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Strategies to Reduce Truck Driver Turnover

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Walden University
2024

Abstract

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by

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MBA, Maryville University, 2019

BBA, University of West Georgia, 2017

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

June 2024

Abstract

Professional truck driver turnover is a massive problem for the leaders of trucking organizations. Business owners are concerned with driver turnover, as it is the number-one predictor of business stability and net income. Grounded in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, this qualitative multiple case study was conducted to identify and explore effective strategies trucking company leaders use to reduce driver turnover. The participants included six trucking company leaders from six different organizations located in the United States. Data were collected using semistructured interviews and archival documents. Three themes emerged using Yin's five-step analysis: (a) competitive driver pay, (b) improving work-life balance, and (c) honoring managerial commitments and driver expectations. A key recommendation is that trucking company leaders should pursue a diverse customer base with different types of commodities and lengths of loads, which will help leaders develop a business model that prioritizes competitive pay and work-life balance. The implications for positive social change include the potential to reduce driver shortages, which could increase deliveries of necessary goods and products to marginalized communities.

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Table of Contents

ii

Section 1: Foundation of the Study

In this study, I explored the strategies used by trucking company leaders to reduce driver turnover. I used a qualitative multiple case study to explore turnover-reducing strategies implemented in real-life context. Trucking company leaders who have the task of reducing driver turnover should understand how their role impacts net income and business stability. In Section 1, I explore multiple journals, reports, and websites to compile a literature review that sheds light on the phenomenon explored during this study.

Background of the Problem

Driver turnover is a frightening issue for trucking company leaders. Voluntary turnover is one of the most common factors that contribute to trucking company failure (Burks & Monaco, 2019; Conroy et al., 2022; Gittleman & Monaco, 2020). In the United States, replacing an employee can cost an employer 1-1.5 times the employee's annual salary (Trick et al., 2021). Voluntary turnover has a domino effect on the entire organization as turnover impacts net income and business stability. The American Trucking Association (ATA) has reported driver turnover at 94% between 1995 and 2018 (McNally, 2018; Miller et al., 2021). Leaders of trucking organizations must implement strategies to mitigate driver turnover because the consequences have proved to be catastrophic.

Problem and Purpose

The specific business problem is that some trucking company leaders lack effective strategies to reduce driver turnover, which results in higher costs and an

unstable business. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to identify and explore effective strategies trucking company leaders use to reduce driver turnover. The target population comprised of trucking company leaders in the United States who have successfully implemented effective strategies to reduce driver turnover.

Population and Sampling

The population for this study were six trucking company leaders from six different trucking organizations in the United States with at least 5 years of experience and reported turnover under the industry average who have implemented effective strategies to reduce driver turnover. I used criterion sampling in my study. Criterion sampling involves only using participants who meet the predetermined criteria (Ames et al., 2019; Braun & Clarke, 2021; Nascimento & Steinbruch, 2019). The data sources for this study included semistructured interviews of six participants and archival documents that supported the data gathered during the interviews.

Nature of the Study

The qualitative research method was suitable for exploring the phenomenon of truck driver turnover because qualitative researchers analyze the participants within their existing environments and provide an in-depth description and further understanding of the problem being studied (see Yin, 2018). Quantitative researchers test hypotheses and correlations among variables related to the phenomenon (Taherdoost, 2022b). A quantitative method would have been inappropriate because the intent was to use detailed data and not to explore the relationship between variables. A mixed-method approach includes qualitative and quantitative research designs, allowing researchers to expand

upon the problem and find further information on the phenomenon (Dawadi et al., 2021; Taherdoost, 2022b). The mixed method would have not been suitable as the research problem did not rely on quantitative data.

In this study, I used a multiple case study design to address the phenomenon because this design provides insight in a real-life context. In a case study design, multiple sources are used to compare the experiences of the target population being studied (Yin, 2018). The multiple case study included six participants from six different organizations. Phenomenological researchers view the problem through the lens of individuals living or who have previously lived the experience (Larkin et al., 2019). A phenomenological design would have not been appropriate because the goal of that design is to understand what it is like to be the individual(s) involved in the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Ethnographic researchers explore the behavior of a cultural group(s) in their natural setting (Wutich & Brewis, 2019). The ethnographic design was not appropriate because culture was irrelevant to my study. Narrative researchers look to gather stories to understand or interpret individuals' life experiences (Alblooshi et al., 2021). The narrative design was not appropriate as my data collection techniques were semistructured interviews and archival documents, neither of which involved stories.

Research Question

The central research question for this study was: What effective strategies do U.S. trucking company leaders use to reduce driver turnover?

Interview Questions

1. When attempting to neutralize turnover, what strategies have you found to be the most effective?

2. In your experience, what are some of the common problems in trucking that cause driver turnover?

3. What impact does driver turnover have on the retained/remaining drivers?

4. What challenges does driver turnover have on the stability of your organization?

5. What impact does driver turnover have on daily operations?

6. What impact does driver turnover have on internal stakeholder relationships?

7. What prior cost-effective strategies have you created that neutralize driver turnover?

8. What intrinsic/noneconomic strategies have you created that neutralize driver turnover?

9. What impact does short haul have on driver turnover?

10. What impact does long haul have on driver turnover?

11. How do you incentivize short-haul drivers to reduce turnover?

12. How do you incentivize long-haul drivers to reduce turnover?

13. How did you overcome barriers to strategy implementation?

14. What more would you like to share with me about strategies you have used to reduce driver turnover?

Conceptual Framework

The framework for this study centered around what employees need to deter them from seeking work elsewhere. Psychologist Abraham Maslow developed the hierarchy of needs in 1943, outlining five key components that show how humans are motivated. My study was focused on reducing driver turnover. The leaders of U.S. trucking companies need to understand what motivates their drivers as people and employees. Maslow's hierarchy of needs breaks this down into five levels: physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Maslow (1943) divided the hierarchy of needs into two groupings: deficiency and growth needs. If an employee cannot fulfill the first three levels, esteem and self-actualization will never happen. Maslow's hierarchy of needs applies to this study because it allows the leaders to understand what motivates truck drivers as both humans and employees and can allow them to construct strategies that help drivers reach self-actualization and, thus, reduce driver turnover.

Operational Definitions

Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations: The requirements a driver must have to operate a commercial truck legally, such as a commercial driver's license and a valid medical certificate (Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, 2023).

Long-haul trucking: Routes that cover more than 250 miles (Dryjowicz, 2022).

Short-haul trucking: Routes that cover less than 250 miles (Dryjowicz, 2022).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

An assumption is a claim that cannot be verified during a study (Sebele-Mpofu, 2020). The assumptions that influence the reliability and validity of the findings are the basis of this study. I assumed all participants would answer my interview questions honestly. I assumed participants would understand all the questions. Lastly, I assumed that all the participants would provide archival documents.

Limitations

Limitations in a study are possible weaknesses or gaps that the primary researcher cannot control (Bergen & Labonté, 2020). The main limitation of this study was the availability of the desired number of trucking company leaders. Another limitation was that the sample size is small compared to the number of trucking company leaders in the United States. The population of this study consisted of six leaders from six different trucking organizations located within the United States.

Delimitations

Delimitations are the characteristics that outline the scope of the study, and the primary researcher decides what information to include and exclude (Burkette, 2022; Gossel, 2022). The scope of this study was limited to leaders of U.S. trucking organizations and strategies they use to reduce voluntary driver turnover. The first delimitation was that I only interviewed trucking company leaders, not drivers. I chose participants regardless of race, age, or gender, as trucking company leaders have diverse

backgrounds. I anticipated a nondiscriminatory sample would represent the population more accurately.

Significance of the Study

Trucks deliver over 90% of U.S. goods, making the study significant (Ross, 2022). Constant driver turnover has caused and has continued to disrupt one of the most important disciplines in the American supply chain (Miller et al., 2021). Driver turnover negatively impacts business operations and forces leaders to focus resources on replenishing drivers instead of daily operations (LeMay & Keller, 2019).

Contribution to Business Practice

This study could be valuable to trucking organizations as reducing employee turnover impacts net income and business stability (see Babalola et al., 2021). An organization that has turnover under the industry average could find itself with a significant competitive advantage (Al-Suraihi et al., 2021). Stephenson and Fox (2021) stated that leaders who can reduce their turnover by 80% can experience increased revenue up to $800,000 annually. Leaders who can successfully reduce turnover can improve the work–life balance for drivers and increase employee morale. Trucking company leaders who can reduce turnover create a more attractive work environment than competitors and thus improve net income and business stability.

Implications for Social Change

The social change benefit could be that a stable industry could attract a larger pool of individuals, and the low-cost barrier of entrance into the industry allows individuals to pursue a career without finding themselves in significant debt. The second social benefit

could be that a stable supply chain could improve the lives of individuals in low-income communities, as shortages tend to impact low-income communities much more than wealthy communities. Truck drivers are responsible for delivering necessities, such as produce, fuel, and medicine. A stable industry could contribute to all communities having the goods they need versus the classism approach that takes place when the supply chain experiences shortages.

Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to identify and explore effective strategies leaders of trucking companies use to reduce driver turnover. The primary databases I searched were the Walden University Library and Google Scholar, which included Business Source Complete, ScienceDirect, APA PsycInfo, SAGE Journals, Academic Search Complete, and ProQuest Central. The review of literature consisted of a critical analysis and synthesis of various sources such as journals, reports, and websites.

The research used included peer-reviewed journals, reports, and websites. The keywords used for searching the databases were *employee retention, driver turnover, trucking, turnover in trucking, competition in trucking, small trucking companies, large trucking companies, turnover across industries, how important are truck drivers, safety in trucking, employee satisfaction, respect in the workplace, employee motivation and performance, pay volatility, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, motivated employees, long-haul trucking,* and *short-haul trucking.* The filters used during data gathering included peer-reviewed journals, reports, and websites from 2020 and later. The literature was

organized and stored in a personalized Walden Library and Google Scholar folder. The overall number of sources gathered for the literature review was 118, of which 101 (86%) were peer-reviewed, and 88 (75%) met the 5-year criteria, per the expectations of the university's chief academic officer.

In the literature review, I introduce the conceptual framework used in the study, which was Maslow's hierarchy of needs. I also include subsections that shed light on driver turnover and why it is a phenomenon worth exploring. Those subsections include truck driver background, voluntary driver turnover, turnover intention, compensation, profitability, organization culture and work–life balance, employee morale and satisfaction, and a final section of strategies to reduce turnover.

The centralized research question was: What effective strategies do U.S. trucking company leaders use to reduce driver turnover? The literature review for the study includes statistics on the state of the trucking industry and significant issues that contribute to driver turnover. I include references to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the conceptual framework for this study, to shed light on how motivating drivers is vital to reducing truck driver turnover.

Literature Review Introduction

I begin the literature review by exploring Maslow's hierarchy of needs and how the framework's components relate to truck driver turnover. I discuss the background of truck drivers and their importance to the American economy and the supply chain. I continue by exploring some of the critical components that leaders can study to understand turnover on a high level and begin to develop strategies to reduce turnover.

Those components include voluntary driver turnover, driver turnover intention, compensation, profitability, organizational culture and work–life balance, and employee morale and satisfaction. I end the literature review with a conclusion, tying all the main points together.

As a leader, understanding what motivates employees in an organization to reach the next level is imperative. Though leaders can use Maslow's hierarchy of needs to implement motivational techniques, it is important to mold the tactics to each employee (Rani & Desiana, 2019). Consequently, leaders who try to create a one-size-fits-all motivational model will likely struggle to reach all their employees. A survey of 51 college students was conducted on each level of the hierarchy and found little to no correlation at each component except for physiological needs (Lester, 2013). This step, the physiological needs, are viewed as the bare minimum or the foundation of needs and must be satisfied before any of the remaining levels becomes the new motivating factor (Mcleod, 2007, 2020). During the surveys, it was revealed that the higher up the pyramid, the more the responses fluctuated from student to student (Lester, 2013). The lack of correlation at each component explains the need to mold motivation techniques specific to the individual. It is a valuable skill for a leader to understand what drives their employees and create techniques specific to the employee in question (Rani & Desiana, 2019).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Conceptual Framework

The framework for this study was centered around what employees need to deter them from seeking work elsewhere. Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs outlines five key

components that show how humans are motivated. This study was focused on reducing

driver turnover and shedding light on strategies U.S. trucking company leaders can use to

address the phenomenon. Maslow's hierarchy of needs breaks this down into five levels:

physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. If

an employee cannot fulfill the first four levels, self-actualization never will happen

(Altymurat et al., 2021; Hoffman, 2020; Maslow, 1943). Maslow's hierarchy of needs is

a suitable lens to explore the motivational strategies trucking company leaders can use to

reduce driver turnover.

Maslow founded the hierarchy of needs to understand what motivates human

behavior. In 1943, most psychologists focused their research on problematic behaviors

(Maslow, 1943; Mcleod, 2020; Papaleontiou–Louca et al., 2022). Maslow wanted to

understand what makes humans happy and found that most people want to be all they can

be, the self-actualization component of the pyramid (Hopper, 2020; Maslow, 1943;

Mcleod, 2007, 2020). The literature review explores truck driver turnover through the

lens of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and investigates how a truck driver's background,

voluntary turnover, turnover intention, compensation, profitability, organizational culture

and work–life balance, employee morale and satisfaction, and strategies to reduce

turnover can impact trucking organizations.

Physiological needs, the first component of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, outline

the necessities for survival: food, water, air, etc. Maslow complemented this section with

sexual reproduction due to humanity's dependence on reproduction (Cherry, 2022).

Humans must meet the base/growth before the following components become motivation

(Altymurat et al., 2021; Hopper, 2020). This step proves quite important in relation to driver turnover as drivers are motivated by increased pay, which aligns with Maslow's theory since the foundational step of motivation is being able to acquire necessities (Altymurat et al., 2021; Maslow, 1943; Nyarko et al., 2021). The physiological need is the first component humans must meet before the following four components become the main motivation.

When an employee seeks work, the baseline goal is acquiring the means to acquire wants and needs. While it is not unheard of for employees to choose meaningful work over a higher salary, they consistently choose the higher salary when deciding between the two alternatives (Autin et al., 2022; Ward, 2023). Conroy et al. (2022) attributed driver turnover to pay, and due to the minimal variation between organizations, pay has been the main contributor to turnover for over two decades. Trucking organizations have faced the detrimental effects of driver turnover, including increased costs, limited productivity, and decreased safety performance (Miller et al., 2021; Robinson & Bently, 2019). Leaders must create a business model that maximizes income for its drivers to reduce turnover (Robinson & Bently, 2019).

The security and safety needs, the second component of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, begins with the complexity of human motivation. This component includes financial security, health and wellness, and safety against accidents and injury (Cherry, 2022; Sharma et al., 2022). A discouraging factor for truck drivers is the lack of consistent healthcare and the dangers of constantly being on the road (Soro et al., 2023). Trucking proves to be a dangerous field as roughly 5% of registered vehicles are large

trucks yet are responsible for 10% of fatal accidents (Behnood & Al-Bdairi, 2020). Truck driving is an extremely dangerous career and is a key element that makes the field unattractive (Nævestad et al., 2020). This component begins the complexity of human motivation and is a vital step to satisfy before the next three levels can become the primary motivation.

In relation to the trucking industry, safety is a primary deterrent in retaining and attaining drivers. In 2017, over 4,000 people in the United States were killed in accidents involving large trucks (Nævestad et al., 2020). Studies show that truck driving is one of the higher-risk occupations in North America, and a survey of 158 drivers revealed that truckers feel they are on their own regarding safety and cannot rely on law enforcement (Gray & Lindsay, 2019). Forty percent of drivers who reported being victimized by crime revealed that those crimes were violent, including rape and assault (Summer, 2020). Leaders must understand that it is imperative to work with the necessary entities to increase safety for truckers and, thus, reduce turnover (Ju & Belzer, 2022).

The love and belonging needs, the third component of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, build upon the complexity of human motivation. At this component, the desire for emotional relationships drives human behavior (Cherry, 2022; Lussier, 2019). Love and belonging outline the craving for friendship, love, intimacy, and family (Carducci, 2020; Mcleod, 2007, 2020). The deprivation of these emotional needs is often the cause of depression and loneliness (Robinson & Bently, 2019; Vithayaporn et al., 2022). Leaders must understand humans are not robots and emotional factors influence work quality, behavior, and turnover (Drigas & Karyotaki, 2019).

In relation to the trucking industry, love and belonging is a huge obstacle for leaders to retain drivers. Truck drivers, specifically long-haul truckers, suffer from extreme loneliness and separation anxiety, which can lead to mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, and stress (Makuto et al., 2023; Robinson & Bently, 2019). One of the most common reasons for driver turnover is extreme solitude and isolation from home, family, and friends (Desrosier et al., 2022; Makuto et al., 2023). Leaders of organizations who implement short-haul trucking into their business models give themselves a significant competitive advantage over competitors who solely rely on long-haul contracts (Butko et al., 2019). Leaders must consider the influence of loneliness in trucking to create a model that prioritizes the mental health of drivers (Zaidi et al., 2021).

The esteem component is the fourth level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and outlines humans' desire to be respected and recognized. This level in Maslow's hierarchy separates esteem into two needs: the need to be respected by others and the need for respect from oneself (Lussier, 2019; Maslow, 1943; Okafor & Abraham, 2021). Esteem is a two-pronged need and is not achievable if one of the two is missing (Trivedi & Mehta, 2019). Esteem is essential because, without respect, humans will likely not feel as if their full potential can be reached (Carducci, 2020).

Truck drivers are a vital piece of society. Employees who feel respected report increased job satisfaction, thus reducing turnover (Ali & Anwar, 2021; Lussier, 2019; Okafor & Abraham, 2021). Some trucking organizations reported turnover to be over 200% (Stephenson & Fox, 2021). In a survey of 65 employees, with 60 of the surveys being complete, lack of respect from superiors was identified as a top three element in

why employees seek work elsewhere (Mohammed, 2022). Leaders who can demonstrate genuine respect for their employees reduce the possibility of costly turnover and can give the organization a competitive advantage in a cost-effective way (Yücel, 2021).

Self-actualization, the growth need, is the peak of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. An employee who has reached the self-actualization component would have achieved self-fulfillment, personal growth, and would be near their full potential (Hopper, 2020; Maslow, 1943; Mcleod, 2020). Leaders who can assist employees with reaching this level significantly reduce the opportunity for turnover (Raj, 2023). Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a model where individual needs encourage behavior to accomplish one's full potential (Brière et al., 2021; Trivedi & Mehta, 2019). Maslow categorizes self-actualization as the peak of human motivation (Maslow & Lewis, 1987).

Leaders who can help employees reach their goals and, thus, self-actualization can significantly increase their ability to retain employees. Trucking company leaders need to understand the goals of their employees as self-actualization varies by person (Gopinath, 2020; Montag et al., 2020). A vital concept of self-actualization is that goals should be realistic and attainable (Gopinath, 2020). Self-actualization centers around growth, and employees want to work for an organization that assists and promotes individual growth (Altymurat et al., 2021; Transilvanus et al., 2019). Consequently, employees will seek work elsewhere if they cannot see the vision of reaching self-actualization at their current place of employment. Even so, employees who reach self-actualization have increased morale, impacting their job performance and improving the organization's overall culture. It is paramount that leaders understand and prioritize

employees' goals to assist with achieving self-actualization and, ultimately, reduce driver turnover (Chudasama, 2021).

Truck Driver Background

Truck drivers in the United States have contributed significantly to the success of the American economy for decades, which causes driver turnover to be a huge concern. Mussell et al. (2020) stated that truck drivers are considered the backbone of the supply chain and are primarily responsible for the movement of goods in nearly every industry across the United States. The American Transportation Research Institute (2023) reported an all-time high shortage of truck drivers, which has been a top industry concern throughout the last five yearly surveys (Kent & Haralambides, 2022). Truck driver turnover is significant because, as the backbone of the American economy, it is imperative that the industry can replenish drivers as turnover occurs (Miller et al., 2021). When the supply chain is disrupted, low-income communities are impacted the most. High-income neighborhoods are prioritized, leaving the remaining communities to sprawl over shortages of goods. Leaders who fail to incorporate strategies to reduce driver turnover contribute to the disruption of the economy, which has rested on the shoulders of truck drivers for decades.

Truck drivers comprise a significant piece of the supply chain and a huge piece of the U.S. economy. Backhaus (2019) revealed that truck driving has been vital to the American economy since the late 1800s. LeMay and Keller (2019) found that current industry developments, economic conditions, and the political landscape significantly influence driver turnover. Thus, leaders can focus on those three factors to create efforts

to reduce driver turnover. The American economy relies heavily on the trucking industry, which has consistently undergone some of the highest turnover compared to all industries across the nation (Scott & Davis-Sramek, 2023). High turnover in the trucking industry impacts the entire United States, as consumers depend on truck drivers for goods such as produce, medicine, and fuel. Truck drivers' contribution to the U.S. economy causes the phenomenon of driver turnover to be an issue worth exploring.

Voluntary Driver Turnover

Voluntary turnover has proven to be a huge issue for trucking organizations in the United States. Stephenson and Fox (2021) found that if trucking company leaders can reduce their annual turnover from 100% to 20%, they could increase revenue by at least 800,000. Trick et al. (2021) found that driver turnover can cost the organization 1-1.5 times the salary of the former driver. Miller et al. (2021) research revealed that many leaders of trucking organizations in the United States implemented increased wages as a solution to reduce driver turnover. Thus, increasing pay can be a strategy trucking company leaders use to address the impact of driver turnover. Furthermore, addressing driver turnover is significant for trucking company leaders since high turnover affects net income and the stability of the business (LeMay & Keller, 2019). Driver turnover is an issue for trucking organizations in the United States, and seeking efficient ways to reduce turnover can be a significant competitive advantage (Al-Suraihi et al., 2021).

Socialization is a factor many researchers decided to explore in reference to driver turnover. The majority demographic of truck drivers is made up of 70% White men, ages 45 and older (Briggs et al., 2019; Riddle, 2021). Huxley and Chan (2022) reported that if

leaders can target minority demographics, it will expand the driver pool and soften the blow of driver turnover. Thus, leaders can address turnover by creating a multidemographic environment, as minorities are naturally attracted to diverse organizations (Jung & Welch, 2022). A diverse organization can appeal to minorities and expand the pool in which leaders can select drivers and serve as a mitigator to the issue of driver turnover (Ferraro et al., 2023). An expanded driver pool can serve as a strategy to address the shortage and turnover of truck drivers. Socialization can be the competitive advantage leaders of organizations need to address the phenomenon of driver turnover.

Leaders can use Maslow's hierarchy of needs to build a model to address the phenomenon of driver turnover. Maslow (1943) developed the hierarchy of needs to understand how individuals' needs motivate them to reach their full potential or self-actualization. Nguyen (2021) and Peltokorpi et al. (2022) showed how to use Maslow's hierarchy to build a model to motivate employees and, thus, reduce turnover. The elements that drive human behavior can be defined using Maslow's hierarchy of needs and used by leaders to understand what motivates employees. Leaders can use Maslow's hierarchy of needs as a guide to understand how to create a culture or style that motivates their employees and reduce driver turnover.

Voluntary turnover is devastating for trucking organizations, and leaders should be able to detect turnover behavior as quickly as possible. Voluntary turnover occurs when the employee terminates the relationship with the organization (Peltokorpi et al., 2022; Su et al., 2020). Oh and Chhinzer (2021) reported that the best way for leaders to predict turnover behavior is by identifying employees' willingness to leave the

organization. Thus, leaders should identify employees who appear to lack satisfaction, decreased morale, or any of the several characteristics that often lead to turnover. Voluntary turnover can be disastrous for both trucking organizations and the American economy (Miller et al., 2021), and the burden to address turnover rests on the shoulders of organizational leaders. Leaders can help reduce driver turnover by detecting characteristics that are associated with an employee who may have plans of resigning.

Burnout impacts the daily operations of trucking organizations, and leaders have sought to understand the cause of the phenomenon and how it relates to voluntary turnover. Robinson and Bently (2019) conducted a stress impact study and found that burnout significantly contributes to driver turnover. Burnout can impact safety, a huge concern for trucking organizations, as large trucks cause ten percent of fatal accidents (Behnood & Al-Bdairi, 2020). Many large organizations are self-insured, and insurance claims directly impact the bottom line (Lee et al., 2021). Consequently, drivers who reach burnout are more likely to cause safety incidents, which impacts the organization's net income. Those who do not cause safety concerns are still more likely to resign. Burnout often leads to voluntary turnover, which affects the ability of leaders to conduct daily operations as their attention must shift to replacing drivers and not business necessities such as profit maximization and business stability (Faulkiner & Belzer, 2019; Nævestad et al., 2020).

The turnover of a tenured employee is usually more devastating as the organization's leader loses both the employee and the employee's experience. The turnover costs are catastrophic on all levels but more costly when an experienced

employee leaves the organization (Kurniawaty et al., 2019). The exiting of a tenured

employee can significantly impact employee morale (Pattnaik & Jena, 2020). Tenured

employees are more efficient, and their replacement rarely has the same quality of work

product (Jeong & Lee, 2023). Consequently, the turnover of experienced employees can

impact net income, business stability, and daily operations. All turnover is significant;

however, the turnover of a tenured driver can be more impactful.

Leaders want to be confident they can retain employees, but more importantly,

they should prioritize retaining effective employees. The costs to replace an employee

directly impacts an organization's net income (Trick et al., 2021). The costs are much

greater for an employee who outperforms their counterparts (Jeong & Lee, 2023). In

trucking, it is not uncommon to work under small margins, which makes efficiency a

huge factor in profit maximization (Kukartsev et al., 2019). Thus, pay is critical in the

trucking industry to retain efficient employees (Conroy et al., 2022). Pay satisfies the first

level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and leaders should prioritize income maximization

to remain attractive to effective employees. Leaders must create a system to ensure they

can retain effective drivers.

A damaged relationship between employees and leadership often causes voluntary

turnover. Disagreements in the workplace will happen, and leaders must have the skill set

to mend relationships when damaged (Chandolia & Anastasiou, 2020). Leaders should

use the human resource department for models and tactics to neutralize conflict when

issues arise (Dwesini, 2019). The bulk of communication between truck drivers and

leadership takes place over the phone, which increases the opportunity for

misunderstanding (Venter, 2019). Consequently, drivers can interpret verbiage from

leaders as rude or demeaning since one cannot pick up nonverbal cues over the phone

(Raximbayevna & Raxmatullayevna, 2023). Misunderstandings can lead to damaged

relationships, and good leaders should seek ways to avoid damaged relationships or mend

damaged relationships when they occur. Establishing and maintaining relationships is an

element leaders should prioritize to reduce voluntary turnover and, thus, maximize profit

and business stability (Guzeller & Celiker, 2020). Trucking company leaders should be

wary of their communication skills to reduce the opportunity for damaged relationships

that can lead to driver turnover.

Driver Turnover Intention

Leaders can address turnover intention by introducing a positive leadership style

that can be accomplished through understanding internal needs and recognizing turnover

intention (Sulamuthu & Yusof, 2018). Understanding the internal needs of employees can

help leaders assist drivers in achieving self-actualization and, ultimately, reduce turnover

(Hoffman, 2020; Kaufman, 2023). Consequently, a leader who understands what

motivates a driver can develop a motivational technique that prevents the employee from

reaching turnover intention. Once a driver enters turnover intention, the likelihood of

voluntary turnover nearly doubles (Ramlawati et al., 2021). Sulamuthu and Yusof (2018)

stated that there is a direct relationship between leadership style and turnover intention. It

can be beneficial for a leader to address the employee's needs before turnover intention

ever settles in. Leaders must prioritize their leadership style in hopes of reducing turnover

intention, similar to prioritizing profit maximization and business stability (Masood et al.,

2020).

Leaders can address turnover intention by prioritizing their employees' goals and

assisting them in reaching self-actualization (Nguyen et al., 2020). Leaders should seek to

align employees' goals with the organization's goals (Chiat & Panatik, 2019). Leaders

can simultaneously pursue organizational goals and reduce the number of employees who

reach turnover intention. Employees whose goals are prioritized will be engaged, which

decreases the plausibility of turnover (Sulistyawati & Sufriadi, 2020). Consequently,

engaged employees will be less likely to resign, allowing leaders to focus efforts on daily

operations. Leaders significantly reduce the chances for turnover intention when

employees' goals are prioritized, and employees can work towards self-actualization

(Chiat & Panatik, 2019).

Compensation

Pay is often a leading contributor to voluntary turnover in the trucking industry.

There is minimal variation between the daily activities of truck drivers, so pay is often the

main contributor to turnover (Conroy et al., 2022). Consequently, truck drivers are prone

to job hopping in search of the highest bidder. Saleem and Gul (2013) surveyed 90

participants and found that pay satisfaction significantly reduces voluntary turnover. Pay

aligns with the base need, physiological needs, which are the most motivational as this

element evolves around acquiring basic wants and needs (Hopper, 2020; Maslow, 1943;

Mcleod, 2007, 2020; Nyarko et al., 2021). Thus, leaders must understand that pay is

highly motivational, and a competitive pay scale is required to neutralize voluntary driver

turnover (Conroy et al., 2022). Pay has continued to be one of the main contributors to driver turnover within the trucking industry.

Organizations can decrease voluntary turnover by allowing employees to control their salaries. Often, truck drivers get paid by the mile (Robinson & Bently, 2019). Truck drivers seek organizations where they can drive the most miles possible according to DOT regulations (Washburn et al., 2021). Leaders of organizations who cannot offer drivers the miles to achieve attractive salaries are at a significant disadvantage (Kudo & Belzer, 2019; Robinson & Bently, 2019). Thus, truck drivers seek employers that have enough business to allow drivers to maximize miles driven. Consequently, organizations that lack enough business to maximize revenue have more turnover than their competitors. Organizations can decrease voluntary turnover by encouraging a culture that allows drivers to maximize their revenue (Conroy et al., 2022).

Employers should compensate safe drivers, as accidents can cost trucking organizations millions of dollars. An added safety incentive creates a more competitive compensation package, which contributes to reducing voluntary turnover (Kudo & Belzer, 2019). Several organizations have milestones built into compensation packages that reward drivers with a certain amount of dollars if they drive a certain number of miles without an accident (Faulkiner & Belzer, 2019). Thus, employees and employers benefit from safe driving from a financial and reputational perspective. Many trucking organizations are self-insured, and at-fault accidents directly hit net income (Lee et al., 2021). A self-insured organization pays for at-fault accidents directly from revenue, causing accidents to impact the bottom line significantly. Many organizations

compensate safe drivers since an earned safety incentive benefits drivers and the organization (Ju & Belzer, 2022). Drivers who can maintain an accident-free driving record often can generate additional revenue, contributing to pay satisfaction and, thus, reducing driver turnover (He et al., 2022).

Leaders of trucking organizations that contract self-employed drivers have a greater burden to offer competitive compensation than employee-based organizations. Self-employed/Owner–operator drivers incur considerable expenses to operate their trucks, causing compensation to be highly motivational (Shin & Jeong, 2020). Consequently, if self-employed drivers cannot cover their costs, their physiological needs will not be met. Some organizations contract self-employed drivers to minimize their expenses compared to asset-based organizations (Flinchbaugh et al., 2020). The expense saved from the organization is passed to the owner–operators. Some of those expenses include truck payments, fuel, and insurance (Shin & Jeong, 2020). Owner–operators have a higher earning potential than traditional employees; however, they can find themselves operating at a deficit if their compensation does not outweigh the costs (Miller et al., 2022). Consequently, trucking organizations must have a business model allowing owner–operators to constantly operate at a profit in hopes of retaining self-employed drivers. Trucking organizations that contract owner–operators have the constant burden of guaranteeing their drivers can operate at a profit.

Owner–operators' compensation needs are significantly higher than those of company drivers. Shin and Jeong (2020) stated that, on average, owner–operators need four times the salary of company drivers to operate at a profit. Consequently, leaders of

organizations that decide to contract owner–operators must have sufficient business that allows drivers to maximize their income constantly. Owner–operators have a ton of fixed expenses that require a minimum compensation to break even, let alone generate profit (Miller et al., 2022). Thus, leaders of organizations that cannot produce stable profits for owner–operators are at a significant disadvantage compared to their competitors. The recurring fixed expenses that owner–operators incur cause their compensation needs to be significantly higher than drivers who are not in business for themselves.

Profitability

Voluntary turnover significantly impacts profitability. Employee turnover can cost an employer 100 to 150 times the employee's salary (Skelton et al., 2020). Employees with tenure possess a skillset that usually yields profit more efficiently than inexperienced employees (Dodanwala & Santoso, 2022). Thus, retention is a strategy leaders can use to improve profitability for the organization. Employees who join a competitor pose a more significant threat as their knowledge or skillset can bring the customer to the new organization (Hussain et al., 2020). The relationship drivers have with the customer can lead to contract loss, especially when employees decide to go into business for themselves. Leaders who understand the correlation between voluntary turnover and profitability are more suited to implement strategies that benefit the business (Astuti & Helmi, 2021).

Turnover intention impacts productivity and, thus, profitability. When employees are motivated to quit, productivity swiftly declines (Falahat et al., 2019; Suyono et al., 2020). Reduced productivity leads to decreased profitability (Takahashi et al., 2020). An

employee intending to quit can lower the morale of coworkers, impacting productivity and, thus, profitability (Obeng et al., 2020). Consequently, a lack of productivity requires more employees to accomplish the same amount of work, which causes driver shortages to be an additional concern. Leaders who understand the relationship between turnover intention and profitability can establish a competitive advantage (Bae et al., 2021).

Turnover impacts profitability beyond the scope of replacing the employee. Several trucking organizations are self-insured, causing at-fault accidents to impact the bottom line directly (Lee et al., 2021). Thus, motor accidents can cause a net income impact ranging up to 2 million dollars (Das et al., 2022). The organization can also suffer financially when goods become damaged in transport. Organizations transporting hazmat goods incur huge financial impacts when goods are damaged (Manzoor, 2020). The law requires hazmat transporters to carry significant insurance policies to cover the expense of damaged chemicals (Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, 2023). Thus, it is beneficial to profitability when the leaders of organizations can retain experienced and licensed drivers in transporting hazmat materials. Though replacing an employee is negative for profitability, the impact on net income can materialize more when employees are inexperienced or unfamiliar with the goods they carry or the customers they service.

Turnover impacts profitability from an efficiency perspective. Inexperienced drivers who replace experienced drivers are less likely to be as efficient as their counterparts (Ji-Hyland & Allen, 2022). Consequently, inexperienced drivers can find themselves missing deadlines, taking inefficient routes that increase fuel costs, or taking

routes that are not suitable for large trucks. It is common for inexperienced drivers to

pursue routes that contain bridges that are not sufficient height for large trucks to pass

(Kabir & Roy, 2023). Even if this incident does not result in an accident, DOT officers

can issue fines for using roadways that are not suitable for large motor vehicles (Kabir &

Roy, 2023). Thus, an inexperienced driver can create financial burdens due to their lack

of familiarity with routes. When an experienced driver resigns, they are often replaced by

a driver with lesser experience, which can impact profitability due to low efficiency.

Organizational Culture and Work–Life Balance

Organizational culture has a significant impact on turnover intention. Employees

who are emotionally committed to the organization are less likely to seek work elsewhere

(Guzeller & Celiker, 2020). Leaders of organizations who establish a culture that

prioritizes the support of their employees are less likely to undergo huge waves of

turnover (Huang et al., 2021). Thus, leaders who establish healthy organizational cultures

can develop a workplace that discourages turnover. Leaders can directly impact turnover

intention by promoting job embeddedness, effective employee commitment, and job

satisfaction (Yang et al., 2019). Murtiningsih (2020) conducted a survey containing 150

participants and found that an organization's culture has a massive impact on turnover

intention. Thus, organizational culture has a direct impact on driver turnover.

Work–life balance has a significant impact on reducing turnover intention. A

survey of 290 employees revealed that work–life balance directly influenced turnover

intention (Yu et al., 2022). Ali and Anwar (2021) conducted a survey containing 67

participants and found that an employee who cannot meet their personal obligations due

to work, engagement, and satisfaction will begin to tank. Consequently, turnover is at high risk when an employee starts associating the negative things in their life with being caused by work. In trucking, work–life balance is arguably more important compared to other industries (Robinson & Bently, 2019). Truck drivers can spend significant time away from home, so work–life balance is highly motivational (Butko et al., 2019; Williamson et al., 2009). Thus, leaders can address turnover by prioritizing the home time for drivers who stay away from home for weeks. Work–life balance is a huge concern for the leaders of organizations, and managing this effectively can be a significant component in reducing turnover (Mulang, 2022).

Organizations that require employees to spend significant time at work are more likely to see turnover due to burnout. Long-haul truck drivers can spend up to a month away from home, causing burnout to be a leading result of turnover (Kudo & Belzer, 2019). Thus, long-haul drivers are likely to experience burnout faster than short-haul drivers. A survey of 277 mental health professionals revealed that burnout and turnover intention are intercorrelated (Scanlan & Still, 2019). When an employee experiences burnout, it is almost impossible for them to be satisfied with their role in the organization (Srivastava & Agrawal, 2020). Burnout can increase stress, which is devastating within itself but even more impactful for drivers who spend significant time alone (Makuto et al., 2023; Robinson & Bently, 2019; Salama et al., 2022). Consequently, when employees reach burnout, their performance will decline and likely enter turnover intention. Organizations that can effectively manage work–life balance are less likely to deal with employee burnout and, ultimately, voluntary turnover (Lestari & Margaretha, 2021).

It is the duty of a leader to constantly seek ways to expand the business (Ali & Anwar, 2021). When new business is obtained, the added workload can negatively impact work–life balance, leading to turnover intention and voluntary turnover (Lestari & Margaretha, 2021). Consequently, the newly added business can force trucking company leaders to add additional headcount to meet customer demands. The need to grow the business while maintaining a work–life balance for the employees is a massive concern for trucking company leaders as the industry averages a 94% turnover rate (McNally, 2018; Miller et al., 2021). Thus, leaders should consider their headcount capabilities when seeking new business as the additional customers could negatively impact work–life balance and contribute to the devastating impacts of voluntary turnover. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of trucking company leaders to prioritize the work–life balance of their employees when making business decisions.

Business goals cannot be at the detriment of work–life balance. Though it is the duty of leaders to accomplish organizational goals, it is equally essential to create realistic goals that align with a healthy work–life balance for the employees (Adriano & Callaghan, 2020). For example, suppose an organization's core business is short-haul, and the business decides to enter the long-haul segment. In that case, the leaders should consider whether their drivers are willing to drive long-haul or seek additional headcount of drivers interested in long-haul routes. The significance of the above example is that long-haul drivers tend to have less work–life balance than short-haul drivers (Makuto et al., 2023). Leaders can find themselves needing to invest in additional resources to accomplish business goals when those goals can negatively impact work–life balance

(Rodríguez-Sánchez et al., 2020). Consequently, failing to do so can lead to a decline in work–life balance for the drivers and, ultimately, turnover. The business's goals should consider the impact on work–life balance for the current truck driver staff.

Employee Morale and Satisfaction

Leaders who can create an environment that has positive employee morale could establish a competitive advantage. Verma and Kesari (2020) stated that leaders who can reduce workload through appropriate task assignments can increase employee morale and, thus, lower turnover. Therefore, it is beneficial when leaders can retain drivers because it creates an environment that allows for a better work–life balance. Organizations that incur high turnover are prone to a decline in employee morale (Al-Suraihi et al., 2021). Obeng et al. (2020) stated that constant turnover creates physical and psychological strain on the remaining employees, negatively impacting employee morale and leading to turnover intention. Consequently, drivers who constantly witness the resignation of their coworkers are more likely to resign themselves because their workload will increase while leaders seek to fill the empty positions. Leaders who can create an environment promoting employee morale are more likely to report turnover under the industry average.

Employee morale reduces turnover intention. When employees are satisfied with their work, they are less likely to reach the point of turnover intention (Obeng et al., 2021). Thus, trucking company leaders can establish an environment that prioritizes the drivers' happiness and significantly reduces the possibility of turnover. When an employee reaches turnover intention, the likelihood of turnover increases dramatically

(Ramlawati et al., 2021). Thus, improving employee morale in the workplace allows drivers to associate their employment with positive outcomes, significantly reducing the probability of turnover. Leaders who can establish positive employee morale amongst their employees can reduce turnover intention and create an environment that promotes job satisfaction, which reduces turnover intention and, ultimately, voluntary turnover.

A satisfied employee is more productive and less likely to resign. Job satisfaction directly impacts voluntary turnover (Lin & Huang, 2021). Thus, trucking company leaders can create environments that prioritize satisfied employees, which can reduce turnover. Employees who are happy with their work will likely outperform dissatisfied employees, increasing productivity (Kessler et al., 2020). Thus, trucking company leaders who prioritize job satisfaction are contributing to the betterment of net income and business stability. While job satisfaction may not immediately impact firm performance, it can reduce careless accidents often caused by disengagement (Kessler et al., 2020). Thus, prioritizing satisfied employees is still an avenue that trucking company leaders can pursue to impact the organization positively. Employees who are satisfied with their work are more likely to be engaged, productive, and retained.

Conclusion

Trucking company leaders can help mitigate voluntary employee turnover in many ways. Leaders should lean on their human resources department to assist with developing practices to reduce voluntary driver turnover (Dwesini, 2019). Trucking company leaders must find effective ways to mitigate voluntary turnover to give the organization a competitive advantage over competitors (Al-Suraihi et al., 2021). The

choice to use Maslow's hierarchy of needs to represent this study is because

understanding human motivation is the foundation for understanding employee

motivation (Altymurat et al., 2021). Leaders cannot motivate an employee if they do not

understand what motivates the employee as a human being. The qualitative method and

case study design allow the primary researcher to gather data from multiple sources in a

real-life context to answer the research question best. The importance of exploring this

business topic is that the American economy and the U.S. supply chain rely on truck

drivers' services.

<div align="center">**Transition**</div>

In Section 1, I used Maslow's hierarchy of needs as the conceptual framework to

explore the strategies trucking company leaders can use to reduce turnover effectively.

Trucking company leaders can begin to address turnover when they can assist the drivers

in reaching self-actualization. I critically analyzed and synthesized the available literature

regarding retention strategies and the causes of turnover. The major points of the

literature review include voluntary turnover, driver turnover intention, compensation,

profitability, organizational culture and work–life balance, employee morale and

satisfaction, and strategies to reduce turnover. Voluntary turnover is devastating to net

income and business stability. Leaders can explore the sections listed throughout the

literature review and possibly create a significant competitive advantage over

competitors. For example, the compensation section sheds light on the value of income,

and establishing a network that maximizes income can prove to be a strategy to reduce

driver turnover.

In Section 2, I present several sections of the study, including the purpose statement, the role of the researcher, participants, research method, research design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection instruments, data collection techniques, data organization techniques, data analysis, and reliability and validity. This section ends with a transition and summary. Section 3 begins with restating the purpose and a summary of the findings. Section 3 includes a presentation of the findings, application to professional practice, implications for social change, recommendations for action, recommendations for further research, reflections, a conclusion, and the appendices.

Section 2: The Project

Section 2 begins with a reintroduction of the purpose of the study. I outline the role of the researcher, participants, research method, research design, and population and sampling. I also discuss the ethical research considerations, data collection instruments, data collection techniques, data organization techniques, data analysis, and reliability and validity of the data. Section 2 ends with a transition and summary.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to identify and explore effective strategies trucking company leaders use to reduce driver turnover.

Role of the Researcher

In a qualitative case study, the researcher gathers accurate data through various sources such as semistructured interviews and archival documents. The researcher is responsible for asking the appropriate questions to bring value and credibility to the study while maintaining ethical boundaries (Drolet et al., 2023). While it is the researcher's responsibility to be as nonbiased as possible, the researcher must disclose any biases present during the study in the reflection journal (Johnson et al., 2020).

I was the primary instrument for data collection for this qualitative multiple-case study. I interviewed six leaders with at least 5 years of experience and reported turnover under the industry average. I requested the participants provide archival documents that supported the data gathered from the interviews. A researcher is responsible for asking questions that bring value to the study and interacting with participants in a manner that sheds credibility on their experiences (Johnson et al., 2020). I emphasized that

participants should provide detailed responses to interview questions and asked probing questions to expand upon answers where there was potential for clarification or added value. The process of collecting data included seeking participants, gathering participant information during interviews, and requesting archival documents, analyzing data, and reviewing and synthesizing findings.

As the primary researcher, I guided interviews and participated in data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation. I collected data in a manner that was both informative and reliable. The integrity of the study relies on accurate findings and reporting validated using data triangulation. It was my responsibility as the primary researcher to align interviews in a way that was productive and free from bias (see Taherdoost, 2022a). I am familiar with the issue of driver turnover through my experience as a transportation manager for one of the largest trucking organizations in the United States.

Interview protocols assist in establishing interview tone, order, and uniformity and to inform participants of their rights (Peterson, 2019). I implemented an interview protocol to enhance data quality and reliability (Appendix A). An interview protocol enhances the efficiency and accuracy of data collection and data saturation, educates participants on the process, and establishes consistent guidelines (Peterson, 2019).

My relationship with this topic is that I worked for a trucking organization in the past. I experienced significant turnover and quickly realized how detrimental truck driver turnover is to net income and business stability. As a manager, I spent substantial time addressing issues that arose from turnover that pulled me away from the other elements

of running a successful trucking organization. I did not have a relationship with any of the participants used in the study. I ethically obtained the information by following the outline of the Belmont report to reduce the possibility of bias. The Belmont report outlines three principles to assist a researcher in ethical research: respect, beneficence, and justice (Beauchamp, 2008). To mitigate bias, I respected the experiences and perceptions and reported findings through the lens of the participants. I notated biases in a reflection journal.

Participants

I used a multiple case study involving six leaders from six trucking companies in the United States. I used criterion and snowball sampling to gain access to participants. The criterion sampling method creates a guideline that the participants must meet to be deemed suitable to participate in the interview (Ames et al., 2019; Braun & Clarke, 2021; Nascimento & Steinbruch, 2019). The snowball sampling method is when new participants are recruited by existing participants (Leighton et al., 2021). The criteria were leaders with at least 5 years of experience and reported turnover under the industry average. Prior to conducting the interviews, I confirmed that all participants met the predetermined criteria. I secured partner agreements from the senior leaders/owners within the organization and asked for permission and then obtained signatures.

The media I used to communicate with interviewees were phone, email, and Microsoft Teams. Interviews were only audio-recorded and not video-recorded. I obtained contact information through an existing contact. I then followed up with the participants to schedule interviews. When I gained access to plausible candidates, I

screened each candidate to ensure they met the selection criteria. Once the interviewees agreed to participate in the interview, I received additional consent through written communication. I also provided each interviewee with an invitation template. I did not have a working or personal relationship with any of the participants. To protect the identity and reputation of the participants, I received approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) before recruiting participants and conducting interviews. I provided each participant with an informed consent form requiring their reply of "I Consent." The informed consent form included interview procedures, the voluntary nature of the study, risks, and benefits of being in the study, a privacy statement, and contacts and questions. I sent potential participants partner agreement forms outlining the criteria required to participate in the study.

Research Method and Design

Research Method

Researchers have the option to choose between qualitative, quantitative, and mixed research methods (Dawadi et al., 2021; Hamilton & Finley, 2019; Taherdoost, 2022b). I chose the qualitative method to conduct the study to explore strategies used to reduce truck driver turnover. Qualitative researchers study the participants with an interpretive approach in their extant environments and disclose a rich description and deeper understanding of the research problem (Alam, 2021; Hamilton & Finley, 2019; Taherdoost, 2022b). I did not use variables, nor did I test a hypothesis in my study, which is required in a quantitative study or the quantitative component of a mixed-method study (Taherdoost, 2022b).

The qualitative research method was the appropriate choice to explore factors contributing to truck driver turnover and the effective strategies leaders use to reduce driver turnover. To explore trucking company driver turnover, I did not test a hypothesis that is part of a quantitative study or the quantitative portion of a mixed-method study (Walden University Center for Research Quality, 2021b). This factor caused the qualitative research method to be the appropriate option for this study. The qualitative method allows a researcher to study participants in depth within an environment that sheds light on the phenomenon being studied (Alam, 2021; Hamilton & Finley, 2019; Taherdoost, 2022b). A quantitative method would not be appropriate when the purpose is to present detailed information and not to seek a correlation between differing variables (Nassaji, 2020). A mixed-method approach combines qualitative and quantitative methods, allowing a broader understanding of a phenomenon (Rooshenas et al., 2019). The mixed method was not suitable for this study as the assessment of the research problem did not require quantitative data.

Research Design

Some common designs used in qualitative research are phenomenological, ethnographic, grounded theory, case study, and narrative research (Levitt et al., 2021; Yin, 2018). I used a case study approach for this study. The case study approach allows a researcher to conduct a comprehensive analysis to view the problem through the lens of the real world (Alam, 2021; Kekeya, 2021; Nassaji, 2020). To ensure I achieved data saturation, I continued interviewing participants until additional research no longer provided value or different conclusions.

A narrative design was not appropriate for this study as it is centered around using data to tell a story (Alblooshi et al., 2021). A phenomenological researcher aims to understand a phenomenon by exploring the views of individuals who have or have had firsthand experience (Larkin et al., 2019; Prosek & Gibson, 2021). The phenomenological design could have been a plausible option to explore strategies to reduce driver turnover; however, a case study allows a deeper exploration of data points. Ethnographic researchers conduct their study from a cultural perspective, which was inappropriate for this study (Wutich & Brewis, 2019). The grounded theory design aims to shed light on the meanings of individuals' interactions, experiences, and social actions (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2019; Charmaz & Thornberg, 2021). The grounded theory design has a reputation for being complex to implement, which caused this design not to be chosen (Chun Tie et al., 2019). There are multiple available designs in a qualitative study, but the case study design was the most appropriate to explore the strategies trucking company leaders use to reduce driver turnover.

A primary researcher needs to select a research design to achieve data saturation. The case study approach allows a researcher to conduct a comprehensive analysis to view the problem through the lens of the real world (Alam, 2021; Kekeya, 2021; Nassaji, 2020). By conducting semistructured interviews and reviewing archival documents, I was able to compile a sufficient amount of data to achieve data saturation and produce both a reliable and valid study. The open-ended questions used in a semistructured interview allow participants to express their experiences in an insightful manner that allows a researcher to understand when the data begin to overlap (Nassaji, 2020). Data saturation

occurs when additional research no longer yields differing experiences or insights (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Hennink & Kaiser, 2022).

Population and Sampling

The sample for this study was six trucking company leaders in the United States with at least 5 years of experience and reported turnover under the industry average. This sample size was sufficient because trucking has minimal variation among organizations, and this sample size covered the most impactful difference, short-haul versus long-haul trucking. I used criterion sampling during this study. Criterion sampling involves only using participants who meet the predetermined criteria (Ames et al., 2019; Braun & Clarke, 2021; Nascimento & Steinbruch, 2019). I did not use random sampling as valuable insights are more reliable when they come from individuals with the skills and experiences to expand upon the existing research. By using this predetermined criteria, I am confident the participants brought value to the study and assisted me in my quest for data saturation.

One of the goals I aimed to accomplish with the participants was to reach data saturation. Data saturation occurs when enough data are collected to draw reliable conclusions and determine that additional data collection would not provide any additional value (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). When the participants agreed to be involved in the study, an informed consent form and invitation template was emailed and returned to protect all parties. I then asked the participants to send me three to four availability times, and I set up meetings via Microsoft Teams. The invitation

template included interview procedures, the voluntary nature of the study, risks and benefits of being in the study, a privacy statement, and contact information for questions.

To protect the identity of the participants, I ensured that their names and places of employment remained confidential. I provided the interview questions in advance and conducted the interviews in the same sequence as the interview questions. The interviews were between 45 and 60 minutes per participant. The interviews were recorded with audio only and transcribed through Microsoft Teams. I also took handwritten notes during each interview to ensure I did not misassign the participants' experiences, opinions, and responses and to reduce the possibility of losing data (see Albaret & Deas, 2023). At the beginning of each interview, I reassured each participant their identity would remain anonymous by replacing their name and organization with numbers and letters specific to each participant.

The purpose of population and sampling is to guarantee the participants selected can effectively bring value to the study (Levitt, 2021; Maxwell, 2021). The population size must be large enough to reach data saturation and allow sufficient depth of the phenomenon (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022; Stratton, 2021). Yin (2016, 2018) suggested that the sample size should produce generalization and, thus, accurately represent the population. Conducting a multiple case study allows for a wide range of data collection. Interviews and archival documents shed light on an issue from multiple perspectives and allow for reliable data triangulation (Calandra et al., 2023; Habibi et al., 2020). To ensure data saturation in this study, I continued to conduct interviews until responses clearly overlapped. For this study, it was important that the participants were located within the

United States as varying regions face different challenges that can both positively and negatively impact driver turnover.

The participants in this study all indicated they have experienced voluntary turnover in their organizations and strategically reduced turnover. The criteria proved to be vital in narrowing down the pool of participants to ensure the selections brought reliability and validity to the study. The participants' experiences provide excellent insights into the challenges and mitigation techniques to effectively reduce driver turnover (see Natow, 2020; Rooshenas et al., 2019). Between the two data collection techniques, I was able to achieve data saturation.

Gathering sufficient data is vital in establishing credibility within a study (Khoa et al., 2023; Morgan, 2022). Achieving data saturation required interviewing enough truck driver leaders with the necessary experience in implementing proven strategies to reduce truck driver turnover. Failure to do so can result in insufficient data triangulation and an unreliable study (Natow, 2020; Rooshenas et al., 2019). Data triangulation is a comprehensive gathering and analysis of research to fully understand a phenomenon (Moon, 2019; Stahl & King, 2020). In reaching the point of data triangulation, a researcher can be sure they have sufficiently explored all the variables surrounding the phenomenon (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

Ethical Research

The primary researcher is responsible for conducting ethical research and, thus, providing an ethical study (Morgan, 2022; Shaw et al., 2020). Per the Walden University IRB standards, it is required to provide the participants with consent and partner

agreement forms. I was connected to business leaders through an existing contact. I was

able to acquire signed partner agreement forms from these introductions. There were not

any incentives awarded to the participants, and I informed the participants that they could

withdraw themselves from the study at any time without repercussions. For any

participant who wished to withdraw, I would have asked for their withdrawal in writing

and disposed of any data gathered from that participant. I did not have any participants

who formally withdrew. Pietilä et al. (2020) stated that any information linked to the

participant should be disposed of. I explained to the participants the criterion by which

they were selected and followed up by confirming that the criterion determined

accurately represented their professional experience. After explaining the criterion, every

participant gave verbal and written consent to proceed with their involvement.

To protect the identity of the participants, I assigned each of them a number and

letter in substitute for their names and place of employment. For example, if the first

participant worked for Werner Enterprises, their data would have been assigned as 1W

for identification. The names and places of employment are not present anywhere in the

study. Husband (2020) stated the researcher should not contact any participants before

receiving IRB approval. I shared with the participants my intent to use the data gathered

during the interviews and receive additional confirmation that in doing so, I would not

cause harm to the participant or their organization. The consent I received from the

participants and the names of the organizations will remain confidential to protect the

identification and integrity of all parties involved in the study. To protect the parties

involved and the organizations in which they are employed, I am the only individual with

access to the information on the participants and the specific information gathered on the

organizations involved in the study. I saved all information in a secured drive and set

actions to dispose of the gathered information after 5 years to protect the confidentiality

of the participants. To ensure this study abides with ethical considerations, I used the

components outlined in the Belmont Report discussed in the role of the researcher

section. A primary researcher is responsible for guaranteeing each participant's identity

remains anonymous (Pascale et al., 2022). I provided consent forms and received email

confirmations from each participant. I provided and received signed partner agreement

forms from each participant.

Data Collection Instruments

A primary researcher is responsible for collecting and analyzing the provided data

(Hamilton & Finley, 2019; Sowicz et al., 2019). I was the primary data collection

instrument during this study. I gathered data through semistructured interviews and

archival documents. After receiving consent from each participant, I audio-recorded and

transcribed interviews atop handwritten notes. The participants were informed before

further actions occurred. It is vital that the primary researcher informs and gains consent

for every action the primary researcher plans to take that involves the participant and

their involvement (Pascale et al., 2022; Shaw et al., 2020; Stahl & King, 2020).

In this study, semistructured interviews and archival documents were the primary

data collection instruments. Once I gained approval from the IRB, I provided the selected

participants with the predetermined, open-ended interview questions found in Appendix

B. The interview protocol consisted of an introduction to each participant, stating my

name and that I am conducting the interview as a doctoral student in the Business

Administration program at Walden University. I advised the participants that my research

thus far had revealed that retention strategies have a significant impact on organizational

net income and business stability. I informed the participants that the social change

impact of reducing turnover is assuring low-income communities have the goods they

need and the ability for individuals to pursue a career with a low entry barrier. I reminded

the participants they could remove themselves at any time and that their identity will

remain confidential to individuals outside the study. I reminded the participants that the

study would take no less than 45–60 minutes. I began the interview by asking the first

interview question outlined in Appendix B. At the conclusion of the interview, I informed

each candidate that I would provide a one-page summary of their responses and allow

them seven days to correct any issues. If I did not receive a response within seven days, I

assumed the responses accurately reflected their experiences and opinions.

I planned to use Coderbyte to identify codes and themes throughout the interview

process. I decided to do manual thematic analysis. I used proven techniques to analyze

the results and bring additional value to the participants' responses. I implemented

techniques to maintain confidentiality for the participants, their organizations, and the

information provided. I planned to infuse the Coderbyte responses with the numbers and

letters assigned to each participant to ensure I did not assign responses to the incorrect

participant and organization. Again, I conducted manual thematic analysis. To further

verify data, I used member checking. Member checking validates the data and aids as an

additional check to confirm the integrity of the data gathered (Amin et al., 2020; Brear,

2019; Hamilton, 2020; Muzari et al., 2022). I provided participants with the conclusions I derived from their interviews and informed them that they could correct any responses that did not accurately reflect their experiences and opinions. I provided each participant with a one-page interview summary to ensure the interpretation was correct. Participants had 7 days to confirm the responses provided by the primary researcher. If participants did not provide responses after 7 days, I assumed the responses were accurate. The member checking process enhances reliability and validity because both the researcher and audience can be sure the interpretation is accurate and represents the phenomenon from experts within the industry. By allowing participants the opportunity to correct anything that was inaccurate, I increased the integrity of the findings.

Data Collection Technique

Some of the most common data collection techniques in qualitative studies are interviews and archival documents (Alam, 2021; Carr et al., 2019; Nassaji, 2020). Primary researchers gather valuable data through interviews and archival documents as it reveals real-world experiences from experts within the studied field (Gray et al., 2020). I did not conduct interviews until I received approval from the IRB. My Walden University approval number is 01-31-24-1159098.

I gained consent from each participant before using the above data collection techniques/instruments. To gain access to participants, I asked them to ensure they would not violate company policies and confirmed the names connected with the interviews and archival documents would be removed. I provided consent forms and partner agreement forms. I conducted the interviews through Teams in a semistructured manner. I set the

meetings based on the participants' schedules if the predetermined criteria were met. I

began each interview by introducing myself, confirming confidentiality, confirming the

participant was willing to participate, reminding them that the interview would not

capture video, and assuring them that they could withdraw from the study without

repercussions. I asked each participant to find a private space, close their door, and turn

their phone off. I then proceeded with the interview by asking the first interview question

listed in Appendix B. Once the interview concluded, I reminded the participant that I

would use Coderbyte to compile, dissect, and analyze the data and return to them with

my conclusions to assure accuracy (member checking). I decided to manually carry out

the above process. If I did not receive feedback after seven days, I assumed the

interpretation was accurate. To ensure confidentiality, I labeled each participant's

responses with a unique number and letter, such as 1W (first participant; Werner

Enterprises). I used a set protocol (described in Appendix A) to introduce myself to the

participants and allowed them to introduce themselves. After the introductions, I

continued the interview by asking the questions listed in Appendix B. I used the same

script with all participants to ensure consistency throughout the interviews. I incorporated

member checking in the review process. Doing so adds reliability and validity to the

interviews (Amin et al., 2020; Brear, 2019; Hamilton, 2020; Muzari et al., 2022).

To properly use member checking, a primary researcher should share the results

with the interviewee to ensure responses accurately depict the participants' experiences

and opinions (Amin et al., 2020; Brear, 2019; Hamilton, 2020; Muzari et al., 2022). I

shared the summary of the interview with the participants as part of the member checking

process, which included their responses to interview questions to confirm the representation was accurate. I informed the participants to share any inconsistencies resulting from the member checking process. Verbal interviews have a unique advantage over written questionnaires because responses can be expanded upon immediately. Verbal interviews allow information to be revealed beyond the scope of the interview questions (Gray et al., 2020). Conducting member checking through verbal communication allowed a clear understanding of any inconsistencies and confirmed the responses accurately depicted the participants' experiences and opinions.

The main advantage of using interviews is gaining instant clarification (Gray et al., 2020; Nascimento & Steinbruch, 2019; Taherdoost, 2022a). The open-ended questions allowed for a conversation to expand upon the questions and thoroughly explore the phenomenon. The primary researcher and interviewee can reveal biases, personal experiences, and perceptions. Another advantage of using interviews is that the researcher can understand the logic behind the turnover-reducing strategies implemented by leadership. The advantage of using archival documents is that I could corroborate the information revealed in the interviews with concrete evidence. The disadvantage of interviews is that the primary researcher and participants must have the same availability on multiple occasions. Another disadvantage is that open-ended questions can allow the participant to deviate from the topic, forcing the researcher to distinguish what responses are irrelevant (Alam, 2021; Braun & Clarke, 2021). The disadvantage of archival documents is that participants can be unsure of what document types bring value to the study.

Data Organization Technique

The data collected during this study was stored in a secured, password-protected file that will be disposed of after 5 years. I created a backup file in case of any technical issues. Stored data included audio recordings, interview transcripts, consent forms, and partner agreement forms. The file consists of a generic name with subfolders specifying the type of data stored in the specific folders. All data is connected to the participant with a letter and a number, such as 1W (first participant; Werner Enterprises). I stored the main and backup files in two separate locations, and both will be destroyed after 5 years. My plan was to use the Coderbyte platform to assist with data organization and provide a strategic way to view, analyze, and manipulate data. I chose to manually carry out those tasks.

In using Coderbyte, a system would have been developed to analyze data effectively and efficiently. Coderbyte creates themes that the primary researcher can use to triangulate data and add reliability to the study (Kiger & Varpio, 2020; Lochmiller, 2021). I would have been able to maintain confidentially in the themes and coding produced by Coderbyte by assigning the responses a number and letter instead of the participants' names. Using Coderbyte, I would have been able to simplify the coding process and use the themes produced to analyze data and seek patterns between participants effectively. After consulting with my Chair, I decided to manually carry out the above tasks.

I maintained a reflection journal throughout the process. The journal outlined any biases or triggers I experienced throughout the data collection process. I also noted any

biases I experienced from the participants. I detailed how I perceived the responses from the participants to assist in minimizing biases to increase the reliability and validity of the study. Ultimately, the reflection journal included what I did as the primary researcher and what I thought and felt while consuming and analyzing the data.

Data Analysis

Open-ended questions and the archival documents provided proved to be an effective method to gather data from participants, allowing further data saturation (Alam, 2021; Braun & Clarke, 2021). The participants revealed proven strategies to reduce driver turnover. Using these responses, I obtained sufficient data to pursue data triangulation. Some common types of data triangulation are theory triangulation, methodological triangulation, scales triangulation, and external validity triangulation (Caillaud et al., 2019; Panchenko et al., 2021). I used methods of triangulation to study the issue of driver turnover. Methods triangulation is the use of several methods to study a problem or a phenomenon (Caillaud et al., 2019). Data triangulation is a comprehensive gathering and analysis of research to fully understand a phenomenon (Moon, 2019; Stahl & King, 2020). More specifically, methods triangulation compares data from multiple sources to analyze and explore a phenomenon (Campbell et al., 2020).

To triangulate data, the primary researcher should compile, dissect/dissemble, interpret, and conclude the gathered data (Campbell et al., 2020; Kiger & Varpio, 2020; Lochmiller, 2021). Once I reached the compilation phase, Coderbyte would have been used to generate codes and themes that assist with the triangulation. Coderbyte would have been useful for data analysis as I could have stored the results on my personal laptop

and a password-protected login on Coderbyte that stores identical results. The Coderbyte

platform would have assisted me in data reassembling and data interpretation. I decided

to manually carry out the above tasks. The reassembling stage categorizes the responses

into groups or themes, which allows for comparative analysis between responses

(Castleberry & Nolen, 2018; Lochmiller, 2021). In the interpretation stage, I drew

conclusions from the responses derived from the reassembling stage that brought value to

the study and further achieved data saturation.

The main goal in the data analysis stage is to convert data into categories and

themes that bring logic to an abundance of complex data (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018;

Islam & Aldaihani, 2022; Khoa et al., 2023; Lochmiller, 2021). I used the approach of

methodological triangulation when gathering data through interviews. Transforming data

into themes will be an effective method for successful data analysis (Kiger & Varpio,

2020). To effectively incorporate methodological triangulation, I gathered data from

multiple participants, which was essential to achieve data saturation and provide

reliability and validity to the study.

Yin's Five-Step Process

Yin's five-step process was the method used throughout the data analysis phase.

Yin's (2018) five steps include compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and

concluding. I abided by Yin's method in chronological order by organizing and analyzing

the data gathered during the interviews. After I compiled the data, I disassembled and

then reassembled the data using the codes derived from manual thematic analysis. Next, I

interpreted the data by identifying themes from the interviews. Concluding the data is the

final stage in Yin's five-step process. The researcher should use the codes and themes

derived to bring value to the study and ultimately achieve data saturation (Yin, 2016).

The researcher will want to confirm the codes and themes derived from the interviews

align with the central research question (Yin, 2016, 2018). I generated themes based on

the data gathered from the interviews and the archival documents. I explored how the

themes confirmed, disconfirmed, or extended upon the research conducted during the

literature review. I explored published research since the proposal was written and

completed synthesis to understand the relationship between the findings and the newly

published data. Lastly, I explored how the themes related to my conceptual framework,

confirming Maslow's hierarchy of needs was a suitable lens to explore the business

problem of truck driver turnover.

Compiling

The compiling stages include the researcher gathering data through avenues such

as semistructured interviews and archival documents (Yin, 2016). The researcher will

want to audio record interviews and take handwritten notes. Recording and note taking

allows the researcher to revisit the information and ensure responses are assigned to the

correct participant. I audio recorded each interview and assigned participants a letter and

number to substitute their name and organization. I used the same method when taking

notes.

Disassembling

The disassembling stage includes creating codes and themes from the interviews

through a platform such as Coderbyte (Yin, 2016). Disassembling allows the researcher

to establish patterns and themes. Both the patterns and themes answered the research question. If they do not, the researcher has not introduced questions that answer the phenomenon.

Reassembling

The reassembling stage includes the analysis of context and the comparison of patterns (Yin, 2016). The researcher can compare patterns between the interviews and understand the consistencies between the participant's responses. I sought patterns between the interview data and archival data and confirmed that the findings answered the research question.

Interpreting

The interpreting stage seeks completeness, credibility, and adds value (Yin, 2016). The researcher can be sure the responses are credible if the patterns and themes overlap and answer the research question. I confirmed each participant answered every interview question thoroughly and used the responses to report the theme.

Concluding

The concluding stage introduces new theories and concepts (Yin, 2016). The researcher can use this stage to shed light on theories that have not been previously introduced and provide findings for future researchers to expand upon. I outlined my findings thoroughly and provided a recipe that a future researcher could use to expand upon my research.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

Creating reliability is arguably the most important task for a primary researcher when studying a phenomenon. To achieve reliability, a new researcher would be able to produce nearly identical results as a prior researcher if provided with similar circumstances (El Dehaibi & MacDonald, 2020; Rose & Johnson, 2020). By conducting a reliable study, the reader can trust the results reported by the primary researcher (Jahja et al., 2021; Moon, 2019; Stahl & King, 2020). Reliability involves the primary researcher confirming the accuracy of the findings (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). Member checking is another necessary method to produce trustworthy data and, thus, deemed reliable (Amin et al., 2020; Brear, 2019; Hamilton, 2020; Muzari et al., 2022).

The primary researcher must establish dependability when exploring a complex phenomenon. To demonstrate dependability, the primary researcher should have a detailed description of the research methods used to conduct the study (Islam & Aldaihani, 2022; Nguyen et al., 2021). As stated, I conducted a qualitative study to explore the issue of driver turnover. The qualitative method allowed me to effectively achieve data saturation due to the numerous sources necessary to ensure a dependable study. Thorough data saturation was the most important strategy I used to ensure the findings were accurate and dependable.

Qualitative reliability is an approach researchers use to confirm the accuracy of the information gathered (Rose & Johnson, 2020). The researcher should use member

checking and thorough process documentation to emphasize dependability (Nguyen et al.,

2021). I sent each participant a summary of the interview responses. If I did not receive

responses after seven days, I assumed the interpretation accurately represented the

responses from each participant. The dependability of the data can be verified when the

member-checking process is complete and verifies the integrity of the data (Brear, 2019).

Member checking enhances credibility. The researcher should safely retain transcripts for

further review to emphasize dependability, improve data quality, and participant

confidence (Rowlands, 2021). I did not conduct a pilot test or transcript review with the

participants. Reliability can be assured when the process is thoroughly documented, and

another researcher can use the process to replicate the result (Coleman, 2022; Moon,

2019; Rose & Johnson, 2020).

Validity

Credibility

To establish validity, a primary researcher should aim to establish credibility,

confirmability, dependability, transferability, and data saturation. Validity in qualitative

research assures accuracy when studying a phenomenon (Hayashi et al., 2019; Rose &

Johnson, 2020). The main goal in the validity stage is to establish credibility and ensure

that the results can be used to make decisions (Coleman, 2022; Motulsky, 2021; Quintão

et al., 2020). Establishing credibility is essential when aiming to achieve validity while

conducting a study. To establish credibility, there should be sufficient data to achieve

data saturation (Khoa et al., 2023; Morgan, 2022). To further emphasize credibility, the

participants in the study should have a background relevant to the topic and a position

that gives them experience in the phenomenon (Nguyen et al., 2021). I selected

participants with at least 5 years of experience and reported turnover under the industry

average.

Confirmability

Another key component in the validity stage is for the primary researcher to

establish confirmability (Nguyen et al., 2021). Confirmability occurs through member

checking, data triangulation, and asking open-ended questions during the interview

process (Alam, 2021; Braun & Clarke, 2021; El Dehaibi & MacDonald, 2020; Rose &

Johnson, 2020). The primary researcher must use the appropriate tools, data, and

processes. It is vital for the researcher to use recent data as using outdated data could

skew the accuracy and, thus, the validity of the study (Gomes et al., 2023). To further

achieve confirmability, the primary research should provide an audit trail and research

journal to prove the study is free from bias (Bush & Amechi, 2019). Throughout this

study, I documented the data collection and analysis process, including handwritten

notes, a reflection journal, and themes and codes from manual thematic analysis.

Transferability

The primary researcher must conduct a transferable study. The data should be

thorough and replicated if another researcher has similar conditions (El Dehaibi &

MacDonald, 2020; Rose & Johnson, 2020). Transferability is when the results can be

transferred or applied to other findings (Makel et al., 2022; Munthe-Kaas et al., 2020;

Stahl & King, 2020). To ensure transferability, the primary researcher should provide

sufficient detail about participants and the procedures used to produce the results (Amin

et al., 2020; Makel et al., 2022). I created a detailed description of the participants while

maintaining confidentiality and an audit trail that another researcher could use to mimic

the results of my study if presented with similar conditions. The audit trail includes the

selection criteria for participants, the geographical location in which the study took place,

the interview questions, the interview protocol, and the member checking process.

Data Saturation

Lastly, the primary researcher will want to ensure the data collected is saturated.

If additional research changes the study's findings, it cannot be deemed valid (Braun &

Clarke, 2021; Hennink & Kaiser, 2022; Stratton, 2021). To achieve data saturation, I

interviewed six participants from six different organizations. As outlined in The Belmont

Report, I strategically adhered to the necessary processes to produce credible,

transferable, confirmable, and saturated data. Data saturation occurs when the

participants' responses begin to overlap, and additional information no longer provides

new findings or additional value to the study. I continued to seek and interview

participants until data saturation was achieved.

Transition and Summary

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies

trucking company leaders use to reduce driver turnover. The sources of data collection

for the study were semistructured interviews and archival documents. Section 2 included

the purpose statement, role of the researcher, participants, research method, research

design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection instruments, data

collection techniques, data organization techniques, data analysis, and reliability and

validity. The method for this study is qualitative, and the design is case study. This method and design provided a detailed analysis of multiple sources and participants in a real-world context. There were six participants located within the United States who had at least 5 years of experience and have reported turnover under the industry average. The data collection techniques were semistructured interviews and archival documents. The data was analyzed using Yin's five-step data analysis method. The study adhered to the Walden University's IRB standards. Section 3 contains the presentation of findings, usage in a professional realm, social change impacts, future research recommendations, research reflection, and the conclusion.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to identify and explore

effective strategies trucking company leaders use to reduce driver turnover. The

framework for this study was Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The primary data collection

technique was semistructured interviews via Microsoft Teams that were audio recorded. I

asked each participant the same 14 open-ended questions. I interviewed six trucking

company leaders from six different organizations. After these six interviews, I

successfully reached data saturation. The second data collection technique included

review of archival documents that supported the data gathered during the interview

process. I took handwritten notes throughout the data collection process and used

Microsoft Team's transcription feature. I conducted the member-checking process for

each interview and did not receive any changes or additions from any participants. I did a

manual thematic analysis of the gathered data, which led to the identification of three

themes.

Section 3 will focus on the three themes, an in-depth presentation of my findings,

the application to professional practice, the social change implications, recommendations

for actions and further research, reflections, and a conclusion. The participants are

labeled as 1A, 2L, 3B, 4R, 5A, and 6B. The number is the sequence of their interview,

and the letter represents the initial of their organization. The three themes that emerged

were competitive driver pay, improving work–life balance, and honoring managerial

commitments and driver expectations. Driver pay and work–life balance were the most

impactful of the three themes. The participants emphasized how the traditional lifestyle of truck drivers is not attractive to modern-day truckers, causing short-haul business to be more necessary than ever. The participants stressed that the motivation of modern-day truckers, similar to their predecessors, is still competitive pay, and this forces organizations to create business models that include short-haul routes while still paying attractive rates. Lastly, honoring managerial commitments and driver expectations emerged as a critical theme while tying into the previous two themes. If a driver and leader agree upon a certain number of miles driven weekly and frequent home time, friction will develop quickly and likely lead to turnover. The participants' responses revealed the importance of tying these three themes together when a leader wants to reduce driver turnover.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question for this study was: What effective strategies do U.S. trucking company leaders use to reduce driver turnover? I interviewed six business leaders from six different trucking organizations with 5+ years of experience and reported turnover under the industry average (94%). Each interview lasted between 45 and 60 minutes and produced transcriptions between 35 and 45 pages. I used Yin's five-step analysis process to analyze the data. Yin's (2018) five steps include compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding. I abided by Yin's method in chronological order by organizing and analyzing the data gathered during the interviews. After I compiled the data, I disassembled and then reassembled the data using the codes derived from manual thematic analysis. Next, I interpreted the data by identifying themes

from the interviews. Concluding the data is the final stage in Yin's five-step process, which allows the themes to emerge. The manual process of thematic analysis led to three themes: competitive pay for drivers, improving work–life balance, and honoring managerial commitments and driver's expectations. The themes that emerged ultimately answered the research question.

Theme 1: Competitive Pay for Drivers

A common theme that emerged throughout the data collection process was competitive pay. Participants 3B and 4R stated that leaders of organizations who provide a pay structure superior to their competitors is one of the most successful methods to address truck driver turnover. Competitive pay aligns with the findings from the literature review in that a previously conducted survey of 90 participants revealed that pay satisfaction significantly reduces voluntary turnover (Saleem & Gul, 2013). All the participants stated that pay is the primary concern for the bulk of their drivers and is the focal point when attempting to reduce driver turnover. Leaders must understand that pay is highly motivational, and a competitive pay scale is required to neutralize voluntary driver turnover (Conroy et al., 2022).

Participant 5A stated that their organization uses retention bonuses to benefit both drivers and the organization. Participant 5A emphasized that retention bonuses are more effective than sign-on bonuses and address both competitive pay for drivers and driver turnover for the organization. Participant 3B stated, "It is not very complex; pay simply has to surpass our competitors." Participant 3B's comment aligns with the findings in the literature review that truck drivers seek organizations where they can generate the most

revenue possible (Washburn et al., 2021). Conroy et al. (2022) stated that due to the lack of variation between trucking jobs, pay is often a primary factor in truck driver turnover, which aligns with Participant 3B's comment in that pay has to be superior compared to competitors. Furthermore, all participants stated the importance of competitive pay for drivers when developing turnover reduction strategies. The common theme of competitive pay that emerged during the data collection process aligns with the findings in the literature review.

Competitive pay allows individuals to purchase wants and needs, which ties into Maslow's (1943) theory of physiological and security needs (Hopper, 2020; Mcleod, 2007, 2020; Nyarko et al., 2021). Competitive pay links with the physiological needs of Maslow's (1943) hierarchy because the first level centers around acquiring necessities such as food and shelter (Altymurat et al., 2021; Nyarko et al., 2021). Competitive pay also links with the security needs of Maslow's theory, as security needs center around financial security (Cherry, 2022; Sharma et al., 2022). The linkage between competitive pay and Maslow's theory aligns with the findings from the literature review in that leaders must create a business model that maximizes income for its drivers to reduce turnover because, without competitive pay, drivers cannot reach self-actualization (Maslow, 1943; Robinson & Bently, 2019). Hence, all the participants stated that truck drivers look to maximize their pay while maintaining the work–life balance that aligns with their lifestyle choices. Leaders who can provide competitive pay for their drivers satisfy arguably the most important elements of Maslow's theory: physiological and security needs.

To make pay more competitive, leaders of organizations often incentivize drivers for safe driving as safe drivers benefit the organizations' bottom line (Lee et al., 2021; Kudo & Belzer, 2019). Participants 3B and 2L supported this statement as their organizations increase the rates for drivers who reach 1 million miles without any at-fault accidents or major traffic violations. The safety incentive approach aligns with the literature review in that several organizations have milestones built into compensation packages that reward drivers with a certain amount of dollars if they drive a certain number of miles without an accident (Faulkiner & Belzer, 2019). The literature review also revealed that, in 2017, over 4,000 people in the United States were killed in accidents involving large trucks (Nævestad et al., 2020). Trucking proves to be a dangerous field as roughly 5% of registered vehicles being large trucks, yet large trucks being responsible for 10% of fatal accidents (Behnood & Al-Bdairi, 2020). Thus, Participant 6B stated that building in incentives for behavior that benefits society and the organization is an element that can reduce turnover as it benefits the driver while simultaneously protecting the organization's interest. The participants' responses revealed the significance of safety incentives to make pay more competitive, which overlapped with research conducted prior to the data collection process.

Every participant stated the importance of pay when it comes to reducing turnover. Participant 4R claimed that a revenue-sharing system has proved very effective because it aligns the drivers' interest with the organization's interest. When an employee feels a sense of ownership in the business, their performance will likely align with the goals and expectations of the company (Jafri, 2015). Participant 4R stated that while the

revenue-sharing system applies to employee-based drivers, owner–operators who are also

business owners can benefit even more when the organization's load pay increases. Thus,

the revenue-sharing system mentioned by Participant 4R can benefit both the driver and

the organization because both parties share the business's success. Participant 4R stated,

"When loads pay more, drivers make more; however, when loads pay less, drivers also

make less." Participant 4R stated that this system allows drivers to share the success of

the company, but it also requires them to share the downturns the company experiences.

Participant 4R also stated that the revenue-sharing system allows the organization to keep

its margins consistent.

Participant 4R claimed that this system helps reduce turnover because it promotes

transparency in load pay, gives drivers a sense of ownership, and allows for immediate

raises when there is an increase in load pay. The comments from Participant 4R align

with the literature review in that a revenue-sharing system can be especially attractive to

owner–operators as their expenses are not fixed like employee-based drivers

(Flinchbaugh et al., 2020). Owner–operators have a higher earning potential than

traditional employees; however, they can find themselves operating at a deficit if their

compensation does not outweigh the costs (Miller et al., 2022). Consequently, a

compensation structure that allows drivers to increase their revenue overnight is attractive

for drivers when their expenses often increase by the day, as stated by Participant 4R.

Leaders cannot understate the importance of competitive pay in relation to developing

strategies to reduce truck driver turnover, as all the participants emphasized.

Organizations must incentivize short-haul drivers in a manner that still emphasizes competitive pay, as stated by four of the six participants. In trucking, increasing miles driven is the most common way to increase pay (Conroy et al., 2022). However, four of the six participants stated that drivers who want to be home more often have to be incentivized by competitive pay regardless of the number of miles driven. Participant 1A emphasized the need to increase rates on short-haul routes. Participant 1A also stated that it is necessary for leaders to calibrate income and gave the example that if a long-haul load pays $1.00 per mile, it can be necessary to pay short-haul drivers $2.00 per mile so their pay is still competitive. Participant 6B stated that hourly pay has proved to be an effective strategy to incentivize both short- and long-haul drivers.

According to Participants 1A and 6B, organizations with short-haul customers must create a pay system that allows their drivers to be compensated on an attractive level to continue meeting the demands of short-haul customers. Participant 2L stated, "Short-haul loads often require more hands-on work than long-haul loads and are significantly more strenuous." Participant 2L emphasized that drivers may be required to unload commodities versus long-haul loads that are often unloaded via forklift. Thus, according to Participant 6B, the hours needed to meet the demands of short-haul customers are often equal to the hours necessary to service long-haul customers.

Participant 4R stated that due to the lack of miles that short-haul loads require, short-haul drivers may have multiple loads in one day, while it is not uncommon for long-haul drivers to have just one load per week. This additional work makes it necessary for organizations to increase rates as the added work can factor into increased turnover,

as stated by Participants 1A and 2L. However, according to three of the six participants, a major attraction in short-haul routes is the ability to have additional home time compared to long-haul routes. The previous statement aligns with the literature review in that the additional pay atop the ability to sleep at home versus in their truck is attractive for drivers who value home time and can significantly reduce turnover (Butko et al., 2019; Williamson et al., 2009). Hence, according to Participant 4R, organizations with short-haul business or that can introduce short-haul business can give themselves a significant competitive advantage. However, additional pay will likely be necessary for the compensation to remain competitive, as stated by Participant 1A. Offering competitive compensation regardless of the miles driven is a crucial element in introducing strategies to reduce truck driver turnover.

Introducing a business model that aligns with the truckers' compensation needs and goals incentivizes most drivers, as all participants emphasized. Participant 3B stated that route consistency is more important than miles driven concerning pay because drivers want to be sure they can drive as many or as few miles as necessary to meet their financial needs. Route consistency reveals a different element compared to the literature review findings, which stated that drivers seek organizations where they can drive the most miles possible according to DOT regulations (Washburn et al., 2021). Participant 3B stated that if a driver's compensation needs require them to drive 2,000 miles per week, the organization needs to provide loads for this driver that consistently allow them to meet the 2,000-mile threshold. Participant 3B emphasized that a dedicated route is one of the best methods to guarantee that a driver's compensation does not fluctuate. The

comment made by Participant 3B aligns with the findings in the literature review in that a business model that allows consistent compensation while still meeting the driver's work–life balance needs is essential when it comes to reducing turnover (Adriano & Callaghan, 2020). Participants 3B and 4R stated that if a driver's paycheck is always significantly different, the driver will struggle to align their lifestyle in a way that aligns with their pay.

As stated in the literature review, inconsistency in pay is a key contributor to voluntary turnover (Li et al., 2022). A model that emphasizes pay consistency can be just as important as a model that emphasizes revenue maximization, as stated by Participant 3B. This theory is significant because some drivers are willing to forfeit revenue if it does not align with the lifestyle they desire, as stated by Participant 2L. It is imperative to understand the needs of the drivers to develop a business model that aligns with the driver's compensation and lifestyle needs.

While mileage pay is the most common method of compensation in trucking, Participant 6B stated that hourly pay is a strategy to neutralize the pay discrepancies between short and long-haul routes. Participants 1A and 2L stated that short-haul routes often require more hands-on work, which increases the time needed to complete loads. Participant 6B claimed that by implementing hourly pay, short-haul loads could pay just as much as long-haul loads when the hours required to complete the load are similar. According to Participant 6B, an hourly pay structure is attractive for drivers because the pay centers around the hours worked versus the miles driven. The pay scale must be attractive whether it is a large number of miles driven or increased work needed to meet

the customers' demands, as stated by three of the six participants. Therefore, compensating drivers via hourly pay can increase the revenue of short-haul drivers while still valuing home time, according to Participant 6B. Participant 6B claimed that hourly pay is attractive for both long and short-haul drivers because they get rewarded for outliers such as prolonged loading and unloading times, breakdowns, or DOT checks. Hence, hourly pay compensates drivers for normal occurrences in trucking that would not be compensated otherwise, as claimed by Participant 6B.

Participant 4R stated that if short-haul loads do not take a lot of time, drivers can deliver multiple loads in a day, increasing their hours worked, thus increasing their pay and reducing turnover intention and voluntary turnover. As revealed in the literature review, it is common for truck drivers to pursue organizations where they can drive the maximum number of miles without violating DOT regulations; however, according to Participant 6B, hourly pay places more emphasis on the time necessary to meet customer demands and not the distance driven (Washburn et al., 2021). An hourly pay scale can be the necessary compensation structure for both short and long-haul drivers to meet their compensation needs and the lifestyles they desire, as stated by Participant 6B.

According to all the participants, pay is the primary concern of most drivers. All the participants stated that if the leaders of an organization can implement a system that makes pay competitive, it is attractive to truck drivers and the key element in reducing driver turnover. The common theme of competitive pay, irrespective of the length of haul, holds its importance because drivers under the age of 50 value home time significantly more than drivers over 50, as stated by Participants 1A and 4R. Driver

shortage has become a huge issue because of the lifestyle of truckers, and implementing competitive pay scales is a strategy leaders can use to reduce truck driver turnover, as stated by Participants 3B and 5A. As stated by Participant 3B, "It is not very complex; pay simply has to surpass our competitors." The quote from Participant 3B and the findings from the remaining five participants emphasize the importance of a pay structure that is competitive for drivers to contribute to the reduction in truck driver turnover.

Confirming Findings With Recent Studies

Competitive compensation is highly motivational for truck drivers. Conroy et al. (2022) stated that due to the lack of variation between trucking jobs, pay is often a primary factor in truck driver turnover. A common theme among the participants was that the driver's primary motivation is pay. New research revealed that transparency in pay is just as important as competitive pay (Cullen, 2024). Participant 4R's comment supports this theory in that their strategy is to pay drivers a percentage of the load versus mileage pay, which requires full transparency from the organization. Pay ties into Maslow's hierarchy of needs in that compensation can satisfy the physiological and security needs outlined by Abraham Maslow. If a driver has sufficient pay, they can purchase their basic needs such as food, shelter, and clothing. The security need is met in that sufficient employment gives drivers the stability necessary to propel them to reach self-actualization. Hence, leaders who cannot implement a compensation package that allows drivers to comfortably acquire the resources needed for survival struggle to reduce truck driver turnover. New research aligned with the findings in the literature review and the

data collection process, emphasizing the importance of leaders incorporating competitive

pay into their strategies to reduce truck driver turnover.

As stated by two of the six participants, offering competitive pay can lead to

increased profitability for organizations. Prior research emphasized the importance of

safety in that many large trucking organizations are self-insured, and accidents directly

impact the bottom line (Lee et al., 2021; Ju & Belzer, 2022). Participants 3B and 5A

stated that their organizations give safety bonuses for drivers who drive a certain number

of miles without accidents or major traffic violations. This safety bonus aligns with the

prior research from Faulkiner and Belzer (2019), stating that several organizations have

milestones built into compensation packages that reward drivers for safe driving. The

significance is that the leaders of trucking organizations benefit from not having huge

insurance payouts while also contributing to the reduction in turnover by creating

attractive compensation packages for drivers.

New research has emphasized the difficulty of predicting turnover intention and

its true impact on organizational profitability (Park et al., 2024). Though paying higher

wages impacts the bottom line, research has shown that increased rates are beneficial

when compared to the cost associated with turnover (Ehrlich & Montes, 2024). Increased

wages align with the comments made by the participants in that compensation is highly

motivational and is one of the main strategies for successfully reducing truck driver

turnover. All participants stated that without competitive pay, driver turnover is

inevitable. Hence, leaders should create a competitive compensation package to

neutralize turnover, benefiting the organization's profitability, as emphasized by two of

the six participants. It is imperative for leaders to develop competitive pay structures to benefit the driver, improve organizational performance, and reduce truck driver turnover.

A compensation package that is attractive to drivers can contribute to addressing driver turnover, organizational stability, and benefit the profitability of the organization. Employee turnover can cost an employer 100 to 150 times the employee's salary (Skelton et al., 2020). Newer research from Climek et al. (2024) emphasized that business disruption is just as significant as the cost of replacing the employee. Aside from the cost of replacing employees, turnover can result in a loss of customers when customer demands exceed workforce, as emphasized by Participant 6B. Participant 6B stated that their organization accepts loads based on the number of drivers available. Hence, unexpected turnover can impact an organization's profitability when customer commitments cannot be kept due to a lack of headcount, as stated by Participant 6B. The disruption of business when turnover occurs can exacerbate the damage to customer relationships, which aligns with the comments made by Participant 6B (Colson et al., 2024). A poor compensation package will lead to turnover intention, often leading to a lack of productivity and, ultimately, a decline in profitability. Takahashi et al. (2020) emphasized that reduced productivity is a major element in the decline in profitability. Therefore, a competitive compensation package should be the primary focus when looking to reduce turnover and maximize organizational revenue. It is a must for leaders to implement a compensation package that is competitive to deter driver turnover, which will ultimately benefit the organization's profitability.

Theme 2: Improving Work–Life Balance

Work–life balance was a common theme that emerged from the data collection process. Per all the participants, time away from home is simply a part of the job in the trucking industry. Leaders of organizations with a business model promoting frequent home time give themselves a significant competitive advantage according to the participants. As revealed in the literature review, work–life balance is arguably more important in trucking compared to other industries (Robinson & Bently, 2019). Participant 2L stated that nonforced dispatch is a method that their organization has adopted to promote work–life balance. Nonforced dispatch is when drivers have the choice of what loads they want to commit to, as stated by Participant 2L. Participant 2L stated that nonforced dispatch gives drivers the option to take loads that align with their needs, and any load refusal does not warrant punishment from the organization's leaders. Participant 2L emphasized the benefit of nonforced dispatch in that it is very attractive to drivers because it allows them to fulfill personal obligations such as attending graduations, weddings, or doctor appointments without the fear of repercussion from leadership.

The literature review supports the statement from Participant 2L because long-haul truck drivers can spend up to a month away from home, causing burnout to be a leading result of turnover (Kudo & Belzer, 2019). Participant 1A stated that work–life balance holds significance because it allows drivers to live a normal lifestyle and helps reduce the possibility of burnout. The comment from Participant 1A aligns with the literature review in that organizations that can effectively manage work–life balance are

less likely to deal with employee burnout and, ultimately, voluntary turnover (Lestari &

Margaretha, 2021). Hence, leaders of organizations that can promote work–life balance

have a significantly better chance of reporting turnover under the industry average

because of the more normalized lifestyle as stated by all participants. Work–life balance

was one of the main themes that the interviewees stated has proved to be effective in

reducing the phenomenon of truck driver turnover.

The lack of work–life balance is a major contributor to driver turnover and driver

shortage, as stated by all the participants. Participant 3B stated that driver shortage is

quickly becoming a bigger issue than driver turnover. Drivers under 50 years old are

unwilling to be away from home for weeks at a time, according to Participant 2L.

Participant 6B stated that turnover can become rampant when leaders cannot get their

drivers home around the holidays. Trucking can be a lonely gig, and drivers who have to

spend Christmas 3,000 miles away from home can quickly reach the point of turnover

intention, according to Participant 1A. The statement from Participant 1A aligns with the

literature review in that one of the most common reasons for driver turnover is extreme

solitude and isolation from home, family, and friends (Desrosier et al., 2022; Makuto et

al., 2023). Hence, it is imperative for leadership to route their drivers back to their homes

promptly to ensure drivers' home time requests are satisfied, as stated by Participants 1A

and 2L. Zaidi et al. (2021) stated that it is imperative for leaders to consider the influence

of loneliness in trucking to create a model that prioritizes the mental health of the drivers.

Therefore, prioritizing home time should be a focus for trucking company leaders. The

failure to do so can significantly increase the plausibility of turnover, according to the participants.

Promoting driver flexibility is a strategy that leaders can implement to increase the work–life balance for drivers, as stated by Participant 1A. Participant 1A stated that drivers have occurrences in their lives that require them to take time off on short notice. Leaders who can strategically route drivers back home when emergencies arise can significantly reduce the turnover in their organization as this type of action prioritizes the needs of the truckers, as stated by Participant 1A. Driver agility is very attractive for drivers as flexibility is not common in the trucking industry and can give leaders a significant advantage when looking to reduce turnover in their organization (Gittleman & Monaco, 2020). Leaders who promote flexibility create a family-oriented environment that makes the drivers feel respected, and drivers understand that this environment is often unfamiliar within the industry (Aryal et al., 2023). Hence, the promotion of driver flexibility creates an environment that prioritizes drivers' work–life balance and can contribute to increased morale within the organization and, ultimately, reduce turnover, as stated by Participant 1A. According to Participant 5A, prioritizing flexibility is a proven way to increase a driver's work–life balance, which often contributes to reducing voluntary turnover.

Trucking is a difficult lifestyle that often contributes to the lack of work–life balance, as stated by all participants. Participant 4R emphasized that nonforced dispatch is a key strategy their organization uses to promote work–life balance. Participant 4R stated that allowing drivers to have control of where they go allows them to have control

of their work–life balance. Participant 6B stated that smaller organizations can struggle to

implement nonforced dispatch as their headcount is often not large enough to offer such

agility. Hence, organizations with enough drivers and enough customers to implement

nonforced dispatch give themselves a significant competitive advantage when reducing

driver turnover, as emphasized by Participants 4R and 6B. Participant 2L stated that the

lifestyle of truckers is a frequent cause of turnover, which can have a significant impact

on customer relationships when turnover begins to impact the quality of service. The

statement from Participant 2L aligns with the literature review in that turnover can

damage customer relationships because the drivers share the bulk of the facetime with the

organization's customers and bear the responsibility of servicing the customers (Ge et al.,

2021). When drivers are unhappy due to their lifestyle, their attitudes and performance

decline, and customers take notice, as stated by Participant 4R. Thus, the leaders of

trucking organizations should prioritize a business model that betters the lifestyle of their

drivers to reduce turnover and maintain a healthy relationship with the organization's

customers, as stated by Participant 2L. According to Participant 2L, the betterment of the

lifestyle of a trucker heavily relies on the work–life balance that the leaders of an

organization prioritize and commit to providing.

 Aligning drivers with specific customers can contribute to the work–life balance

necessary to reduce turnover, as stated by Participant 1A. According to Participant 1A,

the expectations and demands of specific customers often align with the work–life

balance that drivers seek. If a certain customer's loads require manual unloading, a driver

who does not want to spend hours unloading will feel this customer does not align with

the work–life balance they seek, according to Participant 2L. Hence, the customers a

driver delivers to can significantly impact drivers' work–life balance and have huge

implications on turnover, as stated by Participant 1A. It is imperative for leaders to match

drivers with customers in a way that aligns with the expectations, needs, and

geographical preferences of the driver to promote a healthy work–life balance and reduce

the plausibility of turnover intention and voluntary turnover, as stated by Participant 1A.

Work–life balance aligns with Maslow's theory in the esteem component. The

esteem component is the fourth level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and centers around

respect, recognition, self-esteem, status, strength, and freedom (Lussier, 2019; Maslow,

1943). Esteem is separated into two needs: the need to be respected by others and the

need for respect from oneself (Lussier, 2019; Maslow, 1943; Okafor & Abraham, 2021).

Per Participant 1A, honoring the driver's home-time request is one of the most important

components of having respect for the drivers. Participant 1A also stated, "Not being able

to get drivers home as often as they would like is one of the main causes of turnover."

Leaders who can consistently deliver on drivers' work–life balance needs are more likely

to have drivers that reach the esteem component of Maslow's theory and, more

importantly, reach self-actualization. Honoring work–life balance needs aligns with

Maslow's theory because esteem centers around respect and freedom. If a driver's work–

life balance requirements are not honored, it is difficult for them to have freedom as the

traditional lifestyle of truckers is very demanding, as stated by all the participants.

Leaders who can demonstrate genuine respect for their employees reduce the possibility

of costly turnover and can give the organization a competitive advantage in a cost-effective way (Yücel, 2021).

Confirming Findings With Recent Studies

The findings for work–life balance aligned with the data gathered in the literature review. Ali and Anwar (2021) found that an employee who cannot meet their personal obligations due to work, engagement, and satisfaction will begin to tank. Butko et al. (2019) emphasized that due to the time drivers spend away from home, work–life balance is highly motivational. Li et al. (2024) confirmed prior research and participant data by emphasizing that short-haul routes are an effective method to promote work–life balance in trucking. All the participants emphasized that failing to provide a sufficient work–life balance is one of the quickest ways to lose drivers. Hence, leaders who prioritize the work–life balance that drivers desire is an important strategy to reduce driver turnover, as emphasized by all the participants. Li et al. (2024) and two of the six participants stated that short-haul and regional trucking should be an emphasis for leaders to add to their business model in that younger generations will not accept the traditional lifestyle of trucking that requires drivers to be on the road for 3–6 weeks at a time. Participant 2L emphasized how the industry has changed over the last two decades in that drivers do not want to be on the road for weeks at a time. Hence, an emphasis on getting drivers home has proven to be an effective method of reducing turnover, as revealed by all the participants. Participant 1A stated that the failure to honor the driver's work–life balance request is seen as disrespectful and causes tension in the workplace. Work–life balance ties into Maslow's hierarchy of needs on the esteem level because time off gives drivers a

sense of freedom, and their personal obligations are respected on the same level as their career obligations. If leaders can do their part in helping drivers reach esteem, it is more likely that drivers will reach self-actualization. The findings gathered confirmed the research obtained before and after conducting the literature review.

Theme 3: Honoring Managerial Commitments and Driver Expectations

Honoring managerial commitments and driver expectations emerged during the data collection process and is an extension of knowledge compared to the findings in the literature review. It is imperative for both leaders and drivers to honor commitments and expectations, as stated by all the participants. Participant 3B stated that their organization gives onboarding questionnaires to every new hire to define expectations and driver needs clearly. In doing so, there is less room for miscommunication that could contribute to driver turnover, as stated by Participant 3B. Three of the six participants stated that frequent communication between leaders and drivers is important because both parties are informed and can adapt to changes. For example, driver 4R stated that if a driver has a newborn on the way, their commitments and expectations could drastically change. Thus, it is common for a driver to undergo life changes that also change their commitments and expectations, and frequent, open communication can contribute to reducing turnover, as stated by Participant 3B. Leaders who can be flexible with drivers when changes occur give themselves a significant competitive advantage over competing organizations, as stated by five of the six participants.

According to Participant 4R, when a leader makes a promise to a driver, that promise should be honored. A driver may forgive a leader for a failed promise once or

twice, but this will quickly push the driver towards turnover intention and, ultimately, voluntary turnover, as stated by Participant 2L. The failure to honor managerial commitments and driver expectations are two main reasons for truck driver turnover. Not honoring the work–life balance needs of drivers is usually the most common commitment that fails to be upheld by leaders, as stated by Participant 5A. Participant 3B stated that when drivers get onboarded, questionnaires that outline commitments, expectations, and needs are very beneficial. Participant 3B emphasized that during these questionnaires, drivers can outline pay needs, home-time expectations, and geographical preferences. Unfortunately, according to Participant 6B, high turnover can force leadership to dishonor commitments or change expectations because loads are booked based on the expectations of the drivers available. An unplanned wave of driver turnover or even the turnover of one driver can strain the retained drivers when customer demands exceed the manpower available, as stated by Participant 6B. Hence, the commitments and expectations in place must be honored to keep drivers from resigning, impacting the entire business from daily operations and net income perspective, as stated by four of the six participants. Nonetheless, it is imperative for leaders to honor managerial commitments and driver expectations, and when those promises cannot be met, leaders should communicate with their drivers as quickly as possible, as stated by three of the six participants.

Participant 2L stated that the type of freight hauled is an important element that truck drivers consider. Participant 2L stated that they have hauled loads of over 1 million pounds. There are not a lot of drivers who are comfortable hauling a load of this capacity

as there are a lot of dangers involved, as claimed by Participant 2L. Thus, according to

Participant 6B, when an organization has specialty loads such as the one above, it is

important to find out prior to onboarding if a driver is comfortable with this type of

specialty trucking. In some organizations, flatbed hauling is more common than van

hauling. According to Participants 2L and 4R, flatbed hauling requires a significant

amount of work compared to van hauling because drivers must tie down goods with belts

or chains often covered with tarps to protect against the outside elements. Therefore,

leaders must hire based on the type of freight they haul to keep from forcing drivers into

situations they are not comfortable with, according to Participants 2L and 3B. Participant

2L stated that the type of freight hauled varies by organization and is essential in

communicating with potential drivers before the hiring process. In doing so,

commitments and expectations can be defined early and reduce the possibility of turnover

with respect to dishonoring the agreed upon commitments and expectations.

Drivers appreciate having a dedicated manager committed to their needs,

interests, and well-being, according to Participants 1A and 3B. When a driver's

expectations or commitments change, it is important to have a dedicated person in

leadership with whom the driver can communicate with, as stated by four of the six

participants. In trucking, a lot of communication with leadership is written; however,

verbal communication is much more intimate and allows both parties to be more in tune

with each other's feelings, according to Participants 1A and 5A. Participant 3B stated that

their organization emphasizes face-to-face meetings as relationships are built better in

person versus over the phone or email, which allows both parties to discuss commitments

and expectations more openly. Hence, it is important to have a dedicated manager with whom drivers can communicate and build a relationship, as the failure to do so can make drivers feel like they are just a number, as stated by three of the six participants. According to Participant 1A, a dedicated manager can be a simple yet effective strategy that prioritizes drivers' well-being and contributes to reducing voluntary turnover.

Participant 3B stated that it is common in the trucking industry for drivers to have geographical preferences and that keeping drivers in their preferred locations is tied to honoring managerial commitments and driver expectations. According to Participant 1A, there are often areas in the country that have greater pay compared to other regions, and some drivers prioritize those locations. However, those higher paying areas are often due to intense terrain, city maneuvering, or inclement weather (Akter et al., 2020). Safety always takes precedence, and it is important for leaders to honor the drivers' expectations if these are areas the respective driver is not comfortable operating in, according to Participants 1A and 2L. Hence, according to Participant 1A, leaders must honor the well-being of their drivers regardless of customer demands, as the failure to do so will quickly lead to turnover. Geographical preferences are an important element that often plays a factor in the driver turnover that an organization experiences, as stated by Participant 1A.

Leaders in a dynamic industry such as trucking can find it difficult to honor their commitments and expectations to their drivers. According to Participant 3B, understanding drivers' needs and expectations before they get behind the steering wheel is a key element when looking to avoid turnover. Thus, it is important for leadership to implement resources such as onboarding questionnaires to clearly define commitments

and expectations and begin to build a relationship between the driver and the leader(s), as stated by Participants 2L and 3B. According to Participant 3B, failing to do so can damage internal and external relationships and create chaos throughout the organization. For organizations looking to report turnover under the industry average, honoring commitments and expectations has proven to be a strategy that can successfully accomplish this great feat, according to five of the six participants.

Honoring managerial commitments and driver expectations aligns with Maslow's theory in the esteem component. As stated, the esteem component is the fourth level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and centers around respect, recognition, self-esteem, status, strength, and freedom (Lussier, 2019; Maslow, 1943). Respect is the key element of this theme in relation to Maslow's theory. If a leader continuously disregards the commitments and expectations agreed upon, it is a clear sign of disrespect, as stated by Participant 4R. Furthermore, four of the six participants mentioned respect in at least one of the fourteen interview questions which proves Maslow's theory is a suitable framework to represent the phenomenon of truck driver turnover. According to the responses from the participants, Maslow's theory can be used by trucking company leaders when building a motivational model in the construction of strategies to reduce driver turnover.

Extending Upon Findings With Recent Studies

Honoring managerial commitments and driver expectations was the most impactful theme that extended upon the prior research. The above theme holds significance because it links with compensation and work–life balance. Participant 2L

stated that if a driver expects to be home every weekend, it is imperative for leadership to keep those commitments. Participant 3B emphasized the importance of onboarding questionnaires so that leaders can clearly define drivers' expectations. The prior research did not clearly state the importance of honoring managerial commitments and expectations; however, it can be inferred in several of the literature review sections. This theme aligns with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the esteem component. The alignment is mainly due to the respect element, which can be satisfied when leadership prioritizes their commitments and does their best to satisfy driver expectations. Newer research emphasizes how honoring commitments and expectations betters the psychological well-being of employees and can be impactful in reducing turnover (Srivastava & Dhir, 2024). Honoring managerial commitments and driver expectations can be extended upon by future researchers to shed more light on successful strategies to reduce truck driver turnover.

Disconfirming Findings With New Studies

Organizational culture did not have as much influence during the data collection process as during the literature review. Only two of the six participants mentioned employee morale. Guzeller and Celiker (2020) stated that employees who are emotionally committed to the organization's culture are less likely to seek work elsewhere. Murtiningsih (2020) conducted a survey containing 150 participants and found that an organization's culture has a massive impact on turnover intention. The data collection does not align with either of the above findings and places more emphasis on compensation, work–life balance, and honoring managerial commitments and driver

expectations. New research has shown that a strong organizational culture can improve employee performance but does not directly relate to the reduction in turnover (Uy et al., 2024). Hence, trucking company leaders should focus less on organizational culture and more on competitive compensation, work–life balance, and the honoring of commitments and expectations. Leaders can use a positive organizational culture to build upon strategies to reduce turnover; however, the research and data collection have shown that company culture should not be the focal point when looking to implement effective strategies to reduce driver turnover.

Applications to Professional Practice

It is important for a researcher to communicate how to turn academia into professional practice so real-world leaders can apply the findings to their careers. The findings gathered from the participants provided real-world context on how leaders can implement various strategies to contribute to the reduction in truck driver turnover. Ultimately, the goal is to use academic data and provide potential solutions to the real-world business problem: truck driver turnover. Based on the themes that emerged from the semistructured interviews and archival documents, I suggest implementing a business model that centers around competitive compensation and work–life balance.

The compensation package I suggest is a structure that pays drivers a salary based on the commodity hauled, the distance driven, the hours necessary, the skills needed, the driver's experience, and the type of terrain traveled to service the customer. Compensation aligns with the physiological and security components of Maslow's theory because compensation provides individuals the ability to acquire basic needs and

provides financial security (Maslow, 1943; Mcleod, 2007, 2020; Nyarko et al., 2021). I

suggest creating competitive compensation because it allows leaders to create a model

that begins with the most important element of Maslow's theory, physiological needs. If

drivers cannot acquire basic necessities, they will likely not progress through Maslow's

theory and reach self-actualization, which is when an individual reaches their maximum

potential (Maslow, 1943).

The compensation structure I suggest centers around the specificity of the load.

For example, if a driver must deliver an oversized load, the compensation should be

greater because oversized loads require significant security, unique permits, and unique

skills, as stated by Participant 2L. An oversized load should pay more than a regular sized

load, even if the miles driven are shorter due to the skillset and experience necessary to

service the customer, as stated by Participant 2L. If a driver must deliver to a region

where maneuvering is more difficult, such as the northeast, the leader should compensate

the driver based on the difficulty required to meet customer demands versus just the miles

driven. Participant 3B emphasized that many drivers have geographical preferences due

to the difficulty of maneuvering in specific regions. Participant 1A stated that drivers

often have geographical preferences due to greater pay in certain regions. If a driver must

drive through the mountains of West Virginia, their pay should be greater because the

skills needed to operate an 80,000+ pound vehicle through mountains are much greater

than operating in a flat state such as Florida. Thus, leaders should compensate drivers

based on the scope of the delivery and not simply the miles driven, which is the most

common pay structure in U.S. trucking organizations (Robinson & Bently, 2019).

Organizations are paid more for unique loads, which gives leaders the perfect opportunity to compensate their drivers in the revenue sharing system that has proven to make pay more competitive, as stated by Participant 4R. A compensation package structured around the specific load and not a blind system such as miles allows the leaders of an organization to compensate their drivers in a manner that is unique to the traditional pay structure of the industry. In doing so, compensation is competitive and satisfies the most important element the participants claimed leaders should focus on when creating strategies to reduce truck driver turnover.

Prioritizing drivers' work–life balance mainly through nonforced dispatch is my next suggestion for successfully reducing truck driver turnover. All participants stated that drivers value home time more than their predecessors. Work–life balance aligns with the esteem component of Maslow's theory because esteem centers around respect and freedom (Lussier, 2019; Maslow, 1943). Participant 1A emphasized that one of the main ways drivers feel disrespected is by not prioritizing their home-time request. Truck drivers can spend significant time away from home, so work–life balance is highly motivational (Butko et al., 2019; Williamson et al., 2009). Participant 2L emphasized the importance of nonforced dispatch and how it is a beneficial strategy to reduce driver turnover. Participant 2L defined nonforced dispatch as drivers having the choice to accept or decline whatever loads they want. Participant 2L also stated that drivers will accept the loads that align with their compensation goals or their work–life balance desires which ties into the freedom element of esteem in Maslow's theory. Thus, leaders can implement

nonforced dispatch when creating a motivational model to address driver turnover, as it promotes respect and freedom.

My argument is that allowing drivers to have control of their schedules is the best way to promote work–life balance. If a driver wants to be on the road for weeks at a time, that is their prerogative. Drivers who want to be home every night can accept loads that only take them a few hours away from their homes. The flexibility is significant because nonforced dispatch allows drivers to take control of their compensation and their work–life balance, which supports two of the most important factors that I gathered during the data collection process, as stated by the participants. While nonforced dispatch is my suggestion to promote work–life balance, it is imperative for leaders to seek both short and long-haul customers to be able to provide the driver flexibility that is necessary to commit to a nonforced dispatch system. As stated by Participant 6B, it is difficult for leaders to provide flexibility when both customer and driver headcounts are low or inconsistent. Participants 1A and 4R stated that trucking company leaders must understand that truck drivers today require a different lifestyle than the traditional way of trucking. Due to the change in the mindset of modern-day truck drivers, implementing a nonforced dispatch system is my suggestion to leaders when seeking strategies to reduce truck driver turnover.

Implications for Social Change

Leaders who can effectively reduce truck driver turnover provide a social benefit to society. Low-income communities suffer greatly when there is a shortage in the supply of goods, often caused by disruptions in the supply chain (O'Hara & Toussaint, 2021).

The suffering is greater because wealthy communities take priority when resources and transportation modes are scarce (Karner et al., 2020; Morales et al., 2021). When trucking organizations have a shortage of drivers, vendors will prioritize delivery in wealthier areas. Low-income individuals can find themselves having to commute to higher income neighborhoods to acquire basic needs such as clothing, food, and fuel (Jeong & Liu, 2020). Every member of society should have access to basic needs, and trucking company leaders who have customers who provide these necessities must have the workforce to supply a diverse set of areas. Trucks deliver over 90% of U.S. goods, which includes basic needs and luxuries (Ross, 2022). Leaders who successfully reduce driver turnover can contribute to social change by supplying all neighborhoods regardless of financial status.

Recommendations for Action

Implementing competitive pay and an acceptable work–life balance is a tall task, but it is necessary to reduce truck driver turnover. My suggestion to successfully implement competitive pay and work–life balance is to target a diverse customer base. A diverse customer base allows for loads with varying pay and distances as emphasized by participants 2L and 4R. In doing so, the organization can implement nonforced dispatch that will allow drivers to target whatever compensation or work–life balance they desire. It is especially important for leaders to maintain a headcount that allows them to implement nonforced dispatch to provide the compensation and work–life balance that their drivers desire as stated by participant 2L. Furthermore, acquiring a diverse customer base will require skilled and ambitious leaders. Participant 6B stated that leaders must

constantly evaluate their driver pool and customer base to ensure customers' and drivers' needs are met. The driver pool needs to align with the volume of customers to ensure the organization can meet the customer's demands and that the organization can provide the lifestyle that their drivers desire as stated by participant 6B.

To ensure this research reaches the necessary audience, I plan to work with a consulting firm's owner and pitch my strategy's benefit to organizations in the United States. The consulting perspective will benefit organizations because it will reduce the resources needed to dive into the phenomenon of truck driver turnover since I have already conducted the research. It will be my responsibility to help organizations quantify the cost of truck driver turnover and educate leaders on how my suggested approach can successfully reduce driver turnover. I will also provide each participant with a synopsis of my doctoral study, which will consolidate the key findings that leaders can build into their current and future turnover reducing strategies. The synopsis provided will be free to the participants, and I will inform them of how I can help their organization's leaders implement the strategies that have been proven to work across multiple organizations. In doing so, I will provide value to the participants who made this study possible and to leaders of trucking organizations who can understand the devastation of turnover to their organization and society from a social perspective.

Recommendations for Further Research

The conducted study provided a ton of value; however, I found that driver shortage is just as big of an issue as driver turnover for some organizations. Participants 3B and 5A emphasized that their concern with driver shortage holds equal weight as their

concern with driver turnover. Participant 2L emphasized that truck drivers under 50 want a different lifestyle than their predecessors. Due to this fact, the industry has struggled to replace the workforce as drivers have begun to age out (Trick et al., 2021). Participant 5A emphasized that a big part of the difficulty in the truckers' lifestyle is that the food options are shockingly unhealthy. The trucking industry can work with truck stops and rest areas to implement healthier options for truckers. The world is significantly more health conscious than it has ever been, and introducing healthier food options could be a great way to attract younger people to the industry.

Another suggestion is for truckers to work with gyms to provide discounted memberships and parking options for truckers. Participant 5A emphasized how the lack of parking for truckers is a huge inconvenience. If organizations can partner with gyms, a location could be available for drivers to work out, shower, and park, as gyms often have huge parking lots suitable for large trucks. This option neutralizes two major concerns for current and potential drivers that can make the industry more attractive and address both driver turnover and shortage. Trucking company leaders can also work with medical facilities to make consistent healthcare more prevalent for truckers which is a major concern for a lot of drivers in the industry (Soro et al., 2023). If the leaders of trucking organizations can begin to address some of the major concerns that are unattractive to the industry, this can help neutralize both driver turnover and driver shortage.

Reflections

My bias within this study was due to my in-depth experience in the trucking industry. I entered this study assuming I knew why truck driver turnover was significant.

I assumed organizational culture was a huge contributor to truck driver turnover which proved not entirely true. I let the participants lead the interview to mitigate this bias and seldom intervened. To avoid adding my thoughts and opinions, I refrained from bringing up my past experiences, data I received from other participants, or data gathered from prior research. My goal during the data collection process was to not lead participants to a response and to allow every participant to control the interview. When I needed to intervene, I made sure to refrain from giving suggestions or input from other participants and only asked clarifying questions that aligned with the responses the participants already communicated. In doing so, a theme emerged, honoring managerial commitments and drivers' expectations that I did not expect. To further remove biases, I took detailed, handwritten notes of the leaders' responses and refrained from guessing what the leaders meant but asked for clarification when necessary. If I were to repeat this research, I would attempt to acquire participants with a varying customer base since customer diversity proved to be an important foundation in offering competitive pay and work–life balance.

Conclusion

Can you imagine a world where you cannot acquire the items you desire, such as food, water, gas, clothing, and shelter? Truck drivers provide every item that consumers use. Participant 4R heavily emphasized that truckers do not receive the societal respect that they deserve. Truck drivers provide consumers with everyday items to some extent. If truck drivers cease to exist, our world will come to a halt as we know it. It is imperative for leaders to implement a compensation package and a level of work–life

balance that is attractive to keep one of the most important industries alive. It is also

imperative for leaders to honor managerial commitments and driver expectations. The

failure to do so can collapse the American economy. Leaders who can effectively

implement the three themes mentioned in this study can contribute to improving their

organization and the world.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

This interview is targeted at exploring the phenomenon of truck driver turnover and the strategies used to reduce voluntary employee turnover. Participants in the interview will be trucking company leaders located in The United States. Each participant will be asked the same set of questions in the same protocol outlined below:

1. I will introduce myself to participants as a doctoral student at Walden University and give a brief overview of the purpose and time required for the interview.

2. I will then present a copy of the consent form for the participants to read and sign before any interview begins. The participants will be asked by the researcher if any further clarification is needed on the interview questions presented or any other facet of the participants involvement.

3. Once the consent form is signed, I will provide a copy to the participants.

4. The participants will be reminded that the interview will be audio recorded and the recorder will be started with only the specific date and time, for example, Monday, November 1, 2023, at 11:00 A.M. I will begin speaking as the use of an identification mark for the interview.

5. I will end the interview by asking the questions and recording answers in the same sequence as noted on the research instrument. The anticipation of completion is thirty to forty-five minutes.

6. To conclude, the interview will extend a note of gratitude to the participant, stop the audio recording, and conclude the appointment.

7. An appointment will be set at the end of the interview for a member checking follow-up interview.

Introduction, Interview, and Follow-up

• Welcome and thank you for your participation. My name is Thomas Streeter. I am a doctoral student at Walden University. This interview is aimed at exploring the phenomenon of trucking company leaders" strategies to reduce voluntary driver turnover. Each participant will be asked the same set of question. Follow-up questions will be invited to probe and obtain in-depth answers. The anticipated time of this interview is thirty to sixty minutes. I would like your permission to audio record this interview, so I may accurately document the information you provide. If at any time during the interview you wish to discontinue the use of the audio recorder or interview, please feel free to let me know.

• At this time, I would like to remind you of your written consent to participate in this study. You and I have both signed and dated each copy, certifying that we agree to continue this interview. You will receive one copy, and I will keep the other under lock and key, separate from your reported responses. Thank you.

• Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. If you need to stop or take a break, please let me know. You may also withdraw your participation at any time without repercussions. Do you have any concerns before we begin? At the end of the interview, we will make an appointment for a follow-up interview for member checking. If there are no other questions, then with your permission we will begin the interview.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. When attempting to neutralize turnover, what strategies have you found to be the most effective?

2. In your experience, what are some of the common problems in trucking that cause driver turnover?

3. What impact does driver turnover have on the retained/remaining drivers?

4. What challenges does driver turnover have on the stability of your organization?

5. What impact does driver turnover have on daily operations?

6. What impact does driver turnover have on internal stakeholder relationships?

7. What prior cost-effective strategies have you created that neutralize driver turnover?

8. What intrinsic/noneconomic strategies have you created that neutralize driver turnover?

9. What impact does short-haul have on driver turnover?

10. What impact does long-haul have on driver turnover?

11. How do you incentivize short-haul drivers to reduce turnover?

12. How do you incentivize long-haul drivers to reduce turnover?

13. How did you overcome barriers to strategy implementation?

14. What more would you like to share with me about strategies you have used to reduce driver turnover?