). Leaders must ensure they prioritize responsibility, using it as a tool to gain optimal employee performance, productivity, and commitment.

Work. Work is a strong indicator of employee satisfaction (Ann & Blum, 2020; Herzberg et al., 1959) that has long-term effects on job attitudes (Tran & Smith, 2020). It

involves employees' job activities that stimulate positive or negative feelings (Herzberg et al., 1959). The aspects and nature of employees' work allow for creativity, routineness, challenges, or a lack thereof (El-Said & Aziz, 2022; Herzberg et al., 1959; Tran & Smith, 2020). Employees that enjoy their work are satisfied (Tran & Smith, 2020), while those that do not enjoy their work or its conditions are dissatisfied (Vallas et al., 2022). Leaders must maintain awareness of job tasks that fail to promote positive attitudes and behaviors, developing strategies to engage employees fully.

Engaging and exciting work motivates employees (Ann & Blum, 2020; El-Said & Aziz, 2022; Madsen, 2020). Various industry employees experience similar aspects of work they find rewarding (Ann & Blum, 2020; El-Said & Aziz, 2022; Tran & Smith, 2020). Engaging and exciting work promotes employee job satisfaction, strengthening employees' bonds with their organizations (El-Said & Aziz, 2022; Jankelová et al., 2021; Madsen, 2020). It benefits employers to implement job activities that enrich employees' experiences and create organizational value (Ann & Blum, 2020; Jankelová et al., 2021; Madsen, 2020). Doing so allows leaders, like those in WDM organization, to capitalize on the strategies that encourage employees' positive actions.

Recognition. Recognition is hugely important to employees, as they want to know that their employers see their performance (Chmielewska et al., 2020; Rombaut & Guerry, 2020). It is an act of observation, commendation, or criticism from coworkers, clients, customers, or other sources to employees (Herzberg et al., 1959). Leaders show employees recognition through various methods, such as comments, promotions, and bonuses (Ann & Blum, 2020; El-Said & Aziz, 2022; Herzberg et al., 1959; Pasko et al.,

2021). Recognition produces negative or positive job attitudes depending on employees' perceptions of the acts (Herzberg et al., 1959). It is highly interrelated with achievement and significantly affects job satisfaction (Ann & Blum, 2020; El-Said & Aziz, 2022; Herzberg et al., 1959; Madsen, 2020). Recognition benefits all employees by empowering them and increasing their feelings of organizational support (El-Said & Aziz, 2022; Tran & Smith, 2020). However, younger employees have greater expectations of recognition fulfillment than older employees (Ann & Blum, 2020; Jankelová et al., 2021; Pasko et al., 2021). As such, leaders must ensure they implement diverse methods for recognizing employees' achievements to enhance satisfaction.

Advancement. Advancement is significantly important for employees. It is a change in an employee's company status or position (Herzberg et al., 1959) that has long-term effects on job attitudes (Herzberg et al., 1959; Pasko et al., 2021; Weer & Greenhaus, 2020). Advancement is vital for employees' progression, but it holds different values for some generations of workers (Ann & Blum, 2020). Older employees desire advancement to support their ability to live (Ann & Blum, 2020), while younger employees regard advancement as a tool for achieving work-life balance (Pasko et al., 2021). Promotions are among the most common methods of advancement in an organization, although some jobs have few or no opportunities (Ann & Blum, 2020; El-Said & Aziz, 2022; Tran & Smith, 2020; Weer & Greenhaus, 2020). Some organizations' lack of advancement potential negatively affects employee satisfaction (El-Said & Aziz, 2022; Otto et al., 2022; Tran & Smith, 2020). When employees see no career advancement opportunities, they seek alternative employment (Vallas et al., 2022). The

logistics industry is well known for its substandard employee treatment and poor promotion potential (Kane & Tomer, 2021; Keller et al., 2020; Kilibarda et al., 2019; Vallas et al., 2022). Logistics leaders that improve employees' advancement opportunities might improve their satisfaction, retaining them for value creation.

Motivation Factors in Summary

Employee motivation is a complex process inhibited by organizational constraints (Ebenso et al., 2020; Liu & Sun, 2021; Mohite & Kumar, 2019; Zhu et al., 2020). There is no one-size-fits-all approach to increasing employee satisfaction, but the practices leaders employ should apply to satisfying employees' needs (Ebenso et al., 2020; Jankelová et al., 2021; Mohite & Kumar, 2019; Zhu et al., 2020). An organization's resources (Ebenso et al., 2020; Koziol & Koziol, 2020; Mohite & Kumar, 2019) and employees' negative perceptions (Zhu et al., 2020) may affect strategy direction and implementation (Ebenso et al., 2020; Mohite & Kumar, 2019; Zhu et al., 2020). However, leaders' ability to identify and mitigate challenges improves employees' job attitudes for satisfaction and retention (Ebenso et al., 2020; Jankelová et al., 2021; Koziol & Koziol, 2020; Pasko et al., 2021).

Motivation factors apply to the logistics industry because of their relationship to employees' satisfaction and retention (see Herzberg et al., 1959; Kilibarda et al., 2019; Vallas et al., 2022). Achievement, growth, responsibility, work, recognition, and advancement are management tools logistics leaders need to improve employees' job attitudes and retention. Logistics companies operate in dynamic and volatile environments (Cleary & McLarney, 2021; Gultekin et al., 2022), and employees are

critical to company sustainability (Gultekin et al., 2022; Keller et al., 2020). Employees are crucial to logistics companies' competitive advantage, as they have the skills and abilities leaders need for daily operations (Keller et al., 2020; Kilibarda et al., 2019; Skelton et al., 2020). Each of the motivators is vital to logistics employees' retention (Kilibarda et al., 2019; Vallas et al., 2022). Therefore, logistics leaders concerned with employee retention can no longer prioritize company goals over employees' needs (see Cleary & McLarney, 2021; see Gultekin et al., 2022). They must recognize the value of ensuring employees have enjoyable work, responsibility, recognition, and the ability to grow and advance in their organizations. Such actions can motivate employees to achieve their goals, increasing companies' potential to reduce turnover (Liu & Sun, 2021). This is especially true in logistics organizations because employees quickly become dissatisfied and leave their employers when leaders fail to address their motivational needs (Kane & Tomer, 2021; Keller et al., 2020; Kilibarda et al., 2019; Vallas et al., 2022). Motivation factors are vital to logistics employees' job satisfaction and morale, as there are significant benefits to ensuring employees have satisfactory and enjoyable work that motivates them to stay committed to their employers. Therefore, logistics leaders developing strategies to increase employee motivation encourage job satisfaction and retention.

Contrasting Theories

In completing the literature review, I identified three similar theories to Herzberg's two-factor theory: (a) Maslow's hierarchy of needs, (b) social exchange theory, and (c) job embeddedness theory. Each theory had different applications

throughout literature, and researchers' representations offered leaders valuable insight for interpretation. In relation to this study, I reviewed the theories, grouped the concepts, analyzed their theoretical challenges, and explored their applicability related increasing employee retention.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory

The first contrasting theory I reviewed for this study was Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. Abraham Maslow developed the hierarchy of needs theory in 1943, introducing five tenants that motivate peoples' actions (Maslow, 1943). Researchers using Maslow's hierarchy of needs demonstrated the relationship between the physiological, safety, love, self-esteem, and self-actualization needs (Cui et al., 2021; Goede & Boshuizen-van Burken, 2019; Schroeder & Epley, 2020; Seubert et al., 2021). The authors explained their research and discussed the five levels of participants' needs (Cui et al., 2021; Goede & Boshuizen-van Burken, 2019; Schroeder & Epley, 2020; Seubert et al., 2021), identifying integrated levels that influenced satisfaction (Seubert et al., 2021). Although Maslow did not depict the theory in a model (see Maslow, 1943), researchers represent the elements in various hierarchal models (Ozbalci, 2021; Seubert et al., 2021; Staempfli & Lamarche, 2020).

Physiological Needs. Physiological needs are low-level requirements of high importance presented as the first tier of human beings' essential needs (Boudreaux, 2021). These are needs, such as food, shelter, water, and health which are a portion of the core demands people require for motivated behavior, satisfaction, and progression (Maslow, 1943; Weiss & Li, 2020). Physiological needs are the most dominant group of

needs, making all other needs unimportant until satisfaction is achieved (Maslow, 1943). When people achieve satisfaction at the basic level, they focus on the next greater need (Boudreaux, 2021; Maslow, 1943; Staempfli & Lamarche, 2020).

Safety Needs. Safety needs are additional low-level requirements comparable to first-level needs (Boudreaux, 2021; Maslow, 1943). Authors describe them as the second level of desire people have for security and well-being (Boudreaux, 2021; Maslow, 1943). However, individual perceptions of situations like wars, emergencies, disasters, or injuries increase safety needs (Maslow, 1943). Recent studies show that leaders should maintain awareness of situations that may cause individual perceptions of impending danger and implement measures to increase stability (Staempfli & Lamarche, 2020; Weiss & Li, 2020).

Love. Love is the third tier of need that emerges in people after safety needs (Boudreaux, 2021; Maslow, 1943). It is the need for affection and belongingness from friends, family, or associates (Maslow, 1943; Staempfli & Lamarche, 2020; Weiss & Li, 2020). People's desire for love drives them to seek cohesive, supportive, and beneficial relationships for goal achievement (Maslow, 1943; Staempfli & Lamarche, 2020; Weiss & Li, 2020).

Self-Esteem. Self-esteem is a high-level psychological need (Schroeder & Epley, 2020) that contributes to individuals' confidence, strength, and value (Maslow, 1943; Staempfli & Lamarche, 2020). People have a fundamental desire for recognition, appreciation, and respect for their accomplishments (Maslow, 1943; Schroeder & Epley,

2020). Leaders' attention to self-esteem-building initiatives encourages self-confidence and satisfaction (Weiss & Li, 2020).

Self-Actualization. Self-actualization is also a high-level psychological need concerned with people's ability to reach their potential (Maslow, 1943; Staempfli & Lamarche, 2020; Weiss & Li, 2020). It is the fifth and final tier in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, suggesting that people's greatest desires are to live with a purpose (Schroeder & Epley, 2020). Achieving satisfaction at this level depends on satisfaction realization at lower levels (Maslow, 1943), but formative organizational programs offer opportunities that promote healthy results (Staempfli & Lamarche, 2020; Weiss & Li, 2020).

Theoretical Applications. Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs theory is standard in management studies (Cui et al., 2021; Goede & Boshuizen-van Burken, 2019; Ozbalci, 2021; Schroeder & Epley, 2020; Weiss & Li, 2020; Wu et al., 2020). Researchers note that the theory is applied in relation to an individuals' physical and psychological well-being and satisfaction (Schroeder & Epley, 2020; Weiss & Li, 2020). Physiological, safety, love, self-esteem, and self-actualization needs shape behaviors and motivate individuals' goal achievement decisions (Cui et al., 2021). However, people must have freedom and want knowledge and understanding to pursue satisfaction at any hierarchy level (Goede & Boshuizen-van Burken, 2019; Maslow, 1943).

Some researchers used Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory to examine peoples' motivations for their decisions. People are unique and make decisions motivated by their levels of human needs (Cui et al., 2021; Goede & Boshuizen-van Burken, 2019; Wu et al., 2020). However, external factors may affect progression from one level to another

(Cui et al., 2021; Goede & Boshuizen-van Burken, 2019). Some people's basic needs may not be achieved as expected, making leaders conduct further exploration of the motivations needed to reach satisfaction (Cui et al., 2021; Goede & Boshuizen-van Burken, 2019). Leaders must gain awareness of the core motivations needed to satisfy peoples' basic needs and influence their progress.

Other researchers used Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory to determine how leaders might identify the needs important to their employees. Some employees have special needs and require permanent work accommodations that may increase their motivation (Ozbalci, 2021). Other employees require temporary safety measures to protect their health and well-being (Weiss & Li, 2020). Employers must evaluate employees' needs and develop measures that prevent work barriers to employee satisfaction (Ozbalci, 2021; Weiss & Li, 2020). As such, leaders should be aware of people's immediate needs and carefully address them.

Researchers also used Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory to explore the implications of leaders assuming the importance of peoples' needs. Leaders conduct evaluations to identify peoples' basic needs (Ozbalci, 2021; Schroeder & Epley, 2020), sometimes assuming their importance (Goede & Boshuizen-van Burken, 2019; Schroeder & Epley, 2020). They make predictions about the things that motivate people based on preconceived ideas about human behavior (Goede & Boshuizen-van Burken, 2019; Schroeder & Epley, 2020). However, leaders' predictions can be incorrect, resulting in inaccurate assessments of peoples' needs for achieving satisfaction. Although Maslow's

theory has relevance for logistics leaders' understanding of the needs that may motivate employees' decisions, there is limited focus on measures for increasing satisfaction.

Theoretical Challenges. While the hierarchy of needs theory has similarities to the two-factor theory (Alrawahi et al., 2020), the application in literature is different. The hierarchy of needs theory centers on the hierarchal levels of physiological, safety, love, self-esteem, and self-actualization needs that motivate people's decisions (Maslow, 1943). When one need is satisfied or partially satisfied, people's motivations change to the next level of need (Cui et al., 2021; Maslow, 1943). This hierarchy continues with few exceptions, and human needs never end (Cui et al., 2021; Goede & Boshuizen-van Burken, 2019; Maslow, 1943). Thus, leaders may require further analysis to understand what makes a relevant connection between individuals' motivations and behaviors.

Research also reveals that people differ in what motivates their decisions (Cui et al., 2021; Goede & Boshuizen-van Burken, 2019; Schroeder & Epley, 2020). People's ethnic and cultural differences influence their fundamental need decisions (Goede & Boshuizen-van Burken, 2019) and their needs seldom operate independently of each other (Goede & Boshuizen-van Burken, 2019; Schroeder & Epley, 2020). Sometimes, basic needs occur in an order other than expected (Cui et al., 2021; Schroeder & Epley, 2020), and focusing solely on one need causes gaps that prevent retention optimization (Tran & Smith, 2020). These implications challenge the hierarchal representation of basic needs, as the order presented is inappropriate for every situation (Cui et al., 2021; Goede & Boshuizen-van Burken, 2019; Ozbalci, 2021).

Using Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory involves predictions and assumptions about people's motivations and what it takes to satisfy them (Cui et al., 2021; Goede & Boshuizen-van Burken, 2019; Ozbalci, 2021; Schroeder & Epley, 2020; Weiss & Li, 2020; Wu et al., 2020). Leaders' misinterpretations or misunderstandings of these factors can result in inadequate motivation and satisfaction strategies, causing leaders to miss opportunities to maximize potential (Goede & Boshuizen-van Burken, 2019; Schroeder & Epley, 2020). This study focused on increasing employee retention through job satisfaction measures. Therefore, Maslow's theory was inappropriate for this study as it focuses on more than humans' basic needs and motivation.

Social Exchange Theory

The next contrasting theory I reviewed for this study was social exchange theory. George Homans developed the social exchange theory in 1958. Homans (1958) theorized that individuals exchange social behaviors influenced by psychological, economic, influential, and group pressures. Researchers using social exchange theory show how leaders' engagement and support strategies encourage employee exchange and reciprocity (Bentley et al., 2019; Dalal & Akdere, 2021; Kuvaas et al., 2020; Landgraf, 2022; Rodrigues et al., 2020; Zeijen et al., 2020). Employees need high engagement and positive relationship encounters throughout the workday to promote social support repetition (Zeijen et al., 2020). Organizations with supportive cultures for the social exchange process can improve talent retention and enhance their competitive advantage (Bentley et al., 2019; Dalal & Akdere, 2021; Landgraf, 2022; Rodrigues et al., 2020; Zeijen et al., 2020).

Exchange. Individual exchanges occur because of learned social behaviors reinforced through conditioning (Homans, 1958). People perform actions that generate reciprocal actions, motivating specific outcomes (Bentley et al., 2019; Homans, 1958; Jia & Wu, 2021; Liu et al., 2022; Shaw et al., 2019). Popular exchanges involve work and pay where employers benefit from skilled labor for salary costs, while employees benefit from salaries for labor costs (Kuvaas et al., 2020). Other favored exchanges involve employee development and retention when employers receive committed employees for their investment in career development (Rodrigues et al., 2020). In contrast, employees remain with the company for the investment they receive in their development (Rodrigues et al., 2020). Employees and their employers have specific expectations regarding acceptable exchanges and decide on relationship value based on the benefits received (Bentley et al., 2019; Rodrigues et al., 2020; Smyth & Zimba, 2019). However, employers do not achieve optimal results unless there are mutual social exchange benefits (Afzal et al., 2019). Leaders and employees require aligned exchanges that strengthen relationships, influencing behaviors that create and sustain value (Zeijen et al., 2020).

Influence. Influence is an essential part of the social exchange process. Psychological, economical, individual, and group pressures influence individuals' actions and are vital in interpreting their social behaviors (Homans, 1958; Kuvaas et al., 2020; Landgraf, 2022). Reinforced interactions and harmonious relationships increase exchange effects, causing people to conform to or deviate from expected behaviors (Homans, 1958; Zeijen et al., 2020). Positive and negative social exchanges motivate individuals to copy actions and behaviors (Bentley et al., 2019; Zeijen et al., 2020). For example, employees'

work experiences influence their behaviors, outcomes, and values (Bentley et al., 2019; Soderberg & Romney, 2022). Leaders' investment in employees encourages positive behaviors toward the organization (Bentley et al., 2019; Haridas et al., 2022; Homans, 1958). Likewise, leaders' mistreatment of employees results in negative behaviors toward the organization (Zeijen et al., 2020).

Trust is equally important to the process as it encourages relationships that help leaders build influence (Cappelli et al., 2020; Haridas et al., 2022; Pan et al., 2020; Skiba & Wildman, 2019; Soderberg & Romney, 2022). Employees are less likely to participate in social exchange with organization leaders when they degrade trust (Haridas et al., 2022; Skiba & Wildman, 2019). Leaders dedicated to developing and maintaining employee trust enhance their ability to influence positive social exchanges that maximize organizational value (Haridas et al., 2022; Pan et al., 2020; Skiba & Wildman, 2019; Soderberg & Romney, 2022).

Reciprocity. Individuals involved in a social exchange desire balance between cost and reward, indicating that a transaction is fair (Liu et al., 2022; Mohammad et al., 2021; Shaw et al., 2019). They expect to receive benefits that reciprocate their investment and encourage other exchanges (Liu et al., 2022; Rodrigues et al., 2020; Shaw et al., 2019). Reciprocity is a frequent practice (Liu et al., 2022; Shaw et al., 2019) that permits individuals to show appreciation, avoid guilt, and conform to norms (Liu et al., 2022). It enhances relationships (Liu et al., 2022), but cost and reward imbalances may result in perceptions of inequality and unfairness (Shaw et al., 2019). Additionally, the theoretical implication that most people reciprocate (see Mohammad et al., 2021; see Rodrigues et

al., 2020; see Shaw et al., 2019) is not always true (Liu et al., 2022). Employers can mitigate the effects of the imbalances using human resource practices that enhance employees' positive behaviors and produce profit (Mohammad et al., 2021).

Profit. All participants of social exchange desire profit created by low investment costs and high rewards. Exchange is a constant process of giving, receiving, and reciprocating, where profit comes from individuals receiving more than what they give (Jia & Wu, 2021; Liu et al., 2022). People have no incentive to change their social behaviors when perceived profit is high, and the cost is low, as doing so holds no value (Homans, 1958; Jia & Wu, 2021; Smyth & Zimba, 2019). Instead, they are likelier to change their social behaviors when profit is low and gain is absent (Homans, 1958; Liu et al., 2022; Smyth & Zimba, 2019). Thus, employees' social exchange behaviors increase when their benefits exceed their costs, allowing them and their employers to realize a profit.

Theoretical Applications. Social exchange theory has its foundation in various disciplines, and the concept is common in the literature concerning employee behaviors (Cappelli et al., 2020). Research reveals that influential and reciprocal relationships are significant to the interactive process (Afzal et al., 2019; Smyth & Zimba, 2019). Leaders develop the strategies that influence employee behaviors (Holtom et al., 2020; Skiba & Wildman, 2019), and when leaders make a suitable investment in employees, organizations are likely to see positive returns (Bentley et al., 2019; Dalal & Akdere, 2021; Kuvaas et al., 2020; Landgraf, 2022; Rodrigues et al., 2020; Zeijen et al., 2020). As leadership is an influential and critical element in the employee-to-employer relationship

(Avey et al., 2022; Keller et al., 2020; Skiba & Wildman, 2019), the theory is fitting for exploring leaders' strategies for increasing employee retention.

Researchers used social exchange theory to examine employee engagement and retention (Bentley et al., 2019; Dalal & Akdere, 2021; Zeijen et al., 2020). Employee engagement and retention are vital to employers' ability to avoid the skilled labor losses needed for sustainability (Bentley et al., 2019; Vallas et al., 2022). Global talent shortages challenge employers (Dalal & Akdere, 2021; Kilibarda et al., 2019; Su et al., 2022), enhancing their interest in employee-focused management practices that encourage reciprocity (Dalal & Akdere, 2021). High engagement promotes high engagement and relationship reinvestment (Zeijen et al., 2020), and positive employee engagement strategies enhance competitive advantage (Dalal & Akdere, 2021). Leaders that invest in strategies promoting high engagement can increase engagement and retention (Zeijen et al., 2020).

Researchers also used social exchange theory to examine relationships between organizational practices and employees' decisions (Kuvaas et al., 2020; Landgraf, 2022; Rodrigues et al., 2020). Employees value salary for the social and economic relationship connections it allows (Boudreaux, 2021; Kuvaas et al., 2020). Employees also value career development, as employers' practices reveal their care and concern for employees (Dalal & Akdere, 2021; Rodrigues et al., 2020). Employer support is vital for improved perceptions of organizations and employee reciprocated support (Bentley et al., 2019; Landgraf, 2022; Zeijen et al., 2020). Policies and practices that promote employees' well-being promote positivity and engagement that encourage like behaviors (Bentley et al.,

2019; Dalal & Akdere, 2021; Kuvaas et al., 2020; Landgraf, 2022; Zeijen et al., 2020).

Such behaviors help leaders meet employees' needs and increase their retention likelihood.

Theoretical Challenges. Homan's theory is like Herzberg's theory in that it is concerned with various hygiene and motivation factors important to employees, but it differs in the strategies used for achieving success. Herzberg et al. (1959) focused on leaders' implementing certain factors to enhance job satisfaction and motivation, while Homans (1958) focused on reciprocity to achieve organizational goals. Social exchange depends on the relationships that facilitate exchange, influence, reciprocity, and profit (Homans, 1958; Soderberg & Romney, 2022), making it challenging to ensure goal achievement.

First, social exchange is positive and negative, which results in various outcomes (Bentley et al., 2019; Zeijen et al., 2020). The concept is true of employer-employee and employee-employee exchange relationships (Cappelli et al., 2020; Pan et al., 2020). People learn different actions and reactions from the behavioral reinforcements experienced throughout their lives (Homans, 1958; Jia & Wu, 2021; Liu et al., 2022). However, leaders' efforts to reinforce specific behaviors might not produce the intended results (Liu et al., 2022; Rodrigues et al., 2020), as possibilities exist for employees to reach satisfaction and become disinterested in employees' proposed incentives (Homans, 1958). Leaders must discover the practices that mediate negative outcomes and promote positive exchanges.

Social exchange decisions affect employees' feelings and perceptions of value, causing relationships to change (Deas & Coetzee, 2020; Pan et al., 2020). Profit variations create imbalances in the proportion and strength of exchanges (Cappelli et al., 2020; Pan et al., 2020). Sometimes, employees feel obligated to reciprocate an exchange even when they disagree with the norm (Cappelli et al., 2020). Feelings of unfairness and mistrust also arise when employees receive unequal incentives (Cappelli et al., 2020; Shaw et al., 2019). Employees' willingness to be participants in the exchange process is dependent on their expectations of organizational support (Deas & Coetzee, 2020), making trust essential for maintaining effective work relationships (Cappelli et al., 2020; Haridas et al., 2022; Pan et al., 2020; Skiba & Wildman, 2019; Soderberg & Romney, 2022). Problems in any of these areas can result in employees' quitting decisions (Cappelli et al., 2020; Haridas et al., 2022; Pan et al., 2020; Soderberg & Romney, 2022). Leaders must understand the risk involved in social exchange and do what is necessary to encourage positive social exchange.

Social exchange has a broad and ambiguous nature that promotes researchers' assumptions about social exchange and its effectiveness in the workplace (Cappelli et al., 2020). Homans (1958) was unclear about the theory's attributes, leading researchers to ambivalence and various interpretations of the social exchange (see Saunders et al., 2019). Researchers' theoretical misunderstandings and misinterpretations can obscure research findings, affecting research quality (Saunders et al., 2019). Logistics leaders need clear strategies for retaining employees. Therefore, social exchange theory is

inappropriate for this study on logistics leaders' strategies for increasing employee retention.

Job Embeddedness Theory

The final contrasting theory I reviewed for this study was job embeddedness theory. Mitchell and Lee developed the job embeddedness theory in 2001, stating that specific events precipitate employees' job attachment decisions. These events present as favorable, unfavorable, anticipated, or unforeseen shocks to employees' systems, causing employees to reflect on previous situations and contemplate various job decision paths (Maier et al., 2021; Mitchell & Lee, 2001; Thome & Greenwald, 2020). Researchers using the theory demonstrate how link, fit, and sacrifice influence employees' job decisions (Martdianty et al., 2020; Mashi et al., 2022; Thome & Greenwald, 2020; Treuren & Fein, 2021). When link and fit are optimal and sacrifice is high, employees stay with their organizations (Holtom et al., 2020; Maier et al., 2021; Mitchell & Lee, 2001). Leaders that develop and strengthen attachments with their employees can increase retention.

Link. Links are connections made at work and outside of work (Kiazad et al., 2020; Martdianty et al., 2020; Mashi et al., 2022; Mitchell & Lee, 2001; Thome & Greenwald, 2020; Treuren & Fein, 2021). They are conduits for socialization, communication, and interaction with others (Dirican & Erdil, 2022; Holtom et al., 2020; Maier et al., 2021). Links are formal and informal attachments with individuals, groups, and communities (Holtom et al., 2020; Maier et al., 2021; Mitchell & Lee, 2001). For example, employees commit themselves to leadership, coworkers, and teams in their jobs

and families, churches, and clubs in their communities (Holtom et al., 2020; Martdianty et al., 2020; Mitchell & Lee, 2001; Thome & Greenwald, 2020; Treuren & Fein, 2021). Strong relationships bind employees to the individuals, groups, and communities around them, influencing their job decisions (Dirican & Erdil, 2022; Holtom et al., 2020; Kiazad et al., 2020; Martdianty et al., 2020; Thome & Greenwald, 2020). Leaders can increase employees' links through practices that enhance their skills, knowledge, and networking opportunities, promoting embeddedness on and off the job (Holtom et al., 2020).

Fit. Mitchell and Lee (2001) described fit as the compatibility employees have with their job and community. Employees consider their organization's culture, job role, community environment, and belongingness when determining fit (Holtom et al., 2020; Kiazad et al., 2020; Maier et al., 2021; Martdianty et al., 2020; Mashi et al., 2022; Xie & Zhou, 2022). Leaders implement various HR strategies to develop employees' fit perceptions and encourage retention (Holtom et al., 2020; Martdianty et al., 2020). Attachment increases when employees perceive they belong and are comfortable with their jobs and community (Holtom et al., 2020; Martdianty et al., 2020). Therefore, leaders use training, incentives, rewards, and socialization opportunities to enhance employees' fit (Holtom et al., 2020).

Sacrifice. Sacrifice relates to the losses employees experience when they leave their jobs (Holtom et al., 2020; Maier et al., 2021; Mitchell & Lee, 2001). The losses include benefits, investments, retirements, resources, friendships, and lifestyles (Holtom et al., 2020; Maier et al., 2021; Mitchell & Lee, 2001; Thome & Greenwald, 2020). A high cost increases the likelihood that employees will remain with their organizations

(Holtom et al., 2020; Mitchell & Lee, 2001). Thus, leaders should develop creative ways to increase employees' sacrifice and encourage them to stay (Holtom et al., 2020).

Theoretical Applications. Job embeddedness theory addresses the relevance of employers seeking opportunities to enhance employees' connections with their organizations (Kiazad et al., 2020; Martdianty et al., 2020; Mashi et al., 2022; Xie & Zhou, 2022) and communities (Martdianty et al., 2020; Thome & Greenwald, 2020; Treuren & Fein, 2021). For example, organizations that focus on improving their climates (Xie & Zhou, 2022) and offer employees support and development opportunities are likely to see an increase in organizational attachments (Kiazad et al., 2020; Martdianty et al., 2020; Mashi et al., 2022; Thome & Greenwald, 2020; Treuren & Fein, 2021). Community connections also increase employees' support networks and enhance job embeddedness (Martdianty et al., 2020; Thome & Greenwald, 2020; Treuren & Fein, 2021). As such, organizational leaders should focus on employees' anticipated losses and implement benefits that increase their attachments (Thome & Greenwald, 2020; Treuren & Fein, 2021).

Although attachments vary with the intensity of embeddedness, embedded employees are engaged and integrated with their environments (Maier et al., 2021; Mitchell & Lee, 2001). Embedded employees are more likely to remain in their jobs because of their on-the-job and off-the-job connections (Holtom et al., 2020; Mitchell & Lee, 2001). Employees community ties often connect them to the resources they need for motivation and success (Kiazad et al., 2020). Thus, organizational attachment is a relative concept for employee retention (Holtom et al., 2020; Mitchell & Lee, 2001).

Researchers also used job embeddedness theory to examine how on-the-job attachments influenced employee turnover (Kiazad et al., 2020; Mashi et al., 2022; Treuren & Fein, 2021; Xie & Zhou, 2022). Employee responsibilities in work and life sometimes conflict, resulting in relationship challenges, job burnout, and quality of life issues that influence turnover intent (Treuren & Fein, 2021). Job climates can be uncooperative, decreasing employees' desires for cooperation and mutually beneficial outcomes (Xie & Zhou, 2022). Employees might also have low perceptions of their organizations' reliability, trustworthiness, support, and ability to provide what they need (Martdianty et al., 2020; Treuren & Fein, 2021; Vallas et al., 2022). When benefits are far removed from employees' wants, on-the-job relationships weaken, and employees seek alternative employment (Mashi et al., 2022; Thome & Greenwald, 2020; Treuren & Fein, 2021). Leaders must improve organizational climates to they promote better outcomes and reinforce connections for retention goal achievement (Kiazad et al., 2020; Mashi et al., 2022; Xie & Zhou, 2022).

Researchers also used job embeddedness theory to examine how off-the-job attachments influenced employee commitment (Martdianty et al., 2020; Thome & Greenwald, 2020; Treuren & Fein, 2021). Community connections can mediate employees' work-life imbalances and their decisions to leave their jobs (Martdianty et al., 2020; Thome & Greenwald, 2020; Treuren & Fein, 2021). The social resources communities provide influence employees' future decisions (Thome & Greenwald, 2020). Off-the-job attachments offer employees the security, safety, and stability that enhance job commitments (Martdianty et al., 2020; Thome & Greenwald, 2020; Treuren

& Fein, 2021). Thus, leaders should offer benefits that increase employees' off-the-job connections to promote organizational embeddedness and retention.

Theoretical Challenges. Job embeddedness theory was like the two-factor theory in that it was concerned with employee retention. Job embeddedness theory centered on job and community attachment strategies to retain employees (Mitchell & Lee, 2001), while the two-factor theory focused on satisfaction and motivation strategies for employee retention (Herzberg et al., 1959). Job and community attachment strategies benefit organizations and their employees (Kiazad et al., 2020; Martdianty et al., 2020; Mashi et al., 2022; Thome & Greenwald, 2020; Treuren & Fein, 2021; Xie & Zhou, 2022). However, researchers should first consider a couple of theoretical challenges associated with the theory.

First, Mitchell and Lee (2001) based job embeddedness theory on the unfolding model, which has four paths to turnover (Maier et al., 2021). The model indicates that most employees experience internal or external shocks, causing them to reassess their job situations and reevaluate their attachments (Maier et al., 2021; Mitchell & Lee, 2001). They assess their employers and work environments, deciding if further investments are worthwhile (Maier et al., 2021). Sometimes, those shocks result in employees leaving their current employers for former ones (Maier et al., 2021; Mashi et al., 2022; Thome & Greenwald, 2020; Treuren & Fein, 2021).

Second, job embeddedness does not always result in positive outcomes (Dirican & Erdil, 2022; Mitchell & Lee, 2001). Link, fit, and sacrifice are interconnected influences that fluctuate positively and negatively (Holtom et al., 2020), as internal and

external factors influence employees' decisions (Dirican & Erdil, 2022; Holtom et al., 2020; Thome & Greenwald, 2020). While organizational support through training and growth strategies encourages employee retention (Kiazad et al., 2020; Martdianty et al., 2020; Mashi et al., 2022; Thome & Greenwald, 2020; Treuren & Fein, 2021), abusive job relationships (Avey et al., 2022; Dirican & Erdil, 2022), and employees' perceptions of a lack of organizational support (Martdianty et al., 2020; Mashi et al., 2022) suppress attachments. Without leaders nurturing and cultivating employees' job connections and fit, retention efforts fail (Dirican & Erdil, 2022; Maier et al., 2021; Martdianty et al., 2020; Mashi et al., 2022). As this research was not concerned with methods that increase employees' attachments, job embeddedness theory was inappropriate for this study.

Logistics

Logistics is critical to economic growth and sustainability (Kilibarda et al., 2019; Lam, 2021; Paché & Large, 2021). It involves coordinating, moving, and storing goods for consumer and business use (Lam, 2021; Paché & Large, 2021). The industry is composed of an integrated network of companies and operations (Aćimović et al., 2020; Dede & Çengel, 2020; Herold et al., 2021). Service providers like manufacturers, retailers, warehouses, and transportation companies synchronize their activities to support goods production, storage, sale, and delivery (Dede & Çengel, 2020; Herold et al., 2021; Magd & Ruzive, 2021). Their actions ensure goods move domestically and globally, meeting the demands that encourage companies' competitiveness (Lam, 2021).

Nevertheless, as more people shop online and product availability increases, consumers' expectations for product orders, fulfillment, and delivery times change

(Aćimović et al., 2020; Cleary & McLarney, 2021; Li et al., 2021). Consumers want their products and services at lower prices, delivered faster than previous generations, and delivered to their chosen locations (Aćimović et al., 2020; Cleary & McLarney, 2021). These changes contribute to product scarcity and shipping delays, creating logistics leaders' concern for sustainability (Herold et al., 2021). Consumers' reactions to supply chain problems depend on individual perceptions of the logistics industry, and negative perceptions promote adverse reactions (Paché & Large, 2021). Although globalization and technological improvements aid logistics providers in their efforts to meet consumers' demands (Aćimović et al., 2020; Cleary & McLarney, 2021; Paché & Large, 2021), supply chain efficiency and flexibility are required for leaders to address consumers' concerns and mitigate threats (Aćimović et al., 2020; Gultekin et al., 2022; Herold et al., 2021; Paché & Large, 2021).

For example, logistics service providers routinely determine their operations from forecasts, allowing for trend predictions and preparations for consumer demand changes (Gultekin et al., 2022). However, uncertainties and product demand changes cause logistics forecasts to lose their prediction accuracy (Gultekin et al., 2022). Supply chains show vulnerabilities in their flow of goods and services when natural disasters, pandemics, and other adverse events occur (Gultekin et al., 2022; Herold et al., 2021). In addition, logistics providers risk supplier, production, labor, and economic fluctuations that increase supply chain disruptions (Gultekin et al., 2022). Uncertainties like these result in differing outcomes within companies, communities, and economies, such as profit fluctuations, product price changes, and market variations (Gultekin et al., 2022).

Such dynamics prompt logistics leaders to adopt resilient practices that minimize the effects of uncertainties in the supply chain (Aćimović et al., 2020; Gultekin et al., 2022; Herold et al., 2021).

Logistics leaders consider the following areas necessary for achieving supply chain efficiency: (a) warehouses, (b) inventory, (c) transportation, (d) information, (e) sourcing, and (f) cost (Magd & Ruzive, 2021). Warehouses are vital to logistics because the inventory required for product manufacturing and storage is contained there (Magd & Ruzive, 2021). Warehouse inventory supports company positioning for demand responsiveness, while transportation connects the products to the consumers (Magd & Ruzive, 2021). Leaders share information throughout the supply chain about product orders and deliveries, encouraging communication flow and sustainable strategies (Cleary & McLarney, 2021; Magd & Ruzive, 2021). Leaders choose the suppliers that best meet their needs and goals for achieving company sustainability and competitive advantage (Magd & Ruzive, 2021). The total cost of logistics provisions across the network must align with market expectations to promote satisfaction and positive consumer behaviors (Aćimović et al., 2020; Lam, 2021; Magd & Ruzive, 2021; Paché & Large, 2021).

Leaders mitigate supply chain threats and develop resilience by focusing on company strengths and contracting out other activities (Cleary & McLarney, 2021; Herold et al., 2021). An example is when a warehouse provides customer goods storage and shipping services but emphasizes product storage efficiency while contracting product shipping. Amazon is a popular logistics company that has capitalized on its core competencies (Aćimović et al., 2020; Cleary & McLarney, 2021; Li et al., 2021). The

company exploited a growing e-commerce market, maximizing product order fulfillment efficiency (Aćimović et al., 2020; Cleary & McLarney, 2021; Li et al., 2021). Such a centralized focus on supply chain improvement promotes service quality and company financial gain (Li et al., 2021). It also helps increase innovative logistics and optimize supply chain operations (Cleary & McLarney, 2021).

Leaders might also take advantage of technological advancements to support logistics resilience efforts. Modern technology affords logistics leaders opportunities for functional and operational improvements that advance innovation and growth (Cleary & McLarney, 2021; Herold et al., 2021). Digitized processes facilitate supply chain collaboration and integration, increasing logistics efficiency (Cleary & McLarney, 2021; Herold et al., 2021). Leaders also gain market understanding and use process data to plan and predict product movements, maintaining service reliability (Cleary & McLarney, 2021; Herold et al., 2021).

Logistics leaders cannot afford to assume their strategies are sufficient for meeting societal needs (Aćimović et al., 2020; Gultekin et al., 2022; Herold et al., 2021). In dynamic environments, companies must be transparent with consumers and take measures to ensure their processes evolve with the market (Aćimović et al., 2020; Cleary & McLarney, 2021; Li et al., 2021). Leaders must prepare for crises and other uncertainties that bring supply chain risk (Gultekin et al., 2022; Herold et al., 2021; Paché & Large, 2021). Logistics leaders must focus on the operational decisions needed for change and sustainability (Gultekin et al., 2022), as without them, consumer and economic demands would be unmet.

Third-Party Logistics (3PL)

3PL companies are significant segments of the supply chain network. They are part of a growing industry of experts with diversified service offerings tailored to meet customers' logistics service needs (Ashraf et al., 2022; Barker et al., 2021; Premkumar et al., 2021; Sangka et al., 2019). 3PLs provide specialized and synergistic activities that add value, such as distribution, warehousing, and order fulfillment. (Barker et al., 2021; Premkumar et al., 2021; Sangka et al., 2019). Customers depend on the logistics services 3PLs provide to promote supply chain integration and cost reductions (Barker et al., 2021; Borgström et al., 2021; Premkumar et al., 2021). The companies are essential to economic stability (Ashraf et al., 2022), as their services optimize supply chain efficiency and effectiveness (Cavaignac et al., 2021; Premkumar et al., 2021).

3PLs experience growth by establishing their strategic focus in the areas most beneficial to them and their customers (Borgström et al., 2021). As the companies assume more active roles in the logistics supply chain, they invest in solutions that provide standardized services (Aćimović et al., 2020; Baruffaldi et al., 2019; Borgström et al., 2021). Many 3PL leaders align their core competencies with services that meet customers' routine and operational needs (Premkumar et al., 2021). As well, some company leaders focus their business line to manage customers' warehouse and transportation requirements, while others focus on facilitating information transparency (Borgström et al., 2021; Premkumar et al., 2021).

3PL warehouses and distribution centers are critical supply chain assets that allow quick product delivery responses to target market demands (Borgström et al., 2021; Dede

& Çengel, 2020; Magd & Ruzive, 2021). Their designs include the infrastructure, network, and management systems necessary for product receipt, storage, picking, packing, and shipping (Baruffaldi et al., 2019; Dede & Çengel, 2020). As logistics leaders evaluate business markets, transportation networks, and overall costs, they establish warehouses and distribution centers in the locations that add the most value (Dede & Çengel, 2020; Magd & Ruzive, 2021). During disruptions, logistics leaders modify warehouse and distribution center operations to mitigate loss and optimize opportunities (Herold et al., 2021). Such efficient and effective employment of 3PL warehouses and distribution centers improves economic resilience and supply chain flexibility (Herold et al., 2021).

However, the logistics industry is changing, and new competitors are constantly entering the market (Baruffaldi et al., 2019; Borgström et al., 2021; Cavaignac et al., 2021). Customer demand fluctuations prompt logistics service modifications that sometimes challenge providers' ability to adjust (Baruffaldi et al., 2019; Cavaignac et al., 2021). Uncertainties and disruptions also create logistics operational volatility and demand fluctuations that influence profitability and employee job experiences (Herold et al., 2021). As service providers adapt to these changes, they must consider the knowledge and skills needed to support company transformation and develop strategies that stabilize the workforce (Baruffaldi et al., 2019; Herold et al., 2021; Premkumar et al., 2021).

Employee Retention

Retaining employees is an ongoing challenge for organizational leaders. Literature reveals insights into the various intricacies of employee turnover and retention.

Employee turnover and retention problems exist within the U.S. and are global issues with global economic effects (Lai & Gelb, 2019; Molahosseini et al., 2020; Rombaut & Guerry, 2020; Tran & Smith, 2020; Upadhyay et al., 2020). Maintaining skilled and experienced employees has direct and indirect costs that harm an organization's operational objectives (Lai & Gelb, 2019; Rombaut & Guerry, 2020; Tran & Smith, 2020). Leaders' attention to employees' uniqueness is vital in their efforts to customize retention strategies that promote positive employee reactions (Lai & Gelb, 2019; Rombaut & Guerry, 2020).

Turnover Costs

Employee turnover has related costs that negatively affect companies' sustainability (Rozsa et al., 2019; Tenakwah, 2021). The direct and indirect costs of employees quitting their jobs result in substantial losses to organizations (Jannat et al., 2020). They suffer financial, knowledge, performance, and productivity losses, which harm organization profit (Molahosseini et al., 2020; Porter & Rigby, 2021; Tenakwah, 2021). The financial losses are significant because it costs more money to recruit, hire, and train new employees in dynamic work environments (Krishna & Garg, 2022; Tenakwah, 2021). Employee turnover causes organizations to be in unfavorable conditions for achieving goals and objectives (Molahosseini et al., 2020; Vallas et al., 2022). Thus, leaders should know the costs and effects of turnover in their organizations.

Turnover Effects

Employee turnover has a domino effect on organizations, markets, and economies (Jannat et al., 2020; Kilibarda et al., 2019; Krishna & Garg, 2022). Employees have the

knowledge, skills, and abilities vital to an organization's ability to meet its objectives (Gultekin et al., 2022; Keller et al., 2020; Kilibarda et al., 2019; Skelton et al., 2020). However, knowledge is lost when skilled employees leave with proprietary information specific to their organization and its customers (Noranee et al., 2021; Rozsa et al., 2019). Employees' decisions to leave their employers influences other employees, and turnover stimulates more turnover (Porter & Rigby, 2021; Rozsa et al., 2019). High turnover negatively affects peoples' perceptions of organizations and their cultures (Porter & Rigby, 2021; Rozsa et al., 2019; Vallas et al., 2022), which makes companies less attractive to existing and future employees (Porter & Rigby, 2021; Rozsa et al., 2019; Vallas et al., 2022). Company performance and productivity levels drop as employees leave and goals are unmet (Krishna & Garg, 2022). Increased industry competition and competitive labor markets challenge leaders' ability to replace skilled and knowledgeable employees (Krishna & Garg, 2022). Therefore, leaders must understand the challenges of satisfying, motivating, and retaining employees in their organizations.

Logistics Labor Challenges

Logistics organizations heavily depend on their employees to accomplish company goals and achieve competitive advantages (Kane & Tomer, 2021; Keller et al., 2020; Vallas et al., 2022). Logistics activities require substantial employee labor to meet objectives (Cleary & McLarney, 2021), but the industry is plagued with employee turnover (Keller et al., 2020; Vallas et al., 2022). The employees work long hours with low wages and substantial benefits (Kane & Tomer, 2021; Keller et al., 2020; Vallas et al., 2022). Logistics leaders follow company mandates to cut costs and increase

production without compromising customer satisfaction (Keller et al., 2020). Their employees work under increased pressure from those mandates and fear making mistakes that might cause them to lose their jobs (Keller et al., 2020). Leaders' negative responses change employees' work environment perceptions from positive to negative, increasing turnover (Keller et al., 2020). Thus, logistics employee turnover results in critical shortages, influencing companies' sustainability across various supply chain segments (Cleary & McLarney, 2021; Gultekin et al., 2022; Keller et al., 2020).

3PL Labor Challenges

Warehouse employees work various shifts to perform time-sensitive distribution, warehousing, and order fulfillment activities (Ashraf et al., 2022; Vallas et al., 2022). However, their work is repetitive, with employees' wages and promotions dependent on their performance and company profit (Kumar, 2019; Vallas et al., 2022). The employees are also part of the essential employee workforce whom leaders rarely protect from poor labor conditions (Kane & Tomer, 2021; Kumar, 2019; Vallas et al., 2022). Employees routinely experience workplace health and safety violations as employers place customers' needs and profit over employees' welfare (Kane & Tomer, 2021; Kumar, 2019; Vallas et al., 2022). Many warehouse employees are minorities (Kane & Tomer, 2021; Vallas et al., 2022) who encounter other workplace disparities that encourage turnover (Vallas et al., 2022). Poor warehouse work conditions and unpleasant company environments promote employee dissatisfaction and high turnover, harming 3PL leaders' ability to meet market demands (Kane & Tomer, 2021; Keller et al., 2020; Kilibarda et al., 2019; Vallas et al., 2022).

Risks

Logistics has risk and volatility that influences companies' profitability, and employee turnover increases that risk (Cleary & McLarney, 2021; Gultekin et al., 2022). Logistics employees are intangible assets vital to organizational workflow, flexibility, and distribution (Gultekin et al., 2022; Keller et al., 2020). They possess the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for supply chains to remain operational (Keller et al., 2020; Kilibarda et al., 2019; Skelton et al., 2020). Employees' negative perceptions of their welfare create labor challenges that exacerbate industry operations (Gultekin et al., 2022; Kane & Tomer, 2021), and employee job satisfaction deficiencies increase turnover (Gultekin et al., 2022; Olasupo et al., 2019). Thus, logistics employees add increased uncertainties and risks to the supply chain, influencing companies' competitive advantage (Gultekin et al., 2022).

Achieving Competitive Advantage

Logistics companies' competitive advantage is in their employees, and strategies should be focused on such (Keller et al., 2020). Organizations' status, policies, and support affect people's satisfaction and job commitment (Lai & Gelb, 2019). Company benefits influence employees' decisions to quit or stay in their jobs (Upadhyay et al., 2020). Performance appraisals, training, autonomy, growth opportunities, support, culture, and work environments increase employee job satisfaction and commitment (Molahosseini et al., 2020; Upadhyay et al., 2020). Salary is equally important, as it makes employees feel that their sacrifices are worthwhile (Pottenger, 2021; Vallas et al., 2022). Additionally, managers' emotional intelligence promotes interpersonal

relationship building and strengthening to achieve desired outcomes (Keller et al., 2020; Živković et al., 2021). Satisfied employees remain on their jobs (Upadhyay et al., 2020), and positive retention efforts encourage stability (McKeown, 2019).

Leadership

Leaders are vital to employee retention (Keller et al., 2020), as they are responsible for developing and implementing job satisfaction and retention strategies (Haridas et al., 2022; Lai & Gelb, 2019). However, leaders must be aware of the differences between what employees want and their retention options, never assuming their options are aligned and favorable for all employees (Lai & Gelb, 2019; Tran & Smith, 2020). Leaders should track and manage employee turnover, developing predictive models for retention targeting measures (Rombaut & Guerry, 2020), and leverage the resources and information gathered to achieve retention objectives (McKeown, 2019; Yue, 2021). Leaders should partner with businesses, universities, and governments on staff development initiatives that increase positive work decisions and mitigate labor retention challenges (Kilibarda et al., 2019). Leaders should also improve organizational aesthetics (Molahosseini et al., 2020) and focus on strategies to promote employee success and organizational commitment (Lai & Gelb, 2019). It is crucial for leaders to understand their employees' needs and develop personalized approaches for retention (Rombaut & Guerry, 2020). HR departments can assist leaders in developing approaches that create opportunities for enhancing employees' positive behaviors (Jannat et al., 2020; Mohammad et al., 2021; Noranee et al., 2021; Su et al., 2022).

Organizational investment encourages employee satisfaction, motivation, and commitment, keeping organizations operational and efficient (Vallas et al., 2022).

Employee Retention in Summary

Logistics organizations have missions they cannot complete without employees. As the industry grows, it is necessary to retain skilled and knowledgeable employees for success (Baruffaldi et al., 2019; Borgström et al., 2021; Cavaignac et al., 2021). Leaders must invest time into understanding what is essential to their employees and realign company resources to achieve optimum benefit (Krishna & Garg, 2022; McKeown, 2019). When leaders adopt strategies to retain the employees needed it creates organizational flexibility and preparedness for change (Cleary & McLarney, 2021; Yue, 2021). HR departments help leaders develop valuable strategies for retaining employees (Jannat et al., 2020; Mohammad et al., 2021; Noranee et al., 2021; Su et al., 2022). Although leaders cannot stop turnover, they can understand its causes and implement mitigative measures to decrease it. Thus, employee retention remains a critical topic for research and discussion, as it is a chronic issue that is yet unsolved.

Summary of the Professional and Academic Literature

The qualitative single case study aimed to explore the strategies logistics leaders use to increase employee retention. The purpose of the literature review was to comprehensively assess the research topic by synthesizing relevant professional and academic literature to produce insights and valuable information for the reader. Herzberg's two-factor theory promoted the evaluation of how logistics leaders might use hygiene and motivation factors to increase employee retention. The study's qualitative

research method and single case study design allowed for an in-depth analysis of the phenomena in conjunction with Baldrige Excellence Framework and Walden University's Consulting Capstone guidelines. Research showed that employee turnover creates substantial organizational costs that affect organizations worldwide (Jannat et al., 2020; Krishna & Garg, 2022). However, employee retention is especially critical in the logistics industry, where employees routinely face situations that affect their health, happiness, well-being, and motivation to work (Kane & Tomer, 2021; Keller et al., 2020; Kumar, 2019; Vallas et al., 2022). Logistics organizations have a poor image and high employee turnover (Keller et al., 2020; Kilibarda et al., 2019; Paché & Large, 2021; Vallas et al., 2022). Without logistics employees, goods are unavailable for consumer and business use (Lam, 2021; Paché & Large, 2021), and economic growth and sustainability decline (Kilibarda et al., 2019; Lam, 2021; Paché & Large, 2021). Herzberg's two-factor theory offers leaders various options for increasing employees' job satisfaction and motivation, influencing retention (see Herzberg et al., 1959). Herzberg's hygiene factors are essential, as they hold value for employees' future with their employers (Ann & Blum, 2020; Tran & Smith, 2020). Motivation factors are also vital, as they promote productive work environments (Ann & Blum, 2020). A balance between the two facilitates employee job satisfaction and retention (Alrawahi et al., 2020; Chmielewska et al., 2020; Sobaih & Hasanein, 2020; Tran & Smith, 2020). Therefore, Herzberg's two-factor theory supported using hygiene and motivation strategies for increasing logistics employee retention.

Transition

Section 1 was the study's foundation, where I provided background information on the problem of employee retention, including the problem of retaining skilled and experienced employees in the logistics industry. The purpose of the study was to explore the strategies three logistics leaders used to increase employee retention. I briefly discussed the implications for positive social change and justified selecting a qualitative, single case study method and design for this study. The research question was identified, as were the semistructured interview questions for the participants. The section also included an overview and justification of Herzberg's two-factor theory, which was the conceptual framework for this study. Operational definitions were included to aid reader understanding, and I identified the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations that might influence the study's credibility and validity. The significance of the study could be that implementation of plans to retain employees could help logistics leaders, businesses, communities, and economies improve standards of living for community members. The final element of the section encompassed a comprehensive review of the professional and academic literature on Herzberg's two-factor theory, contrasting theories, and the research phenomena. I showed how Herzberg's two-factor theory best supported this employee retention study, linking the theory to the logistics industry for business application.

Section 2 is the project, which identifies the researcher's role, research participants, research method, and research design. The section includes the defined population and sampling method used for the study and related ethical requirements. The

section concludes with a discussion on data collection instruments and techniques, data organization, data analysis process, and reliability and validity for addressing study dependability, creditability, transferability, and confirmability.

Section 3 is the application to professional practice and implications for change. The section includes a comprehensive analysis of the client organization's history, processes, and operations, following the 2019-2020 Baldrige Excellence Framework. I presented thematic findings from the interviews and research data gathered, concluding with discussions on the finding's applications professionally, implications for social change, and recommendations. The final elements of Section 3 include the reflections and study conclusion for logistics leaders' strategies for increasing employee retention.

Section 2: The Project

In Section 2, I restate the purpose of the study, discuss the researcher's role, and identify the research participants. I also include information on the research method, design, population, sampling, and ethical requirements. Section 2 concludes with a discussion on data collection instruments, data collection techniques, data organization techniques, data analysis, reliability, and validity.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies logistics leaders use to increase employee retention. The targeted population was three leaders within different subunits of one logistics organization in the northeast region of the United States who implemented successful employee retention strategies. The implications for positive social change include the potential for positive economic shifts, resulting in productive community and societal changes. Leaders' employee retention efforts can lower unemployment levels, improving individuals' financial stability and economic independence, increasing tax revenues for benefiting communities, citizens, and families.

Role of the Researcher

For this qualitative single case study, I served as the instrument for collecting and analyzing the client organization's data. Researchers evaluate their skills and readiness for case study data collection, including practicing and preparing for the data collection process (Yin, 2018). First, qualitative researchers collect and analyze different data sources related to a phenomenon (Lanka et al., 2021). Qualitative researchers then

conduct data triangulations, converging the evidence to developing findings and draw study conclusions (Yin, 2018). The role of the researcher in the data collection process is to devote time and effort to develop a high-quality study that is significant, engaging, complete, ethical, and inclusive of alternative perspectives (Yin, 2018). As the primary researcher, I prepared for the data collection process through a practice pilot study with friends and family members. The pilot study offered the opportunity for insight before proceeding with the research study. After the pilot study, I collected and analyzed data per the 2019-2020 Baldrige Excellence Framework and the DBA Consulting Capstone Manual to proceed with the research. I used the information to help WDM leaders develop hygiene and motivation strategies for increasing employee retention.

My professional experience included military logistics, small business, and nonprofit management. I collaborated with logistics leaders to create efficient asset acquisition, storage, and movement strategies. I also successfully managed employees, finances, and every aspect of business operations.

My connection to the *Logistics Leader Strategies for Retaining Employees* topic originated from my previous experiences in leadership roles. Twenty-five years of leadership experience contributed to my ability to help the client organization. However, I maintained awareness that my knowledge and experience could lead to preconceived ideas about logistics leader strategies for increasing employee retention. Good researchers strive to avoid bias and maintain ethical standards during the research (Yin, 2018). I had no relationships with the participants or research area that might present additional bias.

In 1974, The U.S. government established a national commission, which wrote and published The Belmont Report in 1976 (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research [NCPHSBBR], 1979). The Belmont Report provides guidelines for researchers' ethical conduct, governing their adherence to three basic principles: (a) respect of persons, (b) beneficence, and (c) justice (NCPHSBBR, 1979). Researchers must follow the Belmont Report's guidelines and establish measures to prevent human subjects harm (NCPHSBBR, 1979).

Kaewkungwal and Adams (2019) reaffirmed that researchers should demonstrate honesty and an ethical approach in their research and are responsible for ensuring compliance with the Belmont requirements. Walden University scholar-consultants are assigned a client organization to work with on a business problem. Client leaders and scholar-consultants collaborate through Walden University's DBA Consulting Capstone program. Walden University signs an agreement with the client organization that includes the scope of work, ethical, and confidentiality relationship terms. Walden's scholar-consultants adhere to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) requirements for ethical research. Students request and obtain IRB approval before data collection and analysis. I received IRB approval (#12-16-20-1028153) for research with my client leader and committed to complying with the terms of the agreement. I ensured that the participants understood the research, their withdrawal options, and the risk/benefit assessments to maximize their well-being and promote ethical research.

Safeguards are required for research design, conduct, and analysis (Stone et al., 2019) because known and unknown biases can damage research validity (Yin, 2018).

Case study researchers should follow an appropriate conceptual framework and report contradictory findings (Yin, 2018). The interview protocol is a relevant tool for keeping researchers focused on their topic, prepared for problems, and ethically aligned. (Yin, 2018). Member checking allows scholar-consultants to validate interview data, while triangulation methods validate and augment research evidence (Yin, 2018).

Researchers must be transparent and establish bias mitigation measures to promote positive outcomes (Yin, 2018). In addition, researchers must know the research problem, recognize their personal and professional biases, conduct themselves ethically, and ensure that scholarly sources support research claims (Yin, 2018). I used an interview protocol, member checking, and data triangulation to minimize research biases, avoid misinterpreting participants' views, and prevent errors.

Interviews are vital to case study research, and researchers must ask open-ended questions, listen accurately, take notes, and remain open-minded when interviewing participants (Yin, 2018). Interview protocols increase case study reliability and guide the researcher in collecting data (Yin, 2018). Interview protocols include four sections: (a) case study overview, (b) data collection procedures, (c) protocol questions, and (d) case study report outline (Yin, 2018). Thus, I used the interview protocol to ensure that I did not intentionally or unintentionally damage the reliability and validity of the study (Appendix).

Participants

Researchers must ensure that their participants have knowledge and experience of their research phenomena (McGinley et al., 2021; Pathiranage et al., 2020; Yin, 2018).

The participants selected must be sufficient for producing quality data and phenomena understanding (Gill, 2020). The selection of key personnel increases researchers' ability to ensure they have represented the population needed (Saunders et al., 2019). The participants in this research consisted of three executive leaders from WDM organization who had logistics leadership experience and accountability for developing successful employee retention strategies. The three participants were the chief executive officer (CEO), chief commercial officer (CCO), and senior vice president (SVP) of operations in a 3PL organization.

3PLs are significant segments of the supply chain network that provide tailored logistics services (Ashraf et al., 2022; Barker et al., 2021; Premkumar et al., 2021; Sangka et al., 2019). In these companies, employees are vital to sustainable operations and competitive advantage (Kane & Tomer, 2021; Kumar, 2019; Vallas et al., 2022). WDM organization has successfully operated as a 3PL for over 22 years, adapting to economic and market changes. WDM's executive leaders collaborated on strategies for improving employees' job health, happiness, and well-being, promoting retention and operational sustainability.

The CEO was the primary executive leader who directed all aspects of WDM and led strategy development. The CCO maintained responsibility for WDM's commercial strategies and warehouse distribution and fulfillment, including strategy development. The SVP of operations ensured that WDM remained operationally positioned to achieve goals and objectives, including strategy development. Mahé (2019) emphasized the importance of identifying participants' official positions that support the interview

selection process. WDM's CEO, CCO, and SVP of operations were the executive leadership team members, overseeing between 400 to 500 warehouse workers. The executive team recognized employee retention challenges and met regularly to discuss, develop, and implement strategies. Thus, a review of WDM's CEO, CCO, and SVP of operation positions and responsibilities enabled me to identify the significance of participants' roles in the decision-making process. They were the leaders who developed employee retention strategies and had the knowledge and experience required for this research.

The selected client organization leaders participated in Walden University's DBA Consulting Capstone program, which offers scholars the opportunity to work with them as business consultants. I gained access to my client organization through the Consulting Capstone because the organization leader agreed to be a consulting client of the Consulting Capstone. I made initial contact with the CEO through email and established a regular communication schedule to build trust. Building trust with research participants increases their willingness to share, facilitating the data collection process (Nunan, 2020). Additionally, trust-building enhances participants' confidence in their researchers conducting ethical research and reporting accurate information (Nunan, 2020).

Buchanan et al. (1988) stated that researchers could use management hierarchy or existing relationships to negotiate interview access. Saunders et al. (2019) posited that researchers should familiarize themselves with the client organization and use existing contacts to gain new contacts. I used my relationship with the CEO to gain access to the other executive leaders involved in employee retention strategy development. I regularly

reviewed the client organization's website, built rapport with the participants, and nurtured the relationships through weekly conversations and email interactions. The process of gaining access to participants encouraged honest interview reflections that contributed to research success. Success is enhanced when researchers reveal competence, develop rapport, and create trust with participants (Saunders et al., 2019).

Research Method and Design

Research Method

Walden University DBA scholars make one of three methodological choices for their study: (a) qualitative, (b) quantitative, or (c) mixed method. I used a qualitative research method to explore logistics leaders' strategies for increasing employee retention. Qualitative research is appropriate for researchers conducting in-depth explanations of phenomena without assumptions (Reddy, 2021). Qualitative researchers rely on nonstatistical data to support their interpretation and analysis (Witell et al., 2020). Researchers using qualitative research methods draw on information from various sources to discover new phenomena insights for change strategies (Yin, 2018).

Quantitative research involves numerical measurements for statistical analysis and inferences between variables (Edwards, 2020). The selected research design determines the data types needed (Yin, 2018). Researchers using the quantitative research method collect numerical data using questionnaires, surveys, or data analysis tools (Saunders et al., 2019). A quantitative research methodology was inappropriate for this study because I did not observe WDM's data and translate them into numbers for statistical analysis, nor did I confirm hypotheses.

Mixed method research aims to explore and confirm phenomena outcomes and conditions (Reddy, 2021). Researchers using the mixed method collect concurrent or sequential qualitative and quantitative data for research integration (Mamabolo & Myres, 2019). Researchers might also find quantitative evidence during their research to become part of a mixed methodological approach (Yin, 2018). Because I did not explore the assumptions associated with logistics leaders' strategies for increasing employee retention or integrate qualitative and quantitative methods, the mixed method was not appropriate for this study.

Researchers' methodological choices should align with their study's goal, context, and ethical rigor (Edwards, 2020). I aimed to explore the how and why of a phenomenon. Qualitative research helped me recognize, evaluate, and understand the link between WDM's processes, strategies, and employee retention. The qualitative and quantitative data collected contributed to my research revelations and the study's theoretical alignment. Additionally, interviews with WDM's executive leaders and a review of organization documentation allowed for information discovery that facilitated the answers to the research question.

Research Design

Researchers use qualitative studies to explore and interpret phenomena, employing the research design that complements their study (Pathiranage et al., 2020). Qualitative research design choices include ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology, and case study (Saunders et al., 2019). The research design is the plan for how the researcher will approach answering the study's research question and

includes objectives, data collection sources, collection and analysis plan, and constraints (Saunders et al., 2019). The purpose of the research design is to link the study's data and findings to the research question through coherent design decisions (Yin, 2018).

After reviewing the ethnography, grounded theory, and phenomenology qualitative research design options, I selected a single case study research design. The ethnographic research design focuses on groups' cultural aspects, including cultural group behaviors, language, values, and beliefs (Haven & van Grootel, 2019).

Ethnography was inappropriate for this study, as it misaligned the study's purpose to focus on organizational leaders.

Researchers use a grounded theory research design to focus on a phenomenon's social aspects, such as participants' perspectives of specific processes, actions, and interactions for theory creation (Haven & van Grootel, 2019; Pathiranage et al., 2020). In my study, I focused on participants' perspectives; however, I did not use the data collected to create a theory. Phenomenology is grounded in philosophy and is concerned with participants' lived experiences of a phenomenon (Haven & van Grootel, 2019; Pathiranage et al., 2020). I did not select phenomenology as a research design because I did not desire to explore the phenomena through participants' lived experiences.

The case study research design includes the explanatory, exploratory, and descriptive research approach, and single and multiple research designs (Pathiranage et al., 2020; Yin, 2018). Case studies are suitable for exploring situations and answering how and why questions regarding organization-specific phenomena (Yin, 2018). Researchers conduct case studies in real-life settings when interactions between

phenomena and their context will lead to topic understanding (Saunders et al., 2019).

Single case study designs are common design choices that allow researchers to incorporate participant subunits for analysis, enhancing case study insight (Pathiranage et al., 2020; Yin, 2018). Multiple case study designs are applicable when researchers collect data from multiple cases for one study (Pathiranage et al., 2020; Yin, 2018). I studied a single organization, collecting and analyzing data from different embedded subunits. Therefore, a single case study design supported the study's research purpose, as the goal was to explore the strategies logistics leaders use to increase employee retention.

WDM's CEO provided access to executive leaders, organization documents, and policies that support the study's topic and data analysis. I conducted case study research using open-ended interview questions to capture WDM leaders' strategies and contributions to the information gathering process. Interviews provide researchers with insightful information, but researchers must realize that the information received may be biased, incomplete, or inaccurate and affect study validity (Crick, 2021; Yin, 2018).

Saunders et al. (2019) stated that qualitative researchers need a minimum of five participants for data saturation. Other authors stated that qualitative research requires between 11 and 16 participants (Pathiranage et al., 2020). However, the participant sample size alone is insufficient (Haven & van Grootel, 2019; McGinley et al., 2021). Participants' knowledge and experience are crucial to data quality and researchers' ability to achieve data saturation (Pathiranage et al., 2020). Researchers must ensure that their participant sample size reflects the population required for data quality (Crick, 2021; Pathiranage et al., 2020). Researchers should also ensure they continue to inquire until

there is no more new information or insights (McGinley et al., 2021). I ensured data saturation by conducting open-ended interviews with three of WDM's senior leaders, gathering in-depth information on employee retention strategies. I also collected organizational data to support data saturation, triangulating it with the interview information. I identified themes for the study and continued asking questions and collecting data until there were no new insights or information on the research phenomena.

I selected three senior leaders in WDM organization with knowledge and experience of information regarding the research question. I used member checking to validate member responses and coded data until there were no new themes. Member checking and data triangulation are validation techniques for establishing research quality (Saunders et al., 2019). Member checking allows researchers to cross-check interview data with participants for accuracy (Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018), and coding helps researchers identify themes and patterns (Crick, 2021). Data triangulation is also vital to the process. Case study data must corroborate and augment other evidence for validity (Yin, 2018). Collecting multilevel data within a single organization helps researchers triangulate findings and strengthens studies (Crick, 2021; Yin, 2018).

Population and Sampling

The scope of this study resulted from a collaborative agreement between WDM and Walden University's DBA Consulting Capstone program. As this study is a qualitative, single case study, the population includes WDM's senior leaders. To further define the sample size for data collection and analysis, I identified an appropriate

sampling approach. Qualitative research involves various nonprobability sampling techniques that researchers can use, such as quota, snowball, convenience, self-selection, and purposive (Gill, 2020; Mthuli et al., 2022; Saunders et al., 2019). Sampling techniques guide researchers' selection of specific subgroups for data collection and analysis (Saunders et al., 2019). Research questions influence researchers' sampling approach, necessitating their awareness and understanding of appropriate sampling techniques (Saunders et al., 2019). Based on the study's research question and the participant subgroups needed for data collection and analysis, I used purposive sampling to identify and select the appropriate senior leaders in WDM with the knowledge and experience in developing employee retention strategies.

Purposive sampling helps researchers identify the target population and sample size best suited for their study. Purposive sampling is often used for case study research and involves information gathering from subgroups with experience suited to the study's qualitative nature and objectives (Ellis, 2021; Saunders et al., 2019). Purposive sampling is helpful for in-depth, revelatory studies, helping researchers identify and select informative case study participants (Gill, 2020; Saunders et al., 2019). Researchers using purposive sampling require access to key personnel with phenomena knowledge and experience (Suri, 2011). Such access increases the likelihood that participant samples will accurately represent study populations (Saunders et al., 2019). Therefore, I used purposive sampling to identify and select WDM executive leaders with employee retention knowledge and experience.

For this study, I selected a sample size of three executives from WDM. The sample size of WDM's leaders aligns with the topic of this study and the research goals. Researchers have no rules for selecting sample sizes, but there is a logical relationship between the sampling technique and a study's purpose and focus (Saunders et al., 2019). The sample size also does not guarantee research validity, but it does indicate the steps a researcher has taken to gather valuable and credible information from all available resources (Saunders et al., 2019). Qualitative case study samples connect to the research phenomena (McGinley et al., 2021; Pathiranage et al., 2020), and researchers must clarify sample units of analysis for evidence gathering (Yin, 2018). The selected sample size depends on the researcher's judgment and experience and must be sufficient to produce quality data and phenomena understanding (Gill, 2020). This study's population sample included WDM's CEO, CCO, and SVP of operations, as they were the executive leaders with the knowledge and experience concerning successful employee retention strategies. The research participants' knowledge and experience provided the insight needed for data collection and analysis. Therefore, the case study sample size was sufficient for the study's purpose and focus, including information-rich sources that provided quality data to achieve data saturation.

Researchers' data collection, analysis, and sample size decisions influence data saturation. Data saturation is essential for research quality and content validity (Crick, 2021; Farquhar et al., 2020). A connection exists between sampling technique, sample size, and data saturation, as the right sample size is necessary for quality interview data (Gill, 2020). There is no universal method for achieving data saturation, but researchers

should follow general principles, such as ensuring that no new data, themes, or coding emerge and researchers can replicate the study (Crick, 2021; Farquhar et al., 2020; Guest et al., 2020; Saunders et al., 2019). Data collection and analysis from participant interviews should continue until there is a depth of information for answering the research question and no new information emerges (Crick, 2021; Farquhar et al., 2020; Guest et al., 2020). Thus, data saturation is required to achieve optimal research goals and objectives.

The timing of data saturation achievement varies for different studies. Researchers with small population samples achieve data saturation before more extensive studies (Fusch & Ness, 2015). A study's scope and topic may also require participant interviews above or below the estimated number (Gill, 2020). Researchers' timeliness in achieving data saturation depends on the participants' ability to share information and provide the data quality required to justify the research findings (Gill, 2020). Researchers must maintain their focus on data collection to ensure that their research is thorough for accurate finding development.

For this study, Walden University and WDM entered a partnership, allowing DBA scholar-consultants to identify and study a phenomenon of significance to the client organization. Walden University's DBA and IRB guided researcher participant selection, requiring that researchers focus on senior leader participants. Qualitative researchers are often required to satisfy predetermined guidelines for research participants (Epp & Otnes, 2021). I selected three executive leader participants from the client organization WDM to

maintain compliance with DBA Consulting Capstone research guidelines and provide quality information for data saturation.

After completing a signed agreement, I established initial contact with WDM's client leader to identify the research objective and developed an interview protocol for participant interview structure and ethical alignment. Qualitative researchers use interview protocols to provide participants with the procedures for data collection (Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). Open-ended and precise interview questions facilitate purposeful data collection and research data saturation (Suri, 2011). I obtained IRB approval and participants' consent for interviewing and data collection, following IRB and Belmont Report guidelines for ethical research. I conducted semistructured interviews with open-ended questions for WDM leader participants' responses using Zoom as the interview setting with the response location selected by the participant. I audio recording the interviews on Zoom to promote information accuracy. I used the Baldrige Excellence Framework and the DBA Consulting Capstone Manual as guides for structuring interview questions and conducting in-depth research with the client organization.

Ethical Research

Ensuring researchers incorporate and follow ethical principles are essential when conducting and presenting qualitative research (Azzari & Baker, 2020). Qualitative case studies may involve ethical dilemmas concerning organizations, participants, and data collection that require researcher professionalism and sensitivity to avoid harm (Yin, 2018). Walden University established the ethical guidelines that govern its scholar's

research conduct and behaviors, requiring them to complete National Institutes of Health (NIH) training for human subject protection to receive IRB approval for their research. IRB approval allows scholars to collect and analyze public records, private records released by other entities, and interviews with client organization participants (Azzari & Baker, 2020). The IRB ensures that all research complies with Walden University and U.S. federal directives (Walden University, 2021a). However, researchers are individually responsible for demonstrating the standards of practice, complying with ethics codes, and maintaining principles of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and accountability (Kaewkungwal & Adams, 2019; Walden University, 2021b). Before conducting interviews, scholars must obtain informed consent from research participants (Azzari & Baker, 2020). Participants must understand and voluntarily give their written or verbal consent for research, including withdrawal measures (Azzari & Baker, 2020; NCPHSBBR, 1979). I received participants' consent to participate in this research via written communication.

Informed Consent

Informed consent is a significant factor to consider when conducting research (NCPHSBBR, 1979). The process involves researchers informing potential participants about a study's purpose, its benefits, and risks and obtaining their agreement for participation (Ashkenazi et al., 2020). The requests for participation entail participants' agreement to provide company information, company documents, business data, interviews, and recordings for analysis and interpretation (Traianou & Hammersley, 2021). Researchers must understand how requests affect participants and how

participants' consent promotes ethical research (Frazer, 2020; Traianou & Hammersley, 2021). Although some research settings may not ethically require participants' informed consent (Traianou & Hammersley, 2021), qualitative research should be rigorous and transparent (Epp & Otnes, 2021). Thus, researchers must be prudent in showing readers they have received consent for research, avoiding ethical hazards that detract from the study (Epp & Otnes, 2021; Traianou & Hammersley, 2021; Varsava, 2021).

Informed consent is also vital to research that produces change (Azzari & Baker, 2020). Ethical research guidelines direct researchers to develop relationships with potential participants and establish a consensual process that recognizes their autonomy in decision-making (Ashkenazi et al., 2020; Nairn et al., 2020). Relationship growth and trust between researchers and participants encourage information sharing, promoting research development (Nairn et al., 2020). Informed consent facilitates researchers' and participants' realization of research objectives and benefits. Academic ethics committees regulate and prescribe informed consent for ethical research (Nairn et al., 2020). Walden University's IRB maintains responsibility for students' ethical and federal regulatory compliance (Walden University, 2021a). Students must adhere to IRB requirements and cannot recruit or collect data prior to research ethics review and approval (Walden University, 2021a).

Research Withdrawal

Participants can withdraw from research without giving reasons or prior notice for withdrawal (NCPHSBBR, 1979). Participants seeking to withdraw from this research could notify Walden University or the scholar-consultant of their desire to withdraw from

participation in the study. I complied with Walden University and U.S. federal directives, receiving IRB approval (#12-16-20-1028153) for this study, allowing participant recruitment, data collection, and information analysis. I informed each participant of this study regarding their right to withdraw from research without penalty.

Incentives

While researchers can use monetary, nonmonetary, or no incentives in their research (Saunders et al., 2019), I elected not to use incentives for this study to avoid negative perceptions of participant influence. Saunders et al. (2019) stated that incentives are an acceptable strategy for increasing participants' response rates. However, researchers Kim and Bak (2020) revealed that incentives might negatively influence participants' motivations for participation, generating responses that influence research quality.

Data Storage

Researchers must protect their participants and avoid unintended consequences (Summers, 2020). Researchers must also address their data archival and storage plans to protect participants' confidentiality (Glenna et al., 2019). I identified the research participants in this study based on their roles and responsibilities in the organization. Thus, the CEO, CCO, and SVP of operations were selected. The participant's titles were generic to avoid revealing their identity or that of the WDM organization. I redacted all other information that identified the research participants and connected client organization. I presented the IRB approval number in the final doctoral study manuscript and shared a summary of the findings with the client organization leader via a scheduled

meeting. I stored all research data on a password-protected hard drive in a locked safe to be retained for 5 years.

Data Collection Instruments

For this qualitative study, I acted as the primary data collection instrument, gathering information for analysis. Researchers function as primary data collection instruments in qualitative studies to gather phenomena data, analyze them, and draw conclusions (Lanka et al., 2021; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). Researchers conduct the qualitative data collection process using various sources of evidence, such as semistructured interviews, documents, direct observation, and archived records (Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). I collected research data using semistructured interviews, documents, and archived records. The direct observation method of data collection was inappropriate as I did not directly observe the research participants' behaviors or work environments.

Researchers conduct semistructured interviews using a combination of standardized and nonstandardized interview questions (Saunders et al., 2019). Researchers draft the questions to promote phenomena discussion through an open information exchange (Conzelmann & Keye, 2014). This process makes it prudent for researchers to develop and distribute an interview protocol informing participants about the research, the information gathering process, the questions, and the study's intended audience (Yin, 2018). Interview protocols support research and keep researchers focused on data collection objectives during the interview process (Yin, 2018). Thus, I provided

the research participants in this study with an interview protocol and open-ended questions for discussion. See Appendix A for the interview protocol.

Documents and archived records are secondary sources available via email communications, organization records, and online mediums (Epp & Otnes, 2021; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). However, researchers must remain aware that secondary documents' original purpose was not for research and ensure that each document is accurately interpreted (Epp & Otnes, 2021; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). I collected administrative documents, financial documents, and other records from WDM for interpretation and analysis. WDM's leaders and I discussed the organization's data, ensuring I understood their purpose and use. The process enhanced study transparency and contributed to research reliability.

Reliability and validity are vital to the qualitative research data collection process (Crick, 2021; McGinley et al., 2021; Pathiranage et al., 2020; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). Interview protocols, data collection procedures, data security measures, member checking, and corroborative data triangulation improve researchers' ability to achieve research quality (Pathiranage et al., 2020; Yin, 2018). I used the interview protocol to maintain a structured process for the interview and ensure alignment with the research question. I audio recorded the interviews, shared the transcripts and the interpreted responses for member checking and validation. Although audio recordings are not required, they offer researchers the ability to achieve interview accuracy and member validation, further contributing to research reliability and validity (Yin, 2018).

Corroborative data triangulation from multiple sources also increases analysis accuracy and enhances study reliability and validity (Epp & Otnes, 2021; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). I used multiple sources of information to corroborate the data collected for the study. The interviews, organization data, and public documents collectively support the study's findings.

Data Collection Technique

The research question I aimed to answer was what strategies do logistics leaders use to increase employee retention? To accomplish the research objectives, I gathered data from semistructured interviews with participants from the client leader organization, WDM's organizational documents, WDM's website, and other public domains. Researchers require a systematic process for collecting, assembling, and interpreting data with a purpose (Saunders et al., 2019). Mutual trust and the relationship between the researcher and participants are essential for collecting accurate information, ensuring adequate data for review and analysis, and achieving research legitimacy (Buchanan et al., 1988; Nunan, 2020; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). I obtained IRB approval for research, built rapport and trust with WDM's leaders, and obtained informed consent to facilitate data collection.

Researchers are responsible for ensuring that participants understand the research, its purpose, and its benefits (Kaewkungwal & Adams, 2019; NCPHSBBR, 1979; Stone et al., 2019). I maintained regular email and phone communications with WDM's leaders, using the Baldrige Excellence Framework as a guide for gathering the information needed for the study. I emailed discussion questions to the CEO each week for the next

week's conversation, promoting in-depth discussion preparation. After each conversation, I gave the CEO a summary discussion for member checking and validation.

Walden University DBA Consulting Capstone mandated that scholars follow established guidelines for research and discuss informed consent, research withdrawals, incentives, ethical protection, data collection, data safety, IRB approval, identifiable information exclusion, and other scenario-specific processes with the research participants. Interview protocols are commonly used in qualitative case studies as they provide participants with research questions and other information, such as the procedures and rules for data collection, research, and follow-up (Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). I developed an interview protocol for this study and shared it with WDM's leaders to help them feel more comfortable with the interview process and encourage transparency (Appendix A). Member checking promotes research transparency and ensures interview accuracy (Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). I obtained participant consent, scheduled semistructured interviews according to the participants' schedules, recorded the interviews for transcription, and forwarded the transcripts for member validation.

The advantages of the data collection techniques used in this study were corroboration and triangulation (see Crick, 2021; see Saunders et al., 2019; see Yin, 2018). Qualitative researchers use semistructured interviews and organizational documents to gather and analyze phenomena (Lanka et al., 2021; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). Researchers gain in-depth phenomena perspectives through open information exchanges (Conzelmann & Keye, 2014). The information is valuable for data comparison

(Crick, 2021) and triangulation for finding development (Crick, 2021; Farquhar et al., 2020; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). Multilevel data from study participants and other sources augment each other, strengthening studies and increasing their validity (Crick, 2021; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018).

The disadvantages of the data collection techniques used in this study were bias and researcher subjectivity (see Crick, 2021; see Saunders et al., 2019; see Stone et al., 2019; see Yin, 2018). Leaders agree to participate in semistructured interviews and release organizational documents based on trust and relationship (Buchanan et al., 1988; Nunan, 2020; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). Participants can be untruthful during interviews or fail to provide relevant information (FitzPatrick, 2019), and researchers can be biased or subjective in their data interpretations (Epp & Otnes, 2021; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). Researchers mitigate biases and subjectivity by implementing safeguards like interview protocols and member checking to validate data and enhance research quality (Crick, 2021; Saunders et al., 2019; Stone et al., 2019; Yin, 2018).

Pilot studies are also mitigation strategies for limiting bias (Crick, 2021; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). I conducted a pilot study with friends and family members to assist me in developing my interview skills and refining my interview timing. I asked the pilot study participants the interview questions to test question clarity and identify where I might add follow-up questions. I did not report the results of the pilot study anywhere. Pilot studies allow researchers to rehearse the interview process and determine if the questions are suitable or need modification (Crick, 2021; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). The pilot study I conducted gave me insight into the structure needed to mitigate

biases and damage to the study's quality. Member checking promotes interview data validation and transparency (Yin, 2018). I conducted member checking of the data interpretations by transcribing the interviews verbatim and summarizing the key points. I provided the research participants with the interview transcripts and summaries for transparency and verification of information. The participants responded by phone and email, confirming their agreement with the data interpretations.

Data Organization Technique

Qualitative researchers use select methods to collect and organize data for interpretation, analysis, and evaluation (Lanka et al., 2021). I used Baldrige's Excellence Framework and Walden University's DBA Consulting rubric as guides for collecting and organizing data during the research process. I transcribed participants' interview responses and used a reflective journal to record my thoughts for follow-up and later discussion. Reflective journals provide qualitative researchers with additional insight into a phenomenon (Lehmann et al., 2019). Additionally, coding aids researchers in the data analysis process, allowing them to identify alignments between the emerging themes, patterns, research questions, and conceptual frameworks (Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). I coded all the information in a Microsoft Word document and identified key themes and patterns for follow-up.

I saved all the electronic documents on an encrypted hard drive and stored the electronic documents in a locked safe. Researchers must use due care when storing and destroying research data to maintain confidentiality and prevent harm (Saunders et al., 2019). I stored all nondigital documents in the same locked safe to retain all data for a

minimum period of 5 years. After 5 years, I will destroy all collected data by permanently deleting electronic documents and shredding nondigital documents.

Data Analysis

I was the primary data collection instrument for this qualitative single case study, collecting research data from semistructured interviews, documents, and archived records. Triangulation is widely used in case study research to promote researchers' perspective development for data analysis and evaluation (Crick, 2021; Farquhar et al., 2020; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). Triangulation from multiple evidentiary sources enhances finding development and contributes to research validity and reliability (Crick, 2021; Farquhar et al., 2020; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). I gathered interview evidence from WDM's leaders and company financials, policies, and procedures. I also collected information from the employee handbook, company website, and other company documents to corroborate and augment the evidence. I converged the evidence to identify themes and study conclusions. Thus, I used methodological triangulation to broaden my perspective of the phenomena and strengthen the study.

Researchers must be prepared for the data analysis process, as it requires them to develop a strategy for analyzing evidence and determine how the analysis process will begin. (Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). Coding helps researchers understand collected data and their relation to the research (Crick, 2021; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). Various electronic and manual coding methods help researchers identify themes and patterns in the data analysis process (Azzari & Baker, 2020; Crick, 2021; Lehmann et al., 2019; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). Electronic coding methods help researchers

identify codes from substantial amounts of data but require individual analytical skills and direction for valid research connections (Azzari & Baker, 2020; Crick, 2021; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). Researchers using manual coding immerse themselves into the data for in-depth insight and analysis (Azzari & Baker, 2020; Crick, 2021). The choice between the different methods is a matter of individual preference (Azzari & Baker, 2020; Crick, 2021; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). Therefore, I used manual coding for my approach.

I used Yin (2018) and Saunders et al. (2019) as guides for the data analysis process, beginning with the interview questions focused on the study's overall research question. I transcribed the participants' interviews into a Microsoft Word document for coding. I also searched the interview transcriptions, question by question, for frequent keywords or phrases related to the study's research question and identified primary and secondary themes. I color-coded themes discovered from the interviews and correlated them with journal entries, documents, and archived records. Additionally, I highlighted information in the journal, documents, and records, color-coding them to correspond to the primary and secondary themes from the interviews. I searched all the data collected for new patterns, adding codes and colors for outlying themes requiring further research. Finally, I aligned the key themes with new and old literature, the conceptual framework, and the Baldrige Excellence Framework criteria.

Reliability and Validity

Qualitative data must be reliable and valid to facilitate rigorous research standards (Crick, 2021; McGinley et al., 2021; Pathiranage et al., 2020; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin,

2018). The challenges with meeting such standards are directly associated with qualitative researchers' subjectivity and biases as primary data collection instruments (Lanka et al., 2021; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). Researcher subjectivity and biases compromise research integrity and replicability (McGinley et al., 2021). Thus, qualitative researchers must offer transparent and trustworthy data that are valuable to readers (Crick, 2021; McGinley et al., 2021; Pathiranage et al., 2020; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). Researchers pursuing research quality implement the necessary safeguards to ensure data are dependable, credible, transferable, confirmable, and exhaustive (Crick, 2021; McGinley et al., 2021; Pathiranage et al., 2020; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018).

Reliability

Reliability is most concerned with how researchers might mitigate factors that harm research trustworthiness and replicability (McGinley et al., 2021; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). Research biased and inaccurate data results in inconsistencies that make it difficult for researchers to achieve study dependability, credibility, and quality (McGinley et al., 2021; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). Researchers must implement whatever measures are required to alleviate potential suspicions of false data documentation and interpretation, preventing harm to dependability (Yin, 2018). Researchers can improve dependability by implementing various research quality measures, such as pilot studies to mitigate bias (Crick, 2021; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018), member checking to validate data (Pathiranage et al., 2020; Yin, 2018), and triangulation to corroborate findings (Crick, 2021; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). I ensured dependability by conducting a pilot study, using an interview protocol, member

checking for data interpretations, and triangulating multiple evidentiary sources. The methods used worked together to enhance research dependability and study quality.

Yin (2018) noted multiple measures researchers might take to mitigate errors and biases, such as using a protocol, developing a database, and tracking the evidence. McGinley et al. (2021) also noted different measures, including member checking for research feedback and findings verification. Protocols and member checking aid researchers in achieving the transparency and data validation needed for research reliability (Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). I used a protocol to promote research transparency. I also transcribed participants' interviews and conducted member checking to validate the data. I provided the research participants with verbatim interview transcripts and summaries for validation. I also provided the client leader with summaries of my interpretations of the data collected from company financials, website, policies, and other company documents for validation. The client leader and other senior leader participants responded with their agreement of the data interpretations.

Validity

Qualitative researchers require rationality for drawing research conclusions, and their decisions must be justifiable (FitzPatrick, 2019). Research should involve integrous processes that produce accurate, generalizable, and strong results (FitzPatrick, 2019; Saunders et al., 2019). Validity is an integral part of qualitative research that reduces reader contentions arising from mistrust (FitzPatrick, 2019; Saunders et al., 2019). Qualitative researchers that employ appropriate methods for achieving study credibility,

transferability, confirmability, and data saturation mitigate research threats and enhance quality (FitzPatrick, 2019; Yin, 2018).

Credibility

To support the study's credibility, I audio-recorded participants' interviews and transcribed them for member checking, comment, and validation. Transcriptions, audio-recorded interviews, member checking, and triangulation contribute to research credibility (Crick, 2021; Farquhar et al., 2020; FitzPatrick, 2019; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). FitzPatrick (2019) recommended that researchers provide descriptions and details that enable readers' experiential connections and promote trust in the conclusions. Such descriptions also enhance researchers' ability to mitigate biases (Yin, 2018). I triangulated the interview data with documents, archived records, and detail-rich descriptions to strengthen the study's findings.

Transferability

To support the study's transferability, I provided rich information on a real-world phenomenon that leaders might identify with and apply to their organizations. Yin (2018) stated that transferability is best addressed during the initial phase of the research design process. Researchers select cases that manifest real-world phenomena, establishing a research question and theory for phenomena exploration (Yin, 2018). Researchers provide rich information, allowing readers to identify with the situation and decide if the study applies to other situations (Crick, 2021; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). Thus, I provided readers with in-depth information on the case study phenomena that promoted

their understanding and maximized the opportunity for generalization and external application.

Confirmability

To support the study's confirmability, I transcribed interviews, verified transcriptions through member checking, and triangulated data. Confirmability is concerned with research truthfulness, and qualitative researchers are responsible for ensuring data accuracy in their study (Crick, 2021; Farquhar et al., 2020; FitzPatrick, 2019; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). Researchers address confirmability through some of the same methods they use for addressing credibility, such as transcribed interviews, member checking, and triangulation (Crick, 2021; Farquhar et al., 2020; FitzPatrick, 2019; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). The methods aid researchers in increasing analytic rigor and alleviating discrepancies (Crick, 2021; Farquhar et al., 2020; FitzPatrick, 2019; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). I ensured confirmability by using rigorous methods to corroborate data for accuracy.

Data Saturation

It is vital that qualitative researchers gather all information concerning their study's phenomena to support analysis and findings. Qualitative research focuses less on participant sample sizes and more on the in-depth information needed to achieve data saturation (McGinley et al., 2021; Pathiranage et al., 2020; Saunders et al., 2019). Researchers should reach a point in their study where information is no longer unique and the data collected are redundant (Crick, 2021; Farquhar et al., 2020; FitzPatrick, 2019; McGinley et al., 2021; Saunders et al., 2019). I gathered in-depth information from

WDM leaders on employee retention strategies through interviews and organizational data. I continued to ask questions until I received the same information repeatedly. I triangulated the interview and organizational data, identifying themes. I continued to follow this process until no new information emerged. Therefore, I ensured data saturation by collecting in-depth data until there were no new insights or information on the research phenomena.

Transition and Summary

In Section 2, I restated the purpose of this study, which was to explore logistics leaders' strategies for increasing employee retention. I described my role as the primary researcher, my experience in military logistics, and my connection to the topic of employee retention. I also acknowledged that I had no previous relationship with the client organization or the research participants. This section included how I would align with Belmont Report guidelines, Walden University DBA Consulting Capstone program requirements, and the IRB to work ethically and prevent research harm. I expounded the methods used to minimize research biases, avoid misinterpreting participants' views, and prevent errors. I provided more information on the client organization's senior leader participants and their organization roles to support their selection for the study. Multiple research methods and research designs were described, with justification provided for a qualitative, single case study. The case study's population included sampling techniques used for identifying the target population and how data saturation was achieved. The ethical requirements section included extensive information on how researchers protect research participants and the informed consent process. As the primary data collection

instrument, I interviewed participants and collected and analyzed data for interpretation. I collected essential information from multiple sources to support research quality. I organized the data for coding and identified storage method for safekeeping. I used methodological triangulation and manual coding to analyze data. Lastly, I described the safeguards for ensuring the research was valid and reliable.

In Section 3, I assess WDM's performance excellence according to the Baldrige Excellence Framework criteria. First, I provide an overview of WDM organization, which begins with the organizational profile. Next, I assess WDM's performance excellence in the areas of leadership, strategy, customers, workforce, operations, measurement, analysis, and knowledge management, identifying thematic findings and results. I record key themes aligned with literature, Herzberg's two-factor theory, and the Baldrige Excellence Framework and summarize the project for the reader. Finally, I conclude the section with the study's benefits to social change, describing recommendations for action and future research.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

This qualitative single case study aims to explore logistics leaders' strategies to increase employee retention. Walden University's Consulting Capstone DBA scholar-consultants use the Baldrige Excellence Framework as a guide for organizational business improvement and sustainability strategies. The Baldrige Excellence Framework criteria and scoring system facilitate evaluators' ability to analyze and evaluate organizational performance, exploring strengths and opportunities for improvement through seven categories (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). Evaluators assess organizations' approaches to leadership, strategy, customers, workforce, operations, and measurement, analysis, and knowledge management, in addition to the results leaders' approaches produce (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). The framework integrates several critical components logistics leaders require for supply chain operations and efficiency (Peng et al., 2020), making it valuable for identifying the organizational strengths and opportunities for improvement concerning organizational performance and employee retention.

Scholar-consultants analyze and evaluate organizational performance using the Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework, providing client leaders with actionable feedback that promotes business problem resolution. WDM, a pseudonym, is a for-profit 3PL organization that has operated for over 22 years, fulfilling clients' ecommerce and multichannel logistics needs. Using Herzberg's two-factor theory as the conceptual framework, I identify key themes and opportunities for improvement for WDM leaders'

consideration and implementation. I analyze the collected data, coding and corroborating it for reliability and validity. The thematic analysis reveals the following primary themes for increasing WDM's employee retention: (a) competitive wages, (b) growth and development opportunities, and (c) recognition.

Key Factors Worksheet

Organizational Description

WDM is a for-profit 3PL in the northeastern part of the United States, founded in 1999. Two partners started the organization to fulfill clients' ecommerce and multichannel logistics needs. WDM began as a small fulfillment center, with the founders working to build their clientele list and develop their reputation. As the client list grew and profits increased, so did WDM's credibility within the logistics industry. The organization capitalized on its growth by adding ecommerce fulfillment to its service list, further extending the opportunity for clients to optimize value creation. WDM's performance produced increased sales and client profits, establishing the organization as a 3PL leader.

WDM's strategic focus is warehouse management, packaging, and order fulfillment operations to provide cost-effective distribution solutions for clients. The organization provides product management for over 100,000 client inventory lines and ships over 5,000,000 orders annually. WDM employs up to 500 employees for warehouse receiving, processing, picking, packing, inventory, and shipping activities. The organization operates in a dynamic industry (see Premkumar et al., 2021), competing with various logistics service providers that are expanding into new markets. Some

logistics industry competitors enter markets with strategies designed to disrupt rival company operations, offering opportunities or wages that make them appear more attractive to employees (Hassel & Sieker, 2022). Companies like WDM depend on their employees to help them accomplish their objectives, and turnover negatively influences efficiency and productivity. Therefore, competitors' disruptive strategies challenge WDM to respond with similar strategies for retaining employees.

Organizational Environment

Product Offerings. WDM offers multiple order fulfillment services for clients' ecommerce, Business to Business (B2B), Business to Customer (B2C), retail and wholesale needs. The organization receives, processes, picks, packs, and ships orders for clients and their customers. WDM also stores and manages product inventories, keeping its operations visible for clients forecasting needs. WDM includes the option for clients to add drop shipping services for WDM to pack and ship products directly to their customers (D2C). WDM provides real-time inventory data to lessen client order inaccuracies, minimize overstock, and decrease customer dissatisfaction. The organization streamlines supply chain solutions, leveraging multichannel and omnichannel capabilities for order fulfillment. Table 2 lists WDM's order fulfillment services.

Table 2*WDM's Order Fulfillment Services*

Services	Associated activities
Ecommerce	Inventory management Order picking & packing Custom packaging Shipping Returns
B2B, B2C, D2C	Inventory management Order picking & packing Custom packaging Shipping Order visibility & management Omnichannel support
Kitting & assembly	Specialized wrapping Custom packaging Gift & special project kitting Tracking
Transportation & freight management	Shipping in 1-3 days Next day shipping Same day delivery International shipping Trucking options Specialty freight options Container movement Temporary warehousing Customized transportation
Shipping operations analytics	Invoices & billing Auditing Claims Forecasts Reports Transit & cost analysis
Global	Government regulation tracking Customs filings Import & export coordination Insurance Documentation Compliance consulting

WDM provides services for online merchants whose goal is to increase their organization's ecommerce and sales activity. WDM's strategy involves enhancing

product brand image, building client customer trust, maintaining market agility, and ensuring information access for business success. WDM offers customized packaging solutions that support clients' needs seasonally and throughout the year. Packaging solutions include options for gifts, brand promotions, and special projects. The packaging options complement client brands and provide customers with unique experiences that enhance satisfaction. WDM's services optimize clients' brands by inspiring trust and promoting customer engagement.

WDM partners with UPS, USPS, FedEx, DHL, and other transportation and freight management companies to provide low-cost transportation to its clients. The organization optimizes domestic and international shipping services, customizing shipments to accommodate clients' needs. WDM's network of supply chain experts ensure that imports and exports have the coordination and documentation required for movement by air, land, and sea. WDM's leaders work to ensure that the customs process is efficient from beginning to end. The organization also provides its clients with a platform for maintaining the visibility of shipping operations, allowing them to conduct data analysis, monitor billing, file claims, and forecast freight expenses. The company's services automate shipping tasks, helping clients minimize inaccuracies and errors that affect the financial bottom line.

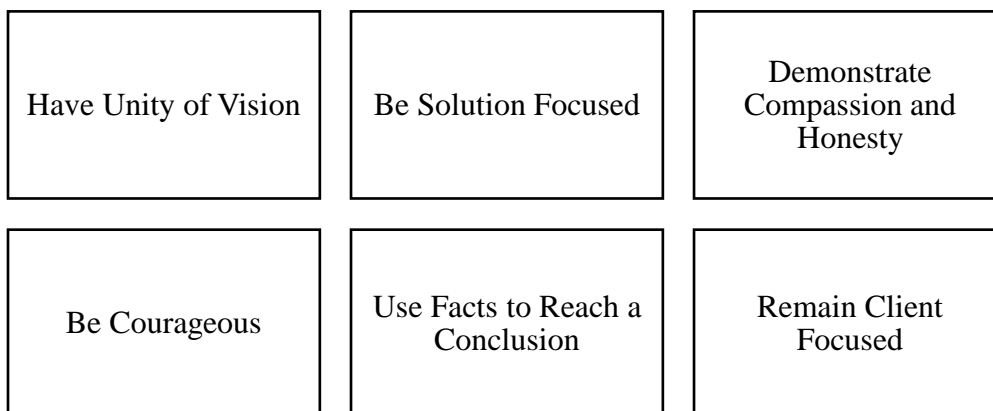
WDM focuses on offering fulfillment services that create client customer excitement, build client trust, and generate opportunities for developing and mature client companies. The services facilitate clients' ability to adjust to shifts in the market and customers' demands, achieving the flexibility and agility required for business growth.

WDM provides ecommerce and B2B clients with the logistics expertise and assistance they need to maximize their return on investment (ROI) and achieve a competitive advantage.

Mission, Vision, and Values. WDM's mission is to help clients achieve success. The organization's vision statement centers on ecommerce business growth. WDM targets companies with proven ecommerce sales to provide them with the strategic 3PL brand positioning required for growth. The organization has six core values that guide employees' behavior and performance. Leaders require new and existing employees to align with the core values, embracing, living, and maintaining them for strategic goal achievement. WDM's leaders achieve mission, vision, and values alignment through daily communication and teamwork reinforcement strategies. The organization's core competency is its ability to leverage the fulfillment experience and access new avenues of opportunity for clients, as stated in its mission. Figure 1 depicts WDM's core values.

Figure 1

WDM's Core Values



Workforce Profile. WDM's workforce includes the executive team, senior managers, mid-level managers, supervisors, team leads, hourly employees, and temporary employees. The organization maintains a maximum of 500 full-time, part-time, and short-term workers. WDM uses short-term employees for special projects and to satisfy peak operation requirements. The warehouse is operational seven days a week with two shifts to support normal business volume. Most WDM employees work either day or night shift schedules, but they must be flexible during holiday seasons and promotional periods. WDM employees work together throughout sales, marketing, operations, human resources (HR), information technology (IT), and accounting departments. Salaried, hourly, and temporary employee formal education requirements vary dependent on organization positions and roles. A bachelor's degree or equivalent experience satisfies some WDM position requirements, while a high school degree, special skills, or certifications satisfy others. WDM fills its positions with employees that support its organizational structure, optimizing its ability to meet order fulfillment demands and facilitate mission achievement. WDM's warehouse employees must be physically fit and capable of frequent walking or standing for prolonged periods. Employees working in specific areas of the warehouses must also be able to lift 50 pounds. WDM's employees require coordination and mental acuity to perform daily receiving, picking, packing, inventory, and shipping warehouse activities.

Full-time salaried and hourly employees receive PTO, sick time, dental, and health benefits. Short-term employees are ineligible for the company's benefits package. WDM uses its employee engagement committee to promote employee bonding

throughout the company. The committee comprises members from the executive team, management teams, and participants throughout the warehouse. The committee responds to employees' concerns and requests for social activities and events. WDM's employees do not have union representation; thus, the engagement committee is beneficial for encouraging employee job satisfaction. Table 3 lists WDM's employee positions and responsibilities.

Table 3

WDM's Employee Job Duties

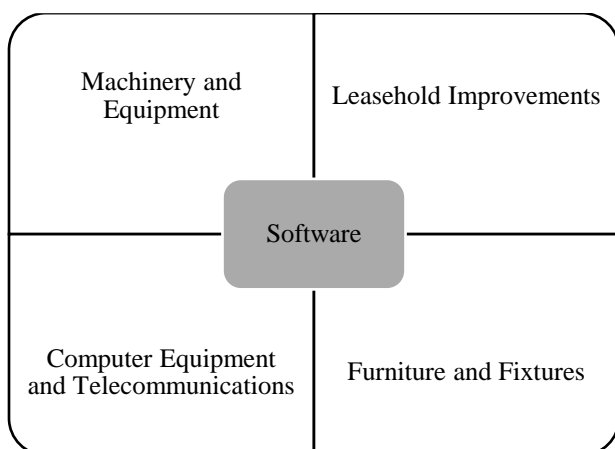
Positions	Responsibilities
Executive team	Overall business oversight of operations, sales, marketing, accounting, IT, HR, and commercial operations
Senior managers	Inventory, operations, quality assurance, sales, marketing, accounting, IT, HR, client management, training, facility maintenance, projects, and analysis
Mid-level managers	Data analysis, operations, client success, inventory control, projects, quality assurance, training, B2B, B2C, inbound, shipping, command center, and utility
Supervisors	Receiving, returns, routing, packing, picking, manifesting, replenishment, inventory control, production, inbound, shipping, operations, command center operations, analysis, and utility
Team leads	Receiving, returns, routing, picking, packing, inventory, programs, shipping, commercial operations, maintenance, production, and manifesting
Hourly/temporary	Receiving, returns, routing, picking, packing, inventory control, replenishment, programs, shipping, data analysis, utility, maintenance, production, and manifesting, command center, unloading, quality assurance

Assets. WDM's warehouses have 12,800,000 cubic square feet of storage space for offices, bulk inventory, and order fulfillment operations. There are shelves, bins,

racks, cabinets, workbenches, ladders, packing equipment, and scales for operational use. WDM's employees perform receiving, processing, inventory, and shipping tasks using mobile computer workstations, servers, switches, routers, mobile scanners, and printers. The organization has a variety of machinery and equipment for warehouse operations, such as forklifts, pallet jacks, service carts, hand trucks, reach trucks, conveyors, and dock equipment. The organization's software asset list includes warehouse management, warehouse optimization, production management, workforce management, and admin management software. At the end of 2021, WDM's total net asset value equaled \$7,127,328. Figure 2 depicts a list of WDM's primary assets.

Figure 2

Asset List



Regulatory Requirements. WDM is a 3PL order fulfillment center operating in the northeastern portion of the United States. As such, the organization follows Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidelines for health and safety in its warehouses. Leaders display posters throughout the facility reminding employees to

think about safety when using machinery and equipment and performing daily tasks. Company policies and procedures also reinforce warehouse safety. Safety meetings occur monthly, and leaders retain the status of all incidents and accidents for reporting, recording, analysis, and follow-up actions. Although WDM does not provide order fulfillment for products regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), organization leaders ensure WDM complies with FDA guidelines when regulated brand products are stored in and shipped from the facilities.

WDM leaders also follow internal guidelines for client and customer data protection. The organization uses Protected Critical Infrastructure Information (PCII) and Systems and Organizations Controls 2 (SOC 2) to maintain compliance. Leaders use secure and encrypted networks for data storage, communication, and analysis. Independent auditors conduct annual audits to reveal any issues with data protection processes, procedures, or controls, which helps leaders maintain awareness of challenges for preventive action. WDM has no additional accreditations, certifications, or registration requirements.

Organizational Relationships

Organizational Structure. WDM has a board of directors composed of the CEO, the company's cofounder, and a group of investors with various ownership percentages. The board is not involved in the CEO's decision-making process or the day-to-day company business. However, the CEO meets quarterly with the board to keep them informed and discuss large projects and financial strategies. The CEO is primarily responsible for leading WDM and providing governance and oversight for the business.

The executive and senior leadership teams comprise the leadership system that supports company operations.

WDM's executive team includes the CEO, CCO, and SVP of operations. The CEO oversees all areas of the business, developing and implementing strategies that guide and direct the organization toward objective achievement. WDM's CCO is responsible for sales, marketing, and operations, ensuring that WDM fulfills its commitment to its clients. The SVP of operations maintains oversight of inventory and fulfillment center operations, promoting a positive operational environment to increase service quality. As executive team members, the CCO and SVP of operations report directly to the CEO, accounting for various areas of operations, sales, marketing, HR, accounting, and IT.

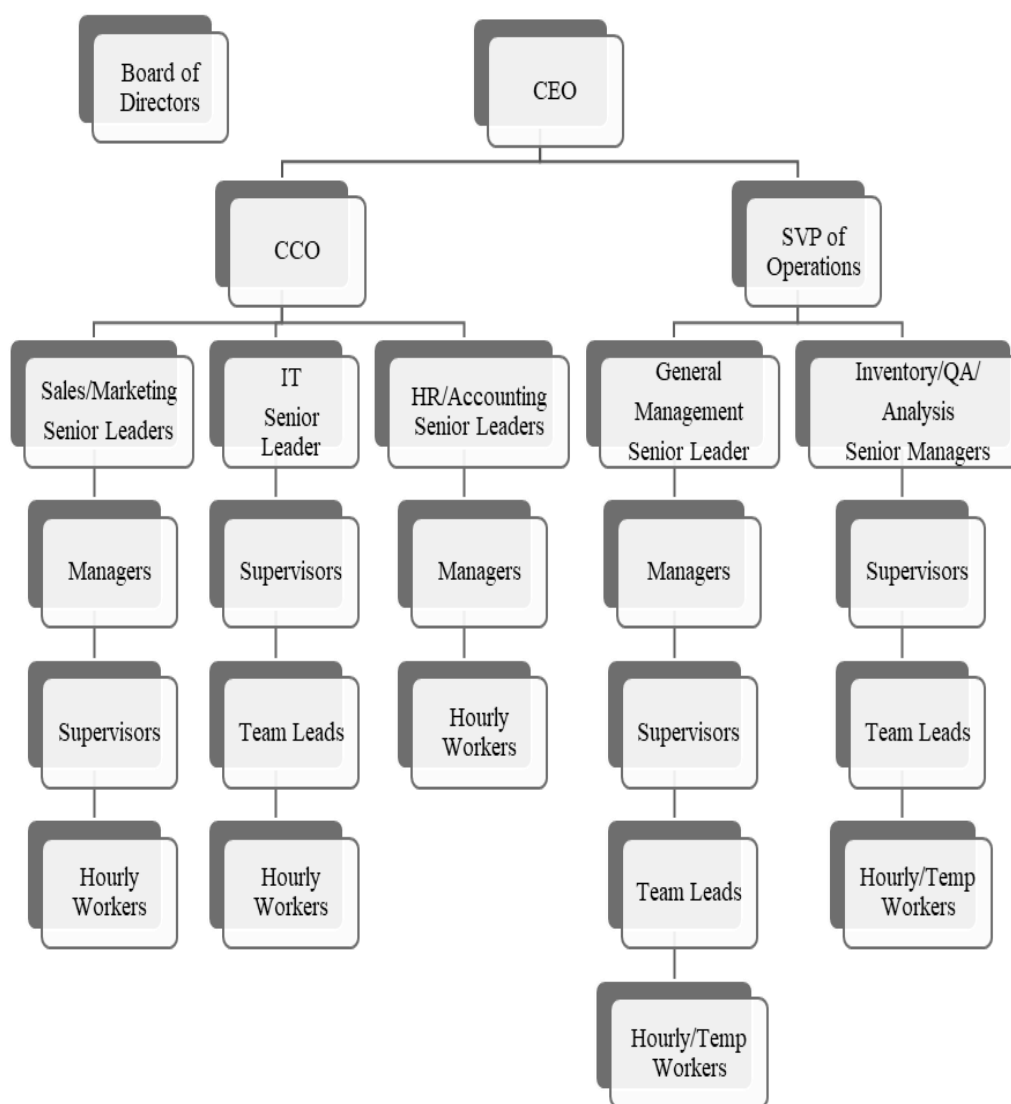
The senior leadership team includes the company's executive team members, executive vice president (EVP), vice president (VP) of IT, and general manager (GM). The EVP ensures an efficient and effective infrastructure to meet client needs. WDM's VP of IT oversees warehouse management systems, transportation systems, and other technology platform integrations to maintain the company's ability to achieve its vision. The GM is responsible for every moving part of building operations, including the fulfillment center. Senior leadership team members report to the CCO and SVP of operations.

WDM's HR, IT, accounting, marketing, sales, and program management departments contribute to the organization's ability to achieve its goals. Senior managers, mid-level managers, supervisors, and team leads supervise lower-level team members

that perform daily warehouse tasks. Hourly and short-term employees assume various responsibilities that support the warehouse distribution center's operations. Each employee promotes the organization's mission to help client businesses achieve growth and success. Figure 3 illustrates WDM's organizational structure.

Figure 3

WDM's Organizational Structure



Customers and Stakeholders. WDM's key customers are client top brands with proven ecommerce, B2B, and B2C concepts. The organization builds collaborative partnerships with clients seeking to optimize logistics and fulfillment services for their ecommerce brands. WDM's project management team establishes Service Level Agreements (SLA) with new clients and onboards them, overseeing and monitoring related strategic and operational activity. The company also contracts with multiple vendors and partners to provide efficient services to clients and their customers. WDM maintains approximately 25 clients at three distinct levels, with its most profitable ones producing between \$500K and \$3M in cash flow. The company continues to target new clients, developing annual strategies to meet stakeholder expectations. Table 4 reflects the list of WDM's stakeholders and their support expectations.

Table 4*Stakeholder Expectations and Levels of Support*

Expectations	Stakeholders				
	Clients	Client's customers	Board of directors	Workforce	Suppliers
Shared/dedicated warehouse space	*		*	*	
Retain flexibility for peak operations	*	*	*	*	*
Effective inventory management	*		*	*	
Maintain order accuracy	*	*	*	*	
Provide low-cost shipping solutions	*	*	*		
Ensure timely product delivery	*	*	*		
Provide high-quality product packaging	*	*			
Maintain communication	*	*	*	*	*
Adequate technology for visibility and transparency	*	*	*	*	
Growth	*		*	*	*
ROI	*		*	*	*

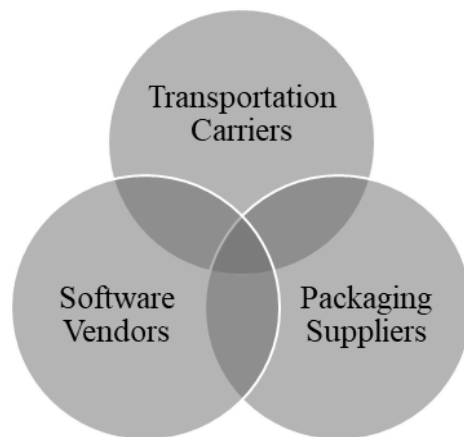
Suppliers and Partners. WDM's suppliers and partners significantly influence the organization's ability to meet goals and objectives. Vendors provide WDM with products needed for custom packaging and technology systems for inventory visibility and order accuracy. WDM partners with transportation suppliers to provide its clients with low-cost transportation services that meet their shipping needs. Logistics companies often adapt their services to ensure they meet supplier expectations for transportation efficiency (Brüel Grönberg & Hulthén, 2022). WDM modifies its product shipments to meet sustainability packaging and transportation, ensuring boxes and pallets conform

with transportation suppliers' demands for shipping efficiency. Integrated networks facilitate communication for visibility and management of the products and services, optimizing WDM's relationships with suppliers and partners for client satisfaction.

Figure 4 depicts WDM's key vendor and supplier partnerships.

Figure 4

WDM's Key Vendor and Supplier Relationships



Organizational Situation

This study's general business problem is that decreased employee retention increases organizational costs and negatively influences organizational efficiency and productivity. WDM's leaders seek to retain employees and maintain inventory accuracy for optimal stability. The company's main objective is to help its clients achieve ecommerce growth. However, the leaders recognize that reaching their objective is impossible without employees to facilitate clients' inventory and ecommerce needs. WDM's leaders strive to maintain awareness of the competitive environment it operates in and the challenges and advantages of the industry, integrating innovative approaches to improve performance.

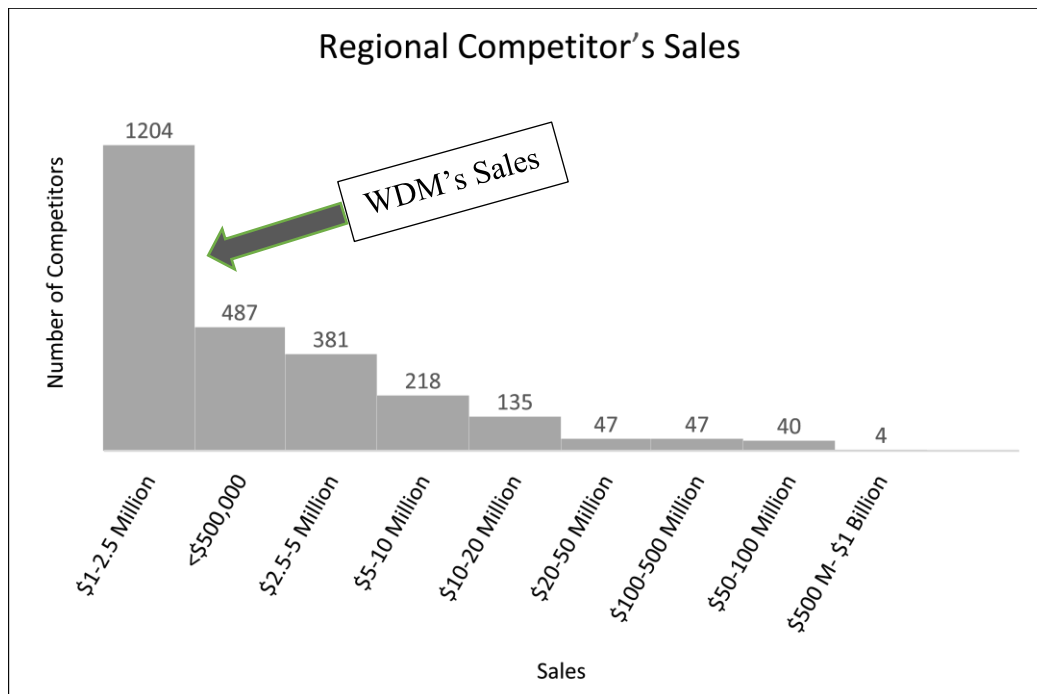
Competitive Environment

Competitive Position. WDM is a 3PL fulfillment provider for ecommerce, B2B, and B2C client brands. The company operates in the same competitive environment as larger fulfillment providers. Using the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) as a reference, data suggests that WDM indirectly competes with 20,352 companies throughout the United States (Data Axle, 2022a; U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). WDM also indirectly competes with 3,352 competitors in the northeast region of the United States, with 25 companies located in the same city (Data Axle, 2022b; U.S. Census Bureau, 2022).

WDM's competitors have some similarities in the services they provide. However, the customized solutions offered to clients vary. Some competitors offer storage, packing, and shipping for home goods, baby products, or electronics, while others focus on retail or health product fulfillment. WDM stores, packs, and ships hair, skin, clothing, and other products. As the number of competitors continues to grow (Barker et al., 2021; Jap et al., 2022), flexible and customized solutions are critical to 3PLs' ability to remain competitive (Barker et al., 2021). WDM's focus on creating a unique brand experience for its clients helps set it apart from others, contributing to the company's ability to maintain its competitive advantage. Figure 5 depicts a list of WDM's regional competitors and their sales.

Figure 5

WDM Competitors in the Northeast Region of the United States



Note. Created from publicly available data. WDM's sales are represented in comparison to competitors in the Northeast Region of the United States (Data Axle, 2022a; U.S. Census Bureau, 2022).

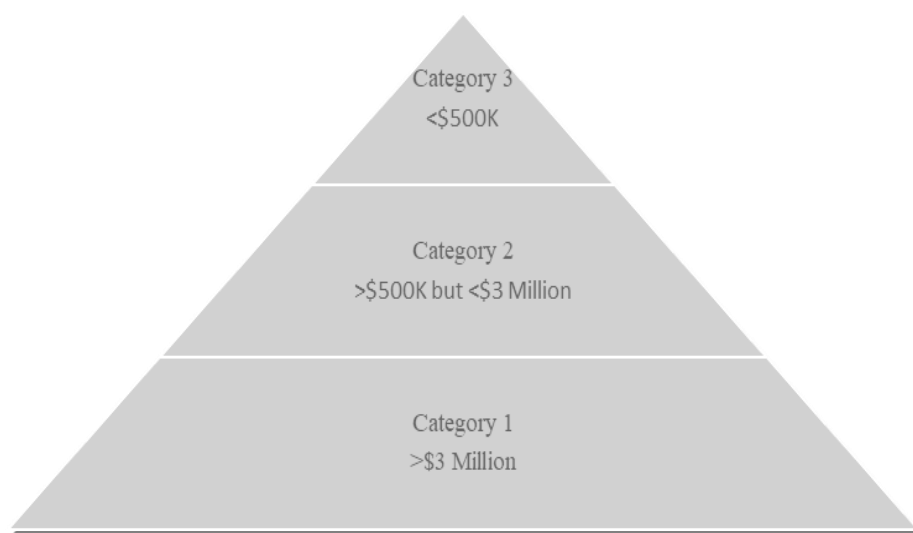
Competitiveness Changes. WDM's produces an average of 43% year-over-year client growth, but challenges exist when clients leave the company. When clients reach their maximum potential and outgrow the facility, they move on to larger 3PL fulfillment providers. Likewise, leaders request that clients that underperform find smaller 3PL fulfillment providers to meet their needs. WDM's client services program managers maintain communication with clients to ensure that the partnership is effective. This communication allows organization leaders to be aware of progress or challenges that

may result in a client change and strategize with the sales team on the pipeline of potential clients to fill voids. WDM's most profitable clients produce significant levels of return for the organization, and leaders' ability to pursue a targeted market of emerging ecommerce brands is essential to sustain the organization's competitive advantage.

Figure 6 lists the categories of clients and their profit ranges.

Figure 6

WDM's Client Categories by General Revenue

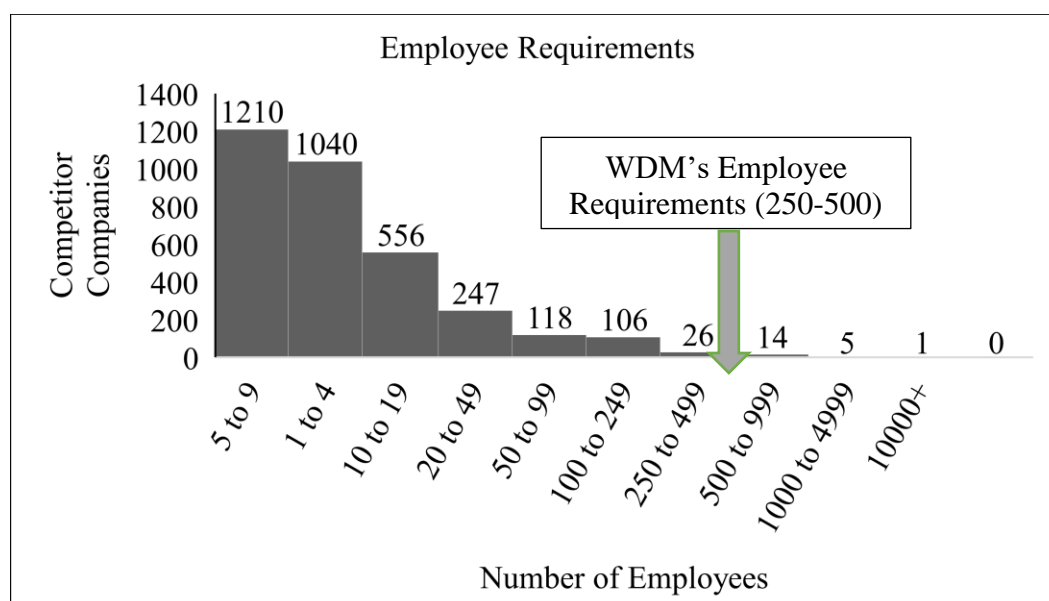


WDM competes directly with competitors for laborers in its city and surrounding areas. Prior to peak seasons, fulfillment companies begin advertising for new hires. Larger companies around WDM advertise wages that are \$3 to \$5 higher than the state's minimum wage requirements, which causes WDM to respond with similar strategies to seek and retain labor. Although peer 3PLs in direct competition require this level of responsiveness to mitigate threats (Barker et al., 2021), such reactive measures can result in budget increases that negatively affect profit and give competitors advantages in the market. WDM's labor costs increased by approximately \$1 million when they responded

to the competitive labor challenges. Leaders were able to offset the expenses in other areas. However, given the competitive situation that remains in the region, the company must maintain an effective employee retention strategy. Figure 7 depicts the number of regional competitors and their labor requirements.

Figure 7

Regional Competitors Employee Requirements



Note. Created from publicly available data. WDM's employee requirements are represented in comparison to competitors in the Northeast Region of the United States (Data Axle, 2022a; U.S. Census Bureau, 2022).

Another indicator of the potential challenges WDM leaders might face is the inflation of goods and services related to employees buying power. The prices of goods and services, like food, energy, housing, clothing, vehicles, and gas have continuously increased (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023). The Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the northeast region of the United States rose 6.1% from December 2021 to December

2022 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023). As of September 2022, regional hourly compensation costs are about \$44 per hour (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022), but that is increasing with the 2023 minimum wage adjustments (see U.S. Department of Labor, 2022). WDM leaders must stay abreast of the changes and create opportunities for innovative ways to market to new clients, retain employees, and sustain the competitive advantage.

Comparative Data. WDM's leaders do not track similar organizations' metrics, nor does the company use industry-specific data to compare itself against the competition. WDM's leaders consider their organization unique because its offerings are tailored to its clients and their needs, eliminating the need for industry comparisons. However, WDM does track the metrics important to its clients and the organization's ability to operate efficiently and effectively. WDM's leaders monitor are dock-to-stock days, order time to fill, inventory accuracy, and aged inventory to ensure there is stock on hand to fulfill ecommerce, B2B, and B2C orders.

WDM leaders also monitor market changes and track comparative data for wage rates and new warehouse management processes used in other 3PL companies. WDM's leaders discuss the changes to determine if they need to adjust their operational processes. If so, they develop implementation strategies that facilitate the organization's ability to maintain proficiency and efficiency for goal achievement.

Strategic Context

The primary strategic challenge that WDM faces is inventory accuracy. The company has an inventory accuracy rate of over 80% but desires to increase that to 99%

at the bin level. Inventory accuracy is critical as it affects order picking, packing, and shipping times. When inventory is accurate, orders are on time, and clients are satisfied. When the opposite happens, clients are dissatisfied because WDM fails to fulfill its obligations as contracted. Companies need strategies to achieve sustainability (Baştuğ & Yercan, 2021). WDM's leaders focus on strategy development to address these challenges and mitigate negative effects.

One way that WDM overcomes its challenges and attains a competitive advantage is through experience. The company has existed for over 22 years, and the CEO is one of its founders. The multichannel experience and knowledge within the organization facilitate its continued success. WDM also maintains an advantage with its ability to ensure delivery of client customer orders in 2 days or less. WDM's executive team leaders participate in daily, weekly, monthly, and quarterly meetings to address concerns, obstacles, solutions, projects, performance, strategy, priorities, status, and to-dos. Executive leaders also conduct meetings with their senior team leads, and team leads conduct meetings with their team members. Senior leaders constantly contact clients, suppliers, and partners to facilitate service efficiency and problem mitigation. The structure promotes the transfer of information throughout the organization, guiding operations toward positive fulfillment solutions for clients and their customers. Table 5 lists WDM's strategic challenges and advantages.

Table 5*Strategic Conditions for WDM's Focus Areas*

Focus area	Strategic challenges	Strategic advantages
Clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client changes • Promotion pricing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22 years of experience • Multichannel fulfillment experience • Customized solutions for clients
Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing labor costs • Leadership changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous learning and development culture • Engaged employees
Inventory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory accuracy • Inventory replenishment • Aged inventory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agility and flexibility for peak season changes • Visibility to improve planning • Fast fulfillment
Shipping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Price changes • Delays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shipping in 1-2 days • Shipping millions of orders annually • Collaborative partners

Performance Improvement System

WDM's leaders use various methods to assess performance but have no formal performance improvement system. In 2016, WDM's leadership conducted six sigma training and initiated lean processes for inventory replenishment, work orders, and B2B shipping. In 2017, the company implemented three six sigma teams to facilitate efficient onboarding of new clients and their brand products. The six sigma teams and processes flourished as the company worked to develop a structured program. However, everything stopped when the creator of the company's six sigma program left the organization. WDM leaders responded by restructuring operational leadership positions, including the responsibility for continuous improvement through lean methodologies.

WDM leaders assess performance in monthly meetings about labor, forecasting, shipping, receiving, inventory, and other operational areas. They also have regular meetings with employees to discuss ideas for improvement. The company's teams work together to streamline processes, reducing inefficiencies and quality issues. WDM accomplishes this through different programs that measure employees' performance against Key Performance Indicators (KPI) in their work areas. For recognition and incentives, employees track their performance numbers in picking, packing, or other operational areas. The programs promote employee engagement and dedication, increasing inventory accuracy and decreasing dock-to-stock, order time to fill, and aged inventory days.

Leadership Triad: Leadership, Strategy, and Customers

The Baldrige Excellence Framework's Leadership Triad concerns the relationship between leadership, strategy, and customers. A leadership focus on strategy and customers links organizational performance excellence and exceptional results (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). Leaders set their company's vision and determine the strategies required to meet client expectations (Dyer et al., 2022). Thus, leaders influence strategic objective achievement and the development of sustainable strategies that positively affect customers.

Leadership

Senior Leadership

The CEO leads WDM and is part founder of the organization. The company's senior leadership team comprises the CEO, CCO, EVP, VP of IT, SVP of operations, and

GM. Leaderships knowledge and experience cover multiple business areas, such as operations, sales, accounting, marketing, IT, strategy, finance, warehouse management, 3PLs, infrastructure development, and more. WDM's senior leaders lead the organization by providing vision, values, and goals for alignment. They communicate this throughout the organization and encourage employees' input for shared value creation. WDM's leaders lead by example and model the company's core values to facilitate the alignment needed to achieve organization objectives and fulfill client needs.

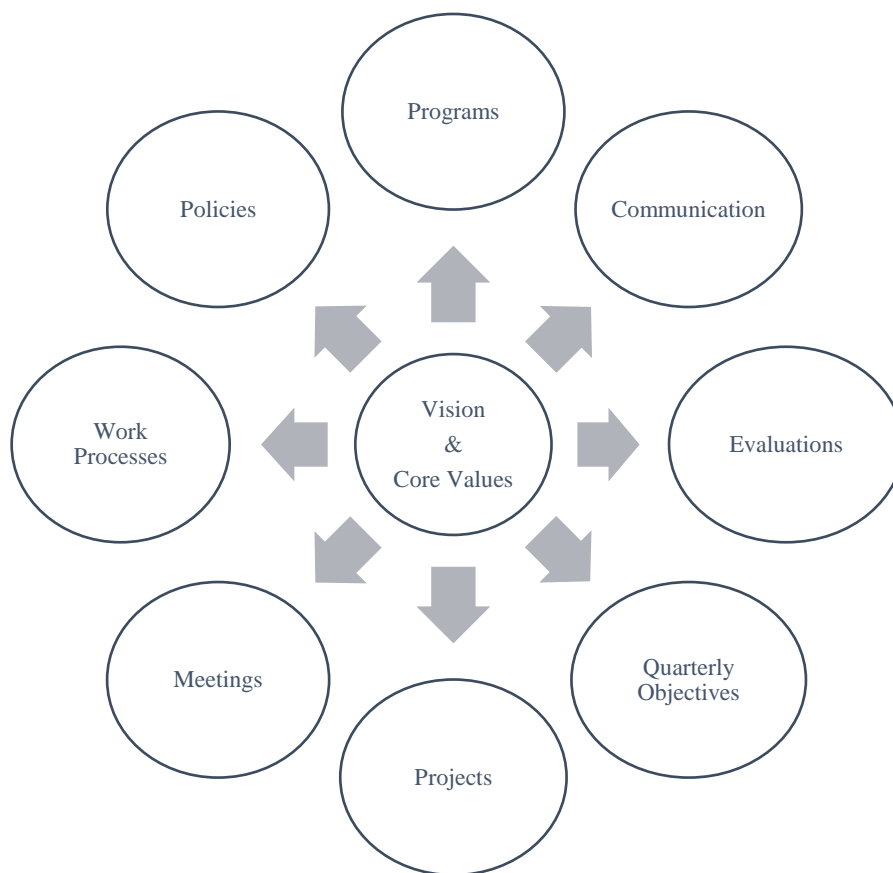
Vision and Values. WDM's founders thought of how they might increase a manufacturer's profit potential and deliver products to customers more efficiently. They developed a marketing plan and established a distribution center that partnered with clients, providing them with the support and services needed for maintaining product inventory and fulfilling orders. The founders had a vision for themselves as 3PL providers and knew that they wanted to focus on building client services that promoted success and growth. Thus, WDM's founders established the organization's primary vision and values.

As the organization grew and the client base increased, the CEO updated the vision and mission statements, integrating them to reflect their focus on helping client ecommerce businesses succeed. WDM's CEO also refined the organization's values by collaborating with the executive staff to establish six core values, as shown above in Figure 1. Prospective employees answer interview questions based on the core values to determine if their principles align with the organization. Leaders require WDM employees to uphold and demonstrate the core values when working with peers, leaders,

suppliers, partners, clients, and clients' customers. Leadership at every level reinforces the core values and communicates the vision for implementation on the job. Senior leaders develop relationships with suppliers, partners, and clients to promote communication and alignment for mutual benefit (see Coe, 2021). WDM's leaders ensure the company's vision and values are applied to create opportunities that enhance clients' brands and positively affect client customers. Such actions demonstrate leaders' dedication to the clients and organization stakeholders, facilitating objective achievement. Figure 8 depicts WDM's system for vision and value deployment.

Figure 8

System for Vision and Value Deployment



Legal and Ethical Behavior. Many of WDM's senior leaders are parents and prefer to teach their employees by example like a parent would when modeling behaviors for a child. WDM's core values are grounded in integrity, and the senior leaders set the example for what they want to see throughout the organization. As such, the senior leaders model the behaviors and work ethic they want employees to follow, avoiding destructive behaviors that employees could emulate.

WDM's HR department guides leadership on legal and ethical matters, ensuring they follow established policies. The employee handbook includes principles for employees to avoid abuse and misuse of client and company information. Employees are to avoid conflicts of interest between themselves and the company to preserve the company's integrity and reputation. The gift policy governs receiving gifts such as products, food, and discounts to keep employees morally and ethically aligned. Additional policies and procedures ensure employees act ethically in the workplace and when dealing with clients, client products, collaborative partners, coworkers, and customers. Senior leaders encourage employees to ask questions of their supervisors if they need clarification on any legal or ethical policies. Supervisors are to consult with HR if they need clarification, and anything HR is unclear on is discussed with the CEO. Employees that disregard WDM's standards for legal and ethical conduct are subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

Communication. WDM's senior leaders communicate with employees using various methods. The executive team has weekly meetings explicitly focused on achieving productivity and efficiency in performance goals, quarterly objectives, client

management, and employee retention. The senior leadership team meets daily to discuss immediate business concerns and obstacles. They also have quarterly planning meetings to review the prior quarter's objectives and set new ones for the next quarter. When their meetings are over, the senior leaders convene with their team leads to create tasks and subtasks aligning with the quarterly objectives. Team leads follow the same procedure with their supervisors and managers, creating subsequent tasks and subtasks for each subordinate. The process promotes consistent communication throughout the organization, ensuring employees know their responsibilities and fully engage in their productivity numbers. Table 6 lists WDM's communication methods, frequency, and direction for stakeholders.

Table 6*WDM's Communication Chart*

Communication method	Frequency	Direction
Employees		
Meetings (virtual & in-person)	Daily, weekly, monthly, & quarterly	2-way
Town halls	Quarterly	2-way
Feedback sessions	Monthly	2-way
Committees	Monthly	2-way
Emails	Ongoing	2-way
Newsletters	Monthly	1-way: top down
App messaging	Ongoing	2-way
Lunches	Every six weeks	2-way
Performance evaluations	Annually	2-way
Social media	Ongoing	2-way
Suppliers		
Meetings	Ongoing	2-way
Emails	Ongoing	2-way
Phone calls	Ongoing	2-way
Social media	Ongoing	2-way
Blogs	Ongoing	1-way
Market research	Annual	1-way
Partners		
Meetings	Monthly & quarterly	2-way
Emails	Ongoing	2-way
Phone calls	Ongoing	2-way
Social media	Ongoing	2-way
Blogs	Ongoing	1-way
Events/summits	Ongoing	2-way
Market research	Annual	1-way
Clients		
Meetings	Daily, weekly, monthly & quarterly	2-way
Emails	Ongoing	2-way
Phone calls	Ongoing	2-way
Social media	Ongoing	2-way
Blogs	Ongoing	1-way
Events/summits	Ongoing	2-way
Market research	Annual	1-way

WDM's CEO has an open-door policy and maintains open lines of communication with employees, encouraging them to send messages via emails, apps, or office platforms. Leaders have monthly town hall meetings where employees receive

information, have open discussions with leadership, and provide feedback. In addition, the executive leadership team shares in the publishing and distributing of a monthly newsletter, highlighting employees, fun facts, company initiatives, and company updates. The CEO also facilitates monthly feedback sessions with employees, providing them with lunch in exchange for their comments on the company and what can be improved.

WDM also communicates with its partners and clients, engaging them in their growth process. The executive staff conducts monthly and quarterly meetings with clients to discuss performance, forecasts, shipping challenges, and receiving issues. The team focuses the quarterly meetings on ensuring that company and client goals and objectives remain aligned. WDM's senior leadership also uses client surveys to guide changes needed to strengthen client relationships. In addition, senior leadership regularly communicates with logistical partners to maintain awareness of transportation challenges that affect client services. WDM aims to sustain partner relationships that provide clients with services and experiences that satisfy them.

Creating an Environment for Success. WDM's leadership recognizes the critical factors in its growth goals: (a) leadership, (b) employees, (c) clients, and (d) partners. WDM creates an environment for success from the inside out, starting with its leaders. The CEO promotes the organization's legal, ethical, and moral culture within the organization. Senior leaders display excellent work ethics and model behaviors that show dedication to the mission. These behaviors are ones that employees appreciate and emulate, helping them take pride in what they do for the clients.

WDM's business as a 3PL provider precludes its success without its warehouse employees. The company's employees perform inventories, receive, process, pick, and pack products for shipping. Thus, warehouse employees perform intricate tasks for warehousing and are vital to WDM's ability to achieve its goals. The CEO solicits employee feedback to improve warehouse processes, employee work motivation, and job satisfaction. Senior leaders also meet regularly to discuss methods for encouraging employee retention, increasing productivity, and increasing inventory accuracy. WDM's CEO primarily focuses on retaining the workforce to sustain efficient operations. The company implemented wage increases, bonuses for productivity achievements, perfect attendance raffles, and employee recognition programs.

The company also focuses on employee training and development in every department. Everyone from senior leaders down to lower-level employees is to train subordinate employees on their job. The objective is to push employees up to the next level, creating a consistent environment of growth and opportunity within the organization.

WDM's success is also contingent upon its relationship with its clients and its ability to achieve mission goals. For example, the clients trust WDM to manage their inventory, pack, and ship their products within the agreed-upon timeframe. When employees fail to conduct accurate inventories or miss shipping dates, clients voice their unhappiness to WDM's leadership. Thus, the CEO collaborates with the senior leaders to stabilize the company's processes to work seamlessly together for the client's and organization's dual benefit. The collaborative work between leaders ensures that 75% of

client product deliveries occur within three days and order accuracy remains at or above 99.9%. WDM also offers its clients premium packing that enhances the brand shipped.

WDM's partner relationships are significant to its ability to create an environment of success. The relationships WDM's leadership builds with transportation and freight companies help them get the services and rates they need to pass on to clients. The partner relationships afford clients access to new markets and brand growth opportunities that increase their competitive advantage, and success for the client means success for the company.

Creating a Focus on Action. WDM implements objectives to create a focus on action that achieves the mission of client success. The leaders use the core values to guide every process and action, setting them per long-term, mid-term, and near-term goals. The leaders track quarterly objectives and discuss them weekly to determine the status and the way forward. Every quarterly planning meeting includes leadership discussion on new or unresolved issues, focusing on developing solutions.

The senior leaders are also working on advanced solutions for measuring warehouse employees' performance. The CEO stated that employees are assigned clients and productivity numbers for which they are responsible, but their leaders cannot track area performance. Leaders acknowledge the need for consistent work practices that streamline processes and reduce inefficiencies.

Governance and Societal Contributions

Organizational Governance. WDM's senior leaders are responsible for their actions and those of their teams. As such, they maintain accountability for their area of

operations and the assigned strategic objectives. The CEO is the organization's primary governing force and is the final decision-maker for all company decisions. However, the leadership team meets regularly to discuss concerns and confer on strategy, employees, and client issues. The leaders facilitate transparency in company decisions to promote awareness and unity throughout the organization. The team accomplishes this through newsletters, emails, and social media posts.

WDM maintains financial accountability through its accounting department. The CEO also has a background in accounting, which provides an additional area of management oversight. The organization uses the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) as its accounting standard. The company maintains rolling forecasts to project future revenue and expenses, planning annual budgets that apply to market fluctuations. The CEO keeps the board of directors abreast of the company's finances and provides the members with regular statements showing the financial condition. WDM's leaders ensure the company maintains financial stability to protect stakeholder interests.

WDM conducts independent audits of its networks to protect data and reveal issues for preventive action. The company also performs internal inventory audits to ensure the accuracy and accountability of client products. Other company audits aid leaders in improving fulfillment operations. Quality control measures WDM maximizes the use of its quality control supervisors to monitor internal processes and procedures, documenting them for corrective and preventive actions. Quality control supervisors conduct training with employees to ensure compliance.

A formal succession plan is in place for all WDM's senior leaders. For example, the CEO trains the CCO and SVP of operations in the responsibilities of the primary leadership role. The CEO's goal is to build the executive leaders' capabilities and prepare them for partnership. Senior leaders apply the same objective: training and development for the next leadership level.

Performance Evaluation. All WDM senior leaders receive annual performance reviews. The CEO reviews the CCO and SVP of operation's performance, and the CCO and SVP of operations review the other senior leaders' performance. Compensation increases and bonuses are not guaranteed, but leaders determine them on a discretionary basis. Leaders' performance metrics relate to their assigned responsibilities and objectives, which include their teams' tasks. The CEO expects the senior leaders to align themselves with the company's core values and fully commit to helping the organization achieve its mission. Senior leaders receive scores on the attributes needed to enhance their focus on the vision and improve performance. Senior leaders receive scores on the attributes needed to enhance their focus on the vision and improve performance.

Legal and Ethical Behavior. WDM does not own the client brand products it manages. However, leaders maintain regular communication with the clients to inform them of any issues that may affect product movement. WDM maintains legal and regulatory compliance for warehouse operations and client product management. The company follows OSHA for health and safety in the warehouse and FDA requirements for food storage and shipment when necessary. The HR department informs senior leaders of regulatory updates and operational risks to employee health and safety.

Leaders track safety accidents and report them to the safety committee, which meets monthly to discuss incidents, follow-ups, and recommended changes. Leaders use the company's notification system to inform employees of emergencies or situations influencing normal operations. Quality control supervisors reinforce the organization's compliance with all legal and regulatory guidelines.

The HR department is primary responsible for monitoring ethical behaviors in the workplace and issuing policies to prevent employee illegal and unethical conduct. However, the HR department shares this responsibility with WDM's leaders and employees at every level. Each employee receives the employee handbook, company policies, and procedures governing conduct. Leaders encourage employees to act appropriately and report violations to HR, a supervisor, a manager, or the CEO. As such, each employee is responsible for reporting ethical violations. HR investigates ethical violation reports and takes corrective action where appropriate, resulting in employee disciplinary action or discharge.

WDM expects its clients, suppliers, and partners to conform to an ethical standard of conduct that maintains a relationship built on trust. WDM's CEO values the company's reputation in the industry and does not want to see it compromised. The company has a responsibility to its stakeholders to create value. Thus, the leaders expect the same level of honesty and transparency from clients, suppliers, and partners to facilitate shared goal achievement. Table 7 lists WDM's compliance measures and goals.

Table 7*Legal, Ethical, and Regulatory Compliance Goals*

Process	Measure	Frequency	Goal
Internal audits	# of findings	Ongoing	100% compliance
PCIII audits	# of findings	Annual	100% compliance
SOC 2 audits	# of findings	Annual	100% compliance
Inventory audits	# of findings	Quarterly	99% at bin level
Employee handbook	# issued	Ongoing	100% compliance
Standard operating procedures	# trained	Ongoing	100% compliance
Safety audits	# of accidents	Ongoing	Zero accidents
Process and procedure audits	# of findings	Ongoing	100% compliance

Societal Well-Being. WDM promotes societal well-being by focusing on employee wellness, environmental solutions, and emergency preparedness. WDM offers employees reimbursement for purchases supporting their wellness. The company's policy allows employees to receive up to \$100 annually for related purchases, such as gym fees, smoking cessation classes, and ergonomic items. The company also conducts virtual meetings and allows employees to work from home when feasible.

The company also routinely supports an organization that benefits fatally ill children and their families. Employees can support the company's designated organization or select another of their choosing. Employees may take up to 8 hours each year to participate in a charitable organization's volunteering effort. The day is a paid day

off to incentivize employee participation, as the CEO's primary goal is that employees volunteer with at least one organization.

WDM encourages its employees to serve and enrich communities in whatever way they like. Employees campaign in support of an initiative that most resonates with them. For example, employees raised \$12,000 to send medical supplies to a developing country during the COVID-19 pandemic. Employees also adopted families to provide them with needed support. WDM actively supports and strengthens its key communities by focusing on causes important to employees and clients and supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Community Support. WDM determines its key communities by the workforce it employs, and the client brands it supports. The company has a variety of employees from different ethnic backgrounds. Leaders recognize employees' differences and highlight employee ethnicities, celebrating them in the organization. WDM encourages employees to voice their concerns on social issues and work with leadership to develop solutions. WDM's leaders extend the same strategy to their clients, encouraging them to voice their concerns and collaborate on solutions. Clients submit feedback on social issues of concern, like environmental sustainability solutions. WDM responds to their concerns, adapting operations to sustainable methods that promote relationship well-being and growth. The company recycles waste, conserves resources, and uses sustainable packaging. WDM also operates entirely from solar power to minimize its energy costs. Back-up generators, communication plans, and emergency service contracts support emergency preparedness.

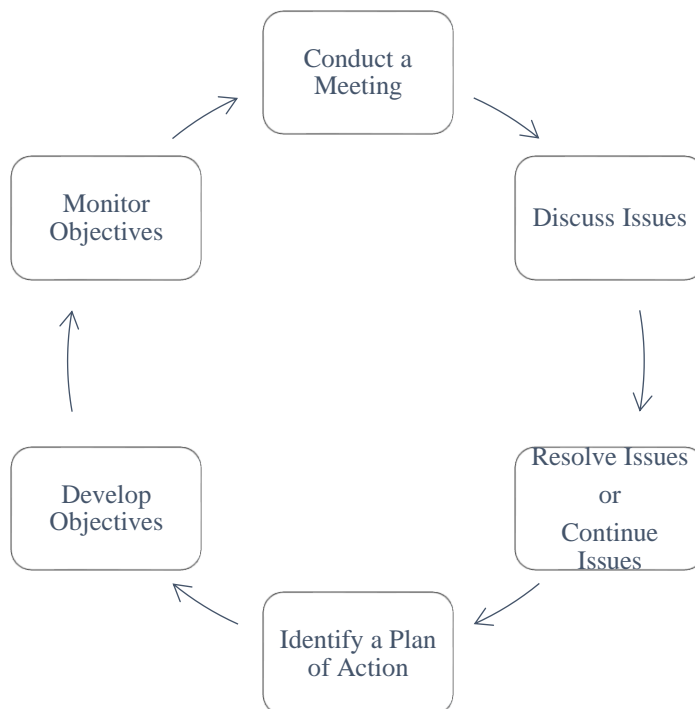
Strategy

Strategy Development

WDM develops strategies to achieve its long-term, mid-term, and short-term goals and objectives. A competitive strategy is required as 3PLs operate in a changing competitive market (Jap et al., 2022). WDM maintains an agile process to accommodate client needs. The strategic planning process is focused on specific targets to guide the organization forward.

Strategic Planning Process. WDM's strategic planning process begins with the executive leadership team discussing existing and new organizational strategies. The team conducts strategy-focused meetings to determine operational needs and potential clients for marketing and sales. Follow-up strategy meetings include senior leaders for further discussions concerning IT solutions, inventory positioning, workforce needs, marketing strategy, and sales strategy for client integration. The company aims to grow its client base, stabilize the workforce, and increase operational efficiency.

The company's goals are established and set as objectives for daily, weekly, monthly, and quarterly task tracking. Leaders base the objectives on WDM's vision, mission, and core values. Senior leaders provide the executive leaders with regular updates to determine if objectives are on or off track. Leaders decide every quarter which objectives remain unresolved and continue to the next quarter. WDM's strategic planning process is iterative to keep leaders focused on meeting the changing logistical needs of existing and potential clients. Figure 9 illustrates WDM leaders' strategic planning process for issues concerning clients, employees, suppliers, projects, and operations.

Figure 9*Leaders' Strategic Planning Process*

Innovation. WDM's CEO maintains awareness of the market and economic changes that affect logistics distribution. The executive team attends meetings and conferences to aid them in market awareness. Program managers monitor clients to identify trends between client brands and their markets of choice. Marketing and sales teams identify potential clients for growth and opportunities. Social media sites and surveys offer leadership information about client preferences. Leaders use all the information gathered to identify strategic opportunities to reach new clients, serve clients' short-term distribution needs, and offer promotional opportunities to optimize growth.

Strategy Considerations. When considering strategy planning, WDM's leaders analyze client performance, financial data, inventory data, surveys, forecasts, social

media posts, and company historical data. Client historical data reveals generated revenue and WDM's abilities and capabilities to provide contracted services. The financial data shows seasonal trends and provides WDM's leaders with an in-depth view of the company's financial position and areas where they can apply strategic focus. WDM's leaders use inventory data and forecasts to determine fulfillment issues and aged inventory that affects profitability. The leaders also use client surveys and social media postings to identify clients' concerns and needs that they might not have communicated in meetings. Company historical data allows leaders to identify past operational challenges, the plan of action, and outcomes. WDM's senior leaders analyze all data to help them determine the best strategic way forward. However, WDM's leaders remain aware of the external environment changes and blind spots that affect the planning process and their execution potential.

The COVID-19 pandemic was an external event that affected WDM's strategy considerations. The pandemic caused labor shortages, supply chain shortages, and changing client and customer needs. Shipping delays and increased transportation costs prompted clients to request additional inventory space, which presented further challenges for WDM. Client inventory was slow getting to the warehouse, and transportation issues slowed the fulfillment process. In addition, some employees would not work because they were afraid, while others could not work because there was no daycare or school. The situation challenged WDM's ability to perform as agreed, but leaders learned adaptive measures to maintain operations and satisfy their clients. Leaders' open lines of communication between themselves, employees, and clients

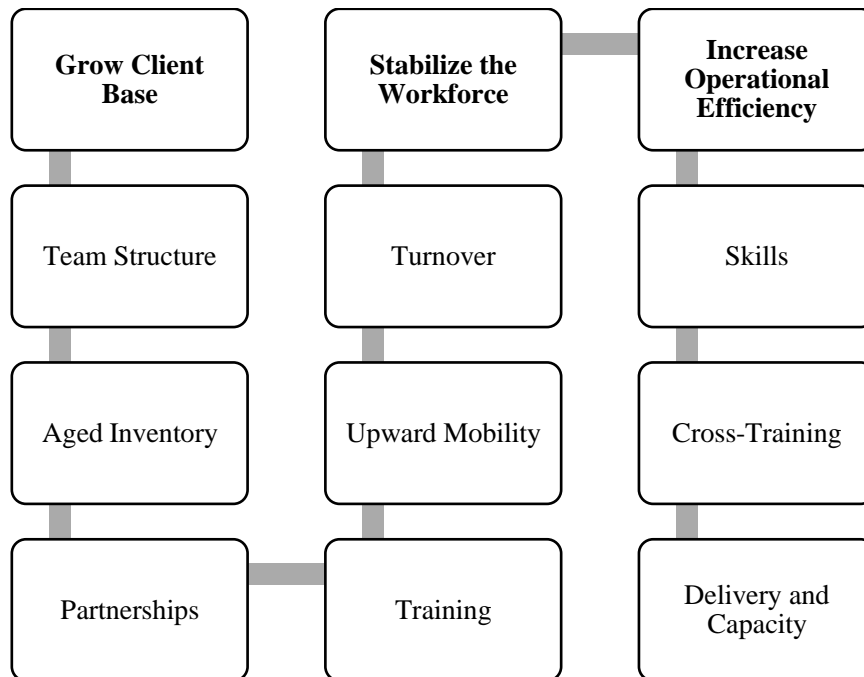
helped the company develop agile processes and procedures to mitigate risks to strategic success.

Work Systems and Core Competencies. WDM's employees conduct their key processes internally. Employees receive, pick, pack, and prepare client products for inventory and shipping. Employees also perform inventory management activities within the warehouse. The only portion that partners are responsible for is product shipping. WDM's relationship with its shipping partners allows them to ship large product quantities at discounted rates. The organization's work systems of IT solutions and software for business and warehouse management allow leaders to maintain an integrated support system for WDM, the client, partner, and customer. Clients access systems to monitor their brand products' inventory, packing, and shipping statuses. Clients' customers also monitor their shipments from the warehouse to the delivery destination. Internal and external process audits facilitate leaders' ability to protect data and mitigate product and information loss. Therefore, WDM's leaders maintain a strategic focus in this area to ensure future competency.

Strategic Objectives and Considerations. WDM's key strategic objectives are to grow its client base, stabilize the workforce, and increase operational efficiency. The primary goal is that the objectives support the organization's abilities and capabilities to help clients achieve success. Growing the client base increases WDM's revenue and the potential to realize a ROI. Stabilizing the workforce allows the company to achieve its productivity goals. Improving operational efficiency increases existing clients'

satisfaction and enhances WDM's appeal to new clients. Thus, WDM's leaders focus on clients wanting to grow their brands.

WDM's objectives directly address the strategic challenges listed above in Table 5. WDM's clients and workforce are vital to the organization. As clients graduate to larger 3PL fulfillment warehouses, new clients must fill their spots to prevent a loss of revenue. A failure to retain employees harms warehouse efficiency and damages company-client relationships. Likewise, decreased operational efficiency influences clients' satisfaction and the company's profit potential. Creating opportunities is critical to the organization maintaining its competitive advantage. It is equally beneficial for the employees, clients, partners, and stakeholders, as they realize increased profit from the company's success. WDM leverages its experience, agility, and culture of learning to turn challenges into opportunities and balance stakeholders' needs. Figure 10 identifies a list of WDM's key strategic objectives and action plans.

Figure 10*Objectives and Plan of Action***Strategy Implementation***Action Plans*

WDM's key action plans concern clients, employees, and company operations. Senior leaders develop action plans from the issues discussed in their strategic meetings. The issues are resolved or continued for an action plan, as shown above in Figure 9. The plan of action includes the resources and actions needed to reach resolutions. The objectives involve the primary goal with tasks and subtasks for action. Established action plans and objectives are part of an iterative process that leaders routinely review for progress updates or modifications.

Action Plan Implementation. Communication is the most critical part of WDM's process for implementing action plans (see Table 6). A 3PL's competitive advantage lies in its ability to show customers that they understand their needs and will do as promised (Ahmed et al., 2021). Communication and trust are vital elements in an employee-employer relationship (Soderberg & Romney, 2022). WDM sets and communicates the organization's direction for action plan implementation from the top down. What begins as a strategy development meeting ends in task assignments with individual employee responsibilities. Employees communicate with clients as needed and report task statuses weekly to their higher-level leaders, working as a team to develop solutions for achievement. Consistent evaluations of task progress and associated challenges ensure the organization can adapt to achieve and sustain its objectives.

Resource Allocation. WDM's leaders ensure adequate resources are on hand to achieve the tasks associated with growing the client base, stabilizing the workforce, and increasing operational efficiency. The CEO meets with the executive team, HR, and accounting leads to discuss the budget, obligations, and strategies. Leadership builds bonuses and salary increases into the budget to facilitate employee retention. Leadership also ensures that training and skill development opportunities are available for employees to increase operational efficiency. Quality control managers contribute by ensuring process efficiency, eliminating waste, and maximizing potential profit. Sales and marketing team leaders contribute by developing low-cost strategies to target potential clients for the organization. They attend nearby summits, conferences, and events to promote the organization and client opportunities. Although financial risk exists, WDM

mitigates it with forecasts, early identification of trends, budgetary planning sessions, alternative solutions, and leadership communication. The organization aims to identify cost-effective solutions that support the action plan and increase value.

Workforce Plans. WDM's action plans involve stabilizing the workforce. The organization's employees are strategically vital to their ability to achieve the other two objectives. As the economic situation continues to change and regional competition increases (see Data Axle, 2022b; see U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023), the potential exists for WDM to experience high employee turnover at every level. WDM's leaders must continue to engage employees and retain them for organizational sustainability.

To accomplish this, leaders assign employees to specific clients to encourage them to take individual pride in their client's progress. The employees have productivity numbers for which they can receive recognition and wage incentives. WDM also has programs that allows employees to progress in the organization and receive higher wages. WDM's leaders want to ensure company employees are well-trained, consistent, and dependable. Thus, leaders are developing training plans and identifying the essential key skills and qualifications needed for each position. Doing so allows leaders to train hourly employees and use them effectively throughout the company, increasing employees' experience while maintaining productivity.

Performance Measures. WDM's senior leaders identify a growing client base by monitoring annual changes to the client list. HR tracks employee changes and provides numbers to the executive leaders. Leaders measure operational efficiency using warehouse management metrics. However, no formal measurement system exists for

tracking action plan achievement and effectiveness. For this process, executive leaders track objectives and related tasks to identify progress and shortfalls.

Performance Projections. WDM's performance projections concern the company's ability to meet or exceed objectives. New clients, decreased employee turnover, and improved processes are key indicators of the company's performance. WDM does not monitor or compare its performance to other industry competitors but identifies market, client, and customer trends that may affect action plans. When leaders require new strategies to respond to changes, they discuss the issues and develop solutions to keep the company and its clients moving forward (Figure 9).

Customers

Customer Expectations

WDM's customers are the clients for which they provide inventory storage and ecommerce fulfillment services (Figure 6). WDM prides itself on creating memorable experiences for client customers that optimize the client brand, inspire client trust, and enhance customer engagement. The company focuses on customized 3PL logistics services to meet client needs and targeted growth. Leaders guide clients through every part of the integrative process, consistently seeking new ways to serve them more efficiently and effectively.

Current Customers. WDM's leaders listen closely to clients to ensure the organization meets their needs. The program management team develops a weekly, monthly, and quarterly communication plan for every client. When WDM onboards new clients, team members manage distribution software integration and warehouse

management implementation. The team develops project plans and monitors inventory, forecasts, and stock-keeping units (SKU) for clients. Team members work closely with the clients to accomplish their requests, building and solidifying relationships.

The marketing team also participates in the customer listening process. The team uses a marketing automation tool and management solutions to maintain awareness of client reactions to services and develop strategies for product sales. The first part of the listening process begins with extended client care, where WDM's leadership monitors all things concerning the client and business integrations, including social media platforms. After a couple of months, leadership disengages from watching the movement of each process. However, when clients prepare to graduate from the company, the leadership team watches closely again to manage the exit.

WDM establishes an SLA with its clients, which includes standards for client support. Senior leaders communicate with clients about aged inventory and shipping table changes. Regular contact allows WDM and its clients the opportunity to share feedback, discuss concerns, react to changes, and make necessary adjustments to keep the relationship strong. Table 8 illustrates a list of WDM's customer listening methods for current, former, and potential clients.

Table 8*Customer Listening Methods*

Method	Frequency	Direction	Current customer	Former customer	Potential customer
Meetings	Ongoing	2-way	*		*
Phone call	Ongoing	2-way	*		*
Email	Ongoing	2-way	*		*
Social media: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, & Youtube	Ongoing	2-way	*	*	*
Blogs	Ongoing	1-way	*	*	*
Surveys	Annual	2-way	*	*	*
Testimonials	Ongoing	1-way	*	*	
Studies	Annual	1-way	*		*
Market research	Annual	1-way	*		*
Events	Ongoing	2-way	*	*	
Summits	Ongoing	2-way		*	*
Sales & marketing platforms: Pardot and Charm	Ongoing	1-way	*		*

Potential Customers. WDM listens to former and potential clients in similar manners. The company conducts an annual ecommerce survey to capture information on trends and consumer preferences. The company also publishes articles, providing studies and market research for the industry. WDM's former clients provide testimonials of the company's dedication and support. Graduating clients enhance the company's image and status in the industry with their testimonials of WDM's service quality.

Customer Segmentation and Product Offerings. WDM determines its client groups and market by the services the company provides. WDM provides order fulfillment services to clients outgrowing or moving from other distribution warehouses. The company provides unique services for its clients that include providing them with customized product packaging that enhances customers' brand experience. The company

promotes real-time visibility of products, facilitating transparency and clients' trust. Leaders nourish existing client relationships while maintaining a consistent pipeline of potential clients in the pre-and post-contract signing stages to continue growing the business. WDM targets emerging ecommerce brands that have proven concepts, focusing on premium brands. Sales and marketing team members use software that tracks brand client bases, activities, sales, and other information for marketing strategies. Surveys and studies provide leaders with additional information concerning consumers' desires and market trends. All the tools guide leaders in decision-making, helping them identify the services clients need and continue offering customized solutions that create growth opportunities.

Customer Engagement

Relationship building supports 3PLs' ability to offer innovative services (Barker et al., 2021). WDM values its clients and establishes relationships with them built on trust. Company leaders continue to seek new ways to engage clients and achieve objectives.

Customer Relationships and Support. WDM uses the project management team to build and manage client relationships. The team maintains a strategic and tactical focus on every aspect of the client management process. Team members meet daily, weekly, monthly, and quarterly to share information and status updates, as identified in Table 6. Clients receive daily information on tasks, tracking, and shipping. The team's weekly communication forums include business and issue updates. Monthly and quarterly

communication forums involve discussions on strategies for new products, promotions, quality control, inventory, and throughput.

WDM strives to exceed clients' expectations and requirements for product fulfillment. Employees rush orders to businesses when asked, leaning into challenges. Leaders encourage customers to voice their concerns to the teams for open discussion and solution development. When clients complain, leaders respond within 1 hour with email confirmation of receipt. WDM leaders monitor complaint tickets from creation to resolution, using the data as a guide to identifying trends, issues, and causes. Leaders analyze the information and improve processes to mitigate relationship challenges.

Customer Satisfaction and Engagement. WDM's leaders use multiple methods for determining client satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and engagement. The senior leaders maintain open lines of communication with company clients to discover concerns that cause dissatisfaction. Leaders investigate the issue and resolve it for the client if there is a concern with product order to ship time. Consistent meetings allow leaders to get ahead of issues and mitigate them quickly.

Another integral part of WDM's ability to manage client satisfaction and maintain engagement is the program management team. The complaint management system further supports the company's ability to capture information regarding client's satisfaction. The SLA between WDM and the client is the primary determinant of success or failure, as it establishes contractual accountability and expectations. The contractual agreement between WDM and its clients determines accountability. When clients are displeased with company services, WDM takes the opportunity to train and refocus

employees and processes on the vision and values. Leaders' willingness to address issues and resolve them promotes continuous learning and the development of a culture that supports clients' success.

Results Triad: Workforce, Operations, and Results

The Baldrige Excellence Framework's Results Triad involves three of six categories for exploring organizational strengths and opportunities for improvement (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). The categories include information on an organization's workforce, operational processes, and performance data results. Each element of the Results Triad is interrelated with the elements of the Leadership Triad, revealing the overall connection between leadership and results. Thus, the following sections and subsections explore how WDM leaders assess employee capability and capacity, use operations to achieve success, and measure, analyze, and improve organizational knowledge.

Workforce

The first element of the Results Triad is an organization's workforce. The workforce subsection describes leaders' approach to employee engagement and empowerment. It comprises an assessment of how leaders strategically deploy their workforce to achieve organizational goals and maintain the agility required for a competitive advantage.

WDM maintains up to 500 employees to meet product demand increases. Leaders increase the company's workforce numbers before peak seasons, hiring short-term hourly workers to satisfy operational requirements. Leaders also enlarge the workforce for

special projects and client brand promotions. WDM's short-term employees work alongside experienced employees, performing warehouse inbound, outbound, and inventory operation tasks.

Workforce Environment

Capability and Capacity. WDM organization primarily assesses employee capability and capacity needs based on the organization's structure (Figure 3) and the order fulfillment services provided to clients (Table 2). Leaders also determine employee capability and capacity needs from their work experiences in the industry and consumers' buying trends. WDM leaders' knowledge of sales, strategy development, distribution management, logistics, warehouse operations, fulfillment operations, supply chain management, contracts, and infrastructure development facilitates their ability to determine operational workforce requirements. Leaders understand that the 3PL fulfillment center design requires employees with various abilities, competencies, and certifications to perform the operational duties outlined in Table 3. Senior leaders' education in business administration, marketing, management, accounting, and IT contributes to their abilities to lead departments effectively and achieve company objectives. However, WDM often hires employees with equivalent experience to fill open positions. Company leaders recognize that their warehouse positions are best suited to individuals having the skill and experience that promote success (see Brühl Grönberg & Hulthén, 2022; see Kong et al., 2020).

For example, warehouse clerks require only mental skills and physical competencies to operate warehouse systems and perform warehouse activities. Forklift

operators require a certification to operate machinery and the mental capacity to upload, transport, and unload products safely. Operations managers require experience directing various aspects of 3PL operations, managing employees and processes to expected goals. Leaders' ability to leverage employees' skills, abilities, and capabilities allows them to achieve stakeholders' expected outcomes (Keller et al., 2020). As such, WDM's employee capabilities align with their positions and meet the organization's operational needs.

New Members. WDM is an equal-opportunity employer and does not discriminate in its hiring or recruiting practices. The company welcomes people of all races, colors, religions, origins, ages, sexes, and statuses. WDM endeavors to accommodate people with disabilities and support employees' diversity. Leaders promote new job opportunities on social media and recruit through the company's website and other sites like ZipRecruiter, CareerBuilder, and Glassdoor. HR advertises the company's job postings, highlighting the benefits of working for a leading logistics organization. Company job descriptions reference competitive wages, health benefits, PTO, promotion, and career growth opportunities. Leaders interview applicants to assess their skills, capabilities, character, and motivation for core value alignment (Figure 1).

WDM hires people from all over the United States. Employees are from diverse cultures and backgrounds, representing WDM's surrounding community. Many of the organization's employees are Hispanic or Latino and bilingual. Workforce diversity promotes the organization's job recruitment efforts in the community and appeals to other

applicants. In addition, workforce diversity increases the organization's appeal to its clients, as the customers they serve are diverse.

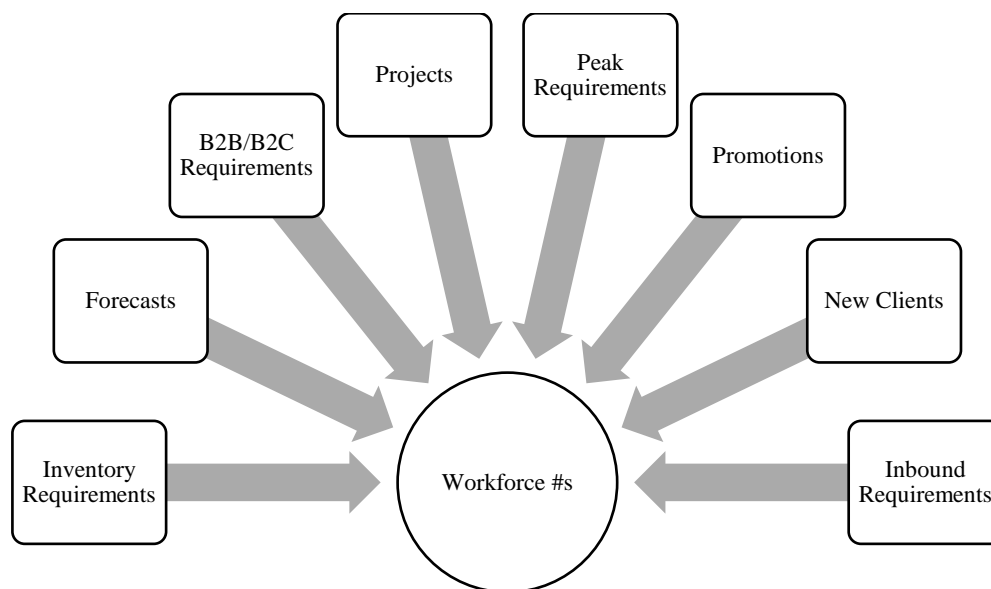
WDM recognizes new hires in its newsletter and welcomes them to the team. Leaders encourage employees to greet them and develop relationships to facilitate integration. WDM onboards its employees and trains them, affording an optimal period for adjusting to the culture. Leaders assign experienced employees to be mentors for new hires, teaching them about the company and how to be successful at their jobs. HR provides new hires with an employee handbook and informs them of all company policies and procedures. The employees watch training videos, learning more about WDM, its clients, and the operational processes that support the vision and mission. Leaders' focus on developing employees promotes positive productivity, system learning, and development.

Change Management. WDM recognizes that its employees are valuable to the company's ability to achieve its mission. As a result, WDM pays its employees competitive wages and provides them incentives for meeting work goals. Company leaders promote employee learning and advancement through programs that encourage engagement. Leaders communicate information and keep employees informed of impending operational changes. The CEO maintains an open-door policy for suggestions and feedback, encouraging employees' ideas for improvement. Leaders' actions enhance the unity of vision and purpose for value creation. WDM's measures for promoting communication, employee appreciation, and vision alignment prevent workforce reductions and ensure continuity of operations.

WDM's employee capability and capacity needs fluctuate based on client product inventory receiving, storage, packing, and shipping needs. Leaders review forecasts and assess the operational requirements to satisfy new, ongoing, and future demands. Leaders then consider multiple factors when determining the organization's workforce needs and discuss strategies for objective achievement, as shown in Figure 9. When the organizational structure or work systems require change, leaders communicate this throughout the organization and implement training to sustain agility and encourage objective achievement. Figure 11 shows WDM's factors for determining workforce needs.

Figure 11

Factors for Determining Workforce Needs



Accomplishment. WDM's leaders organize and manage the workforce to meet client storage, receiving, packing, and shipping needs. Senior leaders set and monitor the staff levels required for each department, working with HR to hire and fill staff voids.

The company uses managers, supervisors, and team leads to oversee various operational areas (Table 3). Leaders maintain open communication with employees about operational changes, requiring work flexibility for increased operational demand. Employees work their assigned shifts knowing the probability of short-term or long-term changes to their work schedules. When vacancies occur, HR members recruit for open positions. Leaders encourage current employees to apply for open positions for career advancement and professional goal achievement. When WDM promotes employees from within the organization, other employees are motivated to achieve their goals. WDM increases its ability to accomplish the work with trained and skilled employees that keep the company agile.

WDM consistently assesses the organization's operations to determine more efficient and effective methods for order fulfillment. Leaders evaluate work processes for opportunities for learning and improvement, providing employees with the training and instructions needed to satisfy requirements. Employees use warehouse software and tools to facilitate work accomplishment. Warehouse management software and integrated client platforms contribute to employees' ability to complete tasks promptly, optimizing productivity and efficiency. When WDM's employees increase their productivity and efficiency, the organization improves client' satisfaction because order fulfillment occurs quickly and accurately.

Workplace Environment. WDM promotes employee advancement in a barrier-free workplace and does not discriminate against any employee in its organization. The company handbook states the company's stance against employee mistreatment and

identifies WDM's plan for accommodating employees with disabilities. WDM's employee population primarily includes women who are parents of small children. Thus, the company provides accommodations for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, such as work schedule modifications, reassignments, increased breaks, and work task assistance.

The company also has policy letters and documents that address discrimination, harassment, equal opportunity, drug safety, workplace violence, threats, immoral or illegal conduct, wellness, and safety. WDM requires employees to read and comply with its policies or be subject to discipline up to and including discharge. WDM's leaders want their employees to be conscientious of practices that may cause harm and report violations as they occur.

WDM informs its employees of workplace health and safety measures. The company provides employees with health and wellness benefits that minimize stress and strain, such as \$100 annual reimbursements toward ergonomic products. Warehouse security cameras allow leaders to monitor health and safety in the workplace and ensure OSHA compliance. Leaders aim to decrease the likelihood of employee health incidents or injuries in the workplace through adequate mentorship and training.

Benefits and Policies. WDM provides employees with services, benefits, and policies that support their needs. WDM's employees accrue PTO for personal use, sickness, emergencies, or family activities. Employees also receive vacation time, retirement benefits, holiday pay, and insurance to supplement their wages. Annually, WDM gives employees an additional paid day off to participate in a charitable event. The company also offers compensation for employee wellness solutions, like gym visits,

smoking cessation classes, and other items. HR requires employees to submit their requests and receipts for processing and reimbursement. WDM's leaders believe that the benefits enhance employees work-life balance, further promoting positive work environments and employee productivity. Table 9 depicts WDM's benefits for employees.

Table 9

Employee Benefits

Benefits	Workforce			
	Salaried	Full-time	Part-time	Short-term
Health, dental, & life insurance	*	*		
PTO	*	*	*	*
Sick days	*			
Vacation	*	*		
Volunteer time off	*	*		
Retirement plan	*	*	*	
Health and wellness	*	*	*	
Disability insurance (short-term)	*	*	*	
Disability benefits (long-term)	*	*		
Bereavement leave	*	*		
Referral reward	*	*	*	*
Holiday pay	*	*		

Workforce Engagement

Engagement Drivers. WDM's senior leaders established various listening methods for determining the key drivers of employee engagement. The leaders recognize that employee engagement drivers vary among the company's workforce, as the employees are salaried, full-time, part-time, and short-term. The company uses surveys, engagement committees, town halls, and feedback sessions to identify the things that keep employees engaged. Leaders maintain open lines of communication to facilitate

employees' ideas and feedback. WDM uses the information gathered to implement training, career development, recognition, and appreciation programs that show employees their value in the company. Table 10 lists the key engagement drivers for WDM's employees.

Table 10

Key Engagement Drivers

Desires	Employees			
	Salaried	Full-time	Part-time	Short-term
Communication	*	*	*	*
Fair wages	*	*	*	*
Promotion	*	*	*	
Recognition	*	*	*	*
Rewards	*	*	*	*
Bonuses/incentives	*	*	*	*

WDM's leaders address employees' communication concerns by increasing information flow through emails, apps, and company bulletins. Leaders discuss wages with HR and accounting leads to ensure wages remain fair and competitive. The company uses three programs to allow employees to receive training for new positions, recognition and awards for their achievements, and bonuses for meeting productivity goals. The first program allows short-term employees to join WDM full-time and receive the associated benefits. The second program allows short-term employees to earn higher wages, recognition, and rewards based on their performance. The third program focuses on training and development for salaried, full-time, and part-time employees, providing opportunities for growth and advancement in the organization.

Engagement Assessment. WDM's senior leaders assess employee engagement regularly through surveys, productivity reports, and informal communication methods. Surveys provide leaders with employee feedback for review and change management decisions. Leaders use productivity reports to monitor and track employee performance and offer opportunities for improvement. Informal methods of communication enhance leaders' ability to assess employee engagement and respond quickly to rising concerns. However, employees' responses to the organization's engagement measures primarily indicate workforce satisfaction and engagement.

WDM's engagement assessment methods do not differ between employee groups. All employees communicate freely with organization leaders, providing ideas and feedback for discussion. Although employees' productivity objectives differ by department, team leaders determine the performance goals that align with their operational areas. Regular quality control checks help leaders identify additional areas for improvement.

Organizational Culture. WDM fosters a culture of open communication, work engagement, and high performance from the top of the organization's management. The CEO sets the example for the workforce and ensures that leadership follows in the same regard. The executive team works with HR to establish policies and procedures that promote positive organizational actions. Leaders reinforce the culture through vision and core value alignment, as shown in Figure 8, improving process efficiencies to achieve growth and success.

WDM benefits because of its employees and equips them through training, growth, and advancement opportunities. The company encourages employees' input, drawing them into the innovative process and rewarding them for meeting KPIs. Employees are vital to the company's value creation as they provide solutions to operational challenges. WDM employees take pride in their abilities to help clients achieve their desired success, celebrating shared objective achievement.

Performance Management. Performance management concerns an organization's system for monitoring and measuring workforce performance. Performance management systems that include performance targets, measurements, and rewards encourage employee productivity and retention (Upadhyay et al., 2020). WDM monitors and measures workforce KPIs to provide employees with recognition and rewards. Employees can receive bonuses, company t-shirts, or other acknowledgments when they reach specific performance achievement levels. Leaders recognize top performers monthly by increasing their wages and providing other rewards. The incentives show recognition for employees' achievements and enhance the pursuit of goals. WDM leaders' initiatives promote high performance and reinforce company objectives (Figure 10), to stabilize the workforce for efficiency and growth. Table 11 lists the performance measurement rewards WDM uses to maximize workforce performance.

Table 11*Performance Measurement Rewards*

Rewards	Frequency
Bonuses	Quarterly
Wage increases	Ongoing
Public ceremonies	Monthly
Company swag or merchandise	Monthly
Gift/gas cards	Monthly
Lunches	Monthly
Newsletter announcement	Monthly
Team recognition	Ongoing

Performance Development. WDM's leaders seek ways to enhance performance learning throughout the organization. Leaders conduct regular meetings to discuss the organization's strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities for improvement and develop team objectives for action (Figure 9). WDM's leaders and their teams each work on their assigned tasks, noting the follow-up meeting discussion and action results. Leaders track operational processes and procedure results, retrain employees when needed, and eliminate methods that fail to improve efficiency and effectiveness. The performance development process allows the organization and its clients to achieve objectives and sustain a competitive advantage.

Learning and Development Effectiveness. WDM's leaders regularly evaluate the organization's learning and development systems. Leaders consult with quality control leads to review and analyze of project benchmark compliance, audited process and procedure results, improvement processes, and training. Leaders discuss department performance results and set new organizational strategies to mitigate deficiencies. New strategies include the provision of new or amended guidance to employees for

improvements and objective achievement. The strategies also include employee training and coaching to improve productivity shortfalls. Organization managers, supervisors, team leads, and peers support and advise through mentoring, facilitating employee alignment with the mission, vision, and core values.

Career Development. WDM has a formal succession plan for critical positions within the organization. The CEO leads, trains, and mentors the CCO and VP of Operations for leadership succession. The objective is for the CCO and the VP of Operations to move up to the next higher position. Every department has a formal succession plan where employees train the person below them to assume their job, pushing them up to the next level. The process develops employees' skills, experience, and knowledge while promoting career development in each department.

WDM also provides an upward mobility path for many of its employees. The upward mobility path shows employees what career progression looks like from their function and level to an advanced position within the company. Employees learn about the organization, train, and develop themselves in the skills required to move from one position to another. The process allows leaders to promote member growth and retention, promoting organizational sustainability.

Operations

The operations category involves WDM's strategies for designing, managing, improving, and innovating work processes that facilitate improvement and value creation. The Baldrige Excellence Framework helps leaders recognize their organization's operational strengths and opportunities, leveraging them to ensure success (Baldrige

Performance Excellence Program, 2019). WDM serves its clients' inventory and order fulfillment needs, providing them with growth opportunities. The organization's key processes support its 3PL design and mission to help clients succeed.

Work Processes

Product and Process Design. As a 3PL order fulfillment warehouse, WDM's operations involve inbound, outbound, and shared services. Inbound services relate to receiving and returning client products and production activities. Outbound services include B2B and B2C activities and shared services involve inventory control and support functions.

WDM's project management team leaders determine the key processes and products required for each client's needs. The team includes the senior leadership team and the directors of operations, business system development, and client strategy. The program management team develops an implementation plan with task lists encompassing each phase from project award until the project goes live. The team completes the administrative portion before the client is set up and configured in the Warehouse Management System (WMS). WDM incorporates IT to support the interface between WDM, clients, shipping partners, and client customers. Before training, leaders work with the clients to determine product storage, kitting, and shipping requirements before conducting training. The project management team discusses every aspect of the implementation plan among themselves and their clients. When leaders identify modifications required to accommodate clients' products or the implementation process,

they adapt to ensure the client's satisfaction. Table 12 lists the organization's key operational processes and support functions.

Table 12

Key Operational Processes and Support Functions

Operations	Fulfillment models	Processes	Paths to success
Inbound		Receiving Returns Production Put away Replenishment	Unload, count, receive, and fill prime and reserve location stocks Log product returns and notify clients Clear backlog
	Outbound	B2B	Picking Packing Routing Shipping
B2C		Picking Packing Manifesting Shipping	Ensure order accuracy Ship orders according to SLA Assign, pick, label, sort, and stage orders Provide tracking information to client
Inventory control		Put away Replenishment Consolidation Cycle count Picking Slotting	Scan and put away inventory Ensure accurate cycle counts Ensure accurate inventories Leverage inventory space Minimize inventory handling Manage inventory
	Support Areas and Functions		
Administration	Maintain clean warehouses, and ensure compliance with contractual obligations		
HR	Train the workforce, reduce turnover, and hire skilled and engaged employees		
Project management	Manage labor needed for client support, and ensure customer care		
IT	Align company protocols with electronic data interchange (EDI), and maintain security and control of information		
Sales/marketing	Complete SLAs and contracts, listen to clients, and monitor consumer trends		

Process Management and Improvement. WDM's leaders monitor all daily processes in inbound and outbound areas of the warehouse. Team leads closely manage client product receipts and customer returns, ensuring that the correct number of employees are on hand to maintain operations and minimize backlog. Team leads also manage the picking, packing, and shipping processes to ensure that employees allocate, pull, and prepare ecommerce, B2B, and B2C orders for shipment within one to five days. When client product shipments come to the warehouse damaged, without packing slips, or without purchase orders, leaders investigate the issues to minimize processing times and costs that challenge their ability to meet client agreements. WDM's leaders strategize (Table 9) to manage and control operational processes, as they directly relate to what is most important to the clients.

WDM's support functions involve labor planning (Figure 11), training, quality control, and other functions that facilitate operational efficiency and effectiveness (Table 12). Leaders establish contracts with clients and track forecasts, system changes, staffing, and transportation issues to maintain the ability to fulfill client requests. Managers monitor inventory levels to ensure the accuracy and accountability of stock. Supervisors track team members KPIs to ensure their productivity is sufficient, correcting deficiencies with training. Quality control measures also facilitate process compliance and improvement. WDM's leaders listen to their clients (Table 8) to ensure they perform according to expectations, reduce inefficiency, and streamline operations to maintain client satisfaction. WDM also communicates with its employees, gathering their feedback

on ways to improve processes (Table 6). Leaders incorporate employee feedback and implement changes, promoting teamwork and unity of goals within the organization.

Supply Network Management. WDM's supply network consists of technology software, packaging, and transportation providers that allow the company to achieve its objectives. Company leaders select suppliers that align with the company's core values and enter contractual agreements to provide services at agreeable rates. WMS software allows WDM leaders to increase warehouse productivity and accuracy, reducing overall costs. Labor management and workforce management systems guide WDM's leaders in managing workforce labor and optimizing distribution to increase operational efficiency. Packaging suppliers offer WDM low-cost sustainable products for clients' customized packing solutions. Transportation partners provide WDM with various shipping options to suit clients' delivery needs. WDM's leaders work with each supplier to align warehouse operations' services and support, communicating feedback on performance (Table 6). Collaborative partnerships and open communication improve relationship quality and the potential for success (Premkumar et al., 2021). WDM's supplier and partner agreements facilitate its ability to operate as a 3PL and achieve stakeholders' support expectations (Table 4). Leaders adapt to changes as they arise, collaborating on new agreements to achieve customer satisfaction and sustain a competitive advantage.

For example, the COVID-19 pandemic created challenges in the logistics supply chain with significant health risks, lockdowns, and shipping delays (Gultekin et al., 2022). WDM was affected when one of its transportation partners modified its shipping tables to increase shipping rates. The increase meant clients would pay more to ship the

same products, decreasing profit potential. WDM immediately contacted its clients and informed them of the changes, allowing them to decide if they would accept the change or ship products via an alternate supplier. WDM's leaders maintained open communication with their clients to ensure they continued offering low-cost shipping solutions and timely product delivery (Table 4).

Innovation Management. WDM's executive leaders, sales, and marketing teams seek new clients by tracking trends and offering solutions to clients' fulfillment challenges. Employees promote the organization using word-of-mouth, marketing, and sales techniques. Company leaders track the clients leaving and develop sales and marketing strategies for adding new clients. Leaders discuss potential clients that might fill the voids of the ones leaving and stagger their sales and marketing strategies to align with their needs. Some clients are in the initial talk phase, while others are in the contract phase. During these phases, leaders monitor the market and study trends to identify consumer preference changes. WDM responds to trends with new strategies that appeal to consumers. The strategic planning sessions (Figure 9) facilitate innovation and opportunities for improvement throughout the organization.

For example, WDM publishes data on consumers' expectations post-pandemic. Company reports show that consumers desire flexibility, transparency, and convenience when shopping for products. WDM encourages clients to adopt business models that prioritize shoppers' expectations and create opportunities to influence positive shopping behaviors. WDM takes a consultative approach with its clients, nurturing their brands to growth and success.

Operational Effectiveness

Process Efficiency and Effectiveness. WDM's leaders use quality control, cost control, KPI monitoring, and agility measures to ensure effective operations management. Quality control leaders conduct audits and document findings on warehouse processes, shipping, staging, loading, receiving, inventory, packaging, and other areas as senior leaders direct. The leaders develop corrective and preventive solutions that involve instruction, training, and visual aids to guide performance improvement. Consistent auditing and quality control checks help WDM's leaders maintain oversight of the areas critical to operational effectiveness and prevent errors that might negatively influence clients' satisfaction.

WDM's leaders also implement measures to control costs throughout the organization. Leaders develop forecasts and budgets for the allocation and planning of labor, shipping, supply, operational, and administrative expenses, and they manage cost controls through warehouse management systems. Warehouse management systems help WDM's leaders minimize aged orders and achieve order fulfillment and inventory accuracy. Workforce management systems help WDM consider the factors affecting labor (Figure 11) and distribute the right amount of labor throughout the departments.

Leaders facilitate operational efficiency by ensuring employees have the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for key operational processes (Table 12). Employees' KPIs indicate their productivity and performance for leaders to track and develop engagement strategies. Leaders encourage employees to perform well, rewarding those who do with monetary and non-monetary incentives. WDM also motivates worker

efficiency and effectiveness through pay increases, balancing the costs of doing so with the need to meet client needs.

Agile measures support WDMs' ability to achieve operational effectiveness. Company leaders participate in strategic planning meetings (Figure 9), developing proactive measures to address challenges (Table 5), sustain operations, and create value. Leaders communicate with company stakeholders (Table 6), promoting vision and value alignment in every process (Figure 8). The company adapts to market changes and consumers' demands, using agile methods to sustain a strategic advantage, mitigate challenges (Table 5), and achieve objectives (Figure 10).

Security and Cybersecurity. WDM identifies the systems that require security protection through company audits. The systems that WDM protects from threats are the computer systems and software containing company, client, customer, supplier, and partner information. WDM's leaders ensure the security and cybersecurity of electronic data and privileged information through policies and the company's compliance program. WDM policies inform employees of the company's security and cybersecurity guidelines. Leaders use passwords, network security, firewalls, and software to maintain PCII compliance, ensuring confidentiality and appropriate physical and electronic access to information. The company conducts the SOC 2 audit annually, using an independent auditor to review security processes and procedures with the IT department. Audits identify threats in company processes, procedures, and controls, helping leaders recover from incidents and mitigate damage.

WDM's leaders keep clients, suppliers, partners, and employees informed of the security and cybersecurity measures to protect data and information. Clients, suppliers, partners, and employees sign documents acknowledging they understand their roles and responsibilities regarding the security and cybersecurity of proprietary information. Each party is responsible to protect confidentiality by not disclosing privileged data or information. Actions contrary to the agreements result in a breach of contract and possible legal action. WDM employees improperly using or disclosing such information are subject to additional disciplinary actions, including discharge. WDM's leaders maintain transparency throughout the audit process, communicating issues and resolutions to clients that promote their trust and satisfaction.

Safety and Emergency Preparedness. WDM's leaders consider safety essential for continuous warehouse operations. The company has safety rules, standards, guidelines, and policies for employees to follow, and violations result in disciplinary actions. Leaders instruct employees to wear proper safety equipment and clothing for their positions and operate all machinery and equipment with care. WDM requires that work areas be free of hazards or dangerous conditions to prevent workplace incidents, accidents, or illnesses. Employees report unsafe conditions, hazards, and safety accidents to their supervisors. Supervisors report issues to the company's safety committee for tracking and reporting. The safety committee conducts a root cause analysis for every incident and submits recommendations to the CEO. The CEO confers with the HR department and takes disciplinary action when needed.

With a disaster recovery plan, WDM prepares for disasters and emergencies, and leaders use past experiences to facilitate safety and emergency preparedness. The company operates in an area where severe weather may disrupt operations. The company's disaster recovery plan directs employees' actions in crises, emergencies, disasters, and recovery. HR maintains an employee emergency contact list for use in the event of crises, emergencies, or disasters. HR activates the emergency notification system for employees, contacting them by email, phone, or text to notify them of work schedule changes. Senior leaders notify clients, suppliers, and partners of disruptions, communicating company status via the website, apps, texts, and phone calls.

WDM experienced several disasters that helped leaders identify critical things for operational continuity. Leaders recognize that communication and power are vital to the company's ability to remain operational. WDM required backup generators for more than just its computer systems. Employees needed lights throughout the warehouse to optimize efficiency. The company mitigated future power outages by purchasing gas-operated backup generators and ensuring that company equipment remains serviced and ready for continuous operations.

To solve communication challenges, WDM developed a communication plan to notify stakeholders of the company's status. WDM's leaders understand that their relationship with employees, clients, suppliers, and partners is critical to sustained operations. WDM informs employees when conditions are safe for them to return to work after disasters (Table 6). The company expects its leaders to maintain communication with clients, suppliers, and partners (Table 6) as disruptions in one area influences others

(Figure 4). The company expects all employees to work their regularly scheduled hours unless the company is closed. In an emergency or crisis, employees are to work via telecommuting. The company's plan helps leaders mitigate subsequent challenges that lead to client dissatisfaction and demonstrate the company's willingness to continue working toward clients' success.

Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management

The measurement, analysis, and knowledge management category is vital for an organization's learning, improvement, and competitive advantage. Leaders' use of the information gathered to enhance organizational knowledge and promote strategic objectives supports company agility and innovation (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). The following category section explores how WDM's leaders track and analyze information, making decisions that support success and continuous improvement.

Measurement, Analysis, and Improvement of Organizational Performance

Performance Measurement. WDM's leaders collect and track organizational performance and operational data using company documents and the WMS. The company's critical measures for tracking warehouse performance come from SLAs and KPIs. Senior leaders analyze performance measures such as aged inventory, dock-to-stock days, and order fill time to determine if the company's performance aligns with objectives. Leaders communicate the data and information collected during monthly meetings (Figure 9), providing updates to the CEO regarding the company's performance and any financial implications. The company's performance measures are directly related to the key operational processes (Table 12), and the company's ability to achieve its

objectives (Figure 10) and clients' expectations and levels of support (Table 4). Leaders routinely monitor the information and compare results to increase operational efficiency.

WDM's leaders believe competition is good and increases team motivation and engagement. However, the company does not compare its performance and service competitively. WDM's leaders consider the company to be unlike other 3PLs in that their client products and markets vary, but some similarities exist (Figure 5). For this reason, leaders review industry best practices and use some standards as benchmarks for company performance. However, the company's primary focus remains on the metrics and measures most important to the clients. Table 13 shows the company's key performance measures, indicators, and frequency.

Table 13

Key Performance Measures

Measures	Indicators	Frequency
Aged inventory	3 days or less	Daily
Dock-to-stock	2 hours	Daily
Order time to fill	3-5 days	Daily
Inventory accuracy	99% at bin level	Daily
Cycle count	100%	Daily
Physical inventory	100%	Annual
Order accuracy	99.9%	Daily
SLA	100%	Daily
Shipping	Client SLA	Daily
Labor management	100%	Daily
Workforce management	100%	Monthly

Performance Analysis, Review, and Improvement. WDM's senior leaders review the organization's performance daily to assess their strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement. The team tracks and analyzes current and historical

performance data to develop insight into specific operational areas. The leaders survey the workforce for ideas on improvement and innovation, as their investment strengthens relationships and the potential for goal alignment. Then leaders use all information gathered to forecast outcomes and calculate new action plans that align with the organization's short-term, mid-term, and long-term goals (Figure 10). Strategic planning meetings support leaders' decisions for adding or updating the organization's objectives (Figure 9) and communicating them for implementation (Table 6). WDM's leaders adapt to changes as they occur, managing consumer demand, workforce stability, operational expenses, and profit fluctuations to realize an ROI. Thus, WDM's performance analysis and evaluation plan facilitate operational agility and progress toward client success.

Information and Knowledge Management

Data and Information. WDM's IT department tests its systems to ensure that the quality and integrity of data and information are valid and reliable. Project management teams integrate client, partner, and supplier information into the company's software systems and EDI platforms for real-time data sharing. The integration allows for internal and external visibility and tracking. Clients, employees, and partners log in to systems to view relative information for value creation.

With real-time data sharing, clients have the data necessary to support informed decisions regarding product sales, marketing, and performance. WDM's leaders maintain visibility of product inventory, orders, shipments, and key performance measures (Table 13) for communication (Table 6) of discrepancies. WDM's collaboration with clients and partners facilitates real-time data quality and integrity verification, allowing leaders to

increase SLA compliance and client satisfaction. Real-time data sharing allows WDM leaders to identify challenges, analyze them, and create strategic opportunities for maintaining a competitive advantage (Figure 9).

Organizational Knowledge. WDM's leaders build organizational knowledge through training, policies, work processes (Table 12), work systems, and communication (Table 6). Company policies guide employee learning in the organization. Although senior and mid-level managers are responsible for operational training in their areas (Table 3), the organization uses every employee to collect and transfer work knowledge. Leaders teach employees about the organization and its operations, while company policies guide learning and development. Company teams work together to complete operational tasks, providing coaching and mentoring to members as needed. As the employees develop their knowledge and skills through work, they enhance their opportunities for rewards and promotion. Employee training and development promote work efficiency and effectiveness while helping the organization adapt to change.

WDM's leaders also use work systems to monitor performance measures (Table 13) for employee learning opportunities. Sales and marketing teams analyze market trends, publishing reports on the website and blogs for stakeholder knowledge of innovative opportunities. Leaders meet and discuss the market and consumer trends (Figure 9) to involve employees, clients, and partners in the strategy development process. Leaders assess operations and implement strategies that address and resolve challenges for clients. WDM communicates new strategies to stakeholders (Table 6),

positioning clients for growth. The organization's processes promote a continuous cycle of learning and growth for sustainability and success.

Collection, Analysis, and Preparation of Results

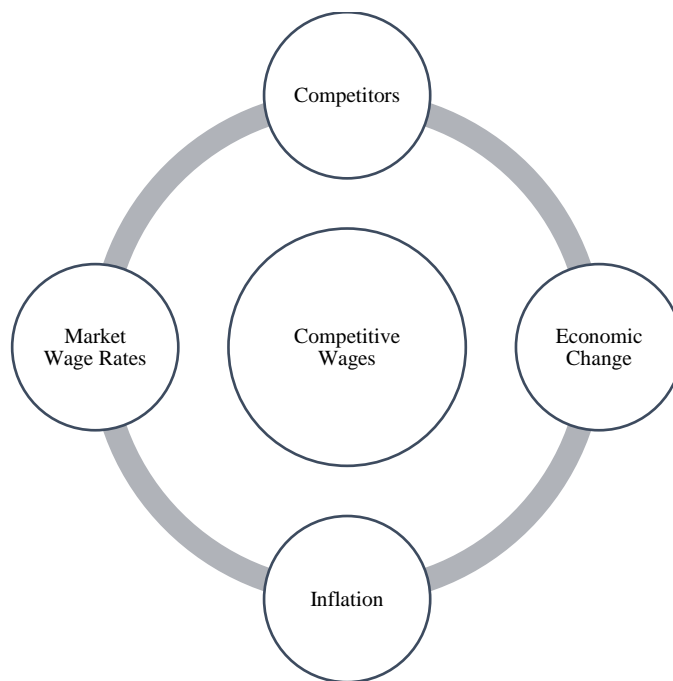
Thematic Findings

This qualitative single case study aimed to explore the strategies WDM leaders use to increase employee retention. The research question I aimed to answer was what strategies do logistics leaders use to increase employee retention? I collected and analyzed research data from various areas, such as conversations with the client leader, financials, policies, employee handbooks, operations documents, company reports, company websites, competitor websites, and in-depth participant interviews. I triangulated the data to recognize the relevant themes in WDM's strategies for increasing employee retention. A thematic analysis of participants' interviews and the data collected revealed three major themes essential to WDM leaders' ability to retain employees: (a) competitive wages, (b) growth and development opportunities, and (c) recognition. The research findings align with the data, literature, Herzberg's theory, and the Baldrige Excellence Framework concerning organizational goal achievement and competitive advantage.

Thematic Finding 1: Competitive Wages

Competitive wages are the first recurrent theme in the research data. An analysis of company documents revealed WDM's commitment to providing employees with competitive wages. Leaders researched the region's prevailing wages for full-time, part-time, and short-term work, maintaining awareness of wage strategy influencers. The

organization sets its wages well above market rates to meet employees' expectations and make competitors' offers less attractive. HR added competitive pay and benefits verbiage to the company's website, policies, and employee handbook, promoting alignment. The study's participants also discussed the significance of competitive wages for the organization and its employees. For example, Participants 1, 2, and 3 stated that competitive wages are the company's primary strategy for retaining employees because they counter competition and inflation. Participant 1 stated that it is one of the things WDM does well. Participant 2 agreed with Participant 1, adding that competitive wages are crucial for retaining talent in high labor-demand markets. Participant 3 further expanded the discussion, positing that competitive wages are creative ways to meet employees' needs while promoting the organization's objective achievements. Figure 12 shows the factors influencing WDM's competitive wage strategies.

Figure 12*Factors Influencing WDM's Competitive Advantage*

Recent literature supports WDM's competitive wage strategy for retaining employees. For example, some employees experience work hours that fluctuate with scheduling, consumer demand, and market demand, causing pay volatility and negative behaviors toward employers (Conroy et al., 2022). Employees care about the compensation received for work and expect pay stability and organizational transparency to support their perceptions of fairness (Conroy et al., 2022; Holtzen, 2022). Compensation facilitates employees' ability to fulfill their needs and desires (Holtzen, 2022). Although company leaders have various compensation strategies available for use (Holtzen, 2022), higher pay promotes employee retention and minimizes the adverse effects of turnover (Conroy et al., 2022; Vong, 2022). Competitive wages are one-way companies respond to market competition, as they signify employees' value to an

organization (Langbein & Roberts, 2022). Thus, competitive wages help leaders retain the value needed to sustain a competitive advantage.

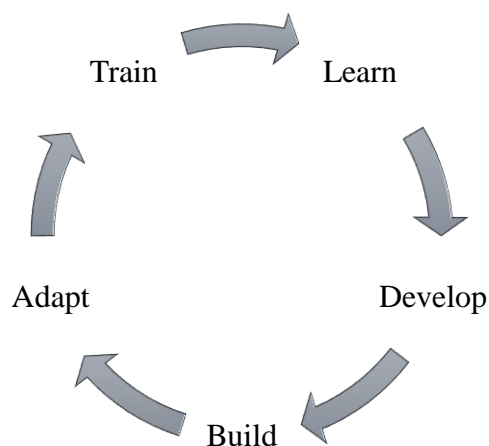
WDM's competitive wage strategy aligns with Herzberg's two-factor theory regarding salary significance for employee satisfaction and retention. Pay is an integral part of employees' benefits packages that directly influences recruitment, performance, retention, and turnover (Shtembari et al., 2022). Adequate wages are vital to employees because they help satisfy their personal and family needs (Holtzen, 2022; LeBaron et al., 2022; Thant & Chang, 2021). However, some companies need to modify their business models to address changing labor costs and employees' wage expectations (LeBaron et al., 2022). To facilitate alignment, leaders must ensure that company statements and actions agree and that agile strategies exist to improve wages, retention, and the competitive situation (LeBaron et al., 2022; Shtembari et al., 2022).

After COVID-19, WDM experienced labor demand and market wage rate changes that resulted in increased workforce expectations of pay. WDM's employees wanted fair wages and sufficient income to support inflation, which was not uncommon after the pandemic (see Shtembari et al., 2022). WDM's leaders acknowledged the value of their employees and responded to their needs with competitive wage offerings, demonstrating their ability to adapt to change. WDM's leaders adapted by deploying the company's vision and value system throughout the organization (Figure 8) and implementing the strategies necessary to achieve employee retention objectives (Figure 9). Participant 2 stated that WDM's strategies must evolve, and the company must remain agile in its initiatives in preparation for the changes that are coming. Agility is critical to

an organization's competitive advantage (Henry, 2021; Yue, 2021). Therefore, it is crucial for leaders to research and understand the labor market, evaluate its sensitivity to competition, optimize employees' needs, and implement strategies that retain value (Langbein & Roberts, 2022; LeBaron et al., 2022). Figure 13 displays WDM's agile measures for improving wages, retention, and competitive advantage.

Figure 13

Improving Wages, Retention, and Competitive Advantage



WDM's competitive wage strategy aligns with the Baldrige Excellence Framework's criteria for organization leaders, workforce, and competitive situations. Leaders are vital to changing and improving an organization's competitive stance (Yue, 2021) because they understand the value of the workforce and can leverage strategies to increase commitment and value (Yue, 2021). WDM's leaders share the company's vision, mission, and values (Figure 1) through various communication (Table 6) methods, promoting alignment and success. Competitive wage strategies engage the workforce and allow organizations to realize their desired results (Conroy et al., 2022; Vong, 2022). To

sustain success, leaders must evaluate the situation, consider what is important to employees, be transparent in their offerings, and adapt to employees' current needs (Shtembari et al., 2022).

Thematic Finding 2: Growth and Development Opportunities

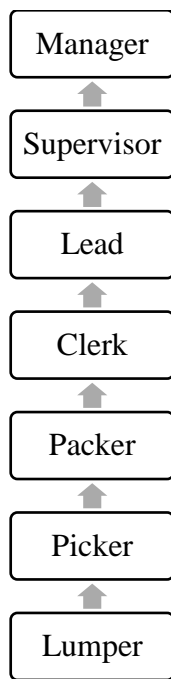
Employee growth and development opportunities are the second theme that frequently appears in the research data. The interview participants acknowledged that the company focuses on growth and development (Table 5) to foster a capable and skilled workforce needed for achieving success. Participant 2 stated that WDM provides employees with various opportunities to receive mentorship and training that develops their skills for advancement within the organization. Participant 3 stated that training prepares company employees for career paths that promote individual and company success. WDM's internal documents align with the participants' statements, supporting the company's focus on employee growth and development.

WDM offers its workforce growth and development opportunities via three programs. Employees can receive training, skill development, and mentorship for themselves while contributing to fellow employees' growth and development. The company's culture promotes teamwork and growth through mission, vision, and core value alignment (Figure 1). Such an iterative learning and development process facilitates organizational sustainability and competitive advantage (see Henry, 2021). Table 14 lists WDM's employee growth and development programs.

Table 14*WDM's Growth and Development Programs*

	Programs		
	A	B	C
Workforce opportunities			
Mentorship	*	*	*
Training	*	*	*
Skill development	*	*	*
Knowledge development	*	*	*
Increase productivity	*	*	*
Performance increase	*	*	*
Career growth		*	
Promotion potential			*

WDM's growth and development strategy aligns with the literature and Herzberg's two-factor theory's opportunity for growth and advancement motivation factors. Recent articles reveal that employees value the growth, development, promotion, and career advancement options organizations provide the workforce (Kim, 2022; Thant & Chang, 2021). Such options can positively and negatively influence employees' perceptions of their work environments (Kim, 2022; Thant & Chang, 2021). Employees experiencing positive work environments are likely to be satisfied with their jobs and remain committed to their employers (Kim, 2022). Employees are valuable investments and understanding what motivates them to work is crucial for leaders (Shtembari et al., 2022). Thus, leaders must consider employee growth and development strategies' benefits and invest in their employees to achieve and sustain a competitive advantage. Figure 14 displays a career path an employee advancing from an hourly position to a salary-level position within WDM might follow.

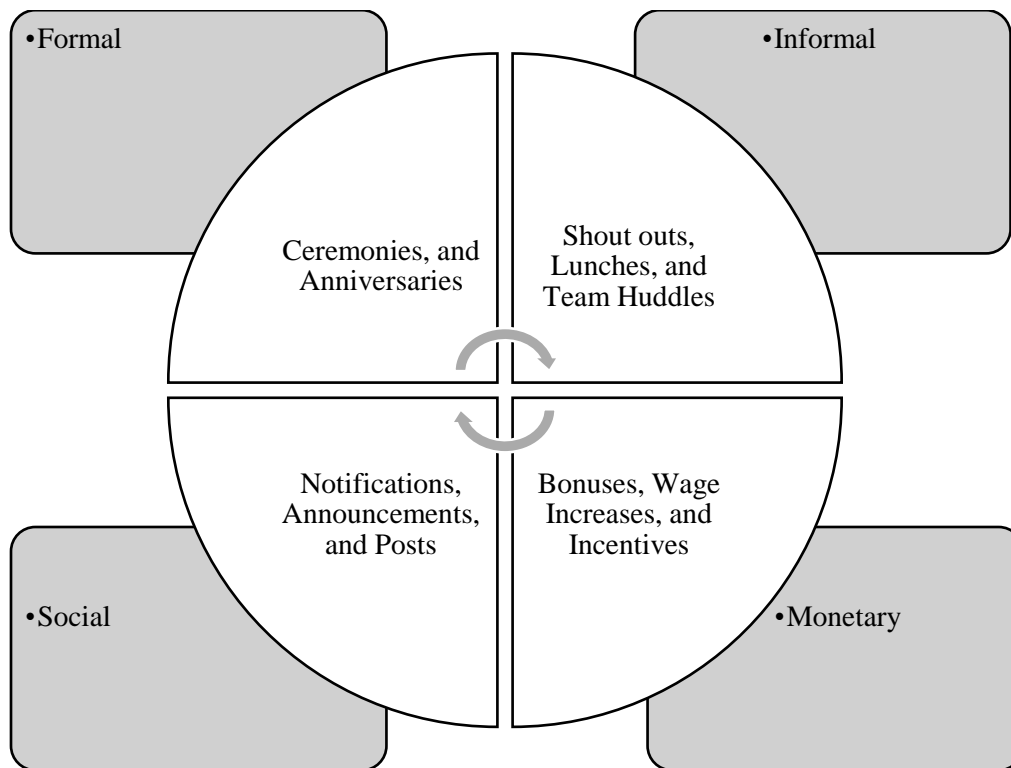
Figure 14*Career Advancement Path*

WDM's growth and development strategy aligns with the Baldrige Excellence Framework's workforce engagement, management, and organizational alignment criteria. The Baldrige Excellence Framework allows leaders to assess workforce effectiveness and identify strengths and opportunities for improvement (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). WDM's strategy focuses on the processes that build organizational efficiency and effectiveness, engaging employees to their full potential (see Kim, 2022; Thant & Chang, 2021). WDM's leaders provide company employees with the opportunities to achieve personal and professional growth and development goals. Leaders' attention to employees' development contributes to the capability and capacity building that supports continuous improvement and competitive advantage (Baldrige

Performance Excellence Program, 2019). Therefore, growth and development strategies facilitate employees' progress which may lead to positive organizational results.

Thematic Finding 3: Recognition

Recognition is the third recurrent theme essential to WDM leaders' ability to retain employees. Company documents and research participant interview data reveal that employees are WDM's most critical asset for achieving success, and recognition is an effective way to show employees they are valued. Participant 1 stated that the company acknowledges employees who perform well. Participant 2 added that leaders recognize employees' performance and dedication to the organization, rewarding them for their contributions. According to Participant 3, recognizing and rewarding employee performance encourages productivity and increases retention. WDM recognizes employees' performance, distributing awards, rewards, and bonuses (Table 11) to motivate engagement (Table 10) and goal achievement. Figure 15 displays the types of recognition systems WDM uses.

Figure 15*Recognition Systems*

WDM's strategy aligns with recent literature and Herzberg's two-factor theory for employee motivation. Recognition is a motivator that enhances job satisfaction (El-Said & Aziz, 2022), and it is vital to employees' job commitment decisions (El-Said & Aziz, 2022; Mihanović, 2021; Thant & Chang, 2021). Recognition promotes positive work relationships and enhances employees' perceptions of their jobs (El-Said & Aziz, 2022; Vong, 2022). WDM's use of the strategy is an effective tool for leaders. For example, leaders monitor employees' productivity numbers and acknowledge achievements via their recognition systems (Figure 15). The company's methods promote employee engagement and retention while enhancing sustainability. Thus, leaders should develop

recognition systems that align with employees' needs to achieve engagement, job satisfaction, and retention (Mihanović, 2021).

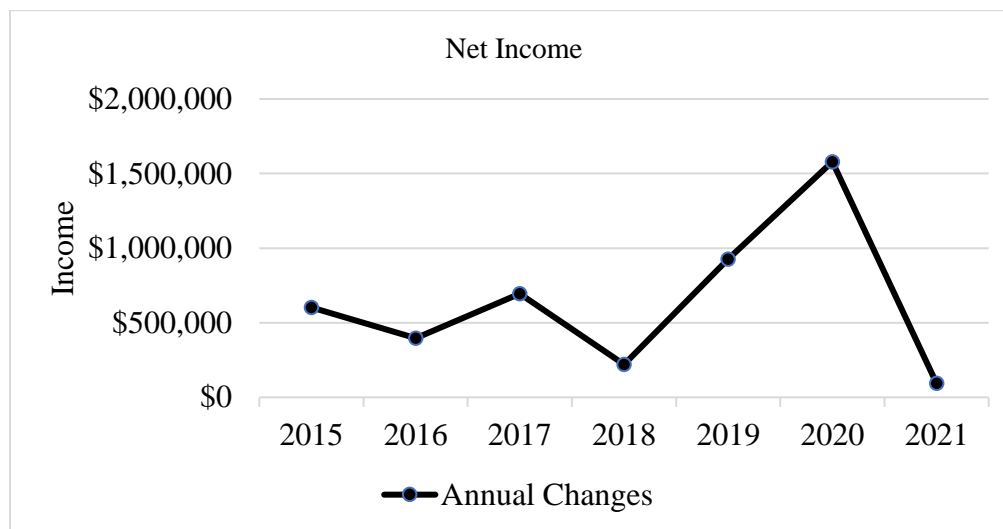
WDM's recognition strategy also aligns with the Baldrige Excellence Framework's criteria for workforce motivation. Leaders must demonstrate employees' value to their organization using measures that promote workforce development and motivation (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). Organization systems must be practical and tailored to the workforce to support performance excellence (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). WDM's leaders recognize employee achievements that support performance measurement goals (Table 11) and organizational objectives (Figure 10), rewarding them appropriately. Such enhanced recognition measures ensure workforce stability and positive organizational performance.

Results

An analysis of WDM's Baldrige results allows an increased opportunity for development in specific areas. Using Herzberg's two-factor theory as the conceptual framework and guide for study alignment, I assessed the organization's approaches to process performance and improvement, including evaluating current performance, trends, competitor comparisons, and integration of results. The analysis allowed for identifying organization strengths and gaps, presenting opportunities for leader learning, understanding, and innovation. The following areas include discussion on WDM's results for product and process, customer, workforce, leadership and governance, financial, marketing, and strategy output.

Product and Process Results

Customer-Focused Product and Service Results. WDM is a 3PL company that fulfills clients' e-commerce and multi-channel logistics needs, providing them with cost-effective distribution solutions. Leaders skillfully and strategically focus on helping clients grow through collaborative partnerships and agreements that facilitate goal achievement. The organization's mission of helping clients succeed began in 2000 with WDM providing order fulfillment services to specific clients. The company grew, and leaders added retail services to support market growth and consumers' needs. WDM further developed its service offerings, adding ecommerce services that appealed to new clients. By the end of 2004, WDM's list of high-profile clients had increased, resulting in nearly \$7.3 million in income. After 2004, leaders experienced 15 years of profit and loss fluctuations as costs increased and the company's more profitable clients left for larger 3PLs. The company's net income at the end of 2021 was \$93,213. Although WDM has not reached income levels of the past 5 years (Figure 16), leaders continue to capitalize on opportunities that enhance the company's capabilities to create sustainable value.

Figure 16*Net Income From Operations From 2015-2021*

WDM uses its core values as a guide (Figure 1) for meeting clients' expectations and levels of support (Table 4). The company optimizes clients' brands, inspiring trust and engagement that increases interest in their order fulfillment services. WDM offers customized logistics services to meet clients' growth needs. Clients' SLAs include information on service expectations, like inventory management and storage, order fulfillment, replenishment orders, packaging, kitting, shipping, returns, shipping notifications, tracking, invoicing, standards, pricing, reporting, and analysis. Client testimonials speak to the organization's expertise and reputation for service excellence, promoting trust in the company's ability to deliver services as contracted.

Work Process Effectiveness Results. WDM employs a maximum workforce of 500, including the executive team, senior leadership team, marketing team, sales team, project management team, IT team, HR, senior managers, mid-level managers, supervisors, team leads, and team members. The employees conduct the inbound,

outbound, inventory management, and support operational tasks (Table 12), promoting client trust and satisfaction. Salaried, hourly, and seasonal employees equally support distribution center operations with integrated and overlapping tasks (Table 3), facilitating objective achievement (Figure 10). The company manages 100,000 lines of clients' inventory and ships millions of orders. Leaders track inventory, backlog, trends, process, and performance metrics for operational efficiency and effectiveness, focusing tactically and strategically on providing clients with the services outlined in their agreements. WDM considers client satisfaction challenges and engages the workforce to ensure performance measures are met (Table 13).

Leaders develop security, safety, and emergency preparedness plans to mitigate operational disruptions when considering the challenges that may affect operations. Leaders use routine audits to optimize information protection and comply with regulatory guidelines to maximize worker safety (Table 7). Company communication plans guide employees' actions in disasters and emergencies, encouraging employee use of prudence while pursuing operational goals. Such efforts enhance stakeholders' trust in the organization's ability to realize growth threats, implement strategies that reduce disruptive results and capitalize on opportunities to help clients achieve growth and success. Table 15 lists WDM's safety and emergency preparedness results from 2017 to 2021.

Table 15*Safety and Emergency Preparedness Results*

	Percent compliant				
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Internal audits	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
PCII audits	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
SOC 2 audits	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Inventory audits	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Safety audits	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Process/procedure audits	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Fire inspections	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Sprinkler system inspections	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Safety inspections	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Alarm inspections	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Disaster drills	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Supply-Network Management Results. WDM implements lean practices that streamline processes, improving order process times and operational efficiency. Leaders position resources for maximum exploitation and incentivize employees (Figure 15) to verify customer order accuracy. The practices allow WDM to achieve its performance measurement goals (Table 13). WDM's practices also decrease order time to fill by employees allocating, pulling, packing, and preparing 75% of orders for shipment within three days. Leaders adapt as challenges arise that influence their ability to achieve goals, quickly resolving issues to maintain client satisfaction. Table 16 shows WDM's performance results for clients and suppliers.

Table 16*Client and Supplier Performance Results*

	Percent compliant	
	Clients	Suppliers
Flexibility	100%	100%
Inventory management	100%	N/A
Order accuracy	100%	N/A
Shipping	100%	N/A
Timely delivery	100%	N/A
Custom packaging	100%	N/A
Communication	100%	100%
Technology	100%	N/A

Customer Results

WDM's primary customers are its clients, and the company focuses on providing clients ecommerce, B2B, B2C, and order fulfillment needs. WDM also provides the kitting and assembly, transportation, freight management, drop shipping, and global logistics needs clients have for increasing their competitive advantage. Leaders develop plans for monitoring client inventory, forecasts, and stock-keeping units (SKU), overseeing all aspects of clients' SLAs for optimal satisfaction. WDM's leaders listen to clients (Table 8) and provide them with the logistics services required to succeed. WDM's success at meeting clients' needs draws new clients while graduating others to advanced opportunities for growth. As such, WDM maintains approximately 25 clients at various profit-producing levels (Figure 6). Figure 17 depicts the number of clients by their service channels. Figure 18 shows the service channel breakdown by client category.

Figure 17

Client Service Channels

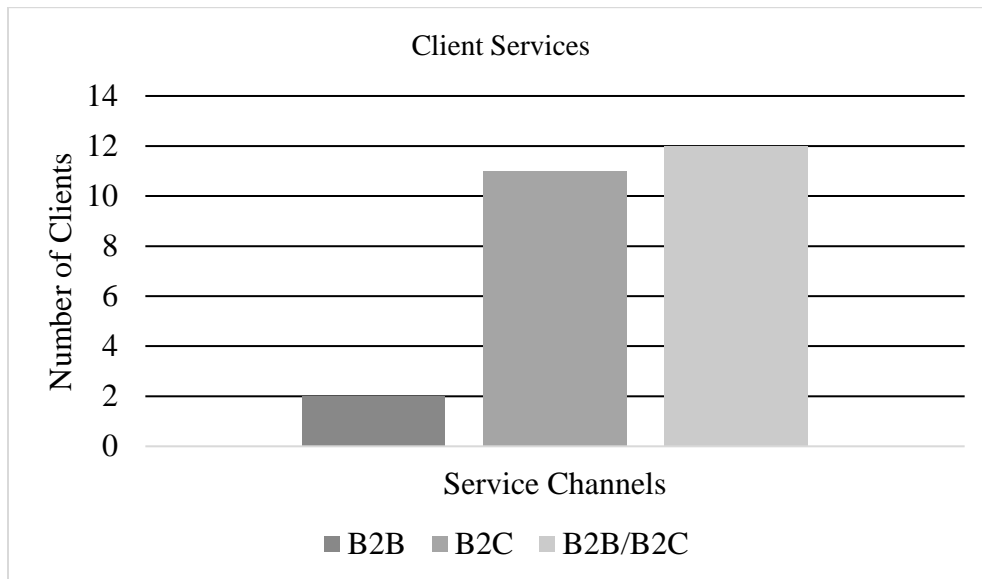
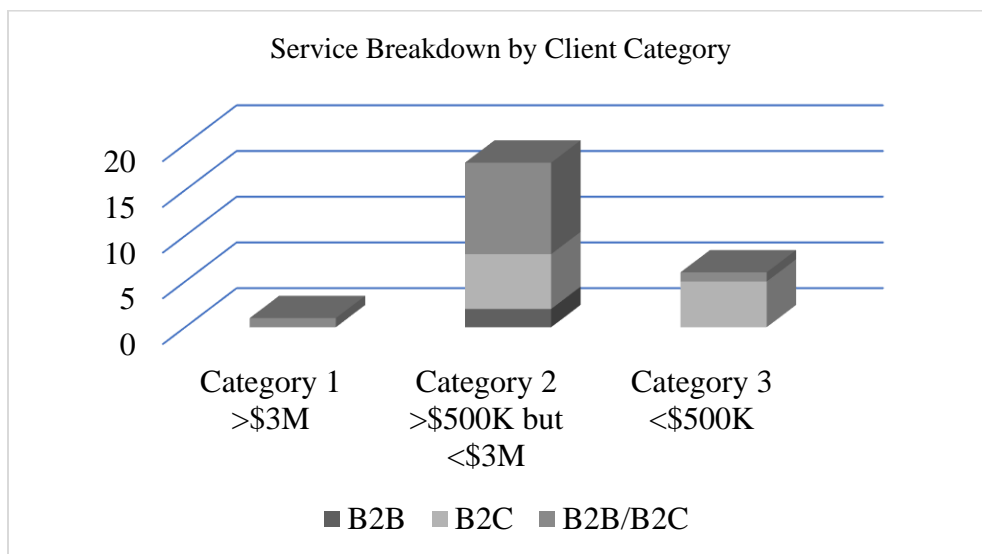


Figure 18

Service Breakdown by Client Category



Leaders' awareness of market shifts allows the company to remain proactive in seeking clients. Weekly communication and information sharing sessions ensure quality

and throughput remain at the forefront of leaders' strategies for client product fulfillment.

Leaders promote continual growth and relationship-building, facilitating client engagement and satisfaction. Table 17 shows WDM's customer communication compliance.

Table 17

Customer Communication Compliance

Method	Current customer	Former customer	Potential customer
Meetings	100%	N/A	100%
Phone call	100%	N/A	100%
Email	100%	N/A	100%
Social media	100%	100%	100%
Blogs	100%	100%	100%
Surveys	100%	100%	100%
Testimonials	100%	100%	N/A
Studies	100%	N/A	100%
Market research	100%	N/A	100%
Events	100%	100%	N/A
Summits	N/A	100%	100%
Sales & marketing platforms	100%	N/A	100%

WDM achieves and maintains client engagement and satisfaction because of leaders' responses to clients' complaints and needs. For example, clients have contracts for logistics distribution services, including their customers receiving timely orders (Table 16). They select the transportation service that suits their needs, and WDM ensures that partners deliver orders within the agreed-upon days. Supply chain disruptions sometimes result in leaders making client discount concessions. At other times, leaders and clients modify agreements for client promotions and seasonal sales. WDM's flexibility and responsiveness to clients encourage lasting favorable experiences that mitigate dissatisfaction.

Workforce Results

WDM employees are vital to operational efficiency, goal achievement, and sustainability. The company maintains a strategic workforce that encompasses various departments. The executive team, senior managers, mid-level managers, supervisors, team leads, and hourly workers' knowledge, skills, and capability requirements differ by positions and operational duties (Table 3). Every employee possesses the physical and mental competencies to perform 3PL warehouse processes and support functions (Table 12). The workforce includes diverse employees who help the company satisfy fluctuating operational requirements. Leaders leverage employees' capabilities and capacities to achieve outcomes that align with the organization's objectives (Figure 10).

Critical indicators of WDM's workforce climate involve employees' benefits, health, safety, and well-being. WDM provides employees benefits that enhance work-life balance and productivity (Table 9). The company also offers employee wellness and other service benefits that supplement wages. In addition, the company promotes employee feedback through policies and procedures that address discrimination, harassment, equality, safety, ethical conduct, morality, health, and wellness. Leaders track incidents and infractions for follow-up action and opportunities for improvement, encouraging conscientious practices throughout the organization.

WDM increases workforce satisfaction using employee engagement measures. However, the company's employee engagement drivers vary with the type of employee (Table 10). Leaders use different communication methods (Table 6) to encourage new idea discovery, employee motivation, and employee satisfaction. The engagement

programs allow leaders to address concerns and stabilize the workforce for a competitive advantage. Thus, leaders' attention to employees' needs enhances their engagement and job satisfaction, promoting productivity and value creation.

WDM accomplishes workforce and leader development through training, promotions, and wage increases. Employees receive coaching and mentoring to increase their work knowledge and skills. Leaders focus on training and development from the top down to facilitate workforce and leader growth and opportunity. Leaders encourage employee development through programs (Table 14) that reward performance (Figure 15), provide advancement opportunities (Figure 14), and wage increases. Leaders monitor the key performance measures (Table 13) and conduct audits and quality control checks to mitigate inefficiency. Leaders meet and develop new strategies (Figure 9) for inefficiencies, promoting work effectiveness and agility.

Leadership and Governance Results

WDM's senior leadership team is the CEO, CCO, EVP, VP of IT, SVP of operations, and GM, who all have extensive knowledge and experience in various business areas. They exemplify and reinforce the company's values and effectively communicate the vision to the employees, clients, and partners. Leaders maintain open communication and engagement with stakeholders to promote goal achievement. For example, WDM leaders communicate with employees through emails, newsletters, meetings, events, and lunches (Table 6). Leaders conduct daily, weekly, and quarterly meetings to improve information flow and discuss goals that improve productivity and efficiency. WDM leaders communicate regularly with their clients and partners, engaging

them through monthly and quarterly meetings that address challenges and goal performance. WDM uses communications to strengthen and sustain relationships that help them achieve goals.

WDM leaders align themselves with core values (Figure 1) and focus policies and procedures on efforts that encourage employee compliance. Leaders follow governing laws and regulations, accepting responsibility for all actions. They secure information and conduct audits, promoting accountability and transparency in the company. WDM's leaders promote an ethical, moral, and legal culture from the top down (Table 7). Leaders display positive work ethics and behaviors that employees emulate. They teach principles of conduct grounded in integrity for employee, client, client customers, supplier, and partner dealings, ensuring employees have the policies and procedures that guide actions and direct violation reporting. Such measures ensure leaders maintain awareness of issues that create legal and ethical conduct violations, mitigating them for operational effectiveness. Table 18 depicts WDM's legal, ethical, and regulatory results.

Table 18

Legal, Ethical, and Regulatory Compliance Results

Process	Results
Ethical conduct	100% compliance
Equal opportunity	100% compliance
Sexual harassment	100% compliance
Discrimination	100% compliance

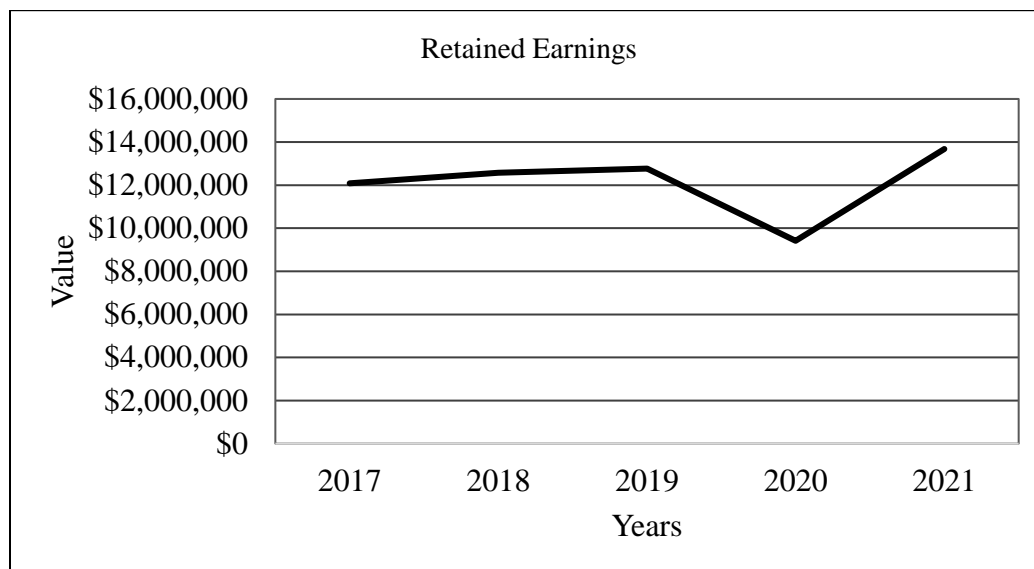
WDM also promotes societal well-being through informal donations and employee-driven initiatives. For example, the company promoted environmental sustainability initiatives to facilitate community resource conservation efforts. Company

employees also conducted charitable initiatives by raising \$12,000 for hospitals' COVID-19 needs. Thus, WDM supports and encourages charitable involvement in several areas, backing employee social issue concerns and offering solutions for implementation.

Financial and Market Results

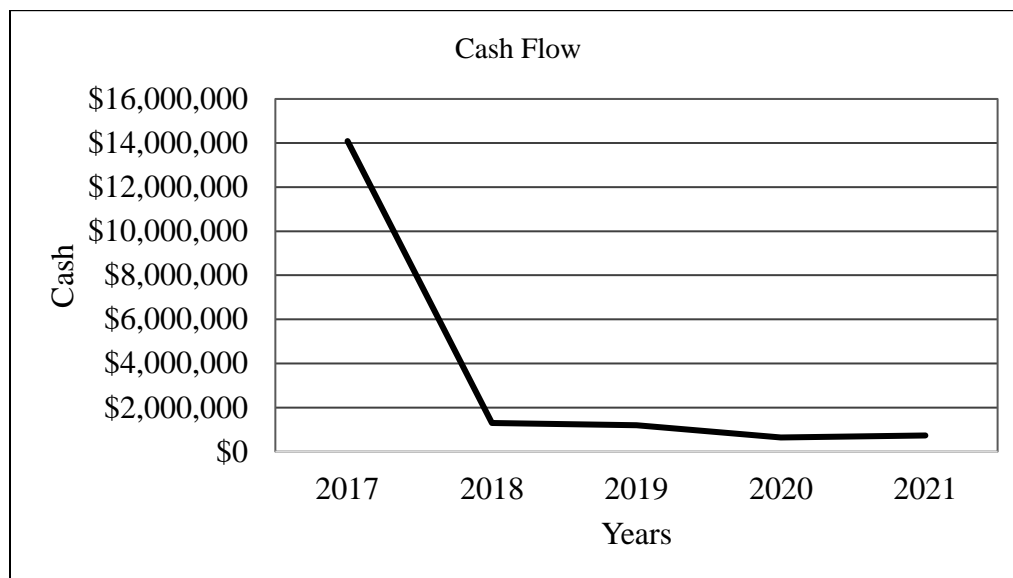
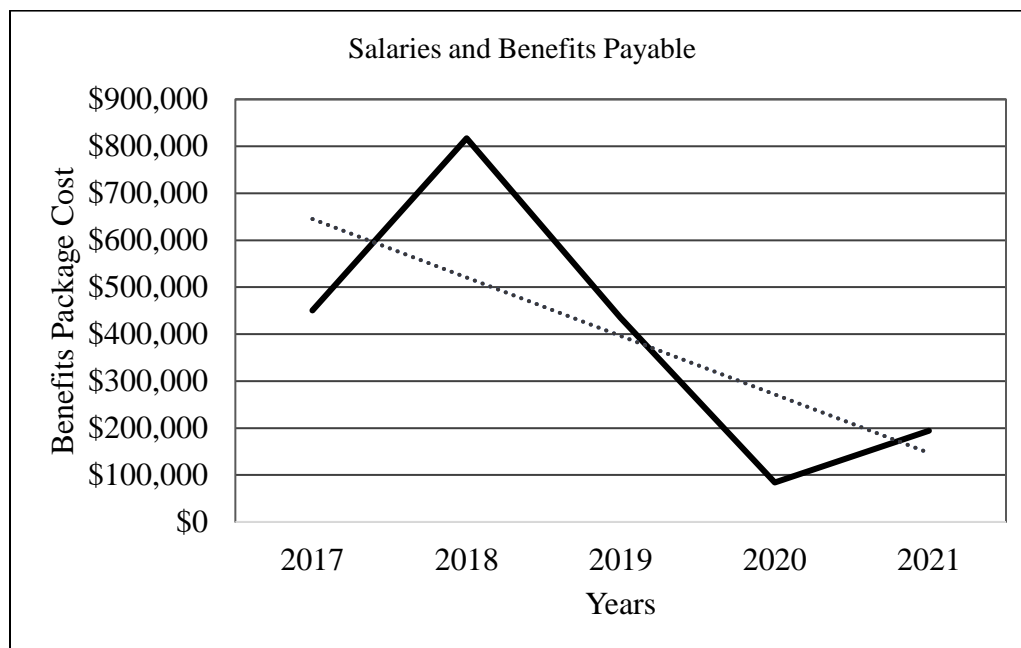
WDM's leaders monitor the organization's financial and market performance discussing results in meetings. They look at competitors' trends for market awareness but avoid metric comparisons. Leaders also review client performance and historical data for revenue growth. Leaders use all information to identify potential new clients and implement targeted marketing strategies. WDM leaders seek competition to focus on their market niche and analyze financials to develop concepts for increased value. The strategy facilitates operational agility and objective achievement.

WDM's leaders analyze financials to determine their ROI and develop concepts for increased value. WDM received its first clients in 2000 and has continued operations for over 22 years. For the reporting period ending December 31, 2021, company assets totaled \$9,741,726, liabilities equaled \$5,784,920, and retained earnings were \$13,677,031. From 2019 to 2020, retained earnings decreased by 37%. The resulting losses reflected WDM's challenges with the changing market following the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, 2020 to 2021 data shows a 35% increase in retained earnings, indicating that the company is on the road to recovery. Figure 19 illustrates WDM's retained earnings.

Figure 19*Retained Earnings*

WDM is a mature company experiencing the effects of market fluctuations.

Leaders use rolling forecasts to help establish expense projections and budgets aligned with company needs. New clients help the organization supplement expenses and employ alternative methods to achieve a competitive advantage. Leaders' efforts to retain employees and gain new clients aid them in increasing owner equity and sustainable value. Although the company's cash flow is decreasing, the positive flow indicates WDM's ability to remain solvent and grow. Figure 20 shows WDM's cash flow from December 31, 2017, to 2021. Figure 21 shows WDM's salaries and benefits payable from December 31, 2017, to 2021.

Figure 20*Operations Cash Flow***Figure 21***Salaries and Benefits Payable*

The company achieves its strategic goals and action plans through strategic meetings (Figure 9). Leaders discuss and set goals, developing tasks for completion. Leaders communicate the goals and tasks throughout the organization to facilitate resolutions. The process is iterative and continues until the company achieves its objectives. WDM has three primary objectives: (a) to grow the client base, (b) to stabilize the workforce, and (c) to increase operational efficiency (Figure 10). Action plans allow company leaders to monitor progress and achieve their objectives.

Key Themes

Process Strengths

Baldrige evaluators assess organizational maturity by evaluating processes approach, deployment, learning, and integration (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). Company processes allow people to accomplish their work. WDM uses a systematic approach to accomplish 3PL warehouse management and order fulfillment operations (see Table 2). The organization's structure (Figure 3) supports leaders' abilities to distribute responsibilities (Table 3) throughout the operational areas (Table 12), achieving performance measures (Table 13) and objectives (Figure 10). WDM's mission centers on helping clients grow, and the company's core values (Figure 1) align with it and the vision statement. WDM's core competency is in leveraging logistics access and opportunities for clients. The organization's workforce is an integral part of the process and vital to WDM's success. Company leaders train, develop (Table 14), and engage (see Table 10) the workforce to meet market demands and clients' needs. Leaders consistently evaluate processes and procedures for issues or challenges, resolving them or

developing new initiatives through the strategic planning process (Figure 9). Leaders also maintain communication (Table 6) with clients and partners to build trust and strengthen relationships. WDM maintains the flexibility required to meet stakeholders' expectations (Table 4) and sustain a competitive advantage in the industry.

Process Opportunities

WDM is successful in retaining the workforce it needs to achieve success. However, workforce requirement fluctuations and competitive offers challenge leaders' ability to sustain employee retention numbers. Employees' paychecks become volatile when work hours change weekly (Conroy et al., 2022). Pay volatility sometimes results from business cycle changes (Feng, 2021), as is the case with WDM's peak season operations. Substantial pay fluctuations can cause uncertainties that influence employees' willingness to remain with their employers (Conroy et al., 2022; Feng, 2021). Leaders must consider how the relationship between pay volatility, employee dissatisfaction, and turnover might influence operational efficiency and sustainability.

For example, WDM experienced increased labor turnover after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some company employees received more work hours, while others received fewer work hours. Leaders sent some employees home because of supply chain issues. At the same time, industry competitors offered higher wages that lured some employees to new positions. WDM's leaders assessed turnover and the labor gaps it caused and increased wages to support the continuity of operations. Leaders also increased communication (see Table 6) with employees and implemented programs to

promote employee learning and development (see Table 14). WDM's efforts encouraged teamwork and mission alignment, improving their ability to mitigate labor challenges.

However, people's compensation preferences have changed since COVID-19 (Shtembari et al., 2022). Employees expect benefits that align with their needs and are willing to change employers to satisfy that requirement (Shtembari et al., 2022). WDM operates among competitors (Figure 5) that use the same type of laborers (Figure 7), and leadership realizes that they need more than adequate wages to retain employees and sustain a competitive advantage. Research shows that employee investments are crucial to an organization's success (see Mihanović, 2021). Thus, WDM might determine proactive methods for identifying employees' changing needs and work with HR to design specific benefit package offerings, eliminating misalignment between preferences and company offerings.

Results Strengths

Baldrige evaluators identify result strengths and opportunities by assessing organizations' performance levels, trends, comparisons, and integration (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). WDM demonstrates satisfactory results for products and processes, customers, workforce, leadership and governance, financial, marketing, and strategy output. WDM consistently conducts the operations and support functions (Table 12) necessary to meet stakeholders' expectations (Table 4) and strategic objectives (Figure 10). The company listens (Table 8) and communicates (Table 6) with customers to facilitate their growth. WDM invests in its workforce, training and developing (Table 14) them to perform their duties (Table 3) and meet performance goals

(Table 13) and organization objectives (Figure 10). Leadership ensures that employees' safety, security, and health and wellness of employees are without incident. WDM has experienced a net financial loss since 2015, but the company's financials remain stable because of client account revenue and cash on hand. Leaders implement strategic marketing measures to appeal to new clients and enhance value. Company leaders' experience helps the company remain resilient and agile for optimal success.

Results Opportunities

Although WDM is thriving and has proven to sustain a competitive advantage in the logistics industry, its leaders can improve financial strength by focusing on increased process efficiency. Leaders might consider cross-training employees in different operational areas of the warehouse to enhance knowledge, increase employee development, improve efficiency, and increase productivity. Research shows that leaders should create conditions for employee learning to maintain a competitive advantage (Mihanović, 2021). When leaders focus on leveraging employees to obtain optimal value, it increases the organization's success (Mihanović, 2021). In addition, it maximizes employees' work experiences, improving productivity, efficiency, and profitability (Kim, 2022). Therefore, WDM's leaders' focus on cross-training might increase their ability to achieve performance measures (Table 13) and client expectations (Table 4), enhancing their appeal to new clients.

Project Summary

Employee retention is a challenge for many organizations. Decreased employee retention increases organizational costs, influencing efficiency and productivity (Vallas et

al., 2022). Employees become dissatisfied for various reasons and leave their employers for other job opportunities (Conroy et al., 2022; Feng, 2021). Employee retention is vital for value creation and organizational sustainability (Upadhyay et al., 2020). Organization leaders can use job satisfaction and motivation strategies to retain employees. Leaders who apply these strategies can mitigate the effects of turnover and enhance company success (El-Said & Aziz, 2022; Mihanović, 2021; Thant & Chang, 2021), as a lack of focus on retention strategies can lead to missed opportunities.

In this study, I analyzed WDM's employee retention strategies to achieve objectives and sustain the organization. Using the 2019-2020 Baldrige Excellence Framework criteria as a guide, I assessed WDM's capabilities and abilities in leadership, strategy, measurement, and other categories using public and private information to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement. I interviewed leaders to determine their strategies for employee retention and how they applied them throughout the organization. I synthesized the data with Herzberg's two-factor theory to show how leaders might increase sustainability with employee retention.

The primary thematic findings identified in this study show that organizations need competitive wages, growth and development opportunities, and recognition to retain employees. The opportunities identified in this study can enhance WDM's leaders' ability to retain employees. The results also help WDM improve operational efficiency and increase client satisfaction and growth.

Contributions and Recommendations

Logistics leaders face the continual challenge of retaining skilled and experienced employees in dynamic markets (Kilibarda et al., 2019). Logistics employees possess the skills, knowledge, and experience their employers require for supply chain management functions (Daghfous et al., 2021). Turnover increases the costs (Jannat et al., 2020; Krishna & Garg, 2022; Tews et al., 2021) and risks (Cleary & McLarney, 2021; Daghfous et al., 2021; Gultekin et al., 2022) that are harmful to organizations' performance (Birou & Hoek, 2022; Tews et al., 2021). Some logistics leaders, like those in WDM, seek effective strategies to increase employee retention (Birou & Hoek, 2022) and approach the challenge by developing initiatives that promote engaging environments and favorable cultures (Birou & Hoek, 2022; Tews et al., 2021). Leaders' actions allow them to identify, assess, and mitigate the risks to organizations' success (Daghfous et al., 2021), improving employees' job satisfaction and motivation for a competitive advantage (Birou & Hoek, 2022).

With this qualitative single case study, I aimed to explore the strategies that WDM's leaders use to increase employee retention. Qualitative study findings are not generalizable but are transferable to leaders desiring to follow the recommendations provided for increasing employee retention (see Crick, 2021; see Saunders et al., 2019; see Yin, 2018). The key themes identified in this study include (a) competitive wages, (b) growth and development opportunities, and (c) recognition that promote WDM leaders' strategies for increasing employee retention.

Applications to Professional Practice

The findings, results, and recommendations from this study have increased logistics leaders' knowledge of effective employee retention strategies. Developing plans that reduce turnover and increase retention enhance logistics organizations' ability to create value. Logistics leaders require skilled and knowledgeable employees to maintain operations (Kane & Tomer, 2021; Keller et al., 2020; Vallas et al., 2022) as operational tasks support a network of supply chain activities. Employee turnover negatively affects logistics organizations' competitive advantage and sustainability (Vallas et al., 2022). Thus, logistics leaders' application of resilient strategies for increasing employee retention is valuable. Focusing on strategies to retain employees might prevent the knowledge loss critical to logistics organizations' efficient and effective operations. Leaders could gain valuable insight that would allow them to exploit employees' skills and abilities, sustaining the organization for the future.

The findings, results, and recommendations from this study also provided insight for logistics company stakeholders and partners on the business practices that could influence goal achievement. There is value in logistics leaders' investment in employees through job satisfaction and motivation strategies (Birou & Hoek, 2022; see Mihanović, 2021; see Tews et al., 2021). Logistics organizations can retain their workforce while maintaining the core competencies needed for specialized and synergistic supply chain activities (Premkumar et al., 2021). Logistics leaders could review my recommendations to WDM for (a) embracing fun in the workplace, (b) implementing employee cross-training, and (c) continued focus on growth, applying it to their organizations. Leaders

might use the information to identify the employee job satisfaction and motivation strategies that would benefit their organization, facilitating increased retention and competitive advantage.

Implications for Social Change

The implications for positive social change extend to individuals, organizations, communities, and economies outside WDM. 3PLs need employees to help them accomplish their missions and sustain a competitive advantage (Kane & Tomer, 2021; Kumar, 2019; Vallas et al., 2022). The organizations provide vital goods and services for consumers (Kilibarda et al., 2019). As such, logistics leaders' employee retention strategies might enhance the financial power individuals require to maximize opportunities and increase their economic stability. The strategies also have the potential to encourage economic growth as employees become more engaged in their communities and build lasting partnerships. Lowered employee turnover may enhance companies' reputations within their communities and markets, providing fewer occasions for labor shortages and market disruptions that facilitate high inflation costs. As individual, organization, and community relationships develop, so does the potential for revenue leading to companies' competitive advantage. Leaders' employee retention strategies may lessen uncertainties, optimizing individuals' job satisfaction and motivation to encourage loyalty. As company leaders focus on implementing employee retention strategies and adopting sustainable practices, leaders might realize an end to systemic employee turnover.

Recommendations for Action

Predicated on the findings and results of this study, I present recommendations for WDM's leaders concerning organization improvement and employee retention for sustained operations. An analysis of the research data revealed (a) competitive wages, (b) growth and development opportunities, and (c) recognition as key themes for increasing employee retention. Further analysis of Baldrige's criteria for determining organizational performance revealed the following strengths and opportunities for improvement that leaders can apply for growth (a) embracing fun in the workplace, (b) implementing employee cross-training, and (c) continued focus on growth. The following paragraphs provide details on the recommendations for action.

WDM's mission focuses on increasing client growth, and the organization cannot complete its mission without its employees. WDM operates in an industry with high turnover (see Keller et al., 2020; see Vallas et al., 2022) because employees perform repetitive work with subpar wages, work conditions, and growth opportunities (see Kane & Tomer, 2021; see Kumar, 2019; see Vallas et al., 2022). Although WDM offers employees several benefits that enhance job satisfaction and motivation, leaders should consider additional ways to make repetitious work seem less boring. Logistics leaders should embrace workplace fun opportunities to promote a culture of enjoyment and pleasure that influence productivity and retention (see Tews et al., 2021). I recommend that WDM implement games for warehouse tasks that allow employees to collect points to redeem for gifts. Leaders might develop a range of possible gifts along a point scale, such as company merchandise, gift cards, spa visits, PTO, or cash. Such actions may

increase WDM's ability to retain employees and increase productivity for operational efficiency.

Employee cross-training is another recommended focus area for WDM. WDM employs up to 500 employees at different times of the year with various responsibilities in operations and support (Table 12). WDM's leaders assign employees to specific operational, support, and functional areas of the warehouse, according to the day's work forecast. However, supply disruptions sometimes occur, causing delays that result in leaders sending employees home. According to Participant 1, work forecasts determine employee scheduling, and leaders send workers home when the forecasted volume fails to arrive at the warehouse. I recommend that WDM's leaders develop a cross-training plan to optimize employee productivity. Doing so could give WDM's leaders the flexibility to cover shortages in other warehouse areas (see Ann & Blum, 2020). Leaders might begin by cross-training employees working in Inbound with employees working in Inventory, as some of their processes are similar. WDM leaders' efforts might improve employees' attitudes toward their employers and enhance job satisfaction (see El-Said & Aziz, 2022).

The final recommended focus area for WDM's leaders is to continue focusing on growth strategies for the organization and its clients. WDM has three client categories whose sales contribute to revenue growth (Figure 6). However, company growth requires an expansion plan or marketing strategy to increase the number of category one clients. With the ongoing economic change increasing the cost of living and wages (see U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023; see U.S. Department of Labor, 2022), WDM's leaders

need a sustainable strategy to increase revenue and offset future expenses. I recommend that WDM's leaders increase sales and marketing efforts to gain more category one clients for the short term and add another warehouse to expand operations for the long term. Doing so might enable the company leaders to increase the operations cash flow and enhance its ability to remain solvent.

The results of this study indicate that logistics leaders should integrate various retention strategies to increase employee retention. Competition within the logistics industry challenges leaders' ability to retain employees (Krishna & Garg, 2022). Logistics leaders require actionable plans to sustain the workforce. Thus, leaders must implement job satisfaction and motivation measures that encourage employee retention.

When adopting retention strategies, logistics leaders should incorporate labor market analysis to understand the competition better and engage employees to understand their job expectations (Langbein & Roberts, 2022; LeBaron et al., 2022). As leaders develop and implement retention strategies, they should share their results at every opportunity. The results of this study might be disseminated through logistics conferences, professional meetings, stakeholder meetings, leader training sessions, social media, and publishing. After this study, I will provide WDM's leaders with a copy of the research, which they may share with other company leaders. I will offer to discuss my findings with logistics leaders in conferences and professional meetings, share the results with academic institutions, and publish the findings in logistics journals.

Recommendations for Further Research

The findings and recommendations from this study might add to the literature on logistics leader strategies for increasing employee retention. Although this single case study was limited to one logistics organization in the northeast region of the United States, future researchers should consider conducting a study in other regions. This case study was also limited to three leaders within different subunits of WDM. As such, future researchers should explore a multiple case study design to facilitate case comparisons and contrasts and mitigate biases. Future researchers might find additional information to support logistic leaders' retention strategies and their generalizability to logistics companies throughout the industry.

In addition, future researchers might explore strategies logistic leaders use to increase employee retention through different conceptual frameworks, such as the resource-based view, equity theory, and transformational leadership theory. Such an approach might provide a fresh view of the subject that promotes logistics leaders' understanding of employee resources and their value to the organization. Future researchers using alternative conceptual frameworks allow leaders to maximize employee retention strategies and create sustainable value.

Reflections

As a scholar-consultant in Walden University's DBA Consulting Capstone program, I had the opportunity to collaborate with a client organization on logistics leaders' strategies for increasing employee retention. I analyzed and evaluated the client organization's performance using the 2019-2020 Baldrige Excellence Framework,

providing actionable feedback for business improvement. I gained valuable knowledge and experience in employee retention strategies that extend beyond those practiced in military logistics, small businesses, and nonprofit management. When I started this research, I acknowledged possible biases or preconceived ideas regarding employee retention and logistics leaders' strategies that would harm study validity. Although I had specific ideas about how logistics leaders might retain employees, I realized that the research participants might not welcome my ideas. Our business environments were different, and research showed that dynamic changes in markets, economies, and industries compel leaders to adopt agile practices that benefit them. Biases create research errors that negatively influence study validity (Yin, 2018), but mitigation measures are safeguards that help researchers validate data, enhance research quality, and promote positive outcomes (Crick, 2021; Saunders et al., 2019; Stone et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). The research process challenged me to keep an open mind and thoroughly research literature for proven solutions to business improvement and sustainability strategies.

Conclusion

This qualitative single case study aimed to explore WDM's leaders' strategies to increase employee retention. Employees are essential assets to organizations' missions (Upadhyay et al., 2020), and turnover negatively influences organizational objective achievement and value creation (Molahosseini et al., 2020). Thematic analysis revealed the significance of (a) competitive wages, (b) growth and development opportunities, and (c) recognition in the evolution of leaders' strategies to increase employee retention. This

study's findings and recommendations can lead to positive business contributions and social change in individuals, organizations, communities, and economies by logistics leaders' focusing on employees' job needs. Leader development of retention plans that fully exploit employees' job satisfaction and motivation has the potential to create sustainable value now and into the future.

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Appendix: Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

1. Introduce myself to the participants and thank them for their participation.
2. Provide a brief overview of the study and its purpose.
3. Explain the interview process and timing.
4. Provide information about member checking for interview reliability and validity.
5. Inform participants of their ability to withdraw from the research at any time.
6. Provide participants with confidentiality assurance.
7. Collect consent to audio record the interview for transcription and analysis.
8. Confirm participants' participation in the study.
9. Annotate the date and time of the interview.
10. Begin the interview, which will last no longer than 60 minutes.
11. Ask the targeted interview questions and probe for more information when necessary.
12. Ask the participant the wrap-up question.
13. Thank the participant again, provide contact information for additional questions and concerns, and stop the recording.

Post Interview Protocol

1. Establish a date for member checking.
2. Complete the interview transcription.
3. Transcribe the interviews verbatim and summarize the key points.

4. Share the transcripts and summaries with participants for transparency and information verification.
5. Establish a follow-up date with participants for questions and comments.
6. Meet with the participants to discuss data interpretations.
7. Make revisions as necessary, resending to participants for validation.
8. When participants validate responses, thank them for their time.

Research Question

What strategies do logistics leaders use to increase employee retention?

Interview Questions

1. What strategies do you use to increase employee retention?
2. How do you assess the effectiveness of your strategies for increasing employee retention?
3. What employee retention strategy is most effective for your organization?
4. What key obstacles have you faced in increasing employee retention?
5. How did you address the key obstacles to increasing employee retention?
6. How do you involve your employees in the retention strategy development process?
7. What additional information would you like to share about your organization's employee retention strategies?