

2016

# Strategies to Reduce Voluntary Employee Turnover in Small Business

Angel M. Major  
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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Angel Major

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
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Walden University  
2016

Abstract

Strategies to Reduce Voluntary Employee Turnover in Small Business

by

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MA, University of North Carolina at Wilmington, 2006

BA, University of North Carolina at Wilmington, 2003

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

April 2016

## Abstract

Increasing turnover rates are costly to businesses, causing problems with workloads and workflow. The annual resignation rate in the United States has approached 25%, which small business owners cannot afford. Guided by the Herzberg 2-factor theory, the purpose of this descriptive case study was to explore what strategies some small business owners have used to reduce voluntary employee turnover in the United States. Data saturation was achieved after conducting semistructured interviews and document reviews with 4 small business owners in southeast North Carolina who have been in business for at least 5 years and have not experienced any voluntary employee resignations within the past year. Data interpretations from the interview data were derived via an inductive analytic coding process; these interpretations were then triangulated with emergent themes derived from small business owners' policies, procedures, and personnel manuals. Participants noted the need for training, equitable employee compensation, a professional work environment, and open effective communication as the top contributing factors to reducing voluntary employee turnover. The small business owners indicated the use of professionalism contributes to a positive work environment and recognized education as a factor of voluntary employee turnover. Social implications include the potential to decrease voluntary employee turnover in small businesses, thus contributing to the retention of skilled employees, reducing unemployment, and decreasing revenue losses.

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## Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral study to my three Angels...Anaya, Jermaine “Aaron”, and Aiden. I strive to be the best I can be to teach you to do the same. You can be and do anything you want to as long as God is first in your life and with prayer. Second, I dedicate this to my entire family. With God everything is possible; we can do anything with prayer. I also dedicated this to my cousin, the late Clifton Skyes Jr., who promised me he would be with me at graduation; though not here in flesh, I know you are with me in spirit. Finally, I dedicate this to my grandfather, the late Melvin Thompson Jr., I did not go to Fayetteville State University, but I still strived for excellence and pursued a terminal degree.

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## Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Small business owners realize that the most valuable assets are employees (Brock & Buckley, 2013). Some small business owners can offer a Monday through Friday, 8 hour workday, which may include a high salary and benefits to avoid voluntary employee turnover (Ryu & Lee, 2013). The annual resignation rate in the United States typically approaches 25 %, which small business owners cannot afford (Allen, Bryant, & Vardaman, 2010). Small business owners agree voluntary employee turnover is a growing and expensive business issue (Patel & Conklin, 2012; Smith, Oczkowski, & Smith, 2011). I explored small business owners' strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover. In this section, I described the background of the problem, problem statement, purpose statement, nature of study, research questions, conceptual framework, and provided a literature review.

### **Background of the Problem**

A problem facing leaders of companies is voluntary employee turnover (Haar & White, 2013). Voluntary employee turnover can negatively influence employee morale and organizational effectiveness, affecting profitability (Dong, Mitchell, Lee, Holtom, & Hinkin, 2012; Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013). Unlike leaders of some large corporations, many small business owners cannot afford the loss of revenue, knowledge, and experience of their employees (Harr & White, 2013). Specifically, small business owners and organizational leaders should consider the development of strategies to decrease voluntary turnover to maintain a business leader's most valuable asset, the employee (Dong et al., 2012).

An employee's dissatisfaction of a job exists for various reasons. The Herzberg two factor theory, developed in 1959, illustrated factors in the workplace that cause satisfaction of the job and a separate set of factors that contribute to employee dissatisfaction (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959). Herzberg developed the Herzberg's motivation hygiene theory and dual factor theory (Herzberg et al., 1959). Herzberg (1974) explored if motivation and job satisfaction influenced an employee's decision to leave a job. An alternate theory is the expectancy theory. Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory suggested employee behavior results from conscious choices to increase pleasure and minimize pain (Nyberg, 2010; Vroom, 1964).

Vroom (1964) stated that employees base their job performance on personality, knowledge, and experiences. Vroom asserted the manifestation of what the employee values, motivates his or her actions. Herzberg (1959) and Vroom (1964) both attempted to rationalize an individual's motivation and job satisfaction by focusing on two different aspects and methods. Herzberg's (1959) two factor theory, used as the conceptual framework of the study, was most appropriate to assist in the exploration of strategies small business owners use to reduce voluntary employee turnover in their organization. Employees are essential to business success and a valuable asset, including employees in all aspects of business will provide a stimulating work environment (Hee & Ling, 2011). Voluntary employee turnover is a pressing issue as the consequences of disruptions in service creates turmoil (Pitts, Marvel, & Fernandez, 2011). Add a summarizing sentence or two to synthesize your ideas and provide a strong conclusion for the paragraph and section.

### **Problem Statement**

Increasing turnover rates causes problems with workloads and workflow that compound over time (Nyberg & Ployhart, 2013). The United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014) reported the annual total separations in 2013 consisted of 48,329 employees in private businesses. The general business problem was that small business owners' are incurring revenue losses from voluntary employee turnover (Kwon, Chung, Roh, Chadwick, & Lawler, 2012). The specific business problem was that some small business owners lack strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive case study was to explore what strategies some small business owners use to reduce voluntary employee turnover. The populations for this study consisted of four small business owners in southeast North Carolina. These small business owners must have been in business for at least 5 years and have not experienced any voluntary employee resignations within the past year. The population might provide information on how to reduce voluntary employee turnover at small businesses. The information provided by small business owners may contribute to social change through creation of strategies to reduce voluntary turnover. The recommendations from this study may offer small business owners strategies to reduce future voluntary turnover. The implication for positive social change might result from sustainable small business practices, increases in tax revenue, increase in job, increase in sales revenue, and reductions in the unemployment rate.

### **Nature of the Study**

Bose and Luo (2011) noted the importance of using a method to facilitate a structured process for a researcher to conduct the research process. A qualitative research method was appropriate to allow me to explore in depth issues (Yin, 2012). A qualitative research method is appropriate for exploring and understanding how individuals have experienced a phenomenon (Bernard, 2013). Understanding strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover is important as this understanding may promote awareness of decreasing voluntary turnover rates and attaining continued business growth. Yin recommended the qualitative method of research to understand social, procedural, ideological, and philosophical thinking. This method in conjunction with the descriptive case study design involves an open-ended data collection style where participants guide the direction of the study with their inputs.

Yin (2012) suggested researchers might explore complexities in processes from the viewpoint of participants. The quantitative research method is insufficient and not appropriate as the purpose of the study is not to test the hypothesis, make prediction, or to evaluate cause and effect of clinical trials (Barratt, Choi, & Li, 2011; Brannen & Moss, 2012; Walshe, 2011; Weisburd, 2010). A researcher may use a mixed method, which is the combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods to collect and analyze data (Brannen & Moss, 2012; Yin, 2012). The mixed method approach provides comprehensive understanding of the problem through an interpretive and statistical perspective, which is not the intent for this study (Yin, 2012). Specifically, I proposed to explore a phenomenon where the participants share the experience, a qualitative method

is appropriate because the research question does not require both qualitative and quantitative methods (Bernard, 2013).

Amerson (2011) indicated a case study design might be suitable to understanding a simple or complex issue or object and may add knowledge or further reinforce what may be common from past research. The use of a phenomenological design is appropriate when a researcher examines lived experiences of participants through engagement to develop themes regarding the phenomenon, which was not the intent of my study (Yin, 2012). A researcher may consider other designs options such as phenomenology, narrative, and case study. Yin recommended a descriptive case study when a researcher explored experiences, focusing on one particular industry or group. The use of the descriptive case study is the best design for me to understand the strategies of small business owners. Given that I proposed to explore the experiences of three to six small business owners in southeast North Carolina; the descriptive case study best supported my research.

### **Research Question**

The central research question for this study was, what strategies do small business owners use to reduce voluntary employee turnover? From this central reference of inquiry, I developed interview questions which I have listed below and in Appendix A.

### **Interview Questions**

1. What experiences could you share concerning voluntary turnover in your business within the past 3 years?

2. What strategies do you perceive could reduce voluntary employee turnover and increase employee retention in a small business organization?
3. What do you think caused employees to continue employment in your small business?
4. What type of training and career opportunities do you offer employees?
5. What type of employer and employee relationships have you established?
6. What are the primary components for effective communication with your employees?
7. Do you believe that training and career opportunities would reduce employee voluntary turnover?
8. What information could you share concerning why past employees voluntary left your company?
9. As a result of past voluntary employee turnover, what strategies have you previously used in the past that you used in 2015?
10. What further information would you like to add regarding strategies that other small business owners might use to reduce voluntary employee turnover?

### **Conceptual Framework**

The Herzberg two factor theory, developed in 1959, concerns factors in the workplace that cause satisfaction for the job and a separate set of factors that contribute to employee dissatisfaction (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959). I choose the



Herzberg two factor theory to explore the issues that may affect voluntary employee turnover to gain a deeper understanding of employee satisfaction and dissatisfaction factors of a job. Herzberg developed the motivation *hygiene theory* and *dual-factor theory* (Herzberg et al., 1959). Herzberg (1974) noted that motivation and job satisfaction influenced an employee's decision to leave a job (Herzberg et al., 1959). Herzberg (1974) referred to two sets of needs, hygienic and growth, in relation to work (Herzberg et al., 1959). Hygienic needs consist of interpersonal relationships, the rewards system, and salary, which should motivate employees (Herzberg, 1987). However, if not motivated, the employee will not be satisfied (Herzberg et al., 1959). The second set of needs known as growth needs, consisted of motivation factors, such as recognition of the work an employee completed, achievement, and advancement (Herzberg et al., 1959). Add summarization for better synthesis.

I used Herzberg's two factor theory in this study to explore strategies small business owners used to reduce voluntary employee turnover in their organization. Communication between employees and managers reflecting a caring and supportive work environment and relationship may lead to a decrease in voluntary employee turnover (Allen & Shanock, 2013). The incorporation of Herzberg's two factor theory into the conceptual framework of the study assisted in identification and exploration of small business owners' strategies reducing voluntary employee turnover

### **Definition of Terms**

The definitions of the terms presented within the study reference to professional and scholarly sources. The goal of a definition section is to explain the definition to

provide clarity to the readers and to prevent misinterpretation terms. No unique words are in this study.

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

#### **Assumptions**

Martin and Parmar (2012) defined assumptions as unverified facts that a researcher assumed as truthful. I assumed that the small business owners would provide ethical, honest, and truthful answers. Additional assumptions was that small business owners would respond quickly and provide detailed responses that may prompt additional open ended questions. A final assumption was that the questions I developed resulted in the business owners describing what strategies' they developed and deployed to reduce voluntary employee turnover in their small businesses (Wikman, 2006).

#### **Limitations**

Poddar and Donthu (2011) suggested weakness within a study defined limitations. A limitation of this study is the location. I sought participants who were willing to participate from the same group and geographic location. The location may limit the variety of experiences and perceptions. Another limitation was the time of the study and that the sample may not prove to be representative of the entire small business population throughout the southeastern state of North Carolina. To overcome that potential limitation, I originally invited three small business owners to participate in the study and continue interviewing participants until I demonstrated data saturation at four business owners.

## **Delimitations**

Alina, Mathis, and Oriole (2012) suggested that delimitations affect the scope of the study. The scope of this study is to explore what strategies some small business owners use to reduce voluntary turnover. A delimitation is that small business owners in southeastern North Carolina will represent an accurate representation of current strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover intention in small business.

## **Significance of the Study**

### **Contribution to Business Practice**

The sharing of information between small business owners' strategies may enhance the employer and employee relationship and reduce voluntary employee turnover (Tymon, Stumpf, & Smith, 2011). Limited current literature exists on reduction strategies of voluntary employee turnover within the academic literature. Through qualitative studies researchers have direct insight into experiences of participants gaining a better understanding of the factors contributing to the participants' situation (Eide & Showalter, 2012). The research findings may be of value to small business owners and organizational leaders in providing insights for developing strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover. Hee and Ling (2011) suggested knowing the factors that contribute to voluntary employee turnover would enable effective strategies to reduce voluntary turnover. Small business owners face economic loss with voluntary employee turnover, which includes nonmonetary losses such as expertise, experience, and loss of knowledge (Hee & Ling, 2011). As small business owners and managers develop effective strategies

to reduce voluntary employee turnover, the owners' may contribute to the communities with better business practices.

### **Implications for Social Change**

Social change may arise from productive small businesses with the advancement of the quality of life by improving the standard of living in a community (Cheung & Leung, 2010). The business and social ramifications of this study might be through the development of strategies to reduce voluntary turnover. The decrease of voluntary employee turnover could reduce the cost of hiring new employees, contributing to the profitability of small business. The information from this study may contribute to positive social change by modifying the employer's view of employees and that may increase the quality of the employees' work life (Watty-Benjamin & Udechukwu, 2014). Add summarizing sentence.

Watty-Benjamin and Udechukwu (2014) examined human resource management (HRM) practices that highlight employees' intentions to leave a job. The potential awareness of the culture of employees moving toward employee rights and liberties could create an understanding of other people by improving the standards of living in a society (Cheung & Leung, 2010). The presence of small businesses in an area helps local communities whom lack technology and financial services (Coward, 2014).

Social change has business value through the sharing of valuable resources, such as knowledgeable employees working with community partners and vendors to develop relationships and partnerships (Al Lily, 2013; Amendola, Easaw, & Savoia, 2013; Schaefer & Simpkins, 2014; Tian et al., 2014). Virgil (2014) declared social change

might occur when one appreciates the value of recognizing the best in people, and the world through the act of exploring and discovering. Saha (2014) suggested social change begins with community leaders, small business owners, pastors, friends, families, and people who live in the area who share their success stories, inspiring others to learn, and change together for a better future.

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

The purpose of this qualitative, descriptive case study design was to explore what strategies some small business owners use to reduce voluntary employee turnover. I have included in the literature review peer reviewed research regarding voluntary employee turnover in small business. The review of literature concludes with a summary of previous research comparing and contrasting research study methods and findings. This review resulted from my search of the following EBSCO databases: Academic Search Premier, MasterFILE Premier, Business Source Premier, Communication and Mass Media Complete, as well as the Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection.

The strategy I used in this review included searches within multidisciplinary databases, management and business databases, and human and social services databases. I searched a variety of publication types including journal articles, books, journals, reports, and scholarly seminal books. Keywords used in this search were: *voluntary employee turnover, small business turnover, employee turnover, human resources and turnover, small business owners, job satisfaction, turnover, business profits, small business revenue, behavior theories, salary and turnover, small business growth, employee morale, and turnover reduction strategies.*

I highlighted in my literature review previous peer reviewed research regarding voluntary employee turnover. The review of literature for this study starts with the background of small businesses as the foundation for understanding the importance of small businesses as it contributes to business practice. The literature review includes the following themes: small business growth; small business types; voluntary employee turnover; turnover intentions and voluntary employee turnover in small business; cost and profitability; employee morale; references relating to the conceptual framework; alternate theories; and voluntary employee turnover reduction strategies.

I documented my references in a word document that enabled me to ensure a minimum of 85% of the literature and material I used for this study had undergone a peer reviewed process and was relevant to a current business problem within 5 years of my expected graduation date. Citations from 207 references, 194 peer reviewed articles are included in the literature review with 178 published in 2011 or later, resulting in 91% of the literature from peer reviewed journal articles published within 5 years of publication of this study.

### **Background of Small Business**

Rolfe (2011) suggested that settlers from various parts of the world came to the United States to pursue freedom of business and religion. Rolfe linked America's small business history to the discovery of the United States. Rolfe insisted that the exploration of the settlers in the United States connected to small business opportunities and religious freedom. Rolfe noted many of the new inhabitants of the United States operated and owned small business, with creation of small businesses occurring in the United States.

The British, Dutch, French, and Portuguese ventured to the New World to find vast resources to make profits, establishing settlers who became small business owners (Rolfe, 2011). The United States has been a society of entrepreneurs (Rolfe, 2011; Schweikart, 2011).

The founding fathers came to America with the established belief that people have the right to ownership of private property, economic freedom, free enterprise, and competition in business (Rolfe, 2011; Schweikart, 2011). Small business growth continued to increase as the world changed with technology and innovation (Beets, 2011). During the 1800s and 1900s, small business owners distributed the majority of goods and services in the United States (Stovall, 2011). Early small businesses were family owned and operated (Stovall, 2011). A family unit was essential, as traditionally small business owners ran their own business (Stovall, 2011). The family displayed and demonstrated respect, responsibility, ethics, and loyalty to the place of work and the customers served illustrating the value of the business (Stovall, 2011). As the demand for the product, service, or goods increased, a small business owner would hire a nonfamily person to help with essential operations and procedures (Stovall, 2011). The small business owner and employees experienced a sense of value to each other, taking pride in the business's daily operations (Barker& Ishizu, 2012). The relationship between the small business owner and an employee developed because of daily interaction (Barker & Ishiz, 2012; Stovall, 2011).

Upon the death of the head of the household (traditionally the person in the family who started the business), the surviving family members did not always find value in the

business, and mismanagement could result in loss of nonrelated employees (Baker & Ishizu, 2012). Barker and Ishizu stated small business mismanagement and employee turnover added to family misfortune. As the number of small businesses rose, creation of jobs contributed to economic growth (Owens, Kirwan, Lounsbury, Levy, & Gibson, 2013). And this continues today. While small businesses may not generate as much money as large corporations, they are a critical component of and a major contributor to the strength of local economies (Kozan & Akdeniz, 2014). Small businesses owners present new employment opportunities and serve as the building blocks of large corporations (Beets, 2011; Kozan & Akdeniz, 2014; Stovall, 2011).

### **Small Business Growth**

Small business growth continues to rise in the United States (Beets, 2011). The growth of small businesses in the 1970s was at 35 % compared to current growth in the 21st century of 80% (Manyika et al., 2011). Small business owners are aware that growth of their small businesses adds value and commitment to the community served through the creation of jobs and uniqueness of small businesses (Michelacci & Schivardi, 2013). Small businesses contribute to local economies by bringing growth and innovation to the community in which the established business provides employment opportunities (Jo, 2014). Small businesses tend to attract talent who invent new products or implement new solutions for existing ideas (De Mattos, Burgess, & Shaw, 2013).

Larger businesses also benefit from small businesses within the same local community, as many large corporations depend on small businesses for the completion of various business functions through outsourcing (De Mattos et al., 2013; Jo, 2014).



Employee turnover is a pressing issue as the disruptions in service create turmoil (Pitts et al., 2011). Through continuous growth, innovation, and employment opportunities created, small businesses contribute to the growth of the economy (Jo, 2014). New and small businesses leaders design sufficient strategic business plans to foster more jobs than that of larger firms (Cassano, Jõeveer, & Svejnar, 2013; LiPuma, Newbert, & Doh, 2013).

A result of small business innovation and processes develops a long-term social welfare for the existing economy through transition and even distribution (Jo, 2014). An efficient, successful economy functions with a combination of processes, which involves culture, education, values, political structure, history, technology, and geography (Weinberger & Wallendorf, 2014; Wicker, Breuer, Lamprecht, & Fischer, 2014). Organizational change, culture, and sustainability cultivate effectively, successful economies (Shirokova, Berezinets, & Shatalov, 2014). Small business owners promote the economy through creation of jobs (Beets, 2011; Kozan & Akdeniz, 2014; Stovall, 2011). Small businesses representing job growth are essential to continue the economic recovery (Jo, 2014). Small businesses account for more than 50% of jobs in the private workforce in the United States (Chow & Dunkelberg, 2011).

### **Small Business Types**

Four main business ownership types compose small businesses in the United States. Regardless of type, all small business promote the economy through creation of jobs, representing growth in the community in the small business owners and employee serve (Beets, 2011; Jo, 2014; Kozan & Akdeniz, 2014; Stovall, 2011). These four types

include cooperative, corporation, partnership, and sole proprietorship (Nartisa, 2012). A partnership represents business ownership by two or more people versus a sole proprietorship owned by one individual (Nartisa, 2012; Wilson, 2012). Many people who are shareholders with a board elected to make decisions form a corporation, compared to a cooperative which is owned by members who share decision-making responsibilities (Nartisa, 2012; Wilson, 2012).

The drive to starting a business creates independence and satisfaction (Nartisa, 2012; Rolfe, 2011). The three sectors of business are primary, secondary, and tertiary (López-Gamero, Zaragoza-Sáez, Claver-Cortés, & Molina-Azorín, 2011). Primary refers to raw material, secondary services are the manufacturing of a product, and tertiary is the service sector of business (López-Gamero et al., 2011). Within small businesses, each of these three sectors provides different types of businesses in the United States. A few examples of the types of small business are home based, online, franchise, green, independent contractors, self-employed, female, minority, or veteran owned (Parnell, 2013).

The number of employees and the company's profit margins are factors that define a small business in other parts of the world (Parnell, 2013). One shared characteristic of a small business is the role and importance of the employee (Parnell, 2012). In the United States, a small business has 500 hundred or fewer employees (Parnell, 2013). Employees are an important aspect of small businesses as they compose the workforce (Parnell, 2013). Dedicated employees serve in capacities resulting in successful small businesses (Parnell, 2013; Myer, 2011). Motivation, salary, fringe

benefits, and information sharing occurs in small business (Kroon, Voorde, & Timmers, 2013).

### **Voluntary Employee Turnover**

Byerly (2012) defined the rate at which an employee leaves an employer as *turnover*. Scott, Heathcote, and Gruman (2011) defined *voluntary employee turnover* as the study of people who leave the organization. Mobley (1977) conceptualized turnover as a 10 step process where an organization might take action to prevent the ninth employee step, the decision to leave or stay. Mobley established a 10-step attrition/nonattrition model described the process. Mobley's model provides attrition antecedents in a preventative attempt to encourage employer action. Mobley, Griffith, Hand, and Meglino (1979) concluded that voluntary employee turnover intentions are the antecedents to employee actions, and the measure of turnover intent forecasts actual turnover. Mobley et al. concluded the management of the direct correlation of antecedents to turnover intent and voluntary employee turnover behavior in an effort to increase organizational commitment.

Turnover increased costs associated with the recruitment, training, and the retention of new employees (Dong et al., 2012; Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013). A problem facing companies is voluntary employee turnover (Haar & White, 2013). Voluntary employee turnover can negatively affect employee morale and organizational effectiveness, affecting profitability (Dong et al., 2012; Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013). Replacing employees requires companies leaders to take an interest to the cost associated

with daily business (Dong et al., 2012; Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013; Palanski, Avey, & Jiraporn, 2014).

Profitability may influence performance. Profitability includes business performance of remaining employees. Remaining employees must absorb the responsibilities of vacant positions and deal with the increased work duties (Hwang & Hopkins, 2012). Assignment of additional duties prevents remaining staff from achieving and reaching their performance goals and affects company productivity (Caillier, 2014). Voluntary employee turnover leads to voluntary turnover intentions from remaining staff (Campbell, Im, & Jisu, 2014; Christian & Ellis, 2014). Van der Aa, Bloemer, and Henseler (2012) suggested a voluntary employee turnover rate of 20 to 40 % implied that staff turnover every 3 to 5 years, resulting in a loss of knowledge.

Voluntary employee turnover also negatively affects customer service because of the time taken for a new employee to function at the level of the replaced employee (Van der Aa et al., 2012). Unlike large corporations, small business owners cannot afford the loss of revenue, knowledge, and experience (Harr & White, 2013; Patel & Conklin, 2012). Voluntary employee turnover in small business affects the daily business operations (Christian & Ellis, 2014). Professional business relationships foster and promote effective working relationships between staff and customers (Allen, Ericksen, & Collins, 2013). The professional relationship forms a respected, organized bond winning customer loyalty and support (Allen et al., 2013; Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013). The exit of an experienced employee interrupts business relationships affecting customer service (Kwon et al., 2012). Operations, productivity, employee morale, and service affects

customer service standards (Batt & Colvin, 2011). The gap in the function between a new employee and an experienced employee reduces productivity and service quality leading to low customer satisfaction and customer turnover (Van der Aa et al., 2012).

In small businesses, voluntary employee turnover occurs for various reasons; however, the reason often cited by employees is a relationship conflict between management and other coworkers (Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013). Relationship conflicts between management and coworkers create problems that include trust of management and other employees and help determine an employee's intention to leave employment (Costigan, Insinga, Berman, Kranas, & Kureshov, 2012; Ertürk, 2014; Greese, Linde, & Schalk, 2013).

### **Turnover Intentions**

Turnover intentions contribute to the rates at which employers lose employees (Christian & Ellis, 2014). Unrealistic expectations of the characteristics of a job, organizational culture and performance, and personal characteristics are reasons employee gave for turnover intentions (Campbell et al., 2014; Christian & Ellis, 2014; Dusterhoff, Cunningham, & MacGregor, 2014; Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013). The way people behave, interactions with each other, and other's actions define organizational culture (Hwang & Hopkins, 2012; Sharoni et al., 2012). Organizational culture varies from one work place to another, and is formed by the diversity of multiple individual attitudes, cultures, and beliefs (Mauno, Kiuru, & Kinnunen, 2011). Flexible work arrangements and workload also contribute to turnover intentions (Botsford, Morgan, &

King, 2012). Ma and Trigo (2012) attributed turnover intentions to both job flexibility and effective pay. Add summary to complete the paragraph.

When the job requirement does not match the employee's skills, voluntary employee turnover increases (Campbel et al., 2014). As voluntary employee turnover increases, so does skill shortage (Davidson & Wang, 2011). Employee shortages force organization leaders to deal with employee turnover and to deal with skill shortages (Masibigiri & Nienaber, 2011). Davidson and Wang (2011) investigated recruiting practices and skill shortages and concluded that no strategies implemented deal with recruiting practices and skill shortages. For organizations to grow and obtain sustainability, better strategic recruiting practices to deal with the challenges and changing demand for labor (Davidson & Wang, 2011). Heavey, Holwerda, and Hausknecht (2013) agreed with Jung and Kim (2012) that organizations' leaders should implement plans and retention strategies to decrease voluntary employee turnover and retain valuable employees. Employees' perceptions of the organization contributed to their decision of intention to quit (Stewart, Volpone, Avery, & McKay, 2011).

Blomme, Sok, and Tromp (2013) explored the role of job fit between perceived organizational support and personal home life. Blomme et al. perceived organizational support was a predictor between personal home life and turnover intention. Yamamoto (2013) suggested high-level performers were less likely to quit their job, whereas low-level performers were more likely to quit their job. Employees committed to their jobs do not intend to quit (Shin, Taylor, & Seo, 2012). Pepe (2010) found people who were happy with their jobs were less likely to quit. Kavitha, Geetha, and Arunachalam (2011)

stated the primary factors in voluntary employee turnover are communication, training, job satisfaction, pay, and benefits. Nyberg (2010) suggested pay has an effect on voluntary employee turnover and job satisfaction. Employees who are satisfied with their pay and job are less likely to leave their current job, while employees who are satisfied with their job but not their pay are likely to quit voluntarily (Nyberg, 2010).

Job satisfaction and status can play a role in voluntary turnover intentions (Garcia-Serrano, 2011). When employees are not happy with the money earned or their status in the organization, voluntary employee turnover increases (Garcia-Serrano; Nyberg, 2010). Yurchisin and Park (2010) studied the perceived attractiveness of a retail store's image and job performance on employee retention. Yurchisin and Park found that perceived store attractiveness affected job performance, job satisfaction, and employee commitment. Yurchisin and Park collected data surveying 317 retail associates in Illinois, Arizona, and Iowa, using structure equation modeling. Yurchisin and Park indicated a relationship between job satisfaction and intention to quit and indirectly related to voluntary turnover and employee commitment.

An effective predictor of voluntary employee turnover is job satisfaction (Diestel, Wegge, & Schmidt, 2014). The examination of job satisfaction predict ways to deter voluntary employee turnover (Diestel et al., 2014; Nobuo, 2014). Edmans (2012) suggested a link between job satisfactions determined the measurement and standards a manager must take to recruit, retain, and motivate employees. Edman examined the relationship between job satisfaction and an absent employee. Edman suggested an employer's value to their employees promotes job satisfaction. Lu and Kao (2013)

examined the relationship of job satisfaction to a family and work inference. Lu and Kao concluded an employee best achieves job satisfaction when an employer could create, nurture, and effectively employ family supportive resources for employees. Fu (2014) argued job satisfaction involves ethical behavior of employees.

Fu (2014) examined ethical behavior of employees in relation to satisfaction of the job, promotions, coworkers, and supervisor. Fu concluded age of employees had an effect on ethical behavior. Young employees displayed better ethical behavior than that of older employees (Fu, 2014). Bianchi (2013) examined the current economy, suggesting that graduates are satisfied with their job compared to other workers who entered the workforce during better economic times. Graduates are satisfied because of their educational background (Bianchi, 2013).

Traditionally, an employee's job satisfaction links with economic conditions (Bianchi, 2013). Kuo-Chih, Tsung-Cheng, and Nien-Su (2014) stated that job satisfaction includes participation by employees in a way that fosters innovation and effective trust between employees and managers. Palanski et al., (2014) examined relationships and job satisfaction and concluded that abusive supervision encourages employee to search for other opportunities. Job satisfaction accomplished through self-awareness, sense of purpose, balancing lifestyle, and a positive attitude creates momentum (Chen, Ployhart, Thomas, Anderson, & Bliese, 2011).

An employee's unrealistic expectations of the characteristics of a job cause an individual to question their career choice (Stewart et al., 2011). At a job interview, interviewers grant candidates the option to ask questions (Hogue, Levashina, & Hang,



2013). Asking honest questions about the organization and job characteristics permits the potential employee to decide if an opportunity is a match for his or her career goals (Hogue et al., 2013). The last reason employees chose to voluntarily leave a job is personal. Personal reasons may include the perception of the employee about the organizational culture, family conflicts, and personal developmental plans and future growth (Prottas, 2013). Reasons to change and leave a career vary among employees. Employees narrowed to two basic categories of voluntary turnover intention: organizational culture and personal characteristics.

Warren, Gaspar, and Laufer (2014) suggested when an employee does not understand the culture of an organization; the performance and intentions are affected. A result of an employee not able to adapt to an organizational culture leads to turnover intentions and voluntary turnover (Campbell & Göritz, 2014). Organizational culture influences employee engagement and is essential to obtain organizational success. The development of awareness strategies that fit the organization's culture may have a positive effect on the organization and decrease voluntary employee turnover (Campbell & Göritz, 2014). Acar and Acar (2014) noted the importance of an organization altering current strategies to remain competitive in a continuously changing business environment to obtain organizational success.

Römer, Rispens, Giebels, and Euwema (2012) asserted employees leave their job when conflicts with management and other employees. Relationship conflicts on the job affect an employee's health and well being (Römer et al., 2012). Participation and involvement of all parties assist with conflict resolution (Roche & Teague, 2012).

Turnover intentions of an employee occur when there is an unresolved conflict. When the conflict is with management, trust, and management practices are questionable (Yoon Jik & Poister, 2014).

Job and pay satisfaction fall under the component of organizational culture. An employee may be comfortable with their status, yet when advertisement of a similar job displays a larger salary, analyzed are both satisfaction and salary (Kelley, 2012). Salary compensation varies in federal and private sector (Akhmedjonov & Izgi, 2012; Condrey, Facer II, & Llorens, 2012). Salary is one factor an employee may provide for a reason to consider new employment. Conflict relationships, organizational culture, and salary are just a few examples of reasons an employee may consider new employment. Next, addressed are personal reasons for employment change. Possessing strong ethic, morals, values, and beliefs can sometimes cause personal characteristics to influence an employee's decision to leave employment (Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013).

An employee must live two separate lives, one at work where prohibited is religious expression, the second at home expressing openly and freely their faith (Kim, McCalman, & Fisher, 2012). Adamant personal beliefs against certain social norms may lead an individual to seek employment elsewhere. In addition to personal values, personal situations, and circumstances can lead to turnover intentions.

Liu and Wang (2011) stated balancing work and family obligations creates a happy employee and decreases turnover intentions. Organizations have introduced employee wellness programs that focus on employees' well-being to include family conflict and issues (Lin & Wang, 2011). Little flexibility and a nonfamily friendly

environment at the place of employment may lead to an employee making a personal decision to seek another opportunity. An individual may love their career; however, the result of spending little or no time with family may contribute to their personal decision to leave as no amount of money can buy or replace the love of a family (Jaekwon, SeungUk, & Smith-Walter, 2013). Schaupp and Bélanger (2014) stated small business owners must ensure that employees are both productive and satisfied with their employment.

### **Voluntary Employee Turnover in Small Business**

Voluntary employee turnover is a problem small business owners and organization leaders deal with regardless of industry (type of good or service) or sector (public or private) (Paillé, 2013). An employee's dissatisfaction with his or her job is the main reasons he or she chooses to leave the job (Paillé, 2013). Small business owners handle voluntary employee turnover differently depending on the effect of finances, productivity and business size (Stewart et al., 2011). Tenhiälä and Lount (2013) stated pay affects an employee's attitudes and behavior, which can lead to turnover intentions. James and Mathew (2012) suggested an increase in voluntary employee turnover could negatively influence the productivity and sustainability of the organization.

Depending on the demand for the products the organization produces, voluntary employee turnover could have a significant negative influence on the organization's processes and daily operations (Palanski et al., 2014). A high voluntary employee turnover rate, the rate at which employees leave a business, can affect the bottom line of businesses (Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013; Palanski et al., 2014). A high voluntary employee

turnover rate, the rate at which employees leave a business, can affect the bottom line of businesses (Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013; Palanski et al., 2014). However, the negative effect on small businesses can be particularly limited resources and the investment in employees (James & Matthew, 2012).

Staff turnover is a phenomenon that affects organizations all over the world (Nobuo, 2014). Nobuo examined voluntary employee turnover with each research taking a different dimension to the same aspect. Organizational leaders and small business owners invest in employees regarding training, developing, maintaining, and retaining them in their organization (Stewart et al., 2011). A need to develop an understanding of the voluntary employee turnover, more especially; the sources what determines voluntary employee turnover and their effects on performance (Nobuo, 2014). Employees values to the organization because employees are intangible and not easily replicated (Dong et al., 2012). The causes of voluntary turnover are similar to factors that contribute to absenteeism (Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013). Experiencing unhappiness in a job is not the only reason people leave one employer for another (Stewart et al., 2011). Small business owners cannot control what is happening with other companies, how much they pay, or which benefits they offer, but small business owners can take steps to reduce voluntary turnover, increase morale, and make happy employees productive. Voluntary employee turnover affects both cost and profitability within the company (Dong et al., 2012; Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013).

### **Cost and Profitability**

Turnover costs include productivity losses during training, recruiting, and lost work while a position is vacant (Dong et al., 2012; Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013; Hennes, Leone, & Miller, 2014). When an employee leaves a job, the costs of hiring and training a new employee, combined with the slower productivity until the replacement employee gets up to speed in the new job is costly for companies (Kwon & Rupp, 2013). The organization's size and productivity determine how an organizational leader responds to employee turnover (Palanski et al., 2014). James and Mathew (2012) suggested an increase in employee turnover negatively effects productivity and sustainability of the organization.

Akintayo (2010) investigated the effect of emotional intelligence on the work family role conflict and employee retention in private organizations in Nigeria.

Akintayi collected data using the descriptive survey research design using a purposive stratified sampling technique. Akintayo concluded there was no significant relationship between work family role conflict and withdrawal intentions. Workers who are low on the emotional intelligence scale experience withdrawal intentions (Akintayo, 2010).

Voluntary employee turnover affects business operations (Palanski et al., 2014).

Recruiting and training employees is costly (Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013; Palanski et al., 2014). Organizational leaders invest in their employees by providing training and resources to perform their job (Christian & Ellis, 2014).

When employees leave their job, organizational leaders experience financial challenges, loss of knowledge, and investment (Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013; Maertz & Boyar, 2012) Turnover interrupts organizational performance as well as cause financial

challenges (Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013; Maertz & Boyar, 2012; Palanski et al., 2014). The costs associated with voluntary turnover are recruitment, replacement, training, and costs necessary to keep the work processes flowing (Gialuisi & Coetze; Ratna, & Chawla, 2012). Rekha and Kamalanabhan (2010) examined the relationship between employee internal and external work environment in Information Technology Enabled Services and Business Process Outsourcing (ITES/BPO) organizations and voluntary employee turnover.

Organizational leaders should create retention strategies to improve employee commitment and reduce stress to keep voluntary turnover down (Rekha & Kamalanabhan, 2010). The cost of turnover is an important economic issue because workers who voluntarily leave their job, terminated, or otherwise let go involuntarily affects company profitability (Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013; Palanski et al., 2014). When a company downsizes or lays off employees, those positions remain vacant; as a result, employee morale declines as management expect the remaining employees to do more work for the same pay (Kostopoulos & Bozionelos, 2010).

### **Employee Morale**

Affected by voluntary employee turnover is employee morale (Kostopoulos & Bozionelos, 2010). Employees react to both external and internal turnover. Internal voluntary turnover refers to employees leaving current positions moving to new positions within the company, whereas, external refers to an employee leaving the company (Chow, Ng, & Gong, 2012). The morale of an employee assist in an individual

developing perceptions and attitudes which lead to turnover intentions (Campbell et al., 2014; Christian & Ellis, 2014; Dusterhoff et al., 2014; Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013).

An employee's job dissatisfaction can produce turnover intentions (Dong et al., 2012). Voluntary employee turnover has a negative effect on the organization's need to meet its demand for service. Employees who are satisfied and committed to their job illustrate no turnover intentions (Gupta, Kumar, & Singh, 2014). Knowledge workers are a valuable resource within an organization (Carleton, 2011; Ting-Pang, 2011).

Organizational leaders should continue to encourage knowledge workers to excel by expanding their knowledge base, ensuring their work is meaningful, and providing sufficient resources to complete work (Carleton, 2011; Ting-Pang, 2011).

Liao and Teng (2010) perceived that trained employees are more satisfied with their job than untrained employees are. Continuous training lead to improving job satisfaction and gave managers a better understanding of their employees' needs (Liao & Teng, 2010). Liao and Teng explored the relationship between ethics training and employee satisfaction and indicated that ethics training related to employee satisfaction. Employee involvement reduces employee turnover and increases employee morale (Carleton, 2011). Dong et al. (2012) found employee job satisfaction was a significant factor in employees' intention to stay with an organization. Motivating employees to be efficient and involved in the organization increases motivation, job satisfaction, and productivity and decreases voluntary turnover (Dong et al., 2012; Fu, 2014).

The reason employees do not quit their job is because of social support, ability to learn new and enhancement of skills (Soltis Agneessesns, Sasovova, & Labianca, 2013).

Marshall, White, and Tansky (2010) found the lack of implementing employee skills influenced voluntary turnover. Recognizing employee accomplishments and keeping employees involved decreased voluntary employee turnover (Marshall et al., 2010). Voluntary employee turnover and retention have been a concern for organizational leaders for numerous years (Yamamoto, 2013). Research focused on job satisfaction was common in the latter half of the twentieth century (Springer, 2011).

According to Ghazzawi (2011), by 1990, 12,000 studies were conducted on job satisfaction. Springer defined job satisfaction as how well an individual likes performing the job. Employee job satisfaction depends upon various external and internal organizational components that include salary, working conditions, organizational climate, and leadership (Stewart, Volpone, Avery, & McKay, 2011). Job satisfaction and leadership behaviors contribute to employees' feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the organization (Ghazzawi, 2011; Springer, 2011).

Nobou (2014) argued job satisfaction links to an employee's intention to leave and stay and concluded the importance of the standard to measure job satisfaction in relation to intentions to leave or stay to understand job satisfaction. Shin, Taylor, and Seo (2012) found employees who are committed with their jobs do not intend to quit. Happy people are less likely to have turnover intentions from career satisfaction (Pepe, 2010). When an employee is happy and satisfied with his or her pay, career, and benefits, no turnover intention occurs (Garcia-Serrano, 2011; Nyberg, 2010; Paillé, 2013; Pepe, 2010). An employee's feelings of a job cause an individual to question their career choice and develop turnover intentions (Stewart et al., 2011).



## **References Relating to the Conceptual Framework**

An employee's dissatisfaction of a job exists for various reasons. The Herzberg two factor theory, developed in 1959, illustrated factors in the workplace that cause satisfaction of the job and a separate set of factors that contribute to employee dissatisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). Herzberg developed the Herzberg's motivation hygiene theory and dual factor theory (Herzberg et al., 1959). Herzberg (1974) explored if motivation and job satisfaction influenced an employee's decision to leave a job. Herzberg (1987) referred to two sets of needs, hygienic and growth, in relation to work. Hygienic needs, the first set of needs, consisted of interpersonal relationships, the rewards system, and salary, which should motivate employees (Herzberg et al., 1959). However, if not motivated, the employee will not be satisfied (Herzberg et al., 1959).

The second set of needs known as the growth needs, consisted of motivation factors, such as recognition of the work an employee completed, achievement, and advancement (Herzberg et al., 1959). Herzberg's two factor theory proposed behavior results from choices among alternatives. Herzberg's theory suggested an employee considers outcomes associated with various levels of performance and choose to pursue the level that produces the greatest reward. The Herzberg two factor theories focus on internal needs of employees suggesting job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction are not opposite of each other, but controlled by a set of factors. Employees linked job dissatisfaction with the surrounding environment whereas employees associated job satisfaction with the job and the outcome of the work (Herzberg, 1987).

## **Alternative Theories**

Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory suggested employee behavior results from conscious choices to increase pleasure and minimize pain (Nyberg, 2010; Vroom, 1964). Vroom stated that employees base their job performance on personality, knowledge, and experiences. Vroom asserted the manifestation of what the employee values, motivates his or her actions. Vroom expectancy theory focus on a combination of five elements on outcomes and the process of how people rationally select the path most beneficially. An employee must believe he or she can complete the task properly to lead to better performance (Vroom, 1964). Herzberg (1959) and Vroom (1964) both attempted to rationalize an individual's motivation and job satisfaction by focusing on two different aspects and methods.

Another theory examined was motivation theory. Motivation theory considers motivation as the driving force to desire completion of a task (Kraimer, Seibert, Wayne, Liden, & Bravo, 2011). Career development, performance, and desire describe the factors, which motivate an employee to seek other employment opportunities (Kraimer et al., 2011). Some individuals are motivated, some are not. Evans, Shuqing, and Nagarajan (2014) suggested motivation theory does not describe all turnovers. Evans et al. (2014) examined chief executive officers (CEO) decisions to leave versus dismissal, which contradicts with the motivation theory. The next theory examined was the self-determination theory. Deci and Ryan (1985) introduced the self-determination theory (SDT) which models human motivation, development, and wellness based on three human psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

Deci and Ryan (1985) suggested the three basic psychological needs provided motivation and happiness. SDT framework provides an alternative factor to voluntary employee turnover through autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Baard, Deci, and Ryan (2004) studied small businesses that granted autonomy to employees and found the autonomy businesses grew four times faster and had one third of voluntary employee turnover. Deci and Ryan (1985) indicated employees with satisfied autonomy, competence, and sense of relationships on the job enabled an employee motivation to perform their job. Gilbert's (2007) behavior engineering model (BEM) is a cause analysis model, which separates employee performance issues into two categories, individual or what is also termed as repertory, which is the personal peculiar qualities of the individual, and the environment in which the employee operates. Within the two categories are three general areas in which the issues that affect performance Gilbert classified as (a) information, (b) instrumentation, and (c) motivation. Gilbert's BEM recognized a relationship between employee performance and the environment in which the employee operates, and allows a systematic way to identify impediments to employee performance.

Gilbert (2007) indicated certain environmental issues that leadership can control which affect employees' behaviors, and worker's behaviors within the employees' control. The BEM does not explain voluntary employee turnover, not chosen for the conceptual framework. Motivation or self-determination theory supported reasons of voluntary employee turnover, Herzberg two factor theory into the conceptual framework of the study was most appropriate to assist in the exploration of strategies small business

owners use to reduce voluntary employee turnover in their organization. Employees are essential to business success and a valuable asset, including employees in all aspects of business will provide a stimulating work environment (Hee & Ling, 2011).

Another theory examined was the resource-based view theory (RBV). The underlying assumption of the resource-based view theory comprised the concept of resources and capabilities possessed by small business owners are heterogeneous and imperfectly transferable (Wernerfelt, 1984). Assets, capabilities, processes, and knowledge must be valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable, and nonsubstitutable in order to serve as a source of sustainable advantage (Barney, 1991; Reteraf, 1993). Barney (1991) classified resources into three groups: physical capital (e.g., equipment and location), human capital (e.g., knowledge and experience), and organizational capital (e.g., planning and organizational structure). Hall (1993) argued that the economic value of an organization is more than the value of its tangible assets (physical, financial, human resources); it also includes intangible capabilities and resources such as reputation, supplier relationships, culture, and employee expertise. Researchers referred to intangible assets as competencies and capabilities (Grant, 2001; Hall, 1993).

Capabilities can be functional such as skills and experiences, as well as cultural such as attitudes, beliefs, and values (Hall 1993). Small business owners can possess a wide range of resources, but resource-based view focuses on internal strategic resources that align with the owner's strategic intent and serve as the basis of competitive advantage. Wernerfelt (1984) noted that the resource-based view provides a valuable strategic guidance by understanding which resources small business owners should seek

to strengthen their position and which resources already at their disposal they may prioritize as more valuable. Rangone (1999) added that to achieve competitive advantage, strategic resources have to align with the small business organizational goals. In relation to my study, resources needed to implement a decrease in voluntary employee turnover are strategic if the small business owner views reduction of turnover as an opportunity to differentiate his firm in the marketplace and serve as a competitive advantage.

Human assets reflect the number of people and their marketing abilities (Moller & Anttila, 1987). Market assets represent a small business owner's position in the market such as distribution channels, market share, brand awareness, and customer base (Moller & Anttila, 1987). Organizational assets refer to the marketing planning, operations, and strategy development capabilities (Moller & Anttila, 1987). Empirical research has emphasized the importance of capabilities in improving an organization's performance, and studies have employed resource-based view as a theoretical backdrop to demonstrate the relationship between resources and performance. Ahmed, Kristal, and Pagell (2014) found that operational capabilities have a positive impact on an organization's performance and can provide competitive advantage during changing economic conditions. Morgan (2012) developed a conceptual framework that demonstrated a link between resources, capabilities, and business performance. Halabí and Lussier (2014) identified resource-based view as a theory that fits well the needs of small business owners. Employee skills and experience may increase inimitability as a potential source of competitive advantage (Trainor et al., 2011).

Previous studies applied several diverse conceptual and theoretical frameworks in

the domains of small businesses. In addition to resource-based view theory, the most commonly used theories included the theory of planned behavior (Alam & Sayuti, 2011; Grandon, Nasco, & Mykytyn, 2011) and dynamic capabilities theory (Nedzinskas, Pundziene, Buoziute-Rafanaviciene, & Pilkiene, 2013; Trainor et al., 2011; Wang, Hu, & Hu, 2013). In this section of the literature review, I provide an overview of these theories and evaluate their ability to explore what strategies some small business owners may use to reduce voluntary employee turnover.

Theory of planned behavior (TPB). Theory of planned behavior is an extension of the theory of reasoned action (TRA) (Ajzen, 1991). Theory of reasoned action provides a model that helps predict people's intentions to perform the behavior based on their attitude towards the outcome of the behavior and perceptions of what others believe they should do (Ajzen, 1991). In addition to the attitude and subjective norm, theory of planned behavior takes into account people's perceptions of their control to perform an action (Ajzen, 1991). According to theory of planned behavior, attitude toward the behavior involves the person's feelings about the likely outcome of the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Subjective norm refers to normative expectations of others to engage in behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Perceived behavioral control is a person's belief in his or her ability to engage in a certain behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In combination, subjective norm, attitude toward the behavior, and perception of behavioral control can explain behavioral intentions. Researchers can use theory of planned behavior in a variety of situations to explain different behaviors and motivations.

The dynamic capabilities theory (DCT) examines an organization's ability to achieve and sustain a competitive advantage in a changing environment through reconfiguration and integration of its resources and capabilities (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997). Dynamic capabilities theory assumes that organizations with greater dynamic capabilities will outperform firms with fewer dynamic capabilities. The dynamic capabilities can lead to better organizational performance; however, companies achieve competitive advantage, not through the existence of dynamic capabilities but their application and usage (Nedzinskaset al., 2013). Helfat and Winter (2011) and Protogerou, Caloghirou, and Lioukas (2011) explained the difference between dynamic and ordinary capabilities. According to Helfat and Winter (2011), capabilities that enable significant change in a short period are dynamic while capabilities that support the organization's ability to perform day-to-day functions are operational. Protogerou et al. (2011) defined dynamic capabilities as the transformation and reconfiguration of operational capabilities. Dynamic capabilities enable firms to renew their operational capabilities constantly and, therefore, achieve long-term competitive advantage (Teece et al., 1997).

Product development procedures, resource allocation methods, acquisition capabilities, and knowledge creation processes are examples of dynamic capabilities (Kozlenkova, Samaha, & Palmatier, 2013). Teece et al. (1997) proposed dynamic capabilities theory to address the gap in the resource-based view theory. Dynamic capabilities theory emphasizes that firms can achieve competitive advantage not only through valuable, rare, inimitable, and nonsubstitutable resources, but also through reconfiguration of the organization's internal and external skills, resources, and

competencies. Teece et al. (1997) proposed dynamic capabilities theory a stand-alone theory; however, a disagreement exists on whether dynamic capabilities theory should be (Kozlenkova et al., 2013). Several considerations prevented me from selecting both the theory of planned behavior and dynamic capabilities theory as a foundation for my study. First, there is no clear consensus among the researchers on whether dynamic capabilities is an independent theory or part of resource-based view (Kozlenkova et al., 2013). Second, by reviewing the literature, I noticed a very limited number of studies that applied dynamic capabilities theory in the field of voluntary employee turnover in small businesses.

### **Voluntary Employee Turnover Reduction Strategies**

Voluntary employee turnover forces small business owners and leaders to understanding why turnover rates are high and create strategies to reduce voluntary turnover to improve employees' job commitment (Hausknecht, Rodda, & Howard, 2009). Implementing reduction strategies to increase motivation and job satisfaction might reduce voluntary turnover intentions (Allen & Shanock, 2013). Organizational leaders should clearly define voluntary turnover strategies to retain valuable employees (Dong et al., 2012). Lack of voluntary turnover strategies could increase voluntary employee turnover (Mohlala, Goldman, & Goosen, 2012). For example, in 2011, nearly 100,000 open nursing positions, and the turnover rate exceeded 50% (Aaron, 2011).

Aaron (2011) examined the lack of recruiting and voluntary turnover strategies for register nurses in long-term care facilities and concluded low wages, regulations, short length of orientation programs, and lack of support for preceptor programs



contributed to employee turnover. Voluntary employee turnover affects organizational effectiveness, affecting profitability (Dong et al., 2012; Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013).

Schatten (2014) noted the connection between a researcher's aim, understanding of the problem, theoretical foundations, method and design reflected in the research question.

The purpose of my qualitative study is to explore what strategies business owners use to decrease voluntary employee turnover. The central research question for this study is, what strategies do small business owners use to reduce voluntary employee turnover?

Hogue, Levashina, and Hang (2013) suggested at a job interview, a small business owner as well as the potential employee should reflect on the job characteristics, responsibilities, and duties to determine if the employee is a good fit for the job. At the initial interview, a small business owner can question why an employee is seeking other employment opportunities (Hogue et al., 2013). Reduction strategies could begin the interview process so small business owners can receive a clear picture of employee development and potential growth opportunities sought by a potential candidate (Hogue et al., 2013). The interview is of equal importance to both the potential employee and the interviewer. The interviewer should consider his or her behavior in the interview process as essential to recruiting and attracting a potential employee (Farago, Zide, & Shahani-Denning, 2013). A potential employee may form conclusions based on facial expression, tone, and indirect actions of an interviewer (Farago et al., 2013).

Hess (2013) suggested women tend to decline an employment offer based on discrimination received during the interview process. Hogue et al., (2013) urged the importance of honesty of both parties during the interview process to ensure the potential

employee and small business owner both have an equal opportunity to determine if a valid fit could occur. Small business owners invested in their company seek employees who will create value to their business (Hogue et al., 2013). During the interview process, small business owners ask questions related especially to what he or she thinks is important (Hogue et al.). Productivity, training, loyalty, honesty, and cost are all important items in the business. Lähdesmäki (2012) suggested small business owners lack ethical and social characteristics to communicate effectively with employees. Effective communication is a skill needed during, before, and after the interview process to ensure effective working relationships (Hogue et al., 2013).

As technology, market, and competition changes, business leaders must continuously change and shift strategies to remain competitive in the business world (Acar & Acar, 2014). The contribution an employee asserts is a determinant in the success in any organization, as the employee's work performance combined with personal goals with the organizational purpose creates value (Acar & Acar, 2014). An employee is a valuable asset of an organization (Brock & Buckley, 2013). For an organization to sustain a committed workforce, organizational leaders should create a good working environment to retain their most valuable asset and decrease turnover. Voluntary turnover is a business problem that affects business growth and is an expensive business issue (Patel & Conklin, 2012; Smith et al., 2011).

Hee and Ling (2011) suggested knowing the factors that contribute to voluntary employee turnover would enable effective strategies to reduce voluntary turnover. Small business owners face significant economic loss with voluntary employee turnover, which

includes nonmonetary losses such as expertise, experience, and loss of knowledge (Hee & Ling, 2011). Employees create and maintain the value in their company (Byerly, 2012). With the development of effective strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover, small business owners can contribute to their local communities and economy through donation of time, resources, money, and skills to keep employees productive in their local communities and organizational societies (Mohlala, Goldman, & Goosen, 2012). For example, Mohlala et al. (2012) used a case study and determined the need to decrease employee. Semistructured interviews were completed which indicated voluntary employee turnover was the main contributor of skills shortage within the company (Mohlal et al., 2012).

Akintayo (2010) investigated the effect of emotional intelligence on the work-family role conflict and employee turnover in private organizations in Nigeria. Data collected used the descriptive survey research design (Akintayo 2010). Akintayo surveyed 321 participants using a purposive stratified sampling technique. Akintayo tested hypotheses and used a correlation statistical method and t test statistics. Although no significant relationship existed between work family role conflict, and withdrawal intentions, withdrawal intentions experienced by workers are those who are low on the emotional intelligence scale (Akintayo, 2010). The qualitative approach used in Akintayo's study included surveys to understand the common attributes that correlate to work family conflict and turnover intentions. Small business owners and leaders have not been able to predict voluntary employee turnover intentions (Perryer, Jordan, Firms, & Travaglione, 2010).

Perryer et al. (2010) conducted a study to determine if organizational commitment and continuance related to turnover intentions. Perryer et al. examined the relationship among Western and South Australian federal employees on organizational commitment, perceived organizational support, and turnover intentions. Of the 3,071 surveys made available, 436 surveys returned at a rate of 14.2% (Perryer et al., 2010). Although effective commitment, continuance commitment, and perceived organizational support were negatively correlated to turnover intention, an extreme relationship existed among affective commitment and perceived organizational support (Perryer et al., 2010). Kaplan, Wiley, and Maertz (2011) suggested a positive perception of an organization decreases voluntary turnover and enhances diverse relationships.

Developing strategies and providing training that enhances diverse relationships might reduce employee turnover (Tymon et al., 2011). Certain themes through my literature review described voluntary employee turnover as a business problem and the need for strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover. An abundant amount of literature supports the problem of voluntary employee turnover in the United States. Turnover in business has prompted small business owners to seek strategies for reduction. Geographical location and culture may result in different strategies for reduction of voluntary employee turnover.

The literature review summarized compared and contrasted sources that relate to my research topic. Based on the research and review of literature, strategies of reduction of voluntary employee turnover in small business are under researched. The results of this study may provide detailed information and provide other small business owners with

information to implement change, motivate and retain employees. This leaves a major gap in the literature to justify further attention to this field of research. Limited current literature in reduction strategies of voluntary employee turnover exists in academic literature. Through qualitative studies, researchers can explore framework and application to business practice (Moustakas, 1994). The method for this research study on strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover is a qualitative study designed to fill the gap in the literature.

### **Transition**

The purpose for this qualitative case study was to understand what strategies small business owners' used to reduce voluntary employee turnover. In the literature review, I presented a historic perspective and discussion of voluntary employee turnover, causes of voluntary employee turnover and the conceptual framework's previous researchers have employed the exploration how to reduce voluntary employee turnover. In the next section, I described the justification for the use of a qualitative case study to explore strategies of small business owners to reduce voluntary employee turnover. I detailed and justified the research design and method that best supported my study. Section 2 includes a review of (a) the study purpose, (b) the role of the researcher, (c) the study participants, (d) the study methods, and (e) details of the investigation plan. Additionally, Section 2 includes (a) population and sampling methodology, (b) the issues surrounding ethical research, (c) the data collection instruments, and (d) the data collection and organization technique.

## Section 2: The Project

A current problem facing leaders of companies is voluntary employee turnover (Haar & White, 2013). Voluntary employee turnover can negatively affect employee morale and organizational effectiveness, affecting profitability (Dong et al., 2012). The purpose for this qualitative single case study is to explore what strategies small business owners use to reduce voluntary employee turnover. In this section, I described the purpose for this study, my role as researcher, participants, research method and design, population and sampling, ethical research, and data collection of this research study.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose for this qualitative descriptive case study was to explore what strategies small business owners use to reduce voluntary employee turnover. I explored the strategies of four small business owners in southeastern North Carolina. These small business owners would have been in business for at least 5 years and have not experienced any voluntary employee resignations within the past year. The small business owners might provide information and insight on how to reduce voluntary turnover in small business. The implications for positive social change include the potential to provide information to small business owners and organizational managers to help create and implement strategies to reduce voluntary turnover.

### **Role of the Researcher**

As researcher, I recruited participants, collected data in an unbiased manner, explored the knowledge, analyzed results, and interpreted all data. The role of the researcher included the selection of participants, data collection, data interpretation, data

analysis, facilitation, and guiding participants through questions to provide an expository result (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). A researcher's role in the qualitative research is to explore experiences of participants, analyze results, and collate data in an unbiased manner (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Wester (2011) indicated researchers must be cognizant of ethical issues that may arise during the research process. I utilized an interview protocol (see Appendix D) for member checking and data saturation.

I had a professional relationship with some of the small business owners who were participants in the study. Identification and recognition of biases ensure neutrality of research conclusions (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). I set aside any personal experiences, beliefs, attitudes, culture, and generational views as recommended by Moustakas, 1994, to be nonjudgmental in an effort to reduce bias. Marshall and Rossman (2011) indicated that qualitative researchers tend to remain sensitive to their social identities. Recognition of personal beliefs and bias prior to and after data collection minimized bias. I practiced ethical principles, such as respect for persons, beneficence, and justice as highlighted in the Belmont Report (1979) to protect the right and well-being of research participants (Mikesell, Bromley, & Khodyakov, 2013). Mikesell et al. (2013) indicated core principles serve as a guide for ethical principles. The core principles, as presented in the Belmont Report, are respect for persons, beneficence, and justice, along with the application of an informed consent, assessment of risks and benefits, and selection of participants serve as a guide for ethical principles (Mikesell et al., 2013).

The Belmont Report (1979) summarized the ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of humans, which was originally written by The National Commission for

the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research Subjects of Research. The Belmont Report includes a distinction between research and practice, the three basic ethical principles, and the application of these principles. I followed the three basic ethics of research involving human subjects in my study. These included (a) the principles of respect of persons, (b) beneficence, and (c) justice (Belmont Report, 1979).

### **Participants**

The participants in the study included small business owners in the Wilmington–Jacksonville area in North Carolina. These small business owners were in business for at least 5 years and have not experienced any voluntary employee resignations within the past year. I gathered names of potential participants from the Chamber of Commerce list and other small business owners by snowball sampling. Olsen, Orr, Bell, and Stuart (2013); Suri (2011); Yin (2012) recommended the adoption of a purposive sample for participants for such studies. I ensured participants met the criteria and eligibility to participate in this study. Prospective participants received an invitation to participate via phone followed up by an email prior to the interview. Prospective participants signed an informed consent form indicating their agreement to participate before the interview was conducted. Siu, Hung, Lam, and Cheng (2013) recommended maintaining a professional relationship with participants. I did not have a prior business relationship with the participants, nor did I have any prior knowledge of the subject matter. As a researcher, I was a blank slate assisting in mitigating any potential bias.

In this research, before and after confirmation of participation, each participant received the interview questions (see Appendix A) and the consent form explaining the



ethical and privacy protection of participants and their participation in the study in which they signed and return. My IRB approval number was 01-05-16-0307886. I collected data by interviewing participants in a natural setting using semistructured interview questions, following a script. Individual lived experiences varied.

## **Research Method and Design**

### **Research Method**

The three research methodologies are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. Quantitative methods involve the collection of data samples and testing a predetermined hypothesis with numerical data through analyzing results (Branthwaite & Patterson, 2011; Oleinik, 2011; Thomson, Petty, Ramage, & Moore, 2011). Employing a quantitative method of hypothesis testing among the population would not be appropriate for exploring the human experience (Yin, 2012). The quantitative research method is insufficient and not appropriate as the purpose of the study is not to test the hypothesis, make prediction, or to evaluate cause and effect of clinical trials (Barratt et al., 2011; Brannen & Moss, 2012; Walshe, 2011; Weisburd, 2010). Quantitative research also involves testing a theory, analyzing statistical data, and examining relationships (Bernard, 2013). The quantitative method was not appropriate for this study as these measurements could not describe the human experience of my participants (Bernard, 2013; Savage-Austin & Honeycutt, 2011; Yin, 2012).

Mixed method researchers apply both qualitative and quantitative methodologies for the collection, analyzing, and interpreting data in a research study (Bernard, 2013; Branthwaite & Patterson, 2011; Thomson et al., 2011). Voils, Crandell, Chang, Leeman

and Sandelowski (2011) indicated the findings from qualitative and quantitative inquiries must be amenable for synthesis across diverse evidence sources to provide informational value. Mengshoel (2012) implied the use of a mixed method is advantageous when researchers need to integrate information from a quantitative and qualitative approach. Quantitative research enables measurement to prove or disprove a hypothesis and is not appropriate for my study so a mixed methods option was not viable (Branthwaite & Patterson, 2011; Bernard, 2013; Thomson et al., 2011). Bernard (2013) suggested a researcher cannot use a quantitative method to describe the human experience in numbers that do not capture the meaning, understanding, and descriptive experiences and insights displayed in a qualitative method. The research method I used was the qualitative method to explore strategies of small business owners to reduce voluntary employee turnover. My decision to use a qualitative method was because of the need understand perceptions and experiences (Moustaka, 1994). I asked semistructured interview questions to explore the perceptions and participants' responses, based on individual experiences (Moustakas, 1994). Through data analysis, I focused on the meaning intended by the participants, analyzed participant's views through a conceptual lens, create an interpretive inquiry, and strive to provide a holistic view of the subject phenomenon (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

### **Research Design**

The five major designs in qualitative research are phenomenological, case study, ethnography, grounded theory, and narrative research (Hays & Wood, 2011; Yin, 2012). Researchers employing case studies explore single or multiple phenomena in an in depth analysis (Yin, 2012). A case study design supports multiple sources of collection

including document reviews and interviews and is suitable to answer how and what, Yin, 2012). The advantage of a case study over other qualitative designs such as ethnography, phenomenology, or narrative, was the ability to identify the primary strategies small business owners use to promote employee retention in a short span of time. Sangster-Gormley (2013) suggested that using a case study design acknowledged the intricacy and in depth study of the phenomenon while Hancock and Algozzine (2011) noted that case studies are comprehensive and reflect various data sources.

Case study designs involve the use of multiple sources of data to explore case specifics (Cronin, 2014; Harland, 2014; Yin, 2012). Yin (2012) noted the six potential sources of evidence: (a) documentation, (b) archival records, (c) interviews, (d) direct observation, (e) participant observation, and (f) physical artifacts. I used interviews and documentation of theoretical perspectives as my sources of data. For my study, documentation included (a) small business owners' standard operating procedures, (b) meeting agendas, (c) memorandums and (d) letters. Participant interviews are sources of data in case study designs as researchers use them to generate a dialogue with participants to extract thematic data for accurate case representation (Yin, 2012). Aykol, Leonidou, and Zeriti (2012) noted that assumptions about society give meaning, focusing on different aspects of society of what one sees and experiences. Aykol et al. (2012) suggested the best perspective is the one which combines many perspectives through documentation of theoretical perspectives. Add summary to connect back to your work and transition to the next paragraph.

In this study, I used interviews and documentation as the primary components of my data collection technique. Draper and Swift (2011) noted that qualitative data collection techniques involve various forms of interviews, observations, textual data, and data of previous qualitative inquiries. I used interviews and documentation from small business owners to triangulate data (Homburg et al., 2012). With methodological triangulation by comparison of two sources of data, I ensured the quality of the collected data, and strengthens the validity of the data (Homburg et al., 2012). Houghton et al. (2013) noted that an advantage of using a case study is a more complete representation of a phenomenon demonstrated through methodological triangulation of diverse data sources.

Yin (2012) identified that the case study can be a single case or multiple cases bounded by time and location. For my study, each small business owner represented a separate case. The boundary is the experience of each participating small business owners who have been in business for at least 5 years. These small business owners have not experienced any voluntary employee resignations within the past year (Yin, 2012). Researchers use the case study method when they want to understand a real life problem in more detail and when the boundaries between the phenomenon under investigation and the context of the study are not clear (Harland, 2014; Yin, 2012).

Yin (2012) maintained that a descriptive multicase study is a good choice when there are multiple variables to explore and multiple sources of evidence to present to create an accurate picture of the investigated phenomenon. A researcher may use a descriptive multiple case study to understand a phenomenon in detail. A descriptive

multiple case study is also appropriate when the cases selected will yield similar results or different results for an expected reason (Yin, 2012). Multiple case studies are appropriate when the cases studied are typical and the researcher has considerable resources available for the study (Yin, 2012). Explain more clearly why this was the right choice for your study.

I explored the experiences and perceptions of four small business owners by completing semistructured interviews in the Wilmington-Jacksonville area of North Carolina. Further interviewing continued until data saturation was evident. Data saturation occurred once new relevant information, perspectives, or experiences no longer appeared from additional interviews. The strategy use of data saturation allowed me to ensure no new information, themes, and the results could be replicated (Anyan, 2013; Walker, 2012).

### **Population and Sampling**

The population consists of four small business owners in the Wilmington-Jacksonville area in North Carolina. I selected four small business owners to ensure sufficient data to answer the research question. These small business owners were in business for at least 5 years and who had not experienced any voluntary employee resignations within the past year. The sample size was appropriate as they can provide information and insight on how to reduce voluntary turnover in small business. An important part of the design of is determination of the appropriate sample size for the study (Rao, 2012). The sample size should reach the number of participants sufficient to meet data saturation standards, in which the data becomes repetitive (Dworkin, 2012).

Marshall and Rossman (2011) suggested sample size correlates directly with data saturation. The guiding principle for the justification for starting with three participants was the concept of data saturation. Recruitment of participants continued until data saturation occurred. Data saturation was reached with four participants. Data saturation was reached when no new information is reported.

A snowball sample provides a range of perspectives to increase the understanding of the research phenomenon (Petty, Thomson, & Stew, 2012). The use of a snowball sampling method to select the population that meets a certain criterion (Suri, 2011) allows a researcher access to participants. Heckathorn (2011) recommended snowball sampling as a method of recruiting inaccessible populations through referrals from current participants while Cohen and Arieli (2011) noted that the use of snowball sampling in conjunction with other sampling methods might reduce the possibility of sampling bias. I contacted the first potential participant from the list of names retrieved by the Chamber of Commerce. I started with one small business owner. Small business owners referred me to other small business owners within the community. I used snowball sampling to allow me to obtain additional small business owners who were appropriate and participated for my proposed study. Through snowballing I obtained a range of perspectives to increase the understanding of a phenomenon.

### **Ethical Research**

Ethical research practices are important to creating cooperation trust, and collaboration to maintain the integrity of the research (Kisely & Kendall, 2011). I

received permission to conduct research through Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to starting the research. Adhering to Walden University's IRB process will also ensure ethical standard compliance prior to conducting research. An informed consent was signed by all participants. In the informed consent form, I detailed the purpose of the research, data collection, the benefits to the participant and the business industry, and the preservation of the participants' confidentiality before, during, and after the study.

Participants could withdraw from the study at any time before, during, or after the interview by contacting me via phone or email. Participants could discuss any concerns before or during an interview. There were no incentives for participation for this study. All participants were over the age of 18 and not from a protected class. All data, including audio recordings, notes, and transcriptions, was in an encrypted computer file or locked file cabinet for 5 years, to protect the rights and identities of the participants. After 5 years, I will destroy all data to ensure the confidentiality of all participants. I will shred hard copies of surveys and spreadsheets and overwrite the electronic files using commercially available software designed to sanitize digital data.

To ensure confidentiality, I used pseudonyms to report and display the results to enhance the research participants' privacy as suggested by Yin (2012). I labeled each participant interview with a letter and a number distinctively (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6). To ensure privacy and confidentiality, I am the only person with knowledge of the participants and their responses (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). By application and

incorporation of the fundamental guide in ethical research, I proposed to ensure privacy and confidentiality (Fein & Kulik, 2011).

### **Data Collection Instruments**

I was the primary instrument to collect and analyze data in this qualitative case study research (Yin, 2012). I collected information through semistructured interviews (see Appendix A) with participants face to face. With participant approval, I used an audio tape recorder to record the interviews, observe, and record hand written notes in a journal during the interview process. Recorded face to face, interviews may ensure retention of information for recall and analysis. I used the interview questions to explore small business owners' perceptions and experiences of strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover. The interview is the primary data source, which will explore the perceptions and experiences of the participants to share their phenomenon (Bernard, 2013; Branthwaite & Patterson, 2011; Petty et al., 2012). To enhance my ability to code and identify themes and patterns during the analysis of data, I implemented the NVivo 10 software for Windows. I triangulated the results of the interviews with small business owners' policies, procedures, and personnel manual.

In-depth, face-to-face semistructured interviews and company document review of small business owners' policies, procedures, and personnel manual were the two primary sources for data collection for this qualitative case study. The semistructured interview involves prepared questioning guided by identified themes in a consistent and systematic manner interposed with probes designed to elicit more elaborate responses (Qu & Dumay, 2011).



A case study protocol may aid me in keeping focus on my topic and assist in reliability (Yin, 2014). A case study protocol consists of (a) an overview of the case study, (b) data collection procedures, (c) the data collection questions, and (d) a guide for the case study report (Yin, 2012). Using the combination of interviews and documentation of small business owners' policies, procedures, and personnel manual, I triangulated the two sources to facilitate in the validation of data through cross verification as I explored strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover in small business (Buchin & Mulzer, 2011). I used an interview protocol (see Appendix D) to include a script to implement successful data collection and member checking. I obtained, organized, and analyzed interview data to prevent disclosure of any information, such as participants' names and companies owned. Using member checking, follow up interviews (in the event of additional questions) will allow me to ensure the transcript is representative of participants' expressed experiences and perceptions (Anyan, 2013; Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). Member checking of the data interpretation includes me taking the analysis and my interpretations back to the participants from the interviews to request participants review the results. Participants can notify me of reasonable findings and if the themes uncovered appear accurate and credible. The process of member checking (respondent validation by sharing the findings and responses with the participants) might enhance the validity of the study (Anyan, 2013; Goldblatt, Karnieli-Miller, & Neumann, 2011; Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014).

### **Data Collection Technique**

The primary method for data collection in a qualitative case study is through semistructured interviews to provide insight, meaning, and understanding (Bernard, 2013; Petty et al., 2012; Qq & Dumay, 2011). Upon IRB approval, interviewing of participants to ask appropriate questions, probe for through understanding, listen intently, recognize, and reduce penetration of personal bias to protect participants from harm or breach of confidentiality, and retrieve pre approval for the use of instruments, including an audio tape recording device and note taking. A cell phone to record is not appropriate because of the potential loss of reception. Scheduling of face to face interviews conducted in the participants' designated locations ensure privacy. Semistructured face-to-face interview questions to format and develop discussions providing in depth meaning of participants' perceptions of the phenomena (Suri, 2011).

To ensure confidentiality, I labeled each participant interviews by a letter and a number distinctively (for example P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, and P6.). The use of a script (see Appendix C) during the interview process to begin with an introduction to the participant, as well as ask the participant to introduce him or herself. After the introductions, conduction of the interview may begin by asking the interview questions (see Appendix A). To meet standards, the use of focused interview processes by the use of a script, interviewing three small business owners, and using member checking throughout to verify the adequacy of the interview format used (Harper & Cole, 2012; Houghton et al., 2013). The use of the member checking follow up interview provides a strategy for data

saturation, reliability, and validity (Andraski et al., 2014; Goldblatt, Karnieli-Miller, & Neumann, 2011).

Member checking of the data interpretation includes me taking the analysis and my interpretations back to the participants using email. Participants had five calendar days to look over the results. Participants notified me of reasonable findings and if the themes uncovered appear accurate and credible. The process of member checking, meaning respondent validation by sharing the findings and responses with the participants might enhance the validity of the study (Andraski et al., 2014). The advantage to interviews versus mailed questionnaires is that the participants can seek clarity during the interviews as well as interviews are private. Questionnaires' requires more time and money.

Milne (2014) referenced other advantages to interviews included incomplete answers are followed up with clarification of ambiguities, high response rates are achieved, obtaining detailed information about personal feelings, perceptions, and perceptions, interviews are not influenced by others in a group, and wording can be tailored to respondent to include precise meaning of questions are clarified. Disadvantages included increase cost of traveling to conduct interviews, the participant potentially becoming uncomfortable and refraining from answering questions, and breach of privacy with face-to-face contact (Yin, 2012). I requested other documents including the small business owners' policies, procedures, and personnel manual. I then triangulated the results of the interviews with these documents.

### **Data Organization Technique**

I proposed to store data collected for five years on my password protected computer to avoid lost, misplaced, or unintentionally altered data. In the event of a technical mishap, storing of the research data in two different locations, in the event one set of data was lost, a backup file will be available. Storage of data including audio recordings, interview transcriptions, and consent forms will be in a password encrypted computer file. The use of labels for identification of the main data files along with subfolders for the audio recordings and consent forms may assist with organization. After five years stored data in two secure locations will be destroyed to protect confidentiality of participants. Yin (2012) noted the importance of note taking and capturing information in case studies during and after data collection. I documented notes during the interview process. Implementation of the NVivo 10 software for Windows to ensure data organization and systematic access to retrieve, view, and manipulate data.

The NVivo 10 software for Windows is cost effective compared to others such as Atlas. NVivo 10 software for Windows, unlike Microsoft word, may enable me to collect, organize, and analyze content from interviews. Recording and transcriptions of interview may be achieved using the NVivo 10 software for Windows. The implementation of the NVivo 10 software for Windows will save me time and money allowing me a faster turnaround. The analysis of the data may assist me in the formulation of the conclusion of the study. Coding may provide a pathway for data analysis during the qualitative case study. The use of NVivo software will enable the development of codes to establish synergies between data collected and strategic

contingency theory (Featherstone, Boldt, Torabi, & Konrad, 2012). To enhance my ability to code and identify themes and patterns during the analysis of data, I implemented the NVivo 10 software for Windows. The NVivo 10 software for Windows will be implemented to input and store data for coding and exploration of themes while maintain the confidentiality of research participants. The use of the NVivo 10 software for Windows may simplify the process of identifying themes and pattern recognition as part of an iterative data analysis process.

### **Data Analysis**

For this study, I developed interview questions to explore the central research question for this qualitative case study: what strategies do small business owners use to reduce voluntary employee turnover? I used semistructured interview questions as one part of the methodological triangulation for this proposed qualitative descriptive case study. During the interviews, the study participants shared insights into strategies that may reduce voluntary employee turnover. Denzin (2012) identified four types of triangulation: methods triangulation, triangulation of sources, analyst triangulation, and theory/perspective triangulation. For this study, I used methods triangulation. Oleinik (2011) described triangulation for qualitative case study as combining information for research purposes. Methods triangulation compares the findings from various data sources to provide a deeper understanding of a phenomenon (Denzin, 2012).

Yin (2012) described five steps in data analysis that includes: (a) compiling, (b) dissembling, (c) reassembling, (d) interpretation, and (e) conclusion. In the compiling phase, I organized all of the data in an order, to create a database (through the use of the

NVivo 10 software for Windows. I proposed to disassemble all of the data (using the NVivo 10 software for Windows) by breaking down the compiled data into fragments and labels. The NVivo 10 software for Windows stores all data in one location and can code hand written notes. The use of the NVivo 10 software for Windows may assist me in the reassembling process involving the clustering and categorizing the labels into sequence of groups. The final stage of interpretation consists of creation of narratives from the sequences and groups for conclusions. Data analysis of all data ensure cross reference (analysis triangulation) through the use multiple sources (Street & Ward, 2012; Torrance, 2012).

The researcher attains a more comprehensive picture of the phenomenon with methodological triangulation than using one type of data alone (Heale & Forbes, 2013). I used the combined methods of interviews and documentation of small business owners' documents (policies, procedures and personnel manual) to produce meaning from the data. By member checking, follow up interviews may verify responses from the participants of the study (Andraski et al., 2014; Goldblatt, Karnieli-Miller, & Neumann, 2011; Harper & Cole, 2012). Follow up interviews may be used to encourage expansion of ideas deemed most relevant to the research question. The selection of multiple data resources (methodological triangulation) for gathering data helped to ensure reliability and validity (Bureau & Andersen, 2014; Yin, 2012). Houghton et al. (2013) noted that an advantage of using a case study is a more complete representation of a phenomenon demonstrated through methodological triangulation of diverse data sources.

The use of the methodological triangulation of data sources such as interviews and documentation of small business owners' documents and previous research studies allows researchers to facilitate and produce understanding (Houghton et al., 2013; Wilson, 2014). In qualitative research, data analysis techniques comprise processes of transforming data into categories and themes (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). In this research, there were multiple sources of information to achieve methodological triangulation, which is common in case studies. Yin (2012) suggested the conceptual framework might guide data analysis in case studies. Yin (2012) suggested providing boundaries with which to structure data analysis around the research question. As I interviewed participants, I was interested in exploring how meanings are produced within a particular social, culture, and relational context this demonstrating reflexivity (Takhar & Chitakunye, 2012).

The use of methodological triangulation and reflexivity will improve the understanding of the complex nature of a phenomenon while allowing researchers to explore the subjective experiences and circumstances surrounding a phenomenon (Reilly et al., 2014). Reflexivity is required as the research process is the focus of inquiry in knowledge production involving reflection on the entire research context (Reilley et al., 2014; Takhar & Chitakunye, 2012). I addressed reflexivity by self-reflection of my biases and theoretical predispositions by mirroring backward my behavior during research. My understanding of concluding themes and patterns deriving from the central research question may assist in my findings. With the use of diverse data sources through

methodological triangulation, I hoped to gain both an accurate and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

The analysis of all of the data will assist me in the formulation of the conclusion of the study. Coding will provide a pathway for data analysis during the qualitative case study. The use of NVivo 10 software for Windows enabled the development of codes to establish synergies between data collected and strategic contingency theory (Featherstone et al., 2012). To enhance my ability to code and identify themes and patterns during the analysis of all data, I implemented the NVivo 10 software for Windows. Yin (2012) provided the format for a multiple case study, which involved conducting in depth interviews and comparing the assessments (observations, views, and opinions) that may emerge from each interview. Yin indicated that participants' assessments can concur or diverge, and this harmony or discord encourages researchers to seek additional elucidation from primary informants.

The benefits of using NVivo versus Atlas is that NVivo stores everything within 1 profile file whereas Atlas has a project file that only stores projects information and certain details. Another advantage of NVivo compared to MaxQDA is the possibility to code handwritten notes. The NVivo software has a single command (semi automation tool) to attach a particular code to all responses. Atlas does not integrate the text search and auto code. MaxQDA software has an exclusion tool and then another tool must be applied for the remaining codes, which causes an additional step. NVivo is cost effective and easy to use compared to Atlas and MaxQDA.



The conceptual framework is consistent with exploring small business owners' perceptions and experiences regarding the reduction of employee turnover. The Herzberg two factor theory, developed in 1959, illustrated factors in the workplace that cause satisfaction of the job and a separate set of factors that contribute to employee dissatisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). I choose the Herzberg two factor theory for this study to explore the factors that may affect voluntary employee turnover. Communication, interaction, job satisfaction and dissatisfaction, as well as motivation are primary components that may lead to a reduction of voluntary employee turnover (Dong et al., 2012; Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013). I reviewed the findings and compare my conclusions for either confirmation or divergence from the Herzberg two factor conceptual framework.

Data analysis involves sorting, integrating, and synthesizing the information I observed and read to provide meaning to the data. To understand the central research question from which the interview questions emerge is: what strategies do small business owners use to reduce voluntary employee turnover? The interview questions were as follows:

1. What experiences could you share concerning voluntary turnover in your business within the past three years?
2. What strategies do you perceive could reduce voluntary employee turnover and increase employee retention in a small business organization?

3. What do you think caused employees to continue employment in your small business?
4. What type of training and career opportunities do you offer employees?
5. What type of employer and employee relationships have you established?
6. What are the primary components for effective communication with your employees?
7. Do you believe that training and career opportunities would reduce employee voluntary turnover?
8. What information could you share concerning why past employees voluntary left your company?
9. As a result of past voluntary employee turnover, what strategies have you previous used in the past that you used in 2015?
10. What further information would you like to add regarding strategies that other small business owners might use to reduce voluntary employee turnover?

### **Reliability and Validity**

#### **Reliability**

Using my interview script, I ensured all interview questions remain consistent, avoiding bias and misleading answers. Oleinik (2011) defined reliability as consistency of all measured items in a research study. Reliability procedures occur when interview questions are consistent throughout the study (Trotter, 2012). Trotter asserted the use of consistent interview questions ensures questions are not biased or misleading (Trotter,

2012). With the use of interviewing additional participants, data saturation happens when no new themes emerge (Robinson, 2014; Unluer, 2012; Walker, 2012; Yin, 2012).

Member checking allowed me to ensure the transcript is representative of participants' expressed experiences and perceptions. With the use of member checking, data saturation occurs when no new information is given by participants (Unluer, 2012).

Wahyuni (2012) stated that reliability in qualitative research corresponds with *dependability*. Reliability in a research study minimizes errors and biases, to ensure the datum is reliable and *credible* (Oleinik, 2011). To maintain the quality qualitative research, I incorporated the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, transferability, and confirmability in this study (Shah & Corley, 2006) through the implementation of methodological triangulation and member checking. Houghton et al. (2013) noted that a more complete representation of a phenomenon is available through methodological triangulation of diverse data sources, an advantage of using case study research.

During the interviews, the study participants will share insights into strategies that may reduce voluntary employee turnover. Denzin (2012) identified four types of triangulation: methods triangulation, triangulation of sources, analyst triangulation, and theory/perspective triangulation. For this study, I used methods triangulation. Oleinik (2011) described triangulation for qualitative case study as combining information for research purposes. Methods triangulation compares the findings from various data sources to provide a deeper understanding of a phenomenon (Denzin, 2012). The use of member checking may help in reduction discrepancies, achieve logical, and consistent

documentation as well as ensure data saturation. Being the research instrument and the only person to collect the data will further enhance the reliability of the study. The combination of the use of member checking and data saturation technique improves accuracy and reliability (Andraski et al., 2014; Harper & Cole, 2012).

Houghton et al. (2013) argued that researchers establish rigor in qualitative case study research by adhering to the elements of credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability, which Petty et al. (2012) suggested are strengths in qualitative research. I satisfied the standards with the use of focused interview processes and by interviewing four participants, using member checking throughout to verify the adequacy of the interview format used. By interviewing additional participants, data saturation happens when no new themes emerge, which ensures depth (Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014; Robinson, 2014; Walker, 2012; Yin, 2012). The elaboration of methods I proposed to use in the study will describe the use of confirmability and dependability of a qualitative research study (Thomson et al., 2011). I ensured interview questions are consistent to ensure no bias or misleading questions. Methods to enhance reliability include using multiple sources of data, check transcripts for possible errors, and using standardized software to analyze interview data (Barratt et al., 2011; Baysal, Holmes, & Godfrey, 2013).

The validation process includes a script with following up phone calls and emails for member checking (Houghton et al., 2013; Unluer, 2012). Presenting the preliminary findings and interpretations to participants to check for accuracy ensured I had captured the meaning of what the participants' said. Member checking allowed me to ensure the

transcript is representative of participants' expressed experiences and perceptions. Houghton et al. (2013) posited that researchers should establish rigor in qualitative case study research by adhering to the elements of credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. I must adhere to qualitative standards of reliability and validity with any instrumentation used. Houghton et al. (2013) referred to credibility as the researcher's demonstration in case study designs of achieving saturation with credible processes. Through member checking and using multiple participant sources of data, researchers establish credibility in case study designs (Houghton et al., 2013; Whiteley, 2012).

### **Validity**

Yang, Kumaraswamy, Pam, and Mahesh (2011) described validity in qualitative research as centering on credibility and the ability to use results to make decisions. Several avenues exist for judging qualitative validity, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Yang et al., 2011). Validity refers to establishing confidence in the findings and how the findings may correspond to the real world (Jiménez-Buedo, 2011). In quantitative research, Jiménez-Buedo (2011) suggested the major type of validity scholars refer to is *internal validity*. Internal validity in qualitative research is similar to credibility to determine if the result of the study is valid (Jiménez-Buedo, 2011). The extent to which research applies to other people and situations define external validity (Jiménez-Buedo, 2011). Thomas and Magilvy (2011) described external validity as the ability of the study to present an accurate description of an experience that is recognizable to others experiencing the same phenomenon.

Credibility refers to the researcher providing an accurate interpretation of the experience and perception of the participants (Thomson et al., 2011). By using transferability, I referenced sources to support the information allowing readers to decide whether the material transfers to applicable business practice (Nawakitphaitoon, 2014; Thomson et al., 2011). Thomas and Magilvy (2011) described validity as the degree of accuracy in analysis of the findings associated with the study. Five forms of triangulations: data triangulation, methodological triangulation, theory triangulation, environmental triangulation, and investigator triangulation (Fielding, 2012). Applying the correct interpretations of the answers during the course of the interview technique to obtain accurate interpretation of data. Applying member checking through follow up interviews and organizational records may achieve research validity. I ensured external validity by the NVivo 10 software for Windows for checking themes and transcription of interviews. I triangulated data using documentary evidence such as: small business owners' standard operating procedures, memorandums, agendas, and interviews.

Methodological triangulation is another method for enhancing study credibility. Triangulation refers to using multiple methods to study a research topic or to view information from multiple perspectives (Grissom & Loeb, 2011). Grissom and Loeb used triangulation to perform analysis on data to determine best outcomes for a case study. Through the use of methodological triangulation I used interviews, hand written journal notes, and documentary evidence, which is the use of theoretical triangulation. Juros (2011) and Lewis (2009) argued that researchers could achieve validity in qualitative studies by using methodological triangulation, member checking, collaboration, and

negative cases. Methodological triangulation involves using multiple means to validate research findings, whether in the form of various theoretical perspectives, data sources, or analysts (Juroš, 2011). Member checking involves validating researcher interpretations of data through participant perspectives, ensuring that interpretations align with participant meanings of both the issues under study and the perceptions conveyed in interviews (Juroš, 2011). Similarly, Houghton et al. (2013) posited that researchers establish validity in case study research by demonstrating credibility and confirmability. To establish credibility, I used interviews, documentation of small business owners' standard operating procedures, and member checking by methodological triangulation.

### **Transition and Summary**

The purpose for this study was to explore the phenomenon of small business owners' strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover. In Section 2, I described the reasons to use a qualitative study to explore the phenomenon. I described the role of the researcher, the participants for the study, the research method and design, population and sampling, ethical research which included the consent form, data collection and organizational techniques, data analysis, and the reliability and validity of this research study.

Section 3 included the presentation of the findings, a discussion regarding the applicability to professional practice, the implications for societal change, recommendations for action and further research, reflections, and the conclusion of the study.

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

#### **Introduction**

The purpose for this qualitative descriptive case study was to explore what strategies small business owners use to reduce voluntary employee turnover. I explored the strategies of a four small business owners in the Wilmington-Jacksonville area in North Carolina. These small business owners have been in business for at least 5 years and have not experienced any voluntary employee resignations within the past year. Small business owners are responsible for creation of new jobs than that of large organizations (Muntean, 2011; Yallapragada & Bhuiyan, 2011). Small businesses provide job creation to improve the U.S. economy in the United States (Mason, 2014).

The use of semistructured face-to-face interviews with four small business owners allowed me to gain the participants trust by having one on one personal contact with each interviewee during the interview process. I assigned a number for each participant such as P1, P2, P3, and P4. I used NVivo 10 software for Windows to organize participants' responses to identify and create common themes for coding. After transcribing the interviews, I then conducted member checking to ensure that I captured the meaning of the participants' responses (Houghton et al., 2013; Reilly, 2013).

I triangulated the data to obtain the same perspective from various data sources (Walsh, 2013). In addition to semistructured interviews, I compared transcriptions, interview responses, direct observation, and business records to ensure validity using methodological triangulation. After I transcribed each interview, I imported the data into NVivo 10 software for Windows to assist me in discovering key themes. To obtain



clarification of the interview information, I performed member checking by providing the participants with a summarized transcript of the interview to ensure the information provided was accurate (Houghton et al., 2013; Reilly 2013). Based on the research question, analysis of the interview questions and company documents, I identified main themes. In Section 3, I outline a detailed description of the findings of the study. This section includes a presentation of the findings, applications to professional practice, implication of social change, recommendations for action, recommendation of further research, reflections, and study conclusions.

### **Presentation of the Findings**

I used semistructured interviews to gain an in-depth understanding of the strategies small business owners use to reduce voluntary employee turnover. I reviewed company business standard operating procedures, staff meeting agendas, and manuals concerning small business to enhance the triangulation of data for this study. I conducted interviews in the location of participant's choice. Each interview did not last more than 1 hour. After I conducted each interview, I transcribed the interviews and uploaded the transcription into NVivo 10 software for Windows to identify common themes and codes on each document. I replaced the names of each small business owner with the names of P1, P2, P3, and P4 protecting their identities. Once all data was coded, and there were no new themes, I then performed member checking by providing each participant with a summarized transcription to close any possible gaps or inaccurate statements and for data triangulations. During the interview process, participants contributed ideas, experiences, and insights regarding strategies used to reduce voluntary employee turnover. These four

small business owners participated in the semistructured interviews and responded to questions regarding the general research question, What strategies do small business owners use to reduce voluntary employee turnover? The four themes gathered were as follows: (a) education and training, (b) employee compensation (c) professional work environment, and (d) open effective communication.

**Theme 1: Education and training.** Alasadi and Alsabbagh (2015) posited individuals have the potential to capitalize on skills upon preparation of education and training. The four small business owners recognized the importance of both education and training. P1 indicated that during the interview process potential candidates were questioned in-depth about current, present, and future education and career goals. P3 and P4 discussed the importance of education and how the mixture of both an education and experience produced an effective well rounded employee. P4 insisted employees maintain employment within small business, as small business owners offer a combination of hands on as well as ongoing in house and exterior education and training related to the career industry. All participants agreed the lack of and abundance of education an employee obtained remains a factor in voluntary employee turnover.

The four small business owners each offered training in house within their small business organization. Each of the four small business owners encourages ongoing education for personal and employee development. P2 indicated “education and training offered to employees contributed to overall satisfaction, as an employee obtains growth in personal and developmental development.” Company documents which included standard operating procedures, manuals, and staff meeting agendas indicated a variety of

training opportunities for employees. Jayasingam and Yong (2013) reported in a study of knowledge workers, results indicated that turnover was less likely when the knowledge workers received opportunities to advance their skills and develop mentoring relationships.

P3 shared “employees develop both life and professional skills as a result of the training received which employees apply to their current position as well as any future positions.” P4 revealed “upon the development of newly acquired skills, employees are able to transfer these skills to their job and demonstrate work accomplishments.” P1 suggested employees only with a high school diploma appeared to be more receptive to training opportunities and illustrated excitement of continuing education and ongoing learning. Alasadi and Alsabbagh (2015) posited individuals have the potential to capitalize on skills upon preparation of education and training. P1 indicated employees who truly valued their education sought ongoing work related training opportunities. P1 and P3 conferred employees with minimum education such as a high school diploma and those employees with 10 years or more work experience were less likely to voluntarily terminate employment. P2 suggested training as an essential tool combined with an employee’s education as a strategic plan in voluntary turnover intentions.

The four small business owners conducted monthly staff meetings as well as individual conferences where the small business owners gave their employees a chance to discuss concerns and satisfaction of the job. Each small business owner documented their staff meeting with an agenda which included training. P4 offered mini refresher training which consisted of skills and knowledge. The mini refresher training focused on

reminders of specifics on the organization's standard operating procedures. P1, P2, P3, and P4 all conferred cross training was necessary within their small business. In addition to job specific training, P4 suggested cultural training within the small business organization, which was required for employees to understand each other, clients, and customers served. Cross cultural training resulted in lower turnover and higher benefits of employee satisfaction and performance (Kassar, Rouhana, & Lythreatis, 2015).

The use of simple, general knowledge training, which introduces and defines the employee's responsibilities, provides a collective understanding and knowledge base of the job (Call, Nyberg, Polyhart, & Weekley, 2015). Each of the four small business owners suggested the use of a formal training plan at the beginning of employment to include ongoing training of all staff. P4 insisted training creates confidence, understanding, and provides insight on the career outcome for an employee. A structured training plan which included ongoing training provided ongoing knowledge and job satisfaction as knowledge base is continuously transferred (Shantz & Latham, 2012). P1 noted that at each staff meeting employees are given the opportunity to share experiences and one new thing learned since last meeting as a form of knowledge sharing. P1 suggested this type of knowledge base training produced and created an effective work environment through learning of different perspectives of each other a part of the team concept.

**Theme 2: Employee compensation.** Employee compensation consists of salary and benefits to include employee appreciation and recognition, flexible work schedule, and incentives to include bonuses, and employee perks such as discounts provide a

strategic advantage to small business owners when attracting potential and retaining employees (P1, P2, P3, P4). The four small business owners agreed that employees are happy, more productive, and committed when the benefit package includes care and concern. P2 defined care and concern as compassion and a general concern for their employees and their families. P1 indicated “taking care of employees involved paying an ample salary on which the employee can live and feel they are valued within the small business organization.” P3 indicated salary, which included “health insurance and perks such as the flexibility of using sick leave for annual appointments for self and family without the hassle of being penalized or worried about job status, created a happy, dedicated employee.” Toress and Adler (2012) asserted compensation is essential to retention and compensation influences retention. Barnes, Reb, and Ang (2012) suggested a lack of adequate compensation would increase employee turnover. Idris (2014) disagreed with the statements of P1, P2, P3 and P4 and further noted that financial benefits are not a sustainable retention strategy. P4 stated the main reason of deciding to be a small business owner included the idea of “not having to choose between staying home and caring for a sick spouse or child versus losing employment due to absence.”

P4 defined employee perks such as a flexible work schedule to allow an employee to start the traditional work day earlier or later than 8 AM. P4 allowed employees to come in as early as 5AM to make up time as well as to get work completed. P1, P2, and P3 also offered flexible scheduled to ensure work was completed and give employees opportunities to make up hours within the current work week for both planned and unplanned leave. Planned leave included items such as scheduled vacation, doctor’s

appointment, or personal leave. Unplanned leave included time off for sick leave for self, spouse, or child, as well as any situation in which an employee did not come to work and the leave was not reported in advance.

P2 insisted employees are “dedicated, punctual, and attentive” when salary is comparable along with health benefits that are affordable. P4 allows employees options to have input on benefits each year. P4 suggested choosing the health insurance carrier, employer paid portion versus employee paid portion, and coverage costs are distributed to employees giving them an option and opinion in coverage for the next fiscal year.

P3 declared “the honest, straightforward approach” worked within the team concept. P3 noted honesty and being open and up front with staff illustrated integrity, care, and concern for employees who in turn valued their job. Grund and Schmitt (2013) recommended work councils for employees and management to advocate for overall job satisfaction factors, which included wages. Reilly et al. (2014) indicated voluntary employee turnovers are a result of job demand and satisfaction. Each of the four small business owners valued their employees and offered employee incentives during the change of the demands of the job. Allowing employees the opportunity to participate with involvement in important decisions pertaining to the business creates value of employees and a commitment to the organization (Whiteoak & Manning, 2012). P4 suggested that allowing employees to participate in work related tasks created a dedicated employee. They in turn would weigh the option of remaining in their small business organization.

**Theme 3: Professional work environment.** Minello, Scherer, & da, (2014) asserted professionalism in the workplace enhance the quality of business. P3 noted

providing a “positive, supportive, professional working environment” in which employee morale is high is important for employee retention and organizational growth. P4 indicated a professional working condition, where team concepts create an effective work environment for the small business as well as for the customer served. P1 suggested a “relaxed, yet professional work environment motivates a happy employee to be at dedicated employee”. P2 asserted the attitude of the small business owner sets the tone for the rest of the organization. Each of the four small business owners indicated professionalism contributes to a positive work environment and satisfied employees. The use of professionalism contributes to uniqueness, efficiency, and good business practices (Lewis, 2013).

P1, P2, P3, and P4 indicated professionalism is a skill that involved the commitment of the entire organization. P4 acknowledged work ethics, such as integrity, honesty, and respect, are components that determine the work culture. P3 suggested professionalism was a benefit that should come with each career, but normally in small business, the professionalism aspect is missing as sometime small business owners let his or her ego dictate the business culture. P1 insisted “respect” to each other and the customer requires professionalism, which is a characteristic that often goes lacking in business. Minello, Scherer, & da, (2014) asserted professionalism enhance the quality of business. P3 indicated relationship management involves professionalism and effective communication.

**Theme 4: Effective communication.** The process of communication allows people to interact. Effective communication involves exchange of information (Lloyd et

al., 2015). P4 suggested effective communication is essential in every business. P2 stated effective communication involves the cooperation of all parties involved. Each small business owners noted effective communication was their major reason for being a small business owner, and from previous experience, tried not to become what they left behind. P3 and P4 agreed effective communication requires a positive open mindset, focusing on the situation, understanding, and approaching the true situation. P2 suggested a small business owner should be “caring, showing concern for employees, yet professional treating employee with respect in addition to expecting respect to be interchanged between each other.” Effective communication involves contributing to the mutual exchange of information, and effective listening that reflects positively on the organization (Lloyd et al., 2015).

**Findings related to Herzberg Theory.** The Herzberg two factor theory, developed in 1959, concerns factors in the workplace that cause satisfaction for the job and a separate set of factors that contribute to employee dissatisfaction (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959). I choose the Herzberg two factor theory to explore the factors that affected voluntary employee turnover to gain a deeper understanding of employee satisfaction and dissatisfaction factors of a job. Herzberg developed the motivation hygiene theory and dual-factor theory (Herzberg et al., 1959). Herzberg noted (1974) motivation and job satisfaction influenced an employee’s decision to leave a job (Herzberg et al., 1959). Herzberg (1974) referred to two sets of needs, hygienic and growth, in relation to work (Herzberg et al., 1959). Hygienic needs consist of interpersonal relationships, the rewards system, and salary, which should motivate



employees (Herzberg, 1987). However, if not motivated, the employee will not be satisfied (Herzberg et al., 1959). The second set of needs known as growth needs, consisted of motivation factors, such as recognition of the work an employee completed, achievement, and advancement (Herzberg et al., 1959). I used Herzberg's two factor theory in this study to explore strategies small business owners used to reduce voluntary employee turnover in their organization. Communication between employees and managers reflecting a caring and supportive work environment and relationship were strategies small business owners used to decrease voluntary employee turnover (Allen & Shanock, 2013). The incorporation of Herzberg's two factor theory into the conceptual framework of the study assisted in identification and exploration small business owners' strategies for reducing voluntary employee turnover.

Certain themes in my literature review described voluntary employee turnover as a business problem and the need for strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover. An abundant amount of literature supports the problem of voluntary employee turnover in the United States. Turnover in business has prompted small business owners to seek strategies for reduction. Geographical location and culture may result in different strategies for reduction of voluntary employee turnover.

Based on the research and review of literature, strategies for reduction of voluntary employee turnover in small business are under researched. The results of this study provided detailed information and provided other small business owners with information to implement change, motivate, and retain employees. Limited current literature in reduction strategies of voluntary employee turnover exists in academic

literature. Through qualitative studies, researchers can explore framework and application to business practice (Moustakas, 1994). The method for this research study on strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover is a qualitative study designed to fill the gap in the literature. The findings confirmed and extended the limited knowledge in the field of voluntary employee turnover in small business.

### **Applications to Professional Practice**

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive case study was to explore what strategies some small business owners used to reduce voluntary employee turnover. The populations for this study consisted of four small business owners in southeast North Carolina. These small business owners must have been in business for at least five years and have not experienced any voluntary employee resignations within the past year. The population provided information on how to reduce voluntary employee turnover at small businesses. The information provided by four small business owners contributed to social change through creation of strategies to reduce voluntary turnover. There is an abundance of research which provided reasons of employee turnover, but limited research on strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover in small business. Small business owners can use this research to reduce future voluntary turnover.

The implication for positive social change will result from sustainable small business practices, increases in tax revenue, an increase in jobs, increase in sales revenue, and reductions in the unemployment rate. The intended contribution to existing research is to provide knowledge to small business owners on the importance of strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover and to use this knowledge to help create

environments that cultivate job satisfaction for employees, which may reduce voluntary turnover.

### **Implications for Social Change**

This qualitative case study is meaningful to strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover. The main objective of the study was to explore strategies small business owners used to reduce voluntary employee turnover. The retention of professionals has been an increasing concern for small business owners (James & Mathew, 2012). Not only should small business owners understand the strategies needed, but they should also be able to identify the most effective and ineffective strategies best suited for their small business organization (Laddha, Singh, Gabbad & Gidwani, 2012). The implementation of the strategies identified by P1, P2, P3, and P4 such as compensation and benefits to include a flexible work schedule are organizational strategies (Idris, 2014). The use of reduction strategies in voluntary turnover in small businesses will assist small business owners in retaining the knowledge of the skilled staff within the small business organization (Larkin & Burgess, 2013).

While the strategies as described by small business owners may assist some small businesses and organizations in retaining employees, understanding the most effective strategies prior to commencing a retention program may assist in overcoming ineffective strategies, barriers, and otherwise critical factors. As a small business owners understand these strategies, the result of the study may assist small business owners in developing effective retention plans to retain key professionals within their small business organization. Fachrunnisa, Adhiatma, and Mutaminah (2014) declared employees who

have workplace spirituality have the spirit to finish their works and will have a strong commitment to the welfare of society. The implementation of recommendations may contribute to small business owners retaining staff and increasing profits. The strategies may have a positive effect on future business owners desiring to start a business. This study could positively affect social change by reducing the unemployment rate.

The implications for positive social change includes the potential to decrease voluntary employee turnover in small business. As a result of a decrease in voluntary employee turnover, an increase in the rate of small business success which can result in hiring and retaining skilled employees, increasing financial security for owners, employees, and employees' families, as well as financial support and employment opportunities for the local community. Additionally, this information might be useful for members of the Chamber of Commerce to share with owners of current and future small business and educational leaders who teach information on issues that relate to sustaining and maintain a successful small business.

### **Recommendations for Action**

Small business owners can use the information in this study to assist them in strategies to reduce voluntary turnover in their small business organization. The information provided in this study may contribute to small business owners successfully retaining employees focusing more time on growth and sustaining their small business. The findings from this study are vital to existing small business owners, managers, organizational leaders, and future small business owners. The implementation of strategies to reduce voluntary turnover may assist other small business owners in

successfully retaining skilled professional staff, operating, growing and sustaining their small business. I recommend small business owners review the findings of this study to implement strategies in their small business.

Dissemination of the findings from the research will occur through various methods. The study participants will receive a compendium of the study to promulgate among peers of other small business owners and organizational leaders. The study will also be published and available through the ProQuest/UMI dissertation database for academia and others. I will seek opportunities to present the findings of this research in business related forums, training, and leadership conferences.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

The purpose of this study was to explore the strategies that small business owners used to reduce voluntary employee turnover. The study findings extend to the existing research of the need for strategies small businesses owners use to reduce voluntary employee turnover. Recommendations for further research include focusing on different sizes of small business in different industries and varying geographical locations. Future researchers should also consider studying small business owners who have increased profitability with no voluntary employee turnover within the past 5 years through quantitative designs. Future research in such areas could help business and government leaders provide continued support and resources to small business owners, their local economy and communities. Additional research could add to the limited scholarly knowledge and understanding of strategies used to reduce voluntary employee turnover in small business.

**Representation.** The main limitation of this qualitative study was that the data collected for this study may not represent all small businesses. Recommendations for further research involve more studies on specific industries within small businesses. I focused on small businesses as a whole.

**Location.** I also recommend exploring a different geographical location other than the Wilmington-Jacksonville area in North Carolina. Larger cities as well as smaller cities may have been an impact on the research. Exploring larger and smaller cities could add richer data to the study.

### **Reflections**

The Doctoral of Business Administration doctoral study process was a personal goal and fulfillment of wanting to be a lifetime learner as well as self-efficacy. The process challenged me and eliminated any preconceived notions that I had before conducting this research. During my interviews with the participants, they were both intrigued and helpful throughout, as a couple provided more information than I requested. While conducting this research, I was able to minimize errors and researchers bias. I anticipated the participants limited schedules and their inability to cooperate in a timely fashion when conducting the interviews, however this was not the case. The participants worked with me and scheduled an appointment the same day no later than 2 business days. 3 of the 4 participants called me before I had a chance to call them about the member checking follow up appointment. The participants had care and concern that made me feel adamant about the responses given.

After completing the study, my level of knowledge and understanding increased on my topic as my research expanded. The findings from this study exposed me to additional strategies that I can use in my current profession as a supervisor to communicate to management and human resources. In addition, I have only been employed in government employment, the compassion, care, and concern the participants displayed toward their employees have opened my eyes to seek all employment opportunities.

### **Conclusion**

Increasing turnover rates causes problems with workloads and workflow that compound over time (Nyberg & Ployhart, 2013). The United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014) reported the annual total separations in 2013 consisted of 48,329 thousand employees in private businesses. The general business problem is that small business owners' are incurring revenue losses from voluntary employee turnover (Kwon, Chung, Roh, Chadwick, & Lawler, 2012). The specific business problem is that some small business owners lack strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover. The purpose of this qualitative descriptive case study was to explore what strategies some small business owners use to reduce voluntary employee turnover. The central research question for this study was, what strategies do small business owners use to reduce voluntary employee turnover?

Four small business owners in the Wilmington-Jacksonville area in North Carolina participated in semistructured interviews. I triangulated the data by reviewing the small business owners' standard operating procedures, manuals, and staff meeting

agenda, interview data, and current literature to support the study findings. After data collection, four main themes emerged from the data including: (a) education and training, (b) employee compensation (c) professional work environment, and (d) open effective communication. The study findings suggested some strategies that small business owners used to reduce voluntary employee turnover. Small business owners provided an insight into the strategies small business owners use to reduce voluntary employee turnover.

The implication for positive social change will result from sustainable small business practices, increases in tax revenue, increase in job, increase in sales revenue, and reductions in the unemployment rate. The intended contribution to existing research is to provide knowledge to small business owners on the importance of strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover and to use this knowledge to help create environments that cultivate job satisfaction for employees, which may reduce voluntary turnover (Yang, 2012).



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### Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. What experiences could you share concerning voluntary turnover in your business within the past 3 years?
2. What strategies do you perceive could reduce voluntary employee turnover and increase employee retention in a small business organization?
3. What do you think caused employees to continue employment in your small business?
4. What type of training and career opportunities do you offer employees?
5. What type of employer and employee relationships have you established?
6. What are the primary components for effective communication with your employees?
7. Do you believe that training and career opportunities would reduce employee voluntary turnover?
8. What information could you share concerning why past employees voluntarily left your company?
9. As a result of past voluntary employee turnover, what strategies have you previously used in the past that you used in 2015?
10. What further information would you like to add regarding strategies that other small business owners might use to reduce voluntary employee turnover?

## Appendix B: Interview Protocol

This interview is aimed at exploring the phenomenon of small business owners' strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover. Participants in the interview will be small business owners in the Wilmington- Jacksonville area. Each participant will be asked the same set of questions in the same protocol outline below:

1. I will introduce myself to participants as a doctoral student of Walden University and give a brief overview of the purpose and time required for the interview.
2. I will then present a copy of the consent form for the participants to read and sign prior to any interview starting. The participants will be encouraged by the researcher to ask any questions or seek any clarifications they deem necessary.
3. Once the consent form is signed, I will give a copy to the participants.
4. The participants will be reminded that the interview will be audio recorded and the recorder will be started with only the specific date and time, for example Monday May 25, 2015 at 10:00 A.M. I will speak as use of an identification mark for the interview.
5. I will commence the interview by asking the questions and recording answers in the same sequence as noted on the research instrument. The anticipated of completion is 1 hour and may continue for 2 hours.
6. To conclude, the interview will extend a note of gratitude to the participant, stop the audio recording and conclude the appointment.
7. An appointment will be set at the end of the interview for member checking

follow up interview.

### **Introduction, Interview, and Follow up**

- Welcome and thank you for your participation. My name is Angel Major. I am a doctoral student at Walden University. This interview is aimed at exploring the phenomenon of small business owners' strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover. Each participant will be asked the same set of questions in the same protocol outline below. Follow up questions will be asked to probe and obtain in depth answers. The anticipated time of this interview is 1 hour not to exceed 2 hours. I would like your permission to tape record this interview, so I may accurately document the information you convey. If at any time during the interview you wish to discontinue the use of the recorder or interview, please feel free to let me know.
- At this time I would like to remind you of your written consent to participate in this study. You and I have both signed and dated each copy, certifying that we agree to continue this interview. You will receive one copy and I will keep the other under lock and key, separate from your reported responses. Thank you.
- Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. If at any time you need to stop, or take a break, please let me know. You may also withdraw your participation at any time without consequence. Do you have any concerns before we begin? At the end of the interview we will make an appointment for a follow up interview for member checking. If there are no other questions, then with your permission we will begin the interview.

### **After Each Question**

A copy of the succinct synthesis for each individual question will be shared with participant. After each question, I will ask: Did I miss anything? What else would you like to add?

1. What experiences could you share concerning voluntary turnover in your business within the past 3 years?
2. What strategies do you perceive could reduce voluntary employee turnover and increase employee retention in a small business organization?
3. What do you think caused employees to continue employment in your small business?
4. What type of training and career opportunities do you offer employees?
5. What type of employer and employee relationships have you established?
6. What are the primary components for effective communication with your employees?
7. Do you believe that training and career opportunities would reduce employee voluntary turnover?
8. What information could you share concerning why past employees voluntarily left your company?
9. As a result of past voluntary employee turnover, what strategies have you previously used in the past that you used in 2015?

10. What further information would you like to add regarding strategies that other small business owners might use to reduce voluntary employee turnover?