

2022

Strategies for Improving Companies' Productivity and Profitability

Mioshi Marshall
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Mioshi Marshall

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Walden University
2022

Abstract

Strategies for Improving Companies' Productivity and Profitability

by

Mioshi Marshall

MBA, Belhaven University 2015

BS, Jackson State University, 2010

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

May 2022

Abstract

Failure of leaders to be proactive and create a plan that motivates employees to be productive often leads to disengaged employees and a decrease in productivity that negatively impacts profitability. Grounded in Vroom's expectancy theory, this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies HR managers use to increase employee commitment and retention to increase the company's productivity and profitability. The participants were four HR managers at four organizations in Texas who manage 50 or more employees and have implemented strategies to retain committed employees to improve productivity. Data were collected from semistructured interviews and company document reviews. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. Using Yin's 5 step data analysis process, three themes emerged: improving employee morale, effective communication, and rewarding employees. A key recommendation for HR managers is to promote corporate culture and HR employee retention strategies such as one-on-one meetings and personalized training to increase organizational commitment. The implications for positive social change include the potential to retain employees thereby, increasing local employment and the community tax base.

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Dedication

My doctoral study is dedicated to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who has guided, graced, and promised mercy to me throughout my doctoral journey. Though this journey has been challenging, I am grateful for the courage, faith, strength, and endurance that he provided me to complete this doctoral journey. In addition, I dedicate this amazing milestone study to my handsome husband, Frederick, whose love, encouragement, unwavering support, and financial assistance made this possible. It is also my pleasure to dedicate my studies to my beautiful daughters, Makiyah and Maleah, for their love and constant motivation to succeed in my studies. Furthermore, I would like to thank all my family and friends who encouraged and assisted me along the way.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge my heavenly father for his divine grace that has allowed me to successfully complete my doctoral journey. I would like to acknowledge my amazing husband, Frederick, and our beautiful daughters Makiyah and Maleah for their love, patience, and motivation throughout this journey. I would like to sincerely acknowledge Dr. Jim Glenn (chair), Dr. Lisa Cave (2nd chair committee member), and Dr. Diane Dusick (URR) for their honesty, insight, recommendations, and guidance. I am forever grateful that I had an opportunity to work with an amazing committee throughout my doctoral journey. I would like to acknowledge my fellow classmates that have provided me encouragement and tips along the way. Lastly, I would like to acknowledge all of the participants that allowed me to conduct an interview with them for my research and reach this amazing milestone.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Business leaders have a responsibility to employees and their companies to create strategies to increase productivity and profits. Employees may become motivated to work harder if they are challenged, valued, and provided incentives for their efforts of productivity that may lead to an increase in profits for the organization. Leaders can be proactive and create a plan that would be beneficial to the employee and the organization.

Background of the Problem

Business leaders within organizations must consider ways to keep employees engaged, productive, and committed to increase profitability within the organization (Zeidan & Itani, 2020). Employees who are dissatisfied could become low performers or demotivated to perform the responsibilities of their job (Kai-Ting Lee, 2020). Leadership strategies to enhance employee commitment help retain employees and keeping them motivated to perform at a high level (Krajcsák, 2019). Human resources (HR) leaders who develop employee strategies help the organization gain or sustain a competitive advantage (Swid et al., 2017).

The key to increased productivity, performance, and profitability is to optimize each employee contribution to increase the productivity, performance, and profitability of their organization (Myrna, 2010). Employee affective commitment enhances by consistently identifying, improving, and communicating organizational core values such as culture, and recognition along with core competencies (Krajcsak, 2019). The focus of

this study is to explore strategies that some HR managers use to increase employee commitment and retention to increase the company's productivity and profit.

Problem Statement

Employees who are dissatisfied with their jobs tend to have lower productivity levels, which may reduce employee retention and overall organizational performance (Jha & Kumar, 2016). In 2021, more than 3 million people quit their jobs voluntarily and did not have the opportunity to grow their careers with their current employer, in turn reducing retention and decreasing organizational commitment, productivity, and organizational performance (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021). The general business problem is that some HR managers fail to provide employment benefits to incentivize workers to stay with the company to lower employee turnover and increase productivity. The specific business problem is that some HR managers lack strategies to increase employee commitment and retention to increase the company's productivity and profit.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study is to explore strategies that some HR managers use to increase employee commitment and retention to increase their companies' productivity and profit. The targeted population were HR managers in four public organizations' HR departments in Texas who have successfully implemented strategies to increase employee commitment and retention to increase the companies' profitability and profits. The implications for positive social change could include higher incomes for local companies and their employees and an increase in the state and local

tax base, which may lead to greater community development and a higher quality of life for all residents.

Nature of the Study

The three methodological choices are quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods (Saunders et al., 2015). I selected the qualitative method because I used semistructured interview questions that were open-ended and provided rich textual data to address the research question. In this qualitative research design study, I used this data collection technique to choose, justify, and then validate the conceptual framework and investigate successful strategies that HR managers used to increase employee commitment and retention to increase the company's productivity and profit. Conversely, Barnham (2015) noted that the quantitative method is appropriate for investigating relationships or differences among independent and dependent variables to prove a hypothesis. The mixed method is a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods to provide richer data for understanding complex phenomenon (Saunders et al., 2015). To explore strategies to increase employee commitment and retention to increase companies profit and productivity, I did not test the relationship between variables or hypotheses; therefore, the qualitative and quantitative portion of a mixed methods study were not appropriate. I used the qualitative research methodology in this study.

I considered three research designs to use for a qualitative study on strategies to increase employee commitment and retention to increase the company's productivity and profits: phenomenology, ethnography, and case study. In a phenomenological design, a

researcher seeks to identify and explore the uniqueness of individuals' lived experiences (Saunders et al., 2015). The scope of my study did not involve personal experiences; therefore, a phenomenology design was not appropriate. An ethnographic design is the study of a culture or ethnic group (Nairn et al., 2020). The scope of my study did not involve describing one or more groups' cultures; therefore, an ethnographic research design was not appropriate. A case study is an in-depth inquiry into a topic within a real-life setting (Saunders et al., 2015). It is a research design that involves an investigation to determine a phenomenon using multiple sources of evidence, which made it an ideal design to explore the strategies that HR managers use to increase employees' commitment. I chose a multiple case study because replication is suitable for the nature of the chosen case population. A single case study approach was not chosen because I did not intend to observe and analyze a phenomenon that few have considered before.

Research Question

What strategies do human resource managers use to increase employee commitment and retention to increase the company's productivity and profit?

Interview Questions

1. What successful strategies are you employing to increase employee commitment and retention to reduce turnover and training cost to improve productivity and profitability?
2. How have you assessed the strategies' effectiveness of the employee strategies you developed to increase productivity and profitability?

3. How has implementation of employee commitment and retention strategies improved productivity and profitability?
4. What were the key challenges that you encountered implementing employee commitment and retention strategies?
5. How did your organization address the key challenges to increase employee commitment and retention?
6. Based upon your experience, how have your organization's strategies to improve employee commitment and retention influenced your company's ability to increase productivity and profitability?
7. What additional information about your organization's strategies to improve employee retention to improve productivity would you like to add to this interview?

Conceptual Framework

Vroom developed expectancy theory (ET) in 1964 to explore employees' choices that may lead to work motivation and superior job performance to achieve the best personal outcome (Lloyd & Mertens, 2018). In the 1990s, there was a growing use of ET to explain and predict human behavior in organizations (Baumann & Bonner, 2017). Vroom believed that an employee's performance is based on individual factors such as personality, skills, knowledge, experiences, and abilities. Vroom's (1964) ET demonstrated the extent to which an employee is likely to engage in an action that will influence their behavior to increase performance for the benefit of organizational growth

by an increase in profits and productivity. The key constructs of ET are the perception that effort leads to performance and influences the behavior choice on perceived rewards or personal expectations (Lloyd & Mertens, 2018). ET was useful for exploring employee retention to increase productivity because it is based on motivating others and influencing employees' behavior based on efforts, performance, and rewards.

Operational Definitions

Affective commitment: Affective commitment is an emotional attachment that an employee develops toward organizational values that impacts an employee's organization-relevant behavior (Paolucci et al., 2018).

Employee engagement: Employee engagement is a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Zuliawati et al., 2018).

Human resource management: Human resource management consists of practices and policies that are required to be maintained within the personnel aspect of the administration, including hiring, appraising, rewarding, and providing a safe and just environment for the current employees of an organization (Mazi, 2015).

Job satisfaction: Job satisfaction encompasses the feelings and beliefs of people about their jobs and work environments that influence their motivation to work effectively (Sumlin et al., 2021).

Organizational commitment: Organizational commitment is the individual's psychological attachment to the organization (Sumlin et al., 2021).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

An assumption is an unexamined belief that has not been confirmed and is sufficient to describe the phenomenon (Nkwake, 2013). The first assumption of this study was that the interviewees provided honest and truthful responses. The second assumption was that the choice of interview questions for data collection led to the necessary information on the strategies human resource managers use to increase employee commitment and retention to increase the company's productivity and profit. Finally, another key assumption was that ET is an appropriate conceptual framework for exploring the constructs that increases employee commitment and retention to increase the company's productivity and profit.

Limitations

Limitations are systematic biases that are uncontrollable by the researcher and affect the internal and external validity of the researcher's findings (Price & Murnan, 2010). The first limitation was that I was solely responsible for data collection and analysis, which creates a potential for bias. As such, more effort to increase the reliability and validity of the study was necessary. The next limitation was that the interviewees provided honest and forthright responses to the interview questions and were willing to share documentation. Interviewees' responses did not represent the views of human resource managers in other geographical limitations. The final limitation was time. Walden University required that I conducted the doctoral study within a specified time;

therefore, I conducted a cross-sectional data collection strategy, which was done relatively fast to save time.

Delimitations

Delimitations are those characteristics that define the boundaries and limit the scope within a study, which are controlled by selecting a choice of research questions and chosen population to investigate (Cörvers et al., 2009). The first delimitation was my focus on only HR managers. I did not include managers from any other areas. The second delimitation was that I used a purposeful sample of HR managers located in Texas who managed 50 or more employees within their organization. The third delimitation was the research problem itself. There are many other important issues that leaders face as HR managers, but I focused on the strategies leaders used to increase employee commitment and retention to increase the company's productivity and profit. The social benefits encourage local managers to learn new skills and retain and attract new employees while remaining competitive and increasing profits and productivity in the workforce.

Significance of the Study

The findings from this study of the strategies that HR managers used to increase employee commitment and retention to increase the company's productivity and profitability enabled HR managers to create proactive strategies to increase a company's productivity and profitability. Greater job satisfaction through talent development and career coaching derive from human resource management (HRM) strategies (Ling et al., 2018). HR managers altered or used new strategies to keep employees engaged and

provided rewards or incentives to stimulate productivity. Profits are important with driving organizational success. The exploration of successful employee retention strategies allowed HR managers to create increased commitment among employees, which lead to an increase in companies' productivity and profitability. Leaders may use the results of this study to identify opportunities to grow their organization faster and compete more efficiently and effectively, which will allow the organization to thrive and remain competitive.

Contribution to Business Practice

The increased business value created through greater employee commitment and retention lead to higher productivity and profitability, thereby improving competitive positioning and an increased market share. HRM strategies derive greater job satisfaction through talent development and career coaching (Ling et al., 2018). The exploration of successful employee retention strategies allowed HR managers to create increased commitment among employees lead to an increase in companies' productivity and profitability. The findings from this study are of value to HR managers to provide strategies to increase commitment to the organization and permit business leaders to retain high performing employees. Leaders may use the findings from this study to identify opportunities to grow their organization faster and compete more efficiently and effectively, which will allow the organization to thrive and remain competitive.

Implications for Social Change

HR managers used strategies to increase commitment and reduce turnover and increase productivity and profitability, which in turn would reduce unemployment and increase state and local taxes, leading to greater investment in communities by both state and local governments. Employee commitment involves an emotional connection with the organization is important to retain employees within an organization (Ziykovic et al., 2021). The improvement in employee commitment enhances employees' quality of life due to employees being happier and willing to perform their jobs more efficiently, thereby creating greater job security for their families. The findings from this study are a value to HR managers in the community to provide strategies to increase employee commitment within organizations and permit business leaders to retain high performing employees in the community by continuing to adopt valuable strategies.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

In this literature review, I explored research findings on the strategies that HR managers used to increase employee commitment and retention to increase the company's productivity and profit. I also explored strategies that HR managers used to maintain employee engagement, relationships, and benefit incentives. The articles in this academic review relate to the research question: What strategies do human resource managers use to increase employee commitment and retention to increase the company's productivity and profit? The ET was utilized as the conceptual framework for this study. In this literature review, I provided supporting and contracting theories, the equity and

reinforcement theory of motivation. Peer-reviewed journal articles, along with books and government publications, were the sources of information utilized in this literature review.

The literature review was an overview of the productivity challenges that HR managers faced in retaining productive employees to increase profits followed by a detailed examination of the literature on the conceptual framework. Secondly, I continued with an analysis of ET, a discussion of the theory's applicability to productivity and profitability strategies among HR managers, and a summary of the contrasting theories. Next, I included a review of the existing body of knowledge relating to the reasons for non-committed employees. The focus shifted to the factors that influence noncommitted employees, such as employee engagements, employee relationships, and the lack of benefit incentives. Lastly, a review and synthesis of the literature on the employee productivity and commitment strategies that HR managers implemented in HR management industry to complete the literature review.

I explored a range of issues in the extant literature on issues relating to employee commitment and productivity and HR challenges in a wide array of industries. I retrieved research material through several databases-Business Source Complete and ProQuest and accessed additional research material through search engines such as Google Scholar. The search terms for discovering relevant content for the review were *employee commitment, productivity, profitability, employee engagement, employee relationships, employee benefit incentives, and productivity and profitability challenges among HR*

managers. The entire study contained referenced works with peer-reviewed studies within the mandatory 5-year period (2016-2021). There are works cited in the literature review that were published prior to 2016. The literature review included 169 references composed of peer-reviewed journal articles and one book. Ninety-three (93%) of the references were published between 2016 to 2021.

Concerns related to dissatisfied employees can affect performance, productivity levels, and retention within organizations worldwide. The review of literature for this study included information collected from organizations and this information is applied to a qualitative case study within the HR industry. The review of literature was conveyed through a summary of previous research, comparing, and contrasting research study methods and findings.

An analysis of employee productivity and satisfaction demonstrated employees were more likely to respond positively to incentives from their employers as a performance incentive such as merit pay, individual commission, and bonuses (Bryson et al., 2016). This study involved exploring strategies to increase commitment among employees while aiming to increase the company's productivity. Managers recognize problems within the organization that may negatively impact the financial stability of the organization (Klink et al., 2021). Lloyd and Merten (2018) noted that worker motivation is an important yet problematic criterion for administrators to utilize effectively among a diverse group of employees, but it is useful in managing employee motivation.

The use of the research question conveyed the strategies that human resource managers used to influence employees to become committed and retain them within the company with the intent to increase productivity among employees while raising the profits of the organization. Leaders planned and strategized ways to develop new and improved ways to grow their organization through engaging and retaining employees, as well as gradually increasing profits for success (Chawla, 2020). The demonstration of the conceptual framework is through ET. Managers used ET, to develop strategies to promote work motivation and job performance by cultivating employees personality, skills, knowledge, experiences, and abilities (Glišović et al., 2019). ET was relevant to understand the findings of my study because it was useful for exploring employee retention strategies to increase productivity because it is based on motivating others and influencing employees' behavior based on efforts, performance, and rewards.

Expectancy Theory (ET)

This literature review began with a discussion of ET as the foundation for understanding the importance of implementing new strategies to motivate employees. In 1964, Vroom, a Canadian professor of psychology, developed the ET (Lloyd & Mertens, 2018). Vroom studied people's motivation and concluded motivation depends on three factors: (a) expectancy, (b) instrumentality, and (c) valence (Chopra, 2019).

Tenets of ET

Expectancy is the belief that effort leads to a specific level of performance (Nimri et al., 2015). Employees are often in search of a particular outcome that will gain

recognition and an increase in pay. Expectation is an idea of the possibility that a particular act will create a desired result (Glišović et al., 2019). Employers are responsible for introducing employees to the organizational culture and creating expectations for the organization to recognize and employ opportunities to award incentives. HR managers are responsible for identifying expectations for an employee to remain motivated in a competitive work industry.

Instrumentality is a performance that leads to an outcome of perception, and is described as instrumentality (Beiu & Davidescu, 2018). Instrumentality is an opportunity for an employee to achieve a desired outcome of positive valence (Glišović et al., 2019). Positive outcomes lead to other results of performance and desired incentives, which is an opportunity to increase motivation among employees, other employers, and HR managers.

Valence is the value of a reward or outcome (Lloyd & Mertens, 2018). Researchers used ET and focused on the importance of employee work motivation to maximize job performance (Blackman et al., 2018). Employees were willing to work hard and enhance their motivation for an attractive reward of recognition. Valence refers to an employee's interest to an incentive outcome through (a) attractiveness (b) importance, and or (c) potential consequences associated with accepting the reward or incentive (Glišović et al., 2019).

Evolution of ET

In the 1950s, the foundation of the ET was established from the expectancy-value theory (EVT; Lloyd & Mertens, 2018). Atkinson, an American psychologist who pioneered the scientific study of human motivation, achievement, and behavior (Bernard et al., 2005). Atkinson developed the expectancy-value theory in the 1950s in an effort to understand the motivation of individuals (Lloyd & Mertens, 2018). ET has evolved since the establishment of the expectancy-value theory.

Leaders need to be able to determine key factors that motivate and keep their employees engaged to remain loyal and contribute to a productive and profitable organization. According to Ball et al. (2016), the EVT linked an employee's performance, persistence, and choices to their values and beliefs. The ET was linked to an employee's effort to achieve work activities while achieving personal and organizational goals (Gilsovic et al., 2019). HR leaders should consider ways to inspire and ensure employee motivation to all employees. Every employee perceives motivation differently based on their economic, social, and emotional needs and experiences.

Employees are motivated by the way their employer reacts to their performance. ET is a process theory that demonstrates what an employee expects to receive in return for their productive work efforts. According to Sobaih and Hasanein (2020) the two-factor content theory of motivation is derived from an employees' perception of their achievement, recognition, and their personal growth through leadership feedback. Covertly, managers utilizing ET must determine new strategies to motivate a diverse workforce to continue to achieve employee motivation (Lloyd and Mertens, 2018).

Employees require different criteria to become motivated and leaders must be able to determine the ways that they are able to retain a productive employee that is committed to contributing to the future of the organization. The key components of ET are effort and reward to enhance motivation. However, human motivation and behavior are the driving forces of (HMT) to motivate employees based on recognition or achievement.

Employees that are motivated may be more productive and committed to the success of the organization. Both theories consist of factors that contributes to job satisfaction, which are motivators. Motivators in HMT will improve organizational efficiency by higher productivity, better quality, better attendance and punctuality, lower labor turnover, which will improve performance in employees (Gardner, 1977). Motivators in ET are determined based on a behavioral choice that will obtain a desirable outcome motivating the employee as a force to be productive. (Baumann & Bonner, 2017). Both of these theories maybe favorable to an organization motivating their employees be productive and contribute to the wealth if the organization. Employees benefited from support, training, and recognition to retain high performing and motivated employees.

In 1968, Porter and Lawler extended Vroom's expectancy theory of motivation using two additional variables in their model. They used the foundation of Vroom's theory to develop their expectancy model. They concluded that an individual's motivation to complete a task is affected by the reward that they expect to receive for completing the task. Porter and Lawer (1968) introduced additional aspects to ET,

reward defined as both intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic rewards are positive feelings that the individual experiences from completing the task such as satisfaction, and sense of achievements. The extrinsic rewards are distributed in the form of bonuses, commissions, and pay increases.

Previous Researchers Who Have Used ET

As firm diversity and collaboration increases, managers must utilize various criteria to motivate workers across numerous sectors and cultures continually. Lee (2019) noted the effects moderating conditions that contribute to performance-based human resources management that directly increases worker motivation. The expectancy theory suggested that if people expect a positive and desirable outcome, they will usually work hard to perform at the level expected of them. Baumann and Bonner (2017) described the theory of expectancy both as a behavioral choice and motivation.

Researchers have assisted with the evolution of the ET over the years by including achievable rewards that are linked to motivate employees personally, to achieve performance goals. Employee expectations are high in regard to receiving rewards based on their positive contributions to the organization (Foy et al., 2019). HR managers now have more measurable options to consider and implement such as conducting quarterly one-on-one meetings with employees linking rewards directly to performance. High performing employees look forward to greater rewards than their peers for their great contributions to their organization's success in profits and productivity levels (Foy et al., 2019). HR managers now have more measurable options to utilize to motivate their team

by linking rewards directly to performance. They understand the importance of developing transparent rewards that are realistic such as bonuses, written praise, or verbal praise. Scholars have widely dissected, debated, and tested ET while expanding it to improve performance among employees. The primary goal is to increase productivity and profitability for the growth of the organization.

HR managers have the ability to create innovative best-fit strategies for their employees by requesting their input and making it compatible with local cultural and institutional contexts (Kornelakis, 2018). The strategies that HR managers may establish to retain employees are through profit sharing, stock options, and the balanced scorecard. Kornelakis (2018) suggested employees who provide input on driven forces to enhance their work experience may also enhance employee productivity, boost employee engagement, and innovation within the organization. Bárcena-Ruiz (2016) insisted that profit sharing is an innovative way for employees to participate in earning and protecting the company profits, while keeping employee morale, loyalty, and retention up. Organizations have the option to pay profit-sharing plans monthly or quarterly to employees or retirees' accordance with their wages/salaries, length of service, absence records, individual performance, held as stocks, or a combination of all factors. Profit sharing may result in higher organizational performance, an increase in profits, and retaining employees. Hambly et al. (2019) insisted that the profit-sharing plan directly relates to three theories: (a) an integrated approach based on the expectancy theory, (b) goal setting theory, and (c) reinforcement theory. Employee expectations are high when

they are confident that their actions will affect by increasing profits and profits, which creates high expectations along with high levels of motivation.

The balanced scorecard is another tool that HR managers use to retain and strategically identify useful objectives that may impact the organization positively. McKnight et al (2020) identified the balanced scorecard (BSC) as a performance metric that help managers develop management initiatives to focus on organizational strategy and vision. The BSC is the foundation to the financial perspective of an organization along with three additional perspectives to include customer, internal, and innovation and learning to stimulate and maximize the organizational success (McKnight et al., 2020). Consequently, ET is a motivational force experienced by an individual to select one behavior from a larger set is some function of the perceived likelihood that the behavior will result in the execution of various outcomes weighted by the desirability (valence) of these outcomes to the person (Lee, 2019).

There are other theories that are closely related to ET and motivating people in various ways to obtain a controlled result. Leadership styles in the work environment can show the effectiveness of achieving desirable organizational outcomes (Kanat-Maymon et al., 2020). The Maslow's hierarchy of needs, equity theory of motivation, and the reinforcement theory all relate to the ET and motivation in the workplace. In 1943, Maslow, an American psychologist who was best known for creating Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which is a theory of psychological health predicted on fulfilling innate human needs in prioritizing and culminating in self-actualization (Bridgman et al., 2019).

Maslow also developed a concept of a hierarchy of needs in his 1943 paper “A Theory of Human Motivation” and subsequent book *Motivation and Personality*. This hierarchy suggested that people are motivated to fulfill basic needs before moving on to other, more advanced needs (Acevedo, 2018).

The hierarchy pyramid consists of three levels of needs: (a) basic needs, (b) psychological needs, and (c) self-fulfillment needs. The basic needs are physiological and safety needs: (a) food, (b) water, (c) warmth (d) rest, (e) security, and (f) safety (Bridgman et al., 2019). The psychological needs are esteem needs and belongingness and love need: (a) intimate relationships, friends and (b) prestige and feeling of accomplishment (Acevedo, 2018). Finally, self-fulfillment needs are self-actualizations of achieving one’s potential and including creative activities. The hierarchy of needs are human requirements that an individual must have to achieve complete development and actualization.

The three components of ET are expectancy, instrumentally, and valence which is ultimately a belief that the efforts put forth will lead to a goal. Conversely, hierarchy of needs indicates that everyone requires the basic needs personally to reach their goals. In sum, people need to have their basic needs met before utilizing ET to achieve their personal, educational, or career goals. ET may be established by an employee after their basic needs are met. The work hierarchy of needs relates to challenging jobs, incentives, social activities, seniority, and salary (Li et al., 2019). The psychological need of prestige and feeling accomplished is similar to ET and the expectancy based on a previous action.

Self-actualization needs, esteem needs, social needs, safety needs, and physiological needs, apply to personal and work needs are necessities for an employee (Wellman et al., 2020). ET is a want for an action to occur to feel accomplished and hierarchy of needs describes the need to feel accomplished as a human requirement as a psychological need (Skiba & Rosenberg, 2011).

Equity Theory

The equity theory of motivation (ETM) supports ET as scholars use ETM to demonstrate that employee motivation continues when they are treated equally, and employers are implementing fair practices within the organization (Davlembayeva et al., 2021). Skiba and Rosenberg (2011) posited that ET and ETM are appropriate for recognizing a wide variety of awards employees will achieve as a result of performance. ETM identifies the importance of perception fairness in the workplace, and the connection with understanding human motivation (Ross & Kapitan, 2018). Employee motivation is inspired by the fair balance between their organizational inputs and outputs (O'Connor & Crowley-Henry, 2019). Therefore, employees receive their motivation from being treated equitably, while receiving their due diligence for their efforts. As a result, HR managers are accountable for implementing ETM to promote organizational justice and employee engagement.

Adams, a workplace behavioral psychologist, laid the foundation for ETM in 1963, and the development of his theory of motivation (Skiba & Rosenberg, 2011). Later in 1964, Vroom expanded on Adam's idea for the theory and introduced the idea of

ensuring that employee reward systems are fair (Skiba & Rosenberg, 2011). There are three components of ETM theory: (a) organizational justice, (b) job performance, and (c) the behavior as a result of inequality (Ross & Kapitan, 2018). The utilization of equity-based awards is associated with retaining employees managing job duties that will offer equal incentives to employees based on their performance. ET highlights the performance of employees' actions in exchange for rewards based on expectations. The three elements of (ETM) are (a) inputs such as education, training, and skills you are putting into a job; (b) outputs such as pay, recognition, and bonuses; and (c) comparisons such as comparing input (effort) with output (rewards) among other employees (Cote, 2019).

ETM is driven by employee satisfaction by comparing their effort and rewards amongst other employees (Demircioglu, 2021). While the ET depends on an employee's belief that their actions will produce a certain outcome that they may value to work towards, in which it is a determining factor of why an employee chooses a behavior in certain situations (Glišović et al, 2019). Therefore, skill-based pay systems allow each individual to be compensated according to their skills. Thus, HR managers could use ETM theory to learn and implement strategies to sustain productivity and profitability within organizations (Guzak & Kang, 2018). The primary goal of ETM is to ensure that employees recognize the fairness of employee reward systems and attain a meaningful work environment (Rosenberg & Skiba, 2011). Conversely, the primary goal of ET is that employees experience motivation to perform by two expectancies, which are the probability that a performance will lead to a certain desired outcome and the effort given

lead to a desired performance in return will determine the level of motivation (Rosenberg & Skiba, 2011).

The ETM and ET have some similarities and also some differences. Both theories contributed to employee motivation and classify a process theory of how motivation occurs within employees (Glišović et al, 2019). However, ETM demonstrated that inputs (work) should be equal to outputs (rewards). Examples of inputs include (a) time, (b) effort, (c) education, (d) qualification, (e) ability, (f) flexibility, (g) sacrifices, and (h) support given. As a result of inputs, examples of outputs include (a) salary, (b) pension, (c) healthcare, (d) job security, (e) recognition, (f) reputation, (g) achievement, and (h) praise and thanks (Rosenberg & Skiba, 2011). While the ET (1964), linked expectancy (effort), instrumentality (performance), and valence (rewards) as an equation that must include all three as a consideration for an employee to become motivated to achieve the ultimate goal to work towards the reward.

The results of ETM were consistent with ET that employees acquire motivation through their perception of the establishment of rewards (outcome or valence) they may receive from their managers on their work efforts (Davlembayeva et al., 2021). Although ET suggested that expectancy, instrumentality, and valence must include all three to be present to motivate an employee, ETM reached a different conclusion that employees demonstrate inputs that leads to outputs (rewards) or they will encounter feeling of demotivation instead of motivation for their inputs (Lloyd & Mertens, 2018). Baumann and Bonner (2017) stated that employees may differ in how they assess valence,

expectancy, and instrumentality, which in return has a different perception of expectancy and their motivation to obtain the reward. As a result, HR managers ensured that the target goals were desirable and obtainable for each employee to aspire to achieve the goal based on their level of motivation to increase productivity and profits within an organization. I selected ET as my conceptual framework because the theory offers a manageable strategy for HR leaders to use to influence employees to become motivated, increase productivity performance, and attract earning rewards. In sum, I did not select the ETM as my conceptual framework because I did not want to review a strategy that only focused on motivating people when they are treated fairly.

Reinforcement Theory

An additional theory that was similar to ET is reinforcement theory (RT). Reinforcement can be defined as an action that a leader used to strengthen or enhance the behavior of an individual to result positively on the growth of an organization (Vollmer et al., 2020). In 1957, Skinner developed RT also known as behavior modifications (BM), to assist leaders with initiating positive or negative reinforcers to control individual behavior (Cote, 2019). HR leaders used the reinforcement-focused programs to control the outcome of behavior through external rewards, which increases employee motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic simultaneously (Shuck et al., 2018). There were four elements to RT: (a) positive reinforcement, (b) negative reinforcement, (c) positive punishment, and (d) negative punishment (Skinner, 1958). Positive reinforcement and negative reinforcement are driving forces that added stimulus and increases behavior. Positive

punishment and negative punishment were a restrained force that removed stimulus while decreasing behavior. Skinner's (1958) applied to the study of HR managers because Skinner allowed for the possibility to explore the influence of HR managers developing strategies to maximize the motivation of employees through intrinsic and extrinsic awards, enhancing behavior, increasing performance, and exceeding job expectations to increase the profitability of the organization.

Antoni et al. (2017) suggested that HR managers, as leaders, should have knowledge of motivating employees and create a reward system to retain and attract employees to promote effective performance. Reward systems were a positive reinforcement that comprised of financial or nonfinancial rewards, which will drive the force to add stimulus to increase behavior. Appreciation, job security, promotion, and benefits are all rewards that managers may provide their employees. HR managers distinguished ways to motivate employees to encourage engagement, positive behavior, and reinforce that good behavior. This was an example of negative reinforcement, which is a driving force that increase behavior of any future performance of an employee (Younies & Al-Tawil, 2021). The factors that influenced an employee's motivation include leadership, social influences, and the nature of the work environment (Meyer et al., 2004).

The leading goal of RT was to guide leaders in utilizing forms of reinforcement to shape the behavior of employees by firmly controlling the consequences by initiating strategies that offer tangible extrinsic rewards such as perks and recognition to influence

favorable behavior in the work environment (Shuck et al., 2018). On the contrary, Rosenberg and Skiba (2011) posited the key goal of ET is that employees will experience motivation to perform by two expectancies, which are the probability that a performance will lead to a certain desired outcome and the effort given will lead to a desired performance in return will determine the level of motivation.

The RT and ET have some differences as well as similarities. Scott (2018) explained that both are effective theories that managers use to motivate employees in the workplace are process theories of motivation, which focuses on how motivation occurs within employee and how motives can change over time. HR managers can use both theories to develop solutions within their organizations to motivate their employees by meeting their intrinsic need for fulfillment and rewards. Conversely, RT is distinct from ET; Vroom suggested that motivation can be planned externally (Scott, 2018). Kang et al. (2017) argued that Skinner's development of RT explained that behavior is a function of its consequences.

Conversely, RT is considered a content theory of motivation (Glišović et al., 2019). Shuck et al. (2018) indicated that HR managers are responsible for designing a workplace climate that meets employees' basic psychological needs are (a) autonomy, (b) relatedness, and (c) competence. HR managers who meet employees' basic psychological needs may create a positive favorable work environment that leads to a healthier work motivation, employee intentions to work for enhanced outcomes, and financial gains for the employee as well as the organization (Shuck et al., 2018). While positive

reinforcement is directly related to results, a direct approach to the solution of performance problems indicates that employees offer a high performance which links to linking to consistent rewards or a specific pattern linked to a reward (Wizard, 1972).

The results of RT focused on consequences as a result of behavior choices, while ET focused on behavior choices among employees. Bawa (2017) suggested that RT is driven by stimulus, behavior, and consequences (positive or negative). In contrast, ET is driven by performance, instrumentality, and valence. Bawa (2017), suggested that managerial leaders could use RT to reinforce to employees to continue positive outcome leading to continual favorable behavior, which will in turn lead employees to not continue outcomes that lead to negativity. Conversely, Bawa (2017), argued that ET has the influence to link a positive reward leads to higher motivation levels of employees within the organization. As a result, HR managers are responsible for utilizing motivational strategies to increase motivational efforts among employees to increase performance and profits within an organization. RT related to consequences while ET deals with how an employee behaves, both are effective motivating theories HR manages can use to create efficient strategies within their organization to increase performance and profitability. Therefore, I chose ET as my conceptual framework because I wanted to focus on behavior choices strategies that HR leaders could develop to increase employee productivity rather than consequences of choices employees make established by RT.

Commitment

In the first decade of the 21st century, involvement of HR in the strategic planning of the firm has grown dramatically. Concomitant with this has been an increase in upper managements' attempts to increase employee commitment to increase employee retention and thereby, firm profitability (Auijla et al., 2020). There are three types of employee commitment: continuance, normative, and affective commitment. Hodgkinson et al. (2018) posited that affective commitment is a form of commitment that can be influenced by an employer. Affective commitment is an emotional attachment that an employee develops toward organizational values that impacts an employee's organization-relevant behavior (Paolucci et al., 2018). Normative and affective commitment can also be a form of commitment that can be influenced by their organization's actions and expectations (Cesaro & Chambel, 2017). Organizational commitment directly affects whether an organization is successful or unsuccessful by how well the organization builds relationships with their employees (Gassen Balsan et al., 2020). Employee commitment played an influential role in increasing the company's productivity and profit.

HR managers value employees who show signs of commitment to their organization to increase business revenue. Continuance commitment was demonstrated by an employee who needed to stay on the job due to the cost or privileges associated with the organization such as seniority, jobs skills, friends, and status (Moin, 2018). Conversely, normative commitment was demonstrated by employees who feel that it is their moral duty to commit to their organization (Meyer & Parfyonova, 2010). HR

managers worked diligently to ensure that their employees are happy, motivated, compensated, and appreciated, and recognized for their exceptional work efforts.

The commitment of HR leaders was influential in developing the best work environment to grow, work, and learn while motivating employees to demonstrate good work habits. Jayasingam et al. (2016) noted that employees look to affirm affective commitment through job satisfaction, extrinsic rewards, constituent attachments, organizational commitment, and organizational prestige. Employees are motivated to continue good work habits if they know they will be rewarded for their duties and or appreciated by their superiors (Wong, 2019). HR leaders played a role of demonstrating the expectations of the organization.

Profitability

One of the main goals of an organization is the expectancy to receive profits for the goods or services provided to their customers. Sánchez et al. (2011) posited profitable organizations are linked to positively influencing the prosperity of their industry along with the economy. Profitability is a term described as creation to reaffirm the point that one of the most practical and available ways to maximize profit is through optimizing productivity (Briggs et al., 2020). The purpose of profitability was to create a work environment and culture to influence engagement and productivity. An organizational leader's ability to optimize services to increase profitability from its customers, define their customer needs, and abilities to provide profit for the organization (Chen et al., 2019a).

Business leaders who are more informed of successful employee evaluation methods are more likely to gain a more productive workforce, which may increase profits and positively impact organizational growth. According to Minton-Eversole (2007), it was vital to increase the profitability of an organization and ensure that employee engagement is a priority to retaining valuable employees. Leaders should remember that less engagement leads to less profits, which is why it is vital that employees are shown their value and appreciation through rewards, recognition, and increase of compensation opportunities (Daisuke & Sato, 2020). Profits should not be the primary focus of management and the only metric used to define organizational success. The quality of an employee's wellbeing along with the potential career growth within the organization is another important consideration (Sarfaraz et al., 2015).

Customers or clients played a major role in the success of the organization by supporting the products or services offered and lifetime customer loyalty, which lead to maximizing the organization's profits (Hegarty, 2018). The success of an organization is dependent on the accuracy of measuring revenues and customer costs which requires excellent customer relationship management and accounting software (Farrah, 2017). There were many different leadership styles that assisted with promoting productive employees, which in turn increased retention along with profits for the organization. Business leaders had the opportunity to create strategies to attract and retain customers based on offering competitive services and products, which lead to an increase in organizational profits (Stinglhamber, et al., 2015). Human resources leader helped

manage new ways to influence productivity among employees while offering customers or clients competitive alternatives.

There were positive outcomes associated with engagement, recognition, and incentives offered to employees, which allowed employees to become more productive and increase profits among customers or clients. One positive outcome associated with the recognition of employees were to provide recognition certificates, bonuses, and employee of the month incentives to continue to motivate high-performing employees (Bergin et al., 2020). Another positive outcome of employee engagement was providing incentives such as a reward for a day off or a half of day when being productive and helping to increase organizational productivity levels (Bokert et al., 2020). Ghose and Mohanty (2016), suggested that employee recognition and reward systems are important drivers of loyalty to an organization. Profitability may increase due to employee engagement, recognition, and incentives as a strategic measure for employees to remain productive. In sum, leaders were able to develop strategies based on the motivational needs of the employees.

HR leader's strategic role in their organization can determine if the organization is successful financially. According to Gowan (2003), strategies were created for successful marketing, business plans, customer retention, and profitability to encourage customers to support the organization. The specific strategies were engagement, retention, and ways to increase productivity (Rompho, 2017). Engagement strategies included allowing employees and managers to collaborate on group projects. Strategies for retention offered

employees competitive pay and benefits. Lastly, productivity may be increased by offering employee incentives such as stock or recognition for their valuable service. The process of gaining knowledge from customers to build organizational profits can also provide the firm opportunities to achieve long term profitability by developing retention strategies for customers. In order to be successful business leaders must be willing to review statistics, create trends, and remain competitive to attract potential employees or clients to establish financial stability within an organization. As a result, HR leaders developed and provided strategies that will continue to enhance employee motivation by engaging, address retention, and increasing employee productivity by ensuring employees are compensated and recognized.

Balanced Scorecard

A strategic planning and management system tool for organizations is the balanced scorecard (BSC) as a way to monitor performance goals to increase organizational profitability. The BSC is a technique that classified the basic goals of an organization and defines success criteria under the four categories of financial, customer, internal business, and learning and growth (Yilmaz & Antmen, 2019). Organizational leaders used the BSC as a tool to align business objectives to the vision and strategy of the organization while monitoring organizational performance against strategic goals (Moullin, 2017). Unlike traditional employee performance models based solely on the financial metrics of a company, managers using the BSC focus equally on each of these four domains: financial operations, the customer, and learning and growth (Yilmaz

&Antmen, 2019). The financial operations provided support to keep the organization paying overhead cost and compensating employees for their performance. The customer supported the organization by purchasing products or services for organization to gain profits. Employees can learn their job duties through on the job training or attending professional development. Growth is a component which will allow the organization to thrive by becoming a competitive organization. Initiatives, goals, targets, and metrics are established for each of these four core areas needed in any company (García-Cruz et al., 2018). Expectations are clearly defined, and each employee knows the targets and goals that they are expected to reach.

Employees who exceed targets are given incentive pay while those who do not meet the minimum targets established may lose their job. In this way managers can incentivize their top performers and fire their worst performers. Importantly, the BSC forced managers to measure and map each core process and set targets and goals that are clear and strategically congruent (Zawawi & Hoque, 2020). The day-to-day progress is monitored and measured daily, and processes organized to prioritize projects, products, and services to ensure their respective departments are meeting preestablished goals, initiatives, and targets. In this manner, progress can be measured and monitored to ascertain progress towards established strategic targets. A performance measurement (PM) system such as the BSC is an essential component metrics used to develop efficiency and effectiveness actions within the organization (Soysa et al., 2018). HR managers utilized the balance scorecard as a tool to measure and improve the

performance of the organization. Productivity and profitability measures are monitored through this strategic management system.

Total Quality Management

Deming developed total quality management (TQM) as a leadership tool that provides organizations with a competitive strategy to continually improve processes aiming to provide a quality service that meets or exceeds expectations to increase profitability (Nguyen & Nagase, 2019). The quality management tool must continuously improve processes aimed at providing quality service to meet or exceed customer expectations. TQM included the entire organization's input to implement and constantly improve processes that managers oversee for quality experience among employee and potential clients. In addition, to achieve total quality it is imperative that employee satisfaction is met by providing a good quality of work life, which is driven by rewards and recognition, open door policies, fair and non-discriminatory grievance, incentives, enhancement of productivity, group incentive, and maintaining a good work environment (Palo & Padhi, 2005).

Lean Six Sigma

Lean six sigma (LSS) was a quality management system that utilizes organizational excellence to eliminate any process that is not beneficial to providing quality HR practices (Raja Sreedharan et al., 2020). The primary goal of LSS was to eliminate or avoid any managerial decisions that could cost the organization money to improve or replace to function as a productive organization (Rodgers et al., 2021). Talent

management strategies improvements consist of refraining from hiring employees that do not meet skill sets, which require innovative ways in sourcing and recruiting to obtain a competitive advantage within organization management quality (Sahay, 2015).

As a result of utilizing a strategic plan and management system, achieving profitability is one of the most valuable components of maintaining an organization. Without profitability there is no organization with studies suggesting that leaders are responsible for developing strategies specifically for the benefit of their organization (Koderisch et al., 2007). Continuous process improvement increases profitability and productivity, in turn helping the organization in growing faster, exceeding stakeholders' financial expectations and goals (Selladurai., 2002). In conclusion, profits are not gained automatically. Growing profitability requires dedication, planning, action, and strategic implementation of processes, goals, initiatives and targets, and most importantly, remaining proactive in developing ways to improve the strategic positioning of the firm within its industry.

Employee Retention

Employees are valuable to their organization's productivity level as well as the profits that are generated. Organizations are developing more strategies because they recognize the value that their employees may provide to the wealth of their organization. Employees created proactive measures to show their appreciation to their employees through recognition and monetary incentives. Organizations set goals, objectives, and intentions to retain their employees to assist achieving their goals (Ohunakin et al., 2020).

However, an employees' skills, expertise, and behavior toward the organization is a contributing factor of retaining an employee. There are benefits to retaining employees to secure the financial future of the organization.

Employee retention in the workplace is necessary to sustain high performing employees. McDougall (2001) suggested that employers create a proactive plan that will provide employees with continued support to stimulate financial growth through innovation and employee retention within an organization. Proactive planning is a time management skill that allow leaders of organizations to plan in advance for future while considering and avoiding costly mistakes. The decision-making experience among leaders is a proactive approach to enhancing the decisions and strategies within the organization (Grover et al., 2020). As a result, employee retention is managed by frequently creating proactive plans within the organization to sustain high performing employees.

Employees have a choice about selecting an employer, and employees feel appreciated and part of the team when they are recognized and rewarded. Employers have an opportunity to create strategies to retain employees that they may remain loyal to the organization. Increased retention can lead to an increase in productivity and profits for the organization (Covella et al., 2017). Affective organizational commitment mediates the relationship between the employee perceptions of servant leadership and employee turnover intention (Haqu et al., 2019). According to Jang and Kandampully (2018) leadership styles play a role in the employees' attitudes and behaviors and increased

affective commitment to retain employees. Leaders ultimately determine corporate culture and the work environment for organizational employees and are often the final step in developing strategies on retention. Employees played a role in the successful day to day operational flow of the organization. Profits kept the organization in operation and valued employees take pride in being productive for the longevity. As a result, employee retention is maintained through strategies involving commitment, incentives, and recognition.

HR leaders can maintain a workforce with talented employees by offering continued training and professional development. Frey et al. (2013) suggested motivating leaders to offer exceptional leadership traits to their employees helps to maintain a high productivity level among employees. HR leaders have a high influence of their employees' longevity and their motivation to remain a loyal employee. Retention led to motivation, an increase in productivity, job satisfaction, and an increase in exceeding organizational profits (Michael et al., 2016). Retention strategies should be a main priority among leaders to retain talented employees within the organization to promote a continuation of growth.

Organizational leaders retain top talented employees by utilizing the BSC to measure employees' performance metrics. Gawankar et al. (2015) discussed that organizations are using performance measurements to aid in achieving goals of effectiveness to continue to make managerial decisions. Employers seek to retain employees aid in increasing profits of the organization to achieve financial and

performance goals. The primary goal of PM was to review, compare, and contrast past and present operational strategies to fulfill the strategic goals of the organization (Gawankar et al., 2015). In comparison, quality management tools are integrated within BSC to organize a strategic plan that will comprise of a new management models for HR managers (Primentel & Major, 2014). Employers may retain more talented employees by using the BSC performance management system.

Employers want to be the choice employer by carefully attracting and retaining talented workers. Employees can be attracted and retained by competitive compensation, health benefits, retirement, flexible vacation, and paid time off (Hegarty, 2018).

According to Ahmad et al. (2020) there are three factors that stimulate retention efforts (a)attracting, (b) motivating, and (c) retaining skilled workers. Employers strive to be competitive in the market to attract and obtain a talented workforce who are motivated, productive, and want to reach the goal of maximizing profits for the organization.

Motivating employees through incentives and recognition may boost employee morale and encourage retention. Employers may retain skilled workers by offering continuing employee development trainings. HR leaders must continue to strategize to create more ways to retain employees for the continued growth of the organization.

Finally, employer branding is unique to each organization and the way they choose to operate their business. According to Molk (2018) employer branding identified the uniqueness of an organization defining the essence of the company attracting prospective employees to join the team. Employer branding has the capability on

delivering an employer promise to their employees in the efforts to retain employees (Botha et al., 2011). Strategies such as training, frequent one on one evaluation, establishing employee and employer relationship, promote organizational commitment, and provide a variety of benefit incentives. Retention strategies are one way to optimize productivity levels and increase organizational profits.

Employee Engagement

Employees assist an organization reaching financial goals and metrics such as, productivity, profits, and organizational success. According to Thomas (2016) HR leaders are responsible for establishing engagement efforts to gain the feedback of employees to succeed in continuous process improvement and maintain a healthy corporate atmosphere and corporate culture to increase organizational performance. Employee engagement strategies allow the organization to become cohesive and further reach desired organizational goals (S & M,2021). There are nine outcomes from improved employee engagement (a) customer ratings, (b) profitability, (c) productivity, (d) turnover, (e)safety incidents, (f) shrinkage, (g) absenteeism, (h) patient safety incidents, and (i) quality (Thomas, 2016). The benefits of strategies to engage employees allow them to become a valuable contributor to the organizational growth and success (Williams & Bland, 2020). According to Schmidt (2007), the benefits of engaged employees are they contribute to a productive work environment, ethics; accountability, and a commitment to working for the organizational for an extended period of time. Employees perform better when they are engaged, and they feel they bring value to the

organization through their unique contributions (Khodakarami & Dirani, 2020).

Cultivating the corporate culture for employees could continue to lead to increased productivity of valued employees and increased organizational profits.

Organizational development is one of the components to a successful organization to maintain employee engagement. Human resource leaders often utilize total quality management (TQM) as a tool to develop strategies to improve quality management processes that assist with engaging employees (Nguyen & Nagase, 2019). TQM is a strategy that allows management to develop a long-term approach to employee satisfaction by improving processes, services, and culture. Quality improvement may be a strategy to implement employee engagement for organizational development. Quality management focuses on employee involvement, process centered, strategic approach, communication, and continuous improvement within the organizational processes. Managers strive to create strategies that are proven to retain employees and allow employees to contribute to the organizational success (Nienaber & Martins, 2020). As a result, TQM allow managers to continue to inspire a positive relationship with employees by continuing to show value within the organization by clarifying the vision, mission, and values of the organization.

Leaders have the ability to create strategies that may guide and assist with developing positive long-term processes that employees would like to contribute for the success of the organization. Researchers have shown that TQM is an effective approach to service quality, productivity, and profits (Hart & Schlesinger, 1991; Nizamidou et al.,

2019). Successful TQM implementation includes a change in organizational values, organizational structure, the way people work together, and the way people feel about involvement and participation (Krajcsák, 2019). In some cases, TQM is led by consultants rather than internal managers to develop organizational changes and training programs to promote quality management (Hwang et al., 2020). Employees benefit from TQM by becoming trained, evaluated, recognized, rewarded, grouped, titled, and managed differently for the quality improvements of the organization (Mehralian et al., 2016).

Employees often help to create a major positive impact on an organization's daily routines and processes. It is vital that employees have an opportunity to voice their opinion on ways to grow the organization financially (Milliken et al., 2015). Employees voicing their options provides a platform for greater employee participation, healthier attitudes, culture, and increased employee involvement. According to Jha et al. (2019) research on employee voice suggested that providing employees with the sense that it is safe to speak up to their managers about their concerns, ideas, and suggestions can have very positive effects on employee behavior inside organizations.

Open and frequent communication within an organization provides managers and employees the opportunity to collaborate on work related concerns. Many employees feel they cannot speak up about issues or offer ideas or suggestions because doing so could lead to negative consequences (Milliken, 2016). Managers who establish an open communication exchange often gain beneficial feedback while creating a healthy form of

communication channel for employees to address their concerns. The process of implementing forms of employee engagement will increase employee commitment, productivity, and organizational success while decreasing the chances of miscommunication and disengagement among employees (Basheer et al., 2019).

Employee commitment contributes to the success of the organization. Mahmood and Sahar (2017) explained the impact of psychological empowerment and perceived career support on employee work engagement with the mediating role of affective commitment. The creation of an emotional bond between the employer and employee will allow the employee to become a valuable asset to the building the organizational brand and maintain capacity (Fehér & Reich, 2020). Leaders should find positive ways to influence an increase in organizational profits to sustain employees and their dedication to the organization because disengagement of employees in their work causes reduction in productivity and increase in cost.

Affective commitment is often linked in the extant literature to employee engagement, empowerment, and increased productivity, and refers to the sense of emotional concern and dedication to the people impacted by the work of others and is expected to precede work engagement (Jayasingam et al., 2016). One study indicates employee work engagement can occur through two different, yet related, pathways: a direct pathway and an indirect pathway. The perceived social impact and social worth are associated with greater affective commitment to customers, which in turn relates to work engagement (Castanheir, 2016). Employee engagement and establishing relationships

between employees and managers should be a positive experience that will meet successful goals of the organization. Castanheir (2016) suggested that affective commitment includes mediation strategies such as work engagement which leads to motivation, positive behavior, dedication, and absorption. The link between managers and employee engagement may determine the productivity and profitability of an organization.

Lastly, leaders who take pride in their employees may establish employee engagement opportunities to promote committed employees who are more likely to increase productivity and profits within the organization. Many researchers have found managers increase organizational profits by valuing their employees (Van De et al., 2016). Human resources leaders have an opportunity to see if this method will be appropriate for their employees to feel empowered by employee engagement. Business leaders are always searching for new ideas and methods to motivate that employees to want to invest in becoming a productive worker to increase the company's profits (García-Cruz et al., 2018). Human resource managers have a variety of options to utilize different motivational skills to improve employee engagement.

Employee Relationships

The development of strong employee relationships is a management approach that can be adopted by using three key conversation pillars: understanding, coaching, and recognizing (Johnson, 2020). Creating positive employment relationships is a vital element to maintaining and increasing productivity levels to ensure success while pursuing

organizational growth. Castanheira and Story (2016) suggested the roles of the relationship between employees and human resources managers create a positive employee outcome through the perception of affective commitment and work engagement aiding in forming employee relationships. Researchers indicated perceptions of performance-oriented HR practices are indirectly associated with affective commitment through work engagement (Ariyabuddhiphongs & Kahn, 2017). Leaders have a role to create the work environment and corporate culture suitable for their employees to perform at a high level while forming relationships.

Leaders should develop and initiate healthy business relationships to meet the needs of the organization. Ridder and Andersen (2014) suggested that assessing customer profitability, customer commitment, and growth potential assists with relationships among customers. Managers assist with determining appropriate customer relationship strategies and performance indicators (Pradhan et al., 2018). The opportunity of creating an employee relationship with managers can be a positive incentive as employees create relationships with customers and clients to increase profits for continued organizational success (Sun & Wang, 2017). Relationships give employers and employees the chance to get to know each other on a personal level to access their strengths, weaknesses, goals, and future aspirations to better serve the organization while reaching their personal goals.

Knowledge sharing is positively associated with a firm's ability to innovate and enhance the organization's performance and profitability by building relationships. According to Jeung et al. (2017) the demonstration that the relationship between

perceived organizational support and knowledge sharing intention is mediated by affective organizational commitment and this mediation effect is strengthened when an individual's organizational tenure is low. Managers and or leaders should strive to implement creating relationships with their employees to identify their specific and unique needs and ways to improve organizations (Ariyabuddhiphongs & Kahn, 2017). Sharing knowledge through employee relationships can assist with reaching organizational goals of increasing profits and productivity.

Sharing knowledge is the key to establishing positive relationships between HR managers and employees. Basnyat and Clarence (2020) acknowledged that an employees' perception of the interpretation of policies and procedures influence the relationship between human resource management and employee retention. Employees are more likely to remain with an organization that creates and implements policies and procedures that the employee respects and understands and see themselves as a valued contributing employee to the success of the organization (Ariyabuddhiphongs & Kahn, 2017). HR leaders should evaluate their policies and procedures to ensure that it serves the organization and its employees efficiently while creating healthy relationships.

The establishment of relationships in the work environment should serve as a positive relationship to promote a profitable organization. Chen et al. (2019b) agreed that corporate social responsibility (CSR) is closely linked to establishing healthy relationships within the workplace to increase productivity. Employers have a responsibility to create a positive safe environment for employees to increase

productivity, to encourage continuous process improvement, and successful organizational workflow (Chen et al., 2020). Employers should continue to create ways to promote a good working environment as well as relationships to enhance organizational growth. Positive relationships help establish loyalty, commitment, retention, and productivity (Giamporcaro et al., 2020).

Employers ideally should create strategies to gain continuous employee feedback to enhance the working environment. Adeinat and Kassim (2019) suggested that employee internal quality (EIQ) drives employee satisfaction. The working environment, career growth, employee compensation, and recognition all refer to internal quality (Fung et al., 2017). Employees are more likely to become satisfied if their employers utilize internal quality to create a positive relationship with employees and their work efforts (Kang & Sung, 2017). Employees want to be acknowledged, compensated, promoted, and paid according to their achievements at work monetary or incentives.

Benefit Incentives

Employees that were offered a variety of benefits are often inspired and become more committed to the organization and its success. Organizational leaders initiate simple, meaningful incentive programs to boost recruiting and retention efforts to remain competitive and increase performance along with profits (Stewart, 2017). Organizational leaders should implement incentives that will create a lasting effect on demonstrating employee engagement to retain a productive work force. Benefit incentives are rewards that can enhance an employee's life by offering monetary rewards, promotions, paid

supplemental benefits, retirement match, and continued employee workforce development (Mead, 2018).

Top-down strategy is needed to create benefit incentives for employees that will benefit the employee while also increasing productivity and profits for the organization. Koderisch et al. (2007) emphasized that leaders are able to increase their profits by offering products that will serve multiple purposes to gain greater profitability for the growth of the organization. Leaders have the advantage to develop strategies specifically for the benefit of their organization based on the needs of their employees to remain focused and motivated (Li et al., 2019). Incentives should always be evaluated to determine if it remains a good fit for the employees within the organization or if room for improvement is needed.

Retirement contributions by an employer is a benefit incentive frequently offered to employees to help secure their financial future after retirement (Mead, 2018). Cole (2017) emphasized that many people do not have a retirement plan unless it is mandated by their employers. Employers are mandating retirement contributions from their employee's salary while also matching the employee's contributions as an added benefit for employees and their family's future (Quinby, 2020). Employers are eager to offer retirement contributions to the compensation package as an incentive. Retirement education and planning is a valuable incentive which is needed to attract potential employees as a premium benefit incentive (Li et al., 2019).

Employees are motivated by employers who offer more than monetary compensation. According to Mead (2018), prominent benefits intended to raise work levels are incentives. The most admired incentives offered include tuition reimbursement, annual employee appreciation events, paid leave, holiday pay, birthday holidays, paid health insurance, and employer matched retirement contributions (Mauser, 2018). Every employer has a competitive advantage that attracts prospective employees to the organization (Amad et al., 2020). Employers have the opportunity to develop strategies to create benefits that attract talented candidates.

In conclusion, employers can remain competitive by considering new and improved benefit incentives. Employers can promote organizational growth through profits and maintaining productive employees. De la Torre-Ruiz et al. (2019) emphasized that employee satisfaction is closely linked to receiving reward benefits that serve as the key to influencing affective reaction towards the firm. Benefit incentives are created to motivate employees, enhance employee satisfaction, and promote organizational commitment (Mead, 2018). Employee surveys can provide feedback to leaders to enhance the employee or employer relationship. HR leaders have the resources to enhance the employee and employer relationship by promoting committed employees, employee engagement, employee relationships, retention, and benefit incentives that could increase profits or productivity within the organization (Li et al., 2019).

Transition

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that some HR managers used to increase employee commitment and retention to increase the company's productivity and profit. The study consisted of three sections, which included the foundation of the study, the project, and the application to professional practice and implications for change.

In Section 1, I introduced the foundation of the study, topic, and the problem statement. In this section, I presented information about the background of the problem, the problem statement, and the need to solve an applied business problem. I reviewed a selection of scholarly literature on strategies that some HR managers used to increase employee commitment and retention to increase the company's productivity and profit. In Section 2, I discussed the study methodology, details of the research design, the target population for the study, the interview instruments that I used for data collection, and conduct interviews while collecting the responses to address the research questions. Finally, in Section 3, I presented my findings relevant to the research question. Section 3 contains the results of the completed research and the themes human resources managers used to increase employee commitment and retention to increase their company's productivity and profit. This study included a discussion of the findings in the context of implications for social change, recommendations for action, suggestions for further study, and my reflections on the research study.

Section 2: The Project

In Section 2, I discuss the purpose of the qualitative study to explore the strategies that some HR managers used to increase commitment and retention while increasing the profits and productivity of the company. Next, I provide an explanation of my role as a researcher and my interviewees' role as participants of the study. I explain the criteria I used to select the participants and ensure their characteristics aligned with my study. Next, there is a discussion of the study methodology, details of the research design, the target population for the study, the interview instruments that I used for data collection, and how I conducted interviews while collecting the responses to address the research questions. Finally, I describe how I ensured reliability and validity for the qualitative study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that some HR managers used to increase employee commitment and retention to increase the company's productivity and profit. The targeted population were HR managers in four organizations' HR departments in Texas who have successfully implemented strategies to increase employee commitment and retention to increase the companies' profitability and profits. The implications for positive social change included higher incomes for local companies and their employees and an increase in the state and local tax base, leading to greater community development and a higher quality of life for all residents.

Role of the Researcher

The role of a qualitative researcher is to (a) become an elective practitioner and a protector of participants and (b) conduct an ethical research (Cumyn et al., 2019). Collins (2014) suggested that a researcher's connection with participants can be strengthened through emotional intelligence during the interview process by carefully listening while clearly understanding the way a participant articulates. In an exploratory study, researchers ask open-ended questions to discover what is currently happening while gaining insight about a topic of interest (Feher, 2021). An exploratory research study can be conducted by searching the literature, interviewing subject matter experts, conducting in-depth individual interviews, or running focus group interviews (Cumyn et al., 2019). Researchers analyze a phenomenon by examining the themes, patterns, and trends from the collected data (Meurer & Costa, 2020). As the researcher, my role during the data collection process was to provide an inviting atmosphere to record accurate thoughts and feelings of participants to gain insight on a phenomenon.

As a qualitative researcher, I upheld the three ethical principles of research established by the *Belmont Report*. First, I provided respect to others by having each participant review and sign an informed consent form. The informed consent form was written in language that was easily understood and explained that participation in the study was voluntary. Secondly, I ensured beneficence by minimizing the risks associated with being a participant by masking their identities. Finally, I achieved justice by ensuring that the participants were able to benefit from the study by learning new

strategies to retain their employees, which allows the organizational to become more profitable. The *Belmont Report* outlines how researchers can ensure respect, beneficence, and justice to participants while conducting semistructured interviews (Adashi et al., 2018).

My relationship with the subject of HR managers' strategies to increase an organization's profitability and profits was associated with my role as a benefits specialist in the HR industry since 2011. I witnessed many organizations lose valuable employees, which resulted in lower productivity and decreased profits. Therefore, I sought an increased understanding of what successful strategies HR managers use to increase an organization's productivity and profits.

In qualitative research, bias may appear from the researcher or participants based on prior beliefs or experiences (Moosa, 2019). As the researcher for this study, I attempted to mitigate bias or viewing data through my personal lens or perspective by using an established interview protocol (see Appendix A), conducting member checking, and ensuring data saturation. To relieve any research presumptions, I developed open-ended interview questions to allow the participants to expand on the question. This approach allowed the participants to answer the questions and provide additional feedback that was beneficial to addressing the initial research question.

An interview protocol is considered an instrument of inquiry from a participant during the interview. According to Saunders et al. (2016), the key to a successful semistructured interview is to consider that prior planning prevents poor performance.

Researchers use an interview protocol to be consistent and develop standard interview questions to address the research question for the study (Levitan et al., 2018). The researcher should maintain consistency by using an interview protocol, asking each participant the same questions during the interview, and allowing participants the option to review interpretations of their response via member checking (Lanka et al., 2021). The interview protocol provided guidance on the steps I took to interview participants (see Appendix). First, I contacted participants by email or phone to extend an invitation to participate in an interview for the study. Secondly, once the participants agreed, I set a time to conduct an audio recorded interview via Zoom with the participant. Thirdly, I asked participants to provide background information such as: (a) educational background, (b) title/position, and (c) years of experience. Lastly, I asked the open-ended questions while watching for non-verbal cues, paraphrased as needed, and asked follow-up probing questions to ensure rich and in-depth responses.

Participants

The participants selected for this qualitative multiple case study were four HR managers in human resource departments in Texas who have successful strategies that they are using to increase employee commitment and retention to increase the company's productivity and profitability. In purposeful sampling, a researcher uses their judgement to select the best participants to meet the objectives and answer the research question for the study (Saunders et al., 2016). I used purposeful sampling to select organizations and

HR managers who have successfully used strategies to increase employee commitment and retention to increase the company's productivity and profitability.

The criteria for selecting the organizations are they must employ more than 50 employees. The criteria for the HR managers to participate in this study were they should have been a HR manager for at least 3 years and performed managerial duties to enhance consistent strategies to retain employees to assist with increasing profits and the profitability within the organization. The specific metrics included demonstrating increased rates of employee retention and maintaining strategies to increase profits stability of the organization. The baseline for success was HR leaders managing a productive team that showed a track record of retaining employees while the organization is increasing profits.

To gain access to participants for this study and to learn more about the phenomenon of this study, I obtained information from the organization's website to learn about the history, mission, and objectives, which is all public information. The organizations' websites include the HR managers' contact information: their name, email, and phone number.

One key component of developing a working relationship with the participants was relaying truthful information and being honest about the interview protocols along with the intentions for the study. The interview protocol (see Appendix) included the same established interview question script for all participants, and I concluded each interview by asking participants if they had any additional information to share.

Researchers should establish a trust-based relationship with the participants on the intended purpose and outcome of the study to demonstrate competence, benevolence, and quality (Keszey, 2015). To establish a working relationship with participants, I provided a statement of purpose and the results I intend to receive from the study. To ensure confidentiality, I masked their names by establishing a system to identify participants by letter instead of names. I also provided participants with an informed consent document to ensure they understood the risks and benefits associated with participating in the study.

The criteria I used to select the participants ensured their characteristics aligned with my study. I contacted each HR manager by email to request a 20-minute initial meeting. I introduced myself, presented the research question, and explained the overall framework of my study. In this meeting, my goal was to establish a trust-based relationship with my participants to relieve any fear. I attempted to create an inviting environment to gain knowledge as I prepared for the semistructured interview process by describing the rights of participants and the importance of the strategies developed, and while I presented opened-ended interview questions. The use of open-ended questions and reliance on participants responses mean that the researcher should avoid making frequent interruptions but cover the themes and questions indicated and probe responses in the time of availability (Saunders et al., 2016). Individuals who met the minimum qualifications of the study and agreed to the interview process were asked to sign a consent form before proceeding with the interview.

Research Method and Design

A qualitative research method was chosen to conduct semistructured interviews to understand strategies that HR managers used to increase productivity and profits within the organization. A multiple-case study design was used to acquire in-depth knowledge from interviewees about retention strategies used by HR managers. The phenomenon required multiple sources to provide evidence.

Research Method

For this study, I chose the qualitative research method to understand which strategies HR managers used to increase employee commitment and retention to increase the company's productivity and profit. Research that is considered high quality and whose findings demonstrate high reliability require experienced respondents suitable for answering the research questions meaningfully (Maramwidze-Merrison, 2016). In this study, I sought rich vivid insights into the strategies HR managers used to increase profits and productivity within the organization to reduce the retention rate.

Conversely to the quantitative method, a researcher uses the qualitative method as a social inquiry to understand the meaning of experiences of human action (Bradbury-Jones et al., 2017). Participants of a qualitative study engage with the researcher by sharing their knowledge and experience to transfer valuable information (Fletcher, 2017). As a researcher, I used a qualitative method to engage participants to provide a thorough summary of their experiences for the researcher to compare and contrast amongst other participants. The process of comparing HR managers' experiences and strategies was a

way that I gained understanding of the meaning of experiences of human actions. In quantitative research, deductive analysis is represented through theories, hypotheses, equations, and numerical data to observe the results of the study (Edwards, 2019). The mixed research method is used to expand and strengthen the study by using both qualitative and quantitative research methods to formulate a conclusion of the study. My intentions for conducting qualitative research was to explore strategies used to increase employee commitment and retention to increase the company's profit and productivity. I did not test a hypothesis, which is part of a quantitative study or the quantitative portion of a mixed methods study, and therefore, I used the qualitative research methodology in this study. I selected the qualitative research method as the preferred method to identify themes and explore HR managers' strategies in their work environment. The qualitative case study suited the needs of this study more than a quantitative or mixed method approach to understand the strategies HR managers use to increase employee commitment and retention while the company continues to increase productivity and profit.

Research Design

For this study, the qualitative multiple-case study design was used. A case study is an in-depth inquiry into a topic within a real-life setting (Saunders et al., 2015). A case study is a research design that involves an investigation to determine a phenomenon using multiple sources of evidence, which makes it an ideal design for this study. I chose a multiple case study because replication is suitable for the nature of the chosen case

population. A single case study approach was not chosen because I did not intend to observe and analyze a phenomenon that few have considered before. Researchers use case studies to explain, describe, and or explore events that occurs in everyday contexts (Yin, 2014). The case study design aligned with the research method because this design allowed for data collection methods such as Zoom face-to-face semistructured interviews with open ended questions of participants with knowledge to answer specific research questions with details, analysis of relevant records of documents of strategies used, and observations (direct and participants) to determine the strategies that increase retention.

Ethnography and phenomenology are other qualitative research designs (Lambert & Lambert, 2012). A researcher conducting an ethnographic study inquires and captures ways in which a group of people produce social life through everyday reactions such as rituals, linguistics, materials, and symbolistic behaviors (Ghaffari et al., 2019). However, the ethnography research design was not appropriate for this study because I did not study a group of people to understand and describe their actions from the past. A phenomenology research design is an appropriate method to seek understanding of individuals' pure perceptions and perspectives of their experiences (Ghaffari & Lagzian, 2018). I did not select the phenomenological research design for my study because I did not wish to interpret the meaning of lived experiences of a particular group.

The ultimate goal when conducting research is to answer the research question. Data saturation is reached when there is enough information to replicate the study, when the ability to obtain additional new information has been attained, and when further

coding is no longer feasible (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Aldiabat and Le Navenec (2018) described data saturation as building rich data to support replication while building theoretical aspects of a research inquiry. To achieve data saturation, I thoroughly used all available relevant documentations and recent data, evaluated the responses from participant interviews, and ensured no additional information or themes are found in the data.

Population and Sampling

In this qualitative multiple case study, the population consisted of four HR managers in Texas, who have successfully implemented strategies to increase employee commitment and retention to increase the companies' profitability and profits. These individuals met the participant criteria that defined the population for the study. As a result, the number of initial participants were four HR managers who have demonstrated their knowledge and expertise within human resources.

The purposeful sampling method is one of the most common research methods used for selecting participants in a qualitative study. I used purposeful sampling to explore the strategies that some HR managers used to increase employee commitment and retention to increase the company's productivity and profitability. The purposeful sampling involves the identification and selection of willing individuals or groups who have the experience or knowledge pertaining to the phenomenon (Palinkas et al., 2015). The power of purposeful sampling lies in the selection of information-rich cases for in depth study inquiry (Suri, 2011). Furthermore, the selected participants remained

available to participate, communicate their experiences, and offer their opinions in a reflective manner. Palinkas et al. (2015) concluded sampling methods must be consistent and intended to maximize efficiency and validity along with reaching saturation. As a result, data saturation is a notification that no new substantive information was acquired to the comprehensive understanding of the study.

In a qualitative study, sample size is not determined until data saturation is reached as justification for the use of acquiring a sample size (Boddy, 2016). A single case study may have multiple interviews and other sources of data because no other knowledge or ideas are presented to compare data. Boddy (2016) noted that developing an in-depth understanding is the purpose of conducting a qualitative study. The sample size for qualitative studies is generally much smaller than those used in a quantitative study, however a larger sample size could become time consuming and require intensive labor (Mason, 2010). I used purposeful sampling to select four managers within HR departments with the necessary expertise and experience to contribute to this study. The participants of this study included HR managers who have been in that position for at least 3 years, perform managerial duties, and employ at least 50 or more employees within their organization. The expertise of the HR managers assisted with answer the research question and enhance the findings of this study.

I interviewed four HR managers, but I was prepared to interview additional respondents to achieve data saturation. Sanders et al. (2018) reported that when there was repetitive information from the participant pool, replication of themes, and no additional

information forthcoming from new participants, data saturation is achieved. All researchers should be clear and concise presenting research findings (Nascimento et al., 2018). The criteria for selecting participants were their position as an HR manager within an organization in the state of Texas. The participants must be HR managers of an organization for at least 3 years with proven successful leadership skills. The criteria for the interview setting included the participant agreeing to a scheduled semistructured interview for a minimum of an hour in their office space or via zoom in a quiet setting with only the researcher and participant present. I attempted to conduct each interview in a setting that the participant is most comfortable and to enable the participant to respond with their truthful and personal experiences.

Ethical Research

Before beginning my research, I completed the Institutional Review Board (IRB) application regarding ethical research. IRBs are regulatory committees that are mandated to approve, oversee, and maintain ethical standards for human subjects' research (Blackwood et al., 2015). The purpose of the IRB application was to protect human rights of the study participants. Data collection begin once I obtained approval from the IRB. The final manuscript included the Walden IRB approval number 06-09-21-0721145. The next step was to obtain informed consent from each participant and ensure they fully understand the study by identifying the purpose, their role as a participant, my responsibilities as a researcher, and the confidentiality procedures before conducting the research. The informed written consent indicated the participants willingness to

participate in the study and to ensure they understood the risks and benefits and their role in the study. The informed consent also ensures the confidentiality of the research data (Blackwell et al. 2015). According to Plutzer (2019), researchers have a professional and ethical obligation to protect the privacy of participants by providing informed written consent to avoid passive data collection, data linkage, and archiving the replication of data. The written consent form informed participants that their participation is voluntary, there were no incentives for participating, and participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time without acquiring penalties. Participants were also informed of the ways to communicate their intention to withdraw from the study at any time by email, telephone call, or in person.

Researchers establish trust among the participants to ensure integrity, effective communication, fairness, and sharing control as the necessary elements to building trust (Erdem & Aytumur, 2018). I maintained integrity in all of my communications with the participants as I expected each participant to adhere to this expectation to ensure trustworthiness. The participants' names or the name of their organization were not disclosed in my findings; data protection measures were taken to label the study participants using designators from P1 to P4, where *P* referred to the participant. The responses from participants included codes, which makes it difficult to link participants to their responses, and ensure the participants and organizations remain confidential. After the study, I sent participants a summary of the findings. I used a fireproof safe to secure all data, including the informed consent form, any recorded data, hard copies of

the research data and transcripts, and information related to individuals or organizations participating in the study. Further, electronic data were protected on a thumb drive which will also be stored in the safe for 5 years. After 5 years, I will destroy all of the information by shredding the paper documents and erasing any e-data.

Data Collection

As the researcher for this study, I was the primary data collection instrument. In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary data collection instrument and data is collected through interviews, observations, and self-administered questionnaires (Prada-Ramallal et al., 2017). Data collected for a particular research study was considered primary data that was specific to the research question.

On the contrary, secondary data is collected from databases that were established for other purposes such as a books or articles (Prada-Ramallal et al., 2017). Case study researchers collect data from multiple data resources and use methodological triangulation to cross reference the data source to determine if both sources lead to the same conclusion and relevant analysis (Aczel, 2015). As part of the data collection process, I gathered and triangulate information from semistructured interviews, documents, company materials, and public information. Qualitative researchers employ data triangulation to collect multiple data sets utilizing a variety of methods to strengthens the results (O’Leary, 2019). Data triangulation enhanced the effectiveness of reliability and validity of the data instrument and the collection process.

I conducted semistructured interviews via zoom with protocols that apply to the research question, research method, and the research design. Interviews were a data collection process that is vital to obtaining accurate and effective data during the research process (Martin, 2000). Peesker et al. (2019) argued semistructured interviews provided a rich set of data analysis that enables respondents to share experiences leading to a deeper understanding of a rich set of data analysis. Conversely, structured interviews have a predetermined list of questions while an unstructured interview lacks format and may cover a range of subjects (Marin, 2000). I developed an interview protocol to ensure consistency throughout the process of capturing HR managers' experiences and perceptions related to their strategies to increase the profits and profitability of their organization (see Appendix A). Researchers apply a particular approach using an interview protocol to guide the interview with open-ended questions and highlight the linkage of the research methods (Hoffman, 2009). The final interview question in the semistructured or informal interview frequently asked the participant to share any additional information the participants would like to share.

Research reliability of the instruments can be achieved through accuracy while validity is accomplished through the reproducibility of data through research instruments (Jordan, 2018; Md & Yupsof, 2011). I used member checking and method triangulation as the criteria to establish validity and reliability of the study results by asking the participants to verify the details of the interview. I asked each participant to verify their responses through member checking to ensure that I provided an accurate representation

of the information and allow the participant to make changes before I analyze the data. Validation and reliability are achieved by allowing participants to make changes if in their opinion their responses were interpreted incorrectly (Reysen et al., 2019). Member checking is a participant validation technique used to verify the accuracy of the conclusions once the research is complete (Naidu & Prose, 2018). Triangulation contributes to the trustworthiness of the data collected while offering validation to ensure the use of multiple data collection methods (O'Leary, 2019). Method triangulation utilizes more than one method to study a phenomenon and provides validity and enhances understanding such as interviews and observations (Paul, 1996). Triangulation and member checking helped the to establish credibility and contribute to trustworthiness. Validity assisted with drawing conclusions when similarities and themes were confirmed by different data sources.

Data Collection Instruments

In order to address the research question, I sought to identify the strategies that HR managers used to increase employee commitment and retention to increase the company's productivity and profits utilizing a qualitative case study to collect data. A case study is a research design that relies on multiple sources of data collection to generate an in-depth understanding of real-life context to recommend practical courses of action to resolve a problem (Vaz et al., 2020). The process of collecting data are achieved through interviews, focus groups, direct or participant observations, and the review of

company/archival documents. The analysis requested the participants to provide documentation supporting their claims in the interviews.

According to Roberts et al. (2014), the disadvantages of an open-ended interview is the cost to systematically analyze and interpret the responses. Also, open-ended interviews are time consuming to conduct and analyze (Roberts et al., 2014). The advantages of conducting an open-ended interview are that the researcher will gain rich qualitative data and real participant insights (Kelle, 2006). The advantages of collecting archival data or documentation is to have a valid support for evidence of information found. The disadvantages of archival data and documentation is observing invalid information that does not pertain to the study causing the results to be invalid.

I utilized member checking to ensure validity and accuracy of the participants responses to interviews by confirming my interpretation of their responses. The purpose of member checking was to confirm that your conclusions represent the participants, responses accurately after the interview and initial analysis. Member checking is a process where participants review a summary of their responses for accuracy and allows participants to expand, amend, or include additional raw data (Brear, 2019). Member checking was a tool for participants to ensure their insights were known clearly. According to Birt et al. (2016) member checking provided participants an opportunity to engage with, add to, interview, and interpret insights clearly to reveal accurate results during qualitative research. Participants were inspired by providing their insights and personal experiences. Qualitative research is an exploratory tool that allows the

researcher to interpret and make sense of participants experiences that assists with the surface of new insights for a particular social phenomenon (Bansai et al., 2018).

After I obtained IRB approval, my protocol for data collection included contacting at least four human resources managers to request an interview. The primary source of data collection conducted semistructured interviews. The goal of conducting interviews was to gain information to answer the research question. Data saturation is reached when there is no new information and research becomes repetitive during the research process (Carmichael & Cunningham, 2017). I conducted individual interviews face-to-face on site at the organization or at a location designated by the interviewee, via Zoom, or over the telephone. I used member checking and data triangulation to support dependability and creditability. At the beginning of the interview, I explained the purpose of the research to the interviewee. After the interview, I transcribed the responses from the interview, summarize my interpretations of the responses, and ask the participant to validate their responses. Once the interview is complete, I evaluated the interviews to develop codes and themes to determine if data saturation has been reached. I achieved data saturation after the fourth interview, I stopped interviews to avoid a negative impact on the validity of research.

Data Collection Technique

Data organization helps ensure reliability of research data because the techniques will help address results that are stable, consistent, ensure privacy, and information security of the research data (Prasad, 2019). Data organization techniques include

organizing data by subcategories, themes, or the interpretation that emerges from the analysis (Spiggle, 1994). Data organization in a qualitative study allows the researcher to ensure conformability, reliability, and dependability while concluding and confirming themes that describes the data (Prasad, 2019).

The intent of organizing data in a spreadsheet is to (a) use as a tool for data entry (b) storage, (c) develop analyses, and visualization (Broman & Woo, 2018). I utilized a research log as my primary data organizing technique to collect, record, track, and organize all interview information along with any other data collected throughout this study. The purpose of a research log is to assist researchers with keeping track of their research process through a journey or story by describing and reflecting on their personal research process (Fluk, 2015). I documented my personal research experience in a reflective journal to reflect on the process. Mladenovic et al. (2019) highlighted a reflective journal as a fundamental skill to reflect on knowledge, experiences, explore values, stimulate critical thinking, and help make connections between theory and practice.

Research logs were used as a reflective journal, interview responses, and relevant internal or external corporate documents were entered into NVivo software to assist in organizing the data into codes and themes. I used NVivo to record the collection of data and used patterns to determine the commonality within the data.

I identified and stored all digital files related to the research in a folder that was protected by a password while I am conducted research. Since my reseach is complete, I

will store the data for 5 years, which is an IRB requirement. After 5 years, I will delete all data from the computer memory or temporary storage devices and shred all documents and physical evidence related to the research.

Data Analysis

For my case study, methodological triangulation was the appropriate data analysis process. Methodological triangulation uses multiple methods to obtain detailed data about a phenomenon through interviews and observations, to understand reality (Abdalla et al., 2018). Better data are obtained from using multiple methods that may have been overlooked otherwise while viewing a single object from the lens of triangulation (Huetttman, 1993). There are four types of triangulation: (a) data triangulation, (b) theoretical triangulation, (c) researcher triangulation, and (d) methodological triangulation. Abdalla et al. (2018) suggested that triangulation improves the quality in qualitative research, contributes to construct validity, and provides an alternative to obtain new knowledge through new viewpoints. The data are transformed into descriptions of themes, patterns, or theoretical models for the researcher to interpret during the data analysis process (Haven & Van Grootel, 2019).

The data analysis process for this qualitative case study differed from a quantitative data analysis process by focusing on key themes. Study participants allow the researcher to explore, describe, understand, or interpret a phenomenon to gain insight to understand personal experiences during the qualitative research approach (Quartirolli et al., 2017). I began with an analysis of all the primary data from the semistructured

interview questions, company documents and websites, along with a review from my research log and journals. I utilized Yin's five steps in data analysis: (a) compiling, (b) disassembling, (c) reassembling, (d) interpreting, and (e) concluding (Yin, 2014). Next, I used a three-step process that included (a) inputting the data into the NVivo software program, (b) searching for themes within the data, and (c) manually checking for accuracy and redundancy. NVivo is a qualitative data analysis software that assists researchers to organize data more efficiently, making it easier to code data (Welsh, 2002).

The first step involved inputting data into the NVivo qualitative data analysis software. Bergeron and Gaboury (2020) suggested that NVivo is an analytic method that also facilitates identifying patterns and ensuring transparency during the data analysis process. In the second step, I used codes to search and identify themes from the interview transcripts. Coding is a key data organizing structure that allows researchers to identify, organize, and build data while emerging themes in qualitative research (Williams & Moser, 2019). Coding relies on recognizing patterns based on the descriptions in the original text (Glaser & Laudel, 2013). As a result, researchers reach data saturation after a deeper understanding of multiple participants' experiences (Vaughn & Turner, 2016). As I developed common themes, I gained an increased understanding of HR managers strategies for increasing the profits and profitability of the organization.

In the final step, I checked the semistructured interview transcripts of the participants for accuracy and redundancy as I finalized the data analysis process. During the data analysis process, I engaged in identifying and correlating the key themes with the

literature and the conceptual framework of ET to develop a conclusion. Themes were found during reoccurring concepts and ideas within a study (Vaismoradi & Snelgrove, 2019). The fundamental principle of the ET as a conceptual framework is to explain and predict human behavior in organizations (Baumann & Bonner, 2017). The ET offered guidelines to engage with HR managers, leaders, and researchers about critical factors that may influence attributes of contributing to low productivity and profits within an organization. The use of existing literature and the ET provided a framework for developing strategies for guidelines to avoid failures resulting in low profitability

Reliability and Validity

For every research study, reliability and validity are components to complete both quantitative and qualitative research. In addition, the analogous criteria that is not measurable for qualitative studies are creditability, confirmability, and transferability. The goal of objectivity must be accepted by a qualitative researcher, which requires attention to reliability and validity (Bellenger et al., 1986). The criteria used to measure validity and reliability in a qualitative study includes methods such as member checking and triangulation. The process to enhance the dependability of a study included checking data interpretation, transcript review, pilot test, expert validation of interview questions, interview protocol, and direct or participant observation protocols. Once data saturation is reached it helps to assure the dependability of the findings. Jordan (2018) emphasized that validity is used to address whether the data collected accurately reflect the

phenomena under inquiry, while reliability focuses on the reproducibility of the data produced by the research instruments involved.

Reliability

Researchers demonstrate reliability when the data collection process is stable and consistent. Qualitative researchers strive to incorporate and design methodological strategies to ensure the findings are trustworthy (Noble & Smith, 2015). To demonstrate dependability, I described the research process, details for gathering data, and the evaluation of the effectiveness of the process of the study. I performed member checking to ensure reliability. Member checking refers to a process that allows participants an opportunity to objectify their personal experiences theoretically, check for accuracy, expand, amend, or comment on the research results (Brear, 2019). I provided the participants with a summary of their responses from the interview, which allowed them to ensure the accuracy of data they provided, edit any incorrect information, add more details, and provide insights on their responses in the member checking process to obtain accuracy.

Dependability

To ensure reliability in my research, I used member checking of data interpretation and transcript review to help ensure dependability. The description of the research process, details for gathering data, and the evaluation of the effectiveness of the process of the study to demonstrate dependability (Funder et al., 2014). The process that allowed participants an opportunity to objectify their personal experiences theoretically,

check for accuracy, expand, amend, or comment on the research results is member checking. Data saturation was an indication that there is no information, and it helped to assure dependability of findings.

Validity

This qualitative research focused on understanding the strategies of HR managers to increase the productivity of employees while maintaining and increasing profits of the organization. In research, validity assists with verifying how the conceptual can be utilized accurately (Matthes & Ball, 2019). Validity ensures rigor and the trustworthiness of research (Le Roux, 2017). Researchers have created criteria to identify validity to include (a) subjectivity, (b) self-reflexivity, (c) resonance, and (d) creditability (Holmlund, et al., 2020).

Credibility

In qualitative research studies, creditability helps to improve research outcomes through validation and verification with the use of tools and techniques (Shufutinsky, 2020). Member checking is used to improve creditability in research, which can foster increased rigor and transparency and promote an increase in confidence, trustworthiness, and creditability of the research findings. Establishing creditability is an essential indicator for a strong qualitative inquiry that utilizes techniques to apply, blend, and justify findings (Liao & Hitchcock, 2018). Accuracy and accountability are attributes of accountability which entails increasing accurate findings along with adequate

documentation (Abernathy et al.,2017; Liao & Hitchcock, 2018). I used member checking to ensure creditability and enhance the accuracy of this study.

Member checking ensures validation of data collected. Creditability and the contribution to trustworthiness is established during the member checking process as an iterative process (Naidu & Prose, 2018). At the beginning of the interview, I explained the purpose of my research. After the interview, I transcribed responses from the interview and provided an interpretative summary to the participants of their responses via email to ensure that I captured their intended meanings.

Transferability

Transferability occurs when the researcher enables others to determine techniques to adhering to analysis techniques. Transferability occurs when the results of a study are not generalizable or transferable (Carcary, 2020). In qualitative research, transferability is used to provide evidence to the reader in relation to the outcome of the research (Daniel, 2019). I demonstrated how the findings of this study was transferable to others through the explanation of the data collection and analysis techniques, the interview protocol, reaching data saturation, and the final report to include the final report meeting the transferability requirements.

Confirmability

Confirmability is the process of ensuring that the results can be confirmed or supported by others. I used member checking as a technique to enhance confirmability. In qualitative research, the process of validating that the data collected is interpreted

correctly for the participant to gain conclusions that are trustworthy, defensible, unbiased, and plausible (Shufutinsky, 2020). The purpose of this research was to provide unbiased information based on the responses from the semistructured interviews and follow-up member checking to enhance confirmability of the data.

Data Saturation

To ensure validity in my research, I used the methodically triangulation method to collect information until I reached data saturation to help assure the creditability, transferability, and confirmability of the findings. Data saturation is reached when no additional information or themes are forthcoming from new participants (Aldiabat & LeNavenec, 2018). Data saturation served as an indication that data collection has concluded. An indication of data saturation is when there is enough information to replicate the study and no further coding is feasible (Kerr, 2010). There is a negative impact on the validity of research when data saturation is not reached in a study (Fusch & Ness, 2015). In research, validity ensures accuracy of data and data saturation ensures that there is no new information.

Transition and Summary

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that some HR managers used to increase employee commitment and retention to increase the company's productivity and profit. The study consisted of three sections, which included the foundation of the study, the project, and the application to professional practice and implications for change. In Section 1, I introduced the foundation of the study, topic, and

the problem statement. I presented information about the background of the problem, the problem statement, and the need to solve an applied business problem.

In Section 1, I reviewed a selection of scholarly literature on strategies that some HR managers use to increase employee commitment and retention to increase the company's productivity and profit. In Section 2, I discussed the study methodology, details of the research design, the target population for the study, the interview instruments that I used for data collection, and conduct interviews while collecting the responses to address the research questions. Finally, in Section 3 I presented my findings relevant to the research question. Section 3 contains the results of the completed research and the themes human resources managers to increase employee commitment and retention to increase the company's productivity and profit. This study included a discussion of the findings in the context of implications for social change, recommendations for action, suggestions for further study, and my reflections on the research study.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

In this qualitative multiple case study, I examined strategies used by some HR managers to increase employee commitment and retention to improve productivity and profitability of the company. Data were collected from four human resource managers via semistructured interviews and document reviews. Participants answered seven open-ended questions and follow up questions regarding HR strategies employed at their organizations. Information from each data source was compared using methodological triangulation. Vroom's (1964) ET, used as the conceptual framework, aligned with the HR strategies revealed by participants. In my analysis of participants' responses, I identified themes HR managers used to increase employee commitment and retention to increase profits and productivity, including boosting employee morale, communicating with employees, and rewarding employees.

Presentation of the Findings

One overarching research question guided this study: What strategies do HR managers use to increase employee commitment and retention in order to increase productivity and profitability? Through Zoom, I conducted semistructured interviews and examined documents participants provided, such as the four companies website. Participants in this study were HR managers in the state of Texas who manage 50 or more employees in their organization. During the interviews, participants provided strategies they used to boost employee engagement and retention at work, leading to

improved productivity and profits for their companies. In my data analysis process, I identified three key themes: (a) improving employee morale, (b) effectively communicating with employees, and (c) rewarding employees.

The data saturation point was reached when I stopped identifying new themes from semistructured interviews and company documents. After collecting the participants' data, I categorized them using a letter-and-number system. For each leader, a P symbol was used, and a number was combined with each to maintain a chronological order. During the interviews, participants were labeled P1, P2, P3, and P4. Based on ET, the three following themes emerged: (a) boosting employee morale, (b) effectively communicating with employees, and (c) rewarding employees. For each company document, a CD symbol was used, and a number was combined with each to maintain a chronological order. During the interviews, company documents were labeled CD1, CD2, CD3, and CD4. All of the emergent themes aligned with ET, and strategies were provided by HR managers to increase employee commitment and retention in order to increase organizational productivity and profitability. Table 1 provides the three themes that emerged and the number of times the themes were addressed by respondents.

Table 1*Emergent Themes*

Nodes/themes	Number of respondents	Number of times the theme was addressed
Improving Employee Morale	4	42
Communication	4	27
Rewarding Employees	3	19

Table 2*Company Documents*

Nodes/themes	Number of documents	Number of citations correspond to theme
Improving Employee Morale	4	4
Effective Communication	2	2
Rewarding Employees	3	3

Emergent Theme 1: Improving Employee Morale

In the interviews with participants, improving employee morale was one of the most frequently mentioned strategies. The participants' experience indicates that recognizing their employees' unique qualities helps them validate their role in achieving increased

productivity and profitability. Vroom (1964) associated the term *improving employee morale* with motivating employees by ensuring they are valued and part of achieving organizational goals. By setting workplace goals, providing feedback about the process, and rewarding employees in an equitable and fair manner, motivation for productivity can be enhanced (Robbins, 1990). P2 stated,

Goals of the organization are established during onboarding and during monthly meetings. Employees obtain feedback on best practices such as enrolling in professional development classes offered by the organization to assist with reaching organizational goals. We want to continue to reward our employees by providing incentives such as recognition to our employees for putting forth an effort.

HR managers must continue to create and implement strategies that will increase employee commitment and retention to increase the company's productivity and profit.

In Interview Questions 1 and 2, I inquired about the strategies HR managers employed to improve productivity and profitability within the four organizations. In response, Participants 1, 2, 3, and 4 each from a different organization provided similar aspects of demonstrating their worth to employees while ensuring that they understand the organizations' goals to retain employees, boost employee morale, and create a healthy work environment. According to P1, "We are really building the belief that employees are an integral part of the work we do. As part of our onboarding process, we explain *why* the work is so vital. We emphasize culture and what motivates our people to do their best

work.” Specifically, P2 stated, “HR managers’ aims [*sic*] of being clear with measures of accountability is an important aspect of building employee morale by finding a healthy work balance between employee independence and accountability. Therefore, it clarifies our employees’ expectations.” P3 stated, “We are focusing on reaching out to our employees and informing them of our expectations, as well as offering additional training.” Finally, P4 stated,

Our company strives to be transparent, consistent, and welcoming the input from our employees. We encourage employees to get involved and contribute to creating strategies that continues to motivate our employees to be productive. One of the primary things when you talk to your employees you think about how they feel about the communication going forward to them and engaging them in the process so that they are assured that they are valued as an employee. Employees are responsible for the productivity itself. If you can get positive participation from the employees that is what aids in the process for the projected outcome. Brainstorming sessions with employees can lead to a positive outcome for the future of the organization.

All the participants provided similarities in their response to informing their employees of clear expectations, which allowed employees the opportunity to commit to being a productive employee and contributing to the positive financial growth of the company. The participants from all four organizations agreed that creating a workplace for employees that is inviting would contribute to their professional growth.

The practices of strategic HRM, including competency-based training, competency-based compensation, and team-based staffing, can enhance individual knowledge and experience of the employee, which in turn increases productivity and profitability of the company (Trivedi & Srivastava, 2021). P1 expressed, “Individual check-ins and newsletters that highlight different departments and people with their accomplishments helps boost employee morale and employee productivity.” The CD1 newsletter highlighted an Employee of the Month:

Our Support Staff of the Month is Mrs. S. Mrs. S has one of the most challenging jobs at our organization. She is constantly on the move providing check-in support, accommodation support, and assisting with planning staff events and de-escalating challenging situations. She does this all with a smile and a calm demeanor. Mrs. S is truly one of a kind and we are fortunate to have her working with our staff. Thank you, Mrs. S, for all that you do!

The productivity of workers is genuinely influenced by their motivation, so if they are motivated, then they will work with a greater degree of determination, which will eventually boost productivity (Alam et al., 2020). According to P2, “We communicate regularly through group messenger and team meetings.” CD2 used a reflection log that documented how managers took the responsibility of creating a secondary communication platform through group messenger and team meeting space to connect and stay informed with employees. “The retreat provides an opportunity to talk about

goals, strengths, and weaknesses, which allow the team to grow and perform better.” A positive attitude towards work can motivate an employee to be engaged and productive.

An employer can motivate their employees by providing them with development opportunities and a good working environment. Employee satisfaction contributes to their performance (Okoth et al., 2019). P3 stated, “We conduct performance evaluations to inform our employee of their strengths and ways that the organization can improve reaching our desired goals.” CD3 was a blank copy of an employee performance form that could be used to evaluate an employee’s progress, weaknesses, improvements, and goals. P2 noted that employee performance evaluations needed to be “accurate, complete, and timely in assessing the employee’s work.” Performance evaluations are conducted annually during a one-on-one meeting with the manager and employee to review their progress and provide constructive feedback. Employees expect their employer to convey ways for the organization to remain cohesive. As P4 stated, “One of the best ways of creating total transparency in communication and incorporation and integration of new ideas are devised through brainstorming sessions with employees.”

I reviewed the strategic plan for P1’s organization, which outlined the organization’s commitment to creating a supportive environment for physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing. CD1 stated that the organizational strategic plan presented that “The ways to increase retention and decrease turnover is by implementing ‘The Five R’s’: Review, Revamp, Relationships, Reconnect, and Rise.” The organization’s HR department typically reviews their current strategic plan, and then develops a new

strategic plan that would help strengthen the organizational goals, establish stronger relationships with other community businesses, reconnect with employees through one-on-one check-in sessions, and gather all information to make the corporate culture and work environment one that continues to motivate and retain productive employees to continue to be promoted by meeting organizational goals. The Five R's allowed the organization to go through the cycle of building, creating, and implementing a strategic plan that will enhance the organization to reach goals faster. Organizations that value their employees and encourage employees' wellbeing in addition to performance contribute to employees' high levels of motivation. Employee morale was improved by HR managers ensuring employees knew and understood the expectations, valuing feedback, being transparent, and creating an inviting culture, which reflected an organizational culture that inspires motivation and empowers employees.

How Findings Correlate to the Literature

The findings from the literature confirm that HR managers must implement strategies to increase employee commitment and boost employee morale in order to increase profitability and productivity. The participants acknowledged that they had to develop employee strategies that were most effective in motivating, engaging, retaining, and committing their employees to the organizational goals. An employee's outlook is influenced by their employers by providing an environment that promotes a positive attitude, satisfaction with their jobs, and confidence to perform their duties. Bonner and

Baumann (2017) found that the theory of expectancy may be used to understand coordination and not observe behavioral choices and as a motivation.

The aim of affective commitment is to enhance employee morale in the workplace to ensure both the employer and employee gain from the organization's success.

Affective commitment is an emotional attachment that an employee develops toward organizational values that impacts an employee's organization-relevant behavior (Paolucci et al., 2018). P1 stated,

The pandemic forced us to make changes to accommodate our employees.

Employees were very appreciative for the opportunity to work an alternate work schedule as long as there was coverage to ensure they were able to take care of their families during this uncertain time. Employees seem to be more committed, and we saw an increase in productivity to get the job done due to the organization allowing an alternative schedule.

Hodgkinson et al. (2018) posited that an employer has the power to influence employee commitment. The literature and findings confirm that HR managers are in charge of boosting employee morale with a variety of strategies that fit both the needs of employees and the corporate culture. Jayasingam et al. (2016) noted that employees sought affirmations of their affective commitment through job satisfaction, extrinsic rewards, constituent attachments, organizational commitment, and organizational prestige.

How Findings Correlate to the Conceptual Framework

In order to increase productivity and profitability, HR managers use strategies similar to Vroom's (1964) ET in order to increase employee commitment and retention. It was Vroom's ET that paved the way for understanding the need for workplace motivation strategies. Vroom stated that one of the three factors of motivation is expectancy. My study confirmed that outlined job expectations and performance measurements are a leading factor in employee commitment. P1 stated,

During the onboarding process, we make sure employees know the "why," our strategic plan, and their job expectations to influence a positive experience that directly reflects their commitment to their performance. It speaks volumes about our increase in performance and commitment because we have had employees that have left and came back and got onboarded the old versus the new onboarding process and they recognized that it was all new and improved.

HR managers revealed that they currently leverage a variety of strategies to increase employee satisfaction, including emphasizing their value, helping them understand organizational goals, implementing culture, establishing clear measures of accountability, and being transparent. P1 stated,

Our strategies include social media posts, and mentoring. We are really focused on building up the belief that employees are a part of the work. During the onboarding process we want the employees to understand that there is a bigger picture than just a job and that this is more about why you are serving the

organization and making sure that culture is the focus, and the why behind the work. Culture is so important to each employee and provides a diverse group of employees working together as a team for the betterment of the organization. The individual check-ins and recognition of employees through social media posts and weekly Newsletters that highlights different departments and different people. We are really trying to show our employees once they are here that we are what we said we are and that we want them to be a part of that.

Employers who proactively promote employee commitment to increase employee morale engage employees in the organizational culture while implementing expectations for employees to be retained and committed to a competitive work environment. Nimri et al. (2015) discovered that by creating strategies of commitment, HR managers revealed that expectancy is the belief that effort can lead to a specific level of performance. A proactive HR manager who develops a plan for retaining their employees, keeping them committed, and motivating them establishes an expectation that a particular act will bring a desired result for the employee (Glišović et al., 2019). Clear strategic goals have a positive effect on employee motivation, which leads to increased productivity and profitability, HR managers might be able to gain a competitive edge by improving employee morale leading to greater retention and committed employees resulting in increased productivity and profitability.

Emergent Theme 2: Effective Communication

The data analysis process revealed that the effective communication theme was the second most important theme. According to HR managers, implementing effective communication measures such as newsletters, personalized emails, and one-on-one meetings are an opportunity to establish a healthy relationship with employees. This form of communication also allows employees to feel comfortable communicating concerns as well as contributing ideas that promotes future growth of the organization. In this way, employees have a sense of belonging, and their voices are being heard and actions are taken on their behalf. Leaders play a central role in encouraging and nurturing employee proactivity. Binyamin et al. (2018) explained an effective leader uses communication skills to motivate staff to achieve organizational goals. HR managers used communication to enhance employee relationships to improve organizational performance, commitment, and retention.

In Vroom's expectancy theory, leaders suggested that communicating to employees about recognition and rewards would lead to an increase in clear employee expectations and performance requirements. According to the organization's website, organizations want their employees to be well informed of the organization's goals. P4 stated,

Maintaining an open line of communication with the employees to meet employee needs as far as the assignments that they have been assigned are concerned and also to get their feedback on how they are adjusting to the changes and their

understanding of expectations, timelines, deliverables, and consequences for poor performance in their job. In order to have a voice in the matter, they must ask direct questions to give you knowledge on how the decision will impact them, so that they may be comfortable with the request that is being made.

CD1 provides immediate communication updates on the website with new information such as the strategic plans, performance evaluation updates, organizational events, opportunities for professional development. Leaders who are open and honest about recognition and rewards associated with performance increase employee satisfaction and loyalty. P2 stated, "An ongoing communication process, meeting monthly with supervisors to discuss job performance, feedback, and clarity." CD2 were noted by HR Managers on a goggle sheet document the date of the meeting, job performance progress, and action items for the employee and manager to track progress at future meeting. Managers and employees can establish a healthy relationship through open, honest, and frequent communication. P1 stated, "The goal is that people feel empowered when they come onboard." According to P3, "We are more intentional about reaching out to our employees in different ways to provide support and communication in regard to conferences that help address open communication tools." Employees who are not motivated will not be empowered and will not be as productive as an employee who feels valued and apart of the team needed to succeed.

Managers would benefit from using Vroom's expectancy theory of motivation to communicate with and influence employees by setting clear expectations that could lead

to specific rewards or positive outcomes. As a result of reviewing the company's website and documents, I was able to triangulate participants' statements regarding communication by validating the statements of participants matched with the company's website and documents. CD4, the organization's website, provides electronic communication about resources such as training, professional development, virtual events, and conference opportunities for employees. Effective communication is provided in many forms to meet the needs and expectations of employees, such as in-person or digitally. Participants emphasized the importance of communicating organizational goals to their workers, supporting them, and motivating them to create a positive work environment that matches Vroom's theory of expectancy.

How Findings Correlate to the Literature

The findings from the study confirm and extend knowledge that communication is a strategy utilized to promote healthy communication for work relationships. P1 stated that employees were willing to provide feedback and recommendations to assist the company reach their goals of continuing to motivate and retain committed employees. The participants noted that their approach to communication with their employees improved manager-employee relationships, performance, commitment, and retention. Johnson (2020) posited that the development of strong employee relationships is a management approach that can be adopted by using three key conversation pillars: understanding, coaching, and recognizing. Participants confirmed that communication from HR managers made employees feel empowered, connected, valued, and supported.

Communication is the link between management and employees. Thomas (2016) argued that leaders are responsible for establishing engagement efforts to gain the feedback of employees to succeed in continuous process improvement and maintain a healthy corporate atmosphere and corporate culture to increase organizational performance.

The aim of communication is to provide work performance details and expectations to employees to ensure they are aware of organizational goals. Employees are empowered by learning organizational expectations to promote a high level of productivity. P4 stated, "Employees are eager to learn about expectations if they can also contribute suggestions to continue to enhance the growth of the organization." According to Jha et al. (2019) research on employee voice suggested that providing employees with the sense that it is safe to speak up to their managers about their concerns, ideas, and suggestions can have very positive effects on employee behavior inside organizations. Open and frequent communication within an organization provides managers and employees the opportunity to collaborate on work related concerns. P1 stated, "We do not micromanage our employees instead we promote frequent one-on-one meetings to connect with our employees to help strengthen our line of communication to express concerns and suggestions." P2 stated, we use google sheets to document our employee-manager meetings to ensure we keep records of communication. This process allows managers and employees to track communication of all discussions for reference." Milliken (2016) argued that many employees feel they cannot speak up about issues or offer ideas or suggestions because doing so could lead to negative consequence.

Open communication between HR managers and their employees can yield valuable feedback and establish healthy communication channels for employees to communicate concerns, hence retaining committed employees that increase productivity and profitability for the benefit of the company.

How Findings Correlate to the Conceptual Framework

HR managers increase organizational communication, through strategies similar to Vroom's model (1964) to incorporate expectancy theory into their organizational processes and protocols that will continue to motivate employee, which retains committed employees to be productive and increase organizational profits. It was Vroom's expectancy theory which helped pave the way for understanding the need for workplace motivation strategies. Vroom stated that one of the three factors of motivation is instrumentality, which is the belief that there is a connection between activity and goal, which requires effective communication from the HR manager and the employee. The study findings confirm that communication is a leading factor in promoting healthy relationships to increase productivity and profitability levels. Using the study's findings, HR managers revealed that they currently are creating new ways to communicate and include employees in decisions and providing useful feedback for the future success of the organization. P1 stated, "We checked in regularly through group messenger and regular team meetings. We also have annual Team Retreats about conversations of goals, strengths, and weakness allowing an opportunity to grow and perform better as a team." Instrumentality is an opportunity for an employee to achieve a desired outcome of

positive valence (Glišović et al., 2019). Positive outcomes lead to higher productivity results of employee performance and desired incentives, which is an opportunity to retain committed employees to increase employee productivity and profitability of the organization.

Emergent Theme 3: Rewarding Employees

The third theme generated from data analysis was rewarding employees. HR managers retaining committed employees for their work efforts and rewarding them for performing at a high level of productivity that is increasing the profitability of an organization is a core concept in Vroom's Expectancy Theory. The expectancy theory focus on the thoughts of employees being motivated to achieve organizational rewards. The expectancy theory posits that HR managers that effectively communicate to their employees about the expectations, goals of the organization, and clearly define the incentives links to favorable employee performance. The different rewards that employers offer to their employees as rewards are flexibility, recognition, and wellness benefits. Employees appreciate the effective communication leading to higher productivity while employees are earning initiatives and targets and goals of profitability are reached by top management.

The participants in the study noted that they had to make some changes to rewards and benefits that were desirable to employees due to the pandemic. P1 stated, "We reviewed our retention improvement plan to ensure our goal was to focus-on equity, diversity, and inclusion, which the results showed that there was an increase in a diverse

applicant pool and encouraged past employees to return due to changes and new implementation.” According to CD1, the organization began to see an increase in a diverse applicant pool due to changes that attracted employees and new rewards that employees could gain, which has retained current employees and motivated them to remain committed while increasing productivity leading to an increase of organizational profits. Employees tend to succeed more at work when their personal values align with their work goals to perform at a high level of productivity while contributing to the goal of increasing organizational profits. P1 noted, “We recruit a wide range of qualified applicants to ensure that we have a diverse workforce while implementing employees with rich culture backgrounds that is valuable to the employees experience. P3 stated, “We have seen the excitement of our employees when we recognize their personal values such as work life balance of not requiring employee to work after hours and encouraging family time.” Some employees are inspired by the opportunity to work with a diverse group and consider it rewarding to communicate and collaborate with variety of people from different backgrounds.

The possibility of allowing employees to be creative and use their innovative skills to assist with improving processes within the organization. P2 stated, “We gave employees ownership of new projects for the betterment of the organization. Giving an opportunity for everyone to contribute to the team outside of their normal job duties. During COVID, we have definitely retained employees with all of the flexibility, communications, and new clear metrics in place”. CD2, a google sheet document,

provided clarification of rewarding employees on their individual projects that notated the progress of the results to share with the team. Employee were recognized as a form of a reward during team meetings for their efforts of successfully implementing a project. The possibility of retaining employees during difficult time such as a Pandemic can be a challenging, but HR managers must be proactive and meet the needs of their employees. P3 stated, “We revised our employee wellness and assistance programs. We are offering our employees up to five free counseling sessions per issue to help cope with most recent challenges of managing COVID. CD3 notated on the website about the employee wellness programs and assistance programs. The programs are provided as an incentive or reward for employees to take advantage of while managing professional or personal issues to help employees to promote work-life balance of a productive employee. The groups include support and networking outlets.” Often times employers are unable to provide monetary rewards but are able to reward employees in other ways that that are valuable to them. P4 stated,

We do not have any incentives per say, but we have an annual recognition program, team building efforts, and non-work-related opportunities for lunch without the work hassle. Each and every organization is unique at motivating and retaining their employees to provide rewards, incentives, and resources to ensure that employees are valued often through non-monetary valuable measures, while also creating strategies to encourage employees to perform at a high level and while contributing to the profitability growth of the organization.

How Findings Correlate to the Literature

The findings from this study confirm and extends knowledge that rewarding employees is a strategy utilized to motivate employees to be more productive and contribute to the profitability and success of the organization. P1 noted, “The pandemic allowed us to recognize and reward our employees more for their efforts such as quarterly recognition for performance achievement. The participants noted that their approach to rewarding employees were not monetary but provided valued added rewards that would benefit employees. P3 stated, “The most popular nonmonetary benefit due to the pandemic were the five free counseling sessions per issue for employees and their dependents to seek assistance for personal issues.” Mead (2018) posited that benefit incentives are rewards that can enhance an employee’s life by offering monetary rewards, promotions, paid supplemental benefits, retirement match, and continued employee workforce development. Rewarding employees is the link between employee productivity and organizational success. Stewart (2017) argued that organizational leaders initiate simple, meaningful incentive programs to boost recruiting and retention efforts to remain competitive and increase performance along with profits.

By rewarding employees, the organization is aiming to increase productivity and the company's profits. Employees are motivated and empowered by rewards that are valuable to their professional and personal lives. Mauser (2018) posited the most admired incentives offered include tuition reimbursement, annual employee appreciation events, paid leave, holiday pay, birthday holidays, paid health insurance, and employer matched

retirement contributions. Amad et al. (2020) argued that every employer has a competitive advantage that attracts prospective employees to the organization. P1 stated, “Employees enjoy the employee appreciation events and the paid leave the most as a notable valuable employee reward that all employees are given.” Employers have the ability to develop strategies that benefits and attracts potential employees.

Employers can retain and motivate employees by considering new and improved benefit incentives. The knowledge for the literature extends that employers can promote organizational growth through profits and maintaining productive employees. De la Torre-Ruiz et al. (2019) emphasized that employee satisfaction is closely linked to receiving reward benefits that serve as the key to influencing affective reactions towards the firm. HR managers that develop reward incentives for their employees promote positive and more productive work efforts to influence organizational success.

How Findings Correlate to the Conceptual Framework

HR managers revealed that they currently are creating new ways to communicate and include employees in organizational decisions. Including employees in the decision-making process creates a virtuous cycle in which employee input and feedback leads to the future success of the organization. Instrumentality is the perception that a first level outcome will lead to a second level outcome, which allows an opportunity for an employee to achieve a desired outcome of positive valence. Positive outcomes lead to other results of performance and desired incentives, which is an opportunity to increase

motivation among employees, other employers, and HR managers (Torre-Ruiz et al., 2019).

In order to reward employees, HR managers should consider the use of the strategies similar to the ones used by Vroom (1964) to initiate rewards and incentives for employees. It was Vroom's expectancy theory which paved the way for understanding the need for motivation strategies. Vroom stated that one of the three factors of motivation is valence, which refers to if the employee finds the rewards desirable. If the reward is not desirable by the employee, they are less likely to remain motivated and productive. The study findings addressed the impact of rewarding employees as an important factor in retaining committed employees that will be productive and aid in increasing profits to sustain organizational growth. HR managers revealed that they are implementing reward incentives that their employees' value. P1 stated, the feedback during one-on-one meetings and performance evaluations noted that employees enjoy the rewards and incentives offered by the employer." The one-on-one meetings with employees noted that HR departments and managers want to develop and implement new reward incentives to motivate prospective employees and remain a competitive employer in the industry.

Application to Professional Practices

In this study, I explored strategies used by HR managers to increase employee commitment and retention in order to enhance productivity and profitability of a business. Based on the study's findings, employers could implement strategies that would

increase employee commitment and retain productive employees that will help to increase profits for the organization. By considering these findings, organizational leaders could diminish the gap in business practice with regard to boosting employee motivation and retaining committed employees, increasing productivity and profitability.

Additionally, these results provide actionable solutions of boosting employee morale, effective communication, and rewarding employees to increase retention and enhance profitability.

My research involved interviewing four HR managers at companies in Texas who implemented strategies to improve employee commitment and retention to increase productivity and profitability. The HR managers valued their employees and were willing to continue to create strategies to maintain employees that are motivated and committed to ensure the company is productive. In their organizations, participants were directly engaged in motivating and encouraging staff growth and commitment by boosting employee morale for the organization to succeed, effectively communicating with employees through one-on-one meetings, and rewarding employees through non-monetary rewards of diversity, flexibility, recognition, wellness. All organizations, regardless of the number of employees, may benefit from the findings of this study.

By categorizing the themes and providing supporting details, organizational leaders may be able to enhance employee engagement, increase employee retention, improve productivity, and boost profitability. It is more likely that employees will remain in a positive working environment where they can grow when they feel valued,

appreciated, and their work is valued. According to Gowan (2003), strategies are created for successful marketing, business plans, retention, and profitability to encourage support the organization. The specific strategies are engagement, retention, and ways to increase productivity (Rompho, 2017). Productivity and profitability strategies may include allowing employees and HR managers to collaborate on projects. Productivity may be increased by offering employee incentives such as stock or recognition for their valuable service. An organization with a healthy and motivating work environment can form a solid model for creating a work environment that will engage employees, increase productivity, and maximize profitability. The mission of any organization should be to see the organization grow and flourish as it operates.

Implications for Social Change

The implications for positive social change from this study involved effective communication strategies HR managers used to increase employee commitment that would encourage employees to feel valued for their work. The intent of this study was to identify a variety of strategies along with tools and resources that may decrease turnover and provide motivation that could lead to commitment to promote an increase in productivity from employees and profits for the overall performance of the organization.

I obtained feedback from HR managers implementing effective employee commitment strategies within their organization to increase employee's ability to learn, grow, and feel valued as an employee. The HR strategies identified in this study such as improving employee morale, creating effective communication protocols, and rewarding

employees are reflective on creating an environment that will allow employees to grow and strengthen their skills.

The findings of this study contain practical leadership strategies leaders can use to increase productivity and profitability in the workplace. Leaders decisions have an opportunity to create a positive reflection on the goals and needs of the organization. By taking a proactive approach to improving the work environment, implementing effective communication methods, and informing employees on the advantages of incentives that offered can create a motivation for employee and their efforts to be productive. HR managers primary goal is to improve retention, motivation, and commitment to achieve an increase in productivity that reflects positivity of the profits of the organization.

Recommendations for Action

The data collected from participant interviews might lead to new insight on strategies that HR managers use to motivate, retain, engage, and reward their employees. Organizations should implement culture that creates an environment for the employees' openness in communication, freedom of innovation and creativity, enjoy work accomplishment, and work with dignity and respect (Yumnam & Elangbam, 2019). HR managers must recognize the significance of implementing positive management strategies that sustain employee motivation and high levels of productivity. Disengaged employees affect the productivity and profitability of an organization, which is the driver of organization success. Employees should know the importance of their role and that they are valued. My recommendations for action include establishing frequent

communication between manager-employee, utilizing employee feedback, enhancing training, ensuring expectations are clear, reward acknowledgements, updating processes that are no longer relevant, and practicing transparency. Involving employees in decision making demonstrates teamwork and allows everyone to be a part of making the organization processes more efficient, which increase productivity and profits. Leaders are responsible for building a good motivational system that the organization can increase value and competitiveness. Employees are more committed and productive in a working environment under less stress with support from their leader or manager (Krstic et al., 2019).

HR managers who fail to implement effective employee commitment strategies might have an adverse on the productivity and profitability of the organization. In addition, the knowledge shared by the participants may assist with contributing to retaining committed employees through productivity measures, organizational growth with an increase in profits. The successful implementation of effective strategies could change the way leaders communicate and engage with their employees to retain happier employees that are rewarded for their performance.

The findings are examples of effective leadership strategies to build employee morale, communication, and reward employees. The results of this study could help HR managers implement more effective strategies to maintain high productivity levels among employees in the workplace. The information collected in this case study would be beneficial to organization new hire orientation, professional development, and one on one

meetings between employees and managers. The participants will receive a copy of the study results and the results will also be available on ProQuest. I recommend HR leaders (a) continue to build employee morale, (b) encourage effective communication, and (c) reward employees for their positive work efforts.

Recommendations for Further Research

The intent of the qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that HR managers use to increase employee commitment and retention in order to improve productivity and profitability in Texas. There are many variables that might affect employee commitment, but participants shared their personal experiences as managers and their successful strategies. The data collected may serve as a resource for other HR managers looking for new strategies to assist with retaining employees while creating a healthy working environment. Scholars could extend the research by selecting another geographic location or interviewing employees to gain direct experience of employee commitment. Perhaps even conducting a quantitative study of the correlation between HR manager strategies and employee productivity, effective communication, and employee rewards.

Future scholars could examine management training to enhance strategic ways to develop employee relationships to retain and influence a positive work environment, which could reduce employee turnover while promoting positive work engagement. Participants mentioned implementing more ways to enhance employee morale, effective ways to communicate and gain feedback from employees, while implementing ways to

reward employees for their high performance. I would also recommend obtaining information from an employee's perspective to determine if the implementation of HR manager strategies is an effective measure to ensure employees are engaged, motivated, are empowered to commit to the productivity and organizational success.

Reflections

As a Doctoral Student with many responsibilities, full time worker in the procurement industry, adjunct professor, wife, mother of two young children, active volunteer, and member of organizations there were many challenges I faced throughout my doctoral journey. During my doctoral journey, I experienced one major move out of state, one move in state, planning a wedding, welcoming our new baby girl, and new job opportunities. In addition, learning valuable information to successfully complete my study was more difficult than I had participated. Time management was one of the most challenging throughout my journey and ensuring that I was able to fulfill all of my responsibilities personally and professionally. Obtaining participants willing to commit to participate was a challenge due to many people were not interested because they had so many responsibilities as a manager during the demands of the pandemic. I had to stay motivated during the data collection process and communicating with participants to complete the member checking process.

The lessons learned through the DBA program journey that allowed me to acquire new insight on effective HR management strategies for retaining and motivating employees to be productive and increase profitability within the organization. I was

honored to have the opportunity to connect and interview with four successful HR managers that shared their experiences with implementing employee commitment strategies. I gained knowledge on strategies managers use to retain and increase employee commitment within their organization to maintain a high level of productivity and profitability. The participants were willing to participate in the study and provide valuable knowledge to research among effective HR management strategies to increase a positive work environment. I was encouraged by the way that the participants were committed to provide a positive work environment and experience for their employees. The interview process was a great way to obtain information to help answer the study research question. The findings from this study have provided the insight to drive effective leadership strategies to increase employee productivity within organizations.

Conclusion

Current and previous research has proven that using commitment strategies to retain and motivate employees to be productive to lead will lead to greater return for the organization by an increase in profits. The opportunity of creating an employee relationship with managers can be a positive incentive as employees create relationships with customers and clients to increase profits for continued organizational success (Sun & Wang, 2017). Relationship building is an opportunity to develop healthy ways to connect and create effective commitment strategies. Employees are more likely to remain with an organization that creates and implements policies and procedures that the employee respects and understands and see themselves as a valued contributing employee

to the success of the organization (Ariyabuddhiphongs & Kahn, 2017). Moreover, HR managers encouraging communication and feedback are creating the ability to sustain a high level of productivity employees to allow their organization to successful.

The findings of this study may help HR managers implement more effective employee commitment strategies that encourage positive manager-employee relationships, promote engagement measures, retain productive employees, and promote healthy forms of communication and feedback to increase employee productivity and profitability. In this study, I conducted semistructured interviews and reviewed company documents to gain insight of the leadership strategies HR managers use to retain employees and increase employee productivity. The participants included four HR Managers from Texas. I identified three themes that emerged from the data analysis process, which were (a) boosting employee morale, (b) communication, and (c) rewarding employees.

I used the expectancy theory as the conceptual framework for this qualitative multi-case study. HR managers from Texas shared in-depth information during the semi structured interviews which aligned with the literature and framework. I used the participants responses from the interview questions to compare data sources using the triangular method. Based on the research findings, I recommend managers in human resources to invest in their employees by continuing to implement commitment and motivational strategies. The data indicated employees respond to positive commitment methods, proactive communication measures such as engagement, rewards, and

motivational strategies to retain productive employees that will promote organizational success.

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Appendix: Interview Protocol

The research question for this study is: What strategies do human resource managers use to increase employee commitment and retention to increase the company's productivity and profit? Therefore, this qualitative multiple case study consisted of seven open-ended questions to gain ideas and insights from experienced human resource managers.

Interview Protocol	
Protocol Steps	Protocol Actions
Select participants	I will contact participants by email or phone and according to established eligibility criteria.
Set time and place for interview	Interviews will take place in participant's private office or public place.
Introduce the interview and set the stage	I will recap the purpose of the research study, obtain verbal consent from each participant, and provide each participant a written consent form.
Record the interview	I will explain to the participant the interview will be audio-recorded. The interview will start with the following background information: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Educational background b. Title/Position c. Years of experience
Ask open-ended questions while watching for non-verbal cues, paraphrasing as needed, and asking follow-up probing questions to ensure rich and in-depth responses	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What successful strategies are you employing to increase commitment and retention to reduce turnover and training cost to improve productivity and profitability? 2. How have you assessed the strategies' effectiveness of the employee strategies; you developed to increase productivity and profitability? 3. How has implementation of employee commitment and retention strategies improved productivity and profitability?

	<p>4. What were the key challenges that you encountered implementing employee commitment and retention strategies?</p> <p>5. How did your organization address the key challenges to increase employee commitment and retention?</p> <p>6. Based upon your experience, how have your organization's strategies to improve employee commitment and retention influence your company's ability to increase productivity and retention?</p> <p>7. What additional information about your organization's strategies to improve employee retention to improve productivity would you like to add to the interview?</p>
Wrap up the interview thanking participant	Thank each participant in person and confirm the participant has my contact information for follow-up questions and concerns. I will also mail out a thank you card to each participant after the interview.
Transcribing the interview	I will transcribe each interview and email transcription and interpretation to participants.
Member check	I will contact each participant and confirm accuracy of the transcription.
Schedule a follow-up member checking interview to ensure data saturation and enhanced rigor of the research	I will ask participants if my synthesis represents their response of if there is additional information they would like to share.