

2023

## Retention Strategies for Managers of Generation Y Employees

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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Michael R. Askari

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Walden University  
2023

Abstract

Retention Strategies for Managers of Generation Y Employees

by

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MBA, California Baptist University, 2015

BS, California Baptist University, 2014

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

March 2023

## Abstract

Employee turnover may lead to increased business costs, degradation of employee mental health, and more taxes on social programs. Managers of Generation Y employees are concerned with turnover because Generation Y employees tend to leave within 12 months of being hired. Grounded in the job embeddedness theory, the purpose of this qualitative multiple-case study was to explore management retention strategies to reduce Generation Y turnover. The participants were six managers of Generation Y employees from six retail businesses who successfully retained employees for more than 12 months. Data were collected using semistructured interviews, journal notes, and a review of public company websites. Through thematic analysis, three themes emerged compensation, benefits, and recognition; employee engagement and communication; and employee organizational relationship. A key recommendation is for managers to lead by example. Employee retention may increase when managers demonstrate that they are willing to do the same tasks that they delegate. The implications for positive social change include the potential to improve employees' mental health by creating a more embedded workforce.

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## Dedication

To my friends who supported me through this challenging process, I consider you family. Thank you for adding joy to my life and joining me on my travels through Asia and the United States.

To Iwakuni, Japan, a special place.

## Acknowledgments

I want to acknowledge my chair, Dr. Kathleen Andrews. Thank you for your continuous guidance and patience through this process. I want to thank Commander Wendell Stephens for providing “top cover” during my time at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni. The support you provided was invaluable to both my work as a Supply Officer and my personal goals outside of the office. Finally, thank you to the six managers who volunteered to participate in my study. Your participation allowed me to finally complete this challenging journey.

## Table of Contents

List of Tables .....	vi
Section 1: Foundation of the Study.....	1
Background of the Problem .....	1
Problem Statement .....	2
Purpose Statement.....	2
Nature of the Study .....	3
Research Question .....	4
Interview Questions .....	4
Conceptual Framework.....	5
Operational Definitions.....	5
Assumptions, Limitations, Delimitations .....	6
Assumptions.....	6
Limitations .....	6
Delimitations.....	7
Significance of the Study .....	7
Contribution to Business Practice.....	7
Implications of Social Change .....	8
A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature.....	8
Job Embeddedness .....	9
Embeddedness and Retention .....	11
Negative Embeddedness .....	12
Embeddedness and Learning .....	13



Education Level and Job Embeddedness .....	13
Job Embeddedness in the Hiring Process .....	14
Effect of Economic Conditions on Hiring Process .....	15
Family-Friends Programs.....	15
Relationship with Manager .....	17
Voice .....	17
Organizational Commitment.....	18
Workplace Groups and Ostracism .....	19
Generational Stereotyping .....	20
Beneficial Workplace Groups.....	21
Organizational Support .....	22
Social Embeddedness.....	24
Transformational Leadership .....	24
Emotional Exhaustion and Excessive Embeddedness .....	25
Burnout .....	26
Perceived Fairness .....	26
Distribution of Resources and Rewards.....	27
Abusive Management .....	28
Job Insecurity .....	30
Organizational Shock.....	30
Generation Y .....	32
Generation Y Turnover .....	32
Generation Y Similarities with Previous Generations .....	33

Job Security.....	35
Perceived Work Opportunities Outside of Organization .....	35
Organizational Fit .....	36
Organizational Commitment.....	37
Salary .....	38
Education Level .....	39
The Work Itself.....	39
Transition .....	39
Section 2: The Project.....	41
Purpose Statement.....	41
Role of the Researcher .....	41
Participants.....	43
Research Method and Design .....	44
Research Method .....	44
Research Design.....	45
Data Saturation.....	46
Population and Sampling .....	47
Ethical Research.....	48
Data Collection Instruments .....	49
Data Collection Technique .....	50
Data Organization Technique .....	51
Data Analysis .....	52
Reliability and Validity.....	54

Reliability.....	54
Dependability.....	55
Validity.....	55
Credibility.....	55
Transferability.....	56
Confirmability.....	56
Data Saturation.....	57
Transition and Summary.....	57
Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change.....	59
Introduction.....	59
Presentation of Findings.....	59
Theme 1: Compensation, Benefits, and Recognition.....	60
Theme 2: Employee Engagement and Communication.....	67
Theme 3: Employee Organizational Relationship.....	75
Application to Professional Practice.....	80
Implications for Social Change.....	81
Recommendation for Action.....	82
Lead by Example.....	82
Genuine Care for Employees.....	82
Future Opportunities or Upward Mobility.....	83
Individualized, Yet Fair.....	83
Recommendation for Further Research.....	84
Reflections.....	85

Conclusion .....	86
References.....	87
Appendix A: Interview Protocol.....	122
Appendix B: Invitation Email Template.....	124

## List of Tables

Table 1. Frequency of Themes in Interviews.....	60
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## Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Organizational turnover is a costly issue for businesses which may substantially increase labor costs and lead to a range of other issues (Blatter et al., 2012; Lee, 2021; Skelton et al., 2020). Many of the factors that cause organizational turnover may be mitigated according to the academic literature. Managers may decrease turnover within their organizations using many of the strategies listed in this paper. The problems rooted that stem from organizational turnover extend beyond the immediate impacts to the organization that the employee departed from. The purpose of this study is to explore retention strategies for managers of Generation Y employees.

### **Background of the Problem**

Generation Y employees tend to leave organizations in under 12 months, which leads to higher turnover costs for businesses (Blatter et al., 2012). These turnover costs can exceed 100% of the employee's annual wages and adversely impact the organizations profits (Skelton et al., 2020). Employee turnover costs may lead to significant increases in labor costs with no additional benefit to the organization. Turnover may lead to employee mental health issues, cause an additional tax on social programs, and provide less job security to remaining employees (Lee, 2021; Skelton et al., 2020). There are many reasons why an employee may leave an organization which include, but are not limited to abusive management, perceived fairness, burnout, and relationships within the organization (Abdin et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2018; Minamizono et al., 2019; Zakarauskaite & Valickienė, 2020). There are a range of reasons why an employee may leave an organization and many of those reasons are preventable according to the academic

literature. The background to the problem has been provided, and the focus will now shift to the problem statement.

### **Problem Statement**

Generation Y employees represent the largest and fastest growing percentage of the workforce in the world but are harder to retain than other generations (Hechl, 2017, p. 158). Generation Y employees tend to leave organizations before 12 months resulting in firms paying up to 50% of the departing employee's annual salary in recruiting and training costs (Blatter et al., 2012; United States Census Bureau, 2017). The general business problem was business managers are less likely to retain Generation Y employees than previous generations which increases recruiting and training costs. The specific business problem was that some retail industry managers lack the management strategies to retain Generation Y employees.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore management strategies that retail industry managers use to retain Generation Y employees. The targeted population consisted of managers of six retail industry companies who have successfully retained Generation Y employees for at least 12 months. The geographical location for the study was San Diego County, California. The implications for positive social change include the potential to provide greater work-life balance for Generation Y employees thus ensuring less stress in their lives. Less stress in the Generation Y employees may lead to better familial relationships, and better physical and psychological health. Additionally, there may be less organizational costs associated with employees being retained because of not needing to replace the employees and this may mean more

funds are available for corporate social responsibility projects, such as donations to charities.

### **Nature of the Study**

Qualitative methodology is the collecting of nonstandardized data that is not in numerical form and interpreting the data (Clark & Vealé, 2018). I used qualitative methodology because I wanted to use interviews for collecting in-depth information through asking open-ended interview questions to address meeting this study's purpose. Researchers use quantitative methodology to examine the statistical significance of casual relationships and correlations rather than providing a deeper understanding of the (Hochbein & Smeaton, 2018). I did not choose quantitative methodology because I did not test the quantitative variables' relationships for group or groups' differences by testing hypotheses. Mixed methodology is a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies where both sets of results are interpreted and may compensate for the weaknesses of the other method (Beach & Kaas, 2020). Mixed methodology includes quantitative methodology which was outside the scope of my study because I did not be testing hypotheses about variables' characteristics or relationships.

I considered case study, phenomenological, ethnographical, and narrative research designs to explore Generation Y retention strategies. Case study design involves the capturing and interpretation of participants' voices (Gregory, 2020). A single case study involves a unique unit while a multiple case study involves looking at replicability (Sneed et al., 2020). A multiple case study was appropriate to address retention strategies as it deals with information from more than one case unit. Researchers use the phenomenological design to focus on the personal meanings of the lived experiences of



participants and the memory of their experiences (Adams & van Manen, 2017).

Phenomenological design did not fully address the scope of my study. The ethnographical design involves studying culture and considers the cultural points of view (Schrottner, 2008). The managers' and organizations' cultures were not focused on exploring retention strategies. A researcher using narrative design has participants tell personal life stories describing an event (George & Selimos, 2018). Narrative design did not provide a holistic approach to addressing retention strategies.

### **Research Question**

What management strategies do retail industry managers use to retain Generation Y employees for over 12 months?

### **Interview Questions**

1. What management strategies have you used to retain Generation Y employees?
2. How did you assess the effectiveness of the management strategies you used for retention of Generation Y employees?
3. What management strategies have you found to be most effective for retention of Generation Y employees?
4. What key barriers did you encounter when implementing management strategies for retention of Generation Y employees?
5. How did you address the key barriers you encountered in implementing management strategies for the retention of Generation Y employees?
6. What else would you like to tell me about the management strategies you use for retention of Generation Y employees?

## **Conceptual Framework**

Granovetter (1985) first introduced job embeddedness theory in 1985. Job embeddedness theory includes the combination of forces that keep employees at their job and includes on-the-job and off-the-job embeddedness (Goliroshan et al., 2021). Job-embeddedness theory is the relationship between employees and their environment (Potgieter et al., 2018). Ma et al., (2018) built upon job embeddedness theory and suggested the number of connections an employee has is related to his or her level of job embeddedness. Employees who are embedded in their job are less likely to leave their organization (Potgieter & Ferreira, 2018). MeiRun et al., (2018) indicated work overload and compensation are related to organizational embeddedness and retention. Learning goal orientation was preceded by job embeddedness rather than the inverse relationship according to Ng and Lucianetti (2018). The job embeddedness theory provided a useful lens for me to understand the management strategies used to retain Generation Y employees for over 12 months.

## **Operational Definitions**

*Employee voice:* An employee's ability to voice problems and concerns to their leadership and express ways to improve the organization (Tan et al., 2019).

*Job embeddedness:* Describes the level in which an employee is tied to an organization based on how well they fit within the organization (Amoah et al., 2021).

*Organizational commitment:* The extent to which an employee is emotionally attached to their organization (Valeau et al., 2021).

*Organizational shock*: Large-scale event (such as a lay-off) that affect all employees, cannot be ignored, and leads to organizational turnover (Biggane et al., 2017).

*Perceived fairness*: The level of trust that employees have in their organizational leadership based on rewards systems and the employee's understanding of the rewards systems (Abdin et al., 2019).

*Workplace ostracism*: A negative social experience which involves an employee being excluded by others within the organization they work (Mao et al., 2021).

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

#### **Assumptions**

Assumptions are positions that are held at the beginning of a study and are generally widely accepted but cannot be substantiated (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019). This study contained three assumptions: participants provided truthful answers, any unclear answers were successfully mitigated through follow up questions, and I interpreted the results of the study objectively. To help ensure that participants provide truthful answers, I asked the managers to answer questions truthfully at the beginning of each interview. I notified the managers that they can stop the interview process at any time if they feel uncomfortable. If participants felt uncomfortable during the interview, they may not have provided honest answers to questions.

#### **Limitations**

A limitation is a research constraint that is outside of the control of the researcher (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019). One of the limitations in the study is that the participants' answers had varying levels of quality and validity. Participants may have

feared retribution from their organizations if they said something negative about their organization. The accuracy of the data that was based on the honesty of each participant. To mitigate this, I reassured participants that the information provided would not be given to anyone at their organization.

### **Delimitations**

Delimitations are created by researchers to create the scope for the research project to prevent the project from becoming unobtainable (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019). The delimitations help researchers explain why they did not take certain actions during the research process (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019). I used a small sample size to allow enough time to conduct interviews with participants in my region. I would have needed a research team or more time to use a larger sample size. I currently work full time in the United States Marine Corps which prevents a larger geographic range for my study. The geographic region for my study was my current county of residence which allowed me to conduct interviews without having to take substantial time off of work. By conducting interviews near my place of work, I easily followed up with participants for member checking.

### **Significance of the Study**

#### **Contribution to Business Practice**

Organizational leaders may increase profitability by improving retention rates (Hechl, 2017). When an employee leaves, businesses spend up to half of an employee's annual salary on recruiting and training replacement employees (Hechl, 2017; Naim & Lenka, 2017). Saeed and Jun (2022) described job embeddedness as a feeling of belonging or family among employees. Embedded employees within an organization may

lead to increased employee retention, reduced costs, and improved organizational performance (Matthews et al., 2018).

### **Implications of Social Change**

One implication for positive social change is increased employee retention. Increased retention may lead to improved quality of life for employees. More satisfaction at work may improve an employee's life overall and may impact their home life and interactions with other members of their community. Additionally, improved management retention strategies may decrease stress and uncertainty in the workplace. Reduced stress can result in improved health for employees. Improved health may increase an employee's quality of life and increase the life expectancy for employees. Moreover, when employees have reduced stress, they may experience more behaviors associated with positive emotional intelligence. These behaviors may increase more positive interpersonal relationships both at home and in communities.

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

The purpose of this study was to explore management strategies for Generation Y retention in the retail sector. The research question is: What management strategies do retail industry managers use to retain Generation Y employees for over 12 months? To gain insight into my research question, I explored current and historical research on the topics of job embeddedness, Generation Y turnover, employee turnover, and employee retention. I primarily used the Walden Library and Google Scholar to find articles for my study. The key words searched for this study were *job embeddedness*, *employee retention*, *Generation Y retention*, *employee voluntary turnover*, *organizational commitment*, *organizational support*, *organizational embeddedness*, *perceived fairness*,

*burnout, job security, and job insecurity.* My review included research in how employees may be embedded during the hiring process, how transformational leadership may impact employee retention, the impact of employee relationships within the organization, the relationship between workplace ostracism on retention, and the relationship between abusive management and retention. Additionally, my review included comparisons between generations and how employees of different age groups respond to a variety of factors. The majority of resources cited were peer reviewed and published within the last 5 years (2018-2022).

### **Job Embeddedness**

Job embeddedness provides a holistic approach to employee retention which is why it was appropriate for this study. Mitchell et al. (2001) first described job embeddedness as the variable that led to voluntary turnover. Mitchell et al. first described the theory in 2001 and indicated job embeddedness represented the connections that employees have with others and the organization, the relationship between the job and community with the employee's life, and how difficult it is to remove one of the existing connections. Unlike other literature on turnover, job embeddedness theory focuses on reasons employees remain in an organization rather than why employees leave an organization (Martdianty et al., 2020). There are a number of reasons why an employee may become more embedded in an organization.

An employee's embeddedness may be influenced by the number of connections they have within an organization. If an employee is connected with other employees, they will have more knowledge about other employees' roles and therefore reduce role ambiguity and increase embeddedness (Ma et al., 2018). An embedded employee

generally has more connections within an organization that may benefit the organization if they want to retain that employee (Ma et al., 2018). Ayola et al. (2019) similarly described job embeddedness as the combination of forces that keep employees within an organization. Potgieter and Ferreira (2018) summarized by stating job embeddedness is what prevents employees from leaving an organization. In summary, job embeddedness can be defined as an employee's connectedness to an organization (Zhou et al., 2020). I chose job embeddedness as my conceptual framework to broadly cover management strategies that may be used to retain employees. Job embeddedness focuses on a combination of forces related to retention rather than a singular force.

Other conceptual frameworks do not have the same holistic approach to retention. For example, leader-member exchange theory focuses on employees' relationship with their supervisor (Bauer & Lim, 2019). The quality of the organizational leadership may influence the overall level of employee embeddedness (Stewart & Wiener, 2021). Leader-member exchange theory compliments job embeddedness as relationship with the manager overlaps some of the other factors relevant to job embeddedness. Researchers using social exchange theory describe the relationship between organizational turnover and employees' expectations from managers (Khalid et al., 2021).

In contrast, Herzberg's two-factor theory focuses on job satisfaction and researchers using this theory cover satisfiers and dissatisfiers. Herzberg's two factor theory covers several influencers related to retention such as career advancement, relationships with managers, and the work itself, but the purpose of the theory was to describe job satisfaction rather than retention (Alrawahi et al., 2020). Job embeddedness theory discusses job satisfaction as a relevant factor related to turnover intention, but it

also discusses many other factors at both the micro and macro levels that influence an employee's decision to leave an organization (Smith et al., 2021). Herzberg's two factor theory does not holistically cover employee retention as well as job embeddedness theory. Researchers using job embeddedness theory give a more thorough explanation as to why an employee remains within an organization.

### **Embeddedness and Retention**

Employee embeddedness influences whether an employee will remain at an organization. Employers are more likely to retain employees who are embedded within an organization (MeiRun et al., 2018). A study in Korea echoed these findings with 333 nurses (Ja & Soo-Kyoung, 2019). Ja and Soo-Kyoung found that job embeddedness and organizational support positively impacted job embeddedness. Support and sense of community are important in the workplace but may not have the same effect on Generation Y employees as it does on previous generations (Robinson et al., 2014). Community may refer to an employee's workplace or communication that may include an employee's network inside and outside of their workplace depending on the study.

Community and family have an impact on employees' decision making however, Generation Y employees tend to live with their parents which may substitute the need for community in the workplace (Robinson et al., 2014). Meng and Berger (2018) found that a sense of community positively impacted retention when they found that employees enjoy having a positive impact in their communities outside of their workplace. Implementing corporate social responsibility initiatives may increase embeddedness in employees and build a stronger community within the organization (Meng & Berger, 2018). Some employees may become too embedded within an organization which may



lead to negative outcomes (Treuren, 2019). Although embeddedness tends to increase employee retention, too much embeddedness may lead to negative outcomes.

### **Negative Embeddedness**

An employee may become too embedded within an organization which may negatively influence the organization, the employee, or both. Employees with higher levels of embeddedness are less likely to leave an organization but there may be negative forms of embeddedness (Treuren, 2019). Some employees are so embedded within an organization that they will make sacrifices for the sake of the organization (Hwang & Han, 2020). Sacrifice embeddedness was shown to increase retention but increase work-family conflict (Treuren, 2019). Sacrifice embeddedness has also been found as a negative side effect as job embeddedness has been found to have a negative relationship with intention to leave an organization (Robinson et al., 2014). Although increased employee embeddedness may lead to higher retention, there may be negative side effects for employees who are intending to leave an organization.

Too much embeddedness may create problems for employee's health over time. On-the-job embeddedness may negatively influence employee behavior when employees prioritize work over everything else in their lives (Peltokorpi, 2020). An employee that is too embedded may burnout or develop problems at home (Peltokorpi, 2020). Greene et al. (2018) indicated that job embeddedness can have a negative impact if employees feel trapped within the organization. Greene et al. (2018) also indicated that a lack of trust will lead to negative outcomes from job embeddedness. When employees are too tied to an organization, they will develop problems outside of the organization which may then negatively influence behavior inside of the organization.

### **Embeddedness and Learning**

Training programs may lead to increased employee embeddedness. Ng and Lucianetti (2018) suggested job embeddedness preceded learning-goal orientation. Ng and Lucianetti initially believed that higher learning-goal orientation would lead to higher job embeddedness. Companies can increase retention by creating training programs that align with the goals of their employees (Ma et al., 2018). Naim and Lenka (2017) echoed this when they indicated competency development decreases the likelihood of voluntary turnover. Safavi and Karatepe (2019) also found that training programs lead to a higher level of embeddedness because they message to employees that their career is vital to the organization. Ma et al. (2018) also stated that mentorship, coaching, and team events increase embeddedness. Mentoring improves employee embeddedness and decreases the likelihood of voluntary turnover. Working with and training employees leads to reduced turnover.

### **Education Level and Job Embeddedness**

Although training and education from the organization may lead to a more embedded workforce, employing someone who has received instruction from outside of the organization may not guarantee embeddedness within an organization (Aboul-Ela, 2018). Aboul-Ela (2018) tested to see if employees with a higher education level were less embedded than those with a lower education level. Aboul-Ela found that education level did not significantly impact job embeddedness. Although education level may make them more attractive on the job market, it is not a guarantee that they will be less embedded within their organization (Aboul-Ela, 2018). Education level alone may not be

the best metric for predicting employee turnover intention. There may be other indicators managers may use to predict employee turnover intention.

### **Job Embeddedness in the Hiring Process**

Organizations may be able to tell how embedded an employee will be during the hiring process. Rubenstein et al. (2017) indicated that an employee's embeddedness within an organization could be determined before being hired. Rubenstein et al. (2017) tested personality traits, proximity to the office, and length of time at a previous job to predict embeddedness. Rubenstein et al. found that employees with a higher level of on the job and off the job embeddedness were more likely to remain with an organization. Off the job embeddedness represents an employee's connections within the community and outside of the workplace (Rubenstein et al., 2017). When off the job embeddedness or community embeddedness and job satisfaction are combined, employee turnover intention is likely to decrease (Fasbender et al., 2019). An employee's ties to the local community may help predict their level of embeddedness within an organization. Managers may predict how long employees will remain in an organization.

The job interview process may help an organization find employees who will be more embedded within the organization. Ma et al. (2018) stated that realistic interviews and job scenarios during the hiring process could help determine if a candidate will be a good organizational fit. By providing accurate information to candidates and asking essential questions about how they may fit in the community, employers may increase the likelihood of a candidate becoming embedded within an organization (Tanova & Holtom, 2008). Meuer et al. (2019) found that human resources can also predict embeddedness with expatriate employees by hiring self-initiated expatriates rather than assigned

expatriates. Employees are more likely to be embedded within an organization if they are already connected with the local community. Conditions external to the business may influence an employee's willingness to remain at an organization.

### **Effect of Economic Conditions on Hiring Process**

Economic conditions are an external factor that may influence employee embeddedness. Li and Yu (2017) suggested that employees hired during poor economic conditions are more likely to remain in an organization long-term. Matthews et al. (2018) indicated that high-wage earners are more likely to be concerned with career advancement while low-wage earners are more concerned with being treated well by management. Li and Yu (2017) suggested hiring is more meticulous in a poor economy, which may make employees better fit. If an employee is a better fit for an organization, management may treat them better, leading to increased retention of low-wage earners (Matthews et al., 2018). The hiring process and the economic conditions during the hiring process may be good predictors of embeddedness within an organization.

### **Family-Friends Programs**

Programs that help employees deconflict problems at home may lead to increased employee retention. Work-life conflicts for employees tend to lead to increased turnover among employees (Yu, 2019). Family-friendly policies may reduce employees' intention to quit (Yu, 2019). Caillier (2016) suggested that family-friendly programs have a negative effect on turnover. The quality of the program is relevant to turnover reduction. Low-quality programs do not significantly impact turnover (Caillier, 2016). Facilitating employee work and life conflicts may positively impact employee turnover intentions (Choi & Kim, 2012). A better work-life balance increases job satisfaction, reducing the

likelihood that an employee will leave the organization (Choi & Kim, 2012). Family-friendly programs may lead to increased employee retention if an organization implements a high-quality program. Family-friendly tend to increase employee job satisfaction. Job Satisfaction

Employees who are more satisfied with their job are less likely to depart an organization voluntarily. Job satisfaction is an employee's response to their job or overall job environment (Dilig-Ruiz et al., 2018). According to Purba and Ananta (2018), job satisfaction is positively related to retention. Purba and Ananta stated that work engagement had a positive correlation with job satisfaction and that job satisfaction had a negative relationship with turnover intention. There are multiple ways that managers may increase job satisfaction. Managers' strategies to increase job satisfaction may vary based on their operating environment.

Allowing for flexibility may increase job satisfaction and retention of employees. In Mexico, work flexibility resulted in the same level of job satisfaction between men and women (Baeza et al., 2018). Previous researchers determined that women were less satisfied without flexibility (Capnary et al., 2018). Although work flexibility increased employees' loyalty in Indonesia, irregular flexible hours made employees feel as though their life was unbalanced (Capnary et al., 2018). Flexibility positively impacted organizations, according to researchers from the study in Mexico and Indonesia, despite being located in different parts of the globe (Baeza et al., 2018; Capnary et al., 2018). Work flexibility may increase job satisfaction and employee retention but may adversely impact employees depending on the culture. The success of management strategies to

increase job satisfaction may depend on how well it is tailored to their organization and employees.

### **Relationship with Manager**

Relationships with organizational leadership may lead to influence an employee's decision to remain at an organization. Employees with a better relationship with their manager are more likely to stay at an organization (Johnson, 2020). An employee's relationship with their manager is less significant when they have been at an organization for more extended periods (Zakarauskaitė & Valickienė, 2020). Those with more seniority within the organization are less likely to turnover (Zakarauskaitė & Valickienė, 2020). Employees with more vital trust and relationships with their managers are less likely to leave an organization (Ward et al., 2021). An employee's relationship with their manager and voluntary turnover may vary based on circumstances. There are several factors related to an employee's decision to remain or depart an organization.

### **Voice**

If employees feel like they can voice their concerns, they are more likely to remain in an organization. Employees are more likely to voice their opinion if they perceive the work environment as fair (Tan et al., 2019). When employees have a voice, they are less likely to leave an organization (Srivastava et al., 2019). Engaged employees are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs decreasing the likelihood of them leaving the organization (Tomietto et al., 2019). Employees who believe their opinion matters are more likely to remain in an organization. Managers may increase employee embeddedness and retention by listening to employee concerns.

Employees who believe their managers listen to their voice are more likely to accept the resolutions to conflicts and, therefore, less likely to quit an organization (Van Gramberg et al., 2020). Employee perception of voice does not reduce turnover intentions in situations where employees have disputes with their managers or conflicts related to working conditions (Van Gramberg et al., 2020). When management allows employees to participate in decision-making, the employees tend to have more job satisfaction and are less likely to leave the organization (Philip & Arrowsmith, 2020). The impact of employee participation may be harmful if the organization does not already have function systems (Philip & Arrowsmith, 2020). Managers may reduce employee retention by allowing employees to voice their dissent. Employees may be more committed to the organization if they believe that their opinion matters and will be considered by management.

### **Organizational Commitment**

Employees may leave an organization before finding another place to work if they have a low organizational commitment and are faced with workplace hardship (Paille, 2013). Dechawatanapaisal (2018) found a significant positive relationship between organizational commitment and job embeddedness and a significant negative relationship between job embeddedness and turnover intention. Li (2018) found that the relationship between leaders and employees was positively related to organizational commitment. Higher levels of organizational commitment led to increased chances of retention within an organization. Researchers determined several factors that may increase employees' organizational commitment.

Organizations that engage in corporate social responsibility tend to have more committed employees. Corporate social responsibility has a significant positive relationship with organizational commitment (Zaman & Nadeem, 2019). Employees' perception of the organization is essential to organizational commitment (Zaman & Nadeem, 2019). An employee's perception of an organization may be improved when a company initiates a corporate social responsibility project (Zaman & Nadeem, 2019). Ouakouak et al. (2020) suggested that corporate social responsibility practices increase organizational commitment. These employees are more committed to the organization and less likely to leave the organization (Ouakouak et al., 2020). Corporate social responsibility may lead to an increase in organizational commitment.

### **Workplace Groups and Ostracism**

Workplace groups tend to negatively influence employee commitment and increase turnover in instances where an in-group and an out-group, overall organizational commitment is lower (Seo et al., 2018). Zhang et al. (2019) found that workplace ostracism leads to lower organizational commitment. Ostracism weakens the commitment and embeddedness of employees (Lyu & Zhu, 2019). Zhang et al. suggested a positive correlation between workplace ostracism and voluntary turnover. However, this voluntary turnover of employees who feel ostracized in the workplace can be mitigated by higher embeddedness (Lyu & Zhu, 2019). Ostracism leads to increase voluntary employee turnover. Managers may decrease turnover by being aware of groups forming within the organization.

Feedback systems may lead to more ostracism within the workplace. Peng and Zeng (2017) found that employees are more likely to experience the adverse effects of



workplace ostracism in organizations that have 360 feedback procedures. Not all work groups are harmful; however, some employees benefit when workplace groups exist (Yang et al., 2020). Managers may mitigate the negative impacts of workplace ostracism by modifying organizational structure. Workplace groups tend to harm employees within an organization, although some situations exist where employees are positively influenced.

Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y employees are negatively affected by workplace incivility and ostracism, but Generation Y displayed a stronger negative reaction (Abubakar & Behraves, 2018). Men reported less exclusion from management than women in the workplace (Cottingham et al., 2013). Race and gender differences may lead to exclusion among employee groups (Cottingham et al., 2013). In some cases, there are advantages to being the only employee from a particular demographic due to increased visibility (Cottingham et al., 2013). Abubakar and Behraves (2018) found that although Generation Y employees are more likely to leave an intolerant or ostracizing organization, they are less likely to sabotage that organization when faced with workplace ostracism. Many factors may lead to ostracism within the workplace but the impact is negative across all demographics studied. Managers may wish to ensure that negative workplace groups are not driving employees to leave the organization.

### **Generational Stereotyping**

Stereotyping between generations may vary depending on the age groups of the employees within the organization. Generational stereotypes may vary based on the amount of generational diversity within the organization (Moore & Krause, 2021).

Groups based on age negatively correlate to job satisfaction and tend to increase employees' desire to leave (Moore & Krause, 2021). Van Rossem (2019) also described self-stereotyping and generational stereotyping and said the consequences of generational stereotypes may not always be negative if managers use the information to understand team dynamics better. Older and younger employees are more likely to face workplace stereotypes than middle-aged employees (von Hippel et al., 2019). Older employees tended to have a more adverse reaction to workplace stereotypes than more senior employees (von Hippel et al., 2019). Generational stereotypes tend to be incorrect and lead to adverse outcomes within an organization. Not all groups that form within the workplace may lead to negative results.

### **Beneficial Workplace Groups**

Employees may benefit from groups, and the size of an organization tends to influence employees' embeddedness. If employees perceive that they belong to a group, they engage in more positive behavior in the workplace (Yang et al., 2020). Employees may benefit from workplace groups if they have similar values and can handle the job demands (Kiazad et al., 2019). When this occurs, the employee is more likely to be embedded within the organization and engage in positive behavior (Kiazad et al., 2019). The work group size may also correlate with the extent of an employee's embeddedness. Coetzer et al. (2017) found that the size of an employee's workgroup is a factor in the embeddedness level of the employee. If an employee is in an organization of 50 or less, they are more embedded than if they were in an organization of 200 or more (Coetzer et al., 2017). Coetzer et al. did not test the embeddedness of work groups between 51 and 199. The size of a group may influence whether the group size positively or negatively

influences employee retention. The employee's perception of organizational support may influence whether or not the group's existence is positively related to retention.

### **Organizational Support**

Organizational support may tend to increase employee retention. When employees perceive support, they are less likely to leave an organization (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017). Akgunduz and Sanli (2017) concluded that people return favors when favors are shown to them. supervisor-subordinate relationships also reduced turnover intention (Brunetto et al., 2013). Brunetto et al. found that about half of nurse turnover was attributed to relationships with coworkers and supervisors. Researchers looking at turnover intention concluded that relationships are a significant reason for turnover. Managers may increase retention by showing support to employees and creating favorable relationships.

Managers who care for their employees increase organizational commitment. Chernyak-Hai and Rabenu (2018) found that when employees are forced to show organizational commitment behavior, or when it is expected, it has a long-term adverse effect on employees. Supervisor and organizational support increased job embeddedness (Shehawy et al., 2018). Making employees feel welcome and supported has been shown to reduce the desire to leave an organization. Martinussen et al. (2020) echoed the above findings and found that people stay with organizations when they perceive their leadership as supportive. Ariza-Montes et al. (2018) indicated social support and job control would improve the well-being of employees, leading to higher retention. Yin (2018) noted that organizational commitment is increased when there is job engagement. Research findings by Harden et al. (2018) are the same as Yin suggested, and Harden

provided the idea that organizational commitment is increased when employers invest in the skills of their employees. Managers' relationships with employees are related to employees' desire to leave an organization. Showing support and caring for the well-being of employees will increase the chances of employees remaining within an organization.

Researchers found that organizational support and engagement increase not only employee commitment but also employee embeddedness (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017). Akgunduz and Eryilmaz (2018) contradicted these results and suggested that support from coworkers did not mitigate turnover intentions. Lack of organizational support may increase emotional exhaustion and turnover (Li et al., 2021). The lack of support from managers diminishes the overall quality of life for employees, which may cause emotional exhaustion and an increased desire to depart the organization (Li et al., 2021). Support from other employees is essential to employee retention. Employees are more likely to stay when supported and have positive relationships with employees and managers.

Perceived level of support may factor into an employee's decision to depart an organization. Generation Y's level of perceived organizational support may reduce the desire to leave the organization (Godinho-Bitencourt et al., 2019). The relationship between employees and managers may affect the employee's perceived level of organizational support (Godinho-Bitencourt et al., 2019). Putri et al. (2018) suggested a negative relationship exists between organizational support and turnover intention among Generation Y employees. Gupta (2019) also observed a negative relationship between Generation Y turnover and perceived supervisor support. Perceived support is related to

contribution and employee well-being (Putri et al., 2018). Organizational commitment mitigated the harmful effects of a perceived lack of organizational support (Putri et al., 2018). Generation Y employees respond positively to perceived organizational support and are less likely to voluntarily leave the organization when they perceive organizational support (Gupta, 2019). Organizational leadership that shows an interest in the career path of employees may retain employees even if they have higher-paying opportunities outside of the organization (Mayangdarastri & Khusna, 2020). If the career path and development are clear, Generation Y employees tend to be more loyal to the organization (Mayangdarastri & Khusna, 2020). The likelihood of employees leaving an organization, even if they have other opportunities, decreases when their leadership supports them. Organizational support may also mitigate other factors that increase the likelihood of organizational turnover.

### **Social Embeddedness**

Workers with low social embeddedness are more likely to perceive their workplace as non-desirable among men and women (Bernhard-Oettel et al., 2018). The less attached an employee is to an organization, the less desirable the employee perceives the workplace. Internal social networking may negatively influence employee turnover intentions (Singh, 2019). An employee's connectedness within an organization affects their desire to turnover. Managers may mitigate turnover by structuring the organization appropriately and ensuring employees are socially connected within the organization.

### **Transformational Leadership**

Transformational leadership may reduce employee turnover intentions (Oh & Chhinzer, 2021). Transformational leadership, perceived support, and perceived trust

were all correlated with turnover intention in a study conducted by Engelbrecht and Samuel (2019). Other researchers suggested that only some aspects of transformational leadership affect job embeddedness while others have no significant effect (Maqsood et al., 2019). Transformational leaders may increase employee retention depending on an organization's circumstances. Although some researchers indicate that transformational leadership is positive for an organization, others also suggest that there are adverse effects.

Although transformational leadership tends to decrease employees' turnover intentions, this type of leadership may increase the turnover rate of the transformational leaders themselves (Lin et al., 2019). Emotional exhaustion positively correlates with transformational leadership behaviors (Lin et al., 2019). Emotional exhaustion may be tied to the level of embeddedness of the leader or employee. A transformational leader may turnover due to exhaustion even though they influence employees to remain in the organization.

### **Emotional Exhaustion and Excessive Embeddedness**

Emotional exhaustion and excessive embeddedness may be mitigated by ethical leadership. Zhou et al. (2020) claimed that embedded employees are better able to cope with emotional exhaustion because they are better equipped to use resources within the organization. Zhou et al. also stated that ethical leadership is negatively related to emotional exhaustion. Ethical leadership increases the likelihood that an employee will be embedded within the organization (Zhou et al., 2020). Ethical leadership may lead to excessive embeddedness, negatively affecting an employee's career (Chih-Jen & Stanley, 2019). An employee who is too embedded may negatively influence their career (Chih-

Jen & Stanley, 2019). Ethical leadership increases the likelihood of employees remaining within an organization even if they are going through a difficult time in their careers.

Ethical leadership increases the level of employee embeddedness within the organization.

### **Burnout**

Work overload may reduce the likelihood of retaining employees. High turnover rates are positively correlated with high rates of burnout (Willard-Grace et al., 2019). MeiRun et al. (2018) showed work overload is not a significant negative factor related to job embeddedness. Work overload may increase embeddedness if the employees have an overall positive experience (MeiRun et al., 2018). Similarly, Wu et al. (2020) said a positive spiritual climate might mitigate the effects of work overload and reduce the likelihood of employees intending to leave the organization. A study in Japan also found that personnel who experience burnout are more likely to leave an organization (Minamizono et al., 2019). Younger employees with higher levels of burnout were much more likely to depart the organization (Minamizono et al., 2019). Employees who stay in an organization for longer than 5 years are less likely to turnover due to burnout (Willard-Grace et al., 2019). Organizations with high self-sacrifice levels may have increased burnout and organizational turnover. Researchers also found that employee perceptions of fairness correlate with turnover intention.

### **Perceived Fairness**

When employees strongly identify with an organization, they are less likely to leave based on fairness or organizational treatment (Avanzi et al., 2014). Fairness and overall treatment play a significantly lower role when employees are firmly attached to an organization (Avanzi et al., 2014). Job embeddedness increases and turnover

intentions decrease when employees perceive their managers as fair decision-makers (Akgunduz & Cin, 2015). Not all researchers agreed on what it means for a manager or leader to be considered fair.

Employees who perceive their workplace as fair are likelier to remain within the organization. Perceived fairness may increase the likelihood of employees staying in an organization (Harden et al., 2018). Perceived fairness leads to increased trust in supervisors and organizational commitment (Abdin et al., 2019). Perceived fairness is achieved through informal, interpersonal, and formal processes such as policies and rewards (Abdin et al., 2019). Fairness leads to higher perceived empowerment and organizational commitment (Tan et al., 2019). Perceptions of politics, interpersonal conflict at work, and organizational change were positively related to turnover intention despite the relationship between leaders and employees (Muldoon et al., 2018). Researchers disagree on the impact of perceived fairness. Some researchers have tested employees' perceptions of fairness within an organization.

### **Distribution of Resources and Rewards**

Perceived fair distribution of resources within an organization may lead to higher employee retention. Akgunduz and Cin (2015) indicated that fairness is based on the equal distribution of resources. These resources are defined as employees' perceived distributive rewards concerning work effort and the distribution of organizational gains (Akgunduz & Cin, 2015). When employees perceive that their leadership fairly distributes resources within an organization, job embeddedness increases while the intention to leave the organization decreases (Akgunduz & Cin, 2015). Employees are



more likely to work hard and less likely to go when they perceive that employees are rewarded fairly.

Reward systems may also influence an employee's decision to stay at an organization. Froese et al. (2019) found that high-performing employees are more likely to remain in a merit-based reward system while low-performing employees are more likely to leave. Diversified interests and differences in demographics may make it difficult to fairly distribute rewards within an organization (Froese et al., 2019). Rewards systems should be tailored to the organization (Koo et al., 2020). Rewards systems may be emotional, such as recognition, or materially based, such as a raise (Koo et al., 2020). Froese et al. (2019) noted that merit-based rewards motivated male employees but not female employees. Organizations may reduce voluntary turnover by ensuring they have fully designed and enforced merit-based systems. Managers may increase job satisfaction and employee relationships by successfully overseeing a merit-based reward system.

### **Abusive Management**

Abusive management tends to lead to higher turnover rates and even mitigates the positive outcomes of other forms of leadership. Researchers often use abusive, narcissistic, and toxic management interchangeably (Sumi, 2019). Abusive management is the emotional abuse of employees by their leadership (Sumi, 2019). Lee et al. (2018) similarly found that abusive management mitigates the positive effect of charismatic leadership. Abusive management has an adverse influence on employee retention and embeddedness. There are other negative impacts of abusive management within an organization.

Abusive managers may also increase employees' negative outlooks about the overall workplace. One of the side effects of abusive managers is reduced optimism in employees (Seo & Chung, 2019). This lower level of optimism increases turnover intention (Seo & Chung, 2019). Abusive managers may also leave employees uncertain about their social standing, which can negatively affect workplace safety and employees' sensitivity to social changes (Yang et al., 2020). Mullen et al. (2018) indicated that employees negatively perceived their safety climates when working for an abusive manager. Abusive management may also reduce job embeddedness (Dirican & Erdil, 2020). These findings are echoed by Schyns et al. (2018), who suggested turnover intention is higher when abusive managers are present. Dai et al. (2019) indicated that abusive management significantly increased employee turnover. Abusive management may negatively influence an employee's work-life, leading to an increased desire for employees to voluntarily turnover.

Job satisfaction may be a mitigating factor in retaining employees who work for an abusive manager (Bakkal et al., 2019). However, Bakkal et al. (2019) also claimed that abusive leaders reduced employees' job satisfaction and recommended removing abusive leaders from the organization. Ethical leadership, concern for subordinates, and integrity lead to increased job satisfaction and job embeddedness in employees (Karim & Nadeem, 2019). Employees tend to be more attached to an organization when the leader is perceived as ethical. Managers displaying concern for employees increase the likelihood of employee retention.

Mental health programs may help mitigate the adverse outcomes of abusive management. Programs designed to improve employees' mental health may increase the

likelihood of retention (Redekopp & Huston, 2019). Workplace bullying and abusive management tend to negatively impact mental health and increase the likelihood of voluntary turnover (Hsieh et al., 2019; Jiang et al., 2019). When employees are victims of being singled out, they are more likely to have lower self-confidence (Jiang et al., 2019). Lack of self-confidence also negatively affects employees' mental health and is inversely related to turnover intention (Hsieh et al., 2019). Organizational programs may increase the likelihood of retention of employees and mitigate some of the negative influence from abusive managers. Employee perceptions tend to be an essential factor in an employee's decision to remain in an organization.

### **Job Insecurity**

Job insecurity may lead to higher attrition rates. Higher levels of job embeddedness may reduce the negative impact of job insecurity on employees and improve employee health through stress reduction (Yang et al., 2019). These findings were echoed by Rafiq and Chin (2019), who suggested that job insecurity is mitigated by job embeddedness and that organizations with more resources are less vulnerable to future losses. Safavi and Karatepe (2019) also found this relationship and indicated that job insecurity reduced levels of employee embeddedness. The employees perceived level of job security might reduce the employees' perceived level of job embeddedness, which makes employees more likely to leave the organization (Karatepe & Safavi, 2019). Job insecurity leads to increased organizational turnover. Increases in turnover may cause a decline in job security, leading to additional turnover.

### **Organizational Shock**

Organizational shock may have positive or negative effects on employee retention. Organizational shock is defined as something that pushes an employee away from an organization (Burton et al., 2010). Employees that are more embedded than employees that are less embedded are less likely to be negatively affected by an organizational shock (Biggane et al., 2017). Job embeddedness in expatriates leads to higher retention when faced with organizational shock (Hussain & Deery, 2018). Employees with higher levels of job embeddedness were likelier to try to help an organization when experiencing shock rather than search for outside employment (Burton et al., 2010). The reasons behind an organizational shock may be unclear, but organizational shock may lead to illusions regarding the nature of the shock (Biggane et al., 2016). Organizational shocks may lead to negative or positive illusions from employees (Biggane et al., 2016). Organizational shocks may bring employees closer together, preventing organizational withdrawal (Biggane et al., 2016). Researchers indicate that organizational shock decreases employee embeddedness and increases the likelihood of turnover. Some employees may be able to mitigate the negative impact of organizational shocks.

Employees better at regulating their emotions are less likely to depart an organization following an organizational shock. If an employee has a higher level of emotional intelligence, they will be less likely to leave an organization during an organizational shock (Bartock, 2019). Those who are better at regulating their emotions will respond better to shocks in their values (Bartock, 2019). Burton et al. (2010) found that when embedded employees face negative pressure, the negative effects are less severe. Employees sometimes engage in organizational citizenship behaviors after

experiencing a negative shock (Burton et al., 2010). The extent to which organizational shock affects an employee varies on individual differences between employees (Yang et al., 2020). Individuals may perceive the shock in diverse ways and have different levels of tolerance and varying coping mechanisms (Yang et al., 2020). An individual may feel a sense of betrayal during an organizational shock which may increase turnover intention (Yang et al., 2020). Pirvu (2020) found that organizations with emotionally intelligent leaders are better equipped to retain employees than organizations lacking emotionally intelligent leaders. Responses to an organizational shock will vary among employees. Emotional intelligence is essential in mitigating voluntary turnover following an organizational shock.

### **Generation Y**

Researchers disagree on what birth years make up Generation Y. Generations are defined as individuals who were raised under similar conditions, share birth years, and experience similar significant life events (Amayah & Gedro, 2014). Most literature on employee retention has focused on Generation X and the Baby Boomer generation. Generation Y was defined as individuals born between 1982 and 2000 by George and Wallio (2017), while Chi et al. (2013) give the range of 1981 and 2000. Wong et al. (2017) provided a similar range that begins in 1980 and ends in 2000. Kim et al. (2016) recognized there is no concrete definition of Generation Y and indicated this generation consists of individuals born between the early 1980 and early 2000s. There is no agreement among researchers as to what birth years constitute Generation Y, although most of the ranges given include 1982 – 2000.

### **Generation Y Turnover**

Generation Y employees do not usually remain at organizations for three years. Heyns and Kerr (2018) suggested Millennials possess more intrinsic and extrinsic motivation than previous generations. Still, Vui-Yee and Paggy (2020) noted Generation Y typically does not remain in jobs for longer than 18 months. Another researcher found that Generation Y employees generally quit their position within the first two years (Ertas, 2015). Campione (2015) claimed that Generation Y remains in organizations for less than three years. Altimier (2006) also suggested that Generation Y employees leave within three years. Blatter et al., 2012 indicated that Generation Y employees leave organizations in under 12 months. Researchers do not agree on the average time that Generation Y employees remain at an organization. It is more agreed upon that Generation Y employees depart organizations at a faster rate than older generations.

Generation Y employees tend to leave at a faster rate than previous generations. Holtschlag et al. (2020) suggested that millennials are more likely to move from job to job than previous generations. The turnover rate of Generation Y employees may vary based on the nation that the researcher studied (Vui-Yee & Paggy, 2020). Pereira et al. (2016) found that the decision to quit combines multiple factors for Generation Y employees. Although Generation Y employees leave faster than older generations, the data may vary based on the nation of study. Many factors lead to Generation Y turnover; some of these factors also lead to turnover from older generations.

### **Generation Y Similarities with Previous Generations**

Similarities exist between Generation Y and previous generations related to workplace motivation. Zaharee et al. (2018) challenged previous research by concluding that there are more similarities than differences between Generation Y and previous

generations. Although born into a technologically different era, Generation Y employees show similar trends to earlier generations in terms of workplace motivation and leadership styles (Zaharee et al., 2018). This conclusion is echoed by Heyns and Kerr (2018), who suggested the only difference in motivating factors between Generation X and Generation Y is the sense of autonomy. Generation Y displays behavior similar to previous generations. According to comparative data, generational differences are less significant than what many researchers believe.

Some researchers indicate that communication between generations is critical for identifying similarities between generations. Similarities outnumber the differences between generations, and many of the differences have been exaggerated (Heyns & Kerr, 2018; Zaharee et al., 2018). Heyns and Kerr recommended that managers not rely on stereotypes when managing multiple generations. Zaharee et al. suggested that Generation Y employees desire the same professional opportunities as previous generations but do desire more rotation within an organization. André (2018) proposed that communication between generations may change perceptions and stereotypes that exist in the workplace. Communication and identifying differences may lead to mutual respect between generational groups of employees (André, 2018). Employees perceive other generations as much more different than they are. Some research indicates that there may be more similarities than differences between generations.

Generational stereotypes may divide employees by creating differences that may not exist. Torsello (2019) suggested that Generation Y shared similar values with previous generations. Torsello further indicated that organizational culture plays a role in an employee's approach to the workplace. Dick (2019) proposed that employees' needs

should be looked at individually rather than at the generational level. Generational stereotypes, such as that Generation Y employees need public recognition, may negatively affect the workplace by giving employees the perception of generational differences (Dick, 2019). Employees of all generations tend to share the same values of trust, loyalty, and family (Society for Human Resource Management, 2007). Generational stereotypes may result in negative outcomes in the workplace. Employees tend to share many of the same values regardless of what generation they belong to.

### **Job Security**

Job security is one of many factors that may reduce employee turnover. Job security only partially mitigated employees' desire to leave in a study conducted by Akgunduz and Eryilmaz (2018). Job insecurity tended to increase turnover intentions among employees, but job security was only one of several factors that led to increased retention (Akgunduz & Eryilmaz, 2018). Paille (2013) concluded that an employee's willingness to remain with an organization through challenging times was the most crucial organizational commitment factor regarding turnover intention. Job security is a relevant factor regarding voluntary turnover, but it is one of many factors influencing employees' decision to turnover. Other factors that work in conjunction with employees' perceived job security may affect turnover.

### **Perceived Work Opportunities Outside of Organization**

Employees' perception of other opportunities may influence their desire to remain at their current organization. Frien and Mulyani (2018) found that perceived outside work opportunities significantly influenced Generation Y employee turnover. Feng and Cao (2017) showed younger employees have a higher chance of leaving due to openness to



new experiences. This conclusion was previously reached by Paille (2013), who concluded that organizational commitment is increased when employees do not perceive that they have alternative jobs available. Hu et al. (2019) found that committed employees tended to have lower perceived opportunities outside their organization than less committed employees. When employees have more opportunities outside the organization, they may not regard their career as tied to the organization and tend to be less loyal (Hu et al., 2019). Employees are more likely to depart if they believe they have opportunities outside of the organization. Managers seeking to increase retention may benefit from offering opportunities within the organization.

Opportunities available within an employee's current organization may increase retention. Internal job opportunities operate independently from external job opportunities (Steel & Landon, 2010). An organization with internal transfer opportunities may not necessarily have lower turnover than an organization without (Steel & Landon, 2010). In contrast, Porter et al. (2016) found that employees with more internal networking opportunities will be less likely to leave an organization. Employees who did more external networking were more likely to leave their organization because they may increase their external opportunities in the process (Porter et al., 2016). Internal networking may increase the likelihood that employees remain in an organization. Job opportunities are one of many factors influencing retention within an organization.

### **Organizational Fit**

Generation Y employees tend to remain in an organization where they feel they are a good fit. Generation Y employees are less likely to think they fit within an organization and are, therefore, more likely to leave the organization (Cennamo &

Gardner, 2008). Cennamo and Gardner noted that these differences were minor, and there was no statistical difference between perceived organizational values. Employees who had values that did not fit with the organizational values were more likely to depart the organization (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008). Organizational fit may reduce turnover intentions among Generation Y employees (Dechawatanapaisal, 2019). An employee's values and needs should match with the values and needs of the organization to increase the likelihood of retaining that employee. Even if an employee fits within an organization, other factors may lead to the voluntary departure of that employee.

### **Organizational Commitment**

Organizations may take several approaches to increase the level of employee organizational commitment. Younger employees show more commitment when they are mentored regularly and given the freedom to make decisions (Hechl, 2017; Heyns & Kerr, 2018; Naim & Lenka, 2017). When Generation Y employees are psychologically fulfilled, they are more committed to the organization (Naim & Lenka, 2017). Hechl (2017) suggested affective commitment is the best predictor of voluntary turnover. Organizational commitment is tied to job embeddedness among women (Potgieter & Ferreira, 2018). Employees leave organizations when organizational commitment is low (Nica, 2018). Quratulain et al. (2018) also indicated organizational commitment was negatively related to turnover intention. Despite this, a breach in an employee's psychological contract with their organization will reduce their level of commitment (Quratulain et al., 2018). A perceived contract breach is when an employee perceives that the organization has failed its implicit obligations to the employee (Quratulain, et al., 2018). The level of commitment an employee shows toward the organization is

negatively related to organizational turnover. Managers may increase an employee's desire to leave by failing to live up to the perceived obligations of the employee.

### **Salary**

Employees with higher salaries tend to have higher levels of embeddedness. Salvant et al. (2020) noted that salary increases job embeddedness among Generation Y employees. Those surveyed rated salary increases as the best form of recognition in the workplace (Salvant et al., 2020). Similarly, Ngotngamwong (2019) found that compensation was one of the most critical factors related to employee retention. Ngotngamwong noted that the perceived opportunity to make more money might lead to job-hopping. Compensation is a relevant factor influencing an employee's decision to remain in an organization. Not all researchers agree that pay is important to increase retention.

The influence of pay on job embeddedness may be more tied to age than generation. In contrast, Frye et al. (2020) reported that income tends to be moderately crucial for Generation Y employees. Generation Y employees tend not to have families to support and are thus expected to value pay as they age (Frye et al., 2020). Lyons et al. (2015) indicated that career patterns have not significantly changed from generation to generation. Lyons et al. suggested that there is more evidence that older generations are becoming more mobile and diverse in their careers than younger generations, who are becoming less traditional in their career mobility. An employee's age may be more critical in determining turnover intentions or reaction to external opportunities rather than what generation they belong to. External factors may have similar impacts on all generations.

### **Education Level**

An employee's education level may be related to the likelihood that an employee remains at an organization (Friar & Mulyani, 2018). McGinnis Johnson and Ng (2016) suggested that education level is a more significant retention factor than salary. A salary increase did not significantly influence turnover intention, but individuals with degrees were significantly more likely to switch sectors (McGinnis Johnson & Ng, 2016). These findings were echoed by Labrague et al. (2018), who found education level makes employees more marketable and, therefore, more likely to leave an organization. Younger employees with bachelor's degrees tend to leave organizations after gaining a few years of work experience (Labrague et al., 2018). Lyons et al. (2015) indicated that during the late 1990s and early 2000s, Generation X also had a reputation for being job hoppers. The impact of education level on turnover intention is not new; employees are more likely to depart if they have a degree.

### **The Work Itself**

Job content was related to turnover intention with Generation Y, Generation X, and Baby Boomers but was more important for Generation Y employees (Lub et al., 2016). Job content is the description of the work itself, such as how interesting or challenging the work is to the employee (Lub et al., 2016). Benny Fong (2018) suggested that Generation Y employees leave if they do not enjoy the work. An employee's unhappiness with the work itself may lead to them departing an organization. A lack of interest in the job may lead employees to seek other opportunities outside the organization.

### **Transition**

In Section 1 I explored factors that may enhance or degrade job embeddedness within an organization. Section 1 included research on the retention of Generation Y employees in relation to other generations. According to research, Generation Y employees turnover more quickly than previous generations (Blatter et al., 2012). Some researchers argue that employees tend to change jobs earlier in their careers and that there are more similarities than differences in generations (Zaharee et al., 2018). Tangible factors, such as education level and salary, impact an employee's decision to leave an organization (Friar & Mulyani, 2018; Salvant et al., 2020). Intangible factors, such as organizational support or perceived fairness, influence an employee's decision to leave an organization (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017).

Section 2 of this study will detail the process for research methods and design, data collection methods, data collection instruments, ethical precautions that will be taken when working with participants, and data collection techniques and instruments used during the study. Section 2 will also include the target population and data analysis methods and explain why the study is reliable and valid. Section 3 will report the findings collected during the study and provide directions for future research.

## Section 2: The Project

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore management strategies that retail industry managers use to retain Generation Y employees. The targeted population consisted of managers of six retail industry companies with Generation Y employees and who had successfully retained Generation Y employees over 12 months. The geographical location for the study was San Diego County, California. The implications for positive social change include the potential to provide greater work-life balance for Generation Y employees, thus ensuring less stress in their lives. Less stress in Generation Y employees may lead to better familial relationships and physical health and mental health. Additionally, fewer organizational costs may be associated with employees being retained because they do not need to be replaced. This may mean more funds are available for corporate social responsibility projects, such as charity donations.

### **Role of the Researcher**

The qualitative researcher is the primary data collection and analysis instrument during a study (Clark & Vealé, 2018). I was the primary research instrument; therefore, I collected data from participants via interview. I adhered to procedures established in *The Belmont Report* that establish ethical principles and the protection of participants. *The Belmont Report* also influenced policies that ensure researchers are held accountable for unethical practices and that participants are adequately informed before conducting a study (Schupmann & Moreno, 2020). My role as the researcher was to ensure that

participants were adequately informed before the start of the study. Additionally, I was responsible for maintaining the participants' privacy throughout the study.

Researchers need to understand and address the bias that may exist in framing the research question, theoretical framework, sources of data, and interview questions (Mackieson et al., 2019). Researchers should consider bias and ethics as researcher bias, and ethical behavior may influence the outcome of a study (Johnson et al., 2020). I did not know the participants of this study, prior to initially reaching out to ask them to participate. Like the research participants, I had experience working in a leadership position where I retained a multigenerational workforce for over one year; therefore, I worked to lessen bias by gathering data from my perspective. To limit bias, I asked open-ended questions that allowed participants to provide an account of their experiences freely. I asked open-ended questions to allow participants to provide answers without being steered in any direction. Following the interview protocol (see Appendix A) helped me decrease bias because I used a standardized approach to asking questions and follow up with the participants to ensure that I interpreted their answers appropriately.

In qualitative research, some participants may answer questions with answers that they believe are acceptable rather than what matches reality (Bergen & Labonté, 2019). I asked neutral rather than socially sensitive questions to help avoid participant social bias. I additionally

assured participants at the start of the interview that they were not being judged to alleviate pressure to provide a socially acceptable answer. I interviewed managers in San Diego County and recorded and transcribed the interviews verbatim to help ensure that I interpreted the responses from the participants' perspectives rather than through my lens

or framework. I mitigated bias by using member checking. I provided participants with a summary of the data analysis to ensure that I accurately capture what they say.

### **Participants**

The selection of participants was from a population of retail industry managers in San Diego County. I chose managers who had successfully retained Generation Y employees over 12 months. I selected participants in retail industry businesses geographically located within my target area of San Diego County. I randomly contacted businesses chosen from the San Diego Chamber of Commerce website. I randomly selected them by using the total number of retail businesses listed in the San Diego Chamber of Commerce (64) and then having Microsoft Excel generate six random numbers between 1 and 64. The randomly generated numbers corresponded with the list of retail businesses in the San Diego Chamber of Commerce, which are listed in alphabetical order. From here, I reached out to managers who worked at the selected organizations and asked if they were willing to participate in my study. I generated additional numbers as managers from my original six did not wish to participate in the study. In the invitation email (see Appendix B), I included the informed consent form. To establish business rapport, I communicated the importance of the study to the manager. I asked for them to respond to the email after agreeing to the informed consent with the words "I consent." Before the interview, I followed up with a confirmation email and thank them for agreeing to participate. I ensured they know that their information will be kept confidential.



## **Research Method and Design**

### **Research Method**

Qualitative methodology is collecting data and conducting an in-depth analysis (Stenfors et al., 2020). The qualitative interview process allows the researcher to gather descriptive information from participants through a script while allowing openness to expand knowledge of the topic being addressed (Steils, 2021). I used the qualitative methodology because I used interviews to collect in-depth information by asking open-ended questions to obtain nonuniform data for in-depth analysis to address this study's purpose. Researchers use the quantitative methodology to examine the statistical significance of correlations or casual relationships in testing hypotheses rather than providing a deeper understanding of the study (Hochbein & Smeaton, 2018). The natural sciences tend to use quantitative analysis, while the social sciences tend to use qualitative analysis (Strijker et al., 2020). I did not choose quantitative methodology because I was not testing the quantitative variables' relationships for group or groups' differences by testing hypotheses. Additionally, most of the retention strategies identified by the academic literature involve the social sciences. Mixed methodology is a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies where both sets of results are interpreted and may compensate for the weaknesses of the other method (Beach & Kaas, 2020). Mixed methodology may be useful when there is a need to triangulate data from quantitative and qualitative data types (Yin, 2018). Mixed methodology includes quantitative methodology that was outside the scope of my study because I was not testing hypotheses about variables'. Researchers using mixed methodology do not always provide a balance between qualitative and quantitative research, as researchers tend to favor one of the two

methodologies (Ramlo, 2020). Given that this was my first study, it was more appropriate to focus on one methodology rather than trying to tie quantitative methodology to a study where qualitative research was the most appropriate.

### **Research Design**

I considered four qualitative designs to explore Generation Y retention strategies: case study, phenomenological ethnographical, and narrative research. Case study design captures and interprets participants' voices (Gregory, 2020). Yin (2018) indicated that a case study is appropriate when the researcher wants to answer "how" or "why" questions in-depth. A single case study involves a unique unit, while a multiple case study involves looking at the phenomenon through the view of more than one unit (Archer et al., 2019). A multiple case study was appropriate to address retention strategies as the study dealt with information from more than one case unit and sought data from six units. I used a multiple case study design to obtain data by interviewing managers from more than one business. Open-ended questions allow the researcher to obtain in-depth information from participants during interviews (Steils, 2021). Through the interview process, I obtained in-depth information about Generation Y employees' retention strategies.

Researchers use the phenomenological design to focus on the personal meanings of the lived experiences of participants and the memory of their experiences (Adams & van Manen, 2017). Phenomenological design is commonly used to understand better participants lived experiences and the meaning of the phenomenon (Schupmann & Moreno, 2020; Thomas, 2021). Phenomenological design was not appropriate for my study as I was not trying to research participants' memories or lived experiences.

The ethnographical design involves studying culture and considering cultural points of view (Schrottner, 2008). Ethnographic researchers may identify patterned meanings in everyday life experiences of participants (Field-Springer, 2020). In this study, the managers' and organizational cultures were not focused when exploring retention strategies. There was also no need to organize participants into ethnic or cultural groups as I was not exploring differences related to ethnicity or cultural-based factors about the participants.

A researcher using narrative design has participants tell personal life stories (George & Selimos, 2018). Researchers using the narrative design focus on participants' chronological and biographical accounts (Eichsteller, 2019). In this study, the information provided through obtaining personal stories of the managers did not capture information that only broadly addressed the research questions. Thus, in using a narrative design, I would have gathered data that exceeded the scope of the study. Additionally, there was no requirement for this study to address the research questions in chronological order.

### **Data Saturation**

Data saturation is a point at which gathering new data will not generate additional information tied to the research question (Lowe et al., 2018). Data saturation is described by Alam (2020) as the point at which additional data collection does not add anything to the data bank. Guest et al. (2020) found that 6-7 interviews capture the data necessary to develop the themes that answer the research questions. To achieve data saturation, I interviewed six participants and determine that no new information will be uncovered by conducting more interviews. I identified themes through coding, as described in the data

analysis section of this paper. If I had encountered unexpected developments with the first six participant interviews, I would have increased the sample size of my study and conducted more interviews until I was confident that I would not uncover new information with further interviews. I chose participants who had successfully retained employees for longer than a period of 12 months.

### **Population and Sampling**

Participant selection in a qualitative study is not a randomized process as participants should be selected that are expected to supply useful data in answering the research question (Johnson et al., 2020). Purposive sampling is used when researchers want to find participants who are optimal for answering the questions posed by the researcher (Johnson et al., 2020). Purposive sampling helps increase the depth of the study rather than the breadth (Campbell et al., 2020). I used the purposive sampling method for this study, specifically the homogenous method that consisted of choosing the criteria for participants and then interviewing a sample within the population that meets those criteria. Researchers using the homogenous method will look for participants with similar characteristics to avoid including participants who are not relevant to the study (Andrade, 2021). My target population consisted of six lower-level managers. There were no age criteria for the managers other than 18 years or older to sign the informed consent, and that they must have retained Generation Y employees for at least 12 months. The sex and racial characteristics of the managers were not used to select participants as that was unnecessary information for this study. A strength of collecting data from specific and defined sources was that the information gathered was relevant to the study (Campbell et al., 2020). The recommended sample size for a qualitative study was six, according to

Guest et al. (2020). One of the weaknesses of using purposive sampling was that individuals who fall outside of the sampling criteria may have valuable insight into answering the study's research question but may not participate (Ames et al., 2019). Additionally, I did not include all managers who were eligible for this study. I approached six businesses to find six managers willing to participate in the study. The rationale for the sample size was so that I would reach data saturation. The researcher's judgment is used to determine when the research questions have been fully answered, and data saturation has been obtained (Blaikie, 2018). Data saturation is the point at which additional data does not provide new information to address the research question (Guest et al., 2020).

### **Ethical Research**

Informed consent is part of obtaining ethical approval for a study (Goncalves, 2020). I sent out invitation letters to potential participants with an explanation of the study and expectations for their participation (Appendix B). I notified potential participants that their information would not be reported to the company and that I would keep their information confidential. The invitation email included the informed consent form. The invitation stated that they needed to read the consent form and respond to the email with "I consent" to indicate they want to participate in the research study and agree with the information in the consent form. Some participants may wish to withdraw if they suspect their information will be linked to the data in the study (Broekstra et al., 2021). Potential participants read in the invitation that they can withdraw at any point during the study, and there would not be consequences to them or their business if they withdraw from the study. Participants could have withdrawn by contacting me either via phone or

email. I did not use an incentive for this study. For this study, I stored the journal for 5 years inside a locked container and the digital data in a password protected Google Drive folder before destroying the data. Before I destroy the data. I am the only person with access to the locked containers or digital folder.

Walden University requires all doctoral students to complete an Institutional Review Board (IRB) process. I completed the IRB process before collecting data from any participants. My IRB number is 09-02-22-0743134. The number indicates that the IRB reviewed and approved my proposal and that the proposal meets the ethical standards of Walden University. My final report did not contain any personally identifiable information and instead used a sequential naming convention for each participant and organization (e.g., P1 and O3)

### **Data Collection Instruments**

When a qualitative study involves interviews, the researcher and the interview questions are the data collection instruments (Roberts, 2020). In a qualitative study, the researcher acts as the primary data collection instrument during the qualitative interview portions of the study (Hamdi et al., 2018). I was the primary data collection instrument for this study. As the primary data collection instrument, I collected information about the business from the San Diego Chamber of Commerce and the business' website. The data from the organization's websites included information regarding their pay, benefits, and sustainability programs. I also used a journal that I use to note body language, facial expressions, and other participant behavior that the audio recording did not capture. I purchased and used a voice recorder to record the interview with a phone recorder app as

a backup. The backup phone app was not needed as I was able to save all data from the primary recording device following each interview.

As the primary data collection instrument, I conducted and recorded semistructured interviews with participants. I used the interview protocol (see Appendix A) to keep the discussion on topic and ensure that the research problem was adequately addressed during the interview. To increase the reliability and validity of the study, I used audio record each interview. After the interviews, I used conduct member checking, providing summaries of the data analysis to participants so they could validate my interpretations of the data collected.

### **Data Collection Technique**

To collect data, I used interview participants in person. No participants requested a virtual interview or any COVID-19 related precautions. Nonverbal communication may sometimes contradict what is being verbally expressed during an interview (Tasker & Cisneroz, 2019). An advantage of the data collection technique is that I could read the participant's body language. I asked the participant my interview and follow-up questions to have them expand on their answers. Open-ended questions in qualitative research may lead to unexpected results (Tasker & Cisneroz, 2019). I asked follow-up questions to gather richer information and have customers expand upon their answers, which could not be done with a survey. A disadvantage of interviews was that I needed to keep my sample size small to complete the study within a reasonable amount of time. I recorded each interview with the participant's permission for later analysis. The protocol that I used is in Appendix A when I interviewed participants.

I obtained company documents from the public websites that each company had available. The company websites publicly displayed information regarding pay and benefits either on the website or in a downloadable PDF format. Some of the company websites contained information regarding how the company impacts the environment or local community. The websites were easy to navigate and clearly displayed what the company offered to employees. This is discussed in further detail in Section 3. In accordance with Appendix A, I used member checking, which involves presenting participants with a summary of the data analysis to ensure that I had correctly interpreted their responses. Member checking is used to validate participant responses and is important to increase the trustworthiness of a study (Slettebø, 2021). No participants disagreed with my summaries or interpretations of their responses.

### **Data Organization Technique**

I kept track of the digital data recordings and transcripts by grouping files within Google Drive to ensure that data from each participant was kept separate in different files. Digital data repositories allow researchers to access their data remotely and help keep the data secure (Antonio et al., 2020). The files included all correspondence, interview notes, and audio recordings related to each participant. My journal segregated information based on the information received from each participant. I designated five pages in the journal for each participant. Each participant had a tab separating their journal section from the other participants so that information does not mix. Researchers who organize their data during the collection process will be more efficient when later accessing that data (Antonio et al., 2020). I made a screenshot of public documents that I viewed and placed them into a word document. These were saved into a folder separate



from the participants information so that they cannot be connected to participants. All digital data will be kept in a password-protected database for 5 years and will then be destroyed. Outside of the journal, I did not obtain any physical documents from participants.

### **Data Analysis**

The four types of triangulation for case study research are methodological triangulation, data triangulation, investigator triangulation, and theory triangulation (Yin, 2018). Researchers use methodological triangulation when information is combined from multiple sources for the same phenomenon within the same method (Abdalla et al., 2018). Methodological triangulation was appropriate for my study as I conducted semi-structured interviews with participants from multiple businesses regarding this phenomenon of retention of Generation Y employees, company documents, and the notes in the journal I made during the interviews.

A researcher uses data triangulation occurs when they combine analytical angles (Kern, 2018). A researcher using methodological triangulation may conduct interviews and then analyze the transcripts of those interviews, while a researcher using data triangulation may use interviews and surveys on the same issue to triangulate the data. I collected data via the interview process and did not gather multiple data types, such as using surveys or observing employees; therefore, data triangulation was inappropriate. Researchers use investigator triangulation when more than one researcher provides multiple observations and conclusions in a study (Archibald, 2016). This was inappropriate for my study as I did not have any additional researchers aiding me with the study and, therefore, could not perform this type of triangulation. Researchers use theory

triangulation when applying multiple theories to their data to find similarities and differences (Llosa, 2019). This was not appropriate for my study as the purpose of the study was not to compare areas of agreement or disagreement between theories but rather to compare and analyze responses from participants.

I used Yin's 5-Step method for analyzing data which consisted of compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding (Castleberry & Nolan, 2018). To compile the data, I interviewed managers in person and transcribed the interviews into a Microsoft Word document. The managers were categorized using an alphanumeric code. I used the letter P and numbered them [1]–[7]. I disassembled the data using analysis software. Analysis software allows researchers to expedite the analysis process because the data becomes searchable and easier to manipulate (Cypress, 2019). I used transcription software and then transferred the completed transcripts into the Atlas ti.9 software to create codes. I used Atlas ti.9 for Windows to assist with reassembling and analyzing the transcribed data. The Atlas ti.9 software assisted me by allowing me to highlight sentences within the transcripts and add unique codes to participant responses. I then compared the codes from each interview to create themes to use within this paper. Other researchers, such as Oh et al. (2020) and Feyissa et al. (2019), have used earlier versions of Atlas to analyze interview transcripts. Coding the data assisted in finding themes and patterns within the study (Yin, 2018). Transcripts alone cannot capture all the data from an interview (Oluwafemi et al., 2021). Participants maintained consistent demeanor during the interviews which provided useful data for Atlas ti.9. I used Atlas ti.9 to assist with finding similarities and differences in participant responses in interpreting

the data. Participants did not disagree with my summaries from the member checking process which validates the information from the transcripts and journal.

Interactions between the interviewer and participants may result in new themes (Snodgrass et al., 2020). Analyzing the data allows researchers to compare themes from the dataset (Vaismoradi & Snelgrove, 2019). I looked for similarities and differences between key themes resulting from the interview process. I achieved this by comparing the themes from the studies cited in my literature review and comparing them to themes from my interviews combined with journal entries and other relevant data from my study. I tied the themes from my analysis to the conceptual framework by using the subparagraphs from the literature review. The subparagraphs from the literature review all relate to job embeddedness which was the conceptual framework for my study. I compared the themes from my thematic analysis, such as employee engagement and communication, with related subparagraphs from the literature review.

### **Reliability and Validity**

#### **Reliability**

Reliability represents the adequacy of the data within a qualitative study (Jude et al., 2018). Yin (2018) suggested that reliability refers to the repeatability of a study while Rudeck et al. (2020) indicated that the repeatability of a study may be used to test the reliability of the study. Reliability was described by Schoenebeck et al. (2019) as the extent to which the results of the measurements used during a study produce the same answer. Schoenebeck et al. (2019) stated reliability is the extent to which a community concurs with the interpretations, readings, or responses to a set of data.

**Dependability**

Dependability is tied to the data gathered process (Amin et al., 2020). A dependability study is one in which another researcher will find similar results (McGinley et al., 2021). To increase dependability, I used the interview protocol in Appendix A. This allowed me to maintain consistency with each interview. I used member checking to ensure that I correctly interpreted the participants' responses. Member checking enhances the rigor of a qualitative study (King, 2021). To do this, I emailed the participants within 2 weeks after interviewing them and provided them with a summary of the interview. I asked them to review and return the summary within 2 days to ensure I received timely feedback. None of the participants told me that I interpreted their responses incorrectly.

**Validity**

Santee et al. (2019) stated that validity is the degree to which a study's theories and evidence support the data's interpretations. Researchers should identify and address threats to validity when conducting a qualitative study (FitzPatrick, 2019). Collecting rich data is essential to increasing a study's validity (FitzPatrick, 2019). Triangulation may be achieved by finding where multiple points of data merge. (FitzPatrick, 2019). I enriched my data by performing member checking to ensure I correctly interpret the information collected during the interview process.

**Credibility**

A researcher should mitigate threats to the validity of their study by addressing credibility (Ampatzoglou et al., 2019). Credibility is assessing the researcher's interpretation of the data to the original dataset (Langtree et al., 2019). Credibility may be achieved through member checking and other techniques (Liao & Hitchcock, 2018). I

achieved credibility by adhering to the strict interview protocol listed in Appendix A and using member checking. Additionally, I asked follow up questions during the interview to clarify answers or obtain a clearer response from participants. In some instances, I repeated or reworded participant responses to them to ensure that I interpreted their response accurately.

### **Transferability**

Transferability is the extent to which a study may be applied in other settings or groups of people in a particular context (Daniel, 2019). Transferability may be limited due to the scope of the study. I increased transferability by strictly adhering to the interview protocol, which consists of asking the same interview questions to each participant. I used the previously described data analysis protocol to ensure that I reviewed the data uniformly, which may be easier for future researchers to replicate. I conducted interviews until I reached the point of data saturation, where new interviews provided little or no data. Data saturation increases the transferability of a study (Carminati, 2018).

### **Confirmability**

Confirmability may be compared to objectivity and verifies that the researcher's bias and assumptions are not included in the study (Langtree et al., 2019). Confirmability may be achieved by asking open-ended questions and following up to possibly explore new themes presented by the participant (Tasker & Cisneroz, 2019). To ensure confirmability, I used open-ended questions during my interviews with participants. I followed up with participants after the interview to have them review a summary of the interview through a process called member checking. Member checking allows a

researcher to verify the data after it has been collected and analyzed (Naidu & Prose, 2018). Member checking is part of the interview protocol described in Appendix A.

### **Data Saturation**

Data saturation is a point at which gathering new data will not generate additional information tied to the research question (Lowe et al., 2018). Data saturation is described by Alam (2020) as the point at which additional data collection does not add anything to the data bank. Guest et al. (2020) found that 6-7 interviews capture the data necessary to develop the themes that answer research questions. Researchers must ensure that codes found during the interview process are changed into themes (Guest et al., 2020). A researcher reaches data saturation when there is no new codes or themes being developed by analyzing participant data (Guest et al., 2020). To achieve data saturation, I interviewed six participants and reached a point where I determined that no new information or themes would be uncovered through additional interviews. I found that information discovered after the fourth interview did not lead to new themes and the new information collected was primarily unique stories or practices that fit within one of the preexisting themes uncovered during a previous interview. For example, P5 and P6 mentioned the importance of communication with employees which was a theme already established by P1 and P2. Therefore, I concluded that data saturation was reached after conducting six interviews.

### **Transition and Summary**

In Section 2, I reviewed the literature about Generation Y turnover and the various factors that contribute to turnover. I compared generational differences and discussed how generations respond to factors internal to the organization. I also discussed

how job embeddedness begins during the hiring process and how leadership may influence an employee's desire to depart an organization voluntarily. Section 2 contained important background information that will help with understanding Section 3.

In Section 3, I will present the findings based on information from the participants, journal notes, and public company documents. The three themes identified in the study will be discussed based on the synthesized information from my primary, secondary, and tertiary sources of data and the academic literature. In Section 3, I will discuss the applications to professional practice, implications for social change, recommended actions, my reflections on the study, and conclusion.

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

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore retention strategies for managers of Generation Y employees to reduce turnover costs, improve employee mental health, and increase employee job security. The data used for this study included six semistructured interviews, notes taken during the interviews, and publicly available company documents. I identified three main themes during the study: (a) compensation, benefits, and recognition, (b) employee engagement and communication, and (c) employee organizational relationship. After reviewing the findings, I will review the application to professional practice, implications for social change, recommendations for action, recommendations for further research, provide reflections on my experience, and conclude the study.

#### **Presentation of Findings**

The purpose of my study was to address the following research question: What management strategies do retail industry managers use to retain Generation Y employees for over 12 months? To collect data, I conducted six semistructured interviews with managers who have successfully retained Generation Y employees for a period of at least 12 months. Prior to each interview, I invited participants via email to participate in my study and requested that they reply with “I consent.” I used two recording devices during the interview. I asked six open-ended interview questions in accordance with the interview protocol in Appendix A and asked follow up questions when necessary. None of the interviews exceeded 34 minutes.



Within 2 weeks of the interview, I transcribed the recordings and emailed summaries of the interview to the participants in a process called member checking. During the member checking process, none of the participants had corrections with the summaries provided to them. To protect the privacy of the participants and organizations, I labeled the participants: P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6 and their respective organizations: O1, O2, O3, O4, O5, O6. I used Atlas ti.9 to assist with coding and analyzing the participants' responses. Three themes emerged when analyzing the data: (a) compensation, benefits, and recognition, (b) employee engagement and communication, and (c) employee organizational relationship.

**Table 1**

*Frequency of Themes in Interviews*

Themes	N	Mentioned by % of Participants
Compensation, benefits, and recognition	30	100%
Employee engagement and communication	80	100%
Employee organizational relationship	25	83%

**Theme 1: Compensation, Benefits, and Recognition**

The first theme resulted from interviews from participants, journal notes, and company information available on their website. The data from the organization's websites included information regarding their pay, benefits, and sustainability programs. Employees have higher levels of embeddedness and are more likely stay at an

organization if they have higher salaries (Ampofo & Karatepe, 2022). Income level is moderately crucial for Generation Y employees according to Frye et al. (2020). P2 made a statement that is coherent with the academic research, “They [Generation Y] think their time is worth more than the next person’s. And that ‘Oh, you’re asking this of me. But you need to pay me more.’” P3 also indicated the importance of pay in retaining employees and even suggested that poor pay increases even deter employees from wanted to be promoted, “and that kind of deters them. Because they’re like why am I going to take on all this responsibility if I am only getting \$1 more?” P3 went on to say, “I think our company has gotten better at it and needs to improve a little more. As you know we are living in some really rough times and people need to be compensated fairly.”

When asked what retention strategies have been the most effective, P5 stated, “In terms of longevity, it is the ability to continually grow and make more money”. P5 also mentioned that title is important to some employees when discussing benefits and career paths:

In retail, movement is always to become a manager and then decide where to go from there. Maybe it is a bigger assignment or a bigger store. But is always kind of getting a higher title. Title is important. Title isn’t money, but is always growing and growing is always money.

P6 noted that retention is difficult once an employee has started shopping for a job:

And now the one thing that becomes difficult is the moment that an employee starts shopping for a job, they’ll try to leverage different pay. It’s gotten worse. So the most difficult thing to deal with is going to be if you’re being offered a higher pay rate. And for that, there’s not much you can do, right. I do have the ability to

increase wages, but I am not going to do that just because they want and did something else and got a quote.

P5 also has the ability to increase wages, “Yes. Because, you know, work for an organization that has multiple cities, states, and so we have guidelines. I’m more held accountable to meeting the total goals than the individual pay scale, if that makes sense”.

P6 also indicated that O6 has not made many changes to their retention strategy but that it matters of whether the employees feel that they are being fairly compensated, “There are employees that have been here for many years, but we haven’t really changed our strategy much. It’s just a matter of are they paid for the job they do. Do they *feel* like they are?” Akgunduz and Cin (2015) indicated that fairness is based on the equal distribution of resources. Bae et al. (2022) also suggested that employees who are early in their career are more likely to remain at an organization if they believe they are being paid fairly. Bae et al. (2022) further stated that employers may increase retention simply by providing information on other employee’s pay.

Managers who recognize employees may increase retention, but there are additional strategies that may increase employee retention. In some cases, monetary incentives or other rewards, may not have as much relevance to employees. Varying interests and differences in demographics may make it difficult to fairly distribute rewards (Froese et al., 2019). P5 stated, “if they’re getting that recognition from being effective or whatever they’re doing, because they’re engaged in it, they’re gonna stay longer”. Later in the interview, P5 repeated the importance of recognition. When asked about ways that P5 mitigated barriers to retention of Generation Y employees, P5 responded with, “I guess making people feel important”. P4 mentioned that monetary

incentive programs are not always effective when discussing gift cards as a reward system. P4 stated, “a lot of incentives really didn’t, they didn’t care because of the fact that they don’t need it. For example, what is the \$25 gift card to you if your parents are rich?”. P4 went on to mention that recognition may be more important if you are in a high end area, “when it comes to high end neighborhoods, or what I call affluent neighborhoods, it’s more of the positive feedback and reinforcement”. Reward systems may be emotional, such as recognition and should be tailored to the organization (Koo et al., 2020).

Employers offering benefits may increase retention within their organization. P1 stated, “We offer tuition programs for college students”. P3 said that O3 offers opportunities for education to allow employees to move to other positions, “Going back to the opportunity, getting your license is something that can carry to other positions, even outside of [O3]”. According to information from company websites, O1, O2, O3, and O6 offer tuition based assistance as a benefit which confirmed the information provided by participants. P5 noted that O5 did offer educational benefits, “It’s basically free, you apply for it, and you get free education”. Education level it is not a guarantee that they will be less embedded within their organization even if it makes them more marketable in the job market (Aboul-Ela, 2018). Aboul-Ela found that education level did not significantly impact job embeddedness. P3 stated that O3 offers licences that they may carry to positions outside of the company. When asked if P3 believes that offering licenses to employees negatively impact retention, P3 responded with, “I would say they're more likely to stay”. P3 provided an example of an employee who had their license paid for by O3:

But then her manager actually said, ‘We pay for all your licensing’. She went and got her license. She said, ‘Wow, they they push me to get that opportunity instantly. That made me want to stay longer and continue to develop’ And, you know, higher positioning inventory specialist, so it generally leads to retention, the fact that they see that we’ll pay for it.

Although training and education from the organization may lead to a more embedded workforce, employing someone who has received instruction from outside of the organization may not guarantee embeddedness within an organization (Aboul-Ela, 2018).

Paying for employees education may lead to higher retention but employers may also offer promotion opportunities within their organization to retain employees. Perceived outside opportunities significantly influenced Generation Y employee turnover (Friar & Mulyani, 2018). Feng and Cao (2017) echoed this and indicated younger employees have a higher chance of leaving due to openness to new experiences. P2 believes in training employees for every position so that they may continue up the ladder if they desire:

They run the ship, they an handle all of my job responsibilities, because I believe in training everybody for every position. So my sales associates can do management in any management project and vice versa. Because I don’t believe in ‘just oh, you’re only trained in that.

P2 goes on to say, “I like to cross train everybody so that way if a job opening opens up, whether it’s here or in another store, and they want to keep moving up the ladder in the business, they’re already trained in it.” Internal transfer opportunities may not necessarily lead to lower turnover according to Steel and Landon (2010). In contrast, Porter et al.

(2016) found that employees with more internal networking opportunities are less likely to leave an organization. P3 echoes Porter when stating,

I really just introduced the what [O3] has to offer and growth potential that we have. I really try to motivate my people that whether you want to be a store manager one day, whether you want to be a district manager, or go on the HR side, [O3] has a variety of opportunities.

P5 also indicated that discussing opportunities will lead to higher retention:

So when you meet them where they are, they tend to have a connection with you and want to perform for you. And if they see that there's growth potential, something that they can do quickly, you're more apt to keep them longer. Generation Y is a lot about how things impact them and they want to move, generally speaking, to do different things. Whether it's a different area, but how do they, how do they make more money quicker than in years past?

When asked if it is frowned upon for employees to look for higher paying jobs at other store locations within the organization, P5 replied,

No, it's not frowned upon? It's actually some something as a tactic to develop talent as an organization, and how do you keep people growing and moving in? That's how you move along any organization? I think it's individual, every leader has a different take on it. Some I've seen many people who protect theirs, you know, they don't want to go anywhere. I think that's the way you lose people. But if you help somebody to better themselves, like in their life, right, you're the vested interest in them, then they're going to be more successful. And they'll probably find that as their loyalty to the company versus to the person. But it's

yeah, I think in general for myself, I would support anyone whether you know, you want to be, you want to work in our asset protection department, in retail, not everything is selling you know. And you want to become a police officer eventually that's what the goal is I'm going to help you get there by developing a job that you learn today that community mindset.

Data from organizational websites also indicated that salary, pay, and benefits were important. Website data showed lists of benefits and described pay as competitive. This is in line with what participants stated during their interviews. The O1 website stated that the company would offer adoption assistance after an employee worked their for longer than one year. Similar to statements made by P3 and P5, the O4 website noted that the majority of managerial positions during the past year were filled with internal employees. O1, O2, O3, O4, O5, and O6 all displayed their benefits at the top of the page or made it easily accessible. In addition to competitive benefits, time based benefits appear to be another way organizations are trying to retain employees. Further research should explore the effectiveness of benefits that are applied after a specified period of time.

The findings relate back to the conceptual framework as salary, benefits, and recognition are all factors that influence an employees level of job embeddedness. As discussed by participants and the academic literature, employees may depart if they find a role with higher salary or feel they will not grow at the company. Employers who provide opportunities within the organization may increase job embeddedness and decrease employee's desire to depart the organization. Managers noted that for organizations to retain employees, managers may need to help employees look for other roles at other

store locations. P3 and P5 noted that internal transfers help employees grow within an organization. Previous researchers note the importance of salary and Ngotngamwong (2019) even suggested that salary was the most important factor in retaining Generation Y employees. P3 noted and Koo et al. (2020) described reward systems as be emotional, while Salvant et al. (2019) suggested that salary increases were the best form of recognition to increase job embeddedness.

## **Theme 2: Employee Engagement and Communication**

The way that employees interact with their managers may influence their desire to stay at an organization. If an employee has a positive relationship with their manager they tend to stay at an organization (Johnson, 2020). This relationship is less significant for employees who have been at the organization for longer periods of time (Zakarauskaitė & Valickienė, 2020). P2 echoed the academic literature, “I treat my employees how I wanted to be treated when I was in their position. So, I try to offer that respect that I never got”. P2 goes on to say, “I tend to close twice a week just because I do not believe it is fair to the other managers to always have to close. I always hated to close when I was in that position.” P3 also indicated it is important to care about employee’s well-being, “So kind of understanding them, what they need. I care about my team a lot is the biggest thing. And that’s what people want to work for. You know, they don’t want to work for someone who’s just like, you’re another number in our company.” P5 mentioned the importance of maintaining relationships with employees, “I make it a habit, or purposefully connect, with pretty much everybody who works during the day”. P5 goes on to say, “If they’re carrying on a conversation with you, in a normal manner, I guess I would say there’s some engagement there”. Later in the interview, P5 mentioned that if



you show a vested interest in the employees, they tend to show more loyalty, “But if you help someone to better themselves, like in their life, you’re vested in them, then they’re going to be more successful. And they’ll probably find that as loyalty to the company”.

P6 also indicated that engaging with employees is important for retention, “If you have a workforce that you want to keep, then you just talk to them, ‘What is going on? What is hindering you throughout the day? What is it that I can do to help support you?’”. To clarify, P6 mentioned earlier in the interview that some employees are unproductive and that if it appears that unproductive employees are going to leave the organization, it may be better for everyone if they left. P6 goes on to state, “But just as far as retention, it is not a company focus but I can tell you that being personal with the associates, showing that you care about them, their families, their lives, they’re going to generally want to stay. They’re a little happier and want to work here.”

P4 found that engagement level is something that may be used to measure the effectiveness of retention strategies. When asked what methods are used to assess the effectiveness of their strategies, P4 said, “So there are three factors that I personally use. Number one is to see the engagement level, and what I mean by the engagement level is with the kind of feedback, the kind of motivation, and enthusiasm that the employees are showing.” The second and third measurements provided by P4 were participation at potlucks and turnover rate. Work events were also mentioned by P6, “We try to provide them with things like days of the week, we’ll do certain things like popsicle Wednesday and try to incorporate different foods and make coming to work kind of fun”. P6 mentioned that fun work events cannot always be attended by the entire staff, “There’s always gonna be people that maybe don’t work that day. We also have a night crew. So,

we have to be mindful of the fact there's not going to be leftovers for the night crew.” When asked how this is mitigated, P6 responded with, “We've started scheduling different times for food arriving or being available.” Creating a fun work environment may be another way to increase employee's desire to remain at an organization. Social networking within an organization may negatively influence employee turnover intentions (Singh, 2019). P1 stated, “I like to keep it fun and light for most part.” P2 echoed this when asked how P2 assessed the effectiveness of previously implemented strategies, “They actually started enjoying coming to work and made it fun”. P2 continued later with, “But it's more just being able to enjoy coming to work and not dreading it. I hated dreading work.” Energy is an important factor to creating a fun working environment according to P3, “At my store, I try to create a culture of ‘Hey, let's have some fun with this, let's compete, let's try and work to beat each other and make it fun.’”

Several participants stressed the important of treating employees like individuals, rather than putting them in a generational group. Generational stereotypes may vary based on the amount of generational diversity within the organization (Moore & Krause, 2021). When employees are groups based on generation, they tend to be less satisfied at work and more likely to leave the organization (Moore & Krause, 2021). P4 stated, “Everybody is an individual. So, everybody has a personality.” P4 later goes on to say, “It's not fair to separate the generations, because a lot of the traits come from their family, their parents.” Near the end of the interview, P4 addressed this again,

I will give any manager this advice: Don't lump a group, and when I say group, I mean, like a generation together. Whereas treat everyone like an individual

because that way you're able to see the whole picture. Versus, I have heard a lot of people say 'Oh, millennials are lazy'. And I can tell you from my opinions, they're not.

P4 goes on to provide another example regarding Generation X stereotypes at a previous organization. P5 had a similar statement during the interview when talking about training programs, "So we've tried different ways of individualizing. I guess we do more individualizing, more buy in." P5 later states,

I guess they're not so different from any generation. In terms of, understanding that people are people. If you treat people well and understand different needs, you're going to get the same kind of results. So, engaging with people, communicating, explaining is always going to build retention. You can't keep everyone but if it works for every generation, you just adjust to what their particular needs are.

P2 stated, "I always try to put my employees on a shift with people they get along with whether they're in the store or out of the store, just the personality types. I don't like two headstrong people working together because they will headbutt a lot." P2 provided an example of treating employees like individuals although they did not state directly that this is what they were doing. Middle-aged employees are less likely to face workplace stereotypes than their older or younger counterparts (von Hippel et al., 2019). Given that a portion of Generation Y employees may be classified as middle aged, generational stereotyping may be less of an issue for Generation Y employees could be an issue that will adversely influence Generation X, and Generation Z in the near future. Future research should explore the changes in generational problems over time.

Four of the participants indicated that one of the most important things a manager can do to retain employees is leading by example. P1 stated “No big job, or little job, is too much for any kind of manager.” P1 later states, “We are a hands-on management team. So, we all ring the register, we have the same expectations as the cashier”. P2 echoed this by saying, “Lead by example. I don’t ask them to do anything I wouldn’t do myself.” P2 repeats this statement later in the interview and goes on to say,

In a retail environment, the store manager is usually in the back doing whatever they want. They’re not usually out on the sales floor, throwing [product] up, helping customers cash out. And that is something I have seen in stores as a customer and as an employee working in a retail business.

P2 goes on to stress the important of doing the same work that you ask of your employees. P3 further expanded on this by stating,

The biggest key for me is leading by example. So, for example, I walk into some store and I know a good half of the managers in my district who don’t work their truck and they don’t touch any of the load. They just supervise like ‘Hey you’re going to do this part, you’re going to do this part, and you’re going to do this part’. What I do is, I’m hands on, I jump on my load. As soon as it gets here, I do everything I can to show my employees ‘Hey this is how we do it.’

P4 provided an example of cleaning up dog feces in the restroom and similarly stated, “I wouldn’t ever ask an employee to do something that I wouldn’t do as a manager.” P4 goes on to state, “Your staff will usually see that, ‘Hey, my boss is doing this, then it’s not above him or her to do it. Therefore, I should be able to do it because I am collecting a paycheck from him or her.” All participants answered this confidently

and maintained eye contact when answering the question. Additionally, participants responded quickly, indicating that leading by example is something that P1, P2, P3, and P4 believe is important to retaining employees. This may be somewhat attributed to varying personalities however, because P5 and P6 generally spent more time thinking before answering each question and P2 and P3 appeared to be more excited about participation in the study relative to the other participants. Leading by example may increase retention, but some employees may have different situations at home that may impact whether they remain at an organization.

Work-life balance is a topic mentioned by some of the participants. Choi and Kim (2012) stated that facilitating employee work and life conflicts may reduce an employee's desire to leave an organization. P1 stated they are flexible with their employees and understands that many of them go to school. P1 further says, "So creating that balance for them where they can feel comfortable letting me know 'Hey, I need certain days off'. And sometimes they don't fit with the business needs but the majority of the time I try to say yes." P2 provided another work-life balance example when describing an employee who resisted scheduling changes but after a conversation with P2 realized that the schedule change aligned much better with their daughter's schedule and would allow her to spend more time with her child and save money on childcare. A manager may face resistance when making scheduling changes, even if those changes create better work-life balance for the employees. It is important to speak with employees and take their needs into account.

Organizational documents from public websites also listed information regarding work-life balance. O1, O2, O3, O5, and O6 displayed their paid time off benefits, or

indicated that they provided paid time off or paid sick days. O3 documents also showed that they organization offers four weeks of parental leave after an employee has been with the organization for longer than one year. Yu (2019) indicated that employees are more likely to stay at an organization if they are not faced with work-life conflicts. An organization offering vacation days may help retain employees however, managers may be faced with scenarios like what P2 described. In addition to days off, managers may need to deconflict issues with scheduling to increase employee retention.

Communication and employee voice were both themes in the academic research as well as with the participants. André (2018) proposed that communication between generations may change perceptions and stereotypes that exist in the workplace. Srivastava et al. (2019) proposed that employees who have a voice are less likely to leave an organization. According to P1, it is important to communicate with employees, “They have full access to me or any manager that they need to talk to. So we have an open door policy as well.” P1 later stressed the importance of accessibility to the manager, “I will say the biggest advice I always give anybody who starts off as a manager, making yourself accessible to them is really important.” P5 suggested that communication helps show the employees that you care about them being there, “What really comes down to is communication. When you’re working with someone, whether they’re vested in being there or not, purely by your interactions with them. So, I think that’s a daily thing, it’s daily engagement.” P3 and P6 also indicated that feedback was important.

P2 noted that communication is important for mitigating issues between employees. P2 explained,

As far as drama between employees, or coworkers, I will talk one-on-one with them and then I will talk together with them as their mediator and try to get whatever point across that they're not communicating with each other or just try and help with their communication. Because they could be saying the same thing, but differently and not realize it.

Abubakar and Behraves (2018) found that although Generation Y employees are more likely to leave an intolerant or ostracizing organization. I previously noted that P2 factors employee personalities into scheduling shifts. Factoring personality types and previous conflicts in scheduling may be one way to reduce employee turnover. A manager may reduce turnover by ensuring they remain fair during employee conflicts.

Ostracism, employee voice, generational stereotyping, and employee engagement all tied back to job embeddedness in the academic literature. Yang et al. (2020) indicated that not all workplace groups are harmful and some employees benefit from workplace groups. This contrasts what P2, P4, and P5 indicated regarding workplace groups. Managers may need to address groups carefully and consider the specific circumstance before addressing workplace groups. P1, P3, and P5 were happy to discuss their level of communication with employees. Employee engagement and employee voice were important themes in the academic literature. When employees perceive that their managers listen to their concerns, they are more likely to accept resolutions to problems and more likely to remain at their organization (Van Gramberg et al., 2020). P2 echoed this and stated it is important to hear both sides of an issue when employees are not cooperating and then resolving the issues after talking to each employee individually. P4 and P5 stressed the dangers of generational stereotyping which compliments the previous

academic literature. Van Rossem (2019) however, suggested generational stereotyping may have positive consequences if it helps managers better understand their team's dynamics.

### **Theme 3: Employee Organizational Relationship**

Another theme that arose was creating a fair work environment and the employee's relationship with their organization. Perceived fairness leads to increased trust in supervisors and organizational commitment (Abdin et al., 2019). P1 mitigates feelings of unfairness by mentioning issues to the group rather than singling out individuals:

So, if I were to bring to a group attention, like 'Hey so this wasn't done correctly, let's make sure we do it this way'. And that tends to fix the situation versus pointing singular people out. Because then it feels like they're the only ones with the problem. But then they might see someone else doing it that way and they're not being addressed because I did not address it to them.

In some cases, an organization may have policies that negatively impact a manager's ability to retain employees. P3 mentioned,

But okay, just if I want to offer certain incentives, I'm restricted from doing so if I want to offer more opportunity. For example, on my roster guidelines, the union has a set roster guideline. So, they say, I was supposed to have six cashiers, two managers, and one store manager, if I was able to choose that, I would have more supervisors, I would have less cashiers. And I would have, I'd restructured the way I'm allowed to promote people.

P3 later explains how this is mitigated,



My restrictions won't let me promote anyone. I can go to a non-union store, or I can go to a store down the street, because O3 is connected like that and go, 'Hey, do you need Bob here, he's a supervisor, he's ready to be a supervisor. I trained him he's gonna knock it out.' So I'll transfer people, to give them more opportunity because in the end of the day, it's more important to retain someone versus have them stay at cashier here and go, 'Man, like I'm never gonna move up here. This is like a waste of time'. And then they go find more opportunity.

Martinussen et al. (2020) found that employees who perceive their leadership as supportive are more likely to stay with their organization. Ariza-Montes et al. (2018) suggested that social support and job control leading to higher retention and increased well-being of employees. P5 also showed a willingness to transfer people if necessary. I asked if promotions generally happen within the store or if it is frowned upon when employees transfer to other stores. P5 responded,

No, it's not frowned upon. It's actually some something as a tactic to develop talent as an organization, and how do you keep people growing and moving in? You know, that's how you move along any organization? I think it's individual, every leader has a different take on it. I've seen many people who protect 'theirs', they don't want to go anywhere. I think that's the way you lose people. But if you help somebody to better themselves, in their life, right, you're the vested interest in them, then, you know, they're going to be more successful. And they'll probably find that as their loyalty to the company versus to the person.

P5 went on to indicate that she would even support employees who have long term goals outside of the organization,

I would support anyone whether you want to work in our asset protection department, in retail, not everything selling you know, and you want to become a police officer eventually. That's what the goal is. I'm going to help you get there by developing a job that you learn today that community mindset now.

A genuine interest in employees and their future, even if it means transferring them to another store was shown to decrease turnover intentions.

P2 mentioned that she closes twice a week because P2 does not believe it is fair to delegate closing to the other managers just to go home earlier. Later in the interview, P2 told a story about holding an employee accountable and stressed the importance of accountability:

I'm holding him accountable for what they signed up for. So, I'm going to hold you accountable. Okay, and that kind of helps them see she really will ask the same thing of everybody. It's not showing favoritism to one person. It's not me liking the person or their personality and taking it out on them. If I'm doing it to every single employee, gotcha.

P3 echoed this and stated, "I think by establishing kind of a ground. Like, this is what we're going to do every week and holding people accountable to their section".

Turnover intentions decrease when employees perceive their managers as fair decision-makers (Akgunduz & Cin, 2015). P1, P2 and P4 all mentioned the importance of holding employees accountable if they are late or if they do not complete tasks that they are assigned. P1 and P4 specifically mentioned a grace period for late employees but that patterns or excessive lateness require accountability. Informal, interpersonal, and formal processes such as policies and rewards help increase employee's perceived fairness

(Abdin et al., 2019). Previous researches stated that perceived fairness is related to job embeddedness and participants in this study noted that it may influence employee turnover.

Organizational changes may also influence retention. Organizational shock is defined as something that pushes an employee away from an organization (Burton et al., 2010). Employees that are more embedded are less likely to be negatively affected by an organizational shock (Biggane et al., 2017). P1 explained,

We had many employees quitting at the same time, and trying to figure out like, why are they leaving because they were employees that had been there for many years, and then we received the whole new management team, and then all of them were leaving. And so although the procedures were the same, and like we felt the environment was the same.

A change in leadership may cause employees to leave the organization. Fear may rise from an organizational shock, such as a change in leadership. An employee's perceived level of job security may influence their likeliness to leave the organization (Karatepe & Safavi, 2019). P1 described when stating, "So that's where like, the open communication comes to as well, because I like my team members to also let me know if I'm doing something that's kind of...if I'm not communicating well, I would like to let them tell me, okay, not be scared. Because they're, they're scared." Previous researchers indicated that organizational shock may lead to less job embeddedness and more organizational turnover while participants provided examples of where organizational shock directly led to increased turnover.

The work itself, may also influence employee retention. Some of what O3 does benefits the health of their customers. P3 stated, “We’re trying to provide health to people, better people, out path to better health”. P3 indicated that the work itself is something that may motivate employees to perform since they are helping people. P5 suggested that company involvement in the community and environment is also important, “The younger are more in tune to some of the things that we are doing globally as a company. So marketing those things like what are we doing for our community. Do we have sustainable support within the environments?” There is a positive relationship between corporate social responsibility and organizational commitment (Zaman & Nadeem, 2019). In the example given by P5, it is not just about what the employees are doing on a daily basis, but also what the organizational whole is doing that is relevant. All six organizations included in the study have public company documents that validate the response from P5. O1 has public documents discussing charitable giving, O2, O4, O5, and O6 have public documents mention how their operations are sustainable or good for the environment, and O3 has public documents describing how their organization benefits local communities.

Perceived fairness, organizational shock, and leadership support were themes in the academic literature that influence job embeddedness. There is a negative relationship between Generation Y turnover and perceived supervisor support (Gupta, 2019). P3 and P5 noted the importance of supporting employee’s careers even if it means transferring employees to other locations due to a lack of opportunities within their store. Employees are more likely to remain at an organization if they perceive the workplace as fair (Harden et al., 2018). Not all researchers agreed on the positive effects of a fair

workplace. Froese et al. (2019) noted that fairness is hard to define when there are diversified interests which make it hard to fairly distribute resources. Additionally, Froese et al. (2019) suggested that high performing employees are more likely to remain at an organization that has a merit based system while lower performing employees are more likely to leave. Although P1 indicated that organizational shocks may lead to higher turnover, Biggane et al. (2016) suggested that organizational shocks may bring employees closer together which prevents them from leaving. P1 however, described a specific scenario where employees were connected to their manager. According to Feng (2019) organizational may be mitigated by higher levels of embeddedness. This may be an indication that the employees who left in the scenario described by P1 had low levels of embeddedness prior to departing the organization.

### **Application to Professional Practice**

The specific business problem was that some retail industry managers lack the management strategies to retain Generation Y employees. The findings from this study may help retail managers increase the job embeddedness of their employees, understand why employees leave their organization, and improve strategies aimed at retaining employees. Businesses spend up to half of an employee's annual salary on recruiting and training replacement employees after an employee departs (Hechl, 2017; Naim & Lenka, 2017). Organizational leaders may increase profitability by improving retention rates (Hechl, 2017). Participants in this study suggested that it was important to lead by example, treat employees like individuals and understand their needs, communicate and give employees a voice, show a genuine concern for the well being of employees, and compensate employees fairly. One implication from the study is that the majority of

retention strategies mentioned by participants are free to the organization. Managers who can successfully implement management retention strategies may reduce costs, increase employee job satisfaction, and increase employee embeddedness which serves as a long-term method for retaining employees despite uncertainty in the future. Global or company-wide events that may be outside of the control of the manager may influence employee retention or feelings of job security. However, higher levels of job embeddedness may reduce the negative impact of job insecurity on employees and improve employee health through stress reduction (Yang et al., 2019). Embedded employees are less likely to be negatively affected by an organizational shock (Biggane et al., 2017). Even though some factors are outside of the control of the manager, if the manager creates a more embedded workforce, they may be able to mitigate the negative influence of factors that are outside of their control. Compensation increases may also increase retention, but whether this is appropriate, and the amount of the raise should be determined on a case-by-case basis.

### **Implications for Social Change**

The results of this study may contribute to positive social change as increased retention may be achieved through creating better understanding of employees needs through treating them like individuals. Managers may create a better work environment and increase job satisfaction which will reduce stress and workplace conflicts. Taking the time to know employees may lead to better employee scheduling, better employee physiological health, and reduction of stress and conflict in the workplace. Managers who lead by example may reduce or eliminate resentment towards leadership and by discussing future opportunities with employees they may be more motivated to remain at

an organization. Reduction of employee turnover is a positive social change. By increasing job embeddedness and reducing turnover, managers will increase perceived job security and perceived fairness which may improve the mental health of employees.

### **Recommendation for Action**

#### **Lead by Example**

Managers may reduce potential employee resentment or unwillingness to complete tasks by leading by example. This will not only benefit the team but also make it easier for management to get work done. Several participants recommended leading by example to retain employees and make it easier to delegate responsibility. In addition, it serves to mitigate resentment that may exist with being delegated work which is something that several participants indicated in their responses.

#### **Genuine Care for Employees**

Managers who show a genuine concern their employees wellbeing may have more success retaining employees. Participants stated that communicating with employees and asking about their personal lives is a good way to build solid relationships with team members and increase retention. Participants also suggested that this is a good way to mitigate issues in the workplace between coworkers or between employees and leadership which will not only increase retention, but reduce stress in the workplace. Communication also gives employees a voice to state concerns and recommend improvements. Both the academic research and participants indicated that it is important for employees to perceive that they have a voice. Communication with employees may also reveal employees future career intentions.

### **Future Opportunities or Upward Mobility**

Taking a concern in employees' future is another strategy that managers may use to increase retention. Participants and researchers agree that upward mobility is important for retention and that if employees feel like they are stuck in the same position, that they may leave for higher pay at another organization. Some of the participants indicated that they are willing to transfer employees to other store locations to assist the employees with furthering their careers. Participants further suggested that trying to keep higher performing employees to yourself may ultimately lead to them departing the organization.

### **Individualized, Yet Fair**

Perceived fairness was another recurring theme with participants. It is important that employees feel as though rewards and disciplinary action is consistent through the organization. Participants mentioned that they are consistent when it comes to enforcing company policies, such as tardiness. Participants also mentioned that getting to know employees and treating them like individuals, rather than part of a group, such as a generation, is important. Employees have unique personalities and needs, and treating them as unique may increase retention. Perceived may also extends to employee wages. Employees who believe they are being fairly compensated are more likely to remain at their organization. A question managers should ask: is it worth it to pay employees more, if it means reducing the amount of time, effort, and cost spent on training new employees?



### **Recommendation for Further Research**

One of the limitations for the study is that the participants may have fear of retribution from their organizations. Participants were told that their information would be kept confidential for the study and this did not appear to influence answers to the interview questions. Future researchers may also approach the problem from another angle. It may be more difficult to find participants, but a researcher with more resources may contact employees who have remained at an organization for specified period of time to find their reasons for staying. Although answers from managers matched the academic research, there may be participants who provide unique answers to the research question. A researcher with enough time and resources could potentially partner with a company and interview a large sample of employees who have stayed at the company for a minimum period of time. Additionally, any of the themes found during this study could be expanded on in future studies.

Salary, benefits, and recognition were also a recurring theme in the study. Although participants mentioned several reasons for employees staying, it is possible that these reasons may have been misinterpreted by participants and that the employees simply did not perceive that they have higher paying opportunities. A quantitative or mixed method study with a significantly larger sample size may be required to determine how big of an impact that pay and benefits alone have on employee retention. There may be a range of certain threshold where a pay increase will generally not matter. For example, P3 noted that O3 employees sometimes do not wish to be promoted and have more responsibility for only \$1 more per hour. Similarly, it may be the case that employees are not willing to go through the trouble of changing organizations unless

there is a significant pay raise. A future study should determine the employee's willingness to accept increases in pay relative to the increase in responsibility.

Finally, there may be subtle differences based on region or specific industry. My sample size was only six and restricted to San Diego County. When interviewing P4, they mentioned that employees who live in high-end areas are not motivated by gift cards or other monetary incentives. A future study should investigate at what point incentives are no longer a factor for employee retention or job satisfaction.

### **Reflections**

The topic of retention first occurred to me around ten years ago. When working on my undergraduate degree, I recall reading articles about how Generation Y was the 'job hopping' generation. I did not think much of this topic again while working on my Master's of Business Administration or when I initially joined the Marines Corps. When I needed to find a topic for my study, I thought back to the topic of employee retention that intrigued me during my undergraduate degree.

The process of obtaining this degree was more challenging than I originally anticipated. I do not believe that this degree got in the way of any relationships or friendships that I had over the years. I knew when I started that being a Marine Officer would cause delays with my progress in the program but I underestimated the extent of these delays. I am exceedingly grateful for the friends who were in my life between 2017-2022. There were periods of time where I felt isolated but being surrounded by amazing groups of friends made the process more bearable. The process of obtaining a doctoral degree has benefited me in the workplace, improved my decision making, and made me a better leader. I applied much of what I learned during the coursework and research

process to my workplace. Through the application of what I learned I was able to increase morale, decrease turnover intention and convinced several Marines to stay in, and create more efficient processes within my scope of responsibility.

### **Conclusion**

The ability to retain employees is important for managers, employees, and local community. When managers genuinely care about their employees, the employees are more likely to remain at their organization. From the participant's responses that that caring for employees may come in different forms. Leading by example, communicating with employees, giving them a voice, helping them progress in their career, giving employees work-life balance when possible, fairly compensating employees, and creating a fair work environment are some of the ways that managers may increase employee's desire to stay. All of these collectively have been shown to positively influence employee's job embeddedness. Managers may significantly reduce costs, improve employee mental health, and spend less time training new employees if they can increase job embeddedness and retain more employees.

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### Appendix A: Interview Protocol

<b>Interview Protocol</b>	
<b>What will you do</b>	<b>What you will say (script)</b>
Introduction/Greeting	<p>Hello there. Thank you for participating in my study. I am researching management strategies to retain Generation Y employees. Your responses will not be shared with anyone outside of my university and I will not record your name or organizational name in the study. I am recording this interview so that I may capture and review everything discussed today. You may stop the interview at any time or opt out of the study at any time. If you agree to participate, we will begin the interview.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pay attention to body language and record in journal notes).</li> <li>• Clarify or reword questions if needed.</li> </ul>	1. What management strategies have you used to retain Generation Y employees?
	2. How did you assess the effectiveness of the management strategies you used for retention of Generation Y employees?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask follow up questions so that participants expand on answers.</li> </ul>	<p>3. What management strategies have you found to be most effective for retention of Generation Y employees?</p>
	<p>4. What key barriers did you encounter when implementing management strategies for retention of Generation Y employees?</p>
	<p>5. How did you address the key barriers you encountered in implementing management strategies for the retention of Generation Y employees?</p>
	<p>6. What else would you like to tell me about the management strategies you use for retention of Generation Y employees?</p>
<p>Wrap up</p>	<p>Thank you for your time, do you have any questions for me?</p>
<p>Member Checking</p>	<p>I will contact you within the next two weeks after I analyze the information. I will send you a summary of the analysis for your review so that you may add, subtract, or correct my summary of the interview. I will then thank them for participating in my study.</p>



## Appendix B: Invitation Email Template

Hello \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is Michael Askari and I am a student at Walden University working to complete my doctoral study. I am formally inviting you to participate in a study to explore management strategies to retain Generation Y employees in San Diego County. You have been identified as a manager who has successfully retained Generation Y employees for a period of 12 months or more. Your participation in this study is voluntary. Your responses will be confidential, and your name and organization will not be included in the final results.

To confirm your participation, please respond to my email at [michael.askari@waldenu.edu](mailto:michael.askari@waldenu.edu) or call at 760-505-4781 to confirm your agreement to participate.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards

Michael Askari