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Strategies for Effective Labor-Management Relationships in the Foodservice Industry

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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Walden University
2024

Abstract

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MBA, South University, 2013

BA, New York City College of Technology, 2005

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

The relationship between unions and management is particularly critical for food service firms, which rely heavily on unionized employees to meet operational needs. Food service managers are concerned with ineffective strategies for engaging with unions because managing these ineffective relationships jeopardizes employee retention and the firm's performance. Grounded in authentic leadership theory, the purpose of this qualitative multiple-case study was to explore strategies food service managers use to develop and maintain an effective union-management relationship for retaining unionized employees. The participants were six food service managers from three large food service firms who implemented success strategies to develop and maintain an effective union-management relationship for retaining employees. Data were collected using semistructured interviews. Through thematic analysis, four themes emerged: (a) balanced processing strategies, (b) relational transparency strategies, (c) self-awareness strategies, and (d) robust moral code strategies. A key recommendation is for food service managers to show that employees are valued and important assets to the firm by listening to and including them in decision-making. The implications for positive social change have the potential for food service managers to reduce staff turnover and enhance employee retention and labor-management relationships that could result in improved performance, thus promoting enhanced welfare and well-being among the families of employees in the local communities.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this study to my Mom, Eula Graham-Richardson and Step-Dad Cedrick Richardson, for being supportive and understanding while I strive to expand my knowledge base and leadership wings through advanced education and challenging career pathways. A special dedication to my twin sons, Cory A. Mitchell and Dasean A. Mitchell who reminded me daily on how to be resilient and overcome adversities while remaining optimistic and patient on my DBA journey.

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I would like to give a special thanks to Dr. WooYoung Chung for his continuous support and guidance in completing my DBA. Dr. WooYoung was not only my Chair, but he was also my guiding light, accountability partner, and a mentor. I would also like to thank Dr. Theresa Neal for the excellent feedback provided during this journey.

This journey was long, challenging, and filled with many tears and moments of disappointment. However, the overwhelming feeling of accomplishing a daunting task fills me with great pride and satisfaction. I would like to thank Dr. Lisa Pearo for mentoring my progress through the initial proposal phase while balancing a tumultuous time in my life. Thanks to my wonderful mom, Eula Graham-Richardson, for all her support and encouragement, along with my amazingly talented young leaders, my twin sons Cory A. and Dasean A. Mitchell.

I consistently remind my young sons that “education = freedom” and ‘authentic leadership impacts lives.” My educational and leadership experiences will continuously be utilized to impact lives within my community and beyond.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

The foodservice industry accounts for over 12 million employees in the United States, with an approximate revenue of $1.8 billion (Bufquin et al., 2021). Several studies have established that the foodservice industry contributes to economic growth by providing job opportunities to millions of Americans (Al-Suraihi et al., 2021; Bufquin et al., 2021). However, high turnover intentions, linked to poor employee engagement and labor relations, threaten the retention and sustainability of the industry (Tews & Stafford, 2020). According to Frye et al. (2020), some managers in the foodservice industry lack an understanding of labor relations management strategies to reduce turnover. Consequently, Tews and Stafford (2020) called for leaders in the foodservice industry to develop appropriate strategies for managing labor relations and improving employee retention. I used a qualitative case study to explore foodservice managers' strategies to develop and maintain an effective union-management relationship for retaining employees.

Background of the Problem

Maintaining a collaborative relationship between union leaders and management sometimes appears challenging. However, the foundation of labor-management relations influences employees' work environments and contracts (Joung et al., 2018). Unfortunately, labor-management relations systems are failing in the United States (Hultman, 2019). The lack of fair and effective conflict resolution to foster and sustain healthy work conditions for employees has been a contributing factor (Hultman, 2019). Union memberships have declined in the United States from 20% in 1983 to 10.3% in

2021 (Green, 2021). The decline in union membership has been linked to inadequate policies developed to promote positive labor unions (Green, 2021).

Employee retention is essential to organizational success. It is estimated that a company could incur a 20% to 150% turnover cost from each employee's annual salary (Baharin & Wan Hanafi, 2018; Hultman, 2019). Effective labor-management relationships increase employee retention through job satisfaction, productivity, support efficiency, and work environment. Effective relationships also reduce job stressors (i.e., discrimination and job instability) and stimulate employee personal growth and development (Eisenberg-Guyot et al., 2021; Villajos et al., 2019).

Problem and Purpose

The specific business problem was that some foodservice managers lack strategies to develop and maintain effective union-management relationships for retaining employees. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies foodservice managers use to develop and maintain an effective union-management relationship for retaining employees.

Population and Sampling

The population of this study comprised six purposively sampled foodservice managers from three organizations in the foodservice industry in Connecticut, United States. Participants took part in interviews to provide descriptions of strategies foodservice managers use to develop and maintain an effective union-management relationship for retaining employees. I also reviewed and analyzed memorandums, handbook, training manuals, policies, and procedures, to gain further insights into the research problem.

Participants were recruited after IRB approval. A flyer was used to invite participants to the study. The flyer was posted in allowed locations in the selected organization, such as the boardroom. Purposive sampling can be used to recruit participants who are better related to the phenomenon being studied (Saunders et al., 2016). In this case, all participants were leaders in food-service companies in Connecticut. The participants had to: (a) come from Connecticut, (b) have leadership experience in the food-service industry, (c) have at least 3 years of experience, and (d) must be aged 18 and older. Data collection was done using semistructured interviews.

Nature of the Study

Of the three research methods, qualitative, quantitative, and mixed, I chose the qualitative method for this study. Researchers use qualitative methods to produce detailed descriptions of the phenomena they are studying (Aspers & Corte, 2019). The qualitative research method was suitable for this study because the purpose of the study was to produce a rich description of strategies used to develop and maintain effective union-management relationships for retaining employees. Quantitative researchers analyze data to emphasize deductive reasoning to examine variables’ characteristics and relationships (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2017), which did not fit this study's purpose. The mixed-methods approach includes qualitative and quantitative research methods (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). Thus, mixed-method research was unsuitable for this study because it did not collect quantitative data.

I chose a case study design from four qualitative research designs: ethnography, phenomenology, narrative, and case study. Ethnographic research studies culture and customs (Yin, 2018). This study did not focus on culture or customs. Phenomenological research focuses on participants' perspectives of their lived experiences (Schweiger, 2007). This study did not focus on the personal meanings of lived experiences; thus, the phenomenological is unsuitable for this study. Finally, narrative research focuses on the chronology of personal experiences (Andrews, 2021). I did not focus on creating a research chronology of personal experiences; hence, the narrative method was unsuitable.

I selected the multiple case study over the single case study. According to Yin (2018), a multiple case study is best when researching comprehensive and extensive experiences. On the other hand, a single case study allows for investigation into one phenomenon or organization of particular interest (Yin, 2018). For these reasons, I chose to use the multiple case study over single case study method because this study required robust and in-depth resources research focusing on gathering detailed information to document and provide detailed descriptions of strategies foodservice managers use to develop and maintain an effective union-management relationship for retaining employees within the selected organization.

Research Question

What strategies do foodservice managers use to develop and maintain an effective union-management relationship for retaining employees?

Interview Questions

1. How would you describe the relationship between union leaders and management at your organization for retaining employees?
2. What strategies do you use to maintain a positive union-management relationship for retaining employees?
3. How do you assess the effectiveness of the strategies for maintaining a positive union-management relationship?
4. What strategies have worked best to improve the relationship between union leaders and management?
5. What strategies have you used that were ineffective in developing and maintaining an effective union-management relationship for retaining employees?
6. What key challenges do you identify that hindered the implementation of the strategies for improving relationships between union leaders and management?
7. How did you address these key challenges?
8. What additional information would you like to share regarding your union-management relationship strategies?

Conceptual Framework

The study's conceptual framework was based on authentic leadership theory. The authentic leadership theory was developed by George and Sims (2010). Authentic leadership theory focuses on integrating authentic and humanistic philosophies into leadership theory, presuming that being true to oneself yielded positive results (George & Sims, 2010). According to George and Sims, authentic leadership theory is grounded on the premise that three primary factors influence the development and growth of an authentic leader: positive psychological capabilities, moral reasoning, and critical life events (George & Sims, 2010). Positive psychologic capabilities are people's balanced cognitive reasoning and resilience (George & Sims, 2010). Resiliency and balanced reasoning comprise basic skills that a leader is required to have to overcome challenges and consider alternative perspectives when making critical decisions (George & Sims, 2010). Balanced processing includes leaders making objective decisions while considering all alternatives and currently available information (George & Sims, 2010).

Authentic leadership theory has four major components: self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, and a solid moral code. Self-awareness is the practice whereby an individual can develop a complete understanding of oneself (George & Sims, 2010). This includes developing a better understanding of oneself by identifying strengths, weaknesses, values, morals, and perspectives (George & Sims, 2010). Relational transparency is where leaders openly share their thoughts and ideas with others, acknowledge mistakes, and maintain their emotions (George & Sims, 2010). Balanced processing is where leaders consider what they do or say, careful not to emotionally affect others by listening to them (George & Sims, 2010). A strong moral code is where leaders make decisions based on acceptable ethics and socially accepted moral practices (George & Sims, 2010). In this study, the four major components of authentic leadership theory, self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, and strong moral code, were used to identify leadership strategies for developing and maintaining a labor-management relationship for retaining employees in the foodservice industry.

Operational Definitions

Foodservice managers: Professionals who work in businesses where food is prepared and served, such as hotels, school cafeterias, restaurants, and other establishments. Foodservice managers' responsibility includes running daily food or beverage operations while working hectic schedules consisting of evenings, holidays, and weekends (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021).

*Union leaders**:*** Individuals with the necessary skill set and experience to disrupt processes and implement organizational changes that affect a targeted vulnerable group (Green, 2021). Union leaders are tasked with leading/managing varied existing trade unions and working towards meeting the concerns/needs of their members (Villajos et al., 2019).

Union-Management relationships: Union-management relationships are predominately based on the powerful foundation of union leaders and managers, encompassing existing interactions across labor union-represented employees and their respective employers (Eisenberg-Guyot et al., 2021). This type of relationship is challenged by management's strategic and innovative human resource (HR) practices (Green, 2021).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are unverifiable facts assumed to be true related to the study (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). In research, concerns, beliefs, or opinions are assumptions found throughout the study, from the start of the research design to the study's conclusion, including details beyond the researcher's control. The research problem does not exist without assumptions (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). My first assumption was that the participants' responses were honest and truthful. This was reasonable because participants were informed that their identities were kept strictly confidential. Also, no trade secrets or socially embarrassing questions were asked.

Another assumption of this study was that the participants had the necessary knowledge to respond to the study's interview. It was a reasonable assumption because the selected participants had an appropriate background or experience in foodservice of 3 to 5 years. I assumed that the participants took the necessary time to answer the questions. Finally, it was a reasonable assumption because I scheduled the interview when it was convenient for them.

Limitations

In the research process, limitations refer to study weaknesses outside the researcher's control during the study (Simon, 2011). One limitation of this study was that the foodservice industry is highly labor-intensive. Participants typically manage multiple foodservice establishments within a district or city. Their availability and workload may have created a hindrance to participating in the interviews. A second limitation was how each participant perceived the intent of each question and their comfortability of responding to the questions, which may create reluctance to expand on a question or provide specific situational examples. A third limitation was the turnover of foodservice managers, particularly foodservice managers in the education sector, whose compensation could be lower compared to the restaurant industry.

Delimitations

Delimitations are boundaries to the study that the researcher must find (Ellis & Levy, 2009). As part of the research, delimitations encompass specific characteristics within the study, limit its scope, and define its respective boundaries, yet they are under the researcher's control (Simon, 2011; Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). One delimitation was that participants included only foodservice managers who worked in a union environment, and their recommendations were aligned with this study. Another delimitation was that this study focused on foodservice managers in Connecticut. The state labor laws, professional practices, and customs were not a focus or issue in this study and was it relative to the construct of authentic leadership theory.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

This study's findings may help foodservice managers plan strategies to develop and maintain effective relationships with union leaders. Employees are the most important asset for an organization's functionality. An effective union-management relationship can lead to higher employee retention and greater profitability (Baharin & Wan Hanafi, 2018). The study's findings may be significant for business practices because identifying strategies for improving union-management relationships may enable foodservice managers to foster higher retention and, ultimately, to reap the benefits accompanying higher retention in their organization's performance.

Implications for Social Change

The study may also have implications for social change. The findings of this study may help foodservice managers create a positive working environment by facilitating collaborative labor-management relationships. An amicable work environment may enhance employment stability and promote employee professional growth. Work relations could improve job satiation and motivation, thereby improving employee retention.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore strategies foodservice managers use to develop and maintain an effective union-management relationship for retaining employees. Turnover intentions among union members have been demonstrated to be significantly negatively correlated with perceived union support and perceived union instrumentality (Martin et al., 2019). The study presented a summary of prior research to identify gaps and provide a foundation for this study.

Strategy for Searching the Literature

I methodically included sources that support this study's main topics based on the research question in the literature review. I explored and integrated research associated with the interview questions and theoretical framework to test the theory that I explored. The research review comprises keywords such as *union-management relationships*, *industrial relations climate, the impact of labor-management relationships, labor-management, interpersonal relationships, authentic leadership in foodservice, union-management cooperation*, and *employee satisfaction*. Constructing the conceptual framework included reviewing and evaluating sources that utilized authentic leadership theory. Integrating the conceptual framework and authentic leadership theory allowed me to highlight the literature gap regarding the relationships between labor, management, and employee retention.

Utilizing several collection methods ensures a thorough review of the availability and quality of the publications. Collecting sources involved utilizing the mentioned keywords and various search engines, including Google Scholar and Directory of Open Access Journals. Furthermore, databases such as Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, ProQuest, and Emerald Insights are some of the databases from Walden University Library that discovered relevant publications. This professional and academic literature review included an evaluation of peer-reviewed and other scholarly journal articles, published dissertations, books, and government documents. In total, 88% of the resources were peer-reviewed that were published from 2020-2024.

Table 1

Literature Review Sources

Reference type	Total references	2017 and older	% 2018 and newer
Peer-reviewed journals	103	7	96
Governmental references	1	0	1
Non-peer-reviewed journals	5	1	4
Total references	107	8	101

The research reveals that ineffective union-management relationship strategies negatively affect employee retention and profitability. Most previous research on this topic has focused on leaders within the private business sector (Joung et al., 2018); however, limited research addresses union-management relationships in foodservice. In this literature review, I summarized foodservice union leaders' strategies to sustain their relationships with their employees. The authentic leadership theory and its correlation to union-management relationships and employee turnover intentions are also summarized in this review.

Conceptual Framework

Authentic Leadership Theory

In this study, I used authentic leadership theory as the theoretical basis of the conceptual framework. Authentic leadership theory is regarded as positive leadership and is relevant to the discussion on management (Landis et al., 2015). Additionally, authentic leadership theory is relevant to the discussion on cooperation between labor and management because it informs the values required to maintain cooperative leadership, hence achieving the mutual objectives of labor and management. Fusch et al. (2015) underscored that authenticity might be described in many ways, including being one's true intended self, the absence of self-deception; taking responsibility for individual choices; and owning the life experience. Authentic leadership theory, authenticity, and the characteristics of an authentic leader are discussed below.

Understanding authentic leadership can mean crucial positive outcomes for business management and employees, as it directly affects performance. Furthermore, Fusch and Ness (2015) contended that accountability, transparency, confidence, and follower growth are at the heart of authentic leadership. Four overarching tenets of authentic leadership are identified: congruence, confidence, competence, and consciousness. Authentic self-development contributes to these tenets through self-learning, self-reflection, self-reappraisal, and self-alignment. By utilizing these methods, the individual attains confidence, congruence, competence, and consciousness over time (i.e., a continuous process of betterment). Thus far, there evidence that authentic leadership is a pattern marked by increased self-awareness, balancing information, relational transparency, and an internalized moral compass or perspective.

Authentic leadership has several outcomes in organizations. Fusch and Ness's (2015) research was based on the observation that authentic leadership has been associated with several critical business outcomes, including organizational commitment, job satisfaction, communication and knowledge sharing, work engagement, and individual team and company productivity. The researchers further argued that insights, skills, and solutions needed in authentic leadership are often extant in the individual, and the only difficulty lies in accessing them (Fusch & Ness., 2015). As such, through self-development, management can focus on these resources by increasing resilience. Therefore, through authentic leadership, management can improve employee cooperation processes, making organizations more effective and productive.

Authentic leadership is multidimensional. Covelli and Mason (2017) also contended that authentic leadership is "multi-dimensional." Consequently, it has considerable similarities to and overlaps with other leadership theories. Servant leaders, for example, aim to help others first by placing others' objectives and targets ahead of their own and then guiding and leading, while transformational leaders aim to bring change to those they lead (Baharin & Wan Hanafi, 2018). Authentic leaders are essential in managing employees in today's society because of the intricacies of their leadership capabilities.

Others perceive authentic leaders to be of high moral character and competent change agents, among other vital attributes. Maximo et al. (2019) found that the more genuinely leaders are perceived, the more workers identify with them and feel psychologically motivated; additionally, these employees become more involved in their responsibilities. Similar results were reported by Green (2021), who reported that an institutional change initiative in which authentic leaders, institutional recognition programs, and group policy configurations precipitate further authentic leadership by reflecting the importance of workplace inclusion, collaboration, goal frameworks, and mutual goal structures. Hultman (2019) also reported that authentic leadership is manifested and, therefore, determined by employee inclusion in organizational goals and achievements and job satisfaction. Therefore, management should ensure that institutional performance appraisals strengthen the significance of inclusion by motivating employees to engage in genuinely inclusive behaviors to encourage these behaviors further and is evidence of authentic leadership in practice.

Leaders, supporters, and organizations can achieve more positive long-term effects by focusing on leadership, especially authentic leadership. Although authentic leadership is not a new concept, it is more important than ever because employees perceive authentic leaders to be more approachable and trustworthy; therefore, employees connect more easily with them, improving employee morale and productivity (Maximo et al., 2019). Other researchers, such as Baharin and Wan Hanafi (2018), have found that a cooperative relationship between labor and management enhances employees' trust in management, and the organization benefits from increased productivity and reduced absenteeism. Employees trust authentic leaders who exhibit high moral values, thus promoting transparent team relationships, shared knowledge, and improved creativity, which results in higher productivity and profitability (Zeb et al., 2020). The literature review revealed that the authentic leadership theory is a valuable framework for exploring how the participating leaders developed and implemented strategies to build effective labor-management relationships within the participating organizations.

The Evolution of Authentic Leadership Theory

Ancient Greek philosophers developed personal authenticity by emphasizing the importance of being true to and knowing oneself. However, Barnard (1938) focused on leaders' commitment, enthusiasm, and consistency in administrative improvements to strengthen leadership. Furthermore, Barnard (1968) later referenced authentic leadership in management and organizational literature, utilizing authentic leadership theory to explain the measurement of executive qualities: self-awareness, self-regulation, and balance that one should derive from an authentic capacity. In 2010, George and Sims developed the five dimensions of authentic leadership theory: (a) passion or understanding one's purpose, (b) practicing solid values, (c) establishing connected relationships, (d) demonstrating self-discipline, and (e) leading with the heart (Covelli &

Mason, 2017). Organizational leaders who are authentic recognize the importance of acknowledging and utilizing the traits of this theory to improve an organization's administrative functions.

Authentic leadership theory was a valuable framework for this study because labor union leaders and management can identify the relationship strategies that affect employee turnover intentions. Through these shared disclosures between labor and management, a sense of trust and understanding can develop an effective union-management relationship, resulting in higher employee retention, commitment, and productivity. Furthermore, leaders can create a positive work environment by utilizing authentic leadership theory, which can additionally impact employee retention (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Therefore, authentic leadership theory was ideal for this study because it allows me to explore how connected relationships and shared values in labor-management relationships contribute to employee retention.

Alternative Theories

The results are interpreted from the research question based on the researchers' theories. Based on the importance of the research theory, I considered alternative theories to ensure that the authentic leadership theory was appropriate for this research. Alternative theories explored for this study include transactional leadership theory, leader-member exchange theory, and great man theory.

Transactional leadership theory promotes a leader-follower relationship to produce a satisfactory experience and increase employee performance. According to Brahim et al. (2015), this theory states that transactional leaders must understand their followers' expectations and respond to these expectations by creating a connection between effort and reward. Hussain et al. (2017) found that employee creativity significantly influences performance and, ultimately, organizational performance. This occurs through distinct methods, including encouraging employees to work together, promoting faster problem-solving, and distinguishing the business from others in the industry by encouraging unique ideas.

Transactional leaders are influential in predictable circumstances in which they can easily understand and fulfill employees' needs, Wei et al. (2010). Although increasing performance is essential, leaders must concurrently reinforce positive behavior among their employees. Nonmanagement employees are important to the organization, and although other members often overlook them, they are significant in promoting success or influencing failure. An organization's leadership must, therefore, take time to ensure that such employees are effectively engaged and motivated. Hussain et al. (2017) stated that when employees are well-educated on different concepts, their performances are influenced positively. This leadership style creates a chain of empowerment and rewards that ultimately facilitate organizational success. As Zeb et al. (2020) stated, the leadership style creates room for leaders to relate to their subordinates, understand their needs, and fulfill them in predictable circumstances; consequently, this theory is not suitable for this research because it does not focus on relationships between unions and management.

The leader-member exchange (LMX) theory is another alternative theory based on relationships between leaders and followers rather than on relationships between leaders. Aggarwal et al. (2020) argued that leaders develop unique relationships with followers. These relationships vary based on exchanges and the nature of their interactions. The quality of the relationship between a supervisor and employees has consequences at both personal and organizational levels (Hultman, 2019). Organizations must implement new policies and revise existing guidelines to empower employees to develop appropriate interpersonal relationships with fellow workers, supervisors, and management (Baharin & Wan Hanafi, 2018). According to Aggarwal et al. (2020), fostering these relationships between leaders and followers ensures the potential for clear communication, understanding, and appreciation. This, in turn, improves performance (Eisenberg-Guyot et al., 2021). Much like transactional leadership, LMX theory is based on the importance of relationships and seeks to utilize positive relationships to increase performance.

The LMX theory holds that social behavior reflects the nature of social interactions and that certain risks and benefits are associated with different interactions. Andersen et al. (2020) discovered that social behavior is based on interactions with different people and the exchange process. Hultman (2019) also noted that the LMX theory centers on the idea that leaders interact differently with followers. Villajos et al. (2019) also reported that the relationships between followers and leaders are cordial and formal, friendly, and trusting with others. While both interactions are acceptable, they impact individuals and organizations differently (Hultman, 2019). Equally, Villajos et al. (2019) state that employees who enjoy positive and friendly relationships with their superiors, particularly organizational leaders, including managers, supervisors, and team leaders, tend to be highly engaged and empowered to perform well. Therefore, LMX theory promotes positive leader-follower interactions to create a healthy working environment, motivate employees, and improve organizational performance.

To understand the impact of relationships on organizational outcomes, one must note that attitudes and behaviors are fundamental issues that impact performance. Umemezia (2019) stated that employees with close relationships with their leaders enjoy inclusion, trust, respect, and fondness to a certain degree. However, members who have only positive interactions with their leaders, while not being disrespected, feel excluded from the group. Employees only enjoy minimal support from management (Eisenberg-Guyot et al., 2021). My research focuses on exploring effective relationship strategies between labor and management leaders. Hence, LMX theory is unsuitable for this study because it focuses on the relationship between leaders and employees.

Another theory I considered was the great man leadership theory. According to Amanchukwu et al. (2015), the great man theory states that an individual's leadership capacity is inherent; thus, leaders are not made but born. As such, leaders already possess all the necessary skills and traits. The inborn traits distinguish them from other individuals and make them responsible for leading (Villajos et al., 2019). Additionally, inborn traits enable leaders to be capable of assuming positions of power and leading their followers effectively. In this theory, a leader is considered a hero who can rise to leadership when needed and accomplish all established goals regardless of the situation or hindrances (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). Great man theory focused on leaders who already possessed the necessary talents and attributes to be a leader, which cannot be taught as per researchers.

Great man theory is based on non-scientific research that leaders must be born with leadership skills and capabilities to effectively lead others. Based on this elaboration of the theory, one can see that the theory emphasizes specific inherent attributes and characteristics that facilitate the achievement of goals following the leadership role in an organization (Eisenberg-Guyot et al., 2021). The ultimate aim is to achieve the desired goals, and this theory argues to accomplish the goals. Although the great man theory has not been scientifically proven, core leadership traits are clearly understood. These traits, including persuasiveness, intuition, charm, personality, and courage, are not taught in school, although they are vital in leadership (Halaychik, 2016). Great man theory traits are important and necessary if there are established goals that must be accomplished regardless of the barriers that may exist.

Given that this theory discusses vital elements in management leadership, it should be considered and acknowledged as a contributor to leadership in organizational settings. According to Spector (2016), the great man leadership theory is worth considering due to its contemporary relevance. The actual merits of this leadership theory do not lie in the aspect of heroism as the theory attempts to portray nor in the debate of whether the theory is accurate. Instead, this theory's greatest strength is its identification of core leadership traits. On this basis, the great man leadership theory is keen on ensuring leaders have the necessary skill set to enhance the organization's success. Essentially, this theory posits that a leader must possess all the skills necessary to facilitate achieving goals regardless of the challenges that may arise. However, this theory may not be applicable in modern organizations because it may be challenging to apply in the organization; hence, it is unsuitable for this research.

Factors Affecting Industrial Relations

Managerial Behavior/Commitment

Previous research has identified organizational commitment as a significant factor affecting industrial relations. Several scholars have consistently indicated that company management significantly determines the organization's employment relations level. Different companies have diverse management attitudes, affecting employee relations in organizations. As an illustration from existing empirical literature, Aboramadan et al. (2019) conducted a qualitative study with 237 employees to investigate factors influencing employee relations in organizations in the United States. The investigators found that organizational commitment ensures competitive compensation, which improves employee commitment to the organization and ensures employee retention.

Extending the findings of Aboramadan et al. (2019), Razzaq et al. (2018) also found that management styles such as authoritarian leadership exhibited less management commitment to enhancing employee-employer relationships. According to Razzaq et al. (2018), an organization's management style greatly impacts the association between employers and employees because it sets a tone for employee engagement. Generally, these scholars concur that managerial commitment significantly affects organizational employee relations.

When employees perceive the honesty and trustworthiness of their leaders, they tend to reciprocate the same behaviors through improved productivity in organizations.

Extending Aboramadan et al. (2019) and Razzaq et al. (2018) findings, Islami et al. (2018) conducted a qualitative study with 172 employees to explore factors influencing employee relations in organizations. After conducting the analysis, Islami et al. (2018) established that managerial commitment is crucial in ensuring strong employee relations. An organization can only be successful in industrial relations through positive managerial attitudes toward its employees, which may also impact how the labor unions respond to the organization's managerial mechanisms.

Disagreements affect employee engagement. When managers differ with employees in organizations, they create unnecessary tensions, which may affect the effectiveness of how the management and the subordinate employees work together (Islami et al., 2018). Agreeing with Islami et al. (2018), Dubey et al. (2018) also confirmed in a qualitative study that tensions between managers and employees may determine how managers and employees coexist, thus negatively affecting productivity. The articles reviewed indicate that managerial commitment significantly affects employee relations in organizations. Other scholars have also confirmed that managerial commitment significantly affects organizational employee relations. Jaworski et al. (2018) conducted a quantitative study investigating the relationship between employee relations, managerial behavior, and commitment to support this assertion. Positive relationships between managers and employees are crucial to an organization's productivity.

The findings revealed that managerial commitment and attitudes are crucial in managing employee relations in an organization (Jaworski et al., 2018). Based on these findings, Culibrk et al. (2018) supported previous literature assertions that managerial behavior toward employees may significantly impact employee relations in organizations. According to Culibrk et al., organizations should ensure employees remain satisfied, more productive, and willing to stay with the organization; this can only be done through effective employee relations management. Negative managerial attitudes towards employees may result in negative outcomes in industrial relations. Comparable findings to Culibrk et al. were also reported. Thus far, while recent research has attempted to address industrial relations factors, many of these studies have methodological flaws that limit their validity, generalizability, and transferability to other settings.

Organizational Culture

Various scholars have consistently indicated that organizational culture significantly impacts the employment relations between the employer and employee. For instance, Meng and Berger (2019) conducted a qualitative study with 838 employees to investigate the factors affecting employee relations in organizations. The findings revealed that organizational culture might impact employee relations in an organization. According to Meng and Berger, such company cultures impart fear among the employees, thereby creating a low level of morale in the company. Organizational cultures that focus on punishing employees rather than rewarding negatively affect employee relations by hampering employee-employer relationships.

Organizational cultures that punish employees create a longer power distance between employees and company management (Meng & Berger, 2019). Similar findings to Meng and Berger were also reported in a quantitative study with 335 employees to investigate the factors influencing employee relations in organizations conducted by Altay et al. (2018). Altay et al. found that company cultures are responsible for ensuring effective communication with employees, training, and development to boost employees' job skills, increasing their motivation and job satisfaction, thereby improving employee relations. Therefore, there is evidence suggesting that organizational culture could influence employee engagement positively.

Some scholars have also indicated that company culture might significantly influence industrial relations in organizations. Agreeing with this assertion, Li et al. (2018) conducted a systematic review of 20 articles to investigate factors affecting industrial relations among employees in organizations. After conducting analyses, Li et al. indicated that an organizational culture that honors employee contributions to the organization fosters a better and mutual relationship between the employees and managers, enhancing employee motivation and promoting a high level of employee relations. The evidence reviewed demonstrates that organizational culture influences industrial relations, thus, employee engagement.

Understanding what motivates the staff may help managers learn and develop plans to increase employee relations and improve the organization's success while reducing staff turnover. Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2020) conducted a systematic review to examine the influence of company culture on industrial relations in organizations. Gallardo-Gallardo et al. concluded that employee relations were enhanced by a positive organizational culture regarding employee involvement in the decision-making process, which may improve employee relations. Extending on previous literature by Gallardo-

Gallardo et al. and Li et al. (2018), Singh et al. (2019) echoed this assertion regarding the relationship between organizational culture and employee relations in organizations. In particular, Singh et al. conducted a systematic review to investigate the relationship between company culture and employee relations in organizations. The findings revealed that organizational culture enhances employee engagement, job satisfaction, and productivity, leading to improved employee relations. Employees ' perceptions regarding company culture may have diverse effects on employee relations.

Equally, according to Singh et al. (2019), an organizational culture in which managers inspire their employees to create partnerships with high expectations for work without expecting additional compensation promotes cordial relationships between employees and company management. Although recent research has attempted to address industrial relations factors, many of these studies have methodological flaws that limit their validity, generalizability, and transferability to other settings. Additional studies have shown that organizational culture may have a key influence on corporate employee relations.

Employee Rewards and Career Growth

Previous research has identified employee rewards and career growth as key factors influencing employee relations. Several scholars have indicated that employee rewards and career growth ensure employee career growth opportunities, thus enhancing industrial relations. As an illustration from the existing literature, Bibi et al. (2018) conducted a quantitative study with 250 employees to investigate the factors influencing employee relations in organizations. The findings from data analysis demonstrated that employee rewards and career growth opportunities enhanced employees' morale and motivation and increased employees' levels.

Incessant interaction between employer and employee is important for providing a supportive atmosphere for career growth in organizations (Bibi et al., 2018). These findings were echoed in a qualitative study by Kellogg et al. (2020) to examine the impact of career growth and employee reward on employee relations. The study results showed that employees who experienced growth in their careers and favorable rewards developed positive relationships with their employers (Kellogg et al., 2020). Studies reviewed have shown that organizational culture may have a key influence on corporate employee relations.

Employees look for opportunities to advance their careers to earn promotions and rewards in the organization; lack of such opportunities may lead to negative industrial relations. Additional research has confirmed that career growth and rewards may influence corporate employee relations. For instance, Tambe (2019) conducted a qualitative study to investigate the impact of career growth and reward on industrial relations. Tambe reiterated that reward and career growth in organizations might significantly affect employee relations. Overall, studies reviewed reveal that organizations with favorable career growth and competitive rewards enhanced employee relations.

Negative Effects of Poor Labor Relationship

Increased Stress and Burnout Among Employees

The presence of a negative relationship in the working environment affects employees' overall job experiences. When employees face discrimination and rudeness in their workplace, it demotivates them, leading to low job satisfaction and commitment, causing low organizational performance. Poor job relationships, such as long working hours and heavy workloads, can cause employee stress and burnout. Costello et al. (2019) conducted a systematic review collecting data from a sample size of 598 employees to determine the risks associated with burnout and stress among staff working in long-term dementia care facilities. These findings indicated that burnout and stress experiences among employees were because of lower job satisfaction and being unsupported.

Comparable results to Costello et al. (2019) were also reported by Tipa et al. (2019) after measuring burnout levels among psychiatric people. The investigators found that workers experienced higher burnout levels because they were unsatisfied with the available resources. Negative job relationships are ultimately identified in increased stress and burnout among employees. Negative relationships in the working environment affect employees' overall job experiences. Increased work strain and self-undermining contributes to increased stress among employees, thus making it difficult for them to develop self-regulation strategies in coping with stress issues.

Extending on Costello et al. (2019) and Tipa et al. (2019) findings, Rasool et al. (2020) found that many physicians experienced burnout because of a poor working environment that constituted long working hours, reducing employee job satisfaction with a sample size of 514 physicians from China. Bakker and de Vries (2021) also reported similar findings to Rasool et al., Costello et al., and Tipa et al. findings in a qualitative study investigating the new methods of undertaking burnout remedies based on resource theory. Across these studies, there is consistent evidence among scholars indicating that poor labor relationship, such as heavy workload and poor working environment increases stress and burnout among the employees because they had to work long hours to achieve a task that could have been done within the shortest time possible.

Low Morale, Low Job Satisfaction

Previous studies have associated poor labor relationships with low morale among employees. Low morale is depicted through poor communication between employers and employees, such as not providing the required tools and guidance to processes needed for effective job execution. Colville et al. conducted a qualitative study to survey the morale of 171 employees working in an ICU unit in the United Kingdom. Poor labor relationships such as poor leadership and a negative cultural workplace lower employee working morale leading to low job satisfaction. After data analysis, the investigator's findings revealed that employees encountered low job morale because of poor leadership and a lack of staff meetings to address their issues. Agreeing with Colville et al. (2017) and Browning et. al (2018) in a qualitative study with 42 nurses, the researchers found that the lack of staff debriefing influenced low morale. However, the debriefing introduction raised employees' morale as their issues were well discussed. Findings from the above studies allude that poor labor relationships such as poor leadership and lack of staff meetings can lower employees' morale, leading to low job satisfaction.

Further research by several scholars has continued to indicate that poor labor relationship lowers employee morale. Rasool et al. (2020) explored the functional performance of employees and the work of professional stress and workplace violence. A sample of 500 questionnaires was randomly distributed to participants; out of this sample, only 69% of respondents gave feedback. The scholars found that harassment among employees lowered their morale, leading to low work performance. Comparable results to Rasool et al. after examining the working performance of employees and the work of professional stress and workplace violence were also reported by Utami et al. (2021). Utami et al. conducted a qualitative study with 198 civilians from Indonesia to determine the satisfaction of teachers' jobs and their influence on turnover. The literature articles reviewed above suggested that poor labor relationships among employees negatively affected their morale, thus leading to low job satisfaction. To conclude the above studies, low employee morale has led to poor work performance, possibly because of poor labor relationships such as harassment and lack of effective communication between employees and employers.

Less Commitment on the Part of the Employees

Existing research has identified low commitment as a negative effect caused by poor labor relationships. Employees' commitment to an organization enhances added value, and Proactive support and awareness of the quality are ways in which an employee shows concern for an organization. Poor labor relationships, such as low salaries, leadership and management style, and organizational structure, strongly influence employees' commitment.

As an illustration, Mahmood et al. (2019) conducted a qualitative study to investigate workers' employment and HR practice and the mediation role of work satisfaction with 263 employees from Pakistan. After analyzing data, Mahmood et al. viewed that salary remuneration significantly impacted employees’ commitment, and poor salary motivation lowered employees’ commitment to work, thus lowering job satisfaction. Comparable results to Mahmood et al. on investigating workers’ employment and HR practices were also reported by Almeida and Coelho (2019), who found out that culture, poor communication, and poor reputation lowered the employee’s commitment, thus reducing job satisfaction. In conclusion, the low commitment of employees is the negative result of poor labor relationships because low salaries and poor leadership can reduce employees' proactiveness and awareness, thus leading to job dissatisfaction.

High Turnover and Low Retention of Employees

Previous research has shown that poor labor relationships among employees can lead to high employee turnover and low retention. High employee turnover and low retention can cause a loss of morale among the employees and even tarnish the company's good reputation. Employees face high turnover and low retention because of overwork, lack of growth and progression, and poor compensation. For instance, a qualitative study was conducted by Zahra et al. (2018) to explore employees' perceptions and the correlation between work stress and turnover with 412 employees from Pakistan. Findings revealed a significant and positive correlation between work stress and employee turnover. Work overload and ambiguity caused employee stress as they experienced burnout, prompting most of them to leave the company.

Work life balance is essential to employee retention and organizational productivity. Bass et al. (2018) found that work-life balance, poor employment policies, and poor workplace innovation negatively affected employee retention, making employees run away from the company to avoid being mistreated. Extending Bass et al. and Zahra et al. (2018) findings, Khalid and Nawab (2018), in a qualitative study with 519 participants, also found corresponding results. Upon analyzing data, Khalid and Nawab (2018) found that poor employee compensation during overtime hours led to low employee retention and high turnover, as many wished to work where their efforts were recognized. This saw the company using much capital to train and recruit new workers. Hoxha and Kleinknecht (2019), in a different study, also determined the retention and turnover of 308 employees in a hotel in the United States. From the empirical study, scholars' results suggested that poor leadership and poor compensation negatively affected employee retention. Most of the employees sought to leave the company because of the harsh conditions, such as the poor working environment that they were subjected to.

According to the studies, it is evident that poor labor relationships such as poor compensation and work overload can lower employee retention as well as increase levels of turnover in an organization. Researchers have stated that lack of employee involvement significantly affects employees' relationships and performances. For example, in the food industry, employees may interact with customers and represent the organization well (McDonald & Mitra, 2019). However, in some cases, the decision-makers fail to incorporate employees' ideas during the decision-making process, which negatively affects employee morale. Furthermore, this failure greatly impacts employee perceptions of their leaders. Employees often resist changes because they feel that decisions are being imposed on them. Lack of employee empowerment contributes significantly to poor working relationships.

Empowerment is a significant part of improving employee relations and allows the organization to achieve its objectives by increasing employee skill sets and granting subordinates the freedom to make rational decisions that managers would have otherwise made. Empowerment encourages employees to be creative and take risks, enhancing the business's competitive edge in a rapidly changing environment (McDonald & Mitra, 2019). Social media and the Internet now provide a platform for sharing ideas. Conn and McLean (2019) argued that, when utilized effectively, social media platforms significantly enhance employee relationships. However, employees must be trained to use these new channels to achieve this objective. Furthermore, training equips them with the necessary skills to support business operations in the current market. The human resources department should evaluate employees' skills and offer recommendations on the ideal training strategies to ensure that no internal gaps affect the competitiveness of the business in the market.

Unitary executive theory, which is part of the U.S constitutional law and the basis of presidential power, states that the social system in a business is a subsystem of the organization as a whole. Therefore, employees should be an important part of the system (McDonald & Mitra, 2019). Additionally, the organization should have a unifying authority and loyalty structure that emphasizes the importance of these values, interests, and objectives, which is vital to reducing conflicts and enables employees to work together as a single unit. Bennett et al. (2020) argued that successful managers delegate authority and responsibility. As a result, they provide employees with opportunities to grow by testing their skills at higher levels. Conversely, managers who control every aspect of an organization negatively affect employees' motivational levels. Therefore, union-management must engage employees to participate in decision-making processes.

Current Solutions to Improve Union-Management Relationships

Building a culture of teamwork and addressing bottlenecks that affect the organization can improve relationships between union labor and management. However, numerous challenges prevent leaders from achieving these objectives. In this section, I outline the possible solutions to enhance union-management relationships within an organization. Researchers (Barker & Christensen, 2019; McDonald & Mitra, 2019) stated that solid policies and laws protecting employees' interests would be significantly beneficial in addressing union-management-related challenges. Furthermore, the business must ensure that it abides within existing labor laws to avoid legal battles that could affect its reputation in the market. Currently, the market is dynamic, with new challenges arising each day (McDonald & Mitra, 2019). Conn and McLean (2019) asserted that allowing employees to join labor unions and other related institutions can improve their relationships with management. Managers may fail to follow established rules and regulations or ignore employees' grievances to protect the organization’s interests.

However, labor unions can fight for improved employee interests and rights. In the food industry, managers tend to support clients at employees' expense. Therefore, having a neutral body that can pressure the organization toward fairness can be useful in addressing grievances raised by employees. Additionally, involving mediators can be significant in improving labor-management relationships. Conn and McLean (2019) asserted that researchers focus on employee conflicts. However, little has been done to develop strategies to address conflicts that involve managers and employees. In some cases, managers utilize their powers to suppress the rest of the workforce.

In such a scenario, employees do not have an intermediary to oversee the problem; consequently, mediators with vast experience in arbitrating and settling difficult issues have become an important component in building a serene working environment. Conn and McLean (2019) suggested that organizations need to have several mediators they can call upon when an internal issue involves parties who work together. Such personnel must converse with the business's operations and internal aspects, such as culture. This further incorporates the unique characteristics of the organization during the decision-making process.

Reasons for Employee Turnover in the Hospitality Industry

Employee Compensation

Previous research has identified employee compensation as a key factor or reason affecting employee turnover in the hospitality industry. Several scholars have consistently indicated that employee compensation packages are key in turnover intentions. As an illustration from existing empirical literature, Kloutsiniotis and Mihail (2018) conducted a quantitative study with 350 employees to investigate factors influencing employee turnover in the United States. The investigators found that compensation improves employee commitment to the organization and ensures employee retention in the hospitality sector.

Employee compensation may comprise financial factors such as car, house allowance, organization benefits, and competitive salary. However, low wages without other benefits, such as housing and non-cash assets, result in high employee turnover (Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, 2018). Extending Kloutsiniotis and Mihail's findings, Blasi et al. also found that employee compensation is critical in attracting the best talents from the job market. According to Blasi et al. (2018), organizations can only attract a talented pool of employees, retain competent employees and ensure they remain satisfied through competitive compensation. Competitive salaries and benefits attract and have talent to the organizations. The scholars concur that employee compensation may significantly affect employee turnover.

Further research has also indicated that employee compensation is a key factor in organizational employee turnover intention. Extending Blasi et al. (2018) and Kloutsiniotis and Mihail's (2018) findings, Vo-Thanh et al. (2022) conducted a qualitative study with 16 employees to explore reasons for employee turnover and perceived job security in organizations. After completing the analysis, Vo-Thanh et al. established that compensation is crucial in attracting talented staff to the organization. Employees who receive lower salaries and insufficient rewards leave the company seeking greener pastures with better salary payments and other financial benefits. An organization can only successfully retain its best employees through competitive compensation policies.

Other scholars have also confirmed that employee compensation significantly affects employee turnover in organizations. To support this assertion, Yu et al. (2019) conducted a quantitative study with 275 companies in China to investigate the relationship between employee pay, employee commitment, and turnover intentions. The findings revealed that executive pay for performance policies might hurt the relationship between employees and management, leading to high employee turnover in organizations (Yu et al., 2019). Agreeing with Vo-Thanh et al. (2022), Ramli (2018) also confirmed in a qualitative study with 82 company employees that compensation policies such as pay-for-performance policies might negatively affect employee turnover intentions. The articles reviewed indicate that compensation significantly affects employee turnover in organizations.

According to researchers there is a correlation between compensation and job satisfaction which may have a direct impact to employee outcome. Stamolampros et al. (2019), stated that organizations should ensure employees remain satisfied, more productive, and willing to stay with the organization; this ensures retaining a talented and quality workforce. Comparable findings were reported by Chernyak-Hai and Rabenu (2018), stating that organizations must adopt mechanisms to attract a talented pool of staff, retain competent employees and maintain equality among staff in companies. While recent research has attempted to address employee turnover, many of these studies have methodological flaws that limit their validity, generalizability, and transferability to other settings.

Supervisory Practices

Various scholars have consistently indicated that organizational management supervision and supervisory practices may significantly impact employee turnover. Afsar et al. (2018) conducted a qualitative study with 343 frontline employees to investigate the reasons for employee turnover intentions and employee performance in organizations. The findings revealed that an effective supervisor might impact and motivate employees. Managers improve organizational success by motivating and inspiring employees to perform at a higher level. According to Afsar et al., most employees do not quit the organization; they stop working with unsupportive bosses. Lack of supervision among employees leads to voluntary employee turnover, loss of enthusiasm, and employee dissatisfaction with their job, influencing them to leave the company (Afsar et al., 2018). Company supervisors are responsible for promoting effective communication with employees and professionally developing to improve their skills, motivation, and job satisfaction.

Some scholars have also indicated that supervisors' supervisory practices might significantly influence employee turnover in the hospitality industry. Agreeing with this assertion, Lee et al. (2019) conducted a quantitative study with 500 employees to investigate supervision and employee turnover intentions among organizations. After completing data analyses, Lee et al. indicated supervisory practices such as employee motivation, setting achievable goals, inspiring employees to work towards achieving company goals, and understanding employees promoted employee retention. Understanding what motivates the staff may help managers learn and develop plans to increase employee performance and improve the organization's success while reducing staff turnover in the hospitality industry (Lee et al., 2019). Mentoring employees positively by the organization supervisors enhanced employee perceptions of support and may significantly affect job satisfaction, influencing employee turnover.

Other studies have shown that supervisory practices may positively influence organizational employee turnover. Extending on previous literature by Crain and Stevens (2018) and Lee et al. (2019), Siyambalapitiya et al. (2018) echoed this assertion regarding the relationship between supervisory practices and employee turnover in the hospitality sector. In particular, Siyambalapitiya et al. conducted a systematic review to investigate the relationship between supervision and employee turnover in organizations. According to Siyambalapitiya et al., exceptional managers inspire their employees to create partnerships with high expectations for work without expecting additional compensation. Generally, suppose organizations in the hospitality sector could address the factors of supervisory practices. In that case, the industry may be able to mitigate the rest of the factors, such as compensation.

Working Conditions

Previous research has identified working conditions as a key factor influencing employee turnover. Several scholars have indicated that working conditions such as workload, location, air quality, and equipment available for working need to be safe for every employee. As an illustration from the existing literature, Kramer and Kramer (2020) conducted a quantitative study to investigate the factors influencing employee turnover in organizations. The findings from data analysis demonstrated that company policies, such as company policies, could influence employees' job satisfaction and work attitude, thus affecting their motivation and turnover intention.

Company policies may harm employee motivation and turnover intentions in hospitality organizations. Buil et al. (2019) examined the impact of working conditions on employee turnover intention and performance. The study results showed that an effective working environment for every employee increase employee motivation and job satisfaction, which may affect employees' job performance and hence increase employee turnover. Yan (2020) conducted a qualitative study to investigate the impact of working conditions on performance, and Yan reiterated that working conditions within the hospital industry significantly impact employee turnover. Elshaer (2021) asserted that the mismatch between jobs and employees contributes significantly to high turnover rates. Due to the considerable number of people leaving their posts, hospitality is a common job for the young generation.

Toxic work environment impact employee well-being and turnover. Burke and Hughes (2018) argued that toxic or unhealthy working environments characterize the hospitality sector. Employees often face intense pressure to deliver, affecting their mental wellbeing. Furthermore, only minimal growth opportunities are found in the hospitality sector. Many join the industry when they are young and later realize that they are not likely to advance their causes because many organizations hire part-time or seasonal employees (Burke & Hughes, 2018; Elshaer, 2021). Overall, studies reviewed reveal that organizations with favorable working conditions enhanced employee motivation, improving employee retention by reducing turnover intention.

Transition

Low employee retention results from labor-management conflicts influenced by industrial climates, such as labor regulations; employees are deemed undervalued by managers, hostile work environments, and dissatisfaction with their work and company (Bastos et al., 2019; Newman et al., 2019). Therefore, labor union and foodservice managers must be innovative and develop strategies and policies to address the issues contributing to low employee turnover. Section 1 covered a framework of the background problem, problem statement, purpose statement, nature of the study, research question, theoretical framework, definitions of terms, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations. The study focused on the significance of labor-management relationships and the impact of the research on social change. A comprehensive review of the literature regarding labor-management relationships identified the problem and the potential causes; additionally, it helped determine the research's relevance.

The objective of Section 2 includes a description of the study's structuring and conduct. The study organization is outlined in the section as follows. The aim of Section 2 consists of a description of the study's organization and purpose. I discussed my role as the researcher, introduction to the participants, research method and design, data collection and analysis strategies, and the study's reliability and validity. In Section 3, after Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, the objective is the presentation of the research findings, application to professional practice, and social change implications, and offer recommendations for action and further research.

Section 2: The Project

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies foodservices managers use to develop and maintain an effective union-management relationship for retaining employees. The targeted population was twelve foodservice managers in Connecticut who have implemented effective strategies for union-management relationships to improve retention and profitability. The implications for positive social change resulting from increased employee retention may include increased labor force stability, profitability for employers, and the economic well-being of the communities in which these employers reside. In addition, an effective union-management relationship increases employee job retention and provides opportunities for employees to participate in leadership roles at work and in their communities through politics, leading to greater quality of life (Flavin & Shufeldt, 2016).

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher in this study, my role was to collect, organize, analyze data, and present the results. Initially, the appearance of information collected during the process is insignificant because there may be hidden layers of meanings of the human experiences, hence the need for analysis and interpretations according to the qualitative research's scope (Creswell, 2013; Nigar, 2019). To conduct this study ethically, I sought approvals such as IRB and site permission. I completed the collaborative institutional training program (CITI) on how to conduct the study ethically.

A researcher's relationship with the: (a) topic, (b) participants, or (c) research area could potential be a source of bias in a study (Yin, 2009). I did not have any prior knowledge of foodservice management or previous experience as a foodservice manager or leader. Because I did not have experience in foodservice management, I provided a fresh perspective on my business problem. I did, however, have experience acting as a worker, which may have produced bias. In addition, my experience as an employee in the foodservice industry could have affected my thought process and influence my interactions with my managers in the foodservice industry. I did not have personal relationships with foodservice managers selected for this study.

Another important role that researchers have is to act ethically throughout the study process. My primary role was to uphold ethical principles and protect participants from harm, and I used the Belmont Report as the reference point to achieve this role. The three principles of the Belmont Report include beneficence, respect for persons, and justice (Office for Human Research Protections, 2012). Respect for persons requires researchers to consider participants as autonomous people worth respect (Office for Human Research Protections, 2012). To account for respect for person principle, I sought consent from each of them and use coded names to conceal their true identities to guarantee their privacy and confidentiality. Beneficence means respecting and protecting participants, decisions and securing participants' well-being by minimizing possible harm while maximizing possible benefits to their person (Office for Human Research Protections, 2012). In this project, I explained the benefits and risks of the study to participants to help them make informed decisions about their participation. Justice means research benefits and burdens should be fairly distributed throughout society (Office for Human Research Protections, 2012). In this study, participants were given an equal chance to participate without discrimination.

Another role that researchers have is to minimize researcher bias in qualitative studies. My primary role was to implement different strategies to minimize personal risk and its influence on the study outcomes. To minimize the researcher's bias when conducting the study, I used member checking and reflexive journaling to document my perceptions and attitudes toward the studied topic for future reference during data analysis to ensure that they do not influence the study outcome. To mitigate bias in this qualitative single case study, I developed an interview protocol (Appendix A). The interview protocol followed Yin's (2018) example. Guided by Fusch and Ness's (2015) suggestions, I used an interview protocol for each interview, reducing researcher or participant bias, including communication problems. The advantages of using an interview protocol are to (a) mitigate bias, (b) reduce communication challenges, (c) guarantee similar participant experiences, and (d) provide rich and thick data (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Yin, 2018). The benefits above helped me provide valid, reliable results, which will help me recognize and recommend solutions for the studied business problem.

Participants

The participants of this study included six business leaders in the foodservice industry from Connecticut. To be included in the study, participants must: (a) come from Connecticut's foodservice industry, (b) have leadership experience in the foodservice industry, and (c) have at least 3 years of experience in implementing labor-related policies in labor unions. Participants were excluded from the study if they: (a) do not come from Connecticut's foodservice industry, (b) do not have leadership experience in the foodservice industry, and (c) do not have at least 3 years of experience in implementing labor-related policies in labor unions.

Gaining Access to Participants

Gaining access to participants is an important part of this study. I have worked with several organizations and foodservice associations. Therefore, participants were recruited via professional foodservice associations. School Nutrition Association Connecticut chapter (SNACT) is a reputable foodservice organization with an estimated 58,000 Scholl Nutrition Association members nationwide, and about 5% belong to SNACT. SNACT was contacted after I received Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. Identified participants were notified of the qualifier requirements and vetted for eligibility using demographic questions. I used an invitation flyer through professional foodservice associations, such as the SNA and SNACT, to invite participants to the study. The cover letter (Appendix B) includes the template to identify and recruit participants. The availability of publicly reviewed documents and websites were used to identify additional participants.

Establishing a Working Relationship with Participants

When conducting research, researchers act as scholar-consultants. As such, it is important to establish a working relationship with study participants. Basias and Pollalis (2018), stated that leadership support from top organizational leaders is important in establishing a working relationship throughout the research process. To enhance rapport with selected organization's leaders, I maintained regular contact with leaders and participants through email and respond to their concerns through emails, phone calls, or virtual meeting requests. I assisted leaders and participants with their needs; in return, they allowed me to access participants and interview them. Working relationships were used to build trust, respect, rapport, and effective communication.

Research Method and Design

Research Method

This study's research question was: What strategies do foodservice managers use to develop and maintain an effective union-management relationship for retaining employees? I selected the qualitative research method for the study. Qualitative research involves exploring a studied phenomenon to understand its current status using participants' views, perceptions, and meanings attached to them (Gephart, 2004). Therefore, the qualitative research method was suitable for this study to delve deeply into foodservice managers' strategies to develop and maintain an effective union-management relationship for retaining employees.

Using a qualitative approach to explore strategies foodservice managers use to develop and maintain an effective union-management relationship for retaining employees aligns with the qualitative method's applications within business and management research.

Quantitative researchers use statistical analyses to test relationships among variables (Basias & Pollalis, 2018). During the quantitative research process, Zyphur and Pierides (2017) stated that data collected from a specific population, data is analyzed, compared to an established theory, and presented the data related to the population.

Quantitative data is often collected through surveys. The study aimed to understand and describe the strategies used in effective union-labor management relationships. This study did not require quantification and analyzing data. Therefore, I did not use the quantitative research method for this study from this assessment.

In mixed-methods studies, researchers use quantitative and qualitative data to examine the relationship and impact between study (Yin, 2018). My overarching research question did not contain variables to be studied using qualitative and quantitative data. Without study variables, researchers cannot conduct a mixed-method inquiry (Basias & Pollalis, 2018). I, therefore, discarded a mixed method for this study. Zyphur and Pierides (2017) noted that qualitative research adds value to a study's internal and external generalizability. Therefore, the qualitative method was an appropriate choice for this study.

Research Design

A case study is set in a time and place. With a case study, I could explore strategies foodservice managers use to develop and maintain an effective union-management relationship for retaining employees, incorporating multiple data sources and collection methods. Case studies are ideal for researchers whose research requires an in-depth exploration of complex and specific phenomena (Yin, 2018). To construct descriptions of phenomena, researchers strive to depict the participants accurately and collect data from interviews, review documents, and observations (Stake, 1995). Exploring and understanding modern phenomena within the management field is the value of a qualitative case study. Additionally, a case study is suitable for examining and describing multifaceted and developing events (Barratt et al., 2011; Beverland & Lindgreen, 2021).

Yin (2018) indicated that a case study can enhance a researcher's study whether it is single case study focusing on a single experiment including but not limited to capturing the context and settings of an everyday situation. Or a multiple case study requiring extensive research and time used to examine multiple contrasting situations resulting in an in-depth and robust research. A case study design was suitable for addressing the study's research question on strategies foodservice managers use to develop and maintain an effective union-management relationship for retaining employees. A multiple case study allowed me to explore different examples of strategies leaders use to foster effective union-management relationships. I chose to use a multiple case study over single case study method because this study requires a robust and in-depth resources research focusing on gathering detailed information to document and provide detailed descriptions of strategies foodservice managers use to develop and maintain an effective union-management relationship for retaining employees within the selected organization.

Alternative qualitative research designs were considered. Phenomenological research design is applied when the focus is on participants' lived experiences. I did not use the phenomenological research design because the intent of the study was to explore strategies to engage and retain employees in the foodservice industry, not participants' lived experiences.

The narrative research design was also considered. According to Fusch and Ness (2015), the narrative research design is used when researchers intend to collect information or data from participants using their self-told stories. I did not intend to use participants' stories in this study. Therefore, the narrative research design was discarded for this study.

An ethnography research design was also considered. According to Yin (2009), an ethnographic research design is used to gather information about participants' culture. In this study, an ethnographic research design was discarded because I did not seek to explore the participants' culture.

Population and Sampling

Sampling Method

Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants. Babbie (2015) asserted that a fair way of selecting samples from a given population could be completed using random sampling. However, because this is a qualitative study, random sampling was not the selected strategy I chose because a qualitative research methodology uses a small sample size to account for the breadth of data collected and analyzed. Therefore, participants were selected using a purposive sampling method because the findings were not from a large population. Qualitative research can focus on small samples of a population to purposefully gain an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon that is not empirically generalized (Patton & Haynes, 2014). Using purposive sampling helped me select relevant participants who can answer the overarching research question.

Sample Size

In addition to selecting a sampling method, researchers must select an appropriate sample size for their studies. The sample population for the study consisted of participants in leadership positions in the state of Connecticut with the responsibility of managing union employees in foodservice organizations. The purpose of the research determines the study's location and size. The study's importance or the data's quality is not determined by the size of the sample (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

The participants in the study were from a population of foodservice leaders who manage union employees. The study’s objective was to collect information from documents and participants with extensive knowledge and specific experience within foodservice. I began by interviewing a selection of small sample of foodservice managers. In this study, six participants were recruited to collect data through interviews lasting 45-60 minutes per session. Participant eligibility criteria included foodservice managers who (a) come from Connecticut, (b) have leadership experience in the foodservice industry, (c) have at least 3 years of experience, and (d) must be aged 18 and older.

Data Saturation

Researchers use data saturation to determine sample sufficiency for their studies. Saunders and Townsend (2018) noted that data saturation is used to enhance their studies' rigor and reliability. Data saturation refers to the point in the research process when no new information is discovered in data analysis, and this redundancy signals to researchers that data collection may cease (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The implication is that any addition of participants or data to the analyzed data did not result in or create new information or themes but a collection of the already established findings (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Data saturation is an important aspect of a study because investigators use it to determine an adequate sample size to enhance its reliability (Hennink & Kaiser, 2021). The final sample size for the study was determined through data saturation. Starting with a minimum sample of six managers from foodservices organizations, I ensured data saturation was achieved by continuing to interview the participants until no new data is obtained.

In terms of the interview setting, researchers need to be aware of the interview setting during the interview process. One objective of the interview is to guarantee comfort to the participant so that they share their opinions, ideas, and knowledge (Hennink & Kaiser, 2021). The participant and I agreed to a convenient time to conduct the interviews for this study. Second, I allowed participants to complete the interviews over the phone or through a video conferencing service (Saunders & Townsend, 2018). Whether the interview is conducted face-to-face or not, the researcher needs to develop rapport with the participants (Fusch & Ness, 2015). To build rapport, I explained the study and the interview process. I also maintained a friendly, non-threatening tone during the interview, as Hennink and Kaiser (2021) suggested.

Ethical Research

Investigators are required to conduct ethical research. In qualitative research, ethics refers to standard behavioral rules and moral principles that guide the research project, such as data collection (Kim & Miller., 2014). While LeCompte and Young (2020) argued that there are standard norms or rules for all research, researchers must depend on guidance from different bodies. Therefore, to guarantee the highest standards of ethics in this study, I relied on (a) an informed consent process, (b) guidance from The

Belmont Report principles, and (c) support from Walden University's IRB office. Walden University's approval number for this study is IRB 06-16-23-0577709. It expires on June 15, 2024.

Consent

A consent form was provided to selected participants. Participants were informed that their participation is voluntary and freely decided not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time. If they withdraw from the study, their data were destroyed immediately. As a result, the participants accessed relevant information about the study. Furthermore, they were allowed to ask questions and seek clarity about their participation in the interview process. One of the primary requirements in research is to ensure a consent process between a participant and the researcher (Kim & Miller, 2014). Furthermore, LeCompte and Young (2020) asserted that consent forms benefit the researchers when ensuring that participants can be informed about participating in the study.

Participant Withdrawal

Another key issue in the study was participant withdrawal. As noted in the informed consent form, participants joined the study voluntarily. If the participant is likely to change their mind, they may withdraw at any point without consequence. A participant could withdraw from the study by notifying me via phone, email, or video conferencing services. A participant could also withdraw from the study by contacting Walden University's representative listed in the informed consent form under "contacts and questions."

There was minimal risk to the safety or well-being of the selected participants. Alternatively, participants experienced minor discomfort around sensitive topics during the interview. Such minimal discomfort may result in upset, fatigue, or stress during the interview process. However, these common experiences that participants encounter in their daily lives have negligible effects on them during and after the study. Data collection came after obtaining the necessary approval. The process that guided the study is the Walden University (IRB). No data were collected without the prior approval of the IRB of the submitted research plan. In addition, I completed a web-based training course facilitated by the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) focusing on protecting human subjects during research. This training course was completed before beginning the data collection process.

Selected participants were encouraged not to share information about the affiliated organizations if they felt they would compromise their professional status. Specific interview questions that made participants feel uncomfortable did not require an answer. Furthermore, I ensured the participants' identity via deidentification during the data exploration process. Participants' identities were concealed using pseudonyms such as P1, P2, and P3. The aim was to ensure that their confidentiality and privacy were adequately protected. I provided the participants with pertinent information about the study and opportunities to ask any questions about their participation in the interview process. All participants were advised that their participation in the interview process is voluntary. No incentives were offered, and participants had the right to withdraw from the interview process at any time. Each participant received a signed copy of the consent form for their records.

To protect the rights of participants, I stored all collected data that was collected and analyzed in a safe and secure location for 5 years after the study is completed. All collected data and analysis files were on a password-protected computer. Hard copies of all collected data and analytical documents will be held in a locked container at my home. After 5 years after the completion and publication of this study, I will destroy the data. Data stored on a personal computer will be deleted from the hard disk, and hard copies will be shredded.

Data Collection Instruments

Researchers play different roles in research. Researchers are the primary data collection instruments (Johnston, 2014). In this study, I was the primary data collection instrument. The study data, materials, and interviews with union-management foodservice leaders in Connecticut were collected and reviewed. Data triangulation is supported by multiple data sources (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). A variety of data collection instruments, such as questionnaires, aptitude tests, aptitude tests, leadership tests, existing documents, interviews, records, and personality tests, can be used by researchers (Johnston, 2014). Data triangulation is used in the case of study research, as Yin (2009) described, to collect data from multiple sources to support the same phenomenon and ensure the research's credibility and quality.

In qualitative research, interviews conducted by phone and face-to-face are the main methods for researchers to explore the lived experience of participants (Seidman, 2013). The interview protocol guiding the interviews was eight open-ended questions (see Appendix A). All participants' interviews were conducted virtually via Zoom. Accessibility to participants is essential in qualitative research, and Online video conferencing has a substantial advantage in a qualitative study (Gray et al., 2020). As needed during the interview, modifications were made to ensure that the selected instrument is appropriate for the study. The six selected participants were interviewed at their location in the comfort of their homes via Zoom. The minimal inconvenience may have been experienced because of the convenience of the Zoom platform.

As a result, participants could participate in the interview process effectively. I also reviewed memorandums, handbook, training manuals, policies, and procedures etc. for data sources in this study. The validity and reliability of the study instruments was achieved in different ways. In this study, the validity of the data was achieved through the use of multiple sources. Moreover, I used the member checking method which is sending each participant a copy of their interview transcript and asking for any corrections or changes that I needed make in the transcript. Participants had 4 days to countercheck the accuracy of their transcript. Member checking review is typically used to ensure dependability (reliability).

Data Collection Technique

I collected and compiled all data for the study and review materials and interviews. The materials used in conducting case studies include a memorandum, email communications, newspaper articles, written reports, letters, and administrative documents (Yin, 2009). Data from publicly available documents support exploring and describing how effective strategies impact union-management relationships. The selected participants can provide useful information such as email communications, administrative documents, reports, and memoranda they believe would be beneficial for analyzing foodservice organization leaders reading effective relationship strategies.

Providing demographic information was not an enforced requirement, but it was stressed that providing these materials was voluntary. However, recommendations were made of specific publicly available materials for this research if the participants do not provide documents. The six selected participants' experiences as foodservice managers in a union environment were explored in this qualitative method in this study. The primary tool to collect data from the participants in this study was the interview. The interviewing process for this study provided an efficient, methodical, impartial approach to data collection.

Semistructured interviews have several advantages. According to Yin (2018), semistructured interviews effectively gather detailed information about a certain phenomenon for thick description (Patton & Haynes, 2014). In addition, researchers can ask clarifying questions to participants. Disadvantages of interviews include the potential for deception among participants (Yin, 2018). Interviews are detailed and require more resources in terms of time to collect and analyze.

Member checking is the method where when data collection is completed, the researchers conduct preliminary analysis of their data, send the participants a report of the preliminary findings (identified themes, in particular), and ask the participants for feedback on the preliminary analysis results. This involves facilitating the initial interview; interpretation of what the participants shared during the interview; and sharing the researchers' interpretations with the participants for validation. Member checking is used to improve and ensure the highest results of credibility and confirmability of a study (Yin, 2018).

Data Organization Technique

Using a password-protected computer was instrumental in creating and maintaining data for the study. Data were stored as (a) type of material, i.e., interview or document, (b) identification process of data, including interview code or name of the document, (c) document file name, i.e., computer, (d) data collection date, (e) location of data collection, (f) pertinent research notes (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Selected participant interviews were only accessible by me, including the compilation, managing, and documentation via computer or OneDrive. The interviews were recorded via Zoom and prepared by TranscribeMe and NVivo 11. In addition, notes were recorded during the participants' interview process and the revision of collected materials. Note-taking is an essential practice during the case study research process, as asserted by Yin (2009). This practice ensures that researchers capture the substance of interviews and review materials during and following the data collection process.

To maintain reliability during the data collection and organization, strict procedures were adhered to for each interview. Copies of notes collected from interview recordings, review of documents, and interview transcripts were stored on a password-protected laptop. OneDrive, a cloud storage system, was a backup for research notes and materials. Participants were asked to answer the same open-ended questions. To minimize potential exposure to the confidentiality of the participants', recorded notes were documented in a journal, and interviews were transcribed verbatim. The collection and analysis of the data process included the de-identification of the selected participants. Furthermore, participants' data and analysis files reference only identification numbers. I stored all collected information and research results for 5 years. After 5 years following completion of the study, electronic and hard copies of data will be destroyed.

Data Analysis

After the data collection process is completed, data analysis started. TranscribeMe was used as transcription processes for interview responses. In addition, NVivo 11® software was utilized to conduct a content exploration to establish unique patterns and concepts from the interviews. The dependability of case studies can be enhanced by creating and using a study database (Yin, 2018). The database included notes taken during the interview, copies of documents, and video interview files. I conducted data analysis using Braun and Clarke's (2012) six steps of thematic analysis, namely familiarization coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up.

The first step was familiarizing with data. In this step, I familiarize with the data collected (Braun & Clarke, 2012). I ensured I obtained a general overview of all data collected before I started to analyze (Braun & Clarke, 2012). This was important as it offered me the insights into data collected in terms of repetitive terms or phrases as a preliminary step in data analysis. To familiarize with data, I listened and re-listened to transcribed transcripts and read texts. In addition, I took notes while reading and listening to audio tapes to familiarize myself with it.

Step two was coding. After familiarizing with data, in step one, step two is coding. The step involves coding of phrases or sentences that are repetitive (Braun & Clarke, 2012). During the coding process, I used NVivo. The coding process involves attaching and labeling short labels or codes to describe repetitive phrases or sentences. The codes generated allow researchers to have an in-depth overview or major point or shared meanings that are repetitive in the study.

Step three was generating themes. After identifying common codes, I then grouped the codes into categories to form themes. In this study, I used NVivo to identify common patterns among the common codes generated to identify the common themes in the study. If some codes were irrelevant to the study, they were discarded.

In step four, I reviewed themes. Reviewing themes include the researcher making decision and evaluation of how accurate the themes selected represent data (Braun & Clarke, 2012). I compared the themes identified against the data collected. Similar minor themes were grouped together to form major themes. Those themes that were irrelevant to the research questions were discarded.

Step five was defining and naming themes. The last step was to write the final report. The findings were discussed on how foodservice managers used strategies to maintain an effective union-management relationship and retain employees. The discussion of the results was linked to the research questions and theoretical framework used in the study. Potential similarities and differences between the study findings and previous literature were discussed, and a rationale provided for the deviations.

Step six entailed write up of the final report. In this step, I discussed and interpreted the themes in reference to the data collected (Braun & Clarke, 2012). I identified the findings against the current literature to compare similarities and indifferences. In addition, I identified how the study findings link to the conceptual framework identified. An explanation regarding the extent to which research findings differed with the existing literature were provided. In qualitative research, triangulation method is used to test the reliability and validity of the study, (Carter et. al, 2014). In this study, the utilization of historical information and research validate the study which is part of triangulation method.

As the researcher in this study, I adopted a data triangulation approach to enhance the validity and depth of my analysis. The primary rationale for conducting data triangulation, integrating both interview data and secondary data, is multi-faceted. By combining data from different sources, I aimed to gain a more holistic understanding of the research topic. Interviews provided personalized, in-depth insights, while secondary data offered broader, contextual information. This blend ensured a more complete view than either source could provide alone. Using multiple data sources allowed for cross-verification of findings. Where interview data and secondary data converged, it reinforced the validity of the conclusions. This is particularly crucial in qualitative research, where the subjectivity of data can sometimes be a limiting factor. Relying on a single data source can introduce bias into research findings. By triangulating data from interviews with secondary sources, I aimed to mitigate these biases, ensuring that the conclusions drawn were not overly reliant on one type of data or perspective. Incorporating multiple sources of data enhances the reliability and credibility of the research. It demonstrates diligence in capturing various facets of the issue at hand and reflects a commitment to thoroughness in research methodology, (Liu et al., 2023).

Reliability and Validity

Triangulation maximizes or tests the validity and reliability of a qualitative study. For the reliability and validity of a case study in qualitative research, a catalyst must be used to assess both research methods (Carter et al., 2014). Zohrabi (2013) asserted that a case study becomes reliable if it is continuous and an accurate representation of the population is provided under the study, which is duplicable under a related methodology.

Dependability

During the research design phase, dependability is the critical component. To ensure credibility and integrity of data collection and results, mechanisms are included by qualitative researchers to ensure dependability in the design of their study (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Establishing case study protocols is essential to ensure case study dependability during the process of case studies in business and management fields (Beverland & Lindgreen, 2010). The dependability of the research can be achieved by participants reviewing transcripts, data interpretation, conducting field test of the interview questions with business experts to validity. I used interview protocol to ask questions in a standard format. To ensure dependability for this study, detailed explanations of the research processes and procedures were provided. Explanations were provided for why certain methods, methodologies, and resources were selected and used in this study.

Validity

Validity is based on positivist practice which includes experimental data, reason, evidence, deduction, and laws. Corbin and Strauss (2014) state that a study's validity is based on the accuracy and trustworthiness of the researcher's information.

Credibility

Credibility is another component of trustworthiness in qualitative studies. The credibility of research which constitutes its validity has three major elements: credibility, transferability, and conformability (Lincoln et al., 1985). Credibility is used to identify the rate at which the study finding's internal validity is applicable. Several studies have recommended the use of data triangulation as a way of achieving credibility in the study (Cypress, 2017; Lincoln et al., 1985). Data triangulation includes when researchers collect a variety of information of data sources such as time in a study (Cypress, 2017).

In this study, I used data triangulation to obtain credibility by combining data from multiple sources, including interviews and secondary data. In addition, I used member checking. Member checking method, a qualitative technique where investigators return interview transcripts to participants to countercheck their accuracy before data analysis commences. Interview transcripts were sent to participants to counter check their accuracy.

Transferability

Transferability is another component for achieving a study's validity. In qualitative studies, investigators utilize the concept of transferability to describe the concept to which the findings remain applicable to other studies or settings (Lincoln et al., 1985). To ensure the transferability of the findings from this study, I used thick descriptions. As explained by Cope (2014), thick descriptions allow the researcher to provide a comprehensive and vivid portrayal of the study's sample, research setting, and the methods used for data collection and analysis. I provided a detailed account of all research processes, including the research method, research design, sampling technique, and procedures for data collection and analysis. By offering this comprehensive description, other researchers will be able to transfer or replicate the study accurately in other settings.

Confirmability

Another element that affects study’s findings is confirmability. Confirmability refers to the extent to which study findings can be replicated or corroborated by other studies (Lincoln et al., 1985). Confirmability is an important aspect of validity as it dictates the extent to which the study findings are objective. Researchers have recommended different techniques such as member checking and triangulation for minimizing researcher bias and upholding confirmability to achieve the validity of the study. Confirmability is a perspective of trustworthiness or achieving as close to an objective reality as the study can get.

I ensured credibility by implementing triangulation and member-checking methods, as recommended by Saunders et al. (2018). Consequently, interview transcripts will be shared by participants to countercheck the accuracy before data analysis.

Triangulation involves utilizing multiple sources for data collection, such as audio files, company documents, semi-structured interviews, reflective journal records, and archival documents. Mason (2010) explained that triangulation provides researchers with an opportunity to examine a problem from various perspectives. To minimize personal bias and develop a comprehensive understanding of the problem being investigated, the researcher will utilize triangulation.

To enhance the credibility of the study and address potential bias, I used multiple methods. Firstly, in addition to triangulation, I incorporated member checking as a strategy. Member checking, as explained by Mays and Pope (2000), involves sending interview transcripts to participants for their review. The process is essential for overcoming personal bias and bolstering the credibility, validity, and reliability of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Once the interviews were transcribed, I emailed the participants their respective transcripts for review. Additionally, I utilized NVivo 11 software to systematically tracked and managed the entire research process, including data collection and analysis procedures.

Data Saturation

The last component that affects study's validity is data saturation. Data saturation refers to a point at which additional participants to the study yields no new information (Aldiabat & Le Navenec, 2018). Data saturation is usually achieved through methodological triangulation (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Methodological triangulation refers to the process of collecting multiple sources. Investigators could also use archival data to saturate when no new themes are emerging during the data collection process.

During the data revision process, data from transcribed interviews, handbooks, and other research materials were used to identify new or developing themes. The utilization of historical study was used if new themes did not emerge during data collection process.

In this study, I ensured that I collected data until I reached the data saturation point. Data saturation is reached when additional participant recruitment and data collection cease to yield new findings and instead only yield redundant findings that have already been identified in the data from previous participants (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Six participants constituted the sample size at which data saturation was achieved in this study. Data saturation was assessed as achieved when analysis of the data from the fifth and sixth participants (i.e., P5 and P6) resulted in the identification of no new codes or themes that had not already been identified in the data from previous participants (i.e., in the data from P1 through P4).

I ensured data saturation by an in-depth review of the information to improve the research accuracy. Initially, I interviewed twelve participants and conduct preliminary analysis of the collected data. Then I conducted two additional interviews and examine if two additional interviews yield new theme or new information relevant to the study. I continued to add two additional interviews until the additional interviews do not yield any new theme or new information.

Transition and Summary

In section 2 I focused on exploring the strategies and methods of this study. In this qualitative study, data collection from foodservice managers originated from interviews. Section 2 covered research methods and design, data collection, reliability and validity, and data analysis. Finally, Section 3 comprises the research outcomes and the social change implications.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies foodservice managers use to develop and maintain an effective union-management relationship for retaining employees. Four themes were identified during data analysis to address the research questions: (a) balanced processing strategies, (b) relational transparency strategies, (c) self-awareness strategies, and (d) strong moral code strategies. Findings included that effective managers listen to their employees and show them that they are valued, leaders' willingness to listen, and to include others to be a part of the decision-making process.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question was: What strategies do foodservice managers use to develop and maintain an effective union-management relationship for retaining employees? Four themes were identified during data analysis to address the research questions. The themes were: (Theme 1) balanced processing strategies, (Theme 2) relational transparency strategies, (Theme 3) self-awareness strategies, and (Theme 4) strong moral code strategies. These four themes are the major findings that emerged during data analysis to address the research question. They indicate overarching patterns of meaning in the data; specific strategies will be discussed and presented in the following presentation of each theme. Table 2 indicates the number of participants who contributed to each theme and the number of excerpts from the transcripts that were assigned to each theme during the data analysis process (i.e., the theme's frequency). A more detailed presentation of each theme follows.

Table 2

Participant Demographics

	Gender	Years of experience	Role
P1	Female	6	Foodservice Director (school district)
P2	Male	15	Supervisor (municipal food and nutrition center)
P3	Female	5	Resident District Manager (school district)
P4	Female	28	Foodservice Director (school district)
P5	Female		Foodservice Coordinator (school district)
P6	Female	38	Foodservice Director (school district)

Theme 1: Balanced Processing Strategies

Five of six participants described strategies that can be identified as balanced processing strategies. Balanced processing occurs when leaders consider what they do and say, listen to others, and are careful not to have an adverse emotional impact on others (George & Sims, 2010). The participants who contributed to this theme reported using a total of four balanced processing strategies, as follows: (Subtheme 1) leader willingness to listen, (Subtheme 2) showing that each employee is valued, (Subtheme 3) encouraging others to be part of the decision-making process, and (Subtheme 4) unbiased decision-making. Table 3 indicates the number of participants who reported using each strategy and the number of times each strategy was mentioned in the data. A more detailed discussion of each strategy follows.

Table 3

Data Analysis Themes Summary

Theme	*n* of participants who contributed data to theme (*N*=6)	*n* of excerpts from data assigned to theme
Theme 1: Balanced processing strategies	5	10
Theme 2: Relational transparency strategies	3	5
Theme 3: Self-awareness strategies	4	8
Theme 4: Strong moral code strategies	2	5

Subtheme 1: Leader Willingness to Listen. Three participants reported that one of their balanced processing strategies was willing to listen. Being willing to listen involved practices such as having an open-door policy and hearing employees out when they wanted to express opinions, even when those opinions were contrary to the participants' views. P4 emphasized the importance of ensuring that employees knew she was willing to listen to them:

> Make sure that they [employees] know that they can come to talk to you, because everybody has a different thought process. Sometimes your managers give you honest feedback, but then the general workers may have a different opinion, and you want to listen to them all. I think that has been what I do, and so they're not afraid of talking to me. And I will listen.

As P4 noted employees were not afraid to talk to her because she let them know that she was willing to listen to them. P4's response also indicated the value she perceived in hearing the different perspectives of different employees because, "everybody has a different thought process," and in particular because "general workers may have a different opinion" from managers. While P4 described her practice of open communication, P5 discussed the subjects about which she allowed her staff to communicate to her:

> I treat my staff the way I want to be treated. It's very open communication. I listen to their wants, their needs, their concerns, their ideas, and if anything can be implemented or changed, then we work to do that. But I think it's very, very important. You have to listen to them, even though we've all been in the place that we're just sitting there listening and, you know, they're making no sense. And sometimes I'll get phone calls daily from my managers, who just give me, "Can you let me vent right now?"

In understanding P5's response, it may be seen that two major types of communication are described. First, P5 was always willing to listen to her employees' requests for tangible support ("their wants, their needs, their concerns, their ideas," etc.), and she was prepared to act on those requests when possible ("if anything can be implemented or changed, then we work to do that"). Second, P5 was always willing to listen to her employees' implicit or explicit requests for emotional support. She was prepared to listen to employees even when they were so upset that "they're making no sense." She made herself available on a daily basis to listen to her managers "vent," and her managers were sufficiently comfortable seeking this form of emotional support from her that they would call her phone for that purpose and request it explicitly. Thus, listening enabled participants to provide tangible and emotional support to their workers as shown in table 4.

Table 4

Balanced Processing Strategies

Strategy	n of participants who mentioned strategy (N=6)	n of times strategy was mentioned
Leader willingness to listen	3	3
Showing that each employee is valued	2	3
Encouraging others to be part of the decision-making process	2	2
Unbiased decision-making	2	2

Subtheme 2: Showing that Each Employee Is Valued. Two participants reported that they used the balancing processing strategy of showing that each employee is valued or appreciated. Demonstrating the value of the individual employee began with acknowledging the employee on an individual level while treating all employees equally. Providing recognition to all employees equally, whether they belonged to the union or not, was also described as helping to make employees feel valued. P2 reported that he showed that each employee was valued simply by finding opportunities to say ‘thank you’ to all of his employees:

> I think by saying “thank you,” that you appreciate it, goes a long way. Because a lot of times, they may not get that appreciation of what they're doing, even though it's a job, but I greatly appreciate all my staff that goes above and beyond for the kids every single day.

It may be noted in P2’s response that he perceived his staff as “going above and beyond” in doing their jobs, and that he took the time to express his appreciation in a simple, time-efficient, cost-effective manner, simply by saying “thank you” to his employees when opportunities presented themselves. He perceived this strategy as effective for showing employees that they and their work were valued.

P3 had about 100 employees working under her, about half of whom were unionized, and about half of whom were not unionized. It was particularly important to P3 that all of her employees feel equally valued and appreciated, so she worked to ensure that recognition and appreciation were given to all employees equally. P3 said of how she ensured that all employees felt valued:

> I make sure that everyone feels included and not segregated due to your union, and everyone feels the same. And I think that's really important. You know, I was in there. And I tell them, I was in your position at one time, and I had some really good bosses and stuff, and I think that's really important, is just to make your staff feel important, regardless of who pays their paychecks. So anything that we do is for everyone.

P3 noted in a different part of the same response that in an organization where some employees were unionized and others were not, union employees could feel “segregated” because unions tended to have their own functions, “their own parties or stuff.” As P3’s previous response indicated, she worked to make every employee feel valued, as well as to maintain unity and teamwork among her staff, by including all staff in all expressions of recognition or appreciation that she provided.

Subtheme 3: Encouraging Others to Be Part of the Decision-Making Process. Two participants reported that they used the balanced processing strategy of encouraging others to be part of the decision-making process. The contributing participants emphasized that when they allowed general workers to be part of decision-making process, they did not allow them to run the process. Rather, they allowed them to have a voice and to express their concerns during a process of negotiation in which other stakeholders also had a voice and other concerns were also heard. Worker concerns and priorities were weighed against factors such as legal and regulatory requirements and the needs of the students the workers were serving. P4 described how a grievance process was used constructively to reach a compromise. When P4 first assumed her position as director of foodservices in a school district, the cafeteria workers refused to cook pasta and rice because they were afraid of being burned by the boiling water. The grievance process was used to determine what equipment and training the cafeteria workers would need to cook the pasta and rice safely, and to ensure that the workers received it, P4 explained:

> So, to make rice or pasta, they were very concerned that they'll get burned because they have a lot of water, and yeah, concerns, if you don't give them the equipment that they need. They want to be safe. So I had to make sure during the grievance process, I have every right to change the work, change the menu. So I had to make sure everybody was trained how to boil water on the stove, they had a pot big enough that they could do it safely, they could move it around and not burn themselves or anybody else. That was that. Good things can come out of the grievance [process]. You know, it lays it all out for everybody, what you can and can't do.

P2 described a different negotiation process, in which workers were given a voice in order to avoid a grievance being filed with the union. During the negotiation P2 described, the workers were invited to share their concerns and priorities, and, in turn, management shared with the workers the regulations and organizational priorities that were being factored into the decision-making on the leadership side, in order to reach an understanding and attempt to compromise:

> We just got to sit down to the drawing board and discuss how we can make it cohesive between us as the department versus the union. And I think allowing the employees to voice their opinion, we want to know what they need, what their expectations are, but also, as a department, set some guidelines, expectations as well, because they need to know, what is our vision? What is our purpose? Where are we going, how we want to operate in the next two to three years, what are all of the changes that may be happening? They have to be informed of all the things and expectations where the department is, because really therein lies them even understanding and going back to the union, like we understand what the department is trying to do.

Thus, P4 and P2 both described an exchange of perspectives between management and the unionized employees. In P4's situation, the exchange took place within the formalized structure of the grievance process. In P2's situation, the exchange took place more informally, in an attempt to avert a formal grievance. In both cases, management and workers attempted to reach an understanding that depended on each side giving the other a hearing.

Subtheme 4: Unbiased Decision-Making. Two participants reported that they used the strategy of unbiased decision-making. This strategy involved relying on factors that did not depend on arbitrary considerations such as a manager's relationships with individual workers to determine the distribution of benefits and tasks. P2 discussed using an unbiased, seniority-based system to allow workers to choose shifts:

> The least-senior person has to know that they have to go through this program because they're releasing a person. So, we want to make sure that was emphasized with the union reps, that they have to make sure when we assign somebody that is releasing already to go to that program and cover, because they're more than likely that they're not going to get the 40 hours, based on seniority. So, we want to make sure that in the management aspect, that they understood that their employees that are union employees, if we assign them to a program and then releasing your data, they can't say no, they have to go to that program to cover.

The program P2 was discussing was unpopular because it resulted from a contract with the city that forbade any paying of overtime, and therefore of letting any employee work more than 40 hours per week. The only way to ensure that all shifts were covered without letting anyone work overtime was to hire extra employees, some of whom would not be able to work a full 40-hour week and would have to work sporadic hours, because they would only be covering for employees who were absent or picking up occasional shifts where extra staff were needed. These irregular shifts were unpopular, so they were assigned to the employees with the least seniority, an example of unbiased decision-making. P4 provided a general statement on the importance of unbiased decision-making:

> You have to treat people fair. And you want to make sure you're not favoring one group over the other, so that people don't perceive you as being unfair. You don't want to be giving out favors that you're not giving to everybody.

Thus, P4 and P2 perceived the importance of unbiased decision-making as a balanced processing strategy for not having an adverse emotional impact on others. As P4 noted, “favoring one group over the other” created the potential for a manager to be perceived as unfair, a perception that might lead to resentment between groups of employees or between employees and management.

The findings indicated that participants affirmed the use of balanced processing strategies to enhance labor management for increased employee retention, which is a critical factor in ensuring long-term goal attainment among organizations in the hospitality industry. One of these strategies was being willing to listen which involved practices such as having an open-door policy and hearing employees out when they wanted to express opinions, even when those opinions were contrary to the participants’ views. The study’s findings showed that appreciating employees and making them feel valued could lead to enhanced labor relations by demonstrating the value of the individual employee through acknowledging an employee on an individual level while treating all employees equally.

Allowing general workers to be part of the decision-making process and engaging in an unbiased decision-making process could promote employee retention. This theme addressed the research question and research problem by identifying various strategies to enhance employee retention and positive labor relation management in the organization.

Such strategies include being willing to listen to employees, recognizing and valuing employees, allowing general workers to be part of the decision-making process and engaging in an unbiased decision-making process. Effective labor-management relationships increase employee retention through job satisfaction, productivity, support efficiency, and work environment. These findings are consistent with previous studies which indicated that effective labor-management relationships through balanced processing strategies such as recognizing and valuing employees also reduce job stressors, including discrimination and job instability, and stimulate employee personal growth and development (Eisenberg-Guyot et al., 2021; Villajos et al., 2019).

The current findings agree with the concept of authentic leadership theory of balanced processing which is where leaders consider what they do or say, careful not to emotionally affect others by listening to them (George & Sims, 2010). This can be used as a leadership strategy for developing and maintaining a labor-management relationship for retaining employees in the food service industry. Thus, the current study findings demonstrate that employing balanced processing strategies can promote positive labor-management relationships in the food service industry, (Nlemma Aleelo, 2024).

Theme 2: Relational Transparency Strategies

Three of six participants described strategies that can be identified as relational transparency strategies. Relational transparency occurs when leaders openly share their thoughts and ideas with others, acknowledge mistakes, and regulate their emotions (George & Sims, 2010). The participants who contributed to this theme reported using a total of two relational transparency strategies, as follows: (Subtheme 5) transparency to form trust and cooperation, and (Subtheme 6) nurturing teamwork. Table 4 indicates the number of participants who reported using each strategy and the number of times each strategy was mentioned in the data. A more detailed discussion of each strategy follows.

Table 5

Relational Transparency Strategies

Strategy	n of participants who mentioned strategy (N=6)	n of times strategy was mentioned
Transparency to form trust and cooperation	2	4
Nurturing teamwork	1	1

Subtheme 1: Transparency to Form Trust and Cooperation. Two participants indicated that they used the strategy of employing transparency to form trust and cooperation. Being transparent to form trust and cooperation involved several elements. First, it meant giving advance notice of significant impending developments that affected workers, when management was aware of them and workers were not. By letting workers know in advance about changes that might or might seem to affect them, managers could maintain workers' trust and ensure cooperation when the time for the change came. P4 discussed how being transparent with workers about impending school closures helped to reassure them about their job security and maintain their trust when they might otherwise have feared for their jobs and started to distrust management:

> We closed one school, and then we changed the schools to four of them being K-2, and four of them being 3-5 schools. That was a major change. So, you really want to talk with them [employees] ahead of time and make sure that you can assure people of their job security. People don't want uncertainty. It's very

> disturbing to anybody, if things are out there in the news that, oh, we're closing schools, you're gonna lose your job, you're saving money, that makes people very uncomfortable and worry a lot, as it would any of us. So you try to get out there ahead of it, and try to at least get the information out that you do know, and assure them that there will be a process, or there will be place for everybody, or however you're gonna do it. You just got to get the word out so that everybody knows, so that they can plan their own lives. I think that makes people more comfortable.

Another aspect of being transparent to form cooperation was sharing the reasoning behind decisions and directives. P5 had a challenging situation with an employee who refused to make the planned menu items in a school cafeteria. When P5 spoke to this employee, the employee explained that the students did not like the menu items. P5 shared with the employee that the items she was serving in lieu of the planned menu did not meet the state-mandated nutritional requirements and would not be eligible for reimbursement if a state inspector learned that they were being served:

> I asked her to come to my office for a meeting at the end of the school day. And we went over it. And I said, I can't have this. I said, I've got five elementaries. And I need all you guys on the same page, because if the state came in and did an audit, none of the meals you served today would be reimbursable. Right? I said, so that's 300 meals that we would have not gotten money for. I said, if you have to change the menu, unfortunately, you have to let me know, so we can walk through this, so I can tell you what you need. And she was in my office for about an hour, and that that did it.

After P5 explained the reasoning behind complying with the planned menu to fulfill the state-mandated nutritional requirements to ensure reimbursement for the meals, the employee complied with the menus. Thus, transparency about the reason for the importance of complying with the menus led to cooperation.

Subtheme 2: Nurturing Teamwork. One participant reported using the strategy of nurturing teamwork. P3 reported that she had one union employee working in a school kitchen with a team of non-union employees. The union employee claimed that her only responsibility was to cook, and that she was not obligated to clean, wash dishes, or perform any other tasks. The claim by one employee that she was exempt from the tasks for which all of the non-union employees were responsible created what P3 called “a rift” between the union employee and the non-union employees that was detrimental to teamwork in that workplace. P3 tried speaking to the union employee, but the union employee insisted that her union contract exempted her from all kitchen duties except cooking. P3 then appealed to the union in an attempt to foster teamwork. The union backed P3:

> We relayed that information to the union president and the vice president, just to get like a rundown, like, okay, what are these responsibilities? Like, do they just do this [cook]? And they're like, no, they do anything that's needed in the kitchen, they're not above anyone else. Their main responsibility is to cook, but they are to do everything else to help maintain the kitchen. So, they're not refraining from doing anything else that needs to be done.

Thus, with the union's backing, P3 was able to repair the rift that had developed between the union and non-union employees in that workplace, by enforcing the union employee's return to a full complement of duties.

Current study findings revealed relational transparency strategies including employing transparency to form trust and cooperation. Being transparent to form trust and cooperation involves several elements such as nurturing teamwork for employee engagement that improves their motivation, and job satisfaction and potentially leads to enhanced employee retention in the organization through positive labor union-management relationships. In the current study, participants indicated that the strategies they used to develop and maintain an effective union-management relationship for retaining employees included relational transparency strategies. This theme addressed the study problem and research question by establishing various strategies including transparency to form trust and cooperation, and nurturing teamwork through employee engagement (Nlemma Aleelo, 2024).

The results are consistent with previous literature which revealed that relational transparency enables leaders to share their thoughts and ideas openly with employees, acknowledge mistakes, and regulate their emotions to enhance employee motivation and retention (Zeb et al., 2020). This study's findings would help food service managers implement effective strategies such as relational transparency, including employing transparency to form trust and cooperation, nurturing teamwork to improve employee engagement, and self-awareness strategies whereby an individual can completely understand oneself (George & Sims, 2010). This includes better understanding oneself by identifying strengths, weaknesses, values, morals, and perspectives (George & Sims, 2010). Therefore, these strategies would help food service managers and other corporate leaders improve their employee relations and labor union-management relationships.

The current study findings also confirm previous research findings which revealed that employees trust authentic leaders who exhibit high moral values, thus promoting transparent team relationships, shared knowledge, and improved creativity, which results in higher productivity and profitability, leading to positive labor-management relationships (Zeb et al., 2020). The findings are consistent with the concept of authentic leadership theory of relational transparency. Relational transparency is where leaders openly share their thoughts and ideas with others, acknowledge mistakes, and maintain their emotions contributing to the positive relationship between employees and management (George & Sims, 2010).

Theme 3: Self-Awareness Strategies

Four of six participants described strategies that can be identified as self-awareness strategies. Self-awareness is the practice whereby an individual can develop a complete understanding of oneself (George & Sims, 2010). This includes developing a better understanding of oneself by identifying strengths, weaknesses, values, morals, and perspectives (George & Sims, 2010). The participants who contributed to this theme reported using a total of two self-awareness strategies, as follows: (Subtheme 7) recognizing own limitations, and (Subtheme 8) adaptability. Table 5 indicates the number of participants who reported using each strategy and the number of times each strategy was mentioned in the data. A more detailed discussion of each strategy follows.

Table 6

Self-Awareness Strategies

Strategy	n of participants who mentioned strategy (N=6)	n of times strategy was mentioned
Recognizing own limitations	3	3
Adaptability	2	5

Subtheme 1: Recognizing Own Limitations. Three participants indicated that they used the strategy of recognizing and not attempting to overreach their own limitations. Recognizing one's own limitations could take different forms. For P1, recognizing and accepting her own limitations meant backing down from making a request that was not being granted by the union and resigning herself to working with the conditions that already existed:

> The way I work anyways, you can't draw blood from a dry well. So I think you just got to the point where you've asked, and you've asked, and you've asked, and you're not getting anything back. So, you just kind of sweep it under the rug and do the best you can moving forward.

As P1's response indicated, she was referring to situations in which she had asked the union or a union employee repeatedly to address a matter that from her perspective was a problem, and the union had repeatedly failed to satisfy her. Rather than continue to ask, and rather than escalate the matter to a higher or more formal level of conflict, she would choose to maintain good relations by backing down and accepting the status quo.

P6 offered a different perspective on recognizing her own limitations, however. P6 would attempt to negotiate her way through conflicts with union employees informally at first in order to maintain good relations. When she repeatedly reached an impasse, though, instead of resigning herself to the status quo, she would escalate the matter by filing a formal grievance with the union, recognizing the limitation in her own ability to resolve the matter informally:

> This work has to get done here, and so I think at some point, you stop, I stopped with this particular union leadership, because there's absolutely no give and take. It's only at you, and never, ever hearing you, or agreeing, or understanding, or any of that. So at some point, I just stopped. You say, I'm done, I need to file a grievance.

As P6 stated, her rationale for escalating from informal negotiation to a formal grievance process was that foodservices work “has to get done,” so if there was an impediment to that work that needed to be resolved, she felt compelled to pursue the matter until that resolution was reached. Thus, it may reasonably be inferred that the choice between whether to apply P1’s strategy of recognizing her own limitations and accepting the status quo, or P6’s strategy of recognizing her own limitations as a negotiator and appealing for a formal arbitration, depended on which choice would ensure that essential operations could continue.

Subtheme 2: Adaptability. Two participants indicated that they used the self-awareness strategy of adaptability. Adaptability could involve being flexible and compromising with the other party in a negotiation. For P1, adaptability consisted of maintaining the essential components of one’s own position while having sufficient self-awareness to be flexible in the face of a stronger personality, and to compromise on points that were less essential rather than being rigid out of a misguided sense of principle:

> It's known that I can be flexible, like, it's not ruling with an iron fist. But just showing that I can come halfway, I can meet you more than halfway . . . So, their union rep was a retired cop. So, he had a pretty stern attitude and always came to the table puffed up and ready to kind of go at it. So, me, meeting him with that, you're not gonna falter on something that you decide, or that you say, when you have a stronger personality across the table. And then again, it's showing transparency and being willing to be flexible.

Thus, P1 described her counterpart in the union negotiations as “a stronger personality” who was confrontational (“puffed up” and “ready to go at it”). P1’s adaptability in those negotiations had two components, she said, both of which depended on self-awareness. First, she was aware of her own position and of expressing integrity by being consistent (“you’re not gonna falter on something you decide . . . or say”). Second, on matters outside of the position she had staked for herself, she was willing to be both transparent and flexible.

P4 described a different kind of adaptability that occurred within a non-confrontational setting. For P4, helping workers to enjoy their work as much as possible, in as dignified a manner as possible, was an important practice. Although P4 recognized that much of the work in the kitchens was menial, she tried to remain adaptable in order to make working conditions as pleasant for workers as possible:

> I try to make things better for them in the kitchen. You can't eliminate the fact that you have to wash dishes and work every day. But I try to make it better and make it a good environment so that they don't mind working. You know, most of them don't mind work, hard work. But, you know, you got to try to make things better for them, you gotta try things, or asking their thoughts on it, or we have to change something, ask their opinion, because they're the ones in the kitchen.

Thus, while P1 was adaptable in the face of opposition from an aggressive counterpart in negotiations, P4 was adaptable to worker input about ways in which working conditions could be improved.

Research outcomes revealed self-awareness strategies as significant in addressing union-management relationships and employee retention issues in organizations. Self-awareness is the practice whereby an individual can develop a complete understanding of oneself (George & Sims, 2010). This includes developing a better understanding of oneself by identifying strengths, weaknesses, values, morals, and perspectives (George & Sims, 2010). Three participants indicated that they used the strategy of recognizing their own limitations and self-awareness strategy of adaptability which could involve being flexible and compromising with the other party in a negotiation. Adaptability also consisted of maintaining the essential components of one's position while having sufficient self-awareness to be flexible in the face of a stronger personality, and to compromise on less essential points rather than being rigid out of a misguided sense of principle. The theme addressed the research question and research problem by revealing various strategies for addressing union-management relations and employee retention in organizations.

The findings concur with previous research which indicated that poor labor relationships such as poor leadership and a negative cultural workplace lower employee working morale leads to low job satisfaction and employees encounter low job morale because of poor leadership and a lack of staff meetings to address their issues (Colville et al., 2017). This concurs with current study findings that leaders should lead by example in a moral code of ethics to enhance positive modelling that employees can follow. Harassment among employees lowered their morale, leading to low work performance. Conn and McLean (2019) asserted that self-awareness helps leaders allow employees to join labor unions and other related institutions can improve their relationships with management. The finding of self-awareness can also be aligned with the component of authentic leadership theory of self-awareness which refers to the practice whereby an individual can develop a complete understanding of oneself, making self-awareness an important strategy to address labor-management relationships and employee retention, (Huang & Zhou 2024).

Theme 4: Strong Moral Code Strategies

Two of six participants described strategies that can be identified as strong moral code strategies. A strong moral code is where leaders make decisions based on acceptable ethics and socially accepted moral practices (George & Sims, 2010). The participants who contributed to this theme reported using a total of two strong moral code strategies, as follows: (Subtheme 9) leading by example, and (Subtheme 10) being fair, respectful, and honest. Table 6 indicates the number of participants who reported using each strategy and the number of times each strategy was mentioned in the data. A more detailed discussion of each strategy follows.

Table 7

Strong Moral Code Strategies

Strategy	n of participants who mentioned strategy (N=6)	n of times strategy was mentioned
Leading by example	2	2
Being fair, respectful, and honest	1	3

Subtheme 1: Leading by Example. Two participants reported using the strong moral code strategy of leading by example. Leading by example meant that the leader abided by and modeled the same standards, ethics, and practices that they expected their employees to follow, these participants indicated. P2 explained how he led by example:

> My philosophy is, I want to work with my employees, I don't want to just be a dictator, I want to show that I can show them proof. I lead by example. Anything that I tell my employees, I don't mind doing as well, whether it's cooking with them, whether that's scrubbing a wall with them, whether that's sweeping, whether that's collecting, whether that's interacting with the kids, I am the example of what I want them to be. So, if I don't do it, they won't follow. And a lot of times they need to see the example of the expectation, or what they need to be doing moving forward.

In understanding P2's response, it may be seen that his leading by example had both a moral and a pedagogical purpose. Its moral purpose was that he wanted to "work with his employees" and not "just be a dictator"; in other words, he wanted to engage with his employees in a more egalitarian work environment where everyone was held to the same standards. The pedagogical purpose of leading by example was to model or demonstrate the procedures he wanted his employees to follow ("they need to see the example of the expectation"). P6 said of leading by example:

> I won't ask staff to do something that I'm not willing to do myself. And they know that, and so I think you have to be loyal to them so that they will be loyal to you. And honestly, that's not about the union. You know, if an employee is not happy, or something has been wrong, I don't want to lose that employee. The whole purpose of that is to retain people.

Thus, P6 indicated that leading by example, or doing what she expected her employees to do, had the purpose of producing reciprocal loyalty, and also the purpose of contributing to employee retention.

Subtheme 2: Being Fair, Respectful, and Honest. One participant indicated that she used the strong moral code strategy of being fair, respectful, and honest. P6 indicated that treating her employees in this way was a means of ensuring retention and averting grievances:

> The retaining of the employees is my relationship with them and how I treat them on the job so that they don't need their union representation to say something. You need to be firm. You need to be fair, you need to be honest, and you need to be open with your staff. And you treat them with respect. They will treat you with respect.

It may be noted that this strategy overlapped with the balanced processing strategy of unbiased decision-making ("you need to be fair"), and with the relational transparency strategy of transparency to form trust and cooperation ("you need to be honest"). This subtheme is presented separately because the participant appeared to propose these strategies from the perspective of a strong moral code.

Participants described strategies that can be identified as strong moral code strategies to be effective in the union-management relationship and employee retention in organizations. A strong moral code is where leaders make decisions based on acceptable ethics and socially accepted moral practices (George & Sims, 2010). Research findings revealed that using the strong moral code strategy of leading by example was effective in the union-management relationship in organizations. According to the participants, leading by example meant that the leader abided by and modelled the same standards, ethics, values and practices that they expected their employees to follow. As leaders, having a strong moral code of being fair, respectful, and honest could contribute to effective union-management relationships thus leading to improved employee retention.

The findings of this theme addressed the study problem and research question by establishing different moral code strategies including leading by example in maintaining acceptable ethics and socially accepted moral practices as one would want employees to follow and abide by, (Huang & Zhou 2024). Current study findings have also been reported in other research which revealed that the lack of staff debriefing influenced low morale. However, the debriefing introduction raised employees' morale as their issues were well discussed leading to an enhanced moral code of ethics and standards as employee follows the example of their leaders (Browning et. al., 2018). The strategy of a strong moral code aligns with authentic leadership theory which indicates a strong moral code is a leadership strategy to maintain labor-management relationships for retaining employees in the food service industry (George & Sims, 2010).

Applications to Professional Practice

Foodservice managers require effective strategies to develop and maintain effective union-management relationships for retaining employees. Therefore, identifying the strategies that foodservice managers use to improve employee retention is vital to enhancing the profitability and sustainability of the business in the hospitality sector. A critical and challenging issue in the hospitality industry is a high employee turnover rate due to poor labor-management relationship strategies in organizations. The decline in union membership has been linked to inadequate policies developed to promote positive labor unions (Green, 2021). Effective labor-management relationships increase employee retention through job satisfaction, productivity, support efficiency, and work environment. Effective relationships also reduce job stressors, including discrimination and job instability, and stimulate employee personal growth and development (Eisenberg-Guyot et al., 2021; Villajos et al., 2019).

Managerial commitment to balanced processing strategies is essential in certifying strong employee relations. An organization can only be successful in industrial relations through positive managerial attitudes toward its employees, such as showing that every staff is valued and appreciated, which may also impact how the labor unions respond to the organization's managerial mechanisms (Islami et al., 2018). Two participants acknowledged that they used the balancing processing strategy of showing that each employee is valued or appreciated to create favorable working conditions that increased employee retention and good standing with the labor unions. Providing equal recognition to all employees, whether they belong to the union or not, can help foodservice managers make employees feel valued. Employee recognition programs can increase employees' commitment to the organization, thus improving retention rates.

Based on the research findings, the most significant contribution to professional practice may be identifying potential strategies foodservice managers may use to improve employee retention and enhance labor relations with unions. Foodservice managers could utilize this study’s outcomes to improve employee retention with positive labor relations for enhanced business profitability and sustainability in the hospitality sector. The study findings could provide foodservice managers with a practical model for creating approaches for improving the working environment for improved employee retention and positive labor-management relationships.

Foodservice managers need help attracting and retaining good employees due to poor labor relations in their organization, with ineffective strategies to retain top talents (Murray, 2016). Researchers have demonstrated that union-management must engage employees to participate in decision-making processes by engaging them in different decision-making strategies because successful managers delegate authority to staff (McDonald & Mitra, 2019; Bennett et al., 2020). Empowerment is an essential part of improving employee labor relations. It allows the organization to achieve its objectives by increasing employee skill sets and granting subordinates the freedom to make rational decisions that the managers would have otherwise made, making them feel valued. Other researchers have stated that a lack of employee engagement significantly affects employee relationships and performances because employees in the food industry may interact with customers and represent the organization well (McDonald & Mitra, 2019). Employees often resist changes because they feel that decisions are being imposed on them, as a lack of employee empowerment contributes significantly to poor working relationships. Foodservice managers may benefit from these study findings by establishing employee engagement in decision-making programs in organizations.

This study's findings could provide foodservice managers with information on how to engage the workforce effectively to improve labor-management relationships and employee retention in food industry organizations. The findings from this research could profoundly enhance corporate profitability and sustainability by employing these strategies to enhance employee retention and positive labor relations with unions. The findings from this study could contribute to the extant literature on labor-management and employee retention strategies in the hospitality industry. The upcoming and new foodservice managers may use the study findings to understand the importance of adopting strategies for a positive working environment. Positive environmental practices, including unbiased decision-making in terms of compensation and recognition and employee engagement in the decision-making process, as indicated in this study, would lead to enhanced employee retention and positive labor relations with labor unions.

Corporate leaders' ability to comprehend how to retain and motivate employees is crucial to the success of an organization in the food industry (Bahrain & Wan Hanafi, 2018). Business leaders should attract, develop, and retain the best employees in their organizations because employee retention and labor relation strategy are essential ways of attaining a competitive advantage in the food business environment (Baharin & Wan Hanafi, 2018).

In the current study, participants indicated that the strategies they used to develop and maintain an effective union-management relationship for retaining employees included relational transparency strategies. Relational transparency enables leaders to share their thoughts and ideas openly with employees, acknowledge mistakes, and regulate their emotions to enhance employee motivation and retention (Zeb et al., 2020). This study's findings would help foodservice managers implement effective strategies such as relational transparency, including employing transparency to form trust and cooperation, nurturing teamwork to improve employee engagement, and self-awareness strategies whereby an individual can completely understand oneself (George & Sims, 2010). This includes better understanding oneself by identifying strengths, weaknesses, values, morals, and perspectives (George & Sims, 2010). Therefore, these strategies would help foodservice managers and other corporate leaders improve their employee relations and labor union-management relationships.

The results from this study also contribute to the empirical literature on employee retention and labor-management strategies. The research outcomes also add value to the food business community by propagating knowledge about strategies for improving employee retention and labor-management relationships and providing a competitive advantage to individual companies in the hospitality industry. The cooperative relationship between labor and management enhances employees' trust in management, and the organization benefits from increased productivity and reduced absenteeism (Baharin & Wan Hanafi, 2018). The findings help leaders implement employee relation strategies such as employee engagement, self-awareness, and relational transparency, nurturing teamwork, and building a culture of teamwork to improve staff engagement in decision-making processes. These strategies lead to employee satisfaction, commitment, and performance, thus reducing labor-management wrangles and improving employee relations with high retention rates. Employees trust authentic leaders who exhibit high moral values, thus promoting transparent team relationships, shared knowledge, and improved creativity, which results in higher productivity and profitability due to enhanced employee retention (Zeb et al., 2020). Foodservice leaders can use the current study findings to establish appropriate strategies to improve employee relations and labor-management relationships, resulting in enhanced employee retention, which promotes productivity and performance.

Leaders in the food industry and other sectors, such as manufacturing, can implement strategies such as building a culture of teamwork and addressing bottlenecks that affect the organization, which can improve relationships between union labor and management. Solid labor relation policies and laws protecting employees' interests would be significantly beneficial in addressing union-management-related challenges, which can be established through engaging employees in decision-making and fair treatment of all staff without favoritisms ((Barker & Christensen, 2019; McDonald & Mitra, 2019).

Leaders can create a positive work environment by utilizing authentic leadership theory’s relational transparency concept, which can additionally impact employee retention and labor-management relationships (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). The study’s findings would help foodservice managers establish favorable working conditions with improved employee relation practices, including teamwork and shared decision-making through employee engagement. Labor union leaders and management can use the current study findings to identify the relationship strategies that affect employee turnover intentions and labor management. Trust and understanding can develop an effective union-management relationship through these shared disclosures between labor and management, resulting in higher employee retention, commitment, and productivity. Organization leaders in the food industry can encourage self-development among employees to increase resilience, which leads to improved employee relations processes, making organizations more effective and productive in the hospitality sector.

This study's findings also help foodservice managers plan strategies to develop and maintain effective relationships with union leaders. Employees are the most important asset for an organization's functionality. An effective union-management relationship can increase employee retention and profitability (Bahrain & Wan Hanafi, 2018). The study's findings may be significant for business practices because identifying strategies for improving union-management relationships may enable foodservice managers to foster higher retention and, ultimately, to reap the benefits accompanying higher retention in their organization's performance.

Implications for Social Change

The study's findings for effecting positive social change can be applied by food service managers who require effective strategies to develop and maintain effective union-management relationships for retaining employees. Therefore, identifying the strategies that food service managers use to improve employee retention is vital to enhancing the profitability and sustainability of the business in the hospitality sector. A critical and challenging issue in the hospitality industry is a high employee turnover rate due to poor labor-management relationship strategies in organizations (Green, 2021). Effective labor-management relationships increase employee retention through job satisfaction, productivity, support efficiency, and work environment (Eisenberg-Guyot et al., 2021; Villajos et al., 2019).

Organizations can adopt these research findings to enhance management commitment to improving labor-management relationships for enhanced employee retention. Managerial commitment to balanced processing strategies is essential in certifying strong employee relations. An organization can only be successful in industrial relations through positive managerial attitudes toward its employees, such as showing that every staff is valued and appreciated, which may also impact how the labor unions respond to the organization's managerial mechanisms (Islami et al., 2018). Providing equal recognition to all employees, whether they belong to the union or not, can help food service managers make employees feel valued. Employee recognition programs can increase employees' commitment to the organization, thus improving retention rates.

Food service managers could utilize this study's outcomes to improve employee retention with positive labor relations for enhanced business profitability and sustainability in the hospitality sector. Based on the research findings, the most significant contribution to professional practice may be identifying potential strategies food service managers may use to improve employee retention and enhance labor relations with unions. The study findings could provide food service managers with a practical model for creating approaches to improve the working environment for enhanced employee retention and positive labor-management relationships. Food service managers need help attracting and retaining good employees due to poor labor relations in their organization, with ineffective strategies to retain top talents (Murray, 2016).

The research outcomes also add value to the food business community by propagating knowledge about strategies for improving employee retention and labor-management relationships and providing a competitive advantage to individual companies in the hospitality industry. The cooperative relationship between labor and management enhances employees' trust in management, and the organization benefits from increased productivity and reduced absenteeism (Baharin & Wan Hanafi, 2018). The findings help leaders implement employee relation strategies such as employee engagement, self-awareness, and relational transparency, nurturing teamwork, and building a culture of teamwork to improve staff engagement in decision-making processes.

Leaders in the food industry and other sectors, such as manufacturing, can implement strategies such as building a culture of teamwork and addressing bottlenecks that affect the organization, which can improve relationships between union labor and management. Solid labor relation policies and laws protecting employees' interests would be significantly beneficial in addressing union-management-related challenges, which can be established through engaging employees in decision-making and fair treatment of all staff without favoritism ((Barker & Christensen, 2019; McDonald & Mitra, 2019).

Labor union leaders and management can use the current study findings to identify the relationship strategies that affect employee turnover intentions and labor management. Trust and understanding can develop an effective union-management relationship through these shared disclosures between labor and management, resulting in higher employee retention, commitment, and productivity. Leaders can create a positive work environment by utilizing authentic leadership theory’s relational transparency concept, which can additionally impact employee retention and labor-management relationships (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). The study’s findings would help food service managers establish favorable working conditions with improved employee relation practices, including teamwork and shared decision-making through employee engagement.

Recommendations for Action

Organizations require effective labor relations and employee relations strategies to enhance employee retention. Leaders should develop and implement strategies to build effective labor-management relationships within the organizations, which would help them sustain the competitive advantage hospitality business require attracting the best talents and retaining employees on the job for a long time (Zeb et al., 2020). Managers should design balanced processing strategies to retain employees and consider the benefits offered to organizational staff (Zeb et al., 2020). To improve the hospitality industry, foodservice managers should adopt excellent strategies to enhance labor relations and employee retention. Foodservice managers should implement strategies to improve employee retention, including balanced process strategies such as showing employees they are valued and willing to listen.

The outcomes of this research could help foodservice managers improve their labor-management relations and improve employee retention. The study findings could significantly lead to information sharing, collaboration, and teamwork among foodservice managers seeking strategies to improve labor-management relations and employee retention for enhanced performance of the business. Some foodservice managers with weak strategies may apply this study’s findings to improve employee retention and enhance business profitability and sustainability. Balanced processing arises when leaders consider what they say and do, listen to employees or other people, and are careful not to have an adversative emotional effect on others (George & Sims, 2010).

The findings could help foodservice managers understand the need to listen to others willingly, including having an open-door policy and hearing employees out when they want to express opinions, even when those opinions contradict the participants. The findings emphasize the importance of willingly listening to employees and union leaders to ensure their complaints and other grievances are addressed; this would help the foodservice managers create a positive working environment, which results in improved employee retention. Foodservice managers should implement more effective employee retention strategies to enhance productivity and sustain their hospitality business.

Most foodservice managers need more effective employee retention strategies to improve labor relations and performance. The study findings demonstrate that foodservice managers use various strategies to enhance labor-management and employee retention. On this note, foodservice managers should be adequately trained to have sufficient education, experience, and skills to adopt suitable employee retention strategies. As a result, I will distribute this study’s findings to diverse stakeholders of interest using presentations at seminars and workshops, conferences, training, and publications in academic business journal articles on employee management and labor-management relationships, as well as labor unions. I will also share knowledge in my place of work, network, and through social media platforms.

Recommendations for Further Research

This qualitative case study explored foodservice managers' strategies to develop and maintain an effective union-management relationship for retaining employees. The study findings offered crucial information that future scholars could examine concerning the foodservice managers' strategies to improve labor-management relationships and employee retention. A significant limitation of this study was the small sample size of six foodservice managers as participants, which constituted the sample size at which data saturation was achieved in this study. Researchers using larger or smaller sample sizes may obtain different themes and findings. The use of a small sample size is considered appropriate in qualitative studies. In this regard, future researchers should consider using a larger size of participants across different managerial levels in diverse sectors, other foodservice sectors, and different geographical settings to enhance the transferability of study findings.

Another limitation of this study was that the foodservice industry is highly labor-intensive. Participants typically manage multiple foodservice establishments within a district or city. Their availability and workload created a hindrance to participating in the interviews. Therefore, I suggest that future researchers consider using participants in different sectors with adequate time to participate in the interviews about employee retention and labor-management relationships.

The participants in this study included only foodservice managers who worked in a union environment. As a result, the study outcomes may be generalized to only some of the target population in the hospitality industry. I, therefore, recommend that future researchers conduct further studies using employees across different levels of management, including foodservice managers, accommodation managers, and IT managers, to provide inclusive responses for transferability of findings across the hospitality sector.

This study focused on foodservice managers in Connecticut. The state labor laws, professional practices, and customs were not a focus or issue in this study and were relative to the construct of authentic leadership theory. Thus, future studies should be conducted in different geographical locations to enhance the transferability of the study outcomes.

The accuracy of the research findings in a qualitative study was limited to the research participants' information. Therefore, further research should involve longitudinal, quantitative, or mixed-methods research designs to examine sectors and diverse geographical locations.

The study was limited to my subjective assessment and accurate explanation of the participant's responses to the interview questions, resulting in researcher bias. The study was also limited to my professional experience and personal beliefs concerning foodservice managers' strategies to improve labor-management relationships and employee retention in organizations. I recommend that future researchers involve specialists from associated multi-disciplines in labor relations and employee management to provide some more details that I may have missed to include in this doctoral research study.

Reflections

In this study, I investigated the strategies foodservice managers can use to develop and maintain an effective union-management relationship for retaining employees. From the research outcomes, I gained a comprehensive understanding of the research problem from the six foodservice managers and their use of diverse strategies to improve union-management relationships and employee retention. I have learned that food managers use similar strategies involving balanced processing, relational transparency, self-awareness, and robust moral code strategies to improve employee retention in hospitality sector organizations. My new knowledge and comprehension of the research problem positively changed my preconceived ideas, beliefs, values, personal biases, and perceptions about foodservice managers' strategies to attain effective union-management relationships to retain employees.

Using the qualitative research methodology allowed me to conduct semi-structured interviews with the participants through direct interaction, which improved my ability to network, communicate effectively, and think critically, as well as improve my emotional intelligence, self-confidence, and problem-solving skills. While organizing the data and analysis process, I comprehended the research problem, which allowed me to identify the important themes and establish the research outcomes. Therefore, I received important knowledge and understanding of the research process in doctoral studies, thereby improving my academic research skills.

Conclusion

Food service managers face critical barriers and challenges in using effective strategies to improve union-management relationships and employee retention in hospitality organizations. This study has provided relevant strategies that can be used to improve union-management relationships and employee retention in hospitality organizations. The research has also provided insight that food service managers can use a combination of effective strategies to improve union-management relationships and employee retention. Implementing these strategies might help food service managers enhance union-management relationships and employee retention, which could result in sustainable businesses in hospitality organizations, thus generating improved economic growth for the local communities. The economic growth among the local communities would contribute to positive social change. Food service managers would also offer jobs to the community and pay more taxes that the government may use to develop local communities by offering social amenities to the local people. The research outcomes would help leaders implement effective strategies to improve union-management relationships and employee retention in the hospitality sector. This research has shown the need for effective strategies to enhance labor-management relationships for enhanced employee retention in the hospitality industry.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Introduction

Thank you for meeting with me, I need your consent before we proceed with the interview. My name is Nichola Hall and I am a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) candidate at Walden University. I am conducting a doctoral study project to examine what strategies do foodservice managers use to develop and maintain an effective union labor-management relation for retaining employees.

Today, I will ask you a few questions about your relationship with union leaders as a foodservice manager or director and the impact on employee retention. I asked that your responses are based on your professional work experiences in your current position. Please take the opportunity to expand if needed to provide clarity or insight. If you need me to repeat the question, please let me know.

Before we begin with the interview questions, could you:

1. Please, state your name and title?
2. Take about 2-3 minutes and tell me about your background?
3. How many years have you been working with this organization?

I will begin this interview and start recording once I have your consent.

Interview Questions

Participants were asked 8 qualitative interview questions:

1. How would you describe the relationship between union leaders and management at your organization?
2. What strategies do you use to maintain a positive union-management relationship?

3. How do you assess the effectiveness of the strategies for maintaining a positive union-management relationship?
4. What strategies do you find have worked best to improve the relationship between union leaders and management?
5. What strategies have you used that were not effective?
6. What key challenges do you identify that hindered implementing the strategies for improving relationships between union leaders and management?
7. How did you address these key challenges?
8. What additional information would you like to share regarding your union-management relationship strategies?

Conclusion

We are at the end of our interview session today. Would you like to share anything else to add to your interview? I appreciate your participation in the interview. I will stop recording now. As stated in the consent form, participant will be asked to member check transcribed response and matched them to the interview responses. I will email you the transcript and you may provide your feedback/corrections by replying to the email. I appreciate you taking the time to participate in this interview.

Appendix B: Cover Letter

Date:

Dear: _____________

My name is Nichola Hall and I am a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) candidate at Walden University. I am conducting a doctoral study project to examine what strategies do foodservice managers use to develop and maintain an effective union labor-management relation for retaining employees. My study is intended to explore the following question: how do foodservice leaders state of Connecticut (a) uses passion (b) understand their purpose (c) practice solid values (d) established connected relationships (e) demonstrate self-discipline, and (f) lead with their heart as strategies leaders use develop and implement effective relationship between union labor-management and to increase employee retention?

Based on your experiences with the foodservice experiences managing union employees and working with union labor-management in the state of Connecticut, I would like to interview you in order to gather information about strategies for maintaining an effective relationship with union leaders to increase employee retention. The interview will require 60-90 minutes of your time and will be scheduled at your convenience within [INSERT TIME PERIOD FOR INTERVIEW PROCESS FOLLOWING COMPLETION OF IRB PROCESS]. I will conduct this Zoom interview at a time that is most convenient for you. I am also inviting you to share with me any e-mail messages, administrative documents, reports, and/or memoranda that you feel may provide additional information about current limitations on maintaining effective relationships between union labor-management and the increase of employee retention. However, I note that the provision of any documents on your part is entirely voluntary. If you do not wish to provide documents, I am still asking that you participate in the study as an interviewee.

Your participation in my study will be helpful in ensuring that I gather data from perspective of foodservice leaders in the state of Connecticut with direct knowledge and experience with working with union labor-management. If you decide to participate in my study, I will send you an informed consent form via e-mail for your review and signature. This informed consent form provides background information on the study and outlines your rights during the interview process. Please contact me if you have any questions or require additional information. I kindly request a response to this letter indicating your agreement to participate or your declination by [RESPONSE DATE TO BE INSERTED AFTER INTERVIEW TIME PERIOD IS FINALIZED FOLLOWING IRB APPROVAL]. I thank you in advance for your consideration and your support of my study of a topic of national significance.

Thank you,

Nichola Hall