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Managerial Strategies to Increase Employee Retention in the Health Care Industry

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Walden University

College of Management and Human Potential

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Albert Scales III

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Walden University
2026

Abstract

Managerial Strategies to Increase Employee Retention in the Health Care Industry

by

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MBA, Trident International University, 2010

BS, Excelsior College, 2007

Qualitative Pragmatic Inquiry Business Research Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

February 2026

Abstract

Employee turnover remains a significant business concern for Hawaiian health care organizations. Health care organization leaders are concerned about employee retention because of its implications for organizational effectiveness and the continuity of customer care. Grounded in Herzberg's two-factor theory, the purpose of this qualitative pragmatic inquiry was to identify and explore successful strategies used by eight purposively selected health care leaders in Hawaii to improve employee retention. Thematic analysis of semistructured interview data and public organizational documents revealed six themes: (a) competitive compensation and benefits, (b) professional development and training, (c) recognition and rewards, (d) work-life balance and flexibility, (e) effective leadership and communication, and (e) employee engagement and support systems. A key recommendation for health care organization leaders is to implement an integrated retention framework that aligns compensation equity, leadership development, and structured growth opportunities. The implications for positive social change include the potential to enhance the workforce stability of health care organizations, which can potentially lead to improved patient outcomes, particularly for patients, their families, and underserved populations.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to Adonai, who guided, strengthened, and remained faithful to me throughout this process. To my grandmother/mother, who has been a well of wisdom, love, and prayers that continue to pour into the foundation of my being. To my children, who remind me each day to learn, lead, and never give up. Lastly, I dedicate this to my family, who believed in me long before I could believe in myself. Thank you for your love, your patience, and your gentle reminders of who I am and what I am supposed to be doing. This is as much your accomplishment as it is mine.

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Section 1: Project Foundation

Background of the Problem

Health care organizations experience significant challenges in retaining qualified staff because of multiple interconnected factors (Daniels et al., 2024). These factors include ineffective management practices, lack of professional development opportunities, insufficient organizational support during changes, and inadequate work environment conditions (Fernandes et al., 2022; Hallett et al., 2024). Employee turnover is not only costly but also highly disruptive for organizations. Research shows that turnover's financial impact can be substantial, often reaching as high as 200% of a departing employee's salary (Bae, 2022). Addressing turnover effectively is essential for maintaining a thriving workplace (Jian et al., 2022). Without addressing these retention issues, health care organizations risk deteriorating service quality, increased burnout among remaining staff, and an inability to meet patient needs (Mathisen et al., 2021). Health care leaders are concerned about employee retention and its impact on the organization's ability to deliver high-quality patient care.

Business Problem Focus and Project Purpose

The specific business problem is that some health care leaders lack successful strategies to improve employee retention. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative pragmatic inquiry was to identify and explore successful strategies used by health care leaders in Hawaii to improve employee retention. The target population for this project consisted of health care leaders who have experience in implementing successful strategies to improve employee retention. The sampling method was purposeful

sampling. The sample size was eight health care leaders in Hawaii. The participant selection criteria included health clinic leaders who have experience implementing successful strategies to improve employee retention.

I used qualitative research methodology to explore individuals' experiences and perspectives and interpret them to yield an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the project phenomenon (see Lim, 2025). The pragmatic inquiry research design effectively integrates beliefs and actions through systematic investigation, aligning ideas with reality to approach truth. This approach supports evidence-based decision-making and the development of practical solutions relevant to the phenomenon under investigation. As Allemang et al. (2022) noted, pragmatism suggested that experience is essential for assigning meaning to an event, highlighting the importance of practical application in research methodologies.

I conducted semistructured interviews to collect qualitative data from the eight participants included in the project. Although data saturation was reached at the seventh participant, all the participants were interviewed since they had committed to the project. The research process included member-checking to increase the validity and credibility of the research findings. According to Sahakyan (2023), member-checking involves sharing the transcribed interview responses with each respective participant for verification to guarantee accuracy of the qualitative data. The collaborative validation process was necessary to increase participation in the construction of knowledge and to strengthen the trustworthiness of the research findings (Sahakyan, 2023). Further, the research process involved data triangulation through available secondary data sources from the selected

health care facilities to strengthen the data quality. According to Schlunegger et al. (2024), data triangulation helps minimize the limitations of qualitative data, and the application extends from data collection to data analysis triangulation. The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, a method which involved analyzing patterns from the data (Lim, 2025).

Thematic analysis is a dominant analysis method for qualitative research, relying on predetermined codes to evaluate the data and define the patterns. Further, the analysis involved multiple codes to enhance consistency of the coding process and yield trustworthy and credible findings. Triangulation in analytical methods was vital to cross-verify results, thereby strengthening the project's conclusions (Schlunegger et al., 2024). The conceptual foundation of the research project was Herzberg's two-factor theory (motivation-hygiene theory), created in 1959 (Herzberg et al., 1959). In principle, the theory informs that the health care staff have needs seeking fulfilment, and its fulfilment leads to motivation-enhancing job satisfaction, thus relevant to interpret the research findings.

Project Research Question

The central research question of the project was, What successful strategies do health care leaders use to improve employee retention?

Assumptions and Limitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are unsupported assertions that researchers treat as facts in their studies, forming the foundation for theoretical statements in research (Braun & Clarke,

2024). In this research project concerning health care employee retention, several key assumptions were made. First, the doctoral research project was based on the assumption that selected health care leaders would be willing to provide insights into the retention strategies based on their experiences and expertise to guarantee authentic data. Second, the research project design was based on the assumption of similar factors influencing job satisfaction and retention in the health care facilities, and organizational leaders have consistent experience with best practices to address the problem. This assumption supports the interpretation of the data and construction of knowledge on applicable strategies to promote employee satisfaction and enhance retention within the health care context (see Szulc & King, 2022). Third, the semistructured interview strategy was based on the assumption that the participants possessed factual knowledge regarding strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover in health care settings. As Braun and Clarke (2024) noted, congruence is a critical element in decisions made within qualitative studies, and this assumption aligns with the methodological approach employed.

Limitations

Limitations in research are constraints or factors that could hinder a study's validity or generalizability (Szulc & King, 2022). A primary limitation was the geographic focus on health care facilities in Hawaii, potentially limiting the relevance and applicability of findings to different contexts. Hays and McKibben (2021) emphasized that such limitations can weaken a study's transferability to other settings. Another significant limitation is the reliance on self-reported data from health care leaders, potentially limiting the insight from other key stakeholders. Further, this

approach can introduce biases and inaccuracies, as participants may overstate or understate their experiences and perceptions, potentially distorting the project's conclusions (Johannessen et al., 2025). Additionally, limitations involved difficulty recruiting the top strategic health care leaders. Further, there was potential for reticence to share innovative organizational strategies to curb voluntary employee turnover, to maintain a competitive advantage in the health care labor market.

Business Project Ethics

While conducting this qualitative, pragmatic inquiry research project as a health care professional and doctoral business student, I maintained complete objectivity and confidentiality throughout the research process. According to Suwedi-Kapesa et al. (2023), health care professionals must recognize and reduce their assumptions during qualitative research to ensure an unbiased and truthful representation of the research topic. Despite having adequate health care experience, which brings significant industry understanding to my research approach, I mitigated its effect on the project findings. Throughout the activities of this project, I worked to uphold a neutral perspective that remained unaffected by my personal biases or preexisting notions about the research project phenomena, the specific industry being studied, or any of the research participants. I documented participants' exact statements and viewpoints with precision to mitigate researcher biases in data collection. Although the qualitative research recognizes the researcher as a project instrument, I restrained my personal opinions from manipulating the research findings (Lim, 2025).

My primary responsibilities as a qualitative researcher included collecting primary data through semistructured interviews and analyzing public documentation and artifacts. The interview questions are included in Appendix A. This included recruiting potential participants, collecting data, and analyzing the data to construct knowledge answering the research project's research question (Mwita, 2022). My primary duty was to oversee all aspects of the research to prevent methodological failures and ensure its quality.

The *Belmont Report* Requirements

Ghuri et al. (2020) stated that researchers must follow ethical investigation protocols. The *Belmont Report* established vital guidelines for research involving human subjects that uphold ethical standards (Tariq, 2024; U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 1979). The report guidelines required that researchers fully disclose the project's purpose to participants while ensuring they receive the highest level of respect (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 1979). Participants had ample time to make participation decisions and received clear communication of their right to withdraw from the research at any time. I made deliberate and objective efforts to protect participant interests, well-being, and rights throughout my research, as guided by the modern ethical standards for human subjects (see Tariq, 2024).

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this project was entirely voluntary, without any form of incentives offered for involvement. Adhering closely to the ethical guidelines outlined in the *Belmont Report*, I complied with vital ethical principles:

1. Respecting individual autonomy by communicating the right to withdraw from the research.
2. Prioritizing participant welfare by promoting benefits to the health care sector.
3. Upholding fairness and justice
4. Obtaining informed consent to respect autonomy
5. Meticulously evaluating potential risks and benefits
6. Fairly selecting participants

Before participating, all individuals received comprehensive information about the research to provide informed consent for their involvement in the project, per contemporary ethical research standards (Ghauri et al., 2020; Tariq, 2024). As the primary researcher, I also communicated clearly to the participant their right to withdraw from the project anytime, without any responsibility.

Data Protection and Confidentiality

All the personal details were replaced with pseudonyms or codes in documentation to protect the identities of interviewees and organizations. The interview protocol is included in Appendix B. The implemented measures were necessary to safeguard confidentiality and protect data for all parties involved by adhering to established qualitative research data management best practices (Busetto et al., 2020). The gathered data was stored in encrypted storage systems and will be preserved for 5 years. Further, there is restricted access to the data, and only authorized personnel, including the researcher, supervisor, and examiner, have access rights. There was clear communication to the participants that the data would be used for academic reasons and

would not be shared with a third party without prior authorization. The IRB approval number for this research project is: 30-10-25-032177.

Evidence-Based Integrative Review

In the evidence-based integrative review, I explore crucial factors and strategies that influence employee retention in health care organizations. This section of the research project includes a comprehensive analysis of this complex issue by integrating basic motivational theories with modern workplace dynamics in health care organizations. Herzberg's two-factor theory informs a theoretical structure for the distinction of motivators like recognition and achievement and hygiene factors such as compensation and working conditions in health care employment (Alshmemri et al., 2017; French et al., 1973; Rai et al., 2021; Raj, 2024).

This evidence-based integrative review focuses on the project's overarching research question and aims to identify and explore successful strategies health care leaders use to decrease employee turnover. An extensive search was conducted based on the following keywords as part of an extensive search on the topic: turnover, retention, employee engagement, leadership strategies, leadership, satisfaction, employee fulfillment, employee engagement, human resource management, qualitative research, organizational effectiveness, work-life balance, employee turnover, retention strategies, motivators, involuntary turnover, job satisfaction, Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory (two-factor theory), and Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Sources were retrieved from Google Scholar, Sage Journals, EBSCOhost, ProQuest, ScienceDirect, Directory of Open Access Journals, JSTOR, Sage Premier, APA PsycINFO, EBSCO Primary, Emerald

Management Academic Search, Business Source Complete, and Academic Search Complete.

The evidence-based integrative review presents Herzberg's two-factor theory by classifying motivator factors as intrinsic satisfaction elements and hygiene factors as extrinsic dissatisfaction prevention elements (Raj, 2024). For researchers, the conceptual framework enables consideration through an organizational lens, which guides subsequent analysis. The review section included a systematic analysis of employee engagement's direct impact on retention rates and organizational performance by stressing the consequences of employee disengagement and turnover within health care establishments. Further, the review included analysis of motivator elements, including achievement and growth opportunities, alongside hygiene elements like compensation policies and working conditions within health care employment.

The subsequent sections include the analysis of retention-influencing factors and improvement strategies through recruitment practices, mentorship programs, career development initiatives, and flexible scheduling. Further, this section also includes an analysis of implementation difficulties, which include financial limitations and organizational capacity constraints. Finally, the last section includes a conclusion to evaluate the effect of managerial practices and leadership styles on retention and subsequently highlighted how employee retention influences patient satisfaction and care quality. The adoption of the structured method supported the analysis of health care employee retention theories and practices while explaining how workforce engagement leads to organizational results.

The primary objective of this qualitative pragmatic inquiry was to identify and explore successful strategies used by health care leaders to improve employee retention. By reviewing scholarly resources and interviewing health care experts from the selected health care institution, the analysis informed the best practices that create a supportive atmosphere, ultimately ensuring that dedicated professionals remain committed to their vital roles in health care.

Conceptual Framework

Herzberg two-factor theory, developed by Herzberg and his colleagues in 1959, serves as the primary framework for deciphering employee motivation and the conceptual framework for this project (Herzberg et al., 1959). It distinguishes between motivators and hygiene factors. Job satisfaction comes from motivators like recognition and growth opportunities, whereas the prevention of dissatisfaction depends on hygiene factors such as workplace relationships and working conditions (Alshmemri et al., 2017). The framework has proven essential for pinpointing factors that motivate health care workers and minimize job dissatisfaction while increasing retention rates (Herzberg et al., 1959).

The theory distinguishes between positive motivational factors and elements that only prevent negative experiences and shows that employee satisfaction needs factors beyond good working conditions (Alrawahi et al., 2020). Modern researchers have expanded this foundation by categorizing these factors further (Raj, 2024). Although there are other theoretical models for explaining employee behavior, existing literature, such as Alshmemri et al. (2017) and Raj (2024), illustrates its relevance to explain job satisfaction, which eventually influences retention.

The Herzberg et al. (1959) two-factor theory has been adapted to address various issues in the contemporary work environment. For instance, expanding on Herzberg's framework, Shaikh et al. (2018) pointed out the difference between intrinsic factors that motivate and extrinsic factors that serve as hygiene elements. Inner needs find satisfaction through intrinsic motivators such as personal achievements and fulfillment, while extrinsic factors like supervision and compensation respond to external demands to influence job satisfaction (Ramírez García et al., 2019). Health care organizations can use this classification to recognize that separate approaches are necessary when addressing internal psychological needs and external environmental factors. Modern studies such as Rai et al. (2021) have validated these distinctions while highlighting the need to focus on both dimensions simultaneously. Since the research project involved the determination of the most effective retention strategies, the theory is relevant for a comprehensive analysis of both internal and external conditions influencing job satisfaction.

To achieve better job satisfaction and lower dissatisfaction levels in health care workers, organizations must enhance hygiene factors and strengthen motivators. Recent research by (Shanafelt et al., 2022) highlighted the necessity of incorporating hygiene and motivator factors into retention strategies to increase job satisfaction. Their findings are supported by Herzberg et al. (1959). The work of Herzberg et al. (1959) shows that satisfaction and dissatisfaction represent separate conditions rather than opposites on one continuum, which requires independent management strategies (Alshmemri et al., 2017). Health care organizations must implement dual-focused strategies that tackle workplace dissatisfaction by enhancing supervision and job security policies while building

satisfaction through opportunities for achievement and recognition. The recent study by . Shanafelt et al. (2022) demonstrated that Herzberg's theory holds up under modern workplace conditions. Shanafelt et al. found that simultaneous adequate support for both domains leads to positive employee welfare and organizational achievement outcomes. Health care leaders can utilize these insights to develop structured retention strategies that address the evolving needs of the current workforce.

Since its development, the Herzberg two-factor theory has been a dominant framework in the workplace behavior literature and has been consistently adopted in health care research. Holmberg et al. (2016) demonstrated that Herzberg's theory significantly influences health care workers' job satisfaction. Achievement recognition is a basic motivator, while supervision and organizational policies generate employee dissatisfaction (Uddin et al., 2025). Herzberg's extension of the theoretical framework in Dunnette and Herzberg (1967) concluded that intrinsic motivational factors are crucial in workers' decisions and intentions to depart from their jobs, and this construct has been adopted in the current health care literature (Goel et al., 2025; Ungar-Sargon, 2025). Further, the foundational constructs explain the relationship between motivators and hygiene factors with employee satisfaction, which must be understood to establish a supportive health care work environment that improves staff retention, increasing the usefulness of the framework (Dunnette & Herzberg, 1967; Kehui et al., 2025). Leaders of health care organizations need to focus on intrinsic motivators and systemic policy improvements to develop a motivated and engaged workforce. Since the research project focuses on strategies to improve retention for highly qualified health care workers, the

Herzberg model is relevant to discuss vital strategies such as recognition and engagement, in addition to the extrinsic components.

Research shows that health care organizations must simultaneously recognize achievement and address systemic organizational policies and supervision issues. Retention strategies must surpass standard workplace enhancements by incorporating systems recognizing staff achievements and professional growth opportunities to connect intrinsic motivation with reduced turnover intentions (Saadeh & Suifan, 2020). Health care leaders must establish complete management methods that integrate operational guidelines with personal development opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge. We will analyze this through upcoming implementation strategy studies.

The two-factor theory proposed by Herzberg et al. (1959) is a key model for analyzing employee motivation in health care settings. This model categorizes workplace factors into two groups: motivators, which consist of recognition alongside achievement and professional growth opportunities, while hygiene factors include workplace relationships and salary, job security, and working conditions. According to Herzberg et al. (1959), the lack of hygiene factors causes significant workforce dissatisfaction, even though these factors alone do not enhance job satisfaction. Herzberg's theory remains relevant today as its applications in health care continue to demonstrate its lasting importance. Scholars have extended the theory by analyzing its application across various health care environments. French et al. (1973) revealed that higher job satisfaction leads to both lower turnover rates and better patient satisfaction within health care settings. The study published half a century ago maintains its importance by demonstrating how

greater job satisfaction leads to measurable improvements in employee performance and patient care outcomes. These findings demonstrated the enduring value of Herzberg's framework as a foundation for contemporary organizational policies and supervisory practices.

Understanding the separation between motivators and hygiene factors helps pinpoint essential elements driving health care worker motivation and retention while reducing job dissatisfaction (Alshmemri et al., 2017). Modern health care organizations can apply these principles within comprehensive retention practices. Shaikh et al. (2018) developed Herzberg's framework further by identifying the key distinctions between intrinsic motivation factors and extrinsic hygiene elements. Shaikh et al. (2018) highlighted the fundamental distinction between intrinsic (motivational) elements and extrinsic (hygiene) elements. Health care professionals find emotional and psychological fulfillment through intrinsic motivators, including personal achievements and a sense of purpose in patient care. Extrinsic factors like supervision, compensation, and organizational policies deal with practical issues that impact job satisfaction (Karaferis et al., 2022). The complex nature of human motivation demonstrates why organizations must implement a dual approach to meet employee requirements (Ramírez García et al., 2019).

Acquah et al. (2021) expanded upon Herzberg's two-factor theory by emphasizing the necessity of improving hygiene factors and enhancing motivational elements to cultivate comprehensive job satisfaction among health care professionals. Their findings affirm that job dissatisfaction and satisfaction are not binary opposites but distinct

dimensions of the workplace experience. This distinction is particularly relevant in health care settings, where unmet baseline conditions such as adequate supervision, fair compensation, and safe working environments can coexist with varying levels of employee motivation (Herzberg et al., 1959; Shanafelt et al., 2022). Therefore, achieving true job satisfaction in health care requires more than eliminating dissatisfaction; it demands creating environments that support both personal well-being and opportunities for professional growth (Morrison et al., 2025). In summary, applying Herzberg's two-factor theory in health care offers invaluable insights into employee motivation and satisfaction dynamics. Addressing both intrinsic and extrinsic factors with a tailored approach can lead to a more engaged, motivated, and satisfied workforce, which is indispensable for maintaining high standards of patient care and achieving organizational success. Health care organization leaders must commit to creating a balanced approach that not only uplifts the intrinsic motivations of their workforce but also mitigates the potential causes of dissatisfaction, thus fostering a resilient and dedicated health care community.

Business Problem Scholarship Evidence

Motivator Factors in Health Care Employment

In the extant Kim et al. (2023), applied the Herzberg et al. (1959) framework, highlighting that job satisfaction in health care workplaces primarily depends on intrinsic job factors that motivate workers through the work they perform. The intrinsic factors that drive job satisfaction include achievement, recognition, work responsibility, advancement opportunities, and personal development possibilities (Herzberg et al.,

1959; Kim et al., 2023). The foundational research by Herzberg et al. (1959) highlighted that a highly competent health care worker finds fulfillment through task completion and target achievement, which leads to improved self-esteem, and this has later been supported by other researchers (Wang et al., 2022). Health care employees are more committed to their roles when organizations establish attainable goals like patient satisfaction and complex care management improvement (Riyanto et al., 2021). Health care organizations focusing on employee autonomy, career advancement, and skill development demonstrate increased retention because these intrinsic motivators build higher satisfaction levels and organizational loyalty (Campbell et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2023). Since the existing empirical evidence supports the significance of exploiting employee intrinsic needs, consistent with the Herzberg framework, unique strategies to address the unique intrinsic factors for each context are relevant.

Extant literature also applying Herzberg's theory emphasizes the significance of organizational efforts, including leadership, in influencing employee motivation. According to Paais and Pattiruhu (2020), leadership strategies focusing on employee motivation directly affect health care worker satisfaction and subsequently influence the retention rates. The study conducted by Paais and Pattiruhu (2020) supported Herzberg's theory by demonstrating that motivation dynamics, along with leadership practices and organizational culture, shape job satisfaction within health care settings. Another current study, Slavkovic et al. (2023), reported that health care managers need to balance their motivation strategies with the demanding work hours and high-stress levels typical in health care settings. Leadership interventions improved retention by tackling workplace

challenges inherent to the health care work settings (Slavkovic et al., 2023). Another study, Lokmanalhakim and Hasbullah (2022), validated this connection by showing that health care workers with intrinsic motivation showed higher levels of job satisfaction alongside increased commitment and innovation. Health care organizations can retain their workforce effectively by developing internal motivation through intelligent leadership practices and a robust strategy to overcome industry-specific challenges while sustaining a committed team. Therefore, the existing empirical evidence demonstrated the relevance of Herzberg's theory for the research project since motivation is a vital element for enhancing employee retention in different contexts.

Hygiene Factors in Health Care Employment

The extant literature, as seen in studies by Uslu et al. (2022) and Almalki et al. (2012), also demonstrates the relevance of the Herzberg model in explaining employee retention, highlighting the significance of hygiene factors in preventing dissatisfaction. Health care employee retention fundamentally depends on important work environment elements called hygiene factors, which prevent employee dissatisfaction (Almalki et al., 2012; Herzberg et al., 1959). Fundamental elements known as hygiene factors are crucial in keeping health care workers satisfied and retained within their organizations. A recent study by Uslu et al. (2022) reported multiple hygiene components, including company policies, supervision practices, salary structures, interpersonal workplace relationships, overall working conditions, and job security guarantees, which influence staff experiences. Almalki et al.'s (2012) study, based on the health care context, explains that when baseline expectations remain unaddressed by health care organizations, employee

dissatisfaction emerges, which directly damages retention efforts despite other workplace positives. According to Labrague et al. (2018), nurse leaders have a responsibility to create fundamental environmental conditions before applying advanced retention strategies to maintain a favorable work environment. This is consistent with other research findings, like Almalki et al. (2012), showing that the relationship between hygiene factors and motivational factors is complicated and must be addressed through integrative strategies. However, Labrague et al. (2018) emphasized that neglecting basic requirements renders sophisticated retention approaches ineffective. The existing empirical evidence, Almalki et al. (2012), and Labrague et al. (2018), Uslu et al. (2022), warranted the relevance of the Herzberg model to explain the effort for health care organizations to establish core hygiene factors first because they form a solid base where more complex retention strategies can develop.

Fair and transparent organizational policies significantly influence health care work environments, ultimately affecting employee satisfaction and retention outcomes. Research by Riyanto et al. (2021) demonstrated that consistently applied transparent policies ensure health care employees receive equitable treatment while clearly understanding organizational expectations and procedures. Another recent study, by Awwad and Adaileh (2025), corroborated Riyanto et al. (2021), reporting that transparency becomes particularly critical in health care settings where precise scheduling procedures and conduct guidelines must be explicitly understood for proper organizational functioning (Riyanto et al., 2021). These findings revealed that when management demonstrates fair policy application, they simultaneously build employee

trust while eliminating damaging perceptions of favoritism or discrimination that could drive talented staff to seek employment elsewhere (Awwad & Adaileh, 2025; Riyanto et al., 2021). Health care organizational leaders can leverage thoughtful policy development and transparent implementation as powerful strategic tools for addressing the employee retention challenges consistent with the aim of the current qualitative pragmatic inquiry.

Factors Influencing Employee Retention in Health Care

Health care job satisfaction consists of multiple factors that lead to an employee's sense of contentment and fulfillment. The connection between high job satisfaction and employee retention exists because health care employees who feel satisfied with their work tend to stay with their organization (Dunnette & Herzberg, 1967). Job satisfaction in health care depends heavily on intrinsic factors, which include achievement, recognition, and the inherent nature of work (Fernandes et al., 2022). Health care professionals experience job satisfaction through feelings of accomplishment from successful patient care delivery and positive feedback reception, enhancing their self-esteem (Dunnette & Herzberg, 1967). The relationship between recognition practices and employee loyalty demonstrates that health care managers should create routine recognition environments to boost staff engagement and loyalty (Jo & Shin, 2025).

Health care workers report higher levels of job satisfaction when their work involves either exciting or challenging tasks. According to Ali and Anwar (2021), health care workers experience enhanced fulfillment when their roles offer chances to innovate through the creation of new care protocols or unique patient interaction methods. Health care employees develop a sense of ownership and pride through professional creativity,

leading to feelings of value and driving them toward excellence (Yalim et al., 2025). Health care environments require proper handling of extrinsic hygiene factors like organizational policies, supervision, salary, and working conditions to prevent employee dissatisfaction (Yasin et al., 2020). Health care organizations experience improved trust and lower employee turnover rates when they implement fair and transparent organizational policies that treat all employees equally (Yasin et al., 2020). Effective supervision delivers essential support to health care professionals while competitive pay remains critical to their recruitment and retention. Health care employees' well-being depends on safe, clean, and comfortable working conditions because poor conditions result in health problems and increase absenteeism and turnover rates (Sönmez et al., 2025; Yalim et al., 2025).

Health care organization leaders and managers should provide career advancement options to retain their workforce successfully. According to Abdallah Yassine and Jacobs (2025), health care employees who see an achievable career path tend to remain with their employer because they visualize possible long-term professional growth within the organization. Health care workers are encouraged to seek internal promotions and new job positions through structured advancement programs, ongoing performance evaluations, and available training opportunities. Another study, by Basiron and Alias (2022), reported that health care employees participating in mentorship programs and skill development workshops with cross-training opportunities develop the necessary skills for advanced positions, which in turn boosts their job satisfaction and organizational strength through a well-trained workforce. Health care employees develop

stronger loyalty to their organization when they witness its dedication to their ongoing professional development (Abdallah Yassine & Jacobs, 2025; Paposá & Kumar, 2019).

Health care organizations benefit from internal promotions through enhanced staff morale while effectively utilizing their existing talent pool to retain skilled employees. According to Ali and Anwar (2021), when health care organizations promote internal staff, they communicate that dedication and effort lead to recognition and rewards, which enhances employee motivation and engagement levels. Internal promotions provide financial benefits by minimizing external hiring expenses and training costs in health care environments. Health care companies establish employee loyalty and commitment through workforce development investments, which help lower turnover rates while forming a stronger and more skilled team (Yasin et al., 2020). Health care employees who advance within an organization maintain a strong knowledge of its culture and operations, which results in easier role transitions and improved performance outcomes. Health care organizations experience improved retention rates and long-term stability when prioritizing career advancement opportunities for their employees.

Health care leaders need effective strategies to enhance staff job satisfaction and employee retention rates. Comprehensive and multifaceted employee retention programs must be implemented to resolve this issue effectively. Retention programs could integrate several key components; they should include supportive leadership with clear guidance, constructive feedback systems, and targeted training opportunities (Halter et al., 2017). Health care organizations that implement these strategies will benefit from lower employee turnover rates and increased job satisfaction (Hussein et al., 2017).

Implementing these strategies helps cultivate committed employees who drive sustained success and stability within health care organizations.

Business Topic Scholarship

Strategies to Increase Employee Retention in Health Care

Establishing recruitment programs that align candidate expectations with organizational realities creates the basis for successful health care employee retention. The research by Kairatkyzy et al. (2022) illustrated that recruitment methods that clearly outline job expectations and organizational growth opportunities during hiring processes lead to lower early turnover rates in health care environments. Supporting this view, Albougami et al. (2020) emphasized that realistic job previews during recruitment significantly enhance employee satisfaction and retention outcomes in health care settings. Through analysis of these results, it becomes clear that transparent hiring processes help health care organizations identify candidates who fit well with their organizational culture while showing strong potential for longer tenure, which solves a major health care workforce stability concern (Haddad et al., 2023). Candidates who enter jobs with clear expectations achieve greater job security, which leads to better retention by lowering early turnover caused by unmet expectations or organizational misalignment (Twigg & McCullough, 2014). Long-term employee retention success in health care organizations depends on comprehensive and transparent recruitment strategies that establish a solid foundation by creating a workforce that understands its roles and organizational culture.

Beyond initial recruitment, effective onboarding strategies represent a critical intervention point for successfully integrating new staff members into their roles within health care organizations. Research from Muga (2022) provided compelling evidence that health care organizations implementing structured onboarding programs—combining orientation sessions, ongoing mentoring, and regular check-ins—achieve significantly greater employee engagement and experience measurably reduced turnover rates compared to those with minimal onboarding processes. Muga's (2022) findings indicated that health care employees who receive consistent guidance and constructive feedback during their initial employment stages develop more substantial role confidence, which Nurtjahjani et al. (2022) directly correlated with increased job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Health care organization leaders prioritizing comprehensive onboarding processes establish an essential early intervention strategy that enhances employee retention rates and maintains organizational stability in a sector frequently challenged by workforce shortages.

Challenges and Barriers to Implementing Retention Strategies in Health Care

Health care organizations with limited financial resources struggle to provide competitive employee compensation, which remains vital for attracting and retaining staff. Health care organization leaders must develop cost-effective solutions to retain their employees during periods of reduced financial resources. According to Valk and Yousif (2023), health care employers with budget constraints can enhance employee satisfaction and retention by implementing nonfinancial rewards such as employee recognition programs and professional development opportunities, and building a positive work

environment. By applying these strategies, health care business leaders can address financial limitations while promoting employee fulfillment and participation. Health care organizations can enhance employee satisfaction through non-monetary rewards paired with flexible work schedules to contain financial costs. Health care workplaces can improve workers' work-life balance and job satisfaction through remote work options for administrative roles, flexible schedules, and job rotation opportunities, according to Ugwu et al. (2022). Health care organizations can retain essential staff members by implementing an internal promotion system that facilitates employee transitions to different roles while reducing employee turnover.

The availability of skilled health care workers and employer competition shape employee retention rates within health care organizations. According to Inamizu (2024), analyzing health care labor market trends locally helps organizations develop strong recruitment and retention strategies. Health care organizations must establish unique value propositions to attract and retain top talent when skilled health care professionals are limited. Organizations must provide competitive pay packages alongside well-structured career development opportunities and maintain organizational cultures that match health care workers' values to retain their employees. Health care organizations must keep track of labor market trends to predict workforce changes and develop appropriate responses.

Organizational budget constraints, managerial practices, and internal policies prevent health care entities from applying successful retention programs. Rudolph et al. (2021) demonstrated that health care organizations need strategic planning and proper

resource allocation to address these barriers. Health care organizations need to focus on retention programs that match their strategic goals and available resources. Health care organizations should target investment areas that significantly enhance employee satisfaction and retention through leadership development, employee recognition programs, and workplace culture improvement (Choi et al., 2016). Successful managerial strategies are vital in overcoming organizational barriers within health care environments. Leaders require specialized skills to build supportive and engaging work settings because health care workers experience high turnover rates when management practices are inadequate (Brown et al., 2013; Pattali et al., 2024). Health care managers' training in communication and conflict resolution skills and employee development techniques improves their capacity to support and keep staff members. Health care organizations can improve retention rates by regularly updating their policies to reflect fairness and transparency while adhering to best practices.

Management practices in health care settings must adhere to motivational theories to achieve higher employee satisfaction and retention levels. The two-factor theory developed by Herzberg establishes a fundamental framework that separates hygiene factors like salary and working conditions from motivational factors such as achievement and recognition (Alrawahi et al., 2020; Dunnette & Herzberg, 1967). Employees in health care remain motivated and satisfied when intrinsic motivators are in action, while hygiene factors merely stop dissatisfaction (Rai et al., 2021). When health care organizations implement policies that address hygiene and motivational factors, they establish a supportive work environment that balances employee needs and drives

satisfaction (Janes et al., 2021). Preventing dissatisfaction and promoting achievement recognition creates an environment that supports high employee engagement and retention in health care settings.

Fachiroh and Suratman (2023) explored the effects of compensation and motivation on health care employee performance and determined that job satisfaction serves as a key intermediary variable. Data obtained through Google Forms showed that employee performance benefits more from compensation and motivational efforts when job satisfaction levels are high. The findings align with earlier research that showed job satisfaction must exist before financial incentives can enhance employee performance (Lam & Chen, 2012; Miller, 2024). Health care workers cannot remain motivated in the long term through competitive salaries alone unless their work environment becomes supportive and satisfying, as indicated by Puni et al. (2018).

Muruga and Vasiljeva (2021) suggested that a multifaceted motivational approach using different theories is the most effective way to meet health care workers' diverse needs. The study across different organizational environments demonstrates that motivation and satisfaction are significantly affected by job characteristics, along with pay structure, peer connections, and accomplishments, which are held in health care settings due to the importance of emotional labor and interpersonal relationships (Lam & Chen, 2012; Rady & Zaki, 2020).

Although Herzberg's two-factor theory provides useful theoretical models that motivational researchers can use, health care organizations find practical implementation difficult. Herzberg's model implementation within health care facilities yields variable

outcomes because of the intricate relationship among staff requirements, patient care quality standards, and organizational processes. Bundtzen's 2020 research revealed that health care organizations can achieve better operational performance and foster a positive workplace culture through effective crisis management and patient satisfaction measures while maintaining employee well-being, which matches Herzberg's intrinsic motivation focus. Bao and Zhong (2019) demonstrated that health care employee motivation improves when well-being programs are paired with defined professional development opportunities. Zohar and Polachek (2014) warned organizational leaders that prioritizing employee well-being without accompanying strong accountability measures generates complacency and causes operational inefficiencies. Herzberg's theory presents necessary motivational elements, but health care organizations need to employ a hybrid model that merges employee satisfaction processes with strict operational performance regulations (Grandey et al., 2013; Zohar & Polachek, 2014). Organizational resilience and employee engagement require combining motivational strategies with strict operational standards. The integrated model will serve as the basis for studying the impact of leadership development and performance management practices on health care workforce retention.

Organizational Practices and Employee Retention in Health Care

Health care workers who receive assignments beyond their formal job responsibilities tend to report lower levels of job satisfaction and face increased rates of leaving their positions. Studies with health care professionals demonstrate that tasks deemed unnecessary or unreasonable decrease morale and job satisfaction, leading to increased turnover rates (Semmer et al., 2010). When health care organizations assign

illegitimate tasks to employees, it leads to turnover, which damages organizational performance while destabilizing operations since experienced staff retention is essential for high-quality patient care (Ahlstedt et al., 2023). Health care employees' well-being depends on creating positive work environments by eliminating illegitimate task root causes. Health care organizations benefit from positive operational results and improved employee retention while simultaneously boosting productivity and cutting costs by creating supportive work environments, according to X. Zeng et al. (2021). Additionally, Rashmi and Kataria, A. (2023). discovered that health care organizations that establish work–life balance policies targeting job satisfaction levels see enhanced employee engagement and organizational effectiveness. Flexible work arrangements combined with programs that support health care employees' personal and professional needs significantly improve employee retention. Health care organizations must strengthen work–life balance connections with employee engagement to maintain a stable and satisfied workforce.

Leadership in Health Care

Health care services continue to change rapidly, yet leadership stands out as a vital element that inspires teams to achieve outstanding goals. The comprehensive literature review enables my analysis of leadership within its diverse scope and demonstrated how effective leadership strategies drive team motivation and achieve success in health care organizations. According to Bennis (2007), leadership goes beyond authority because it involves creating a powerful vision to connect with the team and building trust while transforming the vision into practical steps to release health care

leaders' hidden potential. Effective leadership requires professionals to demonstrate consistent credibility while establishing inspiring goals and applying solution-focused problem-solving techniques (A. Hussain & Ashcroft, 2022). The discourse on effective health care leadership frequently highlights the importance of creating collaborative environments that enable team members to reach their objectives (A. Hussain & Ashcroft, 2022). Health care leadership studies integrate the understanding that effective leadership requires a multifaceted combination of attributes.

Successful health care leadership depends on leaders who understand the motivation of the health care worker and maintain their engagement to achieve maximum effort. According to Burns (1978), achievement and power motivation are essential to developing effective health care leaders. Leadership builds upon this base by focusing on productivity goals and the well-being of employees and organizational culture (Bass, 1985; McNeese-Smith, 1999; Peters & Rodabaugh, 1988; Sadono, 2008). Studies show that leaders who create supportive workplace environments boost individual employee performance and the overall organizational stability (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020). Effective health care leadership requires operational oversight and active engagement with staff members' emotional and motivational requirements. The ongoing development of leadership knowledge enables investigation into the changes in leadership dynamics due to transformations in health care organizational structures.

Modern leadership practices in health care organizations now embody a dynamic reciprocal relationship between leaders and their followers, moving past traditional approaches. J. Sehanovic et al. (2022). According to research by J. Sehanovic et al.

(2022) and Yücel (2021), health care leadership roles have changed substantially due to the movement from fixed hierarchical systems to adaptable network structures. Health care leaders currently work to provide their teams with essential tools for success while maintaining alignment with changing organizational targets. Health care workers experience reduced self-confidence when they encounter broken commitments or misaligned expectations, leading to decreased morale and disengagement (L. Sehanovic et al., 2022; Yücel, 2021). Successful leadership practices shape the performance of health care organizations at all levels by demonstrating the significance of adaptability and emotional intelligence (L. Sehanovic et al., 2022). After understanding leadership as transformational, we will examine how leadership continues to function as an omnipresent force throughout health care environments.

Leadership in health care organizations transcends the limitations of time and place and serves as a steady driver of innovation and new ideas. Sadono (2008) depicted leadership as a constantly active force that affects all areas of an organization, according to Kumar's citation from 2022. Leadership is important in health care settings because it engages teams, ensures quality patient care, and creates conditions that support organizational success over time (M. K. Hussain & Khayat, 2021; Kumar, 2022). Health care organizations become resilient and future-ready when their leaders work to build engagement alongside collaboration and accountability. Once we grasp leadership's extensive impact, we can investigate how specific leadership development strategies affect health care staff retention and organizational longevity.

Integrative Review Conclusion

Research into employee retention strategies within health care facilities revealed fundamental approaches that health care organizations can use to improve employee satisfaction and reduce turnover rates. Applying Herzberg's two-factor theory, combined with Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943), enables health care managers to establish initiatives that simultaneously tackle hygiene factors and motivators, leading to constructive and dynamic work settings. Health care organizations utilize structured onboarding and mentorship programs, continuous education opportunities, and employee assistance programs to develop retention strategies that give health care employees essential resources for success. Research demonstrates that organizational loyalty and productivity rise significantly when employees achieve satisfaction in their fundamental needs for security, belonging, and achievement (Fosah & Llahana, 2025). Motivational theories must be applied to workplace strategies to build a health care workforce that remains committed despite industry challenges.

Health care organizational leaders must evaluate the financial impact of employee turnover while promoting employee engagement. The financial burden of recruitment costs, training expenses, and productivity losses from high turnover rates creates a critical need for retention strategies that improve organizational culture and employee satisfaction (Li & Jones, 2013). Employee satisfaction and long-term financial sustainability result from retention strategies that include flexible work schedules, career development opportunities, and work-life balance initiatives (Duffield et al., 2014). Health care organizations whose leaders implement employee-centered strategies

maintain stable, high-performing teams that deliver outstanding patient care while remaining responsive to industry developments. Health care leaders who focus on hygiene factors and intrinsic motivators create supportive environments that enable professional and personal development and decrease turnover rates while enhancing organizational performance.

Through Herzberg's two-factor theory, the evidence-based integrative review offers a deep understanding of employee retention within health care settings. The theory separates motivator factors that generate job satisfaction through achievement and recognition and personal growth from hygiene factors that reduce dissatisfaction through supervision and organizational policies (Acquah et al., 2021; Alrawahi et al., 2020). Studies validate that satisfaction and dissatisfaction function independently, which requires distinct management approaches according to the theory.

The latest studies support Herzberg's theory by showing how intrinsic motivators boost employee engagement and innovation while extrinsic hygiene factors maintain workplace stability and help retain employees. Task significance, professional development opportunities, and acknowledgment form intrinsic factors that maintain high motivation levels for employees. Organizations that implement clear policies and supportive supervision while offering equitable compensation and safe work environments effectively reduce employee dissatisfaction and turnover.

Leadership proves essential throughout academic literature. Successful health care leaders utilize motivational theories alongside emotional intelligence while implementing research-supported practices to boost employee morale and achieve organizational

coherence. Structured onboarding practices, realistic recruitment previews, and skill-building programs achieve optimal results within an established leadership and organizational structure.

Health care organizations encounter budget constraints and must compete for talent while adapting to shifting workplace standards. Research demonstrates that leadership development strategies focusing on intrinsic motivators to guide employee-centered approaches successfully strengthen health care teams by increasing retention and creating resilient high performers. Herzberg's two-factor theory is an essential framework for health care organizations seeking to understand and improve employee retention strategies. By integrating modern leadership techniques and organizational support systems with this approach, health care organizations can establish motivating and sustainable work environments.

Summary

In summary, in this qualitative pragmatic inquiry, I explored the strategies to enhance health care staff retention, based on Herzberg's two-factor theory. The theoretical and empirical evidence illustrated that there are motivational and hygiene needs for staff promoting job satisfaction or dissatisfaction that must be adequately addressed to enhance employee retention. By separating the motivator and the hygiene factors, the theoretical framework informs retention strategies that involve a complex structure, which must be addressed at different levels and for different contexts. While there is evidence supporting the motivational and hygiene factors in health care retention strategies, context-specific knowledge is important to inform interventions.

Section 2: Primary and Secondary Industry Data Analysis

Nature of the Project

Method and Design

In this research project, qualitative research was conducted to identify and explore successful strategies health care leaders use to improve employee retention. According to Lim (2025), qualitative method researchers perform in-depth exploration of social and organizational dynamics that quantitative methods often overlook. Qualitative research serves as the ideal approach for studies seeking to comprehend human experiences within their specific contexts (Lim, 2025). Health care retention strategies are developed through complex decision-making processes influenced by organizational norms, employee requirements, and leadership approaches (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). This methodology effectively supports the research objective of obtaining detailed descriptive data, which helps create practical solutions to overcome employee retention difficulties.

The research project was based on a pragmatic inquiry research design to guide the structure and purpose of my inquiry, emphasizing practical implementation and adaptability for analyzing contextual phenomena. According to Ramanadhan et al. (2021), pragmatist researchers emphasized practical solutions and results that are directly applicable. This design was selected because it merges beliefs with actions to help health care leaders evaluate their experiences and decisions, thereby influencing policy and management practices. Using pragmatic inquiry, enhanced evaluation of the practical implications of concepts, and promoted decision-making based on evidence. Through this approach, the researcher provides actionable insights that health care organizations can

utilize to develop customized retention strategies tailored to their specific operational contexts. An integration of the qualitative methods with pragmatic inquiry is vital to deliver valuable information that can advance health care leadership and workforce management practices.

Reliability

Qualitative researchers establish reliability through trustworthiness, which encompasses credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Lim, 2025). To ensure the trustworthiness of this research project, the researcher used three core strategies, namely data saturation, member checking, and methodological triangulation. During the interview process, I consistently checked for data saturation. The research data collection continued until no new themes or insights emerged. The point of saturation demonstrated that I had achieved a comprehensive understanding of how health care leaders employ strategies to maintain employee retention. Saunders et al. (2018) stated that reaching saturation enhances the quality of qualitative research by providing an exhaustive exploration of the subject matter.

I enhanced the credibility and confirmability of my research by actively using member checking as a validation tool. Following each interview, I delivered summaries of the participants' responses along with my interpretations. Participants used the opportunity to verify the data accuracy and to suggested clarifications when necessary. Thomas and Magilvy (2011) stated that member checking establishes accuracy while building transparency and participant trust, which serve as essential elements for validating qualitative research findings.

My analysis received support from methodological triangulation, which involved integrating diverse data sources and multiple perspectives. My research employed semistructured interviews, along with thematic analysis and reflective field notes. Researcher methodological triangulation provides cross-validation for research findings, thereby decreasing the likelihood of researcher bias (Fusch et al., 2017). Triangulation enhances the dependability and credibility of qualitative research by enabling patterns to emerge through different perspectives (Fusch et al., 2017). Data saturation, combined with member checking and triangulation, confirmed the trustworthiness of the project results, ensuring a robust interpretation of how health care leaders enhance employee retention.

Population, Sampling, and Participants

In this qualitative research project, the population consisted of health care leaders in Hawaii who had experience implementing successful strategies to improve employee retention. The research project's core objective was to explore the successful strategies used by these leaders to decrease voluntary employee turnover in health care settings. In order to ensure the participants aligned with the project's objective, eligibility criteria were established that required the participants to be in a leadership role, such as Human Resources Manager, Director, or Executive, with at least 2 years of experience in health care leadership and currently be involved in developing or implementing employee retention strategies in health care organizations that have been successful in retaining employees such as hiring, onboarding, and staff development. These criteria were established to ensure that the participants met the minimum qualifications to participate

in the project and had sufficient experience to provide the needed information to achieve the research objective. As Tracy (2024) explained, qualitative research requires participants who are connected to the topic and can share their experiences with depth and clarity. The roles and experience of the selected participants ensured that the individuals provided their expertise based on real-life experiences and addressed the current issues surrounding staff retention in Hawaii's health care system.

Due to my interest in recruiting participants from organizations based in Hawaii and constructing context-specific knowledge, the researcher utilized various professional methods to contact potential candidates for possible recruitment. Some of these included professional social media platforms, LinkedIn, directories of various professional organizations, and email. All the participants identified were listed publicly on their social media pages as heads of various medical departments in different organizations. Their contact details were easily accessible from their respective pages. The researcher emailed or reached out to them through their social media pages, introducing the various details of the research and its value to the health care sector. All the recruited participants were chosen after they agreed to participate in the research project by providing signed consent forms. The outreach process I employed was consistent with the best practices of qualitative research. For instance, gaining access to research largely depends on the researcher's credibility and the clarity of the research goal (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). It was crucial to introduce the researcher's main motivation and described the essence of the research to make them aware of the importance of their input in improving their employee retention policies.

Establishing rapport and gaining trust were paramount to achieving high-quality interview data. I made it a point to maintain confidentiality, openness, and respect throughout the recruitment and interviewing process. Before each interview, I explained the informed consent procedure and reminded them of the voluntary nature of the research project and their right to review the transcript. This practice enabled participants to feel safe sharing their stories. Relationship-building is a crucial factor in effective qualitative research, particularly when interviews focus on professionals' work experiences and organizational challenges. Tisdell et al. (2025) stated that a strong relationship between the researcher and the participant increases data depth and reliability. Therefore, maintaining a respectful conversation and setting clear expectations helped maintain participants' engagement and cooperation throughout the research project, leading to more descriptive and reflective responses.

For this research project, a purposeful sampling, a method well-suited for qualitative inquiry that seeks deep, targeted insight rather than statistical generalization, was adopted. Purposeful sampling involves selecting participants who are exceptionally knowledgeable about or experienced with the phenomenon of interest—in this case, health care employee retention (Bouncken et al., 2025). The focus was not on quantity but on selecting participants whose professional roles and experiences provided rich, relevant data related to the research question.

This sampling method was justified due to Hawaii's unique and limited health care infrastructure. The interconnected nature of Hawaii's health care system makes it ideal for purposeful sampling, where the goal is to gain insight from a concentrated pool

of professionals who have implemented proven retention strategies. As such, the method was not only methodologically sound but contextually appropriate.

The sample size chosen, eight, was appropriate for the research question and type of research project. Qualitative studies are not always as rigorous in terms of sample size, with some studies recommending smaller sample sizes. Tracy (2024) stated that saturation can occur with a small number of well-chosen participants, particularly when they are selected for their ability to provide meaningful insights into the central topic of the research project. With the relatively low number of leaders in Hawaii, eight participants allowed the topic to be fully explored without overlap or extraneous information. The participants represented a diverse range of health care settings and functions, allowing for varied perspectives while focusing on the common experience of managing employee turnover.

Data saturation has been reached when no new themes or concepts emerge during the interview analysis process. After seven interviews, I observed data redundancy because the participants gave similar answers, and no new information emerged from the additional interviews. The repetition of the data confirmed that the main themes were sufficiently explored, indicating saturation. Ravitch and Carl (2021) stated that saturation is not based on the number of interviews but when no new information is found in the data. In my project, after the seventh interview, the participants provided the same responses, indicating that the number of interviews is sufficient and the research design is a robust methodological approach. However, since the eighth participant had scheduled

an interview, data were collected to explore any similarities or differences with the rest of the participants.

Data Collection Activities

Data Collection Instrument and Rationale

The primary data-gathering method employed in this qualitative doctoral project was semistructured interviews. This type of data gathering enabled open-ended dialogue, providing health care leaders with an opportunity to share their rich insights related to employee retention in the health care field in Hawaii. Semistructured interviews have long been a popular method among qualitative researchers, as this type of data collection strikes a balance between the need for consistency and the flexibility to explore participants' comments (Kallio et al., 2016; Mannan & Afni, 2020). Therefore, interview questions may be posed similarly to every participant, but participants are also allowed to elaborate on their answers as needed.

The interview protocol was created to assist the process, ensuring that the main research question remained focused and that the data collection process was as standardized as possible (see Appendix B). The protocol included open-ended questions to gather data on the successful strategies and techniques that health care leaders have used to lower the rate of voluntary turnover. The interviews were conducted in a conversational style, maintaining a structured flow of conversation. A conversational style is suitable for the project because it enables an inquiry into the participants' lived experiences, which aligns well with an interpretive paradigm (Hancock et al., 2021).

Implementation of the Interview Protocol

The interview protocol served as a guideline for the data collection process, ensuring quality control (see Appendix B). Each participant was given an informed consent form, and the purpose and process of the project were explained before the interview. The interviews were audio-recorded, and participants were notified prior to data collection. Recording the interviews can help capture accurate data and review verbal and nonverbal communication for any hints that may explain the participants' statements (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

After the interviews, the audio recording was transcribed verbatim. The transcriptions were then reviewed with each member who was interviewed. This method ensures the accuracy of the collected data and verifies its completeness (Birt et al., 2016; Nowell et al., 2017). The participants could clarify or provide additional details if they thought that their responses needed more context. Member checking is a crucial component in enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative studies (Birt et al., 2016; Nowell et al., 2017).

Step-by-Step Description of Data Collection Activities

The data collection procedure included the following steps:

1. Recruitment – Health care leadership professionals' contacts, email lists, and referrals were utilized to recruit health care leadership professionals in Hawaii who have experience implementing successful strategies to improve employee retention, and have at least 2 years of work experience in health care leadership.

2. Scheduling and Consent – Potential participants were able to choose a convenient time to meet and complete the interview over secure audio-conferencing software, and they completed a written informed consent form prior to beginning the interview.
3. Conducting Interviews – Each semistructured interview took approximately 30–60 min and was conducted using an interview protocol of 10 open-ended questions.
4. Recording – The semistructured interview was digitally audio-recorded using a secure digital audio recorder.
5. Transcription: The interview was transcribed verbatim by me within 48 hr of completion.
6. Member Checking – The interview transcript was analyzed and summarized, then sent to and reviewed with each member. During the review, each member was asked to confirm the accuracy of the interview data and provide any additional thoughts.
7. Storage – All data, including recordings, transcripts, and consent forms, were maintained in password-protected digital files.

The interview protocol is available in Appendix B of this project.

Data Organization and Analysis Techniques

Systems for Keeping Track of Data and Emerging Understandings

In this qualitative pragmatic project about employee retention strategies in health care organizations in Hawaii, I employed systematic methods to support data

organization, transparency, and rigor throughout the project process. Maintaining a research log enhances the credibility and auditability of the research process by providing a transparent record of the decisions and actions taken during data collection (Birt et al., 2016). I maintained a research log to track data-related procedures, including interview dates and times, participants' pseudonyms, key discussion topics, and reminders for follow-up steps, such as member checking.

I also used a reflective journal to record personal thoughts, reactions, assumptions, and insights after each interview. The practice of reflective journaling enhances reflexivity by helping the researcher identify and examine how their positionality and assumptions might impact the interpretation of data (Levitt et al., 2017). The content of my reflective journal included analytical memos where I noted emerging codes, related them to literature, and captured preliminary ideas for possible themes. These practices allowed me to engage more deeply with the data and identify meaningful patterns grounded in the participants' experiences.

Data Analysis Process for the Research Design

Given the qualitative pragmatic nature of this project, which focuses on identifying practical solutions grounded in participants' lived experiences, thematic analysis was selected as the primary approach for data analysis. Thematic analysis is a systematic and flexible method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within qualitative data, making it suitable for applied research questions focused on practical strategies (Braun et al., 2019). A sampling of codes and observed patterns are highlighted in Table 1.

Table 1
Codes, Categories, and Themes

Sample code	Category	Theme	Participant
"Pay not enough to stay."	Compensation	Compensation and benefits	3, 8
"Leadership encouragement matters."	Leadership	Leadership and communication	7
"Career pathways motivate staff."	Development	Professional development	4, 2
"Need flexibility to avoid burnout."	Scheduling	Work–life balance	6, 3
"Recognition boosts morale."	Rewards	Recognition and rewards	2
"Peer support reduces stress."	Engagement	Engagement and support	1, 7
"Pay not enough to stay."	Compensation	Compensation and benefits	3, 8

My logical and sequential data analysis process followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework, as updated in Braun et al. (2019):

1. Familiarization with the data. I read each transcript multiple times while listening to audio recordings to ensure accuracy and deepen immersion in the data.
2. Generating initial codes. I manually coded transcripts using Microsoft Word's highlight and comment features to identify meaningful units relevant to employee retention strategies.

3. Searching for themes. I organized similar codes into potential themes that reflected broader patterns across participants' experiences.
4. Reviewing themes. I refined and validated themes by rereading all coded extracts and entire transcripts to ensure coherence and distinctiveness among themes.
5. Defining and naming themes. I developed clear definitions and concise names for each theme to capture their essence and relevance to the research question accurately.
6. Producing the report. I synthesized the findings into a narrative report, selecting vivid excerpts to illustrate each theme and integrating them with existing literature to highlight implications for health care retention practices in Hawaii.

During the research process, I employed several strategies to enhance the trustworthiness, credibility, and validity of the project's final results. After each interview, I reviewed the verbatim transcripts for comparison with the original audio recordings, which increased the accuracy of the responses to my questions and minimized the number of transcription errors. I attempted to maintain the participants' voices as prominent as possible during the analysis process to ensure confirmability. Member checking is one of the most common practices used to increase the credibility of qualitative research (Birt et al., 2016). As soon as each interview was completed, I created a summary of the results and my interpretations and sent it to the participant via email for confirmation of the correctness of their responses to the questions and, if

necessary, for additional explanation or clarification. In this way, I ensured that the interpretation accurately reflected the participant's intended meaning.

I reached the point of data saturation after the eighth interview. At that point, no new codes and themes were generated, and saturation was additionally confirmed by recognizing redundancy in the participant responses, thus providing evidence that the data were adequate and rich. Publications from 2022 support this idea, pointing out that saturation is reached when new data no longer brings any new information or themes, thus ensuring depth and completeness (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). The assessment of saturation in this project, in other words, served as a checkpoint to verify that the resulting themes are not only representative of the participants' experiences but also sufficiently saturated.

To maintain dependability and confirmability, I employed multiple types of triangulations as recommended by Denzin (2017), specifically methodological triangulation and data source triangulation. Triangulation is vital to enhance research rigor, credibility, validity, and reliability by viewing the phenomenon from different perspectives and reducing researcher bias (Donkoh, 2023). Therefore, the use of triangulation in this research project enhanced the trustworthiness of the results, as the convergence of evidence across methods and data sources increased confidence that the identified themes reflect participants' perspectives rather than merely reflect the researchers' interpretations.

Methodological Triangulation. I used multiple data collection methods to gather comprehensive information about employee retention strategies. Primary data sources

included semistructured interviews with health care leaders, while secondary data sources encompassed organizational documents, industry reports, and relevant policy materials. This approach allowed me to synthesize themes across different data types, comparing interview findings with documentary evidence to validate emerging patterns (Carter et al., 2014).

Data Source Triangulation. I collected data from multiple participants across different health care organizations and geographic locations within Hawaii, ensuring diverse perspectives on retention strategies. Additionally, I triangulated across time by reviewing historical retention data and current practices, and across organizational levels by interviewing leaders in various positions and departments. This multidimensional approach helped verify themes that emerged consistently across different sources and contexts (Tisdell et al., 2025).

Theory Triangulation. I integrated my findings with multiple theoretical perspectives, primarily using the conceptual framework theory for my project while also considering alternative theoretical lenses from the literature. This approach helped identify different aspects of the retention phenomenon and filled gaps in understanding by examining themes through various theoretical viewpoints.

Throughout the triangulation process, I maintained detailed documentation in my research log and reflective journal, creating an audit trail that tracked how different data sources informed and validated emerging themes. I systematically compared coded interview data with reflective journal insights, research log observations, and theoretical propositions from the literature. When themes appeared consistently across multiple data

sources and methods, I considered them validated. Any discrepancies between sources prompted deeper analysis and additional member checking to ensure accurate interpretation. This comprehensive triangulation approach enhanced the internal coherence, credibility, and transferability of the results (Nowell et al., 2017).

Summary

In this section, I presented the detailed data analysis plan used in this qualitative pragmatic project. I employed a systematic approach, utilizing tracking and auditing through research logs, reflective journals, cataloging and labeling, and data management. I followed thematic analysis to identify themes, which was aided by Microsoft Word's highlight and comment features for coding transcripts and Microsoft Excel for organizing and analyzing coded themes, along with visual mind mapping. I addressed and ensured reliability and validity through member checking, transcript review, triangulation, and saturation. The thorough approach of this project yielded trustworthy and transferable findings that apply to the practice of health care leadership in Hawaii.

Section 3: Data and Professional Practice

Project Results

The purpose of this qualitative pragmatic inquiry was to explore strategies health care leaders use to improve employee retention. The overarching research question underpinning the project was, What strategies do health care leaders use to successfully retain employees? Analysis of interview data and public organizational documents revealed six themes: (a) competitive compensation and benefits, (b) professional development and training, (c) recognition and rewards, (d) work–life balance and flexibility, (e) effective leadership and communication, and (f) employee engagement and support systems. These themes align with Herzberg’s two-factor theory, which differentiates between hygiene factors that reduce dissatisfaction and motivator factors that foster long-term satisfaction.

Data Analysis

I analyzed data in six phases of thematic analysis as outlined in qualitative best practices. During the first phase, the interview transcripts were repeatedly reviewed to enhance familiarity with the collected information. In the second phase, open coding was used to identify textually meaningful units related to employee retention and to recurring references to compensation, leadership behaviors, development opportunities, recognition practices, work–life balance, and engagement. Third, related codes were clustered into categories to identify patterns that span participants and/or organizational documents. For instance, statements about wages, benefits, and incentives were clustered into categories reflecting compensation-related ideas. In contrast, statements about trust, communication,

and transparency were grouped into categories centered on leadership practices. Fourth, the categories were refined to ensure internal consistency and conceptual clarity. Fifth, the resulting categories were used to identify themes that summarized the categories and captured the nature and essence of the participants' experiences and the organization's practices. Finally, themes were cross-checked against the research question to ensure they directly addressed the question of which strategies health care leaders use to retain employees.

Overview of Emergent Themes

The analytical process identified six themes that collectively described how health care leaders manage employee retention. These themes are summarized in Table 2 and discussed in detail in the sections that follow. The analysis revealed six interrelated themes: (a) competitive compensation and benefits, (b) professional development and training, (c) recognition and rewards, (d) work–life balance and flexibility, (e) effective leadership and communication, and (f) employee engagement and support systems. Together, these themes demonstrate that retention strategies in health care settings involve both structural conditions and relational leadership practices.

Table 2
Summary of Emergent Themes

Theme	Description	Interview excerpt
Compensation and benefits	Pay, benefits, and financial incentives	“Pay is the first reason people stay or leave.”
Professional development	Training, certifications, advancement	“Growth opportunities keep people engaged.”

Recognition and rewards	Appreciation, awards, praise	“A simple thank-you goes a long way.”
Work–life balance	Scheduling, workload, flexibility	“Burnout decreases when schedules are flexible.”
Leadership and communication	Trust, transparency, support	“Employees quit leaders, not jobs.”

Theme 1: Competitive Compensation and Benefits

Participating health care leaders consistently described salary and benefits as basic retention strategies. One health care leader interviewed for this project expressed that “competitive wages speak to the value you provide your employees and also to a sense of fairness. This minimizes the chance of disgruntled or high-turnover employees.” This response was mirrored in other studies (Labrague et al., 2020), which indicated that salaries and benefits packages were considered critical to maintaining a stable workforce.

This finding aligns with prior research demonstrating that inadequate compensation is a primary contributor to dissatisfaction and turnover among health care professionals. Shanafelt et al. (2019) found that perceived inequities in pay and benefits exacerbate emotional disengagement among health care workers, undermining workforce stability. More recently, Grumbach & Willard-Grace (2025) reported that competitive compensation structures serve as a critical mechanism for reducing employee dissatisfaction and sustaining employee commitment in health care organizations.

These studies reinforce the interpretation that compensation functions as a baseline requirement rather than a motivational enhancer. Consistent with Herzberg et al.’s (1959) motivation–hygiene theory, salary and benefits operate as hygiene factors that

prevent dissatisfaction but do not independently foster long-term motivation or engagement. The leaders interviewed in this project echoed this perspective, explaining that competitive wages establish a sense of fairness and value that minimizes resentment and turnover but must be paired with other strategies—such as recognition and professional development—to sustain motivation.

These findings answer the research question by demonstrating that health care leaders prioritize compensation as a necessary precondition for employee retention. Without competitive pay structures, leaders reported difficulty maintaining workforce stability regardless of other retention initiatives. Thus, compensation emerged as a foundational element upon which more comprehensive, motivation-driven retention strategies can be effectively built.

Theme 2: Professional Development and Training

Participants mentioned pathways for advancement, certifications, and mentorship as important sources of intrinsic motivation that impacted retention. Most participants mentioned professional development as a significant factor for retention, with some leaders also explaining that staff were more engaged when they felt like they had a path for growth. One health care leader in the research project said, “when employees can see a future for themselves here—through certifications, mentorship or advancement—they are more invested in staying.” Another leader mentioned that formal development pathways “communicated that the organization was willing to invest in its people, not just expect productivity.”

This was also supported in the literature, as research shows that professional development and growth opportunities are linked with commitment and retention. Abdallah Yassine and Jacobs (2025) found that access to training and career advancement strengthened organizational commitment and decreased turnover intention in health care staff. Fosah and Llahana (2025) also found that growth pathways were essential to employee motivation and engagement, and that these pathways needed to be supported by leadership.

These findings are similar to the motivation–hygiene theory (Herzberg et al., 1959; Alrawahai et al., 2020), as these development-related activities were considered intrinsic factors that could impact satisfaction. This was supported by leaders in this project, as they described development initiatives as key tools to extend beyond hygiene factors and influence employee fulfillment. Leaders who were supportive of growth and development strengthened intrinsic motivating factors that led to satisfaction, commitment, and long-term retention, and development-focused leadership was a key means for addressing turnover.

Theme 3: Recognition and Rewards

The leaders reported that formal recognition programs and informal gestures of appreciation were particularly effective in elevating morale and loyalty. The participants noted that when an employee's contribution is recognized, it validates their sense of value and belonging and motivates them to remain committed. The organizational documents also showed evidence of recognition activities within the engagement efforts. The results aligned with prior empirical findings, indicating that recognition contributes to job

satisfaction and reduces turnover (Jo & Shin, 2025). In this sense, recognition is an effective motivator because it validates employees' work and reaffirms a sense of meaningful work (Herzberg et al., 1959). The present findings extend the literature by corroborating that recognition was relevant for leaders in the current health care context of stress and shortages. Therefore, the recognition response addressed the research question by demonstrating that leaders retain employees through relational validation rather than material rewards.

Theme 4: Work–Life Balance and Flexibility

Flexible scheduling, manageable workloads, and wellness programs were discussed throughout interviews as additional strategies for employee retention. Participants described flexibility as a way of allowing employees to more effectively balance work and home demands, which lessened negative stressors and maintained work engagement. Several leaders also described flexibility as a way to decrease emotional exhaustion and improve morale. One participant reported that “when staff are given flexible scheduling options, they are better able to manage family responsibilities and recover emotionally, which makes them more likely to stay.” Another leader noted that manageable workloads and wellness initiatives “help prevent burnout before it reaches the point where employees start looking elsewhere.”

These findings were in line with the literature related to work–life balance as a retention strategy in health care organizations, especially given the unique postpandemic environment that had put additional strain on workloads. Yulia et al. (2025) found that increased workloads and decreased flexibility led to higher levels of burnout and turnover

intention among health care professionals. In a similar study, Kehui et al. (2025) found that flexible work practices led to decreased dissatisfaction from work overload and improved employee well-being. The combined evidence from these studies supported the health care leaders' views that flexibility and workload acted as a protective factor for stressors that led to turnover.

From a theoretical perspective, these results were aligned with Herzberg's motivation–hygiene theory, in which flexible scheduling and workload balance were hygiene-related conditions that removed dissatisfaction, but did not have a direct impact on motivation. Leaders in this study framed flexibility as a necessary practice to promote employee well-being and maintain engagement in a high-stress health care environment. The results suggested that work–life balance and flexibility were effective retention factors that removed stressors and supported well-being, and the answer to the research question was that a balanced work environment enabled employee retention in health care organizations by how and why.

Theme 5: Effective Leadership and Communication

Participants also identified trust, clarity, transparency, and ongoing support as critical attributes of successful leadership. Interviewees from leadership positions in public organizations similarly suggested that employees are more likely to be retained when managers establish clear expectations and listen to the employees' needs. Management's decision-making was also identified as an important factor. In accordance with these observations, a closer examination of public organizations' documents revealed that leadership development initiatives were regularly established to improve

communication and accountability and encourage employee-oriented leadership (Abdallah Yassine & Jacobs, 2025).

These results are in line with AbdELhay et al. (2025), who investigated the relationship between transformational leadership and nurse retention. Transformational leadership is considered a leadership behavior that is supportive and can build trust (AbdELhay et al., 2025). The project's findings suggested that transformational leadership is positively related to job satisfaction and nurse retention in health care. To account for this connection, Herzberg's theory of motivation can be used to explain the identified results further. Herzberg's theory is built around the central idea of intrinsic motivation and satisfaction at work, which includes, among the most important factors, recognition, achievement, and personal growth (Alshmemri et al., 2017). Leadership can be viewed as a tool that influences and increases these factors to satisfy employees' intrinsic motivation. The presented results also confirm that management in health care organizations affects turnover by contributing to employees' sense of value and purpose. It can also be suggested that, overall, the project results directly answer the research question that effective leadership is the most successful retention strategy.

Theme 6: Employee Engagement and Support Systems

Participants indicated that employee engagement initiatives, such as peer support, wellness activities, and team-building events, helped employees feel connected to and committed to their work and organizations. Participants also noted that wellness initiatives and engagement efforts that facilitated connections among staff were important for reducing stress. These sentiments were also reflected in publicly available

organizational documents, where formal engagement and wellness programs, as well as policies, emphasized improving psychological health and team collaboration throughout health care units, consistent with findings reported in prior research on employee engagement and organizational support (Abdallah Yassine & Jacobs, 2025; Shanafelt et al., 2019).

These findings were consistent with previous research on engagement, as noted earlier in this section. Employee engagement programs have been shown to decrease workplace stress and promote staff retention (Yalim et al., 2025). In this project, engagement was not limited to informal morale or social drivers; rather, it functioned as part of a broader network of organizational support that employees could rely on and that fostered a sense of belonging and team cohesion.

From a motivational perspective, these findings related to Herzberg's two-factor motivation theory, in which engagement, belonging, purpose, and recognition functioned as intrinsic motivators that enhanced job satisfaction when supported by leadership (Dunnette & Herzberg, 1967). The project findings suggested that staff engagement initiatives that promoted connection and well-being had a direct impact on employee retention by strengthening these intrinsic motivators.

When staff experienced a sense of belonging and togetherness and felt cared for through organizational support programs, leaders reported increased motivational drivers that contributed to lower stress levels and higher retention. Staff engagement initiatives and support programs therefore addressed the research question by demonstrating how leaders maintained employee commitment beyond structural workplace variables.

Overall, the themes indicated that effective employee retention in health care required simultaneous attention to hygiene factors, such as pay, benefits, and scheduling, and motivator factors, such as recognition, leadership, and engagement. This integrated approach reinforced that retention was achieved through coordinated leadership strategies that addressed both organizational conditions and employee experience, consistent with existing research.

Business Contributions and Recommendations for Professional Practice

The findings contribute new insights for health care leaders and the research-scholar community by demonstrating that effective retention requires integrating structural supports with relational leadership practices. The results showed that retention is both a strategic and cultural priority, with implications for workforce stability, operational efficiency, and quality of care. A major business contribution of this project is the development of a practical retention framework that aligns Herzberg's two-factor theory with contemporary leadership challenges in health care (Alrawahi et al., 2020). Stabilizing hygiene factors—competitive pay, benefits, and schedules—provides a foundation that reduces dissatisfaction (Rai et al., 2021). Building on this, motivator factors—recognition, communication, growth, and engagement—strengthen long-term organizational commitment. Recent research confirms that organizations combining both categories experience improved morale and reduced turnover.

A second contribution is the demonstration that transformational leadership behaviors—trust-building, communication, mentoring, and empathy—serve as powerful retention levers. Studies like AbdELhay et al. (2025) have shown that transformational

leadership predicts job satisfaction and retention across health care settings. The findings further support investing in leadership development programs that equip managers to cultivate psychological safety, recognition, and support.

A third contribution lies in emphasizing the strategic role of professional development. Participants described development opportunities as essential to intrinsic motivation and organizational loyalty. Prior scholarship, like Abdallah Yassine and Jacobs (2025), has shown that ongoing training and career pathways reduce turnover and improve employee engagement. Health care leaders can operationalize these findings by establishing structured mentoring, tuition support, and role advancement pathways.

A fourth contribution is the identification of employee engagement and wellness programs as critical retention tools. Yalim et al. (2025) indicated that peer support and wellness initiatives reduce stress and enhance well-being. Aligning engagement programs with organizational values strengthens culture and performance.

Recommendations for Professional Practice

This set of recommendations are based on the results from this qualitative research project. The recommendations are also guided by Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory (Herzberg et al., 1959). The results of the research project show that employee retention is not based on a single construct; rather, it comprises hygiene and motivator factors. This means that healthcare leaders need to work on the areas that are mentioned below, including the extrinsic areas (Hygiene Factors: Salary, Company Policies, and Work Conditions) and intrinsic areas (Motivator Factors: Recognition, Supportive Leadership, Growth, and Engagement). This will help turn retention from a

nebulous organizational challenge into tangible evidence-based leadership and management actions. Recommendations for retention within the research project focused on both extrinsic and intrinsic actions that affect employee satisfaction and intent. The following recommendations will help build a strong foundation of recommendations for bolstering workforce stability, reducing turnover, and supporting long-term organizational performance in complex and dynamic healthcare contexts.

1. Develop integrated retention frameworks. Health care leaders need to account for all the factors that influence employee job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. To address the intrinsic motivators, external motivators, and contextual conditions, the retention program should involve multiple stakeholders (Hamby & Smock, 2025).
2. Invest in leadership development. Transformational leadership is a key organizational resource to increase job satisfaction (AbdELhay et al., 2025). Primarily, the employees in different workplace units need recognition and inspiration, which can be achieved through effective leadership. In Hawaii, cultural diversity is also inevitable, and hence, promoting leaders' cultural intelligence can promote job satisfaction and retention.
3. Implement structured recognition systems. While the intrinsic motivation factors are key to promoting retention, the research shows the need for comprehensive efforts that include recognition (Jo & Shin, 2025). While team leaders' recognition can boost self-esteem, structured recognition efforts will

respond to the qualified staff's personal and professional needs, promoting retention.

4. Enhancing work–life balance initiatives. It is important to health care settings because work–life balance have been shown to serve as effective retention strategies for health care workers (Ekanem & Agiren, 2025). Promoting flexibility, including through information technology (IT), will support work–life balance.
5. Expand professional development programs. Employees' professional needs include enhancing skills and competency to address emerging health care needs (Abdallah Yassine & Jacobs, 2025). In consideration of both motivational and hygiene factors, structured training programs aligned to the unique needs of the staff will guarantee a positive outcome.
6. Use data-driven monitoring of retention indicators. The research findings illustrate the participants' emphasis on different needs. The unique employee needs in a health care setting can be enhanced through data analytics (Cho et al., 2025). In addition to structured feedback and observation, a comprehensive analysis of the employee behavior can help predict retention behavior.

The research project provides health care leaders with insights which significantly impact their professional practice. Employee retention, a common business issue, was given meaning from a professional practice perspective. That is, an elusive concept within the practice of an organization can be translated to specific leadership and

management practices. The research project found that leaders can make retention actionable by aligning pay, leadership behaviors, engagement, and development with motivation theory. If retention is actionable, leaders can improve staff stability, reduce turnover costs, and enhance both efficiency and quality of care. This evidence-based project gives leaders information they can use when making decisions that impact staffing, leadership, and employee support, which will lead to a healthier, more sustainable organization within today's high-demand health care environment.

Implications for Social Change

The findings of this project have significant implications for the promotion of positive social change through the strategic focus on effective employee retention in health care organizations. By bridging motivation theory and current literature, the research findings support Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory (Dunnette & Herzberg, 1967; Herzberg et al., 1959) revealing that health care professionals place value on both extrinsic factors such as remuneration and work-life balance and intrinsic motivators like recognition, career advancement opportunities, and supportive leadership practices. The alignment of the project results with existing literature on health care professionals' experiences in high-turnover, high-stress work environments further substantiates the correlation between improved retention strategies and decreased burnout, emotional exhaustion, and disengagement among employees (Grumbach & Willard-Grace, 2025; Hämmig, 2018). In other words, the results of this project have verified that retention-oriented leadership strategies contribute to the greater well-being and psychological sustainability of health care workers.

On an organizational level, improved retention efforts promote workforce stability, continuity of care, and long-term organizational performance. Health care institutions that prioritize the professional development and recognition of their employees are more likely to retain experienced professionals and reduce turnover-related costs and disruptions (Jo & Shin, 2025; Shiri et al., 2023). Consistent with existing literature, the results of this project emphasized that stable and experienced health care teams support stronger care processes and improved outcomes, including enhanced continuity of services and fewer adverse events (Arredondo et al., 2024; Hallet et al., 2023). The project's findings further suggested that retention strategies, when informed by motivation theory, can support not only individual employee well-being but also the overall resilience and quality of care within health care organizations.

In terms of broader social change, the impact of improved retention strategies is reflected in the community through enhanced patient trust and continuity of care. Decreased turnover rates allow patients to establish and maintain long-term relationships with health care providers, which can be especially crucial for managing chronic conditions and addressing complex health care needs (Grumbach & Willard-Grace, 2025). When health care professionals work in environments where they receive adequate support, manageable workloads, and opportunities for growth and recognition, they are more likely to stay emotionally present and engaged in their roles. The project findings suggested that leadership-driven retention strategies not only support individual employees but also contribute to the creation of healthier work environments. This, in

turn, positively impacts the broader health care system and the community's overall health outcomes.

In summary, this research project contributes to positive social change and the support of human-centered leadership by placing employee retention at the core of leadership responsibilities, rather than treating it as a metric or an organizational goal alone. The incorporation of the participants' perspectives alongside existing motivation theory and related, recent scholarship has illuminated the pathways to intentional leadership practices that create work environments where health care professionals can feel genuinely valued, supported, and motivated to remain committed to their chosen organization. As a scholar-practitioner, I have been enriched by a greater understanding of how evidence-based employee retention strategies can lead to individual health care professionals' greater well-being while also strengthening organizational sustainability and positively affecting patient care and community health. This understanding reinforces the importance of health care leaders' responsibility to prioritize employee motivation and well-being as essential components of sustainable and socially impactful health care delivery.

Recommendations for Future Study

Future researchers should build upon the findings of this project by addressing the assumptions and limitations identified in Section 1. Because the project characteristics assumed that health care leaders would respond openly and accurately, future researchers should consider incorporating data triangulation—such as employee surveys, direct observations, or organizational performance metrics—to validate self-reported leadership

practices (AbdELhay et al., 2025; Rai et al., 2021). Expanding data sources would enhance credibility and dependability.

The assumption that retention factors are consistent across settings warrants comparative studies across regions and organization types. Broader sampling would strengthen generalizability. Mixed-methods designs combining interviews with quantitative turnover and satisfaction data would also enhance validity (Hermes et al., 2025). To address geographic limitations, future research should include health care organizations beyond Hawaii. Additional strategies—such as anonymous interviews, diverse participant groups, multiple coders, and longitudinal research—would help mitigate bias, strengthen transferability, and deepen insight into retention dynamics.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative pragmatic inquiry was to identify strategies health care leaders use to improve employee retention. Analysis revealed six themes aligned with Herzberg's two-factor theory: compensation and benefits, professional development, recognition, work–life balance, effective leadership, and employee engagement (Herzberg et al., 1959). These findings support recent scholarship demonstrating that leadership, recognition, growth opportunities, and balance enhance commitment and reduce turnover (Abdallah Yassine & Jacobs, 2025; AbdELhay et al., 2025; Wynendaele et al., 2025; Yalim et al., 2025; Yulia et al., 2025). Health care organizational leaders who implement evidence-based retention strategies will be better positioned to cultivate a resilient, motivated workforce and deliver high-quality patient care.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

The following interview questions were used to collect data from the participants:

1. What are your role and responsibilities as a health care administrator?
2. In your experience, how do you define and measure employee satisfaction within the health care industry?
3. What are the most significant challenges related to employee satisfaction that led to turnover in health care administration today?
4. What are the main factors leading to employees leaving the health care industry?
5. What successful retention strategies have you used to reduce voluntary employee turnover in the health care industry?
6. What positive motivational strategies have you used to keep employees from quitting?
7. What specific programs or initiatives have you implemented to reduce voluntary employee turnover in the health care industry successfully?
8. What examples could you share about successful strategies or initiatives you have observed that improve the employee satisfaction experience?
9. What recommendations would you offer other health care administrators in Hawaii who are seeking to improve job satisfaction and reduce employee turnover?
10. What else would you like to say about your strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover in the health care industry?

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Action	Script
<p>Introduce the interview and set the stage—often over a meal or coffee.</p>	<p>"Hello, thank you for taking the time to participate in this research study. I appreciate the criticality you attach to the expected findings, and I hope to add to the literature that develops strategies to retain health care employees. I have been working on a degree for a Doctor of Business Administration for the past few years. In this study, I am exploring the strategies business leaders of health care enterprises use to retain employees."</p> <p>"A few weeks ago, you agreed to sign an informed consent form. Do you have any questions for me or any matter that requires my attention? This interview is confidential, and your identity and that of your organization shall remain anonymous and represented by codes."</p> <p>"I will collect data using semistructured interview questions. The idea is to allow you to explain any strategies, events, and memories that answer the interview questions. During your narration, I may prompt you for further explanation and details."</p> <p>"I will need to record your responses so that I do not miss anything."</p> <p>"Note that you may rescind your decision to participate in the research anytime."</p>
<p>Ask interview questions to get in-depth responses.</p> <p>Listen for nonverbal cues.</p> <p>Paraphrase as needed.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are your role and responsibilities as a health care administrator? <li>2. In your experience, how do you define and measure employee satisfaction within the health care industry? <li>3. What are the most significant challenges related to employee satisfaction that lead to turnover in health care administration today?

Action	Script
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. What are the main factors leading to employees leaving the health care industry? 5. What successful retention strategies have you used to reduce voluntary employee turnover in the health care industry? 6. What positive motivational strategies have you used to keep employees from quitting? 7. What specific programs or initiatives have you implemented to reduce voluntary employee turnover in the health care industry successfully? 8. What examples could you share about successful strategies or initiatives you have observed that improve the employee satisfaction experience? 9. What recommendations would you offer other health care administrators in Hawaii who are seeking to improve job satisfaction and reduce employee turnover?
Schedule transcript review either by phone or email.	"In a few days, I will need your assistance in authenticating my understanding of your responses to the interview questions as part of the research process. You may adjust the script or add to your initial responses if needed. I will send the transcript by email, and we can discuss it by phone if you agree."
Introduce a member checking review and set the stage.	"Thank you for agreeing to meet me today to finalize what I heard from you during the interview and the meaning I have provided for each response."
Wrap up the interview by thanking participants.	"Your contribution to this doctoral research has been most impressive, and I thank you very much for helping me to achieve the doctoral degree. I hope you will find the research findings beneficial to your organization and professional development."