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# Effective Strategies Residential Property Managers Use to Reduce Workplace Burnout and Increase Workforce Retention

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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Walden University
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Abstract

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MBA, Webster University, 2004

BS, Park University, 2002

Research Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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## Abstract

Some residential property managers have inadequate strategies to reduce workplace burnout and increase workforce retention. Consequences of workplace burnout may include high levels of absenteeism or turnover, diminished or low job performance and productivity along with depersonalization or cynicism of the work or task itself. Grounded in the job demands-resources theory, the purpose of this qualitative pragmatic inquiry was to identify and explore strategies residential property managers in West Texas use to reduce workplace burnout and increase employee retention. The participants were seven residential property managers who had over 60 years of combined experience in residential property management. Data were collected using semistructured interviews and a review of public documents. Through thematic analysis, three themes were identified: (a) balancing job demands and job resources, (b) benefits, rewards, and recognition, and (c) employee engagement, participation, and organizational commitment. A key recommendation is for residential property managers to provide training, mentoring, and counseling, as well as job-related workshops for both employees and managers. The implications for positive social change include the potential for residential property managers to prepare for future challenges in their local community by matching demands with resources to reduce burnout and turnover of employees.

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## Dedication

Dedicated with eternal love, respect, and admiration for my Mamasita, Abuelita y Abuelito! In their loving memory, I will always and forever THANK my “MaMa” Gloria N.G., the greatest Granparents, Josefina and Desiderio N., and my stepdad L. Pilo G. who all loved me so unconditionally and gave me the spirit and strength from inside heaven’s gate to believe in myself!

I also dedicate, acknowledge, apologize, and appreciate my sons, L. Gerardo Jr., Benjamin, and Michael L. whose time I taxed so heavily during the years YOU needed me the most. I LOVE each of you more than you will ever know. If I could turn back time I would do my doctoral again but this time I would wait for YOU to be much older! Gerardo, thank you for my sons!

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## Section 1: Foundation of the Project

### Background of the Problem

Workplace burnout can be detrimental to any business regardless of industry or location (Ribeiro et al., 2022). The symptoms of workplace burnout can stem from personal or professional situations that may escalate and become problematic for both employees and employers. Acknowledging the importance and the impact of workplace burnout may lead to employee satisfaction, higher productivity, increased morale, and greater employee retention. In addition to acknowledging workplace burnout symptoms in employees, addressing the causes and possible solutions is equally vital in every organization. Mitigating, managing and mediating employee workplace burnout symptoms may close the gap in employee turnover and employee retention.

Many business managers and owners experience low employee retention rates due to high levels of burnout in the workplace (Lee et al., 2020). According to Bayes et al. (2021), burnout is related to an activation of the nervous system caused by constant and excessive stress in the workplace. Burnout symptoms often arise for different reasons and in various shapes and sizes. Some symptoms may go unnoticed in the workplace causing employee fatigue, low productivity, problematic behaviors, and health issues, which may lead to employee turnover. Identification and investigation of workplace burnout is not evident for every employee or in every business (Park & Nam, 2020). The relevance and importance of early detection of employees going through various workplace burnout symptoms is beneficial for both employee and employer.

**Business Problem Focus and Project Purpose**

The specific business problem is that some residential property managers lack effective strategies to successfully reduce workplace burnout to increase employee retention. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative pragmatic inquiry study was to explore effective strategies some residential property managers use to successfully reduce workplace burnout and to increase employee retention. The target population for this study included residential property managers in West Texas who had implemented effective strategies to successfully reduce workplace burnout to increase employee retention.

Potential participants were identified using social media platforms (e.g., LinkedIn) and my personal and professional networks. Participants were selected using nonprobability, purposeful sampling. The participant selection criteria were as follows: (a) participants must be residential property managers, (b) participants must have at least 5 years of experience in residential property management, (c) the businesses must be located in West Texas, and (d) the businesses must have a minimum of five full-time employees. The data for the study was collected using semistructured interviews with open-ended questions to address the problem and purpose of the study. The data included participant responses to interview questions, information collected from publicly available sources, and as provided by participants to support data saturation and triangulation.

The conceptual framework that grounds this study includes the job demands–resources (JD-R) theory introduced by Demerouti et al. (2001). The authors identified two underlying constructs of the theory: job demands and job resources. *Job demands* were defined as the physical, mental, and emotional effort required to complete work tasks. *Job resources* were the personal and organizational means available to employees to respond to changes in job demands. Demerouti et al. believed that the combined effect of job demands plus job resources influenced employee performance and well-being. For example, high job demands drain employees' physical, mental, and emotional resources, leaving them exhausted and unable to perform at expected levels. Having low job resources when demand is high leaves employees without any means to effectively manage the high job demands. A balance between the two is required to optimize employee performance and well-being. JD-R has been and continues to be extensively studied making it a viable conceptual framework for this study. The constructs identified by Demerouti et al. (2001) provide a lens through which multiple aspects of workplace burnout can be explored.

## Research Question

What effective strategies do some residential property managers in West Texas use to successfully reduce workplace burnout and increase employee retention?

## Assumptions and Limitations

### Assumptions

Assumptions are facts considered to be true but are not actually verified (Pyrczak & Bruce, 2017). For this study, I made the following assumptions:

1. Burnout is a current business problem in the residential property management industry.

2. I would be able to identify and recruit five to seven residential property managers who meet the selection criteria and are willing to participate in the study.
3. Open-ended interview questions would be sufficient to help understand the perceptions of residential property managers about the nature of burnout in their industry and effective strategies they have used to reduce it.
4. Open-ended interview questions would be sufficient to help address the research question.
5. Participants would answer the interview questions truthfully and to the best of their ability.
6. I could achieve data saturation based on the data collected through the interview process, publicly available sources, and documentation provided by the participants.

**Limitations**

Limitations refer to potential weaknesses of the study (Pyrczak & Bruce, 2017). The potential limitations associated with this study include that (a) the results of the study may not be generalized to the greater population due to small sample size; (b) qualitative research results are based on the interpretation of the researcher and may contain subjectivity; and (c) this research study has a narrow scope, as I obtained information from only a small number of residential property managers in a single location.

## Transition

In Section 1, the background of the problem of workplace burnout and employee turnover in residential property management was presented. The specific business problem and purpose of the study were articulated. The target population, sampling method and size, and participant recruitment and selection criteria were covered. The conceptual framework that grounds the study, JD-R theory, was introduced. Section 1 also included the research question, the assumptions and limitations associated with the research.

In Section 2, I will provide an opening narrative that specifies my approach for searching and organizing the literature. The literature review will contain a critical analysis and synthesis of the literature related to the conceptual framework and the business problem. Section 3 includes the content on the topics of ethical research, research method and design, and data collection, organization, and analysis techniques. In Section 4, I will present the results of the study.

# Section 2: The Literature Review

## A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

Writing a literature review requires a systematic approach for searching for relevant resources to address the research question. Critical thinking skills are needed to select the most appropriate resources—those that most closely align with the purpose of the current study (Leite et al., 2019). Researching professional and academic literature is important for maintaining focus on the purpose of the study and to avoid scope creep when selecting resources. A literature review is comprised of different expert resources and references that help researchers comprehend existing information or knowledge in a particular field of study. The literature review provides evidence of the depth of study about a phenomenon which increases the credibility and reliability of the results (Creswell, 2009). According to Leite et al. (2019), conducting a thorough literature review is important to frame the current study in the context of existing research, identify gaps in the literature, avoid duplication, link theory and practice, and contribute to the existing body of knowledge.

The objective of this scholarly literature review is to explore the professional and academic literature on JD-R theory for a business-related study on the phenomenon of workplace burnout. I conducted an in-depth search for literature closely related to the business problem and the purpose of my research. I searched for existing literature on the applications of JD-R theory in business sectors like the general property management, residential property management, and apartment housing management. My literature review included expertise from various published resources. I cited peer-reviewed articles, books, and journals, ensuring I used the most recently published scholarly work in the business, leadership, and management expert fields. I primarily used Walden University Online Library to incorporate EBSCO, Business Source Complete, ProQuest Central, ABI/INFORM Collection, Academic Search Complete, ERIC, JSTOR, Sage Premier Journals, Emerald Insight, and Google Scholar.

I used key search terms such as occupational stress, workplace burnout, workforce retention, employee well-being, mental health, human resources, job demands and job resources (JD-R) theory, small business management, leadership styles, residential property managers, work–life balance, employee engagement and job satisfaction.  to conduct my search. My literature review consisted of 76% peer-reviewed resources (i.e., 51 out of 67 total references), and 51% of the peer-reviewed references were published within the last 5 years (i.e., 2019–2024).

**Table 1**

*Sources of Professional and Academic Literature*

| Sources | Review of the literature before 2018 | Review of the literature after 2019 | Total references |
|---|---|---|---|
| Peer-reviewed journals | 25 | 26 | 51 |
| Non-peer-reviewed journals | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Books | 11 | 1 | 12 |
| Total | 39 | 28 | 67 |

## Conceptual Framework

### *JD-R Theory*

JD-R theory is a comprehensive framework that proposes job demands in the workplace often lead to burnout whereas job resources promote the workforce’s overall job satisfaction. Demerouti et al. (2001) introduced the JD-R theory that grounded my conceptual framework study. The authors identified two underlying concepts of the theory: job demands, which are defined as the physical, mental, and emotional effort required to complete work tasks, and job resources, which are the personal and organizational means available to employees to respond to changes in job demands.

JD-R theory has been and continues to be extensively studied, making it a viable conceptual framework for this study. JD-R theory combines the negative effects of job demands in the workplace contrasted with job resources, which positively influence employee performance and well-being. High job demands drain employees physical, mental, and emotional resources, leaving them exhausted and unable to perform at elevated expected levels. Having low job resources when demand is high leaves employees without any means to effectively manage the high job demands (Demerouti et al., 2001). A balance between the job demands and the job resources is required to identify, address, and reduce workplace burnout, to optimize employee performance and job satisfaction.

Workplace burnout is described by business employers and employees as a constant and chronic state of exhaustion, often consisting of excessive, exhaustive, and prolonged emotional, mental, and physical stress. First introduced by Maslach and

Jackson (1981), symptoms of burnout can be emotional as well as physical and often cause a disconnection from work. Maslach (2001) elaborated that burnout was a persistent response to chronic emotional and interpersonal job-related stressors. For the past decades, researchers have identified causes, concerns, and conclusions to address and prevent job burnout.

Burnout symptoms occur and continue for long periods of time with little or no opportunity to voice concerns and recover from fatigue, unsupportive management, and unrealistic expectations. According to Ryan et al. (2021), the signs of workplace burnout may include and are often not limited to job security, conflictive attitudes, lack of appreciation, negative communication, extreme workloads, and work hours, which may lead to decreased productivity, increased absenteeism, low employee morale, and high employee turnover. Three main job-related burnout stressors are defined by exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy (Maslach, 2001). Studies have shown that workplace burnout is more prevalent in certain geographical locations, professions, and workforce industries.

If workplace burnout is not addressed, the consequences may be more costly and detrimental for both employees and employers. Consequences may include high levels of absenteeism or turnover, diminished or low job performance and productivity along with a depersonalization or cynicism of the work or task itself (Ryan et al., 2021). While there are numerous approaches and theories that discuss workplace burnout causes, symptoms, and possible solutions, my study makes a qualitative research connection between workplace burnout and the conceptual framework of JD-R theory.

The term “burnout” was originally coined over 50 years ago. Burnout was first observed in a health care setting where the medical staff and doctors were experiencing high levels of exhaustion and emotional distress as well as a decrease in productivity. Freudenberger (1975) is credited as the first psychiatrist to use the term *burnout* while observing the physical and behavior signs of volunteers providing free medical services to an underserved community in New York. Additional warning signs were noted, such as decreased commitment to volunteering and an increase in fatigue, frustration, and depression. This was the result of burnout. The phenomenon of burnout is related to excessive workplace demands, especially in the commitment of working long hours, in difficult working conditions and with little or no financial compensation.

The physical symptoms of burnout include tiredness, sleeplessness, and headaches, whereas the behavioral aspects of burnout encompass frustration, anger, cynicism, and stress. Maslach (1972) was another early researcher of burnout. Maslach collaborated with colleagues at the University of California at Berkley in a study of burnout among professionals working in different occupations like lawyers, welfare workers, psychiatrists, and physicians. They all required intense and intimate work with individuals who needed help to address a physical, social, or emotional issue. Without relief, workers became weary, cynical, and depressed.

The severity of burnout varied among different occupations but acknowledged its existence in most if not all occupations studied. Maslach (1972) also believed that when employees were constantly subjected to the problems and issues of others, they would cope by disengaging. Early research on burnout was exploratory with the goal of identifying and describing the phenomenon (Freudenberger, 1975; Maslach, 1972). Burnout was initially seen as a social issue that resulted from a societal shift from local support (community and family) to assistance from professional services (therapists and psychiatrists). Where individuals once sought support from family and community, they then looked for help from social services professionals.

This trend left social services workers disconnected from family and community and with few other resources to cope with the increased demands for services. According to Farber (1983), this societal shift was due to a sense of individualism in modern society. Years later the burnout phenomenon was associated with most occupational and industrial jobs because workers were spending extended hours at work and a lot less time at home (Schaufeli et al., 1996). Researchers believed that burnout resulted from excessive job demands but the specific work-related factors were unknown.

Specific work-related personal factors (e.g., personality) were also unknown contributors to burnout or if these personal factors could be applied to cope with work-related stress. Maslach and Jackson (1981) made a major contribution to the study of burnout with the development of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), a tool designed to measure three components of burnout; depersonalization, emotional exhaustion, and decreased personal accomplishment. The authors of the MBI administered a preliminary version of the tool to 605 people working in social service occupations. High scores on each of the three components of burnout indicated that the respondents experienced high levels of emotional fatigue.

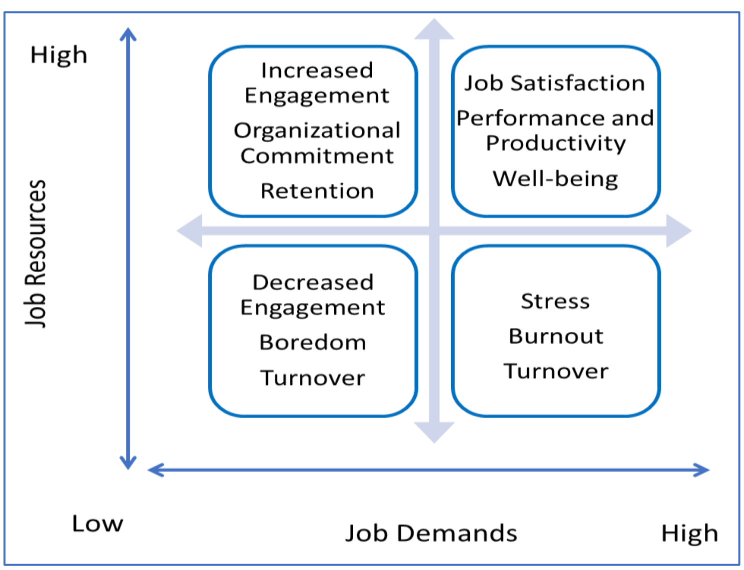
The results of the preliminary version also implied that the workers were detached from their tasks, had developed negative attitudes towards work and/or clients and they had a diminished sense of accomplishment in their work. Decades later, the development of the MBI was significant in the study of burnout as the first standardized tool for measuring burnout (Mäkikangas et al., 2010). The MBI has been widely researched and refined to account for evolving workplace conditions that induce stress and negatively impact employee well-being (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Today, the MBI is the gold standard for assessing burnout in most occupations and professions. Burnout symptoms continue to create negative work environments; however, employing the JD-R model/theory may reduce unwelcome aspects of the job and promote autonomy as well as professional and personal wellness and growth.

JD-R theory describes job demands as the physical, emotional, and mental efforts required to accomplish work or tasks, independently measuring job resources as professional aspects made available to employees for a positive working environment. Job resources may already exist or may need adjusting for employees to use or request when job demands are high. Demerouti et al. (2001) introduced JD-R theory and believed that the condition of burnout existed in all occupational work settings, relating to two factors: work or job demands and employee or job resources. However, there was major criticism in the early research, especially for focusing on social services occupations. The interplay between the two factors (Figure 1) determined the severity of the condition and the impact on the employee and organization.

For example, high job demands with high job resources increased employee engagement, commitment to the organization, and lowered turnover. On the other end of the spectrum, high job demands with low job resources resulted in stress, burnout, and turnover. According to Bakker and Demerouti (2017), job demands are the factors of the occupation that demand different aspects like emotional, psychological, and physical that create stress, burnout, and disengagement. Job resources are the instruments made available to employees to promote a positive workplace environment and personal and/or professional growth and development (Bakker et al., 2005). In addition to JD-R theory, there are several other models and theories that center around similar work and employee characteristics.

**Figure 1**

*Conceptual Framework – Interplay Between Job Demands and Job Resources*




JD-R theory is comparable to the theory of engagement as well as to the effort-reward imbalance (ERI) model, each providing a distinctive perspective of the workplace by addressing burnout and stress as well as the workforce by focusing on the well-being and productive engagement of employees. The theory of engagement suggests that employees are more likely to be dedicated and motivated at their workplace if their level of engagement and enthusiasm is aligned with their work–life balance (Kahn & Fellows, 2013). Similarly, the ERI model (Niedhammer et al., 2004) used certain attributes of the workplace to address and comprehend how to influence the balance between the employee's effort exerted and the rewards employees received. Both the theory of engagement and the ERI model impact employees and their work-related experiences by identifying burnout and stressors or by focusing on positive employee engagement.

**Supporting Theories**

Theory of engagement is a concept related to employees' level of involvement, commitment and enthusiasm concerning their workplace and the organization. Kahn and Fellows (2013) elaborated that if employees are more engaged, they may positively contribute and be more involved with their occupation and with their workplace. The theory of engagement stems from accentuating the importance of employee engagement through motivation and dedication. Engaged employees tend to be more enthusiastic, committed and involved with their work and overall workplace.

The theory of engagement has numerous components, some of which are relatable to the JD-R theory. Components for the engagement theory include but may not be limited to the work–life balance, emotional and social connection, a strong sense of personal and professional development, aligning their personal values with their professional beliefs along with a cognitive and psychological presence at work (Kahn, 1990). These components may also include a positive purpose or meaning that confirms the overall organizational goals or job demand control (Wu et al., 2023). The theory of engagement suggests that potential opportunities for employees to learn, grow, develop, and can effectively contribute to the future of the organization.

The theory of engagement also refers to employees having lasting workplace fulfillment, pride, enthusiasm and higher than usual levels of energy. Employees tend to be happy and committed to their work, finding significance in their daily output. Pride and honor resonate with their autonomy, independence and control in work-related job duties and responsibilities. According to Kahn (1990), positive feedback acknowledging the employees' contributions and efforts will more likely result in a more engaged and effective workforce. In addition, employees will maintain their interest, enthusiasm, and engagement in their work if employees feel they are valued and respected.

The theory of engagement emphasizes the importance of autonomy and reassuring employees that their contributions are vital to the success and future of the organization. Whereas JD-R theory aligns with the theory of engagement by ensuring that the employees' job demands are manageable but also that the job resources are readily available for effective employee engagement. Job resources can be used to promote autonomy that can add value and variety for the emotional support of employees (Kahn, 1992). The theory of engagement enhances positivity from their job resources to improve and maintain the employee's well-being. The theory of engagement equally reinforces the value of encouraging a productive work environment advocating for open connection and communication.

The ERI model demonstrates that an imbalance in organizations between the employees' high effort for their job and low rewards for their output at work. The ERI model primarily focuses on effort versus rewards and vice versa relating to the workplace. Hwang et al. (2019) explained that employees may feel or experience negative outcomes, such as stress or burnout and therefore may not put forth effort, affecting their jobs, salaries, and rewards. The effort portion of the ERI model implies that employees require energy to complete their jobs but also refers to the psychological, emotional, mental, and physical pressures in achieving their job responsibilities, whereas the reward portion of the ERI model includes numerous elements of the job, such as salary, security, and organizational support.

The ERI model encompasses the rewards factor which is attained for the employee's efforts. However, Hwang et al. (2019) elaborated that an imbalance at work occurs if the employee's efforts are not equitably rewarded. This imbalance happens when excess effort goes unnoticed and therefore the return of the reward is adverse. The imbalance may result in negative results by employees perceiving the inequity and unfairness of the workplace and work-related outcomes. Correspondingly, the theory of engagement and the ERI model along with JD-R promote the well-being of the employee by focusing on positive results by promoting job resources, employee engagement and a balance between effort and reward.

There are distinctive aspects of the ERI model, that if left unaddressed may cause health issues, emotional constraints, and workplace burnout for employees. The key elements that relate to the ERI model are effort, reward, imbalance, and overcommitment of employees (Shoman et al., 2023). The ERI model suggests that if the workforce assumes employers are rewarding employees in an inadequate and unfair way, as compared to their efforts it may lead to unwarranted stressors or unwelcome burnout. The ERI model focuses on the imbalance between efforts and rewards as it relates to job demands of the workplace. This imbalance refers to the inequality between the employee's effort and the employer's compensation or rewards, which can apply to the theory of engagement and to JD-R theory.

## Application to the Business Problem

The JD-R theory was originally designed to investigate the causes of burnout related to job demands and job resources. The theory has evolved to incorporate a more holistic view of the organization and its potential impact on employees' well-being and performance. The results of a recent study by Tummers and Bakker (2021) showed that organizational environment and leadership style directly impacted the demands of the job and the resources needed to complete the work. A positive work environment and supportive leadership were shown to facilitate the relationship between job demands and job resources to improve employee engagement and performance.

Workplace burnout is defined as a continuous and chronic state of emotional, mental, and physical stressors. Work or job burnout stems from prolonged feelings of exhaustion without the ability or resources to pause, recover, or reset. Workplace burnout is a current and on-going issue for businesses. The early version of JD-R theory focused only on causes of employee burnout (Demerouti et al., 2001). Employee burnout negatively impacts employees, employers, and businesses overall (Gabriel & Aguinis, 2022). JD-R theory has evolved to incorporate a broader view of the organization and its potential impact on employee well-being and overall job performance.

Researchers continue to study workplace burnout. Current research reveals the influence of organizational factors, beyond just job demands and job resources, which could increase the likelihood of burnout. Human resources practices, leadership styles, and various intervention strategies have been identified as ways that businesses may more effectively manage the underlying causes of workplace burnout and prevent it (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). JD-R theory aligns with the purpose of this study to identify strategies residential property managers use to address their employee's burnout symptoms and increase their overall workforce retention.

Workplace performance may also be affected which may result in high voluntary or involuntary turnover. Preventing workplace burnout may avoid added operational costs and increase employee morale. Recognition of an employee's performance or of professional accomplishments may also lead to a positive working atmosphere. According to Demerouti and Bakker (2011), workplace burnout may affect the physical, mental, and overall well-being of employees, which could lead to more detrimental professional and personal issues. Unfortunately, lower employee morale could cause added workplace stress and unnecessary workforce burnout.

Burnout has also been associated with depression. Bakker et al. (2000) attribute depression to burnout and has been regarded as a detailed kind of job-related stress response among human service professionals. These types of occupations are demanding and emotionally connected between professionals and recipients. In addition, professions like health care or emergency service workers also deal with high levels of mental and emotional situations. Maslach and Jackson (1981) discussed a study linking depression with burnout using two different types of measurements, the MBI and the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D) for its validity. Depression can be the effect of uncontrolled traumas, personal and professional life experiences in which individuals are unable to adequately cope and may cause most employees extreme exhaustion, depersonalization, emotional, mental, or social withdrawal.

Results from this study summarize the equity theory in which burnout symptoms are primarily work related. Moreover, according to Demerouti and Bakker (2011), the JD-R model may be used to identify negative indicators at work, such as poor health conditions, workplace bullying, and low job satisfaction. In a survey of 625 blue collar workers and 761 health care professionals, using the JD-R model concluded that (a) stress from the overall job pressures lead to burnout, but (b) high organizational commitment reduces intentional job turnover (Taris et al., 2011). However, the JD-R model could also predict positive working outcomes, like the employees' work-related well-being, increased valuable performance and motivation.

Emotional demands were also included as part of the job demands and related to frequency of interactions at work. Results of this study assessed employees as positivists, negativists, and indifferent workers. Li et al. (2020) conducted this study where job demands referred to appraisals, time urgency and role conflict. Surveys were collected from full-time employees over a one-year period and concluded that the job demands measured as a hindrance or challenge were prevalent based on the employee's well-being and their job satisfaction. The results showed that high work engagement and job satisfaction with a low level of burnout, but negative or indifferent employees were those with high job demands, conflicting work roles and poor appraisals or evaluations.

Previous researchers explored and studied the JD-R model that included job crafting, work attachment, job performance, job security, and job attitudes. According to Wang et al. (2018), job crafting was referred to as employees experiencing difficult or negative times at work and reflecting their behaviors and attitudes. Job crafting was also positively related to work attachment by having employees seek additional job resources when their job demands are at their highest. The overall concept of the JD-R conceptual framework addresses the relationship between job demands, like excessive work hours and inadequate pay, and job resources, like open communication and stress coping mechanisms.

The JD-R theory is a framework that explains the negative aspect of the demands of a job and the positive characteristics of having employees or human resources available in the workforce. Bakker et al. (2004) developed the JD-R model to identify and provide a framework for employers and employees to use and study work related burnout or stress, along with employee engagement and motivation. The JD-R model continues to be applied and practiced as a tool to identify and intervene for a balance of job demands and job resources. Buruck et al. (2020) also added that the JD-R model has recognized as workload (WL) for job demands and work flexibility (WF) for job resources. The work–life conflict (WLC) is the burnout level with the emotional exhaustion (EE) having a direct effect on the organizational workforce.

The two processes of the JD-R model encompass the job demands and resources which are centered around the work-related factors of employees. The JD-R model consists of two separate processes, job demands and job resources, but both relative and contributing to one another (Taris et al., 2011). The underlying concepts relating to the JD-R model are both the job demands placed on employees and the job resources that are made available to employees (Bakker et al., 2023). To comprehend and analyze the job demands and job resources, I will elaborate on the job demand and follow through with the job resources factors or characteristics. The job demands process refers to the business, physical or psychological aspects of the job itself.

Job demands often contribute to anxieties, stressors, fears, or burnout of employees. Job demands, such as low or inadequate pay, long shifts, or extended work hours, excessive mental or cognitive fatigue, dealing with difficult personal or professional emotions and interactions can cause unwarranted burnout and undue anxieties in the workplace. The negative results may also cause serious health problems for employees, which can loop back to the employer (Akkermans et al., 2013). Job demands also refer to the heavy workloads, deadline or time pressures, organizational rules, policies, and procedures may lead to negative outcomes for employees and may have adverse results.

Job demands are often associated with the physical demands of the job or the lack or limited control over the job itself. However, some job demands are reported with little to no communication, unclear job responsibilities or unreasonable expectations. Akkermans et al. (2013) views job demands as bullying or harassment in the workplace and ineffective training, or flawed management connect. According to Taris et al. (2011), job demands are unreasonable, unjust, and unnecessary, leading to fatigue, exhaustion and burnout. Job demands may cause some employees physical, mental, or emotional burnout. Certain job demands can be more concerning than others but employes may still consider most demands unnecessary, causing undue workforce stress and burnout.

Job resources provide employees with the support, assistance, guidance, and feedback they may require in accomplishing organizational goals. Buruck et al. (2020) job resources are the physical, psychological, social, and organizational attributes employees need and should have to attain their personal and professional goals. Certain job resources like managerial feedback, productive evaluations, professional / personal autonomy or counseling and stress management workshops or trainings may prove to be effective (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009).

Job resources may include wellness programs and mental health, or mental well-being check-ins. Conversely, Taris et al. (2011) discussed that the lack of job resources prevents employees from reaching and accomplishing organizational goals, reducing motivation, and increasing workforce disengagement. Additional job resources may also include open communication with other employees and employers as well as achievement recognition. Job resources are tools employees may use to address signs of workforce burnout and to provide organizational support to encourage and foster a positive workplace environment.

Bakker and Demerouti (2007) and Akkermans et al. (2013) summarized that JD-R theory addresses the work-related well-being of the employees, including both positive outcomes in the form of job satisfaction and employee engagement, as well as the negative outcomes like burnout and health issues. Burnout has been linked to various physical, mental, emotional, and social problems in the workplace (Buruck et al., 2020). The impact on job resources is significant, from increasing employee productivity, improving overall workforce performance and decreasing absenteeism and employee turnover.

Job resources have been used to reduce workplace burnout in their workforce. Avoiding communication or making resources unavailable for employees may increase the likelihood of burnout. According to Buruck et al. (2020) and Bakker and de Vries (2021), work-related burnout is associated with mental health issues, depression, and anxiety. Chronic or prolonged exposures to stress or burnout have led to an increased health decline, weaken the immune system and cardiovascular issues. Employees experiencing burnout are more likely to miss work, make excuses or seek other employment opportunities rather than address the job demands. High turnover rates can be prevented, for the betterment of the employee and for the benefit of the organization by providing job resources.

## Strategies for Addressing Burnout

Strategies like job crafting, an approach that gives employees more autonomy over their work responsibilities, was identified as an effective way to balance job demands and resources. For this study, I explored strategies West Texas residential property managers used to increase retention by reducing employee burnout through the lens of JD-R theory. JD-R theory aligned with the purpose of my study to explore strategies residential property managers use to increase retention by reducing employee burnout. The JD-R theory model helped me to address and answer my research question: What effective strategies do some residential property managers in West Texas use to successfully reduce workplace burnout and increase employee retention?

## Transition

The purpose of my pragmatic qualitative inquiry design study is to identify and explore some of the strategies residential property managers in West Texas use to identify, address, and prevent workplace burnout. Workplace burnout may affect the physical, mental, and overall well-being of employees, which could lead to more detrimental professional and personal issues. Unfortunately, lower employee morale could even cause added workplace stress and burnout. Workplace performance may also be affected, which may cause high voluntary or involuntary turnover.

Moreover, the importance of identifying employee burnout symptoms is to inhibit or reduce the turnover rate and increase the workforce retention. Preventing workplace burnout may increase employee morale and retention. In Section 2, I elaborated on the conceptual framework using JD-R theory to ground my study. I also researched and compared two other supporting theories / models that have some similarities to explore the effects of workplace burnout and how to address or prevent the causes.

I also emphasized the negative effects of workforce burnout but also the benefits to employees and employers by identifying or strategizing the causes and prevent burnout all together. In Section 3, I will provide an overview of methodology used for my study to include the components relating to the institutional review board (IRB) protocols, the

*Belmont Report*, ethical data collection and analysis, and my role as the researcher. I made certain to align my interview questions with the purpose and nature of my study. In addition, my qualitative research design focused on the participants' privacy and confidentiality, ensuring that the data saturation, credibility, reliability, and validity of my study is adhered to.

Section 3: Research Project Methodology

In Section 3, I will provide an overview of ethical research including a brief description of the *Belmont Report* protocol and my role as the researcher. I will discuss the research method (qualitative) and research design (pragmatic inquiry) and why they are appropriate for my study. The target population, sampling technique, and participant eligibility criteria will be identified. A detailed description of the planned data collection, organization, and analysis techniques is provided. I will define the key terms related to reliability and validity in qualitative research. Section 3 concludes with a summary and transitions into Section 4.

## Project Ethics

In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary data collection instrument for a study (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2018). Therefore, I was considered the key person as researcher and the primary data collection instrument for my study. I ensured that the research question as well as the purpose of my study aligned with the open-ended semistructured interview questions. I collected data from seven participants through face-to-face and telephonic semistructured interviews. A defined interview protocol (see Appendix A) was used to ensure consistency of the data collection process.

Workplace burnout is a critical issue in business organizations. Workplace burnout is associated with decreased employee performance, increased workplace accidents, absenteeism, and illness (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Edú-Valsania et al., 2022; Gabriel & Aguinis, 2022). Innovation and creativity are inhibited when employees experience burnout (Gabriel & Aguinis, 2022). The topic of workplace burnout is of interest to me because I personally experienced high levels of stress and burnout in a previous professional environment. The intent of this study was to identify the factors that contribute to workplace burnout and explore strategies that may help residential property managers and employees by emphasizing the importance of acknowledging and addressing potential problems. The findings of this study may help residential property managers institute practices that may reduce voluntary turnover and positively increase employee well-being.

I did not have a personal relationship with any of the potential participants for this study. I may have a professional relationship with some participants because I am using my personal and professional networks, in addition to social media, to identify potential participants. I did not select participants if I perceived any possibility of bias or conflict of interest. Avoiding any type of bias is important for researchers to understand their responsibility for ethical research and to adhere to all ethical practices in the research process.

The *Belmont Report* is the standard for ethical research. Adhering to the *Belmont Report* provides guidelines for the protection of human subjects in research based on three principles (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). The three principles are respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. Respect for persons requires that human subjects or participants are treated with dignity and protected from diminished autonomy. Beneficence refers to minimizing potential harm and maximizing the well-being of participants. Justice involves the adequate distribution of the burdens and benefits of the research, allowing for equity and respect of participants. I adhered to the ethical principles outlined in the *Belmont Report* to protect the well-being and rights of my participants. I successfully completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Program Course, referencing the *Belmont Report* and I received my CITI certificate, Record ID 60895635 (see Appendix B). Furthermore, I adhered to the ethical research requirements established by the IRB at Walden University.

Informed consent is a written agreement between the researcher and study participants. Researchers must obtain a signed informed consent form from each participant prior to scheduling interviews. The informed consent form provides participants with an overview of the purpose of the study, who is conducting the research, and the research process or procedures. Potential participants were notified of the voluntary nature of the study and the right to withdraw at any time. Any potential risks or benefits for participants were disclosed in the informed consent form including an indication that no incentives would be offered for participation.

Potential participants were informed of their right to confidentiality and privacy with assurance that their rights would be protected, and all ethical practices were also adhered to. I secured a signed consent form prior to the interviews, providing the participants with a hard copy and retaining a signed form for my records. Participants requesting to withdraw from the interview process could do so via email prior to the interview or in person during the interview. There were no penalties or other implications to the participant for withdrawing.

Throughout the interview process participants were assured they could withdraw and were not required to continue if they changed their minds. Autonomy was assured throughout the interview process by acknowledging the valuable contribution each participant was making, thereby encouraging open dialog. Incentives of any type or size may influence research participants and introduce biases that could skew the results of the study (Niyibizi et al., 2022). Depending on the context, content, or participants individuality, incentives may cause people to make decisions based on their own desired outcomes or existing beliefs. Incentives may also persuade participants to selectively behave or respond to information or interviews solely on their pre-existing judgements. Participants were notified that participating in the interview process was solely based on their volunteered decision and no form of compensation, incentive, or payment was offered. I complied with federal regulations for ethical research, the ethical research requirements from the IRB at Walden University, and all other Walden research policies and procedures to ensure the ethical protection of the participants for this study.

IRB approval to conduct the research was attained prior to recruiting and engaging with participants. My IRB approval number is 03-22-24-0733124 and expires on March 21, 2025, and was included as part of my final study. Data collection requires researchers to always maintain confidentiality (Ross et al., 2018). The names, titles, contact details, and responses of the participants were not disclosed to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. A coding scheme was employed to mask the identities and responses of each participant. My participants were referred to only as P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6 and P7.

A summary of the results was provided to participants but did not include any identifying information or responses that could be linked to a specific employer or employee. All hard copy data and documentation collected for the study was securely stored in a locked drawer in my home office. Electronic sources were stored in a password-protected file folder on an external hard drive and will be secured in a locked drawer in my home office. I will retain all data collected for the study for 5 years, after which time I will permanently destroy them.

## Nature of the Project

The qualitative research method was used for this study. One purpose of the qualitative method is to explore and explain the experiences of individuals related to a phenomenon (Köhler et al., 2022). Researchers use qualitative methods to gain an in-depth understanding of lived and experienced human behavior in a certain setting or environment. Qualitative approaches benefit researchers seeking to investigate, understand, and articulate human experiences in contrast to quantitative approaches that rely on numerical data to explain a phenomenon. The qualitative research method was appropriate for my study because I was able to explore the experiences and perceptions of residential property managers about workplace burnout, collecting only non-numerical data.

I used pragmatic inquiry research design for my study. Pragmatic inquiry is a type of qualitative research design used by researchers to study organizational processes (Kelly & Cordeiro, 2020). One of the principles of pragmatic inquiry is that research is undertaken to produce practical, action-oriented results that are designed to solve a business problem (Kelly & Cordeiro, 2020). Pragmatic inquiry was appropriate for my study because I explored the experiences and perceptions of residential property managers about workplace burnout and retention. In addition, the results of this study produced actionable strategies or outcomes that could be implemented to address the business problem for residential property managers.

## Population, Sampling, and Participants

The target population for this study included residential property managers in West Texas who implemented effective strategies to successfully reduce workplace burnout and could potentially increase employee retention. The participants eligibility criteria for my study were that (a) participants must be residential property managers, (b) participants must have at least 5 years of experience in residential property management, (c) the residential property/business must be in West Texas, and (d) the residential property/business must have a minimum of five full-time employees.

The identification and selection of the participants is essential for qualitative research by addressing and avoiding any unethical concerns, reassuring the studies' internal validity, and providing quality data saturation (Patton, 2016). Selection eligibility criteria are necessary for qualitative research studies to ensure validity and credibility to the academic researchers' rigor as well as to the doctoral process. Potential participants were identified using social media platforms (e.g., LinkedIn) and my personal and professional networks.

Strategizing to gain access to my qualified and selected participants involved a thorough plan with clearly defined eligibility criteria. Constant communication with participants creates trustworthy interactions, builds rapport and respect. In preparation for conducting interviews, I gained access to the participants by contacting the appropriate business owner or residential property manager via phone calls and professional email invitations. I ensured either communication by detailing my role as a researcher and expanding on my doctoral study. I prepared and outlined a letter of intent to interview participants, maintaining and adhering to the Walden University's IRB protocols and procedures.

I provided a well written, professionally documented, and IRB-approved letter to each of my participants outlining the purpose of this study and including a request to interview, document, and analyze the results. Engaging, establishing, and enabling a sense of equity, authenticity and reciprocity was essential to build effective and efficient communication strategies for participants to share their lived perspectives and experiences. I located and recruited an appropriate number of participants with the precise criteria and experience for my study (Egilsson et al., 2022). I was also able to collect documentation on the strategies for reducing workplace burnout from publicly available sources to support data triangulation and saturation.

In addition to gaining access to my participants, I established an honest connection and genuine open dialogue with all seven residential property managers. I conducted all interviews, either over the phone or in an onsite location agreed by both participant and researcher. I ensured either modality of interview was conducted in a stress-free environment. I did not allow any type of interruptions during the interview process, and I adhered to the set time allotted for the interview. I will follow up with my participants and share the overall analysis of the data when my doctoral study is conferred.

I acknowledged my participants' valuable time and insisted on starting and ending our interview within the allotted timed schedule. I elaborated on my roles and responsibilities as a researcher and allowed for open communication to be set prior to the interview. Open communication for participants ensured honesty and integrity was adhered to and was based on complete voluntary based of verbal and written consent. Data collection, validity, and reliability were also discussed and acknowledged prior to the onset of the interview. As a qualitative researcher, I ensured honest and transparent connection, listened with intent, showed empathy, and built respect, trust, and rapport through my written and verbal communications with my participants.

The alignment of the overarching research projects' purpose and the participants' characteristics relates to the relevance and connection to the data collected from the researched phenomena. The potential participants had the eligibility criteria along with specific lived experiences and perspectives that increased my study's richness and rigor. To align participants with purpose is crucial for the selection criteria, research question, data saturation and the meaningfulness objectives of the study (Patton, 2016). Selecting seven potential participants with distinctive characteristics and aligning with the research question was meaningful and relevant to my research conducted and data collected.

I identified and recruited no less than five and no more than seven residential property managers who meet the selection criteria and were willing to participate in my study. I also selected my participants based on their professional experience and knowledge of residential property management as it relates to my study. Hennink and Kaiser (2022) elaborated that data saturation, also known as thematic saturation, is used in qualitative research to focus on a selected sample size instead of predicting the accuracy of data for future theory development.

Participants were selected using nonprobability, purposeful sampling. Nonprobability sampling in qualitative research is a preferred method because it allows for richer and more substantial data collection and analysis (Patton, 2016). Purposeful sampling of data is a type of nonprobability sampling researchers use to select research participants with specific characteristics relating to the research question of the study. Data saturation in qualitative pragmatic studies is determined by the focus and comprehension of the scope of the study, research question, semistructured interviews and the phenomenon itself.

The data for the study was collected using semistructured interviews with open-ended questions to address the problem and purpose of my study. Jacob and Furgerson (2012) summarized that the research itself should generate interview questions as well as the research question, providing a thorough review of the literature. The data included participant responses to interview questions and information collected from publicly available sources to support data saturation.

In addition to data saturation for qualitative research, an importance is placed on quality of the data instead of the quantity of the sample size. A study with few participants may provide more substantial analysis versus a study with a larger population with inadequate or limited resources. Recognizing the appropriate sample size is often determined by the researcher, nature of the study, and the availability of the participants (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). Identifying experienced and available participants with my required criteria and selected sample size provided a solid foundation and direction for my study.

## Data Collection Activities

In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary data collection instrument for a study (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2018). Therefore, I executed the role of data collection instrument for this study. The data for the study was collected using semistructured interviews with open-ended questions to address the problem and purpose of the study. The data included participant responses to interview questions, information collected from publicly available sources, to support data saturation and triangulation.

According to Patton (2016), interviews are a preferred method of data collection for qualitative research. There are three approaches for conducting interviews with participants: structured, unstructured, and semistructured (Yin, 2016). Structured interviews are comprehensive and include a high level of standardization but are created using a predetermined question set for each participant. Structured interviews are used to control any bias, to accurately understand its population and primarily researched for quantitative studies. The purpose of unstructured interviews, however, is for qualitative studies and conducted to explore and explain the data collected but to further gain an in-depth understanding of the group or phenomenon. Whereas structured interviews require a high degree of control and consistency, unstructured interviews are created with a high degree of flexibility and allowance of interviewer's nuance.

Semistructured interviews are also used for qualitative studies and are a combination of both the standardization of structured and flexibility of unstructured interviews. Researchers using semistructured interviews are tasked with the creation of a predetermined questionnaire and are required to follow and ask the questions in a uniform manner but also have the flexibility to probe for additional information and to ask follow-up questions. Semistructured interviews are appropriate for qualitative research since the interview protocol requires researchers to solicit information to gain an in-depth understanding from their participants.

According to Yin (2016), data collection is critical for the researcher, study, and overall relevancy of the phenomenon. The collection and analysis of data should not be overly simplified and underestimated. The responsibility of data collected for researchers is to validate the research topic, question, raw data, sample size and overall findings of the study. My role as a researcher was to ensure and enhance the research conducted and to provide the participants with transparency throughout this process.

For my study, I used a semistructured interview protocol and asked open-ended questions while probing for additional information of my participants (Yin, 2018). My interview protocol for my qualitative research consisted of communicating with my participants prior to the interview process, organizing the data collected and continuing with the data analysis of the findings. For my study, I used semistructured interviews as the data collection instrument to ascertain each participant received the same interview protocol, set of questions and reassurance of their privacy.

Supporting and guarding participants confidentiality is exceptionally crucial, and I made sure I communicated my intentions of integrity and transparency from my initial contact. This included the process of member checking for verification of authenticity, accuracy, and abundance of the study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) correlated the member checking process with credibility stemming from the participant's feedback. Their original work included member checking as part of a valuable tool in qualitative research, by minimizing weaknesses and emphasizing strengths in the study.

Yin (2016) addressed the reliability of the study and significance of validating the data collected by adequate interpretation and analysis through member checking. I provided each of my participants with an electronic or hard copy of an informed consent form to review and sign, ensuring I retain each form for my records. I also provided each of them with a synopsis of my study and emphasized the importance of their time. I plan to reassure them of their option to stop participating at any time. I did not extend my time allotted with each of my participants, making effective use of the interview process.

The interview protocol (see Appendix A), which lists the research question and the interview questions, assured each participant in this study that they received the exact same interview questions along with the identical interview protocol process. I used an external, handheld audio recorder to record each interview, with the permission of every participant and took written notes for my reference. I created a writing journal outlining formal and field notes I took during each interview.

I used Microsoft Word to transcribe each participants' interview responses and used the qualitative research data analysis software Atlas.ti to manage, arrange, and analyze, and code the data collected from the interview process. After I collected and analyzed all the data from my interviews, I provided my participants with a summary of their responses to ensure I have accurately interpreted the data. I will ensure that all data collected, analyzed, and interpreted will be accurate, reliable and valid for my study.

## Interview Questions

1. How receptive was your workforce in communicating about workplace burnout symptoms?
2. What management strategies have you used to reduce identified workplace burnout symptoms?
3. Which challenges did you encounter in implementing management strategies to identify workplace burnout?
4. Which employee performance indicators related most with workplace burnout symptoms?
5. What difficulties did you encounter in implementing management strategies to decrease employee turnover?

## Data Organization and Analysis Techniques

Qualitative research methods depend on the researcher or interviewer as the primary instrument for data collection (Becker, 2019). I conducted a qualitative pragmatic inquiry research using semistructured interviews for my participants, collected related documents to support data triangulation and saturation. In data triangulation, the researcher can ensure that data collected, analyzed, and evaluated will be valid and reliable.

According to Fofana et al. (2020), triangulation, in combination with data collection and saturation will improve the authenticity of my study but will also increase its validity and reliability. Saturation of the study occurs when the interviewers or researchers acknowledge and recognize repetition of the responses. Data saturation relies on the premise that further elaboration or no additional data exists for that analysis or phenomenon (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). I will also share my analysis with my participants to verify my collected data and interpretation findings for accuracy, documentation, and saturation.

My participants for my study provided insightful information, strategies and experiences from the viewpoints and job responsibilities of being West Texas residential property managers dealing with workplace burnout. I was able to conduct interviews via phone calls and face to face modalities. Regardless of interview modality, I adhered to my roles and obligations as an interviewer and ensured the interviewees responses and their confidentiality was protected and valued (Ross et al., 2018).

Additionally, as a researcher, reliability and validity were essential when conducting qualitative research and were in the forefront of my study, ensuring credibility and trustworthiness. As part of adhering to the credibility, reliability, and validity of my study I will include the safekeeping of my hard copies and electronic files as it pertains to the privacy of my participants. I used research logs, reflective journals, or coding systems to protect the privacy of my participants.

Researchers use research logs to gather information, keep records of data collected and organize specific components of the study, such as dates, times, locations, interviewees, interviewers, issues, challenges, biases, reflections, etc. A research log is an effective tool for data organization but can also be used as a resource for reflexivity on the part of the researcher (Miles et al., 2014). Researchers must always be aware of their own opinions and perspectives while acknowledging their reflexivity for the credibility of their qualitative research study.

Yanto (2023) summarizes that researchers should account for their own reflexivity, occurring because of, rather than despite the researchers bias of their experiences, beliefs, judgements, and feelings. A reflective journal is a proactive tool to have as a researcher, documenting data collection, organization, and analysis. This type of tool is used to accurately improve the interpretation, analysis, and reporting of the participants data throughout the study. According to Janak (2022), researchers use a reflective journal to record their personal thoughts, attitudes, and life experiences as it relates to the study, participants, and results.

Reflective journaling creates a log for self-reflection and self-awareness for the researchers' own accountability and acknowledgment of potential biases. Research logs, reflective journals and labeling systems are all used for researchers to keep track of all data accumulated during the research process. Additionally, I used a labeling system to catalog my participants, data, and overall information. For example, I labeled my participants, referring to them only as P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6 and P7, respectively.

All the data accumulation was required to be documented, collected, sorted, transcribed, interpreted, and validated through the data analysis process. According to Creswell (2018), the data analysis process in qualitative research design is a systematic but flexible approach to gather, sort, interpret and make sense of the complexity of the data collected. The data analysis process outlines the general steps researchers must take to find and adhere to the appropriate approaches most adequate for the study.

There are numerous data analysis processes researchers may select from, for example, thematic analysis, template analysis or analytic induction. Braun and Clarke (2006) summarized that thematic analysis codes the data collected into patterns or themes, making the qualitative data insightful and meaningful. According to King (2012), template analysis uses a combination of deductive and inductive coding, allowing the researcher to use a pre-existing template but accepts new themes to resonate during data collection/analysis. Analytic induction is used in qualitative research, however, unlike thematic analysis and template analysis, this approach emphasizes logical reasoning and aimed more towards theory building and empirical or experimental testing (Thomas, 2006).

My plan was to use either thematic analysis or template analysis for the data analysis process for my qualitative research study. I had several options to use software tools like Excel, NVivo or Atlas.ti to electronically manage, code, arrange and analyze my collected data. Microsoft (MS) Excel can be an effective tool for researchers to use to manage and analyze data. NVivo is a qualitative data analysis software specifically designed to manage, organize, analyze, identify themes or patterns, and interpret various types of data. Atlas.ti is another qualitative analysis software that manages, codes, organizes and analyzes large amounts of textual, graphical, and audio data. Mind mapping through Google is also available for researchers to use to organize information by brainstorming, problem solving, note taking and digitally sorting topics into subtopics.

I was able to continue to research the pros and cons of the different software tools available for researchers to use, manage, code, and analyze my collection of data. Through my data collected from my participants, I was able to identify and generate patterns and themes using Atlas.ti as my qualitative data analysis tool to interpret and validate my study. Yin (2018) elaborates on the significance of coding the participants interviews and any additional company documents to identify pertinent themes in the data. After all research data has been collected, transcribed, organized, coded, analyzed, and verified, all documents associated with my study will be secured for 5 years.

I secured a folder file with all hard copies of signed consent forms, interview protocols, reflective journal to include field notes from all interviews and any information and correspondence from my participants in a secured and locked drawer in my home office. I also kept all electronic files in an encrypted, password-protected USB drive, which I will also store in my folder file in my locked drawer located at my home office. After I secure my doctoral study research for 5 years, I will destroy all evidence of my study, including all documents and data, pertaining to this research.

## Reliability and Validity

### Reliability

According to Patton (2016), reliability in qualitative research pertains to the consistency of results or findings of the study. Reliability is achieved through exact repetition of data methods, collection and analysis with different participants, researchers, or phenomenon. There are three approaches researchers utilize to ensure reliability in qualitative research is adhered to. These three approaches or methods are member checking, peer debriefing, and triangulation. Member checking for reliability implies a checks and balances analogy where interviewers review the participants or interviewees' findings for reliability and accuracy.

Peer debriefing allows numerous researchers to exchange, compare the methodologies and results of the study. The final approach to ensure reliability in qualitative research is triangulation. Triangulation is an effective approach to reliability because it enhances the dependability and credibility of a qualitative research study (Creswell, 2009). Triangulation, tri for three, includes at least three different methods, models, sources, or participants to choose from that adds value and removes or reduces any presumed biases of the study.

According to Becker (2019), there are at least four types of triangulation: (a) data, (b) methodological, (c) investigator / researcher, and (d) theory, all specific to the research and used to limit or reduce limitations of a single source or method study. I conducted a qualitative pragmatic inquiry/analysis, used a semistructured questionnaire for my interviews along with data triangulation and saturation. Reliability is determined by dependability in qualitative research. The dependability of qualitative research is achieved through an accurate and detailed interview protocol, data collection and transcription (Yin, 2016). I achieved data saturation and ensured my findings are accurately represented from the participants' points of view and lived experiences.

**Validity**

Validity in research refers to the accuracy of the study and ensuring the results are meaningful. A researched qualitative study contains a purpose, methodology, results or findings, discussions, and any added summarizations, all of which should be considered valid and have a true representation and reflection of the phenomenon being studied. The validity of a qualitative research study reflects on the accuracy, precision, or correctness of the measurement or participants being studied. Triangulation strengthens the validity of the research, data, methodologies, and participants to ensure accuracy and credibility of the study or phenomenon (Becker, 2019).

Makaruk et al. (2022) explained that validity and credibility also refer to an established researchers' demonstration of the familiarity of the study. This explanation includes the assumptions that researchers will avoid biases and conduct their data collection with transparency and integrity. Ensuring credibility for the study requires each researcher and participant to communicate honestly and without hesitation for the findings. I ensured credibility and clarity throughout the process of data collection, analysis, and transferability. Conducting a credible study refers to establishing and maintaining objectivity as well as retaining a trustworthy rapport with participants.

***Credibility***

Credibility is also interchangeable with believability of the research or study, encompassing how and why the rigor is collected, interpreted, and concluded using triangulation to verify results, allowing for transparent transferability. Adhering to IRB policies and procedures, the essence of a study is to replicate the results or findings of the content, methodologies, participants, conditions, and context for future research.

### *Transferability*

Transferability of studies provides future researchers to use and adjust characteristics, relatable materials or methods and additional relevant descriptions by reducing potential limitations (Ferrando et al., 2019). The implications of my study may address concerns for future research criteria. Effectively applying credibility, transferability, along with confirmability and data saturation to my study will provide a significant and meaningful research contribution to my field of study.

### *Confirmability*

Confirmability relies on the ability of the researched study to be repeated accurately and concisely. According to Yin (2016), researchers achieve confirmability of the phenomenon by using and duplicating their research protocols, methods, and designs for future studies. Researchers ensure that confirmability is the result of the study's reliability and validity.

Confirmability, like credibility, refers to the trustworthiness, accuracy and rigor of the qualitative research study, researchers, and study protocols. Avoiding biases, pre-existing and personal preconceptions is essential to confirmability while reassuring the results of the study are grounded on the true representation of the participants lived experiences.

### *Reflexivity*

Reflexivity in confirmability or reflecting in the researchers own preconceptions, biases, beliefs, and experiences was critical while conducting research and interviews. According to Yanto (2023), researchers reflexivity occurs because of, rather than despite the researcher's subjectivity of their background, interests, values, and attitudes. Researchers must be aware of their own perspectives and perceptions while affirming their reflexivity in conformability for qualitative research. Accomplishing data saturation also contributed to conformability by assuring that all the data collected and analyzed are credible, valid as well as reliable.

Data saturation in qualitative research studies appears when no new information, results or data is evident (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). Redundancy or saturation is apparent when significant and sufficient data is gathered, collected, and analyzed, without being repeated or replicated. I reached data saturation by using the same interview protocol, asking the same questions, and conducting a member checking process for each of my participants, at the conclusion of my study. The researcher should use member checking and data saturation to ascertain the validity and reliability of the study. Validating the study requires the researcher to accurately interpret the data collected through member checking (Katz-Buonincontro, 2022).

## Transition and Summary

In Section 3, I provided an overview of ethical research including a brief description of the *Belmont Report* protocol and my role as the researcher. I further discussed the research method (qualitative) and research design (pragmatic inquiry) and why they are appropriate for my study. The target population, sampling technique, and participant eligibility criteria were identified. A detailed description of the planned data collection, organization, and analysis techniques was provided. I defined the key terms related to reliability and validity in qualitative research.

In Section 4, I will present the findings of my study based on themes that emerged from the analysis of the data, and I will elaborate on how the results of this study aligned with my literature review and conceptual framework. Section 4 includes my assessment of ways that this study may contribute to improved business practices to address the workplace burnout as well as the implications for positive social change. Recommendations for further research are also discussed. This section will conclude with a summary of the themes, managerial strategies stemming from the thematic analysis, and feedback loops and retention strategies’ business model outlining the direct and inverse relationship by balancing the job demands and the job resources.

# Section 4: Findings and Conclusions

## Presentation of the Findings

Workplace burnout is prevalent in most professions, industries, and locations. Extensive research has been conducted on the various factors, causes and potential solutions of job burnout, however, there is no one quick fix or answer to reduce or prevent burnout all together. Identifying and addressing workplace burnout before the causes and factors escalate, ensuring open channels of communication and safeguarding the well-being among all employees is vital for the future of businesses. The purpose of this qualitative pragmatic inquiry study was to research and identify some strategies residential property managers effectively applied to reduce workplace burnout and increase workforce retention.

The research question I used to address my pragmatic inquiry study is: What effective strategies do some residential property managers in West Texas use to successfully reduce workplace burnout and increase employee retention? The data I collected were analyzed for my study's credibility and dependability, and I used member checking techniques (Creswell, 2018). I addition, I used member checking and data saturation to ascertain the validity, reliability, and triangulation of my study. Data saturation contributes to the triangulation of the study by ensuring the depth and dependability of the findings, correlating, verifying, and validating the multiple resources collected. I also analyzed public documents regarding property management policies and procedures as they elaborated but emphasized the responsibilities of renters paying on time and adding electronic apps or online user-friendly websites for their convenience.

My study was comprised of seven residential property managers located in West Texas. The seven participants I interviewed met the following eligibility criteria: (a) participants were residential property managers, (b) participants were employed with least 5 years of experience in residential property management, (c) the residential property/business had to be located in West Texas, and (d) the residential property/business had to have a minimum of five full-time employees.

The data collection process included interviewing seven residential property managers and each manager answering five open-ended questions. I used a semistructured interview protocol and asked my seven participants questions to follow up and probe for additional information. The seven participants each answered these interview questions and expanded on most of the questions but not all. I protected the privacy of all participants by coding them as P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6 and P7.

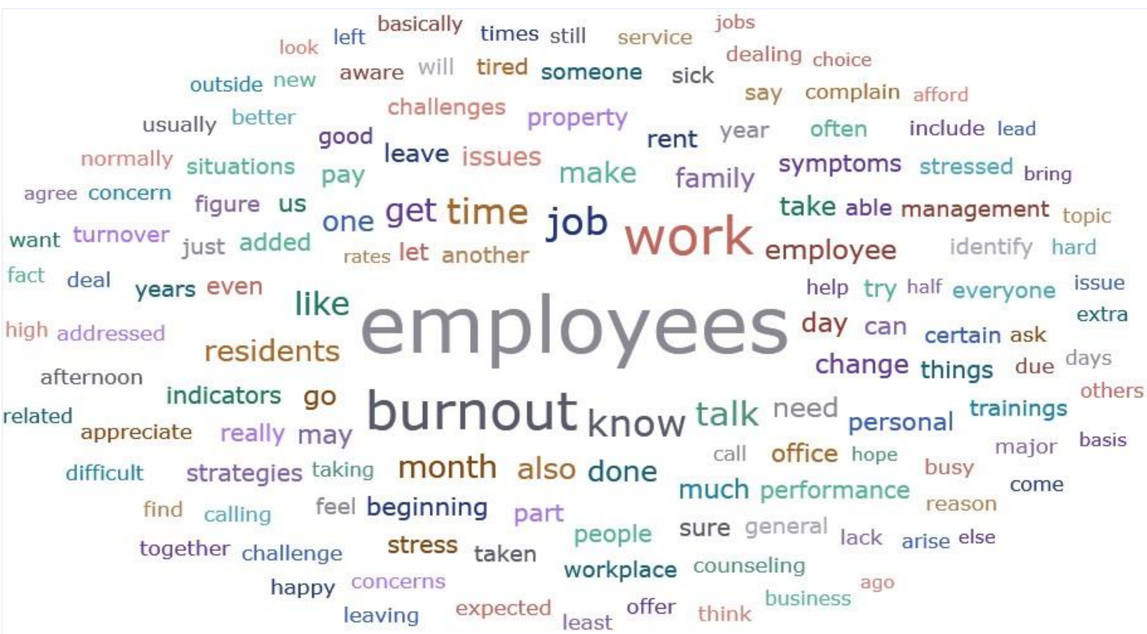
Using various analysis software, primarily Atlas.ti, I was able to identify over 150 codes from the seven participants. I was able to group and regroup the codes into the themes and patterns, creating a word cloud, Sankey diagram, and a pie chart pertaining to the data saturation for my study.

I was also able to thematically analyze and identify three themes: (a) Balancing Job Demands and Resources; (b) Benefits, Rewards, and Recognition; and (c) Employee Engagement, Participation, and Organizational Commitment. I provided an assessment of each theme using 21 replies from the participants. In addition, utilizing the three themes and the reoccurrences, with the guidance and permission of my committee members, we created a model that outlines feedback loops as well as retention strategies for residential property employees and managers.

The word cloud in Figure 2 shows an accumulation of the frequency of words analyzed from the data collected. Using other software like Wordle, WordCloud Generator, and Atlas.ti AI., I was able to analyze the data gathered from the semistructured interviews. Word clouds are a visual representation of the number of words identified and repeated. For example, “employees” is the largest word, centered in the cloud and attached to other frequently used words like “burnout” and “work.”

**Figure 2**

*Word Cloud – Frequency of Words*




I was able to make this cloud smaller with fewer words, but I decided against it because I wanted to show some of the coding Atlas.ti AI generator/coder initially created and provided for my study. In addition to the different word sizes, the word cloud also depicted many colors scattered around, minimizing the frequencies, and breaking up the occurrences as they move away from the center.

Table 2 outlines all participants and identifies them only as P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, and P7 along with their respective residential property geographical locations in West Texas. My participants and their properties were located in the East, Northeast, and West-side city limits of West Texas. In addition, the estimated number of years each participant has been in this industry is recorded. Four of the seven participants individually have over 10+ years and cumulatively combining all seven participants is well over 60 years of residential property management experience. Also important to note is that most of the residential property management offices employ more than seven full-time employees, and some have also been with their residential property for over 5 years.

**Table 2**

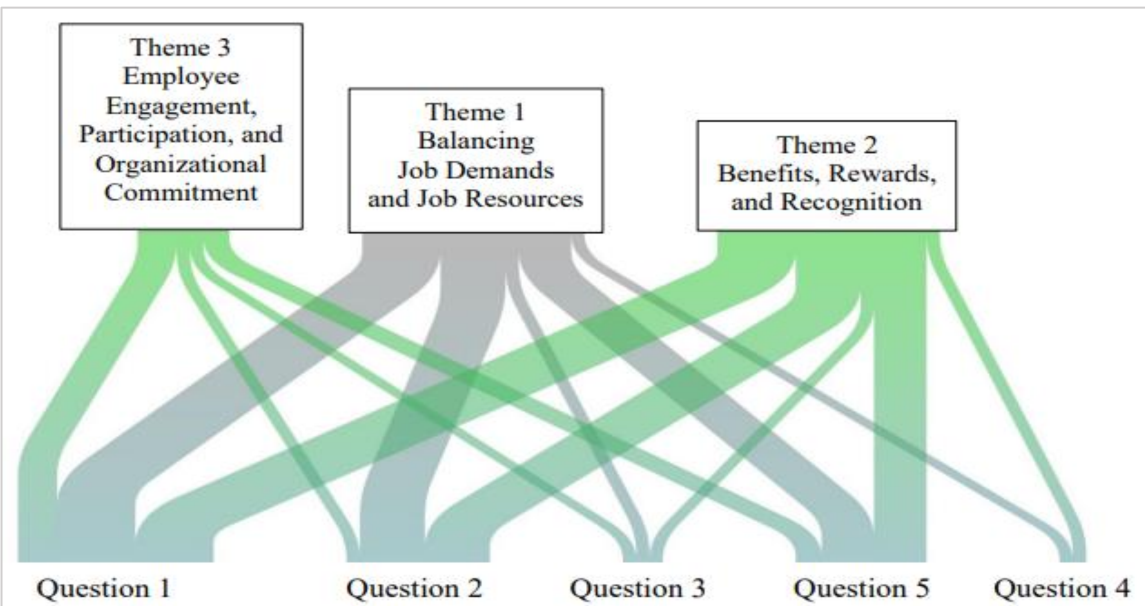
*Participants' Tenure and Location*

| Participants | Years in management position | West Texas location |
|---|---|---|
| P1 | 9 | East |
| P2 | 5 | East |
| P3 | 10+ | Northeast |
| P4 | 7 | West |
| P5 | 10+ | Northeast |
| P6 | 10+ | West |
| P7 | 10+ | East |

Additional analysis of the participants responses shows a consensus of what workplace burnout looks like and how some residential property managers address it. Analyzing the data collected from my participants, I identified three themes using 21 responses to the semistructured interview questions. I took the word frequency data generated from Atlas.ti AI coding and created a Sankey diagram (see Figure 3), which is considered a chart but appears to be an illustration of wavy lines attached to nodes, representing a flow or energy of resources identifying a process or system. I was able to compare the Sankey diagram from Atlas.ti AI Version and MS Excel (with an Add-In). I used the Sankey Diagram (see Figure 3) to identify the three most common themes: Theme 1: Job Demands and Resources (shown in the middle in dark grey); Theme 2: Benefits, Rewards and Recognition (in green on the right); and Theme 3: Employee Engagement, Participation and Organizational Commitment (in green on the left).

**Figure 3**

*Sankey Diagram – Thematic Analysis*



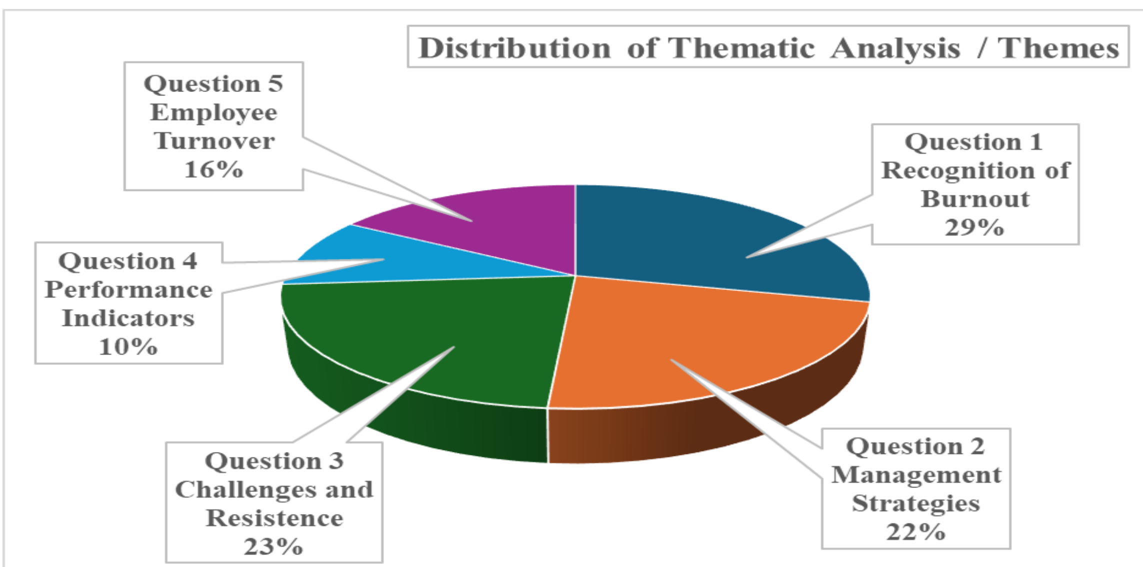

Theme 1: Balancing Job Demands and Resources, the node in the middle has thicker flows or lines leading to each question, meaning the width depicts a larger or

more proportional distribution. Similarly, Theme 2: Benefits, Rewards and Recognition, the green node on the right, whereas Theme 3: Employee Engagement, Participation and Organizational Commitment, shown on the left, has smaller lines but does not flow to all questions.

Moreover, the data I collected from the seven participants allowed for analysis of the three themes listed above. The pie chart in Figure 4 represents the breakdown of the thematic analysis from the themes pertaining to the five open-ended questions/responses my participants. Based on thematic analysis, the three themes were confirmed, and data saturation was reached from the responses and occurrences for comparative perspectives and commonalities of all my participants.

**Figure 4**

*Pie Chart - Distribution of the Thematic Analysis / Themes*




The significance of this pie chart is the emphasis placed on my three themes for data saturation from the participants. The data saturation from this chart corresponds to aspects of the job demand, resources, burnout, challenges, and strategies, some of which are more important than others. Each participant regards workplace burnout (29%), effective management strategies (22%) and acknowledging the numerous challenges along with resistance to change (23%) as part of their jobs. In the sections below, I discuss Theme 1, Theme 2, and Theme 3 and how each theme relates to the literature review and the conceptual theory. Analyzing the data collected from my participants, the three themes were identified using 21 responses to the semistructured interview questions.

**Theme 1: Balancing Job Demands and Resources**

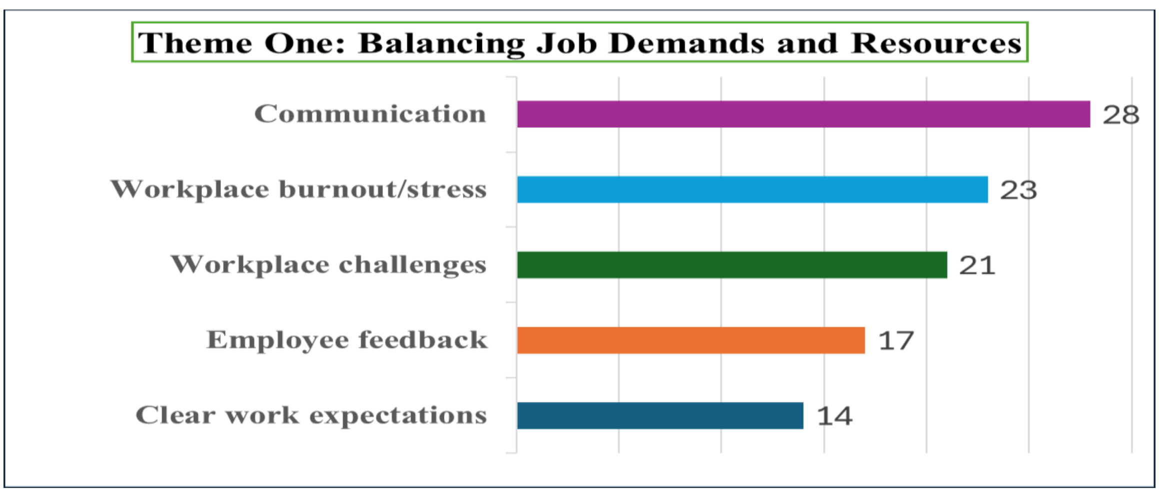
Theme 1 is Balancing Job Demands and Resources. The key factor of balancing job demands and job resources model entails the effective balance between obligations of the work itself and the means available for employees to accomplish those obligations (Demerouti et al., 2001). Job demands included job burnout, work stresses, as well as challenges and responsibilities among all employees. Job resources include but may not be limited to various types of open discussions between employees and managers, ensuring clear work expectations.

These types of exchanges are often considered formal, such as one-on-one, in private, or informal situations, like having lunch outside the office, allowing for honest feedback. Resources also incorporate outside support for employees and management, such as mentoring or counseling sessions. The role of communication is an important and fundamental aspect of my study. The process of communication, the why and the how employees and managers communicate is embedded in all three of my themes, either directly or indirectly. However, for the purpose of my study, I include communication as part of the theme Balancing Job Demands and Resources, as the thematic reoccurrences emphasized the challenges job burnout produces but also provided employee/managerial support and autonomy with accepted feedback. From Atlas.ti AI., over 150 codes were generated, which also included an embedded AI mode.

These thematic analysis codes identify the number of reoccurrences; the larger the number, the more importance is placed on the theme (Clarke & Braun, 2013). From these codes, I was able to recode and regroup these codes into my three themes (see Figure 5). Analyzing the data, I identified communication 28 times within the 35 participant responses. The job demands related to workplace burnout, stresses, and challenges were each addressed over 20 times. Under job resources, employee feedback was acknowledged 17 times, and clear work expectations were addressed 14 times.

**Figure 5**

*Thematic Analysis and Reoccurrences for Theme 1: Balancing Job Demands and Resources*



The analysis from my participants was evident that the theme Balancing Job Demands and Resources as it relates to burnout is apparent and reoccurring. Participant 1 stated,

> My employees and I talk about workplace burnout, and we do get burnout at the office, but we try not to let people or events get to us too much. We know that we must be the ones to put on our understanding faces even when it is difficult to do this. We also know that people in general are struggling to pay their rent on time, but we try to be sympathetic but still hold them to paying on time.

Participant 2 also stated,

> My workforce, if you are referring to my employees, communicating about burnout, about half of them complain all the time about everything and the other three never say much about anything. I am sure we all feel the burnout and stress with the job. There are times when it is more difficult and exhausting than other days, but we are aware of the time of the month. The beginning of each month is the time we all get burned out because the rent is due.

Participant 4 said,

> We all know that burnout is apparent, especially during busy times of the month but we know that it gets less busy after the rush slows down. I do ask my employees if they need something to let me know but do not normally complain about it.

Also, Participant 5 elaborated,

> Workplace burnout symptoms, our employees are very vocal about burnout symptoms and how stressed and tired they are about some aspects of the job. Employees usually voice their concerns soon after a situation occurs or reoccurs and would rather not continue to handle this issue. Usually, burnout issues arise during the beginning of the month. The first to around the fifth of each month is the most stressful for all of us.

The data showed how burnout increases when job demands are exceptionally high and job resources are low. Participant 7 indicated,

> The performance indicators in the sense that they do not like “rent time.” Often some employees will take a day or leave in the afternoon or come in late because they do not want to deal with the phones ringing and angry residents that have good excuses for not being able to pay their rent, but we have to find a way for them to do so.

The review of the literature also emphasizes the numerous drivers pertaining to Theme 1 Balancing Job Demands and Resources.

**Theme 1: Related to the Literature Review**

Burnout is described as a constant and chronic state of exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy resulting from an extended physical, emotional, and mental exertion. According to Maslach and Jackson (1981), signs of burnout are often emotional and physical, causing employers and employees to disconnect in the workplace. Burnout is acknowledged and addressed as a persistent response to prolonged emotional and interpersonal job-related stressors (Maslach, 2001). For decades, researchers have addressed the abundant amounts of stressors, sources, and solutions to identify and prevent burnout.

According to Ryan et al. (2021), the signs of workplace burnout may include and often not limited to negative, little or no communication, extreme workloads, workhours, conflictive attitudes, and lack of appreciation, which may lead to decreased productivity, increased absenteeism, and low employee morale. Workplace or job burnout is a direct correlation with the JD-R theory for my study. Theme 1 Balancing Job Demands and Resources outlines the importance of listening, communicating and feedback, and understanding the resistance to change in personalities or processes, to balance the demands and promote resources for the well-being of the employees and the businesses.

The results of my data collection show a data saturation of JD-R as it pertains to burnout regarding communications, challenges, feedback, and workplace expectations. Employees and employers form different paths for communication and continue to interpersonally connect with what works for them.

Participant 1 indicated that,

> Burnout comes with the job, some days are better than others, but dealing with so many residents all at once can become challenging. I think some employees are very resistant to change and to new technologies or computer systems. Some employees do not take their jobs as seriously as others and are able to brush it off, but other employees take situations so personally.

Participant 2 clearly stated,

> The major challenge for most of the employees is their resistance to change. Technological changes are not always welcomed. We have a new application system, but some employees complain that it requires more time to input and there are discrepancies with the software. We have been sent to training courses but there is still too much resistance from a few employees. In the beginning of the month, we all are trying to keep our heads above water.

Participant 6 indicated,

> Some challenges we see with some employees is their work mentality of complaints and concerns that are not taken seriously. Also, some burnout symptoms may go unnoticed or again not taken too seriously. For example, some employees say they are tired of the same problems at work, but this could be a fact, although it may also be a more serious concern.

Participant 6 also added,

> Employee performance indicators could be that they are not motivated or engaged as compared to other employees. One employee’s performance is affected when demanding or high stress situations arise, and it is not addressed in a timely manner. This employee continuously takes time off by calling in for the day or even just a morning or afternoon when time to service residents is most crucial. The actions of this employee have placed an added hindrance on the other employees and are showing discontent with some level of disrespect.

Participant 7 stated,

> A challenge to implement strategies to identify burnout is lack of communication. Burnout is not a common topic, but I know we all go through it more often than we talk about. Employees in general do not like change and even if we talk about taking some steps to change a system or process for the benefit of the office, the change is not received positively.

**Theme 1: Related to Conceptual Framework**

The JD-R theory is the conceptual and comprehensive framework that grounded my study. The JD-R introduced by Demerouti et al. (2001) addressed job demands in the workplace as the physical, mental, and emotional effort required by employees to complete their job duties and responsibilities, whereas job resources are the means or sources made available for employees to accomplish organizational goals and tasks. JD-R theory has been and continues to be extensively researched to balance employee productivity and engagement. The JD-R theory regards the impact of job demands, that negatively affect the workplace but supporting with job resources, which positively influences employee performance and well-being.

High job demands drain employees physical, mental, and emotional resources, leaving them exhausted and unable to perform at elevated expected levels. Low job resources, when demands are high, leave employees without any means to effectively manage the high job demands (Demerouti et al., 2001). A balance between the job demands and the job resources is required to identify, address, and reduce workplace burnout, to optimize employee performance and job satisfaction. The Theme 1

Conceptual Framework is directly related and is aligned with the results of my data collected and analyzed.

Participant 1 stated that,

> Again, we talk about it [burnout] during work and sometimes after work. Talking about it helps for the most part. If someone in the office is having an extra hard time with someone, we all tend to help and relieve the pressure. We also feel that if one of us is better at dealing with a situation or specific people, we let them handle it. Listening and laughing with each other also helps be more productive and patient with residents. Dealing with people is tough at times.

Participant 3 stated,

> Some challenges include the repetitiveness of the work itself. There are the normal and required things to do and this does become repetitive. Year after year, the properties need the same "make readies" and this is the repetitive nature of the business. Repetition becomes stressful but we are all aware that it is part of the job itself.

Participant 4 added that,

> Some performance indicators from employees may include lack of motivation or low productivity during the very busy weeks. I find it difficult to keep employees happy or motivated when the residents are so stressed themselves, particularly when they must pay their rent. Most employees are stressed at the beginning of each month, but this is expected during rent deadlines or property upkeep.

Participant 7 stated, “A few employees struggle with the work-related stressors, which cause them burnout symptoms, like headaches, and added anxiety.”

Theme 1 Balancing Job Demands and Resources clearly indicated data saturation relating to the positive and negative aspects of communications, the excessive time, and work pressures but also the coworker and managerial support system, particularly through positive feedback and reinforcement. Theme 2 related to the benefits, rewards, and recognition for increased employee and job satisfaction will be discussed in the next subsection.

**Theme 2: Benefits, Rewards, and Recognition**

Theme 2 is Benefits, Rewards, and Recognition. According to my participants, employee recognition benefits and rewards are the positive aspects of the job or work itself. Recognition and managerial acknowledgement are a continual positive theme participants as opposed to the negative narrative employees reminisce about their experiences, excessive duties, and work hours. Rewards and benefits are important factors employees look forward to when dealing with inadequate job security and lack of communication among employees. Benefits, Rewards, and Recognition are crucial factors that promote and contribute to employee and job satisfaction.

Benefits include either wage or non-wage advantages, like a flexible working schedule. Job benefits are considered employee compensatory like sick and vacation leave as well as paid time off (PTO). Job benefits incorporate health insurance, retirement plans, or tuition assistance programs. Rewards are also monetary or non-monetary incentives, like raises or bonuses. Rewards are primarily awarded to employees based on job performance, tenure, or employment and additional work-related accomplishments.

Appreciation is fundamental in the recognition of employees. Recognition may also be related to rewards but requires the acknowledgement along with the appreciation of the workforce and their contributions for employee empowerment, personal, and professional development. The positive effects of Theme 2 Benefits, Rewards, and Recognition emphasized the thematic reoccurrences analysis and was evident in the data collected (Figure 6).

**Figure 6**

*Thematic Analysis and Reoccurrences for Theme 2: Benefits, Rewards, and Recognition*


Job satisfaction was mentioned 21 times from the replies of my participants. Creating a positive work environment by understanding the challenges and integrating rewards and recognition incentives will improve the overall workforce, addressed 16 times. Employee empowerment was identified 15 times, job appreciation addressed 12 times, and professional development that also included personal development was expanded on 8 times. The responses from my participants confirmed the results for my Theme 2 Benefits, Rewards, and Recognition. Participant 1 said that “They [employees] know we recognize their efforts and recognize them in many ways.”

Participant 2 stated,

> Some employees get tired of the job and the abundance of work during the beginning of the month. Employees calling in sick is a problem and another issue that continues to happen repeatedly is the lack of customer service with residents. Work and time pressures occur regularly, but the employees are recognized for their dedication and work together to get the work done.

Participant 5 elaborated, “Although, pay bonuses are based on competence and productivity and for the most part, we all strive for better.”

The Theme 2 – Benefits, Rewards, and Recognition as it relates to the literature review emphasized the importance of employee appreciation and empowerment.

**Theme 2: Related to the Literature Review**

Employee empowerment and appreciation are the factors that are developed from employee recognition as well as acknowledgement of the importance benefits and rewards must increase job satisfaction and promote a positive work environment. Personal resources in the workplace, like effective managerial feedback, counseling, trainings, and stress management workshops are positive measurements employees will likely accept (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009).

Participant 1 stated,

> Employees that are burned out call in to work with a sick or personal excuse. Usually, we know that coworkers are refusing to deal with situations or people in general and will take a sick or personal day.

Participant 2 explained,

> We also have an option to talk to a counselor outside of work. Some employees have taken advantage and said it does help. We do not talk about things that are personal to other employees, only if they want to open up about it.

Participant 4 says,

> We have a quick meeting we call a "pow wow" to identify any major issues with residents or the property itself. I let them know that I appreciate their hard work and dedication to making sure residents are happy.

Participant 7 stated,

> Talking to my employees and asking them what is bothering them. I also ask them if they can suggest certain things at work to make their jobs easier. I try to send them for training like for customer service or computer classes and they go, but sometimes they go unwillingly. I try to give my employees some time off, when we can afford to let someone have an afternoon to do some personal time or errands or even doctors' appointments.

**Theme 2: Related to Conceptual Framework**

Job demands are often associated with the physical, emotional, and mental demands of the job that also include the lack of or limited control over the employees and employers. However, some job demands have little to no communication, unclear, or unreasonable job expectations. Akkermans et al. (2013) viewed job demands as intimidating with ineffective communication, and according to Taris et al. (2011), job demands can be unreasonable, unjust, and redundant. However, job resources are the physical, psychological, and mental attributes employees are required to possess to accomplish their organizational and personal developmental goals (Buruck et al., 2020).

Recognition and appreciation, that also includes praise among coworkers are considered job resources. Managers can provide for employees and promote a good working culture. Participant 7 stated,

> I try to make sure they [employees] know how much I appreciate them, and I often bring breakfast for the office. I have good employees and really hope they know I appreciate how much they do for the office and residents.

Similar from Theme 2 – Benefits, Rewards, and Recognition, Theme 3 Employee Engagement, Participation, and Organizational Commitment also relates to the overall promotion and job improvements of both employees and organizations alike and will be discussed in the following subsection.

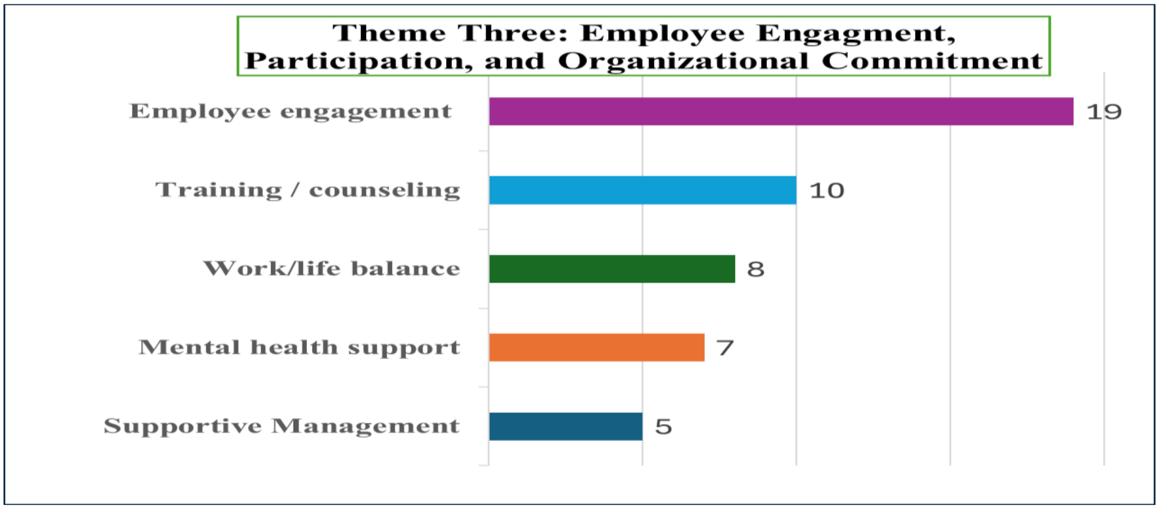
**Theme 3: Employee Engagement, Participation, and Organizational Commitment**

Theme 3 Employee Engagement, Participation, and Organizational Commitment was a direct correlation between employee and manager engagement and commitment. Employee engagement allows and encourages employees to support one another during the most challenging aspects of their work, particularly during certain times of each month. Engagement also correlated with employee collaboration and participation.

Theme 3 Employee Engagement, Participation, and Organizational Commitment are crucial for employee wellness and employer loyalty to the organizations the work for.

**Figure 7**

*Thematic Analysis and Reoccurrences for Theme 3: Employee Engagement, Participation, and Organizational Commitment*




The thematic analysis for Theme 3 Employee Engagement, Participation, and Organizational Commitment confirms the results of the responses from the participants that engagement, outside counseling, along with a balance between work and home life is imperative. Employees that know management is available to provide support are more likely to participate, connect, collaborate, and remain involved in all aspects of the job. Employee engagement was identified 19 times, emphasizing the significance between honesty and trust with both employees and employers.

Training, mentoring, counseling, as well as job related workshops for both employees and managers was addressed 10 times. Mental health support was also mentioned 7 times as part of counseling and therapy to promote self-wellness. Employees related to a work / life balance were mentioned 8 times while ensuring a supportive management team that was described 5 times.

**Theme 3: Related to the Literature Review**

Employees with high job demands but that also have high job resources are more likely to experience employee engagement and are willing to commit to their organization if they continue to feel appreciated and valued by their employers. However, employees who have high job demands and with low or no job resources will endure burnout, stress, fatigue, and intentional turnover. Stressors and burnout are linked to the intense and excessive job pressures employees encounter but when organizational commitment and managerial support is high, it reduces employee’s intent to leave their jobs (Taris et al., 2011).

Participant 5 elaborated that,

> Management strategies to reduce burnout include offering training, counseling, and flexible work schedules. We offer our employees counseling that is free to them, we make efforts to recruit licensed agents to address burnout at work. We also offer sexual harassment training to make certain no feels uncomfortable or unheard. We also take work safety very seriously by conducting periodical drug tests and safety awareness training. Managers are required to take corporate mandatory training at least once a year.

Theme 3 relates to the job demands and resources theory by ensuring open communication, participation, engagement, and aligning committed and supportive management employees, will be discussed in more detail in the following subsection.

**Theme 3: Related to Conceptual Framework**

Bakker and Demerouti (2017) emphasized that job demands are the factors of the workplace that demand distinctive characteristics like the physical, psychological, and emotional efforts from employees, which often create burnout, stress, and work disengagement. Job resources are the instruments made available to employees to promote a positive workplace environment and personal / professional growth development (Bakker et al., 2005). The JD-R theory is comparable to the theory of engagement (Kahn & Fellows, 2013).

The theory of engagement indicates most employees will be more motivated and committed to their place of employment, if they have high levels of engagement by ensuring their work life and personal life are in balance (Kahn & Fellows, 2013). Engaged employees tend to be more enthusiastic, dedicated, and interested in their overall work environment. Participant 4 says "I also make sure I have a one-to-one meeting with each of the employees at least once a month but normally they are content with their job and with the work.

Participant 6 stated,

> We have certain guidelines we use if employees need to talk about burnout, like external services such as mentoring or counseling. Mental health has been brought

up in recent meetings in which we can provide some accommodation for additional assistance.

**Effective Business Practices Related to the Thematic Analysis and Literature Review**

The participants in my study provided substantial insight and expertise by addressing and identifying all three themes: (1) theme 1 related to the balancing of job demands and resources, (2) theme 2 addressed benefits, rewards, and recognition, and (3) theme 3 identified employee engagement, participation, and organizational commitment. Data saturation was achieved with each theme by interrelating workplace burnout with the importance of communication, job satisfaction, and employee engagement but also including the validity of challenges. Challenges included but are not limited to identifying burnout and how it resonates in the same way for each participant.

Additional challenges involved employees' resistance to change and how they refused to adapt to changing times. Decreased motivation and increased absenteeism were apparent at times, especially during extremely busy periods when residents were scheduled to pay rent and utilities. Although burnout is evident, most employees know they are supported by management, remain committed to their jobs, and feel a sense of appreciation in their work environment. The proceeding effective business practices will confirm the findings of my thematic analysis of Theme 1 – Balancing Job Demands and Resources, Theme 2 – Benefits, Rewards, and Recognition, and Theme 3 – Employee Engagement, Participation, and Organizational Commitment as it relates to the literature review.

***Effective Business Practices for Theme 1: Balancing Job Demands and Resources***

The JD-R theory provides an essential foundation for both employees and employers to promote and align employee satisfaction and organization prosperity. Managerial strategies and effective business practices are the fundamental elements that create job satisfaction and a good organizational environment through balancing job demands with resources. Creating a balance between physical, mental, emotional, and psychological exertion of employees with the sources and means available to employees to help them with the prevention of workplace burnout.

Aligning JD-R with effective business practices includes open and transparent communication, ensuring the demands placed on employees are reasonable and realistic but also manageable. Implementation of a proactive process to optimize the job demands while ensuring job resources are made available to employees. Job resources often begin with providing and confirming support from management by encouraging honesty and authenticity from employees. Additional effective business practices stem from employee autonomy and management reassurance of work-related flexibility, constructive feedback, and adopting a supportive work culture.

Participant 1 recognized,

> The importance of patience and maintaining composure during chaotic times. Maintaining open discussions regarding burnout with employees is also fundamental to ensuring a positive work culture, workforce satisfaction, and increased productivity is adhered too. Understanding and empathizing with the

stress and burnout of employees while still holding everyone accountable is most important.

Participant 2 stated" effective communication is important by scheduling regular meetings as a group and individually to encourage open and honest dialogue from employees." Participant 3 stated "Burnout, stressors, and work-related issues are addressed in a collective and supportive manner and open dialogue is essential in a family owed business." Participant 7 said "Communication is essential, promoting an open-door policy for employees to discuss any concerns or issues that they might want to bring up."

Theme 1 - Balancing Job Demands and Resources which included stressors, burnout, and challenges from the job itself but also varies in the types of communication, effective feedback, and managerial support employees rely on, which are all a part of the workplace. The results from my participants indicated a confirmed analysis pertaining to Balancing Job Demands and Resources. Responses also confirmed that management strategies like regular training sessions, open communications and job crafting will allows employees to discuss burnout along with the causes, effects, solutions, and preventions (Wang et al., 2018). Job crafting is an organizational process or concept that proactively involves both employee and employer to identify, transform, and align job demands to enhance employees' wellness and work performance. There are various aspects of job crafting along with numerous benefits that promote the employee's engagement by modifying or reshaping the job roles and work responsibilities (Tims et al., 2013). Further recommended research may provide a detailed analysis of how to fit employees' strengths with the goals of the organization.

***Effective Business Practices for Theme 2: Benefits, Rewards, and Recognition***

Benefits, rewards, and recognition are the provisions offered by employers to employees to attract and retain their employment in exchange for their contributions to the workplace. Benefits and rewards sometimes used in the same way are both essential elements to create value for employment retention. Benefits often include insurance plans, retirement plans, tuition reimbursement, employee assistance plans, and paid time off. Rewards are considered motivational incentives for employees offered by employers that promote a positive and healthy working environment. Rewards may include, but are not limited to, financial rewards or bonuses, and performance-based awards.

Employee recognition practices also align with rewards and benefits. Recognition efforts from employers to employees are crucial and significant to boost morale, productivity, and positively contribute to the overall wellness of the organization and increased retention. Recognition practices are verbal or written forms of communication, like public praising and awards for professional achievements. Appreciation and recognition are significant and powerful strategies that directly and indirectly impact employers and employees in the workplace (Buruck et al., 2020). Acknowledgement of the knowledge, skills, abilities, contributions, and characteristics of employees improving the overall workplace but also reducing the workforce turnover. Participant 3 indicated,

> Management encourages employees to discuss concerns or problems but does not insist in a forceful manner. Employees are more comfortable with different forms of communication. Appreciation and recognition are forms of positive

> reinforcement that increase job satisfaction. Providing the occasional breakfast helps the employee recognition reinforcement factors.

Participant 4 stated “Despite cyclical concerns, employees know they are important and appreciated reflecting in minimal turnover.” Participant 5 stated “We practice patience to promote a positive work environment.”

Participant 7 elaborated that,

> Communication is important and emphasized and encouraged open dialogue among employees as well as with management. Appreciation and recognition are practiced ensuring employees do not feel like they do not matter, or their opinions are not heard. Addressing potential stressors and burnout is a proactive approach to open measures of communication.

Theme 2 – Benefits, Rewards, and Recognition included the thematic analysis of job satisfaction, employee appreciation, empowerment, positive work environment, promoting personal / professional growth, and development. Participants responses included effective and honest communication regarding the varies practices that develop and motivate a positive work environment and encouraged employees to continue to grow with their employer. Increasing these effective strategies and practices, such as recognition and appreciation will increase retention and decrease workforce burnout.

Theme 3 – Employee Engagement, Participation, and Organizational Commitment also reinforced the importance of communication through effective business practices, wellness initiatives, and a supportive management team.

***Effective Business Practices for Theme 3: Employee Engagement, Participation, and Organizational Commitment***

Employee engagement, employee participation, and organizational commitment are important and interrelated components that promote and contribute to the overall wellness of employees and employers. Employee engagement is attributed to the emotional, mental, and psychological efforts employees exert towards their jobs. Often engaged employees are more enthusiastic about their contributions at work as opposed to nonengaged employees.

Employee engagement included an intense or emotional sense of commitment that extended above the employees’ routine employment obligations. Employee participation, comparable to employee engagement, also involved employee commitment by taking an active role in making decisions and initiating problem-solving solutions. Organizational commitment also relates to the employee’s willingness to actively engage and participate in the overall wellness for the employer and business (Taris et al., 2011). Organizational commitment is often aligned with an emotional connection or attachment from the employees towards the employers.

Managerial strategies and effective business practices include the promotion of wellness for both employees and managers but also created an inclusive work environment by providing growth and support for well-being. Approaching counseling, training, and workshops as an opportunity to communicate about the job demands, as well as the job resources, and any other work-related challenges or pressures. Participants in my study responded to employee engagement and employee commitment as positive view of communicating about burnout and the balance between work and home. Participant 1 emphasized,

> Open communication with employees regarding burnout identified the importance of collectively managing wellness through transparency, recognition, appreciation, counseling, and mental health therapy. Suggesting frequent forms of communication with all employees and continuing to offer training and workshops to reduce potential burnout.

Participant 2 addressed that “In addition to open communication, flexible work schedules are also available for employees to ensure a positive work–life balance. Participant 3 expanded that,

> In a family-owned business, there are minimal discussions about burnout because more emphasis is placed on resolutions. Repetition is part of the burnout, but the work is always completed. Turnover is low and family commitment is high.

Participant 4 stated “Employees are offered counseling services to promote support and job satisfaction.” Participant 6 highlighted “We are constantly talking about the importance of good mental health and an effective work–life balance, offering numerous in and outside support measures, like counseling or therapy.” Participant 7 stated that “External resources are available for employees, like counseling for both personal and work-related problems.”

Theme 3 – Employee Engagement, Participation, and Organization Commitment increased the overall wellness of employees. Theme 3, once again, helped me address the numerous aspects of job burnout and job demands in an inclusive manner, fostering healthy forms of commitment and communication by providing job resources for employees, businesses will be better equipped to manage workplace burnout and retention.

## Business Contributions and Recommendations for Professional Practice

The participants in my study provided substantial insight and expertise by addressing and identifying all three themes. Theme 1 related to the balancing of job demands and resources, Theme 2 addressed the importance of benefits, rewards, and recognition, and Theme 3 identified employee engagement, participation, and organizational commitment as ingredients for success in a business setting. Data saturation was achieved for each theme by interrelating workplace burnout with the importance of communication, recognition, appreciation, job satisfaction, and employee engagement but including the validity of work challenges in relation to the use of job resources.

Challenges included but are not limited to identifying job burnout and demands and how they resonate primarily and similarly for most participants but differently for just a few individuals. Job demands involved employees' resistance to change and included the employee's refusal to adapt to changing times. Decreased motivation and increased absenteeism were apparent at all times, especially during extremely busy periods when residents are scheduled to pay rent and utilities. Although burnout was evident, most employees felt supported by the job resources management provided to them and they remained committed to their jobs and felt appreciated in their work environment.

Effective business practices and managerial strategies promote employee and job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and workforce retention. Management strategies and approaches like empowering employees, job enrichment or job crafting promote effective communication, employee performance, and job satisfaction and development. Retention, the opposite of employee turnover, is supported by the recognition of employees and rewards like appreciation, flexible working schedules, and work–life balance. Employee wellness is contributed to the empowerment of employees and autonomy over their own professional well-being.

Employee engagement, participation, and organizational commitment, like communication, promotes the open-door policy and encourages employees to willingly and honestly discuss issues that may hinder work productivity. However, employee wellness goes above and beyond job productivity or even job satisfaction but ensures employees have coping mechanisms to manage their professional productivity and satisfaction. The wellness of employees is also essential to create a balance between work and home by making accommodations for counseling, mental health, and personal development. Leadership training for management is also included in the wellness of employees.

Effectively balancing job demands and job resources may encourage future businesses to implement strategic burnout interventions and address the causes or triggers before symptoms can escalate. Interventions such as comprehensive training outlining previous conditions that can be used for future situations. Systematic training and be used for professional development which can model a healthy workplace.

Additionally, professional development and trainings related burnout would be more productive and successful if there is ongoing assessments linking potentially high job demands with high job resources. Assessments that identify burnout and stressors on a regular or ongoing basis rather than occasionally. Chronic burnout can be identified and assessed more easily with quick feedback sessions, a questionnaire or survey with no more than a few questions and establishing imperative feedback loops or discussions, following up in a timely manner. Measuring assessments progressively (MAP) allows employees and employers to establish a standard of acceptability, accept adjustments, monitor action or inaction often, and recommend solutions, respectively.

## Implications for Social Change

Increasing workforce retention by reducing workplace burnout are critical and significant work factors that may significantly influence the productivity, satisfaction, engagement, and wellness of employees, employers, and organizations alike. Increasing workforce retention has positive social change implications by creating and contributing to the overall wellness of employees and employers. Encouraging open and honest workplaces where employees can foster and prioritize effective communication, inclusive work cultures, to ensure everyone is respected and recognized. Reducing workplace burnout would promote social change creating a healthy work environment for employees to feel safe, supported, and valued.

These factors would also allow for positive social change through various initiatives and programs that boost employee morale, purpose, and employer commitment. A review of the coding and thematic analysis confirms data saturation for my study, illustrating the importance of identifying and addressing workplace burnout to reduce workforce turnover. A combined thematic analysis (Table 3) of theme 1 balancing job demands with job resources, theme 2 available benefits, rewards, and recognition, and theme 3 promoting employee engagement, employee participation, and organizational commitment reflects the validity of 15 identified codes or recodes and with a total of 224 reoccurrences. These codes were used to thematically analyze and confirm the findings and responses from the participants and will also be used to assess the implications for positive social change.

**Table 3**

*Combined Thematic Analysis*

| Theme no. | Codes | No. of reoccurrences |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Communication | 28 |
| 1 | Workplace burnout/stress | 23 |
| 2 | Job satisfaction | 21 |
| 1 | Workplace challenges | 21 |
| 3 | Employee engagement | 19 |
| 1 | Employee feedback | 17 |
| 2 | Positive work environment | 16 |
| 2 | Employee empowerment | 15 |
| 1 | Clear work expectations | 14 |
| 2 | Job recognition/appreciation | 12 |
| 3 | Training/counseling | 10 |
| 2 | Professional development | 8 |
| 3 | Work/life balance | 8 |
| 3 | Mental health support | 7 |
| 3 | Supportive management | 5 |
| | Total no. of reoccurrences | 224 |

Balancing job demand along with job resources (Theme 1) is essential for establishing and maintaining a productive and healthy organizational environment. There are several implications for social change that begin with the well-being of employees, employers, and businesses alike reducing the stigma of mental health, which may lead to less depression and other emotional or physical conditions. By reducing burnout and increasing the overall well-being of employees and employers, work productivity and satisfaction may be more consistent rather than inconsistent. Ensuring an optimistic and supportive culture that fosters inclusivity, empowerment and recognition will have positive effects and implications for social change.

Implications for social change through employee benefits, rewards, and recognition (Theme 2) can influence and impact social change by encouraging optimistic and enthusiastic workplace behaviors, fostering an inclusive office culture, and ensuring appreciation for employees is requisite to manage burnout. Strategically promoting recognition for employees through public praises and awards celebrations can serve as an organizational support to enhance innovation, creativity, productivity, and teamwork.

These implications may also include managerial commitment and leadership to influence and inspire employees that want to improve their skills, knowledge, and abilities to continue to grow with the company. Setting new standards for employee appreciation and recognition may also balance the workplace challenges with the rewards and benefits. Employee engagement, participation, and organizational commitment (Theme 3) also enforce some implications for social change, like enhancing the balance of work and life, driving the sense of employee autonomy, and encouraging the overall wellness of the employees and employees alike.

Promoting open dialogue and communications may lead to increased organizational performance and decreased employee irritation or frustration as it relates to engagement and participation. Engaged and empowered employees are more inclined to participate in organizational decision-making and contribute willingly to innovative processes, systems, and services at work. Committed and engaged employees are adaptable to change, respond in a proactive manner and become more resilient with every workplace challenge. Lastly, employees that have control and balance over their work – life – home well-being will have improved physical, mental and emotional health.

## Recommendations for Further Research

The findings of my study confirmed that workplace burnout is an organizational concern affecting employees and employers. Residential property managers employe and manage dedicated and engaged employees but workplace burnout often interferes with the daily operations of this industry. My thematic analysis identified a direct correlation with increased job demand and decreased job resources. Communication, direct or indirect, was one of the major factors that affected job demands but also promoted job resources. Employee feedback and participation, recognition, and appreciation, as well as managerial and organizational support are all confirmed indicators that further research is recommended.

My recommendations for future residential property managers are to (a) include some preventive workplace measures, processes, and systems to identify some of the most common burnout triggers and prevent debilitating causes from spiraling out of control, (b) is to individualize the needs of employees by ensuring that workplace burnout is addressed and managed in a healthy manner guided by the workforce and not necessarily by management, and (c) provide assurance to employees that follow-up and follow through meetings and open discussions will continue to avoid previous burnout relapses.

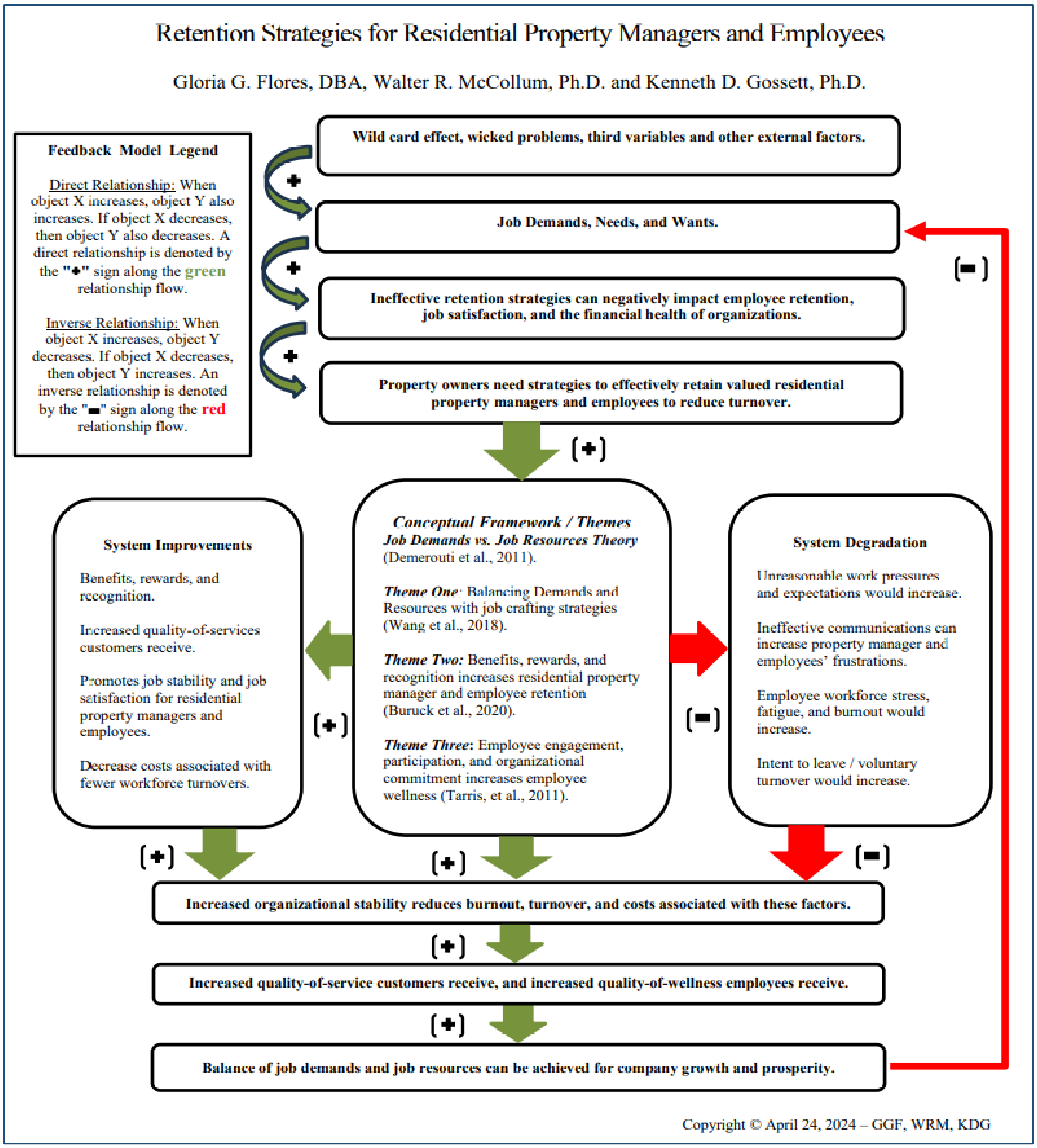
Reducing workforce turnover by reducing workplace burnout is the emphasis of the business model in Figure 8 relating to specific retention strategies by using employee feedback loops and highlighting the direct and inverse relationships between variables. I was able to identify three themes that became especially important for my study. Progressively, each of these themes (1) balancing job demands with job resources, (2) receiving benefits, rewards, and recognition, and (3) employee engagement, employee participation, organizational commitment was addressed, and three strategies were correlated, accordingly.

The importance of balancing job demands and burnout with the available job sources or employee resources is emphasized in my retention strategies' model. In my study, Demerouti and Bakker's (2011) JD-R was the conceptual framework that was used as the theory and the basic premise for my business model. The JD-R conceptual framework was important because it provided the lens in which the organizations' information flowed as the job demands and job resources moved through this system and employees were able to achieve results at the end of this system, however, this does not remain constant.

Data collected and analyzed confirmed that employees' job demands did increase beyond their routine job duties at the beginning of each month, and job resources were not readily available, which may also lead to increased employee turnover. The fundamental reasoning for developing this business model was to identify what themes and strategies employers need to put into place to achieve positive outcomes.

**Figure 8**

*Business Model - Retention Strategies and Feedback Loops for Residential Property Managers and Employees*



Under the system improvements on the left-hand side, which include employee benefits, rewards, and recognition, promoting job satisfaction, and observing an increased quality of service for customers, which all address the negative outcomes that are inversely related in system degradation. The system degradation factors are a major part of employee burnout and fatigue factors, which increase unreasonable work pressures, ineffective communication as well as voluntary turnover.

For example, inversely related refers to these themes and strategies which go up in the middle, these variables on the right-hand side will go down if their themes and strategies go down in the middle, then these variables on the right-hand side would go up. The outcomes in this scenario would not be a good thing for the residential property managers or their employees. To counteract this situation, offsetting these demands with resources is essential as outlined in theme 1. Theme 2 correlates with employees receiving benefits, rewards like awards and recognition, especially appreciation may reduce employee turnover. Theme 3 pertains to employee engagement, along with their enthusiastic participation to achieve organizational commitment. These variables working together will increase employee retention, wellness, and commitment levels, achieving optimal work, job satisfaction, and a dynamic workforce.

## Conclusion

In Section 4, I presented the findings and my thematic analysis from the data collected from my seven participants, each responding to five open-ended questions. Effective business practices include several forms of communications regarding burnout, but it differs between all employees. Some employees are good at voicing their concerns while others do not mention any issues. Discussing issues regarding burnout is normally conducted in private ensuring privacy and confidentiality is always adhered to. Employees prefer to talk about certain concerns or stressors individually instead of in a group or office setting. Addressing burnout symptoms with employees can be challenging, however, each employee is allowed to communicate in whichever approach or method makes them feel most comfortable.

Residential property managers often struggle with workforce burnout and the lasting effects it has on their employees. The lack of effective strategies to combat workplace burnout and boost employee retention is the premise of this study. My study, based on the JD-R theory, identified, addressed, and investigated strategies among seven experienced residential property managers in West Texas. Data saturation from interviews and document reviews revealed three key themes: (a) balancing job demands and resources, (b) providing benefits, rewards, and recognition, and (c) fostering employee engagement and organizational commitment. The study recommends residential property managers adapt to employee needs with appropriate resources, potentially reducing burnout and turnover. This could lead to positive social change by helping managers better address future challenges in their communities.

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# Appendix A: Interview Protocol

## Research Question

What effective strategies do some residential property managers in West Texas use to successfully reduce workplace burnout and increase employee retention?

## Interview Questions

1. How receptive was your workforce in communicating about workplace burnout symptoms?
2. What management strategies have you used to reduce identified workplace burnout symptoms?
3. Which challenges did you encounter in implementing management strategies to identify workplace burnout?
4. Which employee performance indicators related most with workplace burnout symptoms?
5. What difficulties did you encounter in implementing management strategies to decrease employee turnover?

## Interview Protocol

Qualitative researchers will use interview techniques or interview protocols to disseminate interview questions to each of the participants in a consistent and effective manner. I will provide a well written, professionally documented, and IRB approved letter to each of my participants outlining the purpose and nature of my study. My interview protocol will ensure all seven of my participants are interviewed in the same manner, with the same interview questions and with the same time allotted for each interview. Adhering to an interview protocol will assure the researcher that each interviewee / participant will receive the same set of semistructured open-ended interview questions and all numbered in the same order (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). Below are seven steps I will use to interview each participant and collect the data for my study.

Step 1: Greet participants, introduce myself, and request they also introduce themselves.

Step 2: Acknowledge their willingness to participate in my study and thank them for their valuable time. Request permission to record interview for future transcription.

Step 3: Review IRB's interview protocol and request their signature as acceptance to the interview. Reassure participants of added measures taken to protect their privacy.

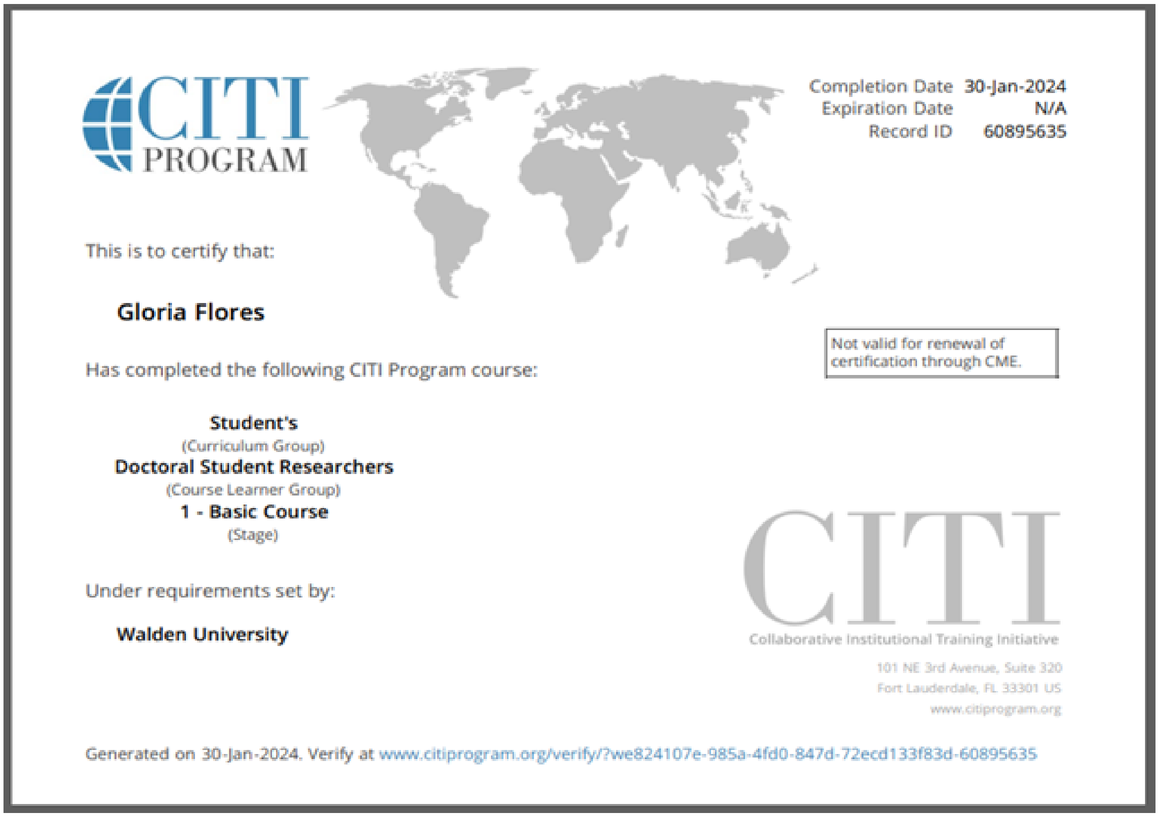
Step 4: Elaborate on the nature and purpose of my doctoral study along with the importance of the data collected. Willingness to share data analysis with participants.

Step 5: Reassure each participant of their volunteer decision to answer each open-ended question with the understanding and adherence if they prefer to withdraw from the interview process.

Step 6: Record introduction, participant identification number (P1, P2, etc.), ask each question in a sequential order, take notes and lead conversation with follow-up questions. End my interview by requesting any additional comments regarding the interview.

Step 7: Conclude interview with each participant, end recording and show appreciation once again for their time and transparency throughout the interview.

# Appendix B: CITI Course Completion Certificate



CITI PROGRAM

Completion Date 30-Jan-2024
Expiration Date N/A
Record ID 60895635

This is to certify that:

**Gloria Flores**

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME.

**Student's**
(Curriculum Group)
**Doctoral Student Researchers**
(Course Learner Group)
**1 - Basic Course**
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

**Walden University**

CITI
Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative
101 NE 3rd Avenue, Suite 320
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301 US
www.citiprogram.org

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