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Leadership Strategies That Reduce Voluntary Turnover Among Millennials

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Abstract

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MBA, California Lutheran University, 2012

BS, California State University Sacramento, 2007

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Decreased performance from high employee turnover can result in lower organizational profitability. Business leaders of sales organizations who lack leadership strategies to reduce voluntary turnover experience high turnover rates among millennials and observe significantly lower organizational productivity and profitability. Grounded in transformational leadership theory, the purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore what strategies some business leaders in sales organizations used to reduce voluntary turnover among millennial employees. The participants comprised five leaders in sales organizations from Southern California who experienced a reduction in voluntary turnover among their millennial employees. Data were collected from semistructured interviews and company documents that included employee handbooks and employee records. The data were thematically analyzed, resulting in four primary themes: (a) coaching, (b) motivating, (c) challenging intellectually, and (d) building personal relationships. A key recommendation for business leaders is to focus on building personal relationships with their employees to help reduce the rate of voluntary turnover. The implications for positive social change include enhancing the local economy by creating increased job stability for millennial employees. Millennial job stability may occur by reducing voluntary turnover among this working group.

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Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral study to my daughter and best friend, Angelyna Andrade. I work hard to make you proud. I could not have accomplished this without you; you are my purpose. Take this accomplishment as a reminder that you can achieve anything you desire. I love you.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my parents for their continued support and motivation as I advanced my academic career. This accomplishment is yours just as much as it is mine. You taught me to work hard and fight for what I want, and without your support, I would not have achieved this goal. Thank you to my family and friends that offered me laughter, advice and helped keep me sane throughout this process. Thanks to my doctoral committee for their continued guidance throughout this doctoral journey. A final thanks to the participants of this study for giving me their time.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

The most available means of reducing organizational labor costs is through business leadership to reduce voluntary employee turnover (Fletcher et al., 2018). Martinez and Raja (2018) found that an employee's replacement cost can be up to 6 to 9 months of that employee's base salary. The costs associated with employee turnover are not limited to only replacement costs but also include the loss of productivity, lower morale for the staying employees, and employee burnout from taking on the additional work from the leaving employee (Skelton et al., 2020). The associated costs of employee turnover can reduce an organization's profitability.

By 2030, researchers estimate millennials to be the largest generational workforce, totaling 75% of the U.S. workforce (Hoffman, 2018; Ramli et al., 2020). Millennials are also the generation with the least organizational loyalty, causing increased voluntary turnover (Stoyanova & Iliev, 2017). Business leaders must learn leadership strategies that reduce voluntary turnover among millennials to have continued organizational growth and profitability.

Background of the Problem

Business leaders are concerned with voluntary turnover among millennials because of the excessive costs associated with replacing employees, the loss of productivity, and the lower morale of staying employees (De Stefano et al., 2019; Frankel, 2016; Nolan, 2015; Petrucelli, 2017). An employee leaving an organization has repercussions beyond their last day of employment with an organization (De Stefano et al., 2019). When an employee leaves, the staying employees often need to pick up the additional work until a replacement employee is hired. The added work causes the remaining employees to fall behind on their work, become burned out, and often feel resentment towards the organization and its leaders (De Stefano et al., 2019). The turnover of one employee can lead to the increased turnover intention from other employees, eventually increasing voluntary employee turnover (Skelton et al., 2020).

Business leaders should learn leadership strategies that reduce voluntary turnover among millennials because this generation will make up the largest portion of the workforce by 2030 (Hoffman, 2018; Ramli et al., 2020). Several factors influence millennials to leave an organization, including dissatisfaction with their role, leader, and organization (De Sousa-Sabbagha et al., 2018). Implementing strategies that reduce voluntary turnover among millennials can benefit an organization’s profitability.

Problem Statement

Millennials’ increasing voluntary turnover rate can significantly reduce organizational profitability (Engelbrecht & Samuel, 2019). According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020), millennial employees (i.e., those born between the years of 1980 and 1999) stay with an organization for an average of only 2.8 years, with a replacement cost equal to 6 to 9 months of their base salary (Martinez & Raja, 2018). The general business problem was the rate of voluntary turnover among millennials negatively affects an organization’s profitability. The specific business problem was that some business leaders in sales organizations lack leadership strategies to reduce voluntary turnover among millennials.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore leadership strategies business leaders in sales organizations use to reduce the rate of voluntary turnover among millennials. The target population consisted of five leaders from five different sales organizations operating in Southern California who successfully used leadership strategies to reduce voluntary turnover among millennials. Reducing voluntary turnover among millennials can potentially contribute to positive social change by supporting job stability and raising the quality of life for millennials, their families, and their communities.

Nature of the Study

The three research methods are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed (Saunders et al., 2016). In this study, I employed the qualitative approach. Researchers use the qualitative method to understand the participants' experiences with a studied phenomenon using open-ended interview questions (Saunders et al., 2016). The quantitative method involves testing hypotheses and analyzing the relationship or differences between independent and dependent variables using statistical methods (Saunders et al., 2016). The quantitative method was not appropriate for this study because hypothesis testing and analysis of the relationships or differences between variables were unnecessary to address the research question. Researchers use the mixed method to analyze both quantitative and qualitative data (Saunders et al., 2016). Because this study did not include quantitative data, the mixed method was not appropriate. Therefore, the qualitative method was the most appropriate for exploring the strategies business leaders in sales organizations use to reduce voluntary turnover among millennials.

I considered three designs for my qualitative study: case study, ethnography, and narrative. Using a case study design enables a researcher to understand a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-world setting bounded by time (Yin & Campbell, 2018). I used a multiple case study to explore leadership strategies that reduce voluntary turnover among millennials. A single case study may have yielded skepticism of my analysis and findings because of having fewer data. An ethnographic design involves studying the culture of a group (Yin & Campbell, 2018). Ethnography was not an appropriate design for this study because studying a group's culture was unnecessary to address the research question. Researchers use a narrative research design to explore the differences between individual experiences within one or more environments through participants' personal stories (Eichsteller, 2019). Because I did not explore the differences in interviewees' social experiences, the narrative design was not suitable for this study.

Research Question

What leadership strategies do business leaders in sales organizations use to reduce the voluntary turnover rate among millennials?

Interview Questions

1. What strategies have you used to reduce voluntary turnover among millennials in your sales organization?

2. What aspects of leadership helped you implement your sales organization's strategies to reduce voluntary turnover among millennials?
3. What leadership strategies have you used to motivate millennial employees in your sales organization?
4. How did millennial employees in your sales organization respond to leadership strategies to reduce voluntary turnover?
5. What leadership strategies have you used to improve relationships with millennials in your sales organization?
6. What were the principal challenges you encountered when implementing your leadership strategies to reduce voluntary turnover among millennial sales employees?
7. How did you address the principal challenges to implementing the leadership strategies for reducing voluntary turnover among millennials?
8. What additional information would you like to share regarding leadership strategies used to reduce voluntary turnover among millennials?

Conceptual Framework

I chose transformational leadership theory as the conceptual framework for this study. James McGregor Burns (1978) developed the transformational leadership theory to focus on leaders engaging their followers and creating a connection that raises motivation in both the leader and followers. The four constructs of transformational leadership theory are (a) idealized influence, (b) inspirational motivation, (c) intellectual stimulation, and (d) individualized consideration (Northouse, 2019). Previous researchers have found that transformational leadership theory is the most used and regarded theory to improve leader and follower relationship and retention (Burns, 1978).

Operational Definitions

Autocratic leadership: An individual who makes all critical decisions and focuses on task accomplishment rather than the happiness of their employees and motivates employees by the threat of punishment (Lewin et al., 1939).

Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory: An individual who leads by creating mutual respect, trust, and support with each of their followers (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

Millennial generation: Individuals born between 1980 and 1999 (Arrington & Dwyer, 2018).

Servant leadership: An individual who leads by putting their follower's needs first and leads to serve the organizational greater good (Greenleaf, 1977).

Situational leadership: An individual who leads by changing their leadership depending on their followers' stage of development (Wright, 2017).

Transactional leadership: An individual who leads using an instrumental reward and punishment approach to promote their followers' productivity (Burns, 1978).

Transformational leadership: An individual who leads by engaging and building a relationship with others raises the level of motivation of both the leader and follower (Burns, 1978).

Voluntary turnover: An employee who leaves their current employment with an organization by choice (Nelissen et al., 2017).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

To improve the quality of study findings, researchers should openly report the study's assumptions, limitations, and delimitations (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). When a researcher clearly reports assumptions, limitations, and delimitations, the reader can determine if the findings are sufficient or require future research (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). In the following subsections, I will provide this study's assumptions, limitations, and delimitations.

Assumptions

Assumptions are accepted as true and certain without supporting evidence (Li et al., 2019). I made three assumptions in this study. The first assumption was that participants would understand the interview questions and answer them truthfully. Another assumption was that participants have actively implemented strategies to reduce voluntary turnover among millennials. My final assumption was that the interviews would yield sufficient data to answer the research question.

Limitations

Limitations are weaknesses beyond the researcher's control that may cause uncertainty in the findings (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). One limitation of this study was the location of the sample. I chose the location of this sample based on convenience and proximity to me as the researcher. Another limitation was the brief time limit of the study. The location and time limit limitations may have caused me to be unable to collect all strategies used by leaders to reduce voluntary turnover among millennials.

Delimitations

Delimitations are boundaries of a study created by the researcher to achieve the study's objective (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). There were three delimitations in this study. The first delimitation was the chosen profession because I only focused on leaders in sales organizations in this study. The second delimitation was the sample size of five business leaders to reach data saturation. The third delimitation was leadership strategies that reduce voluntary turnover among only the millennial generation rather than all employee generations.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

Leaders may use the findings to improve their business practice by implementing the successful strategies used by business leaders in sales organizations that reduce voluntary turnover among millennials. Researchers have estimated that most business leaders are ill equipped to manage millennials and their needs resulting in increased turnover (Deluliis & Saylor, 2021). From the results of the current study, business leaders may gain insights into influencing and motivating their millennial employees to remain with the organization. By reducing voluntary turnover, business leaders may see a decreased cost of new employee recruitment and training and increased organizational efficiency and profitability.

Implications for Social Change

By 2030, researchers estimate that 75% of the U.S. workforce will be millennial workers (Deluliis & Saylor, 2021; Hoffman, 2018). The study results may support positive social change by providing business leaders with strategies that reduce voluntary turnover among millennial salespeople. Reducing voluntary resignations among millennial salespeople may lead to an increase in job stability, which, in turn, may lead to an improved quality of life for millennials, their families, and their communities.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The objective of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies business leaders in sales organizations use to reduce the rate of voluntary turnover among millennials to decrease the negative influence on an organization's profitability. Analyzing existing professional and academic literature helped identify leadership strategies that business leaders use to reduce voluntary turnover among millennials. In this literature review, I aimed to identify gaps in the literature and research by comparing and analyzing the collected sources. I collected the literature to find common themes on strategic leadership practices that have reduced voluntary turnover among millennials as well as millennial needs and values and how they can reduce voluntary turnover when met.

This literature review is organized into four primary topics: transformational leadership, similar and contrasting leadership theories, millennials, and voluntary millennial turnover. The study includes my investigation of current literature to explore strategies business leaders in sales organizations use to reduce voluntary turnover among millennials using the chosen conceptual framework, transformational leadership theory. In the subsection on transformational leadership, I provide an in-depth review of the conceptual framework selected, transformational leadership theory, including the theory's evolution and the four constructs of the theory. The following subsection includes an analysis of similar and contrasting leadership theories, and I explain why those theories were not appropriate for the study. The subsection regarding millennial needs contains an in-depth discussion of the needs and values of millennials. In the last subsection on voluntary employee turnover, I discuss why millennials leave their organization, how the turnover affects the organization, and the role a leader has in reducing voluntary turnover among millennials.

To locate literature for this review, I used the following keyword search terms and phrases: *autocratic leadership*, *autonomy*, *collaboration*, *corporate social responsibility, ethics, generational similarities and differences, growth opportunities, inclusion and diversity, leader influence on turnover, leader relationship, LXM theory, millennials, millennial engagement, millennial motivation, millennial needs, millennial retention, millennial turnover, millennial values, sales organizations, servant leadership, situational leadership, sustainability, transactional leadership, transformational leadership, transformational leadership constructs, transformational leadership evolution, turnover organizational impact, turnover intention, voluntary turnover, and work-life balance.* The Walden University Library was the primary access point for the sources used in this study. The literature review includes 86 peer-reviewed journal articles, six books, and one government website (see Table 1). I did not reference any non-peer-reviewed sources to maintain scholarly credibility.

Table 1

Literature Review Reference Breakout

Reference Source	>5 years	<5 years	% Total references	%<5 year
Peer-reviewed journal articles	9	77	92.5%	89.5%
Books	4	2	6.5%	33.3%
Government reports	0	1	1.1%	100.0%
Totals	13	80	100.0%	86.0%

Transformational Leadership

I chose transformational leadership theory as the conceptual framework for this study. Transformational leadership is defined as an individual who leads their employees by engaging and building relationships with them, causing a lift in motivation in both the leader and the employee (Burns, 1978). Kultalahti and Viitala (2015) and Lee et al. (2020) found that transformational leadership theory is the most used and regarded theory for improving the relationship between leader and employee. A transformational leader motivates and develops their employees to reach their highest potential and is interested in their employees' needs, values, and long-term goals (Northouse, 2019). Transformational leaders lead by example and are role models to their followers; their leadership inspires and influences their followers to be more engaged and productive in the workplace (Flynn, 2018; Jauhar et al., 2017). Leaders from organizations across the world have trained their leaders on transformational leadership and its four constructs.

In the following subsection, I discuss the evolution of the transformational leadership theory since it was introduced in 1973 through its current uses. Then I review the four constructs of transformational leadership theory in depth. According to Burns (1978), the four foundational constructs of transformational leadership are:

1. Idealized influence
2. Inspirational motivation
3. Intellectual stimulation
4. Individualized consideration.

Evolution of Transformational Leadership

James V. Downton introduced the idea of transformational leadership theory in 1973 (Northouse, 2019). Transformational leadership became part of the new leadership paradigm that focused more on leadership's charismatic and affective features (Aledenat, 2018; Flynn, 2018). James McGregor Burns (1978) then expanded and refined the idea of transformational leadership in 1978. Before transformational leadership, the common leadership practice was often called the great man leadership theory. Great leaders were born with specific attributes in the great man leadership theory, such as higher intellect or strength, which helped them become leaders (Safonov et al., 2018). These natural-born attributes are what made men powerful and able to lead. Burns believed that leadership was different from power and natural-born abilities and developed the transformational leadership theory to show the relationship between leader and follower and that there cannot be a leader without followers.

Bernard M. Bass (1985) introduced new additions to the existing transformational leadership model that did not fully align with the previous work of Burns in that Bass's additions focused more on the followers' needs versus the needs of the leaders. Bass's additions included the idea that charisma was necessary but was not enough to be a successful transformational leader (Northouse, 2019). One other difference between

Burns and Bass was their ideas on transformational and transactional leadership (Bass, 1985). Burns viewed the two leadership styles as independent from one another, while Bass (1999) believed that both leadership styles could be simultaneously displayed. Because of the additions and differences to Burns's model, transformational leadership is often referred to as Bass's transformational leadership to differentiate the theories.

When expanding the leadership theory, Bass (1985, 1999) argued that followers could be motivated to do more than expected (Northouse, 2019). A leader motivates followers to do more than expected by (a) helping their followers understand the importance and value of specified goals, (b) inspiring followers to transcend their own self-interest for the sake of the greater good, and (c) influencing their followers to address their own higher-level needs (Bass, 1999; Northouse, 2019). The three actions leaders use to motivate followers to do more than expected led to the creation and refinement of the four constructs of transformational leadership. The four constructs are (a) idealized influence, (b) inspirational motivation, (c) intellectual stimulation, and (d) individualized consideration (Bass, 1999).

Four Constructs of Transformational Leadership

The four constructs of transformational leadership are the foundation of the theory. According to Bass (1999), a leader is most effective when all four constructs of transformational leadership are practiced on a regular basis and with every employee. Leaders should understand each construct and know how to apply them to their day-to-day leadership strategies. In the following subsections, I will provide an in-depth discussion of each of the four constructs.

Idealized Influence. The first construct of transformational leadership is called idealized influence. Idealized influence is the emotional element of transformational leadership (Northouse, 2019). Leaders use their charisma to motivate and create a trusting relationship with their followers (Yue et al., 2019). Engelbrecht and Samuel (2019) revealed that employees who trusted their leaders had a lower intention to quit and stayed with their organization for more extended periods. Millennials are known as the workgroup to have the least loyalty to their companies, but they are loyal to their leaders (Skelton et al., 2020).

In the idealized influence construct, leaders act as role models to their followers (Northouse, 2019). Leaders demonstrate high moral and ethical behaviors, such as equality, fairness, and respect for others, and demonstrate these behaviors by leading by example. Henry et al. (2019) found that followers will try to emulate the behaviors of their leaders, creating a team of trust and high morals. Followers who emulate the behavior of their leaders tend to have increased job satisfaction and productivity as well as improved engagement (Bell, 2018). Leaders who practice idealized influence are respected, trusted, and followed with little hesitation (Henry et al., 2019).

Idealized influence in a leader is necessary for millennials because it helps create the relationship they seek with their direct leader. Millennials want a genuine and trusting relationship with their direct leader (Godinho-Bitencourt et al., 2019; Holderness et al., 2019). Millennials also want a leader whose values match their own (Petrucelli, 2017). A leader who exercises idealized influence will act with high morals and integrity, which is important for millennials.

Inspirational Motivation. The second construct of transformational leadership is inspirational motivation. Inspirational motivation is the communication element of transformational leadership (Northouse, 2019). Through inspirational motivation, leaders communicate ambitious standards and expectations to their followers and motivate them to become committed to the larger organizational goal (Iangat et al., 2019; Northouse, 2019). Leaders motivate followers to achieve more than they thought and rise above any challenges. Leaders also inspire followers to look beyond their own self-interest and contribute to the organization’s shared vision (Aledenat, 2018).

Business leaders use inspirational motivation to improve the morale and energy of their team by using emotional appeals and encouraging words (Iangat et al., 2019; Northouse, 2019; Yue et al., 2019). As leaders communicate the organizational goals to their teams, a sense of community, belonging, and collaboration occurs between their team members. This team collaboration leads to improved individual work performance (Henry et al., 2019; Iangat et al., 2019). A team that collaborates causes work engagement to increase, creating a better working environment.

Leaders who practice inspirational motivation appeal to the millennial generation because they motivate them to be and do better (Deluliis & Saylor, 2021). Millennials want to be challenged, and a leader can use inspirational motivation to bring out the best in their team members, far beyond what the team members felt capable of doing independently (Hesar et al., 2019; Jauhar et al., 2017). Inspirational motivation also helps deepen the relationship between the leader and millennial follower, which is a need for millennials in the workplace (Deluliis & Saylor, 2021).

Intellectual Stimulation. The third construct of transformational leadership is intellectual stimulation. Intellectual stimulation is the innovative element of the transformational leadership theory (Northouse, 2019). Intellectual stimulation is the action of helping team members be creative, innovative, and confident in challenging the status quo (Aledenat, 2018; Bligh et al., 2018; Northouse, 2019). A leader who practices intellectual stimulation will support their team members by trying innovative approaches and engaging in problem solving.

Millennials want the autonomy to create solutions for organizational problems. Bligh et al. (2018) found that leaders using intellectual stimulation helped change the perception of errors for their team members. Team members who viewed errors as learning opportunities were more creative and innovative in finding new and different approaches to existing organizational problems (Bligh et al., 2018; Jauhar et al., 2017). Autonomy in one’s role is achieved through intellectual stimulation (Hesar et al., 2019). As leaders motivate team members to be innovative, they show the team members that they trust them and want them to have autonomy over their role.

Intellectual stimulation is essential for leaders to exercise because it is a need for millennials. Millennials want to continue learning and know that they have the opportunity for growth within an organization (White, 2018). Using intellectual stimulation, leaders can keep their team members engaged by pushing themselves to learn new and different approaches and create new dimensions to their roles (Pathirage & Weerasinghe, 2020). Millennials enjoy collaborating in the workplace, and a leader who practices intellectual stimulation encourages collaboration to happen on a regular basis.

Individualized Consideration. The fourth construct of transformational leadership is individualized consideration. Individualized consideration is the supportive element of the transformational leadership theory (Northouse, 2019). Leaders who practice individualized consideration listen to the needs of each employee while providing a supportive climate (Henry et al., 2019; Northouse, 2019). This type of leader focuses on spending time with each employee and building a caring and unique relationship with each of them (Hesar et al., 2019). The time spent together fosters the unique relationship between the leader and employee.

Leaders who build unique relationships with each employee can identify their differences and view each employee as an individual rather than a group of people (Lee et al., 2018). Through individualized consideration, leaders understand how their employees want to receive feedback and be recognized. A leader who understands the individual needs of their employees can build a stronger relationship with them, helping improve the employee’s engagement (Henry et al., 2019; Rachmawati et al., 2018; Yue et al., 2019). A leader who knows the individual needs of their employees can also help them maintain a healthy work-life balance by providing flexibility in their role.

Individualized consideration in a leader is important to the success of the relationship between that leader and millennial employee (Godinho-Bitencourt et al., 2019; Henry et al., 2019; Hesar et al., 2019). Millennials need constant feedback and recognition, which can be achieved through individualized consideration. Millennials also need a work-life balance and flexibility in their role, and a leader who practices individualized consideration can achieve this need. Through individualized consideration, a leader can make each employee feel appreciated and valued because they will know how to recognize the employee based on their individual needs. An employee who feels appreciated and valued will have less intention to quit.

Transformational Leadership Strengths and Criticisms. As with all leadership theories, transformational leadership has its strengths and criticisms. In addition to discussing the strengths and criticisms of transformational leadership, in this subsection, I will also provide a comprehensive justification of why transformational leadership was chosen as the conceptual framework for this study.

One of the strengths of transformational leadership is that it has been extensively researched by people with various backgrounds (Lee et al., 2020; Raza & Ahmed, 2020; Safonov et al., 2018). Because of the extensive research, business leaders have used the transformational leadership theory successfully and have applied it to diverse organizations and in different industries (Northouse, 2019). The vast application of transformational leadership theory has provided extensive evidence naming transformational leadership as a highly effective leadership strategy (Lee et al., 2020). Another strength of transformational leadership is that leaders using this method lead by example and advocate for their followers (Raza & Ahmed, 2020). A third strength of transformational leadership is the focus on the relationship between leader and follower (Yue et al., 2019). Transformational leadership exists to understand the needs of others and help provide for those needs. The leader also grows professionally and personally by helping followers (Northouse, 2019; Yue et al., 2019). A leader uses transformational leadership to move followers into a higher moral responsibility standard (Watts & Dieffenderfer, 2021; Yulianti & Prameswari, 2020).

Transformational leadership also has some weaknesses to address. One of the criticisms of transformational leadership is that the dimensions are not clearly defined as the four constructs often overlap one another (Northouse, 2019). Researchers often have difficulties defining the parameters of transformational leadership because of the lack of conceptual clarity. Researchers not having defined parameters in transformational leadership make it difficult for them to differentiate against other leadership theories and measure them. Another criticism of transformational leadership is the idea that the theory is a personality trait rather than a behavior (Northouse, 2019). A leadership theory regarded as a personality trait rather than a behavior is problematic because personality traits cannot be taught (Bass, 1999). An additional criticism of transformational leadership is that it may be used negatively. Transformational leadership is focused on motivating and inspiring followers to work on a greater goal. There have been many historical examples of this method used for harmful and unjust purposes, such as racial injustices (Northouse, 2019). Leaders need to use this theory ethically and not harm others.

Despite the criticisms of transformational leadership, it was the chosen conceptual framework of this study. The four constructs, (a) idealized influence, (b) inspirational motivation, (c) intellectual stimulation, and (d) individualized consideration, all causally relate to the needs of millennial followers (Engelbrecht & Samuel, 2019). Through idealized influence, leaders build trusting relationships with their followers and act with high moral standards, which are needs for millennials (Wai Meng Yap & Badri, 2020). Through inspirational motivation, leaders motivate their followers to grow by helping them realize organizational goals. A leader who uses intellectual stimulation continuously challenges their followers and pushes them beyond what they thought possible. A leader using intellectual stimulation supports their followers to be innovative and collaborative. Last, a leader who uses individualized consideration deepens the relationship with their followers (Deluliis & Saylor, 2021). The leader explores the unique needs of each follower and adapts to those needs to be a better leader for them. Leaders who use transformational leadership can meet every need of the millennial workgroup.

Similar and Contrasting Leadership Theories

This section of the literature review will discuss three similar leadership theories and two contrasting leadership theories. The three similar theories are leader-member exchange theory, servant leadership, and situational leadership. The two contrasting theories are autocratic leadership and transactional leadership. I researched both similar and contrasting leadership strategies to ensure I selected the conceptual framework to best address the research question in this study.

Similar Leadership Theories

Transformational leadership theory was the chosen conceptual framework for this study, but other leadership theories are similar in practice. Because of the similarities, the following leadership strategies were considered potential conceptual frameworks but were not chosen because each of them lacked the necessary elements needed to lead millennials. In the following section of the literature review, I review and analyze three additional leadership strategies in depth. By analyzing each leadership theory, I address the similarities and differences to transformational leadership and why the theory was not chosen as the conceptual framework. The three additional leadership theories that I discuss are (a) leader-member exchange theory, (b) servant leadership, and (c) situational leadership.

Leader-Member Exchange Theory. The LMX theory is a leadership theory focused on the interactions between leaders and followers (Megheirkouni, 2017). A leader using this method will create mutual respect, trust, and support with each of their followers (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Along with other leadership theories, transformational leadership focuses on either the leader or the follower. Still, in LMX theory, the focal point is the dyadic relationship between leaders and followers (Lu & Sun, 2017). LMX theory derives from the belief that leaders have unique and distinct relationships with each follower instead of treating all followers as a collective group (Deluliis & Saylor, 2021; Raghuram et al., 2017; Seo et al., 2018). Millennials need unique and distinctive relationships in the workplace.

LMX theory originated as vertical dyad linkage theory in 1975 (Northouse, 2019). Each vertical dyad represented the unique relationship between the leader and follower, and the leader-member exchange theory focused on the quality of those individual relationships. The vertical dyads were considered either in-group or out-group and were determined by the follower and their performance on tasks (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Megheirkouni, 2017). A follower in the in-group had a higher-quality relationship with their leader, whereas followers in the out-group had a lower-quality relationship.

According to the LMX theory, a leader distributes resources to their followers depending on the quality of their relationship (Sias & Duncan, 2019). Followers who are part of the in-group receive more influence and trust from their leaders, which results in more tasks and responsibilities. According to Raza and Ahmed (2020), leaders who practice LMX theory and have high-quality relationships with their followers tend to reduce voluntary turnover by providing growth opportunities.

LMX theory is like transformational leadership theory in that they both focus on having unique and distinct relationships with their followers (Raza & Ahmed, 2020). I did not select the LMX theory as the conceptual framework for this study because of the different treatment of in-group versus out-group followers. Millennials have high moral standards and are not happy working in an organization that does not treat all employees fairly and equally. The separation between the two groups gives the appearance of discrimination against the out-group and bias and preferential treatment from the leader. LMX theory was also not chosen as the conceptual framework because there is not a clear explanation of how a follower can be part of the in-group. Because of the lack of clarity, followers can feel left out and not valued, causing an increase in turnover (Lu & Sun, 2017). The lack of clarity also causes the leader an inability to learn the strategies to help followers become part of the in-group and maintain fairness among the team.

Servant Leadership. In servant leadership, an individual leads by putting the needs of their followers first and leads to serve the organizational greater good, community, and society at large (Greenleaf, 1977). Servant leadership requires the leader to be attentive to their followers, be empathetic, and nurturers while also empowering them and helping them develop to their full potential (Northouse, 2019; Yigit & Bozkurt, 2017). A leader who practices servant leadership places the needs of their followers before their own, and they demonstrate strong moral and ethical behaviors (Yigit & Bozkurt, 2017).

Researchers have not agreed on defined characteristics and principles for servant leadership, causing many to view servant leadership as a leadership approach and not a theory (Northouse, 2019). The first attempt at creating a framework was made in 2002, and it included ten characteristics (Northouse, 2019). The ten characteristics of servant leadership are (a) listening, (b) empathy, (c) healing, (d) awareness, (e) persuasion, (f) conceptualization, (g) foresight, (h) stewardship, (i) commitment to people's growth, and (j) building community. The most recent attempt to create a framework for servant leadership comes from Coetzer et al. (2017). Coetzer believed there are eight characteristics that are central to the foundation of servant leadership. The eight characteristics are (a) authenticity, (b) humility, (c) integrity, (d) listening, (e) compassion, (f) accountability, (g) courage, and (h) altruism. There is no consensus among scholars on the primary attributes of servant leadership (Coetzer et al., 2017; Safonov et al., 2018).

Positive outcomes are the result of leaders practicing servant leadership effectively. Some potential positive outcomes are follower performance and growth, organizational growth, and societal effect (Northouse, 2019). Wang, Meng, et al. (2019) found that followers of servant leaders were more successful in their careers and learned more hard and soft skills through their leader. With the growth of the follower, the organization also grows. Followers with servant leaders are more innovative and creative (Sheikh et al., 2019; Wang, Yu et al., 2019). As an organization grows, it creates a positive societal effect by providing jobs and services to the surrounding community.

Servant leadership is like transformational leadership because it focuses on putting followers first and having high moral standards. Alternatively, servant leadership conflicts with transformational leadership as servant leadership views leadership influence as a negative factor and prefers to share or give control to their followers. Servant leadership was not chosen as the conceptual framework for this study as millennials want a leader with a clear and direct vision that they can follow. Servant leadership was also not selected because there is no clear framework to be followed.

Situational Leadership. Situational leadership is a leadership theory in which an individual leads by adapting their leadership style to match the followers' stage of development (Wright, 2017). Situational leadership has been widely used in business leadership training and development worldwide (Strek, 2018; Wright, 2017). The foundation of situational leadership includes a directive and supportive dimension from the leader (Northouse, 2019). The dimension that the leader uses with their follower is dependent on that followers' competency on the specified goal. An individual who uses situational leadership effectively will continue to match their leadership style to their followers' competency levels on changing goals. Leaders who practice situational leadership successfully can improve their followers' performance (Wright, 2017). Situational leadership is effective because leaders use a different leadership approach with each follower and task.

Situational leadership has two dimensions, directive and supportive, and a leader's behaviors will change depending on the dimension they are in (Wright, 2017). A leader in a directive dimension will set specific goals, explain how they want it done, and who is responsible for the goals. In contrast, a leader in a supportive dimension will ask for feedback and input from the follower and create a solution or allow the follower to solve independently (Wright, 2017). Within situational leadership, there are four styles that a leader uses based on the competency of the follower. The first style, referred to as S1, is high directive and low supportive. In S1, the leader is in control and supervises the followers heavily based on the given directions. The second style, S2, is high directive and high supportive. In S2, the leader allows for input from the follower but still has the final word on how to achieve the goal. The third style, S3, is highly supportive and low directive. In S3, a leader encourages the follower to take control and make decisions about daily smaller goals, and the leader is available for advice. The fourth style, S4, is low supportive and low directive; this leader gives complete control to the follower and does not intervene.

Situational leadership is similar to transformational leadership. The foundation of the theory is to lead each follower based on their needs and requires the leader to be open to change and adaptable. Situational leadership, like transformational leadership, is used extensively in organizations. Situational leadership was not chosen as the conceptual framework for this study because it lacks relationship-building between leader and follower (Wai Meng Yap & Badri, 2020). Situational leadership is a model for leaders to help followers learn skills and have them complete tasks and goals. Still, the model does not satisfy the millennial need for a relationship with their leader, and the theory does not mention ethical leadership behavior (Sahai, 2021). Millennials also need constant feedback and recognition; the situational leadership model only provides that when the leader is highly supportive, not while in a highly directive dimension.

Contrasting Leadership Theories

I also reviewed contrasting theories to ensure that transformational leadership was the correct conceptual framework for this study. This study aims to understand leadership strategies business leaders in sales organizations use to reduce voluntary turnover among millennials. The goal of reviewing contrasting theories was to solidify my choice of transformational leadership as the conceptual framework for this study by understanding if contrasting theories could better serve millennial needs. The contrasting theories that are discussed are autocratic leadership and transactional leadership.

Autocratic Leadership. Autocratic leadership is one of the older leadership theories used in organizations (Fiaz et al., 2017). An individual who practices autocratic leadership leads by making all the important decisions without input from their followers (Fiaz et al., 2017; Lewin et al., 1939). An autocratic leader is more focused on the accomplishment of tasks rather than the happiness of their followers and uses fear and threat of punishment to motivate their followers (Lewin et al., 1939). An Autocratic leader does not focus on creating a relationship with each of their followers.

Autocratic leadership is beneficial when leaders need to make fast organizational decisions. According to Rast et al. (2013), autocratic leadership is advantageous when followers have high self-uncertainty. A follower with high self-uncertainty looks for a leader that will direct every task because they have low confidence in their own abilities (Rast et al., 2013). Followers who accept the organizational hierarchy are also more accepting of autocratic leaders, whereas followers who question and challenge the organizational hierarchy do not accept an autocratic leader (Rast et al., 2013). Employees with autocratic leaders have a higher intention to quit, leading to increased employee turnover.

Autocratic leadership was not chosen as the conceptual framework as there is no focus on relationship building, which is a need of millennials. An autocratic leader also does not challenge their followers because they give exact directions on how to complete tasks and do not provide autonomy over their followers' role. Autocratic leadership is similar to situational leadership only in the high directive and low supportive dimension (Rast et al., 2013). Millennials need a strong relationship with their leaders and want to be mentally challenged, which is provided through transformational leadership.

Transactional Leadership. A transactional leader is a person who leads using an approach of reward and punishment to promote their followers' productivity (Burns, 1978). A transactional leader does not learn the unique needs of their individual followers, nor do they focus on their personal development; they merely want to advance their agenda (Li et al., 2018; Northouse, 2019). A transactional leader can be considered influential only because followers understand it is in their best interest to do as the leader says and not because they trust or respect the leader (Breevaart et al., 2014; Northouse, 2019).

Transactional leadership includes two factors that leaders promote their followers' productivity. The two factors of transactional leadership are contingent reward and management by exception. A contingent reward is something of value that the leader gives their follower when the follower completes a task. Management by exception is a leader who uses corrective criticism and negative feedback to correct the behaviors of their followers (Ghani et al., 2018; Northouse, 2019).

Transactional leadership was not chosen as the conceptual framework for this study as millennials need constant and immediate feedback and recognition. A transactional leader will only provide negative feedback and criticism (Northouse, 2019). The management by exception factor in transactional leadership can cause millennials to lose engagement as they will not feel valued and appreciated in their role (Rachmawati et al., 2018). Breevaart et al. (2014) studied transformational leadership versus transactional leadership and found that millennial followers preferred a transformational leader over a transactional leader. The results revealed that a transactional leader could get followers to complete the required tasks while a transformational leader helps their followers perform beyond what is expected (Breevaart et al., 2014; Li et al., 2018).

Millennials

In the following section of the literature review, I focus on millennials. For this study, millennials are individuals born between 1980 and 1999 (Arrington & Dwyer, 2018). The section regarding millennials includes an evaluation of literature on the specific needs of millennials. This section also includes a discussion on the values that are important to millennials. Leaders must understand millennials' expectations and values to adjust their current leading methods and become more effective leaders for this working group.

Expectations

There are various needs that millennials deem necessary to enjoy their workplace. Because millennials' needs differ from those of other work generations, leaders are responsible for learning these needs and adapting to the needs to properly lead the millennial workgroup (Chenkovich & Cates, 2016; Wood, 2019). The common needs that I found across numerous studies include (a) growth opportunities, (b) competitive salaries and benefits packages, (c) collaboration, (d) constant feedback and recognition, (e) work-life balance and flexibility, and (f) coaching or mentoring relationship with their direct leader (Chambers, 2010; Chenkovich & Cates, 2016; Rachmawati et al., 2018; White, 2018). In the following section of the literature review, I will review each millennial need in-depth.

Growth Opportunities. A millennial will look for an organization that offers growth opportunities when choosing where to work. Millennials prefer an organization where they are constantly challenged, and the potential for career growth is clearly defined (Campione, 2015; Hoffman, 2018; White, 2018). Career growth opportunities can be both vertical and lateral. Vertical opportunities are those in which employees are promoted upward on the organization’s hierarchal structure. In contrast, a lateral growth opportunity has the employee staying at the same level but moving to another department within the organization (Fought & Misawa, 2019). Lateral promotions can be considered growth opportunities as the employee would learn new skills required for their new role.

Millennials want to progress in their roles. Progression in a role can come from continuously being mentally challenged with new tasks (Hoffman, 2018). Another way to create growth opportunities is to provide challenging work for millennials. Challenging work for millennials can take the form of assigning them new tasks and responsibilities, having them train other colleagues, or taking the lead on a new project (Fought & Misawa, 2019). According to Calk and Patrick (2017), the intention to leave an organization rises when a millennial is not challenged and does not have growth opportunities. The millennial leader is responsible for making sure followers are constantly challenged and providing them with new tasks.

Competitive Salary and Benefits Package. The salary that an employee earns is part of the benefits package offered by an organization. Millennials are highly interested in their salary and the benefits the organization offers. The millennial workforce is known to leave organizations to find other organizations that provide a better salary and benefits package (Kultalahti & Viitala, 2015; Wai Meng Yap & Badri, 2020). Many millennials choose an organization based solely on the salary offered.

The benefits package is not limited to just medical insurance benefits. An organization's benefits package also includes organizational benefits offered to keep employees satisfied. Examples of organizational benefits include complimentary snacks and drinks, an on-site gym facility, tuition reimbursement, and positive and fun workplace culture. According to Campione (2015), the combination of a competitive salary and an attractive benefits package can be the deciding factor for a millennial when choosing to stay with an organization. Leaders can create their own benefits to keep millennials engaged, such as flexible workdays, free lunches, or casual dress days (Deluliis & Saylor, 2021).

Collaboration. Collaboration is an important need for millennials. Collaboration is working with a group to achieve a goal or complete a task (Chambers, 2010). Millennials would prefer to work in an organization in which collaborating is part of their daily role, as this allows millennials to interact socially with their colleagues (Chambers, 2010; Pathirage & Weerasinghe, 2020). According to White (2018), 88% of millennials prefer a collaborative work culture. As millennials grew up, they were raised to be open-minded and voice their comments and concerns (Fero & Dokoupilová, 2019). Being raised to be open-minded and vocal has caused millennials to expect this same behavior at work (Wood, 2019). Millennials can be open-minded and vocal in the workplace by collaborating with their colleagues and leaders. Millennials who cannot easily collaborate in their organization tend to leave for an organization that does allow frequent collaboration (Chambers, 2010; Sun & Wang, 2017; Watts & Dieffenderfer, 2021; Wood, 2019). Collaboration helps millennials be heard and noticed.

Constant Feedback and Recognition. Collaboration is a tool used by millennials to be heard and noticed. An important need for millennials is to receive continuous feedback and be recognized often by their leaders. Multiple studies have noted that immediate and frequent positive feedback and recognition is a need for millennials in the workplace (Chambers, 2010; Chenkovich & Cates, 2016; Holderness et al., 2019; Rachmawati et al., 2018; Wai Meng Yap & Badri, 2020; White, 2018; Wood, 2019). Because millennials grew up with every accomplishment acknowledged and every event or sports participation rewarded, they expect the same behavior at work from their managers and others in the organization (Mahmoud et al., 2020). Millennials want to be valued and receive positive feedback and recognition for a job well done (Rachmawati et al., 2018). The need to be valued by their organization leads them to be actively engaged and productive in their role and will continue to do so when they know recognition will be given for their actions (Chambers, 2010; White, 2018). Millennials who do not receive adequate feedback or recognition will look for organizations to provide this need. Leaders need to understand this need and provide the required feedback and recognition.

Work-Life Balance and Flexibility. Millennials are the product of divorced households, single-parent households, and hard-working parents. Growing up with this different family dynamic has caused millennials to value a work-life balance. Millennials prefer to have a balanced work-life balance and will leave an organization if their work-life balance is not to their liking (Sánchez-Hernández et al., 2019). Millennials work hard and want to have an equal amount of time to spend on living life through traveling, pursuing hobbies, and quality time with family and friends (Dick, 2019). Millennials do not want to live only to work; they want to work to live a fulfilled life.

Millennials have grown up with technology easily accessible to them. Any questions millennials had, were quickly answered on their phone or tablet by researching the internet. Possessing this technology at their disposal and the ability to work from anywhere has created the need for a work-life balance and work flexibility. Because technology has become so easily accessible, millennials do not see the need for employees to be in an office to complete the job. Because of accessible technology, millennials prefer working for an organization where they do not have to be in an office every day and create their work schedules to accommodate life situations (Campione, 2015). Millennials are attracted to organizations with flexible work schedules and leave organizations whose work schedules are too strict (Watts & Dieffenderfer, (2021).

Relationship With Their Direct Leader. Millennials' lives revolve around their relationships, and the workplace is no different. Relationships are critical to millennials as they want to have strong bonds with friends and family (Godinho-Bitencourt et al., 2019). In the workplace, millennials seek to have a trusting and respected relationship with their direct leaders (Chambers, 2010; Godinho-Bitencourt et al., 2019; Holderness et al., 2019; Raghuram et al., 2017). Millennials want a leader who is more than just a manager; they want their leader to be a coach, mentor, and a friend to them (Chambers, 2010). Lee et al. (2018) stated that millennials need the relationship with their leader to be unique and genuine. A leader needs to know their employees as individuals and not generalize their approach to all employees (Deluliis & Saylor, 2021; Dick, 2019; Nolan, 2015). A strong relationship between business leaders and millennials includes providing growth opportunities, encouraging collaboration, providing frequent feedback and recognition, and allowing flexibility in their work schedules (Ramli et al., 2020).

Values

Values are important to millennials. Millennials are known as the more ethically and morally conscious generation than other work generations (Wiengarten et al., 2017). The millennial generation is more vocal about inequalities, injustices, and the future state of our planet. When millennials look for job opportunities, they value and prefer organizations that practice social responsibility, diversity, and inclusion (Bernardino, 2021; Supanti & Butcher, 2019; Yulianti & Prameswari, 2020). Millennials seek out organizations that encourage and promote corporate social responsibility (CSR) and diversity and inclusion. Millennials tend to choose an organization whose organizational values match their own (Petrucelli, 2017). Organizations that practice CSR and diversity and inclusion can retain millennials longer than organizations that do not practice these initiatives (Bernardino, 2021).

Corporate Social Responsibility. Organizations that practice corporate social responsibility (CSR) have been increasing. CSR refers to an organization that is socially responsible and accountable to its stakeholders through self-regulatory practices (Shea & Hawn, 2019). Organizations that have CSR practices implemented are attractive to millennials because the practices show that the organization cares about its employees, the community, and the future state of the planet (Yulianti & Prameswari, 2020). CSR practices positively influence the organization's brand and identity, which help attract and retain millennials (Tourky et al., 2019; Wiengarten et al., 2017). Millennials would accept a lower salary to work for an organization that practices CSR compared to an organization that does not practice CSR (Alonso & Llach, 2019; Supanti & Butcher, 2019). Millennials are proud to work for organizations trying to change their communities positively and worldwide (Bernardino, 2021).

Diversity and Inclusion. Diversity and inclusion practices are important to millennials. Diversity and inclusion are also critical practices to the success of an organization (Alonso & Llach, 2019). Millennials view diversity and inclusion as a necessary practice in an organization they choose to work for (Gilbert, 2019). Parents raised millennials to be racially aware and open-minded (Chu, 2017). Parents also raised millennials to believe that people with diverse backgrounds and cultures must be treated equally, heard, and included in decision-making (Chu, 2017; Gilbert, 2019). Millennials will leave an organization if it does not actively promote and practice diversity and inclusion initiatives (Lehan et al., 2020). Bernardino (2021) states that millennials choose not to work for an organization that does not value corporate social responsibility and does not practice diversity and inclusion initiatives.

Voluntary Millennial Turnover

Voluntary turnover is a high financial cost to an organization. Voluntary turnover is when an employee decides to leave their current organization by choice (Nelissen et al., 2017). This section of the literature review will discuss why millennials choose to leave organizations, the effect of turnover, and the leaders' role in reducing voluntary turnover. Leaders who understand the reasons for voluntary turnover can use that information to change their leadership strategies and reduce voluntary turnover among millennials.

Reasons for Turnover

Millennials as a work group are different than their previous counterparts. Millennials are regarded as the work generation with the lowest level of organizational loyalty (Stoyanova & Iliev, 2017). Millennials only stay with an organization for up to 2.6 years before moving on to their next job (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018). Some of the most common reasons millennials leave organizations include dissatisfaction with their role, leader, and organization (De Sousa-Sabbagha et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2017; Rubenstein et al., 2019; Skelton et al., 2020). When a millennial is unhappy in the workplace, the intent to leave starts increasing faster than in previous work groups (Wai Meng Yap & Badri, 2020).

Some of the most common factors to unhappiness in the workplace include boredom and lack of trust in their colleagues, leaders, and organization. When millennials are bored in their role, they are more likely to leave an organization (Campione, 2015; Hoffman, 2018). Millennials want to be mentally challenged and know their growth opportunities, and their intention to leave rises when these needs are not met. The relationship between millennial and leader is critical to the employee's happiness. Millennials who do not have a trusting relationship with their direct leader will seek employment elsewhere, searching for the leadership relationship they need (Lee et al., 2017; Rothausen et al., 2017). Millennials want to know that their leader has their best interest in mind and supports them and their growth (Deluliis & Saylor, 2021).

Because millennials are more ethically and morally conscious, the perception of unfairness can also cause millennials to leave their current organization (Gevrek et al., 2017). Examples of unfairness in the workplace include varied salaries and raises for the same roles, favoritism from leadership, and uneven workload for the same positions. According to Petrucelli (2017), millennials have left organizations simply because the organization’s values do not align with their own. Unaligned values lead to an increase in voluntary employee turnover.

Impact of Turnover

Employee turnover has a negative effect on organizations. Employee turnover not only negatively affects the organization financially and operationally, but it also negatively affects the morale of the staying employees (De Stefano et al., 2019; Frankel, 2016; Nolan, 2015; Petrucelli, 2017). The financial cost of replacing an employee can be up to 6 to 9 months of that employee's base salary (Martinez & Raja, 2018). Additional costs associated with turnover stem from lost production because of the knowledge and skill left. The financial cost and operational productivity loss will reduce the organization's overall profitability and performance.

An employee who leaves an organization also causes disruption among the retained employees. The retained employees often need to take on additional work to cover the lost production; this causes them to fall behind on their work, become burned out, and resent the organization (De Stefano et al., 2019). The departure of one employee can cause a reduction in employee morale for the staying employees. If not handled correctly, one employee's departure can increase turnover intention among the remaining employees (Skelton et al., 2020). An increase in turnover intention can eventually cause more voluntary turnover in the organization.

Leader's Role in Reducing Voluntary Turnover

A leader can reduce an employee's intent to leave an organization. Leaders have the most influence over their employees in an organization (Fletcher et al., 2018). When that influence is used correctly, organizational leaders can be one of the first lines of defense when it comes to reducing voluntary turnover (Fletcher et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2018). Sun and Wang (2017) found that leadership strategies, specifically transformational leadership, directly influence quitting behavior and prevent employees from forming turnover intentions. Turnover intentions often lead to voluntary turnover. Leaders are responsible for understanding their employees' individual needs and values and leading them specifically to those individual needs (Nolan, 2015). A leader who has built trusting relationships with their employees can help mitigate workplace problems that may lead to a decrease in voluntary turnover (De Sousa-Sabbagha et al., 2018; Frankel, 2016; Jauhar et al., 2017; Raghuram et al., 2017). Employee retention has turned into a key responsibility for organizational leaders.

Transition

In Section 1, I provided the background of the problem identified for this study. As the researcher, I also provided the research question that is the foundation for this study. I also included the interview questions that were used for data collection. Section 1 also included my chosen conceptual framework of transformational leadership. As the researcher, I provided operational definitions for terms used in this study, and the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of the study are also included in Section 1. I provided the contribution to business practice and the implications for positive social change. Last, I provided an extensive review of professional and academic literature, including information on millennials, voluntary millennial turnover, transformational leadership, and similar and contrasting leadership theories.

Section 2 includes the processes and procedures I used to complete this multiple case study. Section 2 consists of the role of the researcher, participant population and sampling, research method and design, and ethical research. Section 2 also includes data collection instruments, data techniques, and the data analysis. Section 2 concludes with a discussion on the reliability and validity of the study.

Section 3 includes the presentation of the findings and how to apply those findings to business practice. In Section 3, I will address the implications for positive social change based on the findings. I also include recommendations for action and recommendations for further research. Section 3 will conclude with my reflections on the doctoral study process.

Section 2: The Project

Section 2 includes the purpose statement for this study, my role as the researcher, the criteria for selecting participants, and the research method and design. Section 2 also includes a discussion of the data collection instruments, data collection techniques, and the data analysis process. I conclude Section 2 by presenting the process for assuring valid, reliable, and ethical research and transitioning into Section 3 with a summary.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies business leaders in sales organizations use to reduce the rate of voluntary turnover among millennials. The target population consisted of five leaders from five different sales organizations operating in Southern California who successfully used leadership strategies to reduce voluntary turnover among millennials. Reducing voluntary turnover among millennials can potentially contribute to positive social change by supporting job stability and raising the quality of life for millennials, their families, and their communities.

Role of the Researcher

A researcher's primary role in qualitative studies is to be the data collection and analysis instrument (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Once I gained approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB), I gathered data by conducting semistructured interviews with five business leaders in sales organizations in Southern California. The participants' interview responses provided information on what strategies business leaders use to reduce voluntary turnover among millennials. A researcher should have a sound, structured research design to help increase their research value (van den Berg & Struwig, 2017). My role as the researcher included developing an appropriately structured procedure to complete this study. The procedure consisted of recruiting potential participants, collecting and analyzing the data, and managing the interview process while respecting and adhering to the participants' rights and confidentiality.

I recruited participants for this study with whom I had no prior relationship. Not having a previous relationship with the participants mitigates observer bias and validity concerns (Saunders et al., 2016). To uphold research standards, as the researcher, I did not impose any private opinions on the research or the participants. According to Karagiozis (2018), qualitative research interviews can be shaped by the interrelationship between the interviewer and the participant. To avoid exerting any influence on the participant and the interview, the researcher must try to distance themselves from the participant and focus only on capturing the interview data (Karagiozis, 2018).

I have a moderate relationship to this topic because I am considered a millennial according to my age. Another relation to the topic is that I am a manager, and my team includes millennial employees. Before conducting this study, I had no in-depth understanding of sales organizations because I had never worked in one. I chose the sales industry as my research target to mitigate any personal bias because I had no prior knowledge of this industry. According to Pannucci and Wilkins (2011), bias can occur in any phase of the research process, so researchers are responsible for identifying any potential observer bias and disclosing how it may affect the study. A researcher can avoid observer bias by using an interview protocol with each participant.

I adhered to the ethical standards of Walden University in recruiting appropriate participants for this study. As the researcher, I also complied with the protocol outlined in the *Belmont Report*. Following the guidelines of the *Belmont Report* (The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979), I ensured that the participants did not experience harm by participating in the study complied with ethical standards to prevent an intrusive investigative process and respected the participants' autonomy. To respect the participants' autonomy, I received written consent from each participant before they took part in the study. The written consent included details about the study, information about me as the researcher, and a statement that their participation was voluntary. The participants could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. The written consent also included an explanation of my responsibility as the researcher to protect their identity, privacy, and confidentiality. Getting the participants' written consent helps them understand what was involved in the study and decide whether to participate in the study (Gillies et al., 2018).

I used an interview protocol to conduct the participant interviews. Having an interview protocol enhances the quality and validity of the data obtained from the participants (Yin, 2018). The same interview protocol (see Appendix A) was used with each of the five participants to maintain consistency in the interviews. Within the interview protocol, I asked the same eight interview questions with each of the five participants to track their perspectives. To avoid personal bias during the interviews, I remained open minded and refrained from making any judgments about the participants' responses.

Participants

In this qualitative multiple case study, I conducted interviews with five business leaders operating sales organizations in Southern California who had used strategies to reduce voluntary turnover rates among millennials. According to Vogel (2017), obtaining data from various participants while targeting the overarching research question ensures the validity of the findings. To be eligible for participation in this study, the participants needed to be at least 21 years old and have managed millennials for a minimum of 3 years. For this study, a sales organization was defined as a business whose core function was to provide sales to other clients. A business leader was defined as a person who owns the sales organization or is a manager at the sales organization and responsible for supervising staff. Additional responsibilities for the business leader included hiring, training, and implementing strategies to reduce voluntary turnover among millennials.

To obtain access to potential participants, I searched online for sales organizations in Southern California. While conducting my online search, I created a list of potential organizations that provided updated contact information on their websites that I could call or email. I emailed each organization’s owner or manager from the list I created during my online search of organizations in Southern California. The email included a description of the purpose of the study, participant eligibility criteria, and background information about myself as the researcher. In the email, I also explained the rights of the participants, including my responsibility to protect their identity and confidentiality. If they met the eligibility criteria and would like to participate in the study, I asked potential participants to respond to the email by a designated date. Once I received consent from the participants, I offered to schedule a telephone call with each of them before the interview to review the information from the initial email and answer any questions they might have. I then scheduled the formal interviews with each participant. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, I did not conduct any interviews in person to ensure the safety of all participants and myself. All interviews were done via Zoom and lasted no more than 30 minutes.

The success of the study relies heavily on the ability of the researcher to build trust, rapport, confidence, and transparency with each of the participants (Billot, 2017; Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Saracho, 2017). According to Sarmento et al. (2015), having a call with the participants before the interviews take place to answer any questions they may have about the study is important to building rapport and an effective working relationship. The researcher and participant should have an effective working relationship, so the participant is comfortable being honest and vulnerable in the interview (Karagiozis, 2018). To build a working relationship with the participants, my communication with them was honest, open-minded, and respectful of their needs and privacy. Before the scheduled Zoom call, I had a telephone call with each participant to answer any questions and address any concerns. During this call, I focused on building a working relationship with the participant by being honest and transparent.

Research Method and Design

I identified the appropriate research method and design to answer the research question. I considered each available research method and design to decide which were most appropriate to address the research question in this study. The qualitative research method and the multiple case study design were selected for this study's research method and design.

Research Method

As the researcher, my focus in this study was to explore the leadership strategies business leaders in sales organizations use to reduce voluntary turnover among millennials. I chose to use the qualitative method because qualitative research is conducted to explain or answer questions about a phenomenon (Northouse, 2019). Researchers use the qualitative method to understand a phenomenon through different participants' experiences (Saunders et al., 2016). The qualitative method incorporates semistructured interviews, observations, and interview data analysis and evaluation. The qualitative method has become the most used form of research in various academic and professional fields (Yin, 2018). The qualitative method was the most appropriate approach to answer the research question. The use of the qualitative method allowed me to gain a thorough understanding of the phenomenon from various participant perspectives.

The quantitative method was not appropriate for this study. The quantitative method involves testing hypotheses and analyzing the relationships between independent and dependent variables using statistical methods (Saunders et al., 2016). The quantitative method is used to measure variables and identify trends numerically, but it does not allow the researcher to understand the participants' different experiences with a phenomenon. Using the quantitative method would not have allowed me to capture the leadership strategies business leaders use in sales organizations to reduce voluntary turnover among millennials. This study did not require hypotheses testing or an analysis of the relationships between variables to address the research question; therefore, the use of the quantitative method was not appropriate for this study. The mixed methods approach was also not appropriate for this study. The mixed methods approach enables researchers to analyze both qualitative and quantitative data (Saunders et al., 2016). The mixed method was not appropriate for this study because the study will not require quantitative data.

Research Design

In this study, I employed a multiple case study design. Researchers use a case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-world setting bounded by time (Yin, 2018). According to Gog (2015), researchers' use of qualitative case studies has increased in the business field and is used to practice focused theories. A multiple case study design allows the researcher to explore different organizations with the same contemporary phenomenon to understand the phenomenon more comprehensively. A multiple case study design was the most suitable design for this study because it allowed me to explore the phenomenon of leadership strategies used by five different business leaders in sales organizations to reduce voluntary turnover among millennials.

Other qualitative research designs were considered but not chosen. I considered the other qualitative research designs of ethnography, narrative, and phenomenology. An ethnographic research design involves studying the culture of a group over time (Templeton, 2016; Yin, 2018). Using an ethnographic research design was not appropriate for this study because studying a group in a cultural setting was unnecessary to address the research question. A researcher uses a narrative research design to explore the differences in individual social experiences in an environment through the participants' personal stories (Eichsteller, 2019). The narrative research design was not appropriate to explore why or how a phenomenon occurs; it only explores the interviewees' social experiences. A phenomenological research design involves understanding participants' lived experiences, feelings, and reactions to external circumstances (Conklin, 2013; Hanna et al., 2017). I did not need to understand the feelings or reactions to leadership strategies, so the phenomenological research design was not appropriate for this study.

Data saturation is achieved when information from the interviews becomes repetitive, and no added information is revealed (Fusch & Ness, 2015). A researcher will achieve data saturation when data is no longer adding new information, and there is no need for further coding. I obtained data saturation once I identified repetitive themes from all participants, and there was no new added information from the participants.

Population and Sampling

In a research study, the recruiting and retention of adequate participants are critical to the study's outcome (Raymond et al., 2018). For this qualitative multiple case study, the target population consisted of business leaders in sales organizations in the geographic area of Southern California. The purposive sampling technique is used when the researcher does not want a random selection method but wants to select specific participants who are willing to supply information (Etikan et al., 2016). Using the purposive sampling technique allowed me to identify experienced and knowledgeable participants in the researched phenomenon (see Etikan et al., 2016). This study included a sample of five participants from the target population. The selected participants were business leaders responsible for hiring and training millennials in their organization who had experienced voluntary turnover in their organization and had explored leadership strategies to reduce millennial voluntary turnover. I chose to use the purposeful sampling technique to help me understand the phenomenon and achieve data saturation.

Data saturation will be achieved when all significant information has been obtained from the participants. A researcher achieves data saturation when no new information is gathered from the participants and data collection is no longer needed (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Jamshed, 2014). According to Fusch and Ness (2015), a researcher can obtain data saturation by interviewing multiple participants, asking the same interview questions, and following the same interview protocol with each participant until no added information is shared. To reach data saturation in this study, I interviewed five business leaders.

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic and the corresponding state laws in California, I conducted the interviews online via Zoom to ensure the safety of all participants and myself. I asked each participant for the best day and time to schedule the interviews to be uninterrupted for the duration of the interview, which was expected to last 30 minutes. I used the same interview protocol (see Appendix A) with each participant during the interview, asking them the same eight interview questions to obtain data saturation. After the interviews, I transcribed each interview and sent it back to the respective participant for member checking and accuracy to ensure that my interpretation of the interviews accurately reflected the participant’s thoughts.

Ethical Research

As the researcher and primary instrument of the study, it is my responsibility to conduct ethical research. Through ethical research practices, I collected rich data for this study. The participants must trust me as a researcher to openly share their answers to the interview questions. To build trust as a researcher, I needed to avoid deceptive practices, guarantee confidentiality, and be accountable for the participants’ human rights. Therefore, gaining approval from IRB ensured that I was responsible to participants and protecting their rights to privacy and ethical practices.

I gained Walden University’s IRB approval to ensure beneficence. The IRB committee is responsible for upholding the ethical standards for human research participants. To obtain IRB approval, I was required to demonstrate minimal risks to the participants. The participants' selection was unbiased. I gave each participant an informed consent form. I treated each participant equally to ensure minimal ethical risks to the participants by following my interview protocol.

Once the IRB approved the proposal, I emailed potential participants to determine eligibility for the study. A total of 11 participants were emailed. My email to the potential participants included the eligibility criteria for the study. If the potential participants met the eligibility requirements and were interested in participating in the study, I asked them to respond to my email within three days. Once I received all the responses, I started the selection process. I upheld justice for participants by making a fair selection of participants—the selection process needed to be unbiased and inclusive (see Adashi et al., 2018). I first determined if the participants met the criteria for the study; if yes, I emailed the informed consent form to review and acknowledge their intent to participate by replying to the email. The purpose of the informed consent form is to provide the participant information on the study's nature (Yin, 2018). The consent form included details about the research procedures, an overview of the study, the researcher and participants' roles and rights in the study, and my contact information. I asked each participant to review the informed consent form and respond by email within three days of receiving the consent form by replying to the email "I consent" if they agreed to participate in the study. Once I received consent from each participant, the data collection began. My Walden University IRB approval number is 11-15-211006582.

I conducted the interviews via Zoom. I scheduled the interviews with each participant at times that were convenient for them. Before starting the interview, I asked the participants if they had any questions about the study's research process or participation. I did not present any personal information or organizational information to ensure each participant's confidentiality. I referred to each participant as P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5. The collected data will be stored on a password-protected USB flash drive in my office for 5 years. I will be the only person with access to this flash drive. Once 5 years have passed, I will destroy all the collected data by deleting it from the USB flash drive.

As identified in the Belmont Report, the three fundamental ethical research principles are respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (Adashi et al., 2018). To ensure that I respected the persons, I maintained ethical research standards throughout the research process. I notified each participant that their participation was voluntary. Voluntary participation is a foundation to research practices (Hunter et al., 2018). I let all participants know the withdrawal procedures can occur at any time during the research process by phone or email. I treated all participants with respect and did not mistreat or disrespect any participant for choosing not to volunteer in the study. I did not reward or compensate participants for their voluntary participation in the study.

Data Collection Instruments

I was the primary data collection instrument for this qualitative multiple case study. The researcher collects specific data and information that addresses the research problem (Saracho, 2017). In the role of a data collection instrument, I gathered information from business leaders in sales organizations to understand their leadership strategies used to reduce voluntary turnover among their millennial employees.

The secondary data source was semistructured interviews using an interview protocol and company documents. Researchers use semistructured interviews to gather data from participants using preset open-ended questions and following an interview protocol (Denny & Weckesser, 2019; Jamshed, 2014; Rosenthal, 2016). According to Wilson (2016), interviews are the most common data collection source used in qualitative research studies. The use of semistructured interviews with an interview protocol of open-ended questions permits the participants to respond in their own words based on their personal views (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Researchers use open-ended questions because a researcher can probe and ask the participant follow-up questions on the topic of study.

I also collected company documents from the participants as a data source. The company documents I collected were employee handbooks and employment records. Researchers in qualitative studies use company documents to identify themes pertaining to the research question (Yin, 2018). When I reviewed the company documents, I focused on the research question and collected extensive data to explore leadership strategies business leaders use to reduce voluntary turnover among millennials.

The researcher uses an interview protocol to ensure the data's consistency and reliability obtained from the interview (Venkatesh et al., 2016; Yin, 2018). I followed the interview protocol for this study (see Appendix A). The interviews with each participant were scheduled at an agreed-upon day and time. To enhance the reliability and validity of the research, I used member checking to validate the researcher's interpretation of the data. Researchers use member checking to strengthen the reliability of the study. Member checking is a more widely used research validation technique (Harvey, 2015). The doctoral committee will conduct the reliability and validity of the interview protocol.

Data Collection Technique

Prior to collecting data, I selected who my participants would be. I initially emailed 11 potential participants using the same email script. The contact information for these potential participants was found during an online search of sales organizations in Southern California. Of the 11 potential participants, six responded showing their interest in participating in my study. I then reviewed each potential participant to ensure that they met the requirements for this study and selected five participants. Before collecting data, I ensured that my five participants had each read and returned their consent forms to participate. Each participant was asked to return their signed consent form within 3 days of receiving it. I also made sure that each participant had confirmed their scheduled Zoom meeting. I used the same interview protocol with each of the five participants (see Appendix A), so each participant received the same interview process (see Yin, 2018). Participants were not offered any incentives for taking part in this study as I did not want the incentive to alter or influence any answers to my research questions.

The data collection technique I used for this study was face-to-face, semistructured interviews using open-ended questions. Interviews are the most common data collection tools used in qualitative studies (Wilson, 2016). The participant can share their interpretations of experiences with the researcher by using semistructured interviews (Rosenthal, 2016). I used semistructured interviews to obtain information on the leadership strategies used by business leaders to reduce voluntary turnover among millennials. In this study, I used methodological triangulation on the collected data. The collected data are the responses from the interview questions, member checking of the interpreted themes, and company documents.

Semistructured interviews as a data collection technique have advantages and disadvantages. An advantage of semistructured interviews is that participants are free to describe their experiences in their own words, with descriptions, and provide examples (Ilyushin & Azbel, 2017). Another advantage to semistructured interviews is the researcher's ability to guide the conversation and have flexibility (Wienclaw, 2018; Young et al., 2018). Researchers' flexibility in semistructured interviews allows them to ask probing and follow-up questions to gain additional information from participants. A researcher can capture non-verbal cues, such as facial reactions from the participants, by using face-to-face interviews and noting the nonverbal cues in a journal. The researcher's observations noted in a journal can later be used during the data analysis phase.

There are also several disadvantages when using semistructured interviews as a data collection technique. One of the disadvantages is the amount of time it takes to find participants, schedule the interviews, and the time of the interviews themselves (Young et al., 2018). Participants also may not be honest or willingly want to share all their information in the interviews, causing another disadvantage (Vogl, 2013; Young et al., 2018). Another disadvantage is the amount of time it takes to review and transcribe the collected interview data. In my study, these disadvantages did not impact my study. I was able to find, select, and confirm my five participants in a span of 2 weeks. When transcribing my data, Zoom has a feature that records audio and transcribes the audio, and sends you the transcription within 2 hours of ending the recorded interview. This fast transcription allowed me to start the data analysis process after my first interview.

Once I gained IRB approval, I started conducting interviews following my interview protocol (see Appendix A). Using the same interview protocol with each participant ensures that participants experience the same interview process (Yin, 2018). I met with the participants individually in a Zoom meeting room on the agreed-upon day and time. I conducted the meetings via Zoom, and I asked the participants to be in a secluded area where we would not be interrupted for the interview duration. Each interview lasted no more than 30 minutes. Each interview began with introducing myself to the participant, reviewing the consent form, and answering any questions from the participant as they related to the consent form. Before I started asking the participant any questions, I let them know that I audio recorded the interview via Zoom and took notes during the interview to ensure accuracy and allow for analysis. I asked each participant the same interview questions and in the same order. My notes consisted of the facial expressions of the participants while answering each question and overall emotions throughout the interview. After the participant answered any additional probing and follow-up questions, I ended the interview.

The participants were then told when they could expect to receive a summary of the interview findings and the transcript of their interview. Each participant received my interpretation of the interview and the transcript of their interview within 5 days of having their interview. I did not want to delay in sending the participants their interview information so that it could be easier for them to review. Participants then member checked the summary of my findings. Member checking allows the participants to ensure the accuracy of my interpretation of the interview (Harvey, 2015). Each participant was asked to review and respond to the member checking within seven days of receiving their interview information. I received member checking confirmation within the desired period for all participants, and no one made any changes. Once all participants reviewed and member-checked the summary of my findings and their transcripts, I asked the participants if they had any additional feedback to provide or if clarification or corrections were needed. None of the participants asked for corrections to be made. One participant asked me to clarify if there was anything else needed from them regarding the interview. I told them that I may require another round of member checking if necessary.

This feedback came from the first participant who responded after member checking, so I let the other participants know about the possibility of additional rounds of member checking to ensure transparency with all participants.

Data Organization Technique

I used the software NVivo to organize the data collected from my interviews for this study. A researcher uses data organization techniques as a platform to extract and store data used for a study (Yadav et al., 2018). Using qualitative data analysis software, such as NVivo, helps a researcher analyze the collected data and report data findings (Paulus et al., 2017). The collected data were recorded Zoom calls and the paper notes I took during the interviews.

I transcribed all the Zoom recordings into a Microsoft Word document using the latest version of NVivo called NVivo 12. I chose the software NVivo over the software ATLAS.ti because of my cohort's familiarity with the software. I used my cohort members as a resource for any issues or complexities when using the NVivo software.

After I transcribed the Zoom recordings, I saved them to a password-protected USB drive to safely store the data and deleted the original recording from my laptop. All paper notes that I took were also converted to a Word document using NVivo and saved to the same password-protected USB drive. After converting my paper notes into a Word document, I destroyed my paper notes in a cross shredder. Standard naming conventions maintain the collected interview data integrity (Anyan, 2013; Yin, 2018). I kept the confidentiality for all participants by assigning each with codes such as P1, P2, etc. I assigned the codes based on the sequence of the interview schedule. Any notes I took were also marked with the participant's code not to compromise their identities.

I stored the collected data saved on the password-protected USB drive in a locked safe in my home office. I am the only person with access to my safe in my home office. The USB drive will be securely locked in my safe for 5 years. At the end of the 5 years, I will permanently delete all the collected data from the USB drive. Any information used in a study that includes participants should be destroyed after the initial intent. Deleting the collected data after 5 years aligns with the universal best practice for research.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is essential to the quality and credibility of a qualitative study. Throughout the data analysis process, I found emerging themes that match the chosen conceptual framework of transformational leadership theory and its four foundational constructs. I also looked for themes that potentially matched the similar and contrasting theories mentioned in the literature review. Comparing the data against the similar and contrasting theories helped solidify my decision to choose transformational leadership theory as the conceptual framework of this study.

I analyzed the captured data using the Braun and Clarke thematic analysis process and the computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) NVivo. The Braun and Clarke thematic analysis process includes six phases. A researcher uses thematic analysis to identify, analyze, and report themes and patterns within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The six phases of the thematic analysis process are:

1. Getting familiar with the data
2. Generating codes
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming the themes
6. Producing the report.

Thematic Analysis Process

Using the thematic analysis process helped me organize the data during the six phases of data review. I completed the following strategies for each phase of the analysis process.

Phase 1

I became familiar with the collected data. I read, reread the transcribed interviews, and took notes on any observed themes or patterns to become familiar with the collected data. Phase 1 is the most time-consuming phase of the thematic analysis process (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A researcher needs to become familiar with the data before beginning the coding process (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clark & Veale, 2018).

Phase 2

I started creating codes from the captured data. The creation of codes refers to sections in the data that I found interesting and compelling. The codes can include common concepts and repetitive statements found in the captured data. I created the codes by reviewing the hard copies of captured data and highlighting the data's characteristics. I used an assortment of color highlighters to separate the codes I created. I also used the software NVivo to help me identify themes in the data. NVivo is used to identify common themes across numerous data sources (Castleberry, 2014). I organized the codes using the literature review and conceptual framework as a guide. Once I created the codes, I grouped the codes to form themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Phase 3

I reviewed the coded information to identify themes in the data. Researchers identify themes when they find a relation between trends and patterns in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The goal was to find themes and subthemes that convey significant information relating to the research question.

Phase 4

I conducted another review of the themes after completing all the themes in phase 3. During the phase 4 review, a researcher can exchange themes or eliminate existing themes that do not provide any relevance or do not reflect the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I refined the themes I found in Phase 3 to ensure the themes could answer the research question.

Phase 5

I defined and named the themes finalized in Phase 4. In Phase 5, the researcher is more specific about the themes and ensures they select the research's correct themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I used the chosen conceptual framework as the foundation to categorize and organize the research data themes. Organizing the themes according to the conceptual framework will help answer the research question.

Phase 6

In the last phase of the thematic analysis process, I produced the report. The report included the identified themes and analysis of the research study (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The final report consisted of a description of each theme and its significance to the research study.

After completing the thematic analysis process, I used methodological triangulation to strengthen the data analysis process. A researcher uses triangulation to enhance the validity of the research. The four types of triangulation are (a) data triangulation, (b) theoretical triangulation, (c) researcher triangulation, and (d) methodological triangulation (Jentoft & Olsen, 2019).

The chosen triangulation method for this study was methodological triangulation. Methodological triangulation is used in qualitative research studies to gain rich data from collected transcribed interview data (Carter et al., 2014; Clark & Veale, 2018; Wilson, 2016). It is helpful for researchers to collect data about the same phenomenon using interviews, observation, organizational documents, and note-taking for qualitative studies (Carter et al., 2014; Wilson, 2016). A researcher uses methodological triangulation to comprehensively understand the phenomenon and increase the data's validity through the convergence of data from various sources (Carter et al., 2014; Clark & Veale, 2018). Researchers who use triangulation may benefit from a broader understanding of the research topic (Jentoft & Olsen, 2019). For this multiple-case study, I used responses from the interview questions, member checking of the interpreted themes, company documents such as employee handbooks and employee records, and cross-reference against the observational notes for methodological triangulation. I used methodological triangulation from multiple sources to understand how business leaders in sales organizations use leadership strategies to reduce voluntary turnover among millennials.

Before I began the data analysis process, I performed member checking on my interview summaries with each participant. Having participants member check the summarized interviews will ensure accuracy and validity and reduce researcher bias. I sent each participant an email with my interview summaries as an attachment for their review. I gave each participant three days to review and validate the interview summaries and asked them to respond to the email confirming they had validated my interview summaries. After each participant validated my interview summaries, I interpreted the data collected using computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS). Researchers use CAQDAS to (a) organize and manage textual data from interviews, (b) engage in analytical practices beyond the use of traditional hard copies, and (c) make the analytical process more transparent (Woods et al., 2016). One of the most used CAQDAS is the software NVivo. NVivo is a software program used to organize qualitative data (Castleberry, 2014). I used NVivo to support and enhance the data analysis process.

Reliability and Validity

For qualitative research, trustworthiness is akin to reliability and validity. Trustworthiness includes dependability, credibility, transferability, conformability, and data saturation (Yin, 2018). Assessing the quality of qualitative research can be approached in diverse ways. Reliability and validity are fundamental concepts when determining qualitative research's quality and accuracy (Leung, 2015; Yin, 2018).

Researchers who include reliability and validity in their research process can increase transparency and reduce the potential for researcher bias. A researcher can evaluate the reliability and validity by incorporating methodological strategies to ensure the research's trustworthiness (Mohajan, 2017).

Reliability occurs when a researcher uses systemic procedures that are consistent and dependable (Mohajan, 2017; Yin, 2018). A study is reliable when there is no researcher bias, and a researcher can replicate the study in other settings. A researcher can enhance reliability by having an objective approach to data collection methods (Mohajan, 2017). A study needs to be deemed reliable to attain validity. Reliability is achieved when a study is dependable.

Dependability

To achieve dependability, a study's results should be the same if the study is repeated and conducted over time (Connelly, 2016; Elo et al., 2014; Korstjens & Moser, 2017). To maintain dependability in this study, I maintained a journal and conducted member checking. Researchers use journals to write observational notes during the interview process and assess the participants’ responses (Levitt et al., 2017). I also used my journal to note the logic and justification behind my decisions in this study. Member checking increases the study's reliability because the participants validate the researcher’s interpretation of the interview (Harvey, 2015). I used member checking to ensure my interview interpretations were correct. I used a standardized interview protocol, journal notes, and member checking to confirm my findings' dependability.

Validity

Validity refers to a study in which the researcher uses the appropriate data collection instrument to study a particular phenomenon (Saunders et al., 2016). The researcher also inspects the accuracy of their data analysis and the generalizability of the study findings to other situations to achieve research validity (Saunders et al., 2016). Validity is achieved when researchers ensure that they have captured what they planned to study and recorded their findings truthfully (Mohajan, 2017). Researchers can avoid data quality issues by ensuring their study is transparent and consistent. Validity in a study reflects the trustworthiness of the data (Yin, 2018). The four components essential to validity are (a) credibility, (b) transferability, (c) confirmability, and (d) data saturation (Mohajan, 2017).

Credibility

Credibility refers to the plausible research findings for that study (Billot et al., 2017; Yin, 2018). A researcher can establish credibility by collecting and interpreting the data collected from the participants and not distorting any data (Mohajan, 2017). There are several strategies to enhance the credibility of qualitative research. The strategies I used for this study are (a) detailed record keeping, (b) accounting for personal bias, (c) data triangulation, and (d) member checking.

I used a journal to take detailed notes throughout the study on any actions and decisions that may affect the study. Member checking will mitigate researcher bias and ensure trustworthiness (Yin, 2018). The participants will validate my interpretation of their interviews and analysis through member checking.

Transferability

Transferability refers to other researchers' ability to replicate the methods and findings of a study (Korstjens & Moser, 2017; Yin, 2018). Transferability also relates to the reader identifying with the research findings based on their knowledge of the phenomenon (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). A researcher achieves transferability when a different researcher can conduct the same study with other participants and in a different location and obtain the same results. To ensure this study's transferability, I provided detailed descriptions of the research phenomenon, research process, analysis, and results. Providing the study details, like the interview protocol (see Appendix A), will allow readers to assess whether the study is transferable to their specific setting.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the researcher’s ability to display objectivity in the study (Abdalla et al., 2018; Korstjens & Moser, 2017; Yin, 2018). A researcher who remains objective during a case study analysis can ensure that the results are free from personal bias (Abdalla et al., 2018). Achieving confirmability requires other scholars to confirm or corroborate the results found in the study (Nilsson et al., 2016). I ensured that the results reflected the participants' views and experiences and did not reflect my personal bias to attain confirmability. I used member checking to validate that the findings are indeed the participants' views and experiences.

Data Saturation

A researcher who does not obtain data saturation will not achieve the validity of their study. Data saturation is achieved when no new data or themes emerge about the research topic during the data collection and analysis processes (Elo et al., 2014; Fusch & Ness, 2015; Saunders et al., 2016; Yin, 2018). According to Yin (2018), data saturation can be achieved with less than 10 participants and as low as two participants. The researcher must understand that the number of participants alone will not ensure data saturation. Data saturation is achieved by obtaining rich and in-depth data (Fusch & Ness, 2015). To obtain data saturation, I interviewed five business leaders until no added information was obtained and no new codes or themes emerged.

Transition and Summary

The intent of this qualitative, multiple case study was to explore the leadership strategies business leaders use to reduce voluntary turnover among millennials. In Section 2, I included: my role as the researcher as the data collection and analysis instrument, information on the five participants I used, and a detailed description of the research method and design, qualitative multiple case study. In Section 2, I also provided details on the population and sampling I used. In this study, the target population consisted of business leaders in sales organizations in Southern California. Additional subjects covered in Section 2 include information on ethical research and its importance to the study, the researcher's role as the primary data collection instrument, and the data collection technique used in this study, face-to-face semistructured interviews using open-ended questions. I described the data organization software I used and how I used Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis process to analyze my data. I ended Section 2 with a discussion on study reliability and validity.

In Section 3, I will include the presentation of the findings, including the emergent themes. In Section 3, I will also discuss the results and how they can be applied to professional practice and positive social change implications. I will end Section 3 with the recommendations for action and further research, researcher reflections, and the conclusion.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore leadership strategies business leaders in sales organizations use to reduce the rate of voluntary turnover among millennials. The most available means of reducing organizational labor costs is business leadership, reducing voluntary employee turnover (Fletcher et al., 2018). The associated costs of employee turnover can reduce an organization's profitability. By 2030, researchers estimate millennials to be the largest generational workforce totaling 75% of the U.S. workforce (Hoffman, 2018; Ramli et al., 2020). Millennials are also the generation with the least organizational loyalty, causing increased voluntary turnover (Stoyanova & Iliev, 2017). Therefore, business leaders must learn leadership strategies to reduce voluntary turnover among millennials to have continued organizational growth and profitability.

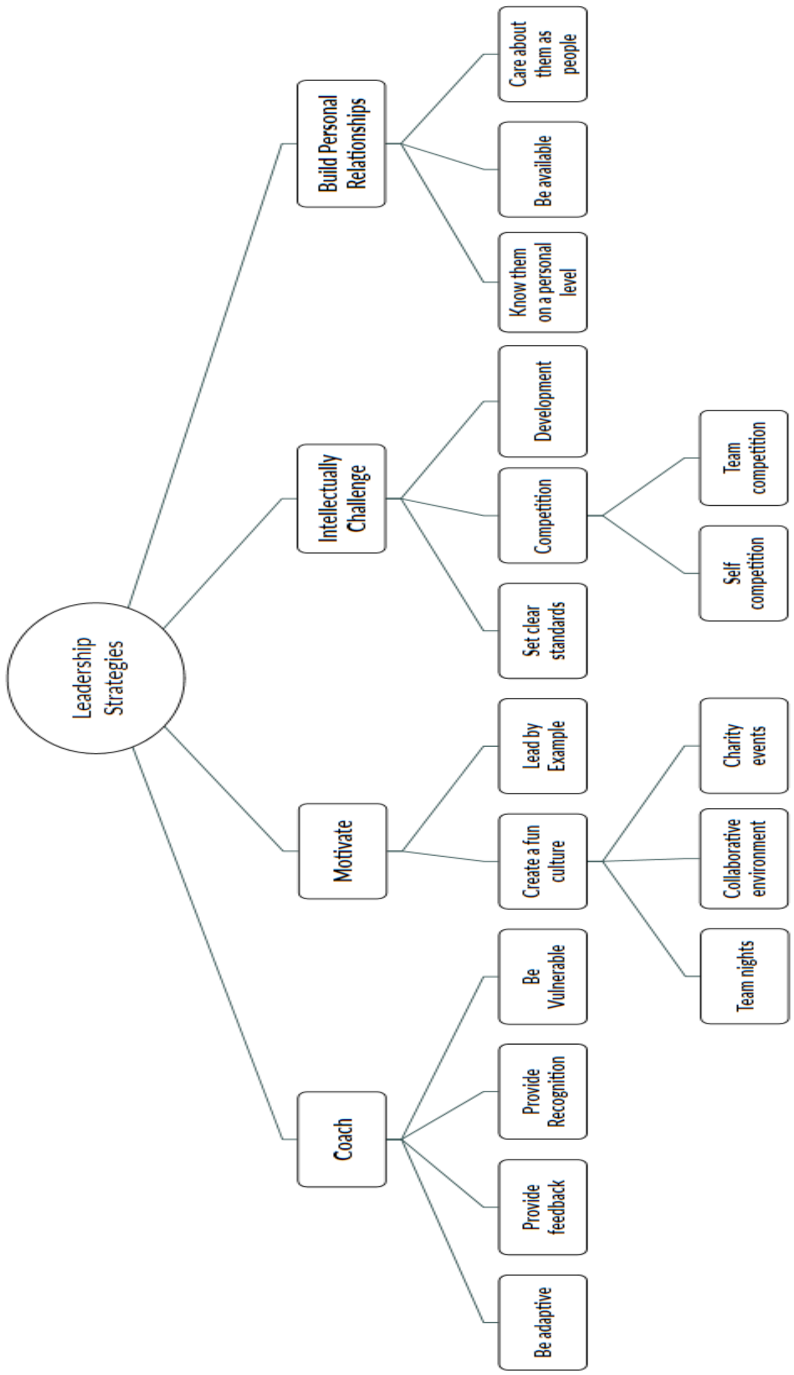
In this study, I collected data from five business leaders in different sales organizations located in Southern California. The findings suggest that sales industry leaders seeking to reduce voluntary turnover among millennials should implement leadership strategies that include (a) coaching, (b) motivating, (c) intellectually challenging, and (d) building personal relationships. In Section 3, I provide a more detailed presentation of the findings, the application of the study to professional practice, and social change implications. My recommendations for further action and further research are also included. I will end this section with my reflections on the doctoral study and a conclusion.

Presentation of the Findings

The primary research question for this study was: What leadership strategies do business leaders in sales organizations use to reduce the rate of voluntary turnover among millennials? I conducted semistructured interviews with five business leaders in sales organizations located in Southern California to address this research question. The leaders each responded to eight open-ended interview questions relating to the use of leadership strategies to reduce voluntary turnover among their millennial employees. I also analyzed company documents provided by the leaders that included employee handbooks and employment records. Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase analysis technique was used to analyze and recognize themes in the collected data. I then used the NVivo software to support data organization and analysis. Four primary themes emerged from the data collected: (a) coaching, (b) motivating, (c) intellectually challenging, and (d) building personal relationships (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Major and Minor Themes of Leadership Strategies That Reduce Voluntary Turnover



Theme 1: Coach

The first theme I identified from analyzing company documents and participant responses was being a coach. All five participants spoke in-depth about the importance of coaching their millennial employees. P2 described how the voluntary turnover in their office reduced when there was more focus on coaching employees versus telling them what to do and expecting results. P5 said that millennials want more feedback regularly, and the best way to do that is by being a coach. Chambers (2010) stated that millennials want a leader that is more than just a manager; they want their leader to be a coach and mentor. These findings align with those of Wai Meng Yap and Badri (2020), who acknowledged that millennials need leaders who are coaches and can provide them with regular feedback and recognition. P3 said that being a coach was one of the more important things to do as a leader. P3 stated that he did not consider himself a manager but rather a coach:

> A coach is there to help you grow and achieve your goals. A manager is there to ensure the organizational goals are met. I have never considered myself a manager. I am here to help my team grow, both professionally and personally. When my team grows, the organizational goals will be met, but the organizational goals will never be met if my team is not growing.

Millennials will trust their leader when they feel the leader cares about them and their growth. Millennials who trust their leaders have a lower intention to quit and stay with organizations for more extended periods (Engelbrecht & Samuel, 2019). Skelton et al. (2020) stated that millennials have the least loyalty to their companies, but they are loyal to their leaders. Leaders can gain loyalty from their employees by being honest and transparent coaches to their millennial employees.

The first theme of coaching aligns with the first construct of transformational leadership, idealized influence. In the idealized influence construct of transformational leadership, leaders act as role models to their followers and demonstrate behaviors of equality, fairness, and respect for all by leading by example (Chambers, 2010). P1 discussed that being honest and transparent with his employees improved his coaching abilities. P1 said, “I need to lead by example, so my team trusts me and follows me. I also had to learn to be vulnerable and adapt quickly to changes.” P1 said that leading by example, learning to be vulnerable, and adapting quickly to change helped reduce the voluntary turnover in his office.

Theme 2: Motivate

The second theme that emerged from the data analysis was motivating millennials. Each participant shared techniques they have used to motivate their employees. P1 said that they focus on leading by example. According to P1, “I expect every leader in my office to lead by example. I do not believe a team will follow you if you aren’t practicing what you preach. You cannot expect someone to do something that you are not willing to do yourself.” P2 also spoke about leading by example, saying:

> I make sure that my team sees me doing what I expect from them. If I expect them to talk to customers for 6 hours a day, then they will see me also talking to customers for 6 hours a day. Leading by example is how I earn my team’s respect.

According to Raza and Ahmed (2020), leaders who lead by example and advocate for their followers are exercising one of the strengths of transformational leadership.

One approach that all five participants used was creating a fun and engaging work culture. P3 shared that their office held a weekly team night for all employees. The team nights usually included doing an activity as a team, such as bowling, kickball, charity events, etc. According to P3,

> The goal of the team night is to bring the employees together and help them build friendships with each other. The friendships will usually extend outside the workplace. Building friendships with coworkers helps keep employees engaged and motivated because they work with their friends, who they like to be around.

When employees like who they work with, they tend to stay around a little longer. Pathirage and Weerasinghe (2020) said that millennials like to work in organizations where they interact with their colleagues. Creating a fun work environment allows employees to develop friendships freely with other colleagues.

Leaders who motivate their employees help improve the morale and energy of their team (Iangat et al., 2019). P4 described how a collaborative work environment is used to motivate millennial employees. In the office, P4 creates contests and challenges for the employees. Some of these contests are individual based, and others are team based. P4 said, “Creating small contests and challenges helps the employees collaborate and help each other achieve their goals. I believe that having the contests and challenges creates a sense of community and belonging within the team.” Henry et al. (2019) said that team collaboration leads to more engaged and motivated employees.

Along with having a fun and engaging work culture, P5 described how his office focused on social responsibility. The team nights in P5's office often included charity work and activities that help their community. P5 stated,

> My employees need to know that we serve a bigger purpose. I want to make sure my team has fun, but it is more important for them to know they are helping others at the same time. At least once a month, our team nights are focused on charity work. These events include volunteering at food banks, creating supply bags for homeless people, and running food and toy drives. Doing these charity events helps my team become stronger and more unified.

Bernadino (2021) said that millennials are proud to work for organizations that practice CSR. Millennials often seek out organizations that practice CSR because they want to be a part of an organization that cares about its employees and community.

The second theme of motivating relates to the transformational leadership construct of inspirational motivation. Leaders use inspirational motivation to motivate followers to achieve more than they thought possible and rise above challenges (Aledenat, 2018; Hesar et al., 2019). For leaders to create inspirational motivation, they need to lead by example, create a fun and collaborative workplace, and have goals focused on social responsibility. Leaders need to show their employees that they care and are invested in them through their actions. Deluliis and Saylor (2021) said that inspirational motivation helps deepen the relationship between the leader and millennial follower. A leader who acts as a coach and motivates their employees has a greater chance at reducing voluntary turnover among their millennial employees.

Theme 3: Intellectually Challenge

The third theme found during data analysis was the need for leaders to challenge their millennial employees intellectually. All five participants spoke about the importance of constantly challenging their millennial employees intellectually. Millennials will choose an organization where they are constantly challenged, and the potential for career growth is clearly defined (Campione, 2015; Hoffman, 2018; White, 2018). P1 said that one of the most important things he does when hiring a new employee is talk about the growth opportunities, explaining that,

> I need to make sure that every person in my office knows the opportunity they have working here. My employees need to understand how to earn promotions and the typical time frames to achieve those promotions. I have seen many good employees leave because I did not set clear expectations. I have learned from that, and now I make sure that everyone understands the standards from the day they walk into my office. I also reiterate the standards regularly, so no one forgets.

The intent to leave an organization rises when millennials feel no growth opportunity (Calk & Patrick, 2017). Leaders are responsible for always finding ways to challenge their millennial employees intellectually.

P2 said that being a good coach is directly related to keeping his employees challenged intellectually. P2 described how being a good coach lets him know when he needs to provide support to an employee, saying, “I know when an employee is ready for new tasks and challenges by being an attentive coach. Promotions in my office increased, and employee turnover decreased when I focused on providing more challenging work to my employees." According to Fought and Misawa (2019), millennials feel appreciated when given new tasks and responsibilities, the opportunity to train other employees, and autonomy in their roles.

The third theme of intellectually challenging millennials aligns with the intellectual stimulation construct of transformational leadership. Intellectual stimulation allows leaders to support their employees by trying innovative approaches, engaging in problem-solving, and allowing their employees to have autonomy over their roles (Hesar et al., 2019). P5 shared,

> As their leader, I am the example. If I expect my team to learn new skills or take on new tasks, I must also do the same. They need to see me learn new skills and try to better myself. The employees who stayed longer in my office did so because we were learning new skills together.

P3 and P4 both said that having competitions also increased intellectual stimulation. The competitions were daily or weekly, and they asked their employees to increase production. Both participants shared that their employees had to get creative, innovative, and collaborate with other team members to succeed in the competition. The competitions increased engagement and helped keep their employees intellectually challenged. According to Hessar et al. (2019), leaders who help their team members be innovative prove to their team that they trust them and want them to have autonomy of their role. Leaders who act as coaches, motivate and intellectually challenge their employees have a greater chance of reducing voluntary turnover.

Theme 4: Build Personal Relationships

The final theme that emerged during data analysis was leaders building personal relationships with their millennial employees. Every participant in this study has managed millennials for at least 3 years. They all said that turnover reduced when they focused on building personal relationships with their employees. Yue et al. (2019) noted that a leader could improve an employee's engagement and build strong, unique relationships by understanding the individual needs of each of their employees. P3 reported that,

> It is up to me to get to know each of my employees. I make it a goal to know them personally. I want to know their family dynamic, friends, what they like to do during their free time, etc. I always try to find a commonality between us that we can share, such as a favorite sports team, favorite place to get dinner, or book recommendations. Knowing each employee on a personal level lets me understand how to coach them better. Each person needs different feedback and recognition.

A leader who builds personal relationships with their employees can make each employee feel appreciated and valued (Henry et al., 2019). An employee who feels appreciated and valued will have less intention to quit.

Millennials are more engaged when they feel that their leader cares about them (Henry et al., 2019). According to Deluliis and Saylor (2021), leaders need to know their employees as individuals without generalizing their approach to all employees. An employee who does not feel a genuine and unique relationship with their leader has a higher intent to quit, searching for their preferred leadership relationship (Lee et al., 2018). P1 said knowing employees personally helped provide a better work-life balance. P1 provided different schedules to the employees based on each of their needs, saying that,

> I enjoy scheduling my employees at times that work best for them. If some of my employees need to do school drop-offs in the morning, I like to let them come in a little later. If someone needs to go to a child’s game or performance, I let them leave work early not to miss it. I never want my employees to feel like they should miss important life moments because of work. If I did not know my employees personally, I would not be a good leader and offer them flexibility.

Millennials value a work-life balance and flexibility and are attracted to organizations that offer these benefits (Watts & Dieffenderfer, 2021). Millennials will leave organizations that have strict work schedules and are not flexible to the needs of their employees.

The fourth theme of building personal relationships aligns with the last construct of transformational leadership called individualized consideration. Leaders who practice individualized consideration listen to the needs of each of their employees while providing a supportive environment (Henry et al., 2019). To achieve individualized consideration, leaders must spend time with each employee and build a genuinely caring relationship with them (Heser et al., 2019). Each participant discussed the importance of building personal relationships with their employees in depth and emphasized that having a personal relationship with their employees helped them be better coaches as well as motivate and intellectually challenge their employees.

Relevancy to Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was the transformational leadership Theory by James McGregor Burns. I used the transformational leadership theory to understand strategies leaders in sales organizations use to reduce voluntary turnover among millennials. Burns (1978) defined transformational leadership as an individual who leads their employees by engaging and building unique relationships, causing a lift in motivation for both the leader and employee. A transformational leader motivates and develops their employees to reach their highest potential and is interested in their employees' needs, values, and long-term goals (Northouse, 2019). Transformational leaders lead by example and are role models to their followers; their leadership inspires and influences their followers to be more engaged and productive in the workplace (Flynn, 2018). Lee et al. (2020) found that transformational leadership theory is the most used and regarded theory when improving leader and employee relationships. Transformational leadership is often used to reduce voluntary turnover.

The four themes identified in this study were (a) coaching, (b) motivating, (c) intellectually challenging, and (d) building personal relationships. The four themes align with the conceptual framework of transformational leadership and its foundational constructs. The constructs of transformational leadership are (a) idealized influence, (b) inspirational motivation, (c) intellectual stimulation, and (d) individualized consideration. According to Bass (1999), a leader is most effective when all four constructs of transformational leadership are practiced on a regular basis and with every employee. Leaders should understand each construct and know how to apply them to their daily leadership strategies.

When a leader acts as a role model, they are leading by example. Being a role model allows employees to build trust in their leaders. Employees who emulate the behaviors of their leaders tend to have increased job satisfaction, improved engagement, and an increase in productivity (Bell, 2018; Henry et al., 2019). Acting as a role model is the idealized construct of transformational leadership. The second construct of transformational leadership is inspirational motivation. The participants in this study all practiced inspirational motivation. The participants shared that they used team nights, charity work, and collaboration to promote motivation. According to Yue et al. (2019), leaders who use inspirational motivation can improve the morale and energy of their team by creating a sense of community.

The third construct of transformational leadership is intellectual stimulation. P3 and P5 both spoke about how they used contests to get their employees engaged. P1 spoke about learning with his team through reading and lectures. According to White (2018), millennials want to keep learning and growing in their roles and stay with an employer longer when that is happening regularly. Building personal relationships was a common theme among all the participants. Building personal relationships aligns with the last transformational leadership construct of individualized consideration. P1 and P3 both spoke about the importance of knowing their employees on a personal level to better coach and lead them. A leader who understands the individual needs of their employees can build a stronger relationship with them, helping improve the employee’s engagement and reduce voluntary turnover (Rachmawati et al., 2018). The four themes found in this study are all strategies used by leaders in sales organizations to reduce voluntary turnover among millennials.

Triangulation of Data Sources

I used methodological triangulation to support the analysis of strategies leaders in sales organizations use to reduce voluntary turnover among millennials. Researchers use methodological triangulation to compare the rich data collected from semistructured interviews and company documents (Clark & Veale, 2018). I conducted each interview, transcribed and summarized the data, and used member checking to ensure my interpretation was correct. To gain an in-depth understanding of strategies leaders use, I compared the transcribed interviews, my notes from the interviews, and company documents provided by the participants that included company benefits and employee records. By synthesizing the transcribed interview data with my notes and company documents, I conducted methodological triangulation and aligned the data to support the research question.

I identified four themes from the triangulated data. The member checked data from the interviews aligned with the conceptual framework of transformational leadership theory. The company documents, such as employee records, showed decreased voluntary turnover for each of the five participant offices when weekly coaching and one-on-one meetings started being held. Based on the results of methodological triangulation, all leaders have implemented successful strategies to reduce voluntary turnover among their millennial employees.

Applications to Professional Practice

Employee turnover is an ongoing issue for organizations. The associated costs of employee turnover can reduce an organization’s profitability. Business leaders must implement strategies to reduce voluntary turnover among millennials as they will be the largest generational workforce by the year 2030 (Ramli et al., 2020). Business leaders would benefit from learning and implementing leadership strategies that reduce voluntary turnover among millennials to have continued organizational growth and profitability.

Employee turnover must be addressed so organizational leaders can reach their business goals. The results of this study indicate that to reduce voluntary turnover among millennials, leaders need to implement strategies where they (a) coach, (b) motivate, (c) intellectually challenge, and (d) build personal relationships with their millennial employees. Leaders who apply the results from this study could reduce voluntary turnover in their organizations. Employees who have genuine relationships with their leaders and have leaders who coach, motivate, and challenge them have a lower intention of leaving an organization (De Sousa-Sabbagha et al., 2018). Leaders in sales organizations may use the results from this study to improve strategies to reduce voluntary turnover and improve the organization’s profitability. The findings from this study contribute to existing data regarding the importance of implementing strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover.

Implications for Social Change

The implications for positive social change include enhancing the local economy by creating increased job stability among millennial employees. Job stability among millennial employees can enhance the local economy in two ways. The first way job stability among millennials can enhance the local economy is by the employees becoming regular customers of local businesses. People with increased job stability have an improved quality of life where they can spend more time and money in local businesses (Bernardino, 2021). More money brought into the community can contribute to economic growth.

The second way job stability can enhance the local economy is by organizations becoming more profitable. Organizations with healthy profits can improve their services and products, increasing customer satisfaction. Profitable organizations can also increase employment opportunities, strengthening their communities’ economic stability. With improved financial performance, organizational leaders may invest in local community programs and improvement projects (Yulianti & Prameswari, 2020). When leaders implement strategies to reduce voluntary turnover, they increase job stability for employees which enhances the growth in local communities.

Recommendations for Action

Business leaders in sales organizations could use the recommendations, findings, and data collected in this study to implement strategies to reduce voluntary turnover among their millennial employees. The findings from this study indicate that leaders who (a) coach, (b) motivate, (c) intellectually challenge, and (d) build personal relationships with their employees can reduce the rate of voluntary turnover among their millennial employees. The five participants in this study noted these strategies vital to reducing voluntary turnover. As a result, including these strategies can help organizational leaders reduce voluntary turnover among their millennial employees.

My first recommendation is for leaders to adapt coaching practices. Being a coach means being adaptive, vulnerable, and providing feedback and recognition to their employees. My second recommendation is for leaders to motivate their employees. Leaders can motivate their employees by leading by example and providing a fun and collaborative work culture. My third recommendation is for leaders to keep their employees intellectually stimulated. Leaders can intellectually stimulate their employees by developing them, creating healthy competition, and setting clear expectations. My last recommendation is for leaders to focus on building personal relationships with their employees. For millennials to feel valued, leaders must know their employees personally and genuinely care about them. My four recommendations can help leaders reduce the rate of voluntary turnover among their millennial employees.

Future researchers may find this study beneficial to gain knowledge on leadership strategies the reduce voluntary turnover among millennials. Leaders in sales organizations could receive the results of this study through conferences, training, or professional workshops. Each participant will receive a copy of this study. In addition, student researchers and scholars may access this study in the ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database as they develop their research studies.

Recommendations for Further Research

Leaders in sales organizations struggle with millennial employee turnover because of the lack and implementation of leadership strategies. The literature specified that millennials are the least loyal generational workforce and leave organizations when they are dissatisfied with their leaders (De Sousa-Sabbagha et al., 2018; Stoyanova & Iliev, 2017). According to Wai Meng Yap and Badri (2020), when millennials are unhappy in the workplace, the intent to leave starts increasing faster than previous generational work groups. I performed a multiple case study to determine what strategies leaders in sales organizations use to reduce voluntary turnover among millennials.

The following are recommendations for further research into understanding strategies leaders can use to reduce voluntary turnover among millennials. One limitation of this study was the location of Southern California. Researchers could consider expanding the research outside of the geographical location of Southern California. This study was specific to leaders from sales organizations. Future researchers should consider conducting research on strategies to reduce voluntary turnover from other business industries. This study also focused on the millennial workforce. Researchers could research reducing voluntary turnover among different generational workgroups. I would also recommend that future researchers use a quantitative or mixed-method approach to gather additional findings on strategies to reduce voluntary turnover among millennials.

Reflections

As I reflect upon my doctoral journey with Walden University, I am grateful, honored, and excited to have reached this moment. This journey has allowed me to increase my organizational leadership knowledge and helped improve my critical thinking and writing skills. I have learned to manage my time wisely to meet my goals during the past few years. I found it extremely helpful to write the annotated bibliographies for class as it made writing my literature review fast and efficient. I also enjoyed the discussion posts because I learned from my peers, and we could all share information with one another.

My doctoral research has helped me deepen my understanding of leadership strategies used to reduce voluntary turnover among millennials. As I reflect on my journey, I did not let my experience as a leader who manages millennials interfere with the data collection and analysis process. Instead, I was led by unfolding the data during the analysis procedure. Exploring the strategies that organizational leaders in sales organizations use to reduce voluntary turnover among millennials has given me a greater awareness of the leaders' processes to create and implement them. My doctoral study has permitted me to collect data and present findings that organizational leaders may find beneficial in reducing voluntary turnover among their millennial employees.

Conclusion

Organizational leaders should focus on reducing employee turnover to improve organizational growth and profitability. To reduce voluntary turnover, leaders in sales organizations must address the issues by implementing leadership strategies. Literature indicates that organizational leadership is the most available means of reducing voluntary turnover. Leaders must create and implement strategies to reduce voluntary turnover among their millennial employees.

Four themes emerged after completing a comprehensive data analysis of the participants' responses and company documents. The four themes were (a) coaching, (b) motivating, (c) intellectually challenging, and (d) building personal relationships. The identified themes may be valuable to organizational leaders looking for strategies influenced by the constructs of the transformational leadership theory. Leaders who implement leadership strategies could position the organization to have reduced voluntary turnover and organizational growth and profitability.

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Appendix: Interview Protocol

1. Introduce self to participant
2. Present and go over the consent form and answer any questions from the participant as they relate to the consent form
3. Provide the participant with their copy of the consent form
4. Turn on the recording device and note the date and time
5. Begin the semistructured interview with question one and continue through to question eight
6. Follow up with any additional probing or clarifying questions
7. End interview process
8. Discuss the next steps, transcript review, and member checking with participant
9. Thank the participant for being part of the study
10. End of protocol