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Strategies Day-Care Center Leaders Use to Reduce Employee Turnover and Achieve Sustainability

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Walden University

College of Management and Human Potential

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Angel Harris

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Walden University
2022

Abstract

Strategies Day-Care Center Leaders Use to Reduce Employee Turnover and Achieve

Sustainability

by

Angel Harris

MS, Strayer University, 2013

BS, City College, 2008

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

July 2022

Abstract

Daycare center leaders who lack effective strategies to retain employees face high employee turnover, jeopardizing children's ability to form strong attachment bonds with their childcare staff, resulting in behavioral and developmental issues. Grounded in the hygiene-motivation theory, the purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies six daycare leaders in northcentral Florida used to retain their employees for 5 years or more and achieve sustainability. Data sources were semi-structured interviews, researcher notes, and employment policies at each facility. Yin's five-step data analysis process resulted in four themes: effective hygiene factors, building relationships with employees, setting relevant performance goals and objectives, and developing strategies to ensure job satisfaction. A key recommendation for leaders in day-care facilities is to create a positive work culture and mitigate extra employee demands. The implications for positive social change include the potential for day-care leaders to improve childcare quality, allowing parents peace of mind while they are at work and improving the surrounding communities' economic stability.

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Dedication

First of all, I would like to give thanks to the Lord above. I wanted to give up many times, but God gave me the strength to keep going. Also, I dedicate my study to my children, who are the most important part of my life, Jacquez, Alexis, Akira, and Aylah. In addition, I dedicate my study to my supportive husband, Estaban Gentle. Finally, I would like to dedicate my study to my mother who taught me how to be strong and independent.

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I would like to give a special thanks to Dr. Simon. I appreciate everything she has done for me. I was lost before she became my chairwoman, and she is another reason I have completed my study. I would like to give a special thanks to my Academic Advisor, Richard Hay, who checked on me periodically to see how far along I was in my study.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Daycare leaders experience high employee turnover rates. Achieving success in a competitive economy involves retaining employees who engage in their work and have an emotional attachment to their jobs (Mohanty, 2018). There is a positive relationship between leaders who support employee commitment and revenue growth (Allen et al., 2013). Developing strategies to help promote employees' positive feelings toward working in a daycare center may help strengthen and retain employees in the workplace. Employees who lack the motivation to provide quality care in daycare centers could lead to turnover and lackluster performance, tainting the reputation of the organization, affecting the learning abilities of the children, and decreasing the retention rate in daycare centers; in essence, teachers who work at a daycare center that lack commitment to that center can be harmful to the organization (Cumming et al., 2015). Commonly documented reasons that employees leave day-care centers are incommensurate pay, lack of professionalism, workplace stress, and limited career development opportunities (Cumming et al., 2015).

Background of the Problem

Employee turnover can harm a business because of increasing the cost of recruitment and selection, training, and decreased productivity (Perez-Campdesuner et al., 2018). Employees decide to leave daycare centers because of low wages, lack of childcare experience, and job dissatisfaction (Totenhagen et al., 2016). Employees also leave childcare facilities because of emotional exhaustion (Lovgren, 2016). Once an employee leaves a position, leaders spend an average of 21.4% of an employee's salary

trying to replace that employee (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018). For example, if a previous employee earned \$40,000, then the average cost to replace that employee is \$8,560 (Blakely-Gray, 2018). In June 2018, the employee turnover rate in day-care centers increased by 0.2 % from June 2017, and the number of unemployed day-care workers was 6.6 million (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018). Decreasing employee turnover and strengthening employee retention have been a chronic struggle for daycare centers.

Problem Statement

Approximately 94.3% of business owners reported that the COVID-19 pandemic increased their employee turnover rate, which decreased their sales and services (Nordhagen et al., 2021). Childcare centers experience higher turnover rates than most places of employment (Lee et al., 2018). Employee retention strategies are necessary to help organizations retain their talented and competent employees and achieve improvement in their performance (Chawla, 2021). The general business problem was that high employee turnover affects daycare centers' profitability and sustainability. The specific business problem was that daycare center directors lack effective strategies for retaining employees.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies that daycare center directors use to retain employees. The target population was 2 daycare center directors and 4 daycare leaders of centers in north central Florida who retained their employees for at least 5 years. The study findings have implications for positive

social change because daycare centers that have experienced profit loss due to employee turnover may also consider implementing strategies to reduce employee turnover, which could help address social issues, such as poverty in communities, and enable parents to feel comfortable about working outside their homes.

Nature of the Study

The three types of research methods available to researchers are quantitative, qualitative, and mixed (Venkatesh et al., 2013). In this study, I employed the qualitative method. Advantages of the qualitative method are that the data collection is concentrated, sampling is specific, and the approach provides the ability to explore key points to gather meaningful data (Katz, 2015). Quantitative researchers use statistics, numerical data, and hypotheses for examining the characteristics of and/or relationships between variables (Simon & Goes, 2018). The quantitative method was not appropriate for this study because no hypotheses were evaluated. I did not use the mixed methods approach because it includes a focus on both qualitative and quantitative methods and the qualitative method was sufficient to address the study's purpose.

I used a multiple case study as the research design to explore strategies that daycare center directors in north central Florida use to retain employees. Case study researchers use diverse types and sources of information to develop detailed descriptions of phenomena (Isaacs, 2014; Robinson, 2014; Yin, 2014). Within a case study design, the focus is on a general situation in a real-life setting (Yin, 2018).

I considered other qualitative designs, including ethnography, phenomenological, and narrative, for the study. Researchers conduct an ethnography to study an

organization's culture and activities over an extended period, sometimes years (Crandall et al., 2016), which was not the intent of this study. Researchers who conduct phenomenological studies focus on individuals' perceptions of experiencing phenomena (Bowden & Galindo-Gonzalez, 2015). In this study, I explored strategies used rather than participants' perceptions. Narrative inquiry involves asking participants to share personal life stories (Clandinin et al., 2017) Personal life stories were not the focus of this study. Since the ethnographic, phenomenological, and narrative designs did not align with the focus of this study, I did not select them for use in this study. A multiple case study design was in accord with the purpose of this study and provided a greater opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon than a single case study by providing an opportunity for comparisons among varying conditions across differing organizations (see Yin, 2018).

Research Question

What strategies do daycare center directors use to retain employees?

Interview Questions

Warm-Up Questions

- How long has your center been open?
- How many employees do you have?
- How many children are in your care?

Interview Questions

1. What strategies do you use to motivate your employees?

2. What strategies have you used to build an employer-employee relationship with your team?
3. How do you engage your employees in setting goals and objectives for your center?
4. What strategies do you use to assure your employees are satisfied with the work they are doing?
5. How do you assess the effectiveness of your strategies to retain employees?
6. What else can you share with me about the strategies and processes you use to retain employees?

Conceptual Framework

I selected the hygiene-motivation theory as the conceptual framework for this study. Herzberg (2003) developed the hygiene-motivation theory to increase worker satisfaction and meet employees' needs. Hygiene factors refer to organizational policies and procedures, job security, a satisfactory work environment, relationships with coworkers and supervisors, and compensation (Herzberg, 2003). Motivation factors include recognition and achievement that can improve productivity and increase dedication to the organization.

Herzberg (2003) later added to hygiene motivation theory to motivate employees by increasing responsibilities and focusing on employee retention. Herzberg contended that the main motivating factors are the intrinsic value and satisfaction gained from the job itself. Herzberg's two-factor theory aligned with the intent of this study to reveal strategies leaders use to prevent employee turnover.

Operational Definitions

Career development: The act of moving toward a different career pattern (Woodd, 2013).

Corporate social responsibility: The tendency to focus on examples of bad practices and misbehaving in the corporate office (Crowther & Seifi, 2018).

Job dissatisfaction: The feeling of dissatisfaction with a job that can lead employees to quit their job and consider better job opportunities (AlBattat & Som, 2013).

Job embeddedness: A collection of forces that influences employees to leave their jobs (Collins & Mossholder, 2014).

Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory: A relationship-based approach to leadership that focuses on the relationship between leaders and followers (Zacher et al., 2014).

Organizational change: A situation that involves confronting the persistent pattern of behavior that is blocking an organization from higher performance (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2015).

Organizational culture: The way organizations conduct business and treat employees, customers, and the wider community (Domnisoru et al., 2017).

Transformational leadership: A style of leadership that challenges followers to take greater ownership of their work, allowing the leaders to align followers with tasks that enhance performance (Hetland et al., 2018).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions are presumable facts researchers may believe are true without a valid proof (Siddiqi, 2014). Limitations are potential weaknesses in the design or methodology of a study that could affect the interpretation and results of the study (Simon & Goes, 2018). Delimitations are the scope and boundary of the study set by the researcher to answer the research question (Simon & Goes, 2018).

Assumptions

An assumption is a statement assumed to be accurate, sometimes temporarily, or for a specific purpose, such as building a theory (Wargo, 2015). The primary assumption I made in this study was that all participants were honest and answered the interview questions to the best of their ability. Because participation was voluntary, I ensured that all my participants' information was kept confidential and safe.

Limitations

Limitations exist in research when adequate information is out of the researcher's control and could influence the interpretation of the findings from research (University of Southern California, 2020). I was familiar with day-care directors in this region. To minimize any bias and address this limitation, I did not interview any daycare center directors that I know, and I used bracketing to mitigate any preconceptions that may have tainted the research process.

Delimitations

Delimitations refer to characteristics that limit the scope and define the boundaries of a study (Simon & Goes, 2018). One delimitation for this study was I only

interviewed directors in day-care centers that had retained their employees for 5 years or more. Another delimitation was the location; the study was limited to daycare organizations in north central Florida.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

Business leaders may use findings from this study to develop strategies to increase employee retention. Leaders who understand the importance of retention strategies may have a better chance of identifying worker needs to effectively retain quality employees, thus reducing costs due to employee turnover. Daycare center directors may also compare the findings from this study with organizational strategies and encourage employees to remain employed by implementing policies and practices discovered in this research. Business leaders who use findings from this study may experience the benefits of an engaged and high-performing workforce to reduce recruiting and training costs from employee turnover.

Implications for Social Change

The results of this study may contribute to positive social change if daycare center directors can use the findings to retain employees and provide quality care to the children at their centers. During the earliest years of life, children develop attachments to significant adults in their lives, and these strong emotional attachments allow children to develop a sense of trust necessary to build healthy relationships with other people (Arriaga et al., 2018). When these attachments are broken, children may suffer emotional consequences for the rest of their lives (Arriaga et al., 2018). Healthy attachments to day-

care providers enable children to develop skills needed for success in school and development. The retention of childcare workers also reduces the stress on parents who need assurance that their children are well provided for, thereby increasing the probability of stabilizing families.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies daycare center leaders may use to reduce employee turnover and achieve sustainability. The literature is replete with studies on different theories and strategies leaders can implement that may decrease employee turnover. The purpose of this literature review was to provide a framework for and authentication of the foundation of the study for addressing the research question: What strategies do daycare center leaders use to retain employees? The literature review contains 140 references of which 120 (85.9%) are from scholarly, peer-reviewed articles or, government publications published in the past 5 years. In the literature review, the study found substantiate interrelationship between the research problem and the design of this study. The literature review includes three main sections: (a) an analysis of the conceptual framework, (b) the synthesis of the literature concerning employees' decisions to leave day-care centers, and (c) a review of the literature about leadership styles. The subtopics include alternate theories, the benefits of finding the right employees, implementing effective retention strategies, and the importance of maintaining sustainability in day-care centers. Other subtopics include employees feeling excluded, increasing work-time flexibility, offering benefits, and practical training.

The primary source of the professional and academic literature was databases accessed through the Walden University Library, including SAGE Premier, Emerald Management Journals, and EBSCOhost. I also used Google Scholar to search keywords to identify relevant articles and then searched for those articles through the Walden University Library to gain access to the literature. I conducted a comprehensive search of the existing literature using keywords and a combination of keywords to locate studies and information relevant to the topic of the study. The keywords searched were *career development corporate culture, corporate social responsibility, job dissatisfaction, job embeddedness, leader-member exchange theory, organizational, leadership, and transformational leadership*. The literature review begins with an overview of Herzberg's two-factor theory of employee motivation, which was the conceptual framework for the study.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Employee Motivation

In the two-factor theory, Herzberg identified the factors for job satisfaction, motivation, dissatisfaction, and demotivation for employees in the workplace (Chiat & Panatik, 2019). Employee dissatisfaction has a direct effect on the employee's thoughts concerning turnover (Chiat & Panatik, 2019). Herzberg's theory not only focuses on employees' turnover but also covers factors that promote and reduce employees' turnover rate (Chiat & Panatik, 2019). According to Tan and Waheed (2011), Herzberg's hygiene and motivational theory is divided into two different dimensions affecting job satisfaction. Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory plays a major role in job satisfaction and is assumed to be the main source of the organizational factor (Mehrad, 2020). The

Herzberg motivation and hygiene theory focuses on the needs that were suggested by Abraham Maslow (1943) and the ways the needs can be satisfied (Mehrad, 2020).

Herzberg (2003) concluded that when employees are satisfied, dissatisfaction diminishes, decreasing poor performance that may lead to improved productivity (Holston-Okae & Mushi, 2018).

Comparing Hygiene and Motivation Factors

Herzberg (2003) developed the hygiene-motivation theory to facilitate leaders' understanding of how to increase worker satisfaction and meet employees' needs. Hygiene factors refer to organizational policies and procedures, job security, a satisfactory work environment, relationships with coworkers and supervisors, and compensation (Herzberg, 2003). Motivation factors include recognition and achievement that can improve productivity and increase dedication to the organization. Herzberg contended that the main motivating factors are the intrinsic value and satisfaction gained from the job itself. Herzberg (2003) later added to the two-factor theory to motivate employees by increasing responsibilities and focusing on employee retention. I chose this theory as the conceptual framework because it aligned with the purpose of this study and helped me reveal and understand strategies leaders use to mitigate employee turnover.

Hygiene-Motivation Related Theories

Herzberg's two-factor theory is also known as the motivation-hygiene theory and is one of the most popular theories linked to job satisfaction (Alshmemri et al., 2017). Hygiene factors consist of company policies and administration, relationships with managers, and salaries (Alshmemri et al., 2017). Motivation factors focus on

achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibilities, advancement, and growth (Alshmemri et al., 2017).

The absence of hygiene factors leads to employees being dissatisfied, and the presence of motivating factors leads to job satisfaction (Staempfli & Lamarche, 2020). Addressing the hygiene factors may decrease employee dissatisfaction, leaving employees feeling neutral and neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with their jobs (Staempfli & Lamarche, 2020). According to Herzberg (2003), motivation factors are addressed through several strategies, such as self-scheduling, the ability to communicate, control of resources, and accountability. Herzberg posited that motivation is based on growth and intrinsic motivators may provide extra motivation. In contrast to hygiene factors, motivational factors may produce job satisfaction, but their absences lead to job dissatisfaction (Alshmemri et al., 2017).

Sobaih and Hasanein (2020) argued that addressing hygiene factors has a positive impact on job dissatisfaction, whereas not addressing motivators harms job satisfaction. Addressing hygiene factors, monetary compensation, and positive working conditions may be a great strategy for increasing employees' job satisfaction (Sobaih & Hasanein, 2020). According to Sobaih and Hasanein, satisfaction is not statistically dependent on motivators. Hygiene is supposed to help employees avoid bad and negative feelings in the workplace (Alfayad & Arif, 2017). In comparison, motivation is the main aspect that motivates employees on the job (Alfayad & Arif, 2017). Both hygiene factors and motivation factors contribute to levels of employee job satisfaction (Atalic et al., 2016).

Job satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the workplace are believed to be critical because they affect the productivity and effectiveness of the employees and the performance of the business (Ali, 2013). Tan and Waheed (2011) stated that application of the motivation-hygiene theory may prevent dissatisfaction but that does not necessarily mean that it will lead to employee satisfaction. Researchers have proposed that the motivation and hygiene factors can respectively affect employee satisfaction and dissatisfaction; therefore, satisfying motivators may assist with improving job performance and decreasing employee turnover (Byrne, 2006).

Contrasting and Complementary Theories of Employee Motivation

Instead of Herzberg's two-factor theory, I considered using Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs theory, and Drucker's (1954) management by objectives theory as the conceptual framework for the study. Together, Maslow's and Drucker's theories provide a potential composite framework that directors and leaders can use to develop and implement strategies to retain employees. Management by objectives is a theory designed to facilitate managers' motivating employees to meet and exceed goals (Drucker, 1954). Disregarding the management by objectives theory may lead to the loss of good employees in day-care centers (Chron, 2019). Management includes defining objectives within an organization, conveying information to organizational members, and deciding together with workers how to achieve each goal in sequence (Drucker, 1954). The combination of management by objective theory and Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory may have been suitable for this study because their concepts of employee motivation, job

satisfaction, and personal growth are strategies that can help to decrease employee turnover in daycare centers.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory

Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs theory is a motivational theory consisting of a five-tier model of human needs, often depicted as hierarchical levels within a pyramid. Needs lower down in the hierarchy (i.e., basic needs) must be satisfied before individuals can address needs higher in the pyramid. According to Maslow, driving forces motivate individuals, and these forces may change over time. Driving forces stem from physiological, safety, belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization needs (Gouveia et al., 2014). Maslow noted that employees' needs occur in a hierarchical flow, stating that an employee should have their lower needs met, like safety, before fulfilling their higher needs, such as self-esteem and self-actualization. Maslow empathized with the essential limitations to the success of self-actualization that a human might need in a set hierarchy without variation (Boyd, 2014). Small business owners need to understand that meeting employees' needs can help reduce employee turnover (Gouveia et al., 2014). According to Gouveia et al. (2014), leaders who implement strategies to improve working conditions should validate and address employees' needs to decrease turnover rates.

Management by Objectives Theory

Management by objectives refers to a managerial process in which leaders diagnose and fulfill a company's purposes by encouraging upper management and subordinates to mutually agree on goals and objectives that are specific, measurable, time-bound, and combined through using an action plan (Yanagizawa & Furukawa,

2016). Productivity and turnover rates have improved in small organizations after leaders applied management by objectives (Yanagizawa & Furukawa, 2016). Most organizational leaders who incorporate management by objectives encourage employees to set numerical goals as a means of measuring work performance (Yanagizawa & Furukawa, 2016). Researchers can use management by objectives to increase productivity in their organizations. (Brewer & Hunter, 1989). Previous researchers conducting a meta-analysis of qualitative studies of the use of management by objectives theory revealed that 68 out of 70 reviews resulted in productivity increases, and only two studies showed decreases when using the management by objectives strategies (Brewer & Hunter, 1989).

LMX Theory

According to the leader-member exchange theory, a leader naturally develops a relationship with each of their subordinates, and the quality of each relationship strongly influences the responsibilities, decision making, access to resources, and performance of subordinates (Janse, 2019). Leaders encourage and build a shared mindset of collective organizational commitment to combine business responsibilities that could reduce employee turnover (Seo et al., 2018). Using LMX theory could enable managers to decrease employee turnover by forming differentiated relationships which may be used to predict employee turnover (Seo et al., 2018).

Expectancy Theory

Expectancy theory focuses on performance, effort, intention preference, and choices (Van Eerde & Thierry, 1996). Vroom (1964) proposed that improving motivation behaviors concerns determining why people seek to be pleased with the utmost

satisfaction while exhibiting minimal regret. Vroom's expectancy theory focuses on results differently from Maslow's (1943) and Alderfer's (1969) that were both centered on human needs. Vroom suggested that an individual's perceived view of an outcome and its difference from meeting a need will determine their level of motivation and choices made to maximize pleasure and minimize pain (Purvis et al., 2015). According to Nazir et al. (2016), employees must agree with their organizations' values and reward and recognition system before being fully committed to an organization.

Boyd's Theory

In contrast with Maslow's theory, Boyd (2014) theorized that employees might strive to fulfill needs more complex than their physiological ones and may fail to address those needs. Osabiya (2015) posited that employee motivation is at the center of how a business will successfully fulfill its goals. Organizational leaders should strategize on what incentives, rewards, and leadership skills could help the organization thrive (Osabiya, 2015). This theory could assist the day-care center directors with improving employee retention because their employees may feel like their work is appreciated and, in many cases, employees may decide to stay at the daycare centers long-term.

ERG Theory

The existence, relatedness, and growth (ERG) theory is another version of Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory and puts forth the idea that all human needs can be satisfied (Mulder, 2019). Alderfer (1969) contended that the most critical needs leaders should address in organizations are existence, relatedness, and growth. The need for survival (or existence), like the physiological needs and need for safety in Maslow's

theory, refers to an environment that is danger-free and safe for a person to survive and continue he or she lineage (Turabik & Baskan, 2015). Moreover, relatedness refers to establishing and maintaining relationships with business colleagues (Turabik & Baskan, 2015). Finally, growth occurs when people focus on their self-development and potential (Turabik & Baskan, 2015). Alderfer's ERG theory is similar to Maslow's hierarchy of needs regarding the flexible movement between needs (Guillen et al., 2014). Turabik and Baskan (2015) contended that the ERG theory addresses disappointment and regret principles, which are missing from Maslow's theory.

To benefit from the implementation of the ERG theory, Alderfer (1969) indicated that leaders need to recognize staff members' multiple needs of existence, relatedness, and growth (Russ, 2011). Alderfer suggested that managers who only focus on one worker may cause regress due to irritation. Managers who strictly enforced the ERG theory understand each employee's behavior and work towards motivating all workers (Alderfer, 1969; Russ, 2011).

Employee Growth Needs

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory and Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory are relevant for understanding organizational behavior and management (Acevedo, 2018). Maslow (1943) suggested that unsatisfied needs on any level are risky, and individuals should not disregard requirements. Understanding organizational behavior should help management to understand and mitigate employee turnover in day-care centers. Herzberg (2003) posited that employees who are effectively motivated to perform are more productive, engaged, and invested in their work.

Alderfer's (1969) ERG theory of motivation focuses on existence, relatedness, and growth principles following employee needs and could be a strategy daycare center directors use to retain employees. Additionally, ERG theory addresses an adverse responsibility in encouraging employees, which may not be suitable for daycare leaders because of the need to implement positive strategies to retain employees (see Alderfer, 1969). Alderfer found that the satisfaction of lower level needs does not aid with satisfying higher level needs. Individuals may be inspired to participate in behaviors that may meet one of the three groups of needs (i.e., existence, relatedness, and growth) regardless of meeting lower level needs (Alderfer, 1969).

Human Resources Roles and Responsibilities

Human resources managers' commitment to organizations' success should lead to the proper delivery and implementation of human resources practices and is the key to the success of business practices (Oh et al., 2017). Human resource management has two principal components: (a) the creation of cumulative knowledge based on trustworthy empirical evidence and (b) the support of applied practices based on evidentiary science (Ones et al., 2017). The human resources staff is responsible for enhancing both personal and organizational effectiveness (Russell et al., 2016). The roles and responsibilities of human resources staff are to invest in potential talent, deliver consistent approaches across a business, and monitor the outcomes (Turner, 2018).

Employees' Decisions to Leave Small Businesses

One of the main reasons' employees decide to leave daycare centers is because of managers' behavior (Reina et al., 2017). Reina et al. (2017) used multilevel path

modeling to determine whether a managers' use of pressure and inspirational strategy influenced an employee's decision to quit. Employees' emotions may also affect the decision to leave daycare learning centers (Reina et al., 2017). Childcare centers whose leaders have visionary and organic or distributed leadership may outperform those with leaders using classical and transactional leadership styles (Jing, 2018). Other reasons employees decide to leave a job include age, gender, marriage, education levels, and years employed at an organization (Al Mamun & Hasan, 2017). In accord with Maslow's (1943) theory, another reason people leave their job is that they feel like they do not belong.

Finding the Right Employees

Leaders need to find the right employees who fit with the company's culture. Managers recruit to identify potential employees using different approaches. Searching the web is a strategy that staff may use to find the right employees. Campos et al. (2018) noted that using the Internet significantly increases the number of applicants. Moreover, the presence of network externalities derives from the increased number of finding employees who fit into the company's corporate culture (Campos et al., 2018). Having a competent human resources department and career path development strategies may be beneficial for selecting the right candidates (Bohannon, 2018).

Finding the right employees consists of fit, links, and sacrifice and could decrease employee turnover to ensure that a potential employee is compatible with the company (Ma et al., 2018). Usually, the better an employee fits into the company culture, the higher likelihood they will remain on the job for a long period (Ma et al., 2018). Ma et al.

(2018) believed an employee who is more involved in the job, and the community is more likely to remain in the job. Also, employees who are unwilling to sacrifice may not leave the company. Sacrifices consist of having to forego the material and psychological benefits that an employee would lose when quitting a job (Ma et al., 2018).

The Need for Employee Retention Strategies

Researchers focus on employee turnover to find reasons to continue to study retention strategies (Mitchell et al., 2014). The importance of leaders implementing retention strategies should assist employees with growing opportunities to reduce turnover rates (Gounaris & Boukis, 2013). Gounaris and Boukis (2013) indicated that organizational stakeholders have a high interest in human capital. Executives attempt to retain employees for competitive advantage (Gounaris & Boukis, 2013). Business owners should understand and meet employee needs to lower decrease turnover rates (Beattie et al., 2014).

Employee turnover management supervision is an obligation to attain organizational goals effectively (Al Mamun & Hasan, 2017). Yet, employee retention strategies are necessary to address the various needs of employees to reduce the cost of having to hire and train new employees (Al Mamun & Hasan, 2017). Managers must be capable of determining the difference between employees who bring value to the company and employees who do not contribute toward company success, so the managers can strategize on how to retain employees who may help to decrease employee turnover in day-care centers (Al Mamun & Hasan, 2017).

Employee Motivation

Employee motivation is a key concept for addressing the purpose of this study and involves executives developing job satisfaction practices based on identified motivational strategies (Ncube & Samuel, 2014). Furthermore, leaders should attempt to implement strategies to prevent employee turnover by putting forth the necessary action towards work-related job tasks. Managers can motivate employees by developing policies for reducing employee turnover and encouraging work engagement (Van-Beek et al., 2013).

Employee turnover is steadily increasing in small businesses. Kim (2014) noted that employee turnover is detrimental, decreases revenues, and increases expenses in management operational and strategic challenges. According to Alfayad and Arif (2017), work motivation is essential and helps to contribute to organizational and societal success and the businesses' performance.

Offering Benefits and Offering Training

Compensation is an essential aspect of running a childcare center. Competitive advantage is a solution to reduce employee turnover in day-care centers. (Jaworski et al., 2018) mentioned that excellent benefits and incentives affect an employee's commitment to an organization. Hee et al. (2018) posited that managers should put forth more effort in the benefit and compensation packages to decrease employee turnover. Ben Mansour et al. (2017) reported that training in organizations to aid workers with the development of skills-behavior knowledge, skills, and social behavior could assist with retaining employees. Ben Mansour et al. also reported that approximately 50% of leaders have

singled out employee learning as a principal priority. Also, training is one of the primary mandates of any human resource department (Ben Mansour et al., 2017)

Understanding Employees' Needs

According to Maslow (1943), driving forces may motivate individuals, and people do not have the same forces provided to them at a specific time. Driving forces stem from physiological, safety belonging esteem, and self-actualization needs (Gouveia et al., 2014). Maslow (1943) noted that employee needs occur in a hierarchy flow, which will identify multiple levels of management that are at the top of the company. For employees who complete lower orders, employers can begin to satisfy the next levels of needs. Small business owners need to understand that meeting employees' needs can enable managers to develop effective turnover strategies (Gouveia et al., 2014). According to Gouveia et al. (2014), leaders who implement strategies to reduce employee turnover may be able to meet the needs of the group and decrease turnover rates.

Employees Need to Belong to a Group

Employees decide to leave jobs in daycare because they felt like they did not belong. Leaders can create workgroups to make team members feel appreciated and a part of the business (Zameer et al., 2014). Workplace groups are beneficial because the groups consist of employees working and interacting together (Fitzsimmons & Stamper, 2014). Shevhyufhellar et al. (2014) concluded that cooperation takes place in such a way that the behavior or performance within the group influences the behavior performance of the other team members. Leaders who use workplace groups can use this tactic to motivate employees to meet and exceed short-term and long-term goals (Fitzsimmons &

Stamper, 2014; Zameer et al., 2014). Team members like to engage in workplace groups because the groups help to satisfy team member needs (Shevhyufhellar et al., 2014; Zameer et al., 2014). Employees believe that accomplishing group goals and activities can fill their needs as employees (Zameer et al., 2014). Organizational stressors are affiliated with teams because all the members have the same demands including actions, situations, and events. (Shevhyufhellar et al., 2014; Zameer et al., 2014).

Developing Retention Strategies

Milman and Dickson (2014) reported that adopting policies to retain employees is an initiative-taking approach. Still, adopting policies does not help determine why employees decide to quit their jobs. Leaders may benefit from the implementation of motivational strategies (Milman & Dickson, 2014). Leaders who are motivated to take the company to another level may feel inspired to make initiative-taking decisions before issues get worse (Gershengorn et al., 2014). Creating a targeted strategy to assist with retaining employees could help child-care directors' turnover rates to decrease, and the business profits would increase (Gershengorn et al., 2014). Kandampully et al. (2014) determined researchers should learn how leaders develop retention strategies to retain workers. Directors may use the strategies that emerged from this study to have a better understanding of the different techniques and strategies for retaining employees.

Effective Leadership and Management Styles to Mitigate Employee Turnover

Stoman (1999) asserted that leadership and management refer to the ability to lead, guide, and motivate teams to perform effectively and excel on the job. However, style character and conduct distinguish a capable manager and define organizational

success (Stoman, 1999). Reio and Trudel (2016) contended that rapid changes and increased competition across industries place stress on management and workers alike, increasing the potential for workplace conflict and deviant workplace behaviors, including incivility and competent managers are needed to apply effective techniques to manage the process and outcomes of interpersonal conflicts and improve retention. Schoar and Zuo (2017) explained that small business owners possess a more conservative leadership style and support a more modest investment in capital expenditures, research development, and reducing costs.

Leadership Behavior

Leadership has been an essential aspect of the success and failure of businesses since the beginning of time (Hargis et al., 2011). Although leadership is an integral part of an organization, Graybill (2014) noted there would never be a clear and consistent definition. Wu et al. (2013) reported that achieving the benefits of desired leadership behaviors is realized through training programs concerning improving leadership skills and investments in leadership development. However, finding that empowering and enabling practices are helpful for employees' self-concordance and creative efficacy when tasks are interdependent could aid leaders with developing strategies (Hon & Chan, 2013). Leadership styles that motivate employees could decrease the turnover rates in organizations (Hon & Chan, 2013).

Preventative Turnover Strategies

Leonidou et al. (2017) explained that the green business strategy among small enterprises influences competitive advantage performance, which could aid in re-training

employees. Yang et al. (2012) indicated that management should focus more on subordinates when providing career advice and relevant training because such a focus may enhance career opportunities. Strom et al. (2014) reported that leaders should create a working environment that promotes effective employee retention strategies. Moreover, interpersonal relationships can lead to a decrease in employee turnover. Employing a social exchange perspective influences the emotional attachment created and implicates employment turnover (Waldkirch et al., 2018).

Knowledge Management

Knowledge management is the process of creating, sharing, using, and managing the knowledge and information of an organization (Chong & Besharati, 2014).

Employees hold institutional memory of a shared set of critical concepts, experiences, expertise, processes, internal structure, and collective understanding of how to work as well as knowledge regarding organizational performance, strategies to work together, as a team, and ideas (Wang et al., 2014). Higher amounts of knowledge could give employees the ability to enhance work performance, which may result in higher pay (Wang et al., 2014). Sharing knowledge with other employees helps to ensure a team's expertise is implemented into the day-care center's corporate culture to meet the employees' needs and to prevent high turnover rates (Chong & Besharati, 2014).

Chong and Besharati (2014) concluded that high turnover rates in day-care centers usually occur because of poor leadership. Business owners need leaders who can motivate employees to learn and share different ideas so the companies can become and

remain successful (Chong & Besharati, 2014). Knowledge sharing serves to motivate and help retain employees in daycare centers (Chong & Besharati, 2014).

Job Satisfaction

Karatepe (2013) asserted that when employees feel satisfied with their jobs, this job satisfaction could increase organizational success. High employee satisfaction scores correlate with a decreased desire to terminate employment (Walsh & Bartikowski, 2013). Employees of daycare centers who continuously receive effective management and support from the leadership team experience a high level of attachment and satisfaction at work (Karatepe, 2013). Regts and Molleman (2013) indicated that job satisfaction is one way to predict whether an employee will remain with a company.

Valuing Employees

Employees are a significant part of an organization's success (Park & Levy, 2014). The daycare centers under study are childcare centers with a focus on profits and customer service (Park & Levy, 2014). Employee turnover rates affect business productivity, which could negatively affect employees' customer service skills. According to Freedman and Kosova (2014), the cost of losing employees includes the loss of productivity and a decrease in the value of time because employees or new hires must learn the skills necessary to replace former workers.

Compensation

Gupta and Shaw (2014) noted that the number of compensation employees receives plays a significant role in how long they will remain with a company. One of the main reasons employees leave a job is to accept a higher rate of pay (Bryant & Allen,

2013; Gupta & Shaw, 2014). Leaders who decide to underpay employees are at risk of employees quitting to seek higher-paying jobs (Bryant & Allen, 2013). Chrisman et al. (2017) noted that directors must align with the owner's and employee's interests. Besides, incentive compensation can decrease the alignment of interest issues in small establishments (Chrisman et al., 2017). In contrast, Michiels (2017) explained that daycare centers that have a chief executive officer have more formal compensation practices. Focusing more on compensation packages could reduce employee turnover in childcare businesses.

Coaching Opportunities

Beattie et al. (2014) reported that management should look for opportunities where employees can develop and enhance work-related skills. Bryant and Allen (2013) indicated that the employee coaching strategy has empowerment benefits for employees who implement coaching skills. Employee turnover can improve career development opportunities and coaching skills (Kim et al., 2013). Kandampully et al. (2014) noted that further developing the chances given to employees may include both personal employee development plans and management coaching. According to Kandampully et al. (2014), counting on the assignments that management provides to the team, allowing employees to obtain fundamental skills could benefit the company.

Managing Priorities in Small Businesses

Frese et al. (2016) reported that personal initiative is vital for business owners' success. The results of this study could include training on initiative-taking, a self-starting approach to planning, innovation, time management, goal setting, and the ability to

overcome barriers (Frese et al., 2016). At the end of observations, Frese et al. (2016) mentioned that the intervention study led to positive changes occurring after training on all four of Kirkpatrick's evaluation levels. Kirkpatrick's evaluations include reaction, learning, behavior-based, and success measures (Frese et al., 2016).

The Expectations of Daycare Centers

Daycare centers should provide children with positive development, safe and healthy environments, and developmentally appropriate stimulation with opportunities to gain experience (Vermeer et al., 2016). Childcare facilities are businesses that refer to the narrow range of environmental features and interactions in nonparental care and educational settings while linked to child development (Vermeer et al., 2016).

Falenchuk et al. (2017) contended that the education of childcare teachers is a primary factor in the quality of the child-care center. Daycare providers that interact positively with parents usually contribute to the children's well-being and success of the business (Barnes et al., 2016). Besides, a daycare provider that uses diverse ways to communicate can contribute to building daycare centers on a firm foundation (Barnes et al., 2016).

Maintaining Sustainability in Daycare Centers

At times, it may be difficult for daycare centers to remain sustainable due to increased stress, pay structure, limited career development opportunities, and a lack of professionalism (Cumming et al., 2015). These issues have a significant impact on determining whether employees will remain in childcare facilities long-term (Cumming et al., 2015). Sustaining daycare teachers that lack motivation or do not have a passion for

children will not be the best fit for day-care centers (Cumming et al., 2015). Daycare center directors need to attract an adequate number of capable and qualified teachers (Cumming et al., 2015). Shallwani et al. (2018) found that childcare centers struggle with the quality of learning and hiring qualified employees.

Hiring High-Quality Employees

Managers that hire productive employees can also help decrease employee turnover in day-care centers. Leaders who are adamant about finding the right employees to complete work-related tasks are more likely to decrease employee turnover (Herbert, 2016). Leaders need to consider a potential employee's personality during the hiring process (Tladinyane & van der Merwe, 2016; Unal & Turgut, 2015). In certain cases, leaders may allow potential employees the opportunity to shadow workers to see if the job candidate is a good fit for the company (Wells & Bravender, 2016). Leaders may even invite employees to participate in the interview process to help determine if the potential employee would be the best selection for the position (Zwillinger, 2017).

When hiring qualified employees, leaders need to interact with new employees closely to enhance the hiring process. Keisling and Laning (2016) interviewed 20 new employees to discuss how welcomed they felt in their organization. Keisling and Laning (2016) discovered that leaders, who emphasized to new employees the importance of company ethical practices as well as offering new employees' room to advance, could help organizations with improving retention.

Leadership Styles Affecting Employee Retention

Leaders are role models who can make ethical decisions and work with employees to prioritize and address company issues (Prabhakar & Yaseen, 2016). Daft (2014) noted that being a good leader also involves having the ability to follow and set examples for others. In contrast, Northouse (2017) defined leadership skills as traits, which means that everyone has certain qualities that influence the way he or she leads. Anderson and Sun (2017) studied the impact of leadership styles on the patterns of attitudes and behaviors of managers.

Authentic Style

Moore (2017) noted that trustworthy leaders are moral, inclusive, transparent, and original. Authentic leaders provide a healthy work environment by engaging teams and demonstrating genuineness (Moore, 2017). Authentic leaders can influence, directly or indirectly, employees' attitudes, and employee behavior (Semedo et al., 2017). Zehir and Narcikara (2016) theorized that authentic leadership is a suitable leadership model in resilient organizations with high levels of organizational efficiency. According to Stander et al. (2015), leaders within organizations should develop more elevated levels of optimism and trust in the company to increase the levels of work engagement. According to the genuine leadership theory, leaders' and followers' personal histories influence authenticity (Hinojosa et al., 2014).

Authoritarian Style

Pyc et al. (2017) expressed that authoritarian leader are abusive supervisors who cause adverse outcomes for employees. Autocratic leaders may cause exhaustion,

physical symptoms, and job dissatisfaction, as well as increase the intention for employees to quit (Pyc et al., 2017). Daycare centers with authoritarian leaders may cause turnover rates to increase. Ertureten et al. (2013) reported that path analysis indicates authoritarian leadership increased *mobbing* which is bullying and abusive behavior by employers in the workplace (Qureshi et al., 2015). Daycare centers should try to avoid mobbing to improve organizational turnover rates (Ertureten et al., 2013). A negative relationship exists between authoritarian leadership and subordinates concerning work engagement and small business leaders should not apply this leadership style because business leaders cannot become and remain successful without work engagement (Shu, 2015).

Bureaucratic Style

Chartprasert (1993) contended that bureaucratic leaders tend to follow normative rules, which adhere to lines of authority. Milosevic and Bass (2014) noted that bureaucratic leaders are essential to business leaders looking for consistency and efficiency. Moreover, researchers believe that bureaucratic leaders are not creative and do not care to reflect on diverse ideas from team members (Stacher, 2011). Bureaucratic leaders focus on administrative structures that are fixed official duties under a hierarchy of authority, which dictate a system of rules for managers and the decision-making process (Bauer & Ege, 2016). Matte (2017) noted that bureaucratic leaders should pay more attention to what is happening to group factors and choose an organizational structure that helps to reduce risky decisions. Lockwood (2017) reported that bureaucratic leadership skills take time to develop, and bureaucratic leaders often work at larger

companies where decision-making is a top priority. Smaller businesses may benefit from bureaucracy because the leadership skills include a focus on the job at hand, and such leaders usually must sign off on final decisions (Lockwood, 2017). Bureaucratic leaders often attain positions because of their ability to follow organizational rules and expect followers to do the same (Lockwood, 2017).

Charismatic Style

Charismatic leaders influence skill acquisition by boosting positive effects (Towler et al., 2014). Junquera and del Brío (2017) indicated that charismatic leadership leads to an intensive, creative, and eco-efficient organization. Wilderom et al. (2012) noted that charismatic leaders are emotionally intelligent and can motivate a team to achieve short- and long-term goals. Most charismatic leaders have compelling visions, confidence, and energy that can inspire employees (Dionne et al., 2012). However, charismatic leaders should be treated with skepticism, even caution, to temper any negative impacts on followers within the organization (Nisbett & Walmsley, 2016).

Laissez-Faire Style

Tremblay and Gibson (2016) explained that laissez-faire leaders are less supportive, show signs of aggression, and lack humor. Laissez-faire leaders make psychological job demands and tend to focus on job safety (Sandhåland et al., 2017). This leadership style may not be helpful when trying to determine why employees decide to leave small businesses. Small business leaders need more supportive leaders. Deriu (2012) contended that laissez-faire leaders might be ineffective because they leave the leadership up to the team and are typically unavailable when the team needs them.

Paternalistic Style

Chen et al. (2014) explained that paternalistic leaders have a positive relationship with in-role and extra-role performance. However, authoritarian paternalistic leadership has a negative correlation with subordinate performance. Paternalistic leaders who are also authoritarian are unhealthy to businesses. Cheng et al. (2014) argued that paternalistic leadership is typically a dominant leadership style. Paternalistic managers have elements of authoritarian, benevolent, and moral character leadership skills. However, there is still a need to investigate and obtain more knowledge concerning paternalistic leaders within mainstream leadership studies (Cheng et al., 2014).

Servant Style

Servant leaders are typically more acceptable than authoritarian leaders and servant leaders are often more effective than authoritarian leaders because of making better use of their power (Zhang et al., 2012). Palumbo (2016) contended that servant leadership could sometimes constrain rather than empower followers, which may discourage organizational commitment. Neubert et al. (2016) explained that servant leaders have relationships based on critical employee and corporate criteria. Researchers have studied servant leaders all over the world and individuals, teams, and related organizational issues (Coetzer et al., 2017). Lemoine et al. (2016) theorized that servant leadership affects two characteristics of followers, which are prosocial motivation and psychological capital. Lemoine et al. (2016) determined that the focus of servant leadership is stakeholder concern, follower development, and empowerment.

Transformational Leadership

Wang et al. (2017) noted that transformational leaders can facilitate employees' adaptability and proactivity. Wang et al. (2017) predicted that transformational leadership would stimulate employee job development by (a) seeking resources, (b) seeking challenges, and (c) reducing demands. Wang et al. (2017) contended that transformational leadership makes a difference in employees' decisions to leave a company. Transformational leadership directly mitigates employee turnover by cultivating a collaborative culture (Sun & Wang, 2016). Chen and Wu (2017) indicated that managers should recruit more transformational leaders to decrease turnover rates.

Transformational leadership fosters employees' affective and normative commitment, which can decrease an organization's retention rates. Dong et al. (2017) found that transformational leadership has a positive indirect effect on employees being creative and on skill development. Transformational leaders have a significant positive and direct impact on how managers perform as well as how well these leaders retain employees in small businesses (Nguyen et al., 2017). Triana et al. (2017) noted that transformational leaders collaborate with their teams to determine what kind of changes are needed. Diebig et al. (2017) explained that transformational leaders' behaviors depend on how well employees can manage levels of stress, and stress plays a significant role in an employee's decision to leave a company. Transformation can be appealing to the individual doing the conversion (Tourish, 2013). However, Tourish (2013) reported that the flaws of the transformational leadership style can stem from these leaders who focus

on giving power to employees, and who may see their primary mission as transforming others.

Transactional Style

Junquera and del Brío (2017) explained that a transactional leadership style might cause adverse effects on employee innovation. Transactional leadership includes characteristics of transformational leadership, which can lead to transactional leaders producing positive results (Junquera & del Brío, 2017). Caillier and Sa (2017) contended that transactional leaders have a positive effect on employees' behaviors in smaller establishments.

Organizational Change

Anderson (2016) indicated that organizational change is a necessary strategy because organizational change distinguishes the characteristics of successful organizations. Perkins et al. (2017) noted that current ideas are necessary for day-care centers to survive and grow. Kuusela et al. (2016) contended that decreasing financial resources from substantial performance shortfalls might affect employees' attitudes toward organizational change. Zhao et al. (2016) noted that new leaders might influence employees' attitudes and behaviors during organizational change could cause employees to become resistant to the change. Sanyal et al. (2017) indicated that to attract and retain employees the human resources department may have to emphasize strategic and innovative practices.

The Great Resignation

During the COVID-19 pandemic, millions of people experienced job instability and resigned from their jobs (Coech & Hiltner, 2022). As the pandemic cases continued to rise, more than 22 million people either lost their jobs or resigned. According to Coech and Hiltner (2022), the pandemic left Americans scrambling to manage their businesses, schools, and daycare centers. Daycares are critical to getting the economy back to normal (Brooks et al., 2020).

Shortly after the COVID-19 outbreak, mandatory stay-at-home orders were put in place around the world except for employers or employees that were deemed as essential workers (Petts et al., 2021). Employees who remained employed during the pandemic suffered from their hours being reduced (Petts et al., 2021). Petts et al. (2021), shared that a poll was conducted and 13% of employees' hours were reduced due to the pandemic. The poll indicated that parents with young children were most affected by the shutdown.

The pandemic impacted daycare centers around the world. Bassok et al. (2021) reported that 370,000 daycare teachers resigned from the childcare workforce due to the pandemic, lack of safety precautions, and low pay. These turnover challenges meant that fewer children were served and parents were unable to return to work because of unreliable childcare (Bassok et al., 2021). School closures due to COVID-19 have shed light on social and economic issues concerning virtually learning, and parents having access to childcare (Mustafa, 2020). According to Mustafa (2020), daycare centers needed to continue to operate, absorb the impact of public-school closures, and continue to serve children with special needs.

In April and May of 2021, the COVID-19 numbers were decreasing but 7.6 million employees still decided to quit their job and this became known as “the great resignation” began (Hirsch, 2021). Businesses large and small were having a tough time retaining employees, which forced them to adjust their offerings because they could not hire enough staff immediately to keep up (Hirsch, 2021). Sheather and Slattery (2021) shared that most employees were not on the radar in the business, they worked hard to meet and exceed the company’s expectations, they were burned out, and quietly resigned from the job, unnoticed by the system. Researchers believe that employers need to implement training in stress management, self-care, effective communication skills, and mindfulness to decrease the great resignation (Sheather & Slattery, 2021). Most businesses reported that they felt overwhelmed, overworked, underpaid, and unappreciated which caused them to put in their resignations (Avitzur, 2021).

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that 4.6 million employees quit their jobs in September and 4.3 million in October, corresponding to 3.1 and 2.9% in the workplace (Hall, 2022). According to Hall (2022), the great resignation was triggered when the government increased unemployment benefits. Unemployed employees were receiving Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation of \$600 weekly (Ganong et al., 2020). Between April and July 2020, 76% of employees were eligible to receive unemployment benefits and their statutory replacement rates were above 100%, which meant they were eligible to receive compensation that exceeded their lost wages (Ganong et al., 2020). Conducting my research during the great recession heightened the

importance to investigate strategies that align childcare services with family care policies to reduce the risk of inequalities in childcare settings,

Transition

In Section 1, I included the foundation of the study, the background of the problem, the problem, and the purpose statement. The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate two day-care centers that have successfully mitigated turnover rates in north central Florida and have retained their employees for at least 5 years. Section 1 also included the research question and derivative interview questions, an explanation of the conceptual framework, operational definitions, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations. In Section 1, I also addressed the significance of the study, how the study's results may contribute to business practice and positive social change. Section 1 concluded with a comprehensive review of the related literature focusing on the proposed conceptual framework of Herzberg and Maslow. Section 2 includes a restatement of the proposed study's purpose and a description of the role of the researcher, the participants, and the rationale for choosing the qualitative method and a multiple case design. Section 2 also includes discussions on the population, sampling, and participant selection. Also included are several types of strategies I used to collect my data. Section 3 includes an overview of the study, a presentation of the findings, applications to professional practice, implications for social change, and recommendations for further study. Section 3 is concluded with my reflections on planning, conducting, and completing the study within the Doctoral Business Administration program.

Section 2: The Project

The focus for this qualitative multiple case study was to research the strategies day-care center directors use to retain employees. This section includes a restatement of the purpose statement followed by a discussion of the role of the researcher, participants, research and method design, and population and sampling. In addition, this section includes details on ethical considerations, the data collection instruments and process, data organization technique, and data analysis process. In the final subsections, I address the reliability and validity of the research before concluding the section.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies that daycare center directors use to retain employees. The case population was two day-care center directors and four daycare leaders of centers in north central Florida who had retained their employees for at least 5 years. The study findings have implications for positive social change because daycare centers that have experienced profit loss due to employee turnover can also consider implementing strategies to increase employee retention, which could help financially address social issues, such as poverty in communities, and enable parents to feel comfortable about working outside their homes.

Role of the Researcher

A qualitative researcher's purpose is to function as the primary research instrument for data collection as well as to serve as the mediator of evidence by using multiple types and sources of data (Yilmaz, 2013; Yin, 2018). A researcher influences the connection between the facts and values of a study (Ritchie et al., 2013). During

qualitative research, researchers and participants should understand their roles, the kinds of data the researcher plans to collect, and the reason for the investigation and analysis (Berry, 2016). Qualitative researchers often use interviews to obtain data (Ritchie et al., 2013). I used the interview protocol (see Appendix D) because it may have increased the quality of data obtained from my research interviews, as recommended by Castillo-Montoya (2016). My role as the researcher was to select the participants, conduct the interviews, organize the data, and interpret the results. During this process, I ensured that the participants' information always remained safe and confidential. To ensure accuracy, I used member checking because it allowed the participants to validate their interview responses, leading to credible results (see Birt et al., 2016). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I did not conduct face-to-face interviews since this type of research was not considered an essential activity. Instead, I ethically carried out video conferencing and phone interviews.

I have worked in the daycare industry in the past, but I did not select participants with whom I have had a professional relationship. I did not interview any directors with whom I have been affiliated in the past. Participants were selected from various locations and areas to avoid potential bias. To protect the participants in this study and mitigate potential bias, I used the guidelines outlined in *The Belmont Report* (see U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 1979). Before beginning interviews and collecting archival data, I obtained signed documents from each participant stating that they were aware of the study's purpose, understood their role as participants, and willing to participate in the study.

Participants

Participants had to meet two eligibility criteria: (a) be a leader at a daycare center and (b) had to have successful experience retaining employees for at least 5 years. The six participants comprised the directors of D1 and D2 (codes established to protect the identity of each day-care center) and two day-care leaders each from D1 and D2. Identifying participants who have experience with the phenomenon is a requirement in case studies (Yin, 2018). To identify and gain access to the participants, I received permission from the owners of the daycare centers under study.

Purposeful sampling was a suitable approach for selecting participants for this study. Researchers should use a persistent sampling strategy to select participants based on their ability to answer the research question most effectively (Karanja, 2017). According to Emerson (2015), researchers can build trust and a working relationship with participants through emails and follow-up phone calls. To establish a working relationship with the participants, I introduced myself by sending out letters to each of the participants informing them of how the interview process would take place as well as providing them an overview of this study, the selection process, and how the results would be displayed upon completion of the study. I also informed the participants that if they had any questions about the interview process, they could contact me via email or phone.

Research Method and Design

Research Method

The three types of research methods available to researchers are quantitative, qualitative, and mixed (Venkatesh et al., 2013). I employed the qualitative method in this study. Qualitative researchers explore topics using open-ended questions (Katz, 2015). Contrarily, quantitative research includes statistics, numerical data, and hypotheses for testing purposes (Simon & Goes, 2018). Quantitative researchers seek answers to test hypotheses using scientific and statistical procedures (Davies & Hughes, 2014). I did not test any hypotheses; therefore, the quantitative method was inappropriate for this study. I did not use the mixed-methods approach because the qualitative method alone was sufficient to answer the research question.

Research Design

Qualitative researchers have the option to choose from a variety of research designs, such as phenomenology, narrative studies, ethnography, and case studies. I chose the case study design for this study on the strategies that day-care center directors use to retain workers because this design is suitable for addressing *what*, *how*, or *why* questions. Researchers conduct case studies to investigate a contemporary phenomenon (i.e., the case) in a real-world setting (Yin, 2014). Using the case study design involves assumptions (Thomas, 2015). For example, assuming that the participants will answer the interview questions honestly and candidly (Yin, 2018). The principal types of case study design are single and multiple case studies (Yin, 2018). Since this study involved interviewing the directors of multiple childcare centers to attempt to identify the

strategies used to retain workers, I chose a multiple case study design. According to Yin (2018), multiple cases provide a researcher with an opportunity to ascertain whether the assumptions regarding a business problem are correct by comparing findings from cases associated with the same phenomenon.

Ethnography, phenomenology, and narrative inquiries were other qualitative designs considered for this study. Ethnographic researchers study an organization's culture and activities over an extended period (Crandall et al., 2016), which was not aligned with this study's purpose. Researchers conduct phenomenological studies to understand the personal meanings of participants' experiences with a unique phenomenon (Bowden & Galindo-Gonzalez, 2015). This design was not suitable for this study's purpose either. Narrative inquiry is a way of thinking about, studying, and aims to understand knowledge gained from individuals' personal experience (Clandinin et al., 2017). The purpose of narrative inquiry is to reveal the meanings of the individuals' experiences through storytelling, which was not the intent of this study. Ethnographic, phenomenological, and narrative designs did not align with the focus of this study, so I did not select them. Instead, I employed a qualitative multiple-case design that was appropriate to explore strategies daycare center directors use to retain employees.

The origination of the data saturation process is based in grounded theory (Saunders et al., 2018). Data saturation refers to the point where no new themes emerge from interviews (Coenen et al., 2012). I followed Francis et al.'s (2010) accepted method of achieving data saturation by: reviewing the transcripts from the interviews and the notes I took in my reflexive journal, writing out the interview questions and then

combining the interview data into a few sentences, and using member checking to provide the participants with a copy of the combined interview data so they could verify it and make any necessary corrections. To apply the data saturation method, I initially selected 2 directors for the initial analysis. I repeated the second step, which involved two more interviews with other directors and no new themes emerged.

Population and Sampling

The population for this qualitative multiple qualitative case study included daycare center directors and leaders in north central Florida. I selected participants using purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling consists of recruiting participants who can answer the research questions effectively and meet the sampling criteria (Karanja, 2017). The inclusion criteria for participants were (a) being a director of a daycare center, (b) being responsible for implementing strategies to retain workers, and (c) success in retaining employees. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I did not conduct face-to-face interviews since this type of research was not considered an essential activity. Instead, I ethically carried out video conferencing and, when needed, phone interviews.

The sample size for this study was 2 childcare center directors and 4 daycare leaders. According to Yin (2018), a sample of this size is usually sufficient for a case study. I purposefully selected the participants from daycare centers that had been successful in retaining employees over the past 5 years.

Ethical Research

Respecting the privacy and protecting the rights of human participants are essential principles of research ethics while conducting interviews (Levitt et al., 2017).

Before participant selection, I provided potential participants with information regarding the study and the role of participants as well as required each participant be at least 18 years old. After I received Walden University Institutional Review Board approval (Approval No. 07-06-21-0482178), I thoroughly explained the entire research process to potential participants to give them a better understanding of the study and help them to decide whether to participate in it. To participate in this study, each voluntary participant had to sign a consent form (see Appendix A). Researchers often send consent forms electronically because this is an efficient and convenient method for both the researcher and potential participants (Coughlin, 2015). I sent , the potential participants the consent forms electronically. The consent document included an explanation of the purpose of the research, an overview of the strategies that will be used to protect their privacy for 5 years, and information concerning the research process. I also informed the participants that there would not be any compensation or incentives for participating in the study. Participants could withdraw from the study at any time by emailing me with no repercussions for withdrawal. However, no participant withdrew from the study.

Protecting the identities of the participants is a crucial part of the research process, because the participants identities must remain confidential at all times. I removed all sensitive or identifying information from the reporting of the data, such as an organization's name or any information that would identify the participants. I used the codes of D1, D2, P1, P2, P3, and P4 to disguise the names of the directors, organizations, and the participants. I secured all the consent forms and case study information on my

password-protected flash drive as well as locked it in my safe where it will be kept for 5 years. After 5 years, I will permanently destroy all data related to the study.

Data Collection Instruments

Qualitative researchers serve as the primary data collection instrument by conducting interviews with and observing the study participants (Burnham et al., 2015). I was the primary data collection instrument for this study because I was directly involved with the research participants, conducting the interviews, observing their responses, and interpreting the data. Qualitative case studies require collecting a minimum of two types of data (Yin, 2018). In addition to semi structured interviews, I reviewed relevant documents from the participating organizations.

To reduce potential bias, I interviewed daycare center directors that I did not know before the study and used a reflective journal. Investigators can reduce bias by using a reflexive journal (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Ponterotto (2014) found that using a reflexive journal may build up a scholar's ability to maintain a reflexive viewpoint when it comes to the phenomenon under investigation. The reflective journal included details of what I did, thought, and felt while collecting and analyzing the data. Using a reflexive journal enabled me to express those beliefs and add depth to the collected data by describing my feelings and interpretations during the research. A reflective journal is the personal notes taken in the field based on the experience of the researcher to reflect on personal bias, which could affect the outcome of the research (Sangasubana, 2011). Jotting down valuable information and keeping records of my observations should have helped improve the objectivity of the data collection process. According to Lincoln and

Guba (1985), the reflexive journal process may assist in eliminating personal bias. However, investigators have established that in certain cases, achieving an objective detachment between a researcher's experiences and perceptions may be unattainable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yu, 2014). I also used bracketing to set aside various assumptions and beliefs about the phenomenon under investigation.

Qualitative researchers seek to gain access to the way participants think and feel as a means of gaining an understanding of how participants describe experiences (Sutton, & Austin, 2015). Following an interview protocol (see Appendix D), I conducted semi structured interviews in which I asked open-ended questions to elicit participants' responses and gather the strategies that they use to retain workers. The interview questions are in Appendix C. Lincoln and Guba (1985) determined semi structured interviewing is one of the approaches that may improve the credibility of studies. During the interview process, each participant was free to ask me to clarify questions about any interview question. In support of this decision, Tremblay and Gibson (2016) noted that it is ethical for the participants to have the ability to clarify the interview questions during studies.

I also used member checking to ensure data validity and reliability. Researchers use member checking to ensure that the information provided by the participant is accurate (Hudson et al., 2014). Member checking involves the process of checking with research participants to ensure the identified concepts and developing themes align with the participants' related experiences (Goldblatt et al., 2011; Simpson & Quigley, 2016). After completing the interviews, I contacted the participants to verify that my

interpretations of their responses to the interview questions and my summaries of the documents provided on employee retention strategies were accurate. I allowed the participants to review the interpretations to assure the validity of my interpretations of the interview data collected. The resulting summaries of the participants' responses and the company reports referring to the employee retention strategies enabled me to develop the key themes found in the study.

Data Collection Technique

Qualitative data collection methods are exploratory and concerned with gaining insights and understanding to answer the research questions (Cleary et al., 2014). Once I received Walden University Institutional Review Board approval to conduct the study, I started the interview process. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the interviews were held virtually. Each virtual interview took place in a secure and undisclosed location. According to Stuckey (2013), the interview process consists of ways to collect information for qualitative research to address a specific research question. With permission from the participants, I recorded each virtual interview. Interviews and document analysis of the related information on the organizations' web pages were used as the data collection sources. Furthermore, I employed member checking to confirm the emerging themes and inferences from the researchers' interpretations (see Brewer & Hunter, 1989). Birt et al. (2016) indicated that member checking can help researchers improve the accuracy, credibility, validity, and transferability of research studies. Member checking, also known as participant or respondent validation, is a technique for

exploring the reliability of results (Birt et al., 2016). I used member checking to verify the responses from each participant after the interviews.

The potential disadvantage of interviews may be getting participants to commit to participating in my interview. The pandemic caused issues because interview facilities were limiting contact or closed. An advantage of the interview collection technique was that I was able to conduct interviews using video conferencing.

Data Organization Technique

Organizing and documenting data collected from case studies enables providing proof of information as well as the researcher's analysis (Yin, 2018). As a means of identifying emerging themes, I used color-coding for each transcript. Both my reflective journal and a file of the organizations' archival documents were used to organize interview data. Researchers use reflective journals to evaluate separate ways of thinking to nurture the quality of learning (Rué et al., 2013). Francis et al. (2010) described a reflective journal as a steadily expanding document in which researchers record the reflections based on the findings. In addition, I also reviewed publicly available documents from a deep probe into the two daycare centers' webpages.

I organized my archival data into "*fonds*". A fond is designed to organize records of an organization or individual and is kept separately from other fonds to prevent the information from becoming disorganized (Dalhousie University Libraries, 2020). All data collected will remain secure throughout the study, and beyond the study's completion. The primary means for securing the data is using my locked laptop which requires a

passcode and then kept into a private file on my device for 5 years. After that period, the data will be permanently deleted.

Data Analysis

After completing the data collection and the organization of the study, I began the analysis portion. Data analysis is a systematic review of data elements and includes data interpretation to discover underlying meaning (Lewis, 2015; Parker, 2014; Ridder, 2017). Ridder (2017) described data analysis for a case study as the process of using multiple sources of data to provide answers to a research question.

I used Yin's (2018) 5-step method to analyze the data: (a) compiling the evidence, (b) disassembling the data, (c) reassembling the data, (d) interpreting the meaning of the data, and e) concluding the data. I also used my reflexive journal, the organization's web page, and interviews to triangulate the findings. After collecting and compiling the data, I transferred the data into Microsoft Word and manually disassemble, reassemble, and analyze the data to identify key themes as recommended by Yin (2018). I then transferred the data to NVivo software to assist with managing, coding interpreting and identifying the themes. NVivo is a software package used by investigators to explore items from the interviews to answer research questions (Trotter, 2012).

Qualitative researchers seek to detect and gain a better understanding of themes, patterns, concepts, and understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Analyzing data from a qualitative study typically requires an iterative data collection and analysis (Coughlin, 2015). This process assists with identifying and understanding patterns and themes from complex data (Zheng et al., 2015). After identifying and verifying the key

themes emerging from the data analysis, I compared, contrasted, and connected these themes with the conceptual framework and the literature review and with the expected outcomes from the composite conceptual framework lenses.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

Noble and Smith (2015) described tests quantitative researchers used to measure studies' validity and reliability but indicated qualitative researchers could not use the same processes that the quantitative researchers apply. Researchers consistently debate whether terms such as validity and reliability are appropriate for evaluating qualitative research (Noble & Smith, 2015). Research that can be repeated and have the corresponding results is considered dependable (Morse, 2015).

For qualitative studies, dependability is the analog of reliability in a quantitative study (Connelly, 2016; Yin, 2014). Dependability is the stability of findings over time (Connelly, 2016; Yin, 2018). Dependability can be established from a step-by-step process using an efficacious data collection method. I used an interview protocol (see Appendix D) to ensure data accuracy and dependability. Varpio et al. (2017) noted that member checking for establishing studies' credibility is traceable to Lincoln and Guba (1985), who claimed that member checking is the most crucial technique for establishing research findings credibility.

Silverman (2015) proposed five approaches to enhance the reliability of studies' results: (a) refutational analysis, the explanation of contradictions between individual studies ;(b) constant data comparison ; (c) validation of the data for input into a computer

system ;(d) review of any deviant cases for refining an analysis to account for a majority of cases ;and (e) the use of tables for presenting numbers for comparison with other numbers or summarized or define concepts, terms, or other details of a study (as cited in Leung, 2015). I applied Silverman's approach to assuring the reliability of this study's findings.

Validity

Validity in qualitative research refers to the appropriateness of tools, processes as well as the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings from the data (Leung, 2015). Blumstein (2017) explained that credibility is essential because the method enables other researchers to have confidence in the results. Transferability is based upon the judgement of the person who is making the decision (Baeroc, 2018). Transferability decisions are enabled by offering in-depth comprehension and significance of a phenomenon thereby helping the readers to understand how the findings might relate to their own experiences (Carminati, 2018). According to Yin (2018) transferability is also facilitated by data saturation. To enable others' determination of transferability, I provided a detailed description of the data collection processes and findings. I demonstrated credibility and trustworthiness through using member checking, assuring data saturation, methodological triangulation, and enabling confirmation. Confirmability is when other researchers can validate the research findings (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I verified confirmability by consistently rechecking the data my participants provided and, as necessary, I made any required changes, and I then verified data saturation.

Transition and Summary

Topics discussed in Section 2 included the role of the researcher, the participants, the research method and design, the population and sampling, and the process for assuring the study conformed with ethical research requirements. Within this section is an explanation of the use of the qualitative research method discussed in Section 2 to measure the strategies managers use to retain employees and different ways to collect and organize the data.

In Section 3, I will present the data and findings. Section 3 will include a discussion of the data analysis and the resulting implications regarding the day-care leaders' strategies to retain employees. Section 3 will also include a discussion of the application to professional practice, implications for social change, recommendations for future research and further action, reflections, and an overall summary and conclusion.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies that daycare center directors use to retain employees. The target population was 2 daycare center directors and 4 daycare leaders of 2 daycare centers in north central Florida who retained their employees for at least 5 years. I collected data for this study by validating and triangulating information from semi structured interviews, archival journal notes, and video conferencing. Furthermore, member checking was used to verify the interview findings. In the interviews, study participants explained strategies that daycare center directors use to retain employees. Section 3 includes the presentation of the findings, applications to professional practice, and implications for social change. In addition, Section 3 includes my recommendations for further research and reflections as well as and the conclusion of the study.

Presentation of the Findings

This qualitative single case study was designed to answer the following research question: What strategies do daycare centers use to reduce employee turnover and achieve sustainability? To answer this question, I conducted semi structured interviews virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There were 6 open-ended interview questions asked of each participant. To protect the privacy of the participants, I identified each center's director and participant with codes, such as D1 and D2, P1, P2, etc. I identified four themes from the data collected from the interviews and the review of company documents: (a) effective hygiene factors, such as physical work environment, job

security, and compensation; (b) building relationships with employees; (c) setting goals and objectives; and (d) strategies used to ensure job satisfaction.

Theme 1: Identifying and Providing Effective Hygiene and Motivation Factors

The first theme that emerged from data analysis was the need to identify effective hygiene factors, such as work environment and job security. P2 from D1 shared that creating a comfortable work environment, offering job security, and compensation are some of their company's strategies that help them to decrease employee turnover. All 6 participants indicated that effectively motivating their employees daily aligns with how they retain their employees. P1 from D1 stated, "It is important to find effective ways to motivate employees because when employees are dissatisfied, he or she tends to leave the job." P2 from D1 shared, "That setting measurable goals is one of their successful strategies." P3 from D1 mentioned, "That employee flexibility and employee's ability to advance have decreased employee turnover." P1 from D2 indicated, "That effective training and development have helped them retain their employees." P2 from D2 added, "That pay raises, compensation, and competitive benefits are some of their most effective strategies to prevent high turnover rates in their daycare center." P3 from D1 shared, "That allowing employees to share their ideas and creativity plays a key role in employee retention."

The study findings support the those found in the peer-reviewed literature. Researchers stated that strategies, including, better pay, career advancement, scheduling flexibility, training and development, and the freedom of allowing employees to be creative, may reduce employee turnover (Ndonye & Genga, 2019).

In contrast to hygiene factors, effective motivation strategies may be viewed as enhancing employee engagement, satisfaction, commitment, and performance in organizations (De Vito et al., 2018). Motivational strategies in businesses can enhance levels of productivity (Omilani & Akintolu, 2017). P1 from D1 noted, “Being treated fairly at work is a motivational factor.” P2 from D2 said, “Employees want to enjoy good relationships with their coworkers, which is very motivating.” P3 from D2 added, “Recognition helps employees know that the organization values them and their contributions to the overall success.” The findings of this study also supported aspects of the conceptual framework; Herzberg’s (2003) motivation theory, to motivate employees by identifying and satisfying their personal needs. P2 from D3 noted, “Personal recognition strengthens the bond between the organization and employee being recognized.” Herzberg’s motivation theory helps explain the relationships between employees’ job satisfaction or dissatisfaction at the workplace (Holston-Okae & Mushi, 2018). Herzberg posited that when employees’ job satisfaction is high, job dissatisfaction begins to diminish (Holston-Okae & Mushi, 2018). These findings tie in the existing literature to the effectiveness of business practice because daycare leaders who make employee satisfaction a top priority are more likely to decrease employee turnover (Ali & Anwar, 2021). Ali and Anwar (2021) posited that leaders who focus on productivity, responsiveness, quality, and a recognition service are more likely to decrease employee turnover.

Theme 2: Building Relationships With Employees

The leaders at both daycare centers acknowledged the importance of building relationships with their employees. Leaders' interactions with their employees have an impact on the way employees perform (Shebaili & Charni, 2021). One of the biggest strengths in businesses is the relationship and communication development between leaders and employees (Ali & Anwar, 2021). All 6 participants mentioned that building relationships with their employees have increased their employees' satisfaction and decreased employee turnover in their daycare centers.

Participants mentioned how critical it is for leaders to build relationships with their teams. P2 from D1 said that having a strong bond with employees decreased the employee turnover rate by 20%. P1 and P2 from D2 said, "We have implemented many strategies to building a closer relationship with our employees; for example, at least once a month we have meetings so that everyone can get to know one another and address any concerns." P1 from D1 indicated how challenging it has been in the past for their leaders to connect with their employees, but they overcame this issue by conducting surveys and asking employees for suggestions on ways their management team can be improved and help understand their own personal tendencies. Providing a way for staff to share what is bothering them and finding ways to improve work conditions allows daycare centers to address employee concerns and increase the chances of retention. P3 from D2 added, "the personality tests we administered have been helpful concerning building relationships with our employees." P1 and P3 from D1 shared, "We make it our business to interact with our employees as much as possible and provide opportunities for them to share in

making the centers better. We have not had any employee turnovers over the last 5 years.” These findings align with the literature review in those leaders establishing quality relationships with employees has a positive impact on employees’ behavior and decision to stay with a company (see Szostek, 2019). The findings of the current study also support the conceptual framework because use of the hygiene-motivational theory leads to employee job satisfaction and decreases employee turnover (see Alshmemri et al., 2017).

Daycare leaders implemented different motivational strategies to decrease employee turnover and remain sustainable by finding different ways to develop relationships with their employees. P1 from D1 said that conducting the personality test has helped improve employer-employee relationships. P3 from D2 added that meetings are helpful too because leaders and the employees can address their issues and concerns. Both of these daycare leaders agreed that most issues are usually resolved in meetings and that they are critical to building a close relationship with their teams. The daycare centers’ webpages confirmed that one of the goals of the organizations was to build a family atmosphere at the childcare centers.

Theme 3: Setting Goals and Objectives

Goals and objectives that are chosen wisely can keep businesses on the right path and up and running (Singh & Singh, 2021). Leaders who focus more on setting goals and objectives are more likely to position their business for long-term success (Singh & Singh, 2021). Both daycare directors shared that setting goals and objectives for their employees have helped their employees become more productive and has decreased

employee turnover. P1 and P2 from D1 shared that their employees set monthly goals and objectives and then give themselves a certain timeframe to accomplish the goals. P2 and P3 from D2 said, “Setting goals and objectives is one of our most important strategies in their organization.” P3 from D1 and P3 from D2 both agreed that setting attainable goals for their employees has helped employees reach their goals. P1 and P2 from D2 added, “We evaluate our employees once a month to make sure they are meeting their objectives and goals.” In contrast, P2 from D1 shared, “That setting measurable goals is one of their successful strategies.”

Daycare leaders also challenged the employees to accomplish their goals and objectives over 2 weeks instead of monthly. P1 from D2 said, “The employees who accepted the challenge are the employees that remain with our company for an extended period.” P2 and P3 from D2 added that employees who accepted the challenge are usually the employees who advance to a higher level within the company. P1 and P2 from D1 said, “Over the past couple of months, we have challenged and awarded our employees for completing their Department of Children and Family courses promptly.” P3 from D1 shared, “The [Department of Children and Family] courses are one of the most important goals for our teachers to accomplish because it determines how long will they remain employed with our company.” In addition, P1 said, “That celebrating when employees do magnificent work is also an effective motivational strategy.” P2 from D1 said, “Our daycare center monitors different motivational strategies to determine which motivational strategy is the most effective.” The 6 participants agreed that setting goals and objectives have had a positive impact on their organizations.

This finding confirmed those in the existing research from the literature review. Varma (2017) said that employees who are motivated and satisfied will have committed approaches towards the company's goals and objectives. Employee satisfaction has brought stability to organizations, including defining clear goals and objectives that helped employees' growth and development within the company (Reidhead, 2021). Leaders who demonstrate the ability to work well with others, resolve conflicts, and are knowledgeable have the skills and abilities required to help employees achieve their objectives and goals (Butera & Cruz, 2017). The strategy of offering ethical development opportunities to strengthen and assist employees with being productive, achieving their goals, and advancing in the day-care centers aligns with the conceptual framework because leaders investing in the team's professional development was one of the ways to determine the outlook of how employees viewed the daycare centers' objectives and goals.

Theme 4: Strategies Used to Ensure Job Satisfaction

Participants shared those employees being satisfied with their jobs is one of their main focuses as leaders. P1 and P3 from D1 said, "Every day we are thinking of creative ways to keep our employees engaged and satisfied with their jobs". P2 from D1 added that sometimes it becomes difficult trying to produce different strategies to keep their employees satisfied, but they put forth effort because their employees are important to their daycare center. Alam and Asim (2019) said that the contributors to job satisfaction are pay, the work itself, management, the possibilities of promotion, the team, and working conditions. P2 and P3 from D2 explained that the leadership goals in their day-

care center are to make sure that their employees' challenging work does not go unnoticed, so their management team evaluates their employees' work performance monthly to determine pay raises and eligibility to advance within the company. P1 from D2 described how important it is for their leaders to ensure that the work environment is safe and comfortable.

Pandey and Asthana (2017) posited that job satisfaction is how employees feel about their jobs. The level of job satisfaction depends on the personality and character of the employee (Pandey & Asthana, 2017). According to Alshmemri et al. (2017), the Herzberg motivation theory posits that job satisfaction involves the individual's need for self-growth and self-actualization. P1 and P3 from D2 explained how their employees are evaluated and awarded monthly for their challenging work. P2 and P3 from D1 emphasized how the employee satisfaction surveys have helped their daycare center meet and exceed their employees' needs. P1, P2, and P3 from D1 also said how the employee satisfaction survey has helped management to determine how satisfied their employees are with their job. P2 from D2 added that their daycare center's rewards, compensation, and recognition program are strategies they use to retain and keep their employees satisfied. These findings supported the key themes from the literature review because job satisfaction can be maintained when organizations consider treating employees with respect as well as providing a comfortable work environment, effective leadership, and monetary benefits (see Birbirsa & Lakew, 2020). The findings supported the conceptual framework of the hygiene motivational theory because the theory is a means for

understanding employees' motivation levels, job satisfaction, and dissatisfaction (see Kushta, 2017).

Applications to Professional Practice

The specific business problem for this study was that some daycare center directors lack effective strategies for retaining employees. The findings of this study include the strategies the participating day-care owners used to retain employees. These findings are relevant to daycare centers remaining sustainable and reducing employee turnover.

Based upon the participants' answers to the interview questions and an evaluation of the companies' webpages, I discovered that implementing motivational strategies, building an employer-employee relationship, and setting attainable goals and objectives are important strategies for leaders to implement to reduce employee turnover. Daycare leaders may encourage employer-employee relationships to help decrease employee turnover. One of the most important objectives of the employer-employee relationship is to establish and encourage friendly relationships between the leaders and team members to achieve the organization's goals (Akpan, 2021). The current study findings also indicated that the selection and engagement of workers and the power to control employees' behavior may be strategies that leaders implement in their daycare centers. According to Akpan (2021), the key elements of effective employee management include trust, effective communication, commitment, and teamwork.

Implications for Social Change

The implications for social change consist of decreasing employee turnover by encouraging leaders to use effective retention strategies to prevent knowledgeable employees from leaving to reduce recruitment and training costs (see Rombaut & Guerry, 2020). Effective management training and management styles have decreased employee turnover in organizations (Malek et al., 2018). The current study findings suggest that implementing motivational strategies, building employer-employee relationships, setting goals and objectives, and ensuring job satisfaction may help decrease employee turnover. Daycare centers, people in the community, and students who are struggling with meeting their goals may benefit from the strategies listed above because these strategies have assisted both study site daycare centers with reducing employee turnover and achieving sustainability. In addition, leaders motivating their employees, building relationships with their employees, setting attainable goals may help businesses around the world to build their organizations on a firmer foundation.

Recommendations for Action

Daycare directors should consider implementing effective employee relationship management principles as a strategy to improve employee turnover and business practices. The current study findings can benefit daycare leaders who are interested in being more effective leaders. Daycare directors should consider using the themes found in this study to decrease employee turnover to improve business practices so that their day-care centers can achieve sustainability. My four suggested steps for action are: (a) focus on offering a competitive benefits package ;(b) improve employer-employee

communication ; (c) prioritize promoting from within the company; and (d) recognize your employees for their hard work.

In addressing these recommendations management should respectively focus on competitive benefits packages, daycare leaders could affect this by creating benefits packages that would best suit their employees' needs. Benefit packages should be based on employees' experience and job performance. Managers should also compare their benefits packages with other organizations. The benefit should match the employee's salary. Implementing job assessments may help managers to determine what employees are eligible to receive benefits. Employees need to understand that, receiving employee benefits is a privilege and not required.

In addressing the second recommendation for improving employer-employee communication and relationships, leaders must recognize that communication is one of the keys to success. Leaders can implement effective communication by allowing their employees to express their feelings and ideas. Daycare leaders can encourage employees that they are open to any questions or concerns they may have. Most importantly, daycare leaders should create feasible and effective communication strategies as a guide for their employees to follow.

The third recommendation of prioritizing promoting within the company, promoting within your organization may allow current employees to advance and move up into a higher job position. Daycare management promoting current employees may help increase their productivity, and it may even save the organization time and money from avoiding turnover costs.

For the fourth recommendation of recognizing your employees for their hard work, managers need to understand employees are important assets to businesses. Recognizing your employees is always a plus in an organization. Daycare leaders can easily implement this strategy by, acknowledging their employees for their hard work. Leaders need to show their employees their work is appreciated. Leaders always want employees to feel like they are important to the organizations.

The participants in this study will be given copies concerning the findings of this study via email. I also plan to publish my dissertation to ProQuest. These results may be used at company and corporate meetings.

Recommendations for Further Research

I conducted this qualitative case study to research strategies daycare leaders used to reduce employee turnover and achieve sustainability. The study's findings can be beneficial to daycare owners and daycare leaders. I recommend that future research be conducted using different research methodologies to investigate the different strategies used to motivate daycare employees. Longitudinal and cross-sectional studies would ensure a larger sample size to provide a more comprehensive understanding of what motivates daycare workers to continue in their jobs.

The study participants I interviewed worked in daycare centers in north central Florida, who have retained their employees for 5 or more years. Scholars in the future can expand the geographical location to other daycare centers around the world. In addition, future researchers can expand their sample size to a larger number of participants.

I would recommend for future researchers follow my primary focus as well. For instance, they could continue to research strategies daycare leaders use to reduce employee turnover and achieve sustainability, to become more knowledgeable concerning retaining employees. Future researchers may also collect information from daycare management to determine strategies used to decrease employee turnover. Employees are one of the ways to collect data because they may help with validating information reported from daycare leaders and explore the reasons why employees decide to leave daycare centers.

Reflections

When I started the doctoral program, I did not realize how challenging this journey was going to be. All I could think of was how exciting it was going to be to have “Dr.” in front of my name. This process has been an emotional roller coaster for me because at one time I wanted to give up. After all, my personal life became chaotic. My chairperson, Dr. Simon, my children, and my husband were my inspirations to keep going. I decided that I was not going to let anybody, or anything get in my way of completing this program.

I have learned so much about how to conduct scholarly research. One of the first things I learned, was how to find peer-reviewed journals with digital object identifiers which I have never heard of until I began this program. In addition, I learned how to abbreviate references with more than one author throughout my study. Time has not been on my side since I started this program. However, I learned how to effectively manage my time to reach the finish line.

Researchers are going to have their personal biases and preconceived ideas and values. To avoid becoming biased, I interviewed daycare centers who I have never been affiliated with. In addition, I never let my thoughts or opinions get in the way of conducting my research. Most importantly, I used member checking to validate my participants' responses. The entire doctoral journey has been challenging and required rigorous academic work, commitment, and a support system. I found the whole journey interesting.

Conducting interviews was my favorite part of the study. During the interviewing process, I learned a lot about the highs, lows, and how both daycare directors overcame employee turnover and remained sustainability for over 5 years. I enjoyed my interviewees because they were raw and honest about areas that need to be improved in their daycare centers. My participants brought excitement to my study, and they made me feel comfortable throughout the entire interviewing process. Most importantly, my participants made the interview process easy, and they were always available when I had other questions that may have been unclear during the interview process.

My participants shed light on the great resignation. Each participant agreed that the pandemic has taken a toll on their daycare centers and acknowledged that turnover rates were higher than usual in other daycare facilities. Participant 1 from D1 shared those three daycare workers in the area that resigned at the same time due to being overwhelmed with the pandemic. These daycare centers were forced to close their businesses for a month until the health department came out to determine if it was safe and sanitized properly before the children returned.

Participant 1 from D1 had to close the facility for 1 week because some of their children and 2 teachers tested positive for COVID-19. Participant 2 from (D1) added that the pandemic has put a strain on their daycare center and they have lost thousands of dollars due to the mandatory stay-at-home order. Participant 3 from (D2) implied that it has been a struggle for them to retain employees and maintain sustainability since the spread of COVID-19. The directors from both daycares said that they have had to offer competitive incentive packages to retain employees because some of their employees expressed concern about working in the childcare field due to the fear of contracting COVID-19.

This was an educational, emotional, and exciting journey all at the same time. I do not have any regrets concerning my study. My topic was interesting and there was never a dull moment. I changed my topic a few times so that it would best fit my study. However, the literature review was most challenging for me, but I managed to gather important information to determine ways daycare directors can reduce employee turnover and achieve sustainability. I plan to share this information with my management team, employees, and other organization that are struggling with high employee turnover rates.

Conclusion

Retaining employees and achieving sustainability in daycare centers can be challenging (Kim et al., 2020). The purpose of this qualitative study was to answer the research question What strategies do daycare center directors use to retain employees? 6 daycare leaders in north central Florida, who have retained employees for 5 years or more participated in my interview to answer this research question. I also collected my data by

using the company's public records and reflective journals. Four themes emerged following the data collection: (a) effective hygiene factors such as physical work environment, job security, and compensation; (b) building relationships with employees; (c) setting goals and objectives; and (d) strategies used to ensure job satisfaction. These findings identified the strategies daycare leaders have used to retain employees and how they achieved sustainability.

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Appendix: Interview Protocol

The guiding research question for the study is as follows: What strategies do daycare-center directors use to retain employees? The following interview protocol contains the questions used to explore the central research question.

Interview Protocol	
What I will do	What I will say—script
<p>Introduce the interview and set the stage.</p>	<p>Good morning or afternoon</p> <p>I want to first thank you for taking the time to participate in this research study. The purpose of this qualitative study is to research “Strategies Day-care Centers Leaders Use to Reduce Employee Turnover and Maintain Sustainability.” The outcome may produce an understanding of how day-care leaders strategize to decrease employee turnover. As the researcher, I wanted to assure you that the information provided will be kept confidential as indicated in your signed consent form.</p> <p>The qualitative research data are collected using interviews to understand the experiences and processes from the perception of the participant.</p> <p>These questions are presented openly to encourage you to answer as openly as possible.</p>

	<p>The interview will last approximately 30 to 60 minutes with an additional 20 minutes at an established date to review the synthesized data captured during the initial interview.</p> <p>Before we proceed are there any questions concerning the intent of this study or anything that I have stated?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch for non-verbal queues • Paraphrase as needed • Ask follow-up probing questions to get more in-depth 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What strategies do you use to motivate your employees?
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. How do you engage your employees in setting goals and objectives for your center?
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. What are some of the strategies you may use to decrease employee turnover in the future?
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. What types of training techniques and career development are available to your employees?
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. What strategies do you use to communicate relevant information to your employees? 6. What other strategies do you use to retain

	employees that we have not yet discussed?
	7. What other insights would you like to add regarding strategies day-care center leaders may use to prevent employee turnover?
Wrap up interview thanking participant	This concludes the interview and I wanted to thank you again for your participation.
Schedule follow-up member checking interview	The follow-up meeting to discuss the synthesis of the information interpreted from each question should last approximately 20 to 30 minutes. What date and time frame would you like to be scheduled?
<p>Follow-up Member Checking Interview</p> <p>Member checking involves the process of checking with research participants whether the identified concepts and codes fit one's personal experience (Carson, 2010).</p>	
Introduce follow-up interview and set the stage	Thank you for this follow-up member checking meeting to review for validity that the synthesized data represent the correct answers. If I missed anything or you like to add anything, please feel free to add that information as we review.
Share a copy of the	Question and succinct synthesis of the interpretation

succinct synthesis for each	
question	1.
Bring in probing questions related to other	Question and succinct synthesis of the interpretation—one paragraph or as needed
information that you may have found—note the	2
information must be related so that you are	Question and succinct synthesis of the interpretation—one paragraph or as needed
probing and adhering to the IRB approval.	3
Walkthrough each question, read the	
interpretation, and ask: Did I miss anything? Or,	If there is no additional information that you would like to add, this concludes the follow-up meeting.
is there anything you would like to add?	Thank you for your contribution of time and knowledge to this study.