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Strategies Software Company Sales Managers Implemented to Reduce Voluntary Employee Turnover

Pete Taylor
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Pete Taylor

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Walden University
2016

Abstract

Strategies Software Company Sales Managers Implemented to Reduce Voluntary
Employee Turnover

by

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MBA, University of Phoenix, 2005

BA, University of Phoenix, 1998

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

August 2016

Abstract

The high rates of voluntary employee turnover in software sales organizations have forced business leaders to search for strategies that reduce voluntary employee turnover. The purpose of this multiple case study was to explore the strategies of a small group of sales managers who had demonstrated reduced voluntary employee turnover in their software manufacturing companies. Ten managers from 5 software manufacturing companies who had a minimum of 5 years of management experience were recruited and participated in semistructured, face-to-face interviews. The conceptual framework included Herzberg's 2-factor theory for exploring the relationship between job satisfaction and voluntary employee turnover. Open and frequent communications, constant performance feedback, and transparency align appropriately with the tenets of Herzberg's 2-factor theory. The Yin method for analyzing data through the process of data grouping, scrubbing, and organizing resulted in the emergence of themes including communications, recognition, and the work environment. All 10 sales managers spoke extensively about the importance of these themes in reducing voluntary employee turnover. These managers "noticed the little things," they gladly celebrated team successes, and they visibly supported their teams through actions. Findings from this study will provide a positive influence on social change through productivity improvements resulting in lower cost products and services, improving community prosperity. Additionally, consumers may benefit from these successful managers, as they facilitate a more expedited process of new products and services to the market.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this doctoral study to my wife, Susan Taylor. Throughout this entire process, you carried the load, allowing me to focus on studies. I thank you sincerely for your prayers and for never complaining throughout the past 5 years. No matter how difficult or challenging the curve balls life threw at us, you never complained, and you never gave up. You worked tirelessly to support our family and keep things going, so that I could achieve academic aspirations. I would also like to dedicate this doctoral study to my mother-in-law, Sally Lindberg, who continuously encouraged and inspired me to go after my dreams. Please know how special both of you are to me, and how much I love and appreciate you.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

United States business leaders spend billions of dollars annually on employee training and development (Salas, Tannenbaum, Kraiger, & Smith-Jentsch, 2012). Employee turnover, whether voluntary or involuntary, represents a costly event for companies and human resource management (HRM) organizations to overcome (Salas et al., 2012). Extensive research has documented the impact of turnover at the executive management level, but very little research existed for employee turnover (Choudhury & McIntosh, 2013; Hancock, Allen, Bosco, McDaniel, & Pierce, 2013). Furthermore, researchers have produced extensive literature documenting the effects of job satisfaction and commitment to employees on corporate financial success (Choudhury & McIntosh, 2013; Fortado & Fadil, 2014; Hancock et al., 2013). Voluntary turnover rates within information technology increased significantly since 2003 (Uruthirapathy & Grant, 2014; Von Hagel & Miller, 2011). HRM practice systems designed to manage relationships at all levels within the organization reduced voluntary turnover rates (Von Hagel & Miller, 2011). Employing a qualitative multiple case study research method, I explored the strategies software manufacturing company sales managers used to reduce voluntary turnover of sales associates.

Background of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to explore the strategies sales managers used to reduce voluntary turnover within sales divisions of software manufacturing companies. Financial and organizational performance resulting from employee turnover diminished with the time and expense needed for adaptation and team integration (Tariq, Ramzan, &

Riaz, 2013). HRM development of improved practice systems begins with developing an understanding of why employees voluntarily quit their jobs (James & Mathew, 2012).

High employee turnover rates within companies could negatively affect profitability through increased costs of employee recruitment, selection, and training (Rockstuhl, Dulebohn, Ang, & Shore, 2012). Companies with high employee turnover rates experienced decreased productivity, diminished morale, and loss of top talent (Tariq et al., 2013). The direct costs of recruitment, training, and overtime exacerbate the impact of lost productivity and revenue within technology organizations (James & Mathew, 2012; Kim, 2012). Sales managers who rely on a highly skilled and talented technology sales organization cannot afford to lose top performers (James & Mathew, 2012). Fortado and Fadil (2014) determined that while organizational culture changes may lead to increased sales, unintended consequences included increased employee turnover, damaged competitiveness, and destruction of core values once respected by all stakeholders. Minimizing voluntary turnover of top performing sales associates requires causal identification and change initiatives leading to increased job satisfaction (Boles, Dudley, Onyemah, Rouziès, & Weeks, 2012).

Problem Statement

Employee turnover negatively affected financial and organizational performance within professional businesses requiring critical knowledge and learned skills (Hancock et al., 2013). Voluntary employee turnover represented approximately 50% of total turnover in the professional and business industries in the United States for 2013 (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2013). The general business

problem is the cost of high voluntary turnover rates and leadership's lack of understanding as to the turnover causes directly affecting organizational performance. The specific business problem is that some software manufacturing sales managers lack strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover of sales associates.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies software manufacturing company sales managers used to reduce voluntary employee turnover of sales associates. The research population consisted of sales managers selected from five software manufacturing companies headquartered in the southeastern United States. Findings from this study might make a positive impact on social change by increasing awareness of employee retention strategies. Findings of this study may empower corporate sales managers to develop strategies that minimize employee turnover. Positive work environments lead to improved organizational performance, revenue growth, profitability, and decreased workplace stress (Fortado & Fadil, 2014; James & Mathew, 2012; Salas et al., 2012).

Nature of the Study

This research followed a qualitative methodology rather than quantitative or mixed methods. Qualitative research allows the researcher to explore and identify questions for social issues business leaders seek to understand (Yin, 2012). Qualitative studies involve individuals or groups of people and their experiences, social or human (Yin, 2012). Qualitative research requires the development of an in-depth narration based on a relatively small sample within a particular setting (Venkatesh, Brown, & Bala,

2013). Qualitative research methods include processes for understanding and personalizing data while quantitative research constitutes the examination and explanation of data in an impersonal way (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2012). The quantitative research constitutes linear attributes, measurements, testing a theory, and statistical analysis to define exactly how things work (Stake, 1995). Because of its exploratory nature and hypotheses development based on research variables, the quantitative research methodology was not appropriate for this study (Stake, 1995). Mixed methods incorporate a combined qualitative and quantitative approach, requiring additional effort and time to complete the process (Bansal & Corley, 2012; Venkatesh et al., 2013).

Qualitative research design includes case study, ethnographic, narrative, and phenomenological methodologies (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2012, 2014). Case studies involve the research of a particular case or set of instances based on a set of parameters or boundaries (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Stake (1995) and Yin (2012) described the case study research from constructivists' paradigm in that employee perception sometimes conflicts with reality or intention. Using case study design, the researcher explores specific details of problems that occurred in a particular setting, capturing all details and contextual material (Boblin, Ireland, Kirkpatrick, & Robertson, 2013; Cronin, 2014; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2014). Case study research enables the development of in-depth knowledge of the organization, event, or person, providing an opportunity for others to learn and benefit from the research (Boblin et al., 2013; Cronin, 2014; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2012).

Ethnographic research is useful for exploring cultural issues representative of a particular culture-sharing group and involves immersion, allowing for observation (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2012). Multicultural groups within the case organizations prevented utilizing ethnography. Narrative research includes both interviews and review of existing documentation used for data analysis in developing a narrative story about an individual's chronological life (Yin, 2012). This study did not include research of an individual; therefore, the narrative design was not appropriate. Phenomenological research includes people's lived experiences for a particular event that happened to them, and their perceptions of understanding and interpreting the phenomenon (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2012). Company internal policies and business practices vary, preventing the use of phenomenological research. Case study research allowed me to explore the strategies software manufacturing sales managers used to reduce voluntary turnover of sales associates.

Research Question

This qualitative multiple case study research involved the development of questions for use during semistructured face-to-face interviews. The primary research question was as follows: What strategies did software manufacturing sales managers use to reduce voluntary employee turnover of sales associates?

Interview Questions

A comprehensive literature review highlighted particular areas of focus leading to the development of eight questions supporting exploration of the primary research

question, concluding with a final open-ended question. The interview questions for participants in the study included the following:

1. What strategies do you use to retain sales associates?
2. What do you consider as the critical success factors to retain sales associates?
3. How do you establish retention objectives for sales associates?
4. How do you measure performance in meeting employee retention objectives?
5. What training programs designed to reduce voluntary employee turnover have you participated in during the past 3 years?
6. Finally, what additional information would you like to add that I did not ask?

Conceptual Framework

For the purposes of my research, I selected Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory as the conceptual framework. I used Herzberg's two-factor theory to guide research exploring the relationship between employee motivation and job satisfaction with voluntary turnover. Herzberg was a renowned psychologist known for his research on the correlation between workplace motivation and employee satisfaction. Herzberg's two-factor theory included the characteristics of organizational behavior affecting job satisfaction and voluntary employee turnover. Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1959) identified two primary factors that affected job satisfaction: hygiene and motivation. Hygiene is indicative of the traditional drivers of employment: pay, benefits, work environment, leadership quality, job security, and company reputation. Motivation included recognition and reward systems, growth opportunities, training and development, and career opportunities (Herzberg et al., 1959). While some turnover is

necessary and expected, control of this process is important in minimizing loss of top talent (Cooper & Quinn, 1993; Herzberg et al., 1959). These factors provided a foundation for this study as the underlying variables affecting workplace motivation and voluntary employee turnover. I selected Herzberg's two-factor theory as a framework to explore leadership's effect on workplace motivation influencing voluntary employee turnover.

Operational Definitions

Behavior engineering model (BEM): Gilbert (1978) developed BEM to enable organizations to identify individual and environmental performance barriers and deficiencies. Graves (2015) discussed BEM in the context of employee incentives affecting employee performance.

Behavioral integrity (BI): BI considers the alignment of honesty, trust, and leadership actions with words and behaviors (Leroy, Palanski, & Simons, 2012). BI can be catastrophic to the company, its employees and shareholders, and all stakeholders when actions and behaviors do not align (Leroy et al., 2012; Prottas, 2013).

Customer orientation (CO): Zablah, Franke, Brown, and Bartholomew (2012) defined CO as a psychological or behavioral phenomenon existing between employees and direct interactions with customers.

High-performance work systems (HPWSs): HPWSs constitute self-empowered employees combined with improved training and development HRM practices (Patel, Messersmith, & Lepak, 2013): HPWSs support employee empowerment and benefits in areas that include compensation and benefits, training and development opportunities,

reward systems, and more control of those decisions affecting them most (Patel et al., 2013).

Human capital: Skilled workers, skilled labor, and employees define human capital (Son & Noja, 2013).

Leader–member exchange (LMX): A positive relationship between manager and employee based on supportive, resourceful, and responsive leadership motivates desired subordinate behavior (Rockstuhl et al., 2012).

Organizational behavior: Organizational behavior is the study of human behavior within organizational settings on such topics as leadership, motivation, social interaction, and job satisfaction (Nahavandi, Denhardt, Denhardt, & Aristigueta, 2014). HRM processes and social and psychological environments developed to establish corporate objectives and strategies in the workplace (French & Holden, 2012).

Organizational commitment: Organizational commitment is a measure of the degree of responsibility an employee feels towards the organization’s mission (Jehanzeb, Rasheed, & Rasheed, 2013).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions represent something a researcher has taken for granted or supposed as true (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Qualitative multiple case study research is appropriate for an in-depth investigation of organizations, events, or persons (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2012). Several assumptions guided this study. I considered the information collected as factual even if unverified. I was capable of capturing, analyzing,

and interpreting the responses of the participants. Identification and categorization occurred for patterns and themes emerging from participant responses. I assumed business leader participants proved willing and honest throughout the interview process, including 100% completion rate, and willingness to commit adequate time for the face-to-face interview process. Participants in the research could articulate their experience of the studied phenomena. Open-ended interview questions allowed participants to provide responses that were broader scope, decreasing the potential for bias and minimizing any possible restrictions (Yin, 2014). Finally, the assumption existed that participants would commit adequate time for completing the face-to-face interview process.

Limitations

Limitations represent a restrictive weakness based on limiting conditions (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Limitations of this study included interviewing only leaders to the exclusion of employees, limiting the research breadth. Participation was limited to sales managers selected from five software manufacturing companies performing sales job roles, headquartered in the United States, with offices in the Southeast. The population size was small, and interviews conducted within a single industry (software manufacturing) imply findings may not prove generalizable to a broader population (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2012). Additional limitations included the number of participants, local culture, and employment rates that varied significantly on a per state basis (BLS, n.d.b). Use of a multiple case study design limited the types of insights derived from the study. Finally, limitations of my skills and ability as a researcher limited the depth and richness of the data collected.

Delimitations

Delimitations represented the boundaries or demarcations for this research (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Delimitations of this study included the use of a population located in the southeastern United States. This study limited research to a single industry (software manufacturing). Additionally, interviews excluded the voice of nonmanagement employees. Study participation limited interviews to 10 sales leaders in their current role for at least 6 months. Additionally, candidates possessed 5 years cumulative management experience with current and past employers. Finally, utilization of interviews as the primary instrument for data collection excluded useful information collected through other means.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

The results of the study may contribute value to the business and social impact by identifying strategies leaders used to retain employees and prevent voluntary employee turnover. The interview questions that guided this study may contribute to understanding voluntary employee turnover by revealing information to HRM organizations, executive leadership, and professional scholars on the value of investments in workforce management beyond the traditional HRM roles. During the 2007 to 2009 recession, companies reduced expenditures in training and development, compensation, team building exercises, and employee benefits, resulting in decreased job satisfaction (Hashim & Hameed, 2012). These investments can result in the reduction of employee turnover,

higher retention rates, and the attraction of highly talented employees (Hashim & Hameed, 2012).

This study may contribute to the active practice of business by exploring strategies that improve job satisfaction and organizational performance. Mensah (2015) described the relationship between talent management and employee performance. Talent management systems incorporate various mechanisms leading to employee performance and job satisfaction (Mensah, 2015). An opportunity appears for improvement in HRM operations, especially in managing a global workforce (Hashim & Hameed, 2012). Labor costs are a burden to all industries, some more than others (Hashim & Hameed, 2012). Voluntary turnover rates within information technology increased significantly since 2003 (Uruthirapathy & Grant, 2014; Von Hagel & Miller, 2011). HRM practice systems designed to manage relationships at all levels within the organization reduce voluntary turnover rates (Von Hagel & Miller, 2011). Patel et al. (2013) noted that high-performance work systems (HPWSs) improved financial return on investments. HRM is the managerial function establishing professionalism, but not affiliated with strategic leadership, indicating continued strife for HRM (Hashim & Hameed, 2012).

Employee turnover creates additional cost associated with overtime, product and service delays, reduced customer satisfaction, and recruitment and replacement (Jehanzeb et al., 2013; Rockstuhl et al., 2012). Training, team integration, moral deterioration based on business disruption, loss of innovation, and loss of knowledge further exacerbate the problem (Jehanzeb et al., 2013). Knowledge sharing and transfer within technology companies was critical to organizational success (Tong, Tak, & Wong, 2015). Leadership

places responsibility on employees to handle production, service delivery, customer interaction, and technical execution, thereby meeting stakeholder expectations and commitments (Jehanzeb et al., 2013). Despite awareness of the need to improve employee satisfaction, a Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM, 2012) research report indicated job satisfaction declined from 86% to 81% between 2009 and 2012. Recruitment challenges and retention remained a primary focus for the development of a sustainable workforce (James & Mathew, 2012; Wang & Howell, 2012).

Implications for Social Change

This study may contribute to positive social change and improvement of business practices by creating a more positive employee work environment through improved job satisfaction and retention practices. A positive work environment leads to improved organizational performance, revenue growth, profitability, and decreased workplace stress and injuries (Bryant & Allen, 2013; James & Mathew, 2012). Revenue growth and profitability support additional hiring and community growth, which in turn leads to increases in charitable donations and volunteering (Bryant & Allen, 2013). Raising awareness of leadership about the benefits of a motivated workforce can encourage the development of a long-term strategy for sustainability, effecting positive social change (Bryant & Allen, 2013; James & Mathew, 2012).

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

Leadership from software manufacturing companies performing sales management roles headquartered in the southeastern United States represented the

targeted participant group. The primary research question that drove this study addressed strategies software manufacturing sales managers used to reduce voluntary turnover of sales associates. A literature review of voluntary and involuntary turnover included the use of ABI/INFORM Complete, Business Source Complete, EBSCO host, Emerald Insight, ProQuest, and SAGE Premier databases via the Walden University Library online services and keyword searches. Primary search terms included *employee turnover, employee retention, personnel selection, organizational development, organizational leadership, succession planning, Herzberg two-factor theory, HRM, and job satisfaction. Secondary search terms were leadership, voluntary turnover, involuntary turnover, culture, career development, leadership development, management development, employee development, human resource management, SHRM, strategic human resource management, financials, sales, and strategic management.* This research yielded more than 175 items as presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Literature Review Sources

Source	Sources prior to 2012	Sources 2012 and later	Total
Dissertations	0	14	14
Peer-reviewed articles	6 (4%)	137	143
Seminal books	11	8	19
Government	0	5	5
Total	17 (9%)	164 (91%)	181

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies software manufacturing company sales managers used to reduce voluntary employee turnover of sales associates. The literature review section includes a summary of the literature used to explore reasons for voluntary employee turnover in developing strategies sales managers might implement to increase retention rates and improve employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Two-factor theory included the proposition that leadership behavior and HRM practice systems affect workplace motivation (Herzberg et al., 1959). This two-factor theory explained the relationship between job satisfaction, organizational performance, organizational behavior, and voluntary employee turnover (Herzberg et al., 1959). Comparing and contrasting various points of view within existing research provided scholarly strategies for problem resolution. Research built upon previous research to identify job satisfaction drivers and strategies for reducing voluntary employee turnover. In contrast to previous research on job satisfaction at the macro level, this study explored the strategies software manufacturing company sales managers used to reduce voluntary employee turnover of sales associates. Through the thematic review, I explored major strategies leaders used to encourage and achieve job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Specifically, the review included a discussion on three main areas including financial impact, Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory, and HRM strategies. Each of these three main sections was then broken down into smaller subsections. The initial section covered the financial impact of employee turnover on organizational performance. Next, the two-factor theory section included subsections on job satisfaction; organizational

culture and values; retention and recruitment challenges; and strategies, training, development, and leadership. The final section on HRM strategies included implementing an agile framework, CASs, and HPWSs.

Financial Impact

Cost of employee turnover. Employee turnover at all levels throughout the organization is costly (Chrobot-Mason & Aramovich, 2013). Historical research viewed voluntary turnover according to the impact of executive leadership turnover, ignoring the effect of nonmanagement employee voluntary turnover and retention (Hancock et al., 2013). Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory articulated the impact of workplace motivation on job satisfaction and voluntary employee turnover. Employees deliver products and services with high quality, low cost, and timeliness (Chrobot-Mason & Aramovich, 2013; Hur, 2013). The costly occurrence of voluntary employee turnover is preventable (Maertz, Boyar, & Pearson, 2012). Human capital turnover has a negative impact on the return on investments made throughout an employee's tenure (Kehoe & Wright, 2013; Maertz et al., 2012). Employee turnover has a substantial and meaningful impact on revenue and profitability (Chrobot-Mason & Aramovich, 2013; Hancock et al., 2013; Hur, 2013; Kehoe & Wright, 2013).

Diminished job satisfaction affects voluntary employee turnover and organizational performance (Bandura & Lyons, 2014; Fortado & Fadil, 2014; James & Mathew, 2012). Employee turnover damages organizational performance as measured by profits, revenue, market share, employee satisfaction, and customer satisfaction (Hancock et al., 2013; Vinit & Patel, 2013). Organizational culture, company policies, job fairness,

trust, respect, and supportive management affect job satisfaction (Bandura & Lyons, 2014). A highly skilled and knowledgeable workforce is core to creating and sustaining a competitive advantage (Nag & Gioia, 2012). Mensah (2015) described the relationship between talent management and employee performance. Talent management systems incorporate various mechanisms leading to employee performance and job satisfaction (Mensah, 2015). HRM organizations perform exit interviews for determining why an employee decides to leave (George, 2015). George (2015) surmised that understanding why employees stay with a company is equally important.

Unemployment rates among those who were seeking either full-time or part-time work rose from 13.6% in 2008 to a high of 17.1% in 2009 before settling at 15.2% in 2011 (BLS, n.d.a). Individuals that had given up looking for work increased steadily from 2008 to 2011, rising from 80 million in 2008 to nearly 87 million in 2011 (BLS, n.d.a). Unemployment rates were high during this period of global economic collapse, and yet the number of workers voluntarily leaving the workforce continued to grow (James & Mathew, 2012). Research suggested that job satisfaction was a primary determinant of voluntary employee turnover leading to a shrinking pool of skilled workers (Choudhury & McIntosh, 2013; James & Mathew, 2012).

Employee turnover affects revenue, profit, job satisfaction, customer satisfaction, and organizational performance (Chrobot-Mason & Aramovich, 2013; Hancock et al., 2013; Hur, 2013; Kehoe & Wright, 2013). Furthermore, knowledge as a competitive differentiator and the loss of skilled workers can prove costly to the organization (Hancock et al., 2013; Kehoe & Wright, 2013). The loss of talented employees with

unique skill sets increases the risk of proprietary information transferring to competitors resulting in lost revenue and market share (Hancock et al., 2013; Kehoe & Wright, 2013). Furthermore, companies make considerable investments in training and developing employees that, when combined with experience, results in increased recruitment and replacement costs (Hur, 2013; Kehoe & Wright, 2013).

Employee replacement costs range between 50% and 200% of an employee's annual wages (Berry, Lelchook, & Clark, 2012). The negative consequences of employee turnover can be more costly to certain groups including leadership, technical and engineering organizations, sales, and marketing (Hancock et al., 2013). Voluntary employee turnover within the sales organizations results in lost revenue (Hancock et al., 2013). Key customer relationships acquired through recruitment of top sales and leadership resources impact revenue and market share (Hancock et al., 2013). Organizational behavior, poor direction, and human resources (HR) practices lead to the voluntary turnover of key sales and management employees (Hancock et al., 2013; Kehoe & Wright, 2013; Maertz et al., 2012). For example, turnover within the sales organization leaves opportunity pipelines unmanaged for an extended period leading to lost revenue and market share (Hancock et al., 2013). Often top salespeople's customer relationships are unknown to the organization and leave with the employee (Hancock et al., 2013). The process of recruiting and training replacement salespeople represented an extended period where the sales territory received no coverage, resulting in exposure to the competition (Hancock et al., 2013).

Strategic human resource management. Strategic HRM practice systems combined with leadership training and development improved job satisfaction, resulting in reduced voluntary turnover costs (Kehoe & Wright, 2013). Research validated the positive impact of strategic HRM high-performance practices on financial performance (Hur, 2013; Kehoe & Wright, 2013). Hygiene and motivation, as described by Herzberg et al. (1959), articulated two primary factors affecting job satisfaction. Employee perception of high-performance HR practices affect job satisfaction and voluntary turnover (Kehoe & Wright, 2013). Performance and commitment practices positively affect the organizational effectiveness and financial performance through increased job satisfaction (Chrobot-Mason & Aramovich, 2013; Hancock et al., 2013; Kehoe & Wright, 2013). Kehoe and Wright (2013) suggested HR practices positively affected job satisfaction so long as the employee perceived the practices as HR designed them. Successful HR practices require effective communications of value and purpose aligning perception and reality (Chrobot-Mason & Aramovich, 2013; Kehoe & Wright, 2013). Voluntary turnover and loss of top talent continued as a significant financial concern for leadership (Hancock et al., 2013; Hur, 2013; Kehoe & Wright, 2013).

Organizational performance. Hancock et al. (2013) analyzed the relationship between employee turnover and organizational performance. In their research, Hancock et al. analyzed the results of 48 previous studies meeting specific criteria including reporting of voluntary and total turnover rates. The total sample size included 24,943 and 134 relationships associated with turnover rates and organizational performance (Hancock et al., 2013). Furthermore, Hancock et al. performed an analysis at the group or

industry level, including manufacturing, transportation, financial, technology, retail, and food services. Analysis indicated the more a group relied on talent, skills, and knowledge, the greater negative impact on financial and organizational performance turnover had (Hancock et al., 2013). Manufacturing and transportation industries yielded the highest negative impact on financial performance followed by finance and technology, groups requiring special skills, knowledge, and experience (Hancock et al., 2013). Retail and food service industries yielded minimal financial impact and required minimal skills (Hancock et al., 2013). A lack of internal job satisfaction practices led to turnover of top talent (Chrobot-Mason & Aramovich, 2013; Hancock et al., 2013; Hur, 2013; Kehoe & Wright, 2013).

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

Herzberg (1959) developed the two-factor theory to explore the characteristics of organizational behavior affecting job satisfaction. Herzberg et al. (1959) identified two primary factors that affected job satisfaction: hygiene and motivation. Hygiene is indicative of the traditional drivers of employment: pay, benefits, work environment, leadership quality, job security, and company reputation. Motivation includes recognition and reward systems, growth opportunities, training and development, and career opportunities (Herzberg et al., 1959). Additionally, useful feedback motivating targeted behaviors results in positive development choices and increased organizational performance (Lee, 2012; SHRM, 2012).

Herzberg et al. (1959) studied the need satisfactions of 200 accountants and engineers. During two separate interview sessions, participants described a time when

they felt wonderful about their job, and a time when they hated their job (Herzberg et al., 1959). Results and analysis of these interview sessions led Herzberg et al. to conclude people had two specific needs. The two specific needs included an avoidance of pain and a need for psychological growth and stimulation (Herzberg et al., 1959). Herzberg et al. concluded that job satisfaction consisted of two dimensions. The first dimension classified job satisfaction based on intrinsic factors such as a need for self-actualization and self-realization (Herzberg et al., 1959). Examples of intrinsic factors included a sense of achievement, public recognition, responsibility, advancement opportunities, and the work itself (Herzberg et al., 1959). Job dissatisfaction factors included ineffective or inefficient policies, incompetent management, salary, benefits, and interpersonal relationships (Herzberg et al., 1959). Furthermore, Herzberg et al. suggested intrinsic job satisfaction factors motivated employees, while job dissatisfaction factors did not. These factors provided a foundation for this study as the underlying variables affecting job satisfaction, voluntary turnover, and recruitment and retention strategies. According to Herzberg et al., highly motivated employees in a high hygiene environment had the greatest potential to drive positive job satisfaction, retention, and recruitment results. Furthermore, little motivation in a low hygiene situation had a negative impact on job satisfaction, retention, and recruitment results (Herzberg et al., 1959).

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a crucial indicator of employee turnover (Karatepe & Vatankhah, 2014; Lee, 2012; Siddiqui, Syed, & Hassan, 2012). Compensation and benefits, job security, training and development, and work-life balance are job

satisfaction drivers (Lee, 2012; SHRM, 2012; Siddiqui et al., 2012). Advancement opportunities, recognition and rewards, work environment, leadership and management, and organizational culture, highlight additional job satisfaction drivers (Lee, 2012; SHRM, 2012; Siddiqui et al., 2012). Commission rates and earnings potential typically motivate sales associates (Batt & Colvin, 2011). A report by the SHRM (2012) found job satisfaction declined from 86% to 81% between 2009 and 2012. The top five, job satisfaction areas included (a) work that incorporated existing skills and abilities, (b) job security, (c) pay and benefits, (d) communications between leadership and employees, and (e) relationship between manager and employee (SHRM, 2012). Job satisfaction based on skills and abilities increased from 55% to 63% between 2009 and 2012 while job security declined from 63% to 61% during this same period (SHRM, 2012).

Traditional drivers of employment include pay, benefits, work environment, leadership quality, job security, and company reputation. Modern drivers include recognition and reward systems, growth opportunities, training and development, and career opportunities (Herzberg et al., 1959). Traditional drivers remain relevant to the recruitment and retention process (Cooper & Quinn, 1993; Herzberg et al., 1959). Pay and benefits were core components of HRM systems (Olafsen, Halvari, Forest, & Deci, 2015). Motivation is becoming increasingly more essential to reducing voluntary turnover and improving job satisfaction (Cooper & Quinn, 1993; Herzberg et al., 1959). Recognition typically occurred as a non-controlled event leading to increased motivation and a positive experience of individual achievement (Cerasoli, Nicklin, & Ford, 2014; Olafsen et al.,

2015). Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory highlighted the relationship and worth between workplace motivation and leadership behavior.

Organizational culture and values. Organizational behavior and commitment require HRM leadership (Jehanzeb et al., 2013). Gilbert's (1978) behavior engineering model (BEM) considered the work environment and employee in determining organizational performance. Gilbert focused on the work environment including the physical workspace, working relationship between employee and management, and availability of appropriate tools and resources required to support desired performance. BEM considered the frequency of performance feedback, clear expectations and guidance reinforced through monetary and non-monetary incentives, career development, advancement opportunities, and consequences for poor performance (Gilbert, 1978). Additionally, Gilbert used the BEM to focus on recruitment processes, and training alignment of job requirements, motivation, and job satisfaction in delivering desired organizational performance. Gilbert's (1978) BEM model enables organizations to identify performance barriers and interventions required to resolve obstacles in attaining desired group results through a high performing workforce.

People represent the most valuable assets of an organization. Replacing employees is costly and challenging, especially highly motivated and productive workers (Barr, 2015; James & Mathew, 2012). National Instruments (NI), a 7,000-employee company growing 7% annually, measured success by employee satisfaction (Pollitt, 2014). National Instrument received global recognition as one of the best companies to work for every year from 2000 through 2014 resulting from intentional job satisfaction

initiatives (Pollitt, 2014). Pollitt (2014) explained NI's focus on job satisfaction through encouraging inspiration, originality, recognition programs, training, development, career growth opportunities, and a work environment supported by trust and openness. Focusing on these elements resulted in turnover rates 47% lower than the U.S. industry average (Pollitt, 2014).

Organizational culture and values directly affect employee commitment to the organization (James & Mathew, 2012; Karatepe & Vatankhah, 2014). Employee commitment begins with a belief in the goals and objectives of leadership, motivating the employee to work harder and desire linkage with the organization (James & Mathew, 2012; Karatepe & Vatankhah, 2014). An employee must believe in the products, services, and long-term goals of the company strongly enough in compelling them to work harder than expected, to establish an active connection (James & Mathew, 2012; Karatepe & Vatankhah, 2014). Fortado and Fadil (2014) explored the introduction of a sales culture within one of the 10 largest U.S. banks. Increased revenues offset by unanticipated problems with disgruntled employees and unhappy customers highlighted significant flaws in the strategy (Fortado & Fadil, 2014). Forcing employees to sell additional products and services through pre-defined processes without the opportunity to discuss or challenge negatively influenced employee and customer satisfaction measured by increased turnover rates (Fortado & Fadil, 2014). The organizational commitment provides a competitive advantage for increased productivity, quality, innovation, and reduced costs (James & Mathew, 2012). HRM recruitment strategies are critical to the development of employee and organizational commitment, and hiring individuals who

exhibit the appropriate characteristics up front (James & Mathew, 2012; Karatepe & Vatankhah, 2014). Engaging employees with social initiatives increased organizational commitment and emotional attachment (Bode, Singh, & Rogan, 2015). Management recruitment strategies represent an important component in this process (Prottas, 2013).

Business ethics. Business ethics affects employee commitment, voluntary turnover, and retention (Prottas, 2013). The period between the 1980 and 2008 included several financial disasters triggering severe consequences for stakeholders (Prottas, 2013). These failures included 1980s savings and loan scandals, the 1990s dot-com collapse, and a massive financial collapse driven by the mortgage crisis of 2008 (Prottas, 2013). Employees lost their jobs, and retirement accounts evaporated, directly resulting from poor ethical behavior by management and corporate leadership (Prottas, 2013). Global Crossing, Enron, and WorldCom are examples of poor business ethics and organizational behavior destroying stockholder investments and confidence (Prottas, 2013). These massive corporate failures led to increased regulations intended to deter bad corporate behavior (Prottas, 2013). These tremendous lapses in judgment and BI carried a high financial cost that undermined revenue, profitability, job growth, and innovation (Prottas, 2013). Employees who had viewed themselves as good, honest, hardworking individuals quickly learned to distrust their leadership because of BI actions (Prottas, 2013). This distrust diminished job satisfaction and employee commitment resulting in the voluntary turnover and retention issues (Prottas, 2013). Ethical conflicts cause emotional distress, which causes problems with job satisfaction and voluntary employee turnover, at a significant cost to the business (Tuzun & Kalemci, 2012).

BI. BI issues increased focus on corporate social responsibility, not just financially, but to all stakeholders and local communities (Leroy et al., 2012). Development of the social exchange theory resulted in a framework researchers used to explore the impact of employee relationships with managers, organizations, or both, in defining commitment as a determinant of turnover intention (Tuzun & Kalemci, 2012). Employment relationship represented a major variable in turnover intentions (Avanzi, Fraccaroli, Sarchielli, Ullrich, & van Dick, 2014). Employee perception of leadership and the organization, risk compromise based on a lack of support and poor ethical behavior observed or perceived (Tuzun & Kalemci, 2012). Job satisfaction peaks when a substantial connection exists between the employee and his or her manager and the organization (Tuzun & Kalemci, 2012). This connection leads to improved commitment, performance, and reduced voluntary employee turnover (Tuzun & Kalemci, 2012). Fairness and trust in organizational interactions, processes, and procedures was critical to social exchange (Osman, Noordin, Daud, & Othman, 2016). Disconnects between management and organizational values create conflict for employees (Tuzun & Kalemci, 2012).

Environmental sustainability. Eco-innovation and environmental awareness serve as economic drivers enabling innovation and employee loyalty resulting from self-pride in working for an organization committed to a greener, healthier environment (Doran & Ryan, 2012). Eco-innovation has a positive impact on organizational growth and development (Doran & Ryan, 2012). The Stockholm Conference of 1972 created the initial platform to draw attention to the environment, followed by the United Nations

resolution establishing the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1983 (Babonea & Joia, 2012).

Recruitment and Retention

Recruitment challenges and retention remain a primary focus for the development of a sustainable workforce (James & Mathew, 2012; Wang & Howell, 2012). Replacing pension plans with a 401K vesting in 4 years leads to increased turnover rates (Bryant & Allen, 2013; Govaerts, Kyndt, Dochy, & Baert, 2011; Wang & Howell, 2012).

Furthermore, self-invention, personal skills development, and increased entrepreneurship increased turnover rates (Bryant & Allen, 2013; Govaerts et al., 2011; Wang & Howell, 2012). Employee turnover hurts business operations through increased safety risks, reduced productivity, customer satisfaction, and profitability, especially when turnover is unplanned or unexpected (Samson, 2013).

Technology solution sales represented some of the highest compensated employees driven by increased demands for qualified top talent (Hancock et al., 2013; Vinit & Patel, 2013). Retention of technology solutions sales employees represented a major concern for organizations in managing costs and increasing market share (Hancock et al., 2013; Vinit & Patel, 2013). Technology companies placed significant value on sales organizations for financial contributions, customer relationships, and their role in obtaining strategic competitive industry information (Hancock et al., 2013; Vinit & Patel, 2013). Research conducted by Vinit and Patel (2013) identified four specific areas affecting voluntary turnover of technology employees. The lack of an appraisal process emerged as the primary factor influencing voluntary turnover of technology employees

(Vinit & Patel, 2013). The performance appraisal process was a collaborative opportunity between employee and manager to provide constructive feedback (Budworth, Latham, & Manroop, 2015). Additional areas included a lack of training opportunities, organizational transparency, and flexibility (Vinit & Patel, 2013). Technology employees demand openness, collaboration, career growth, and fairness (Vinit & Patel, 2013). Identifying employee knowledge, skills, and abilities, and then aligning with organizational needs was a major part of the career growth process (Vaiman, Haslberger, & Vance, 2015).

HRM policies and processes are typically balanced employee expectations with business requirements in achieving strategic objectives (Samson, 2013; Wang & Howell, 2012). Samson (2013) established that HRM policies designed to incent employees have a negative effect on voluntary turnover while increases in employer expectations and demands of employees have a positive impact on turnover. HRM retention strategies traditionally address economic and social aspects to improve organizational commitment (Govaerts et al., 2011; James & Mathew, 2012; Samson, 2013). These policies create a feeling of increased obligation by employees to the organization for receiving increased incentives (Samson, 2013). Perceived employee commitment to the business increased individual stress reducing job satisfaction (Bryant & Allen, 2013; James & Mathew, 2012; Wang & Howell, 2012).

Additionally, within sales organizations, recruitment strategies should consider CO (Zablah et al., 2012). CO described the inherent attitudes and personality traits associated with recruiting frontline employees and their abilities to manage direct

interactions with challenging customers (Zablah et al., 2012). Zablah et al. (2012) determined through their research, stressful customer interactions by frontline employees negatively influences job satisfaction and organizational performance leading to voluntary turnover of sales employees. HRM and sales managers should consider CO as a critical component of recruitment practices and not be tempted to curtail financial investments in ongoing CO training and development related expenses (Zablah et al., 2012).

Retention and recruitment challenges. Employee replacement costs far exceed 100% of annual compensation (Bryant & Allen, 2013). Employee turnover led to critical gaps in knowledge management, organizational disruption and diminished customer satisfaction (Bryant & Allen, 2013). Compensation and benefits historically represented a major strategy for driving HRM recruitment and retention strategies (Bryant & Allen, 2013; James & Mathew, 2012). Based on research conducted by Nawaz and Pangil (2016), promotion speed and remuneration growth represented significant career growth strategies most aligned with employee turnover intention. Wide discrepancies between low and high wage employee compensation, and perceptions regarding pay fairness, negatively impact turnover, while the use of stock options positively affect retention (Bryant & Allen, 2013). Fair and equitable compensation plans, employee stock option plans, and retirement programs vesting over a longer period improve recruitment success (Bryant & Allen, 2013).

Employee voluntary turnover rarely occurred because of compensation alone (Bryant & Allen, 2013; Govaerts et al., 2011; James & Mathew, 2012). Individual

turnover begins with dissatisfaction of the work environment visible as withdrawal (Bryant & Allen, 2013; Govaerts et al., 2011; James & Mathew, 2012). HRM practices address leadership training in recognizing employee withdrawal, a process that typically plays out over an extended period (Bryant & Allen, 2013; Wang & Howell, 2012). Gilbert's (1978) BEM model enables organizations to identify performance barriers and interventions required to resolve work environment obstacles in attaining desired results improving employee motivation and job satisfaction. HRM solutions might reverse the process leading to an active reduction of voluntary employee turnover (Bryant & Allen, 2013). HRM policies based on providing pay increases to employees who threaten to leave for a better paying job set a precedence that can be quite costly to the business (Bryant & Allen, 2013). Attracting and retaining highly skilled employees requires HRM processes beyond pay and benefits (Bryant & Allen, 2013; Samson, 2013; Wang & Howell, 2012).

Individuals develop relationships with their fellow employees, leadership, the organization, and the community (James & Mathew, 2012; Khattak et al., 2012). These linkages are broken when an employee decides to resign their position affecting many other individuals (James & Mathew, 2012; Khattak et al., 2012). Knowledge management, unique skills, personality, workload, and other social characteristics, for which the resigning employee was responsible, disappear (Khattak et al., 2012). The remaining employees must now fill this void. Voluntary turnover leads to decreased morale, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and additional turnover (James & Mathew, 2012; Khattak et al., 2012). This scenario further highlights the need for

leadership training in the recognition of employee withdrawal, job embeddedness, and organizational commitment (Bryant & Allen, 2013; Khattak et al., 2012).

Voluntary turnover within the information technology (IT) industry frequently occurs, based on compensation, career growth, opportunities, and job satisfaction (James & Mathew, 2012; Kim, 2012). Recruitment and retention of top IT talent globally provided a competitive advantage (James & Mathew, 2012; Parez, Silva, Harvey, & Bosco, 2013). Teamwork, job embeddedness, and innovation represent critical objectives within the IT industry. Losing a vital resource or multiple resources supporting strategic application development projects, products, or services, is costly and difficult to manage (James & Mathew, 2012). Knowledge management represents a critical component in dealing with recruitment and retention of talented human capital (James & Mathew, 2012). Additionally, leadership time required to address the loss of critical resources, combined with replacement efforts, has a negative impact on workforce planning, morale, and workload.

Retention and recruitment strategies. Successful retention and recruitment strategies provide a competitive advantage (Govaerts et al., 2011; James & Mathew, 2012; Parez et al., 2013; Wang & Howell, 2012). Specifically for sales recruitment, the process begins with a strategy that considers CO and the ability of a potential new hire to navigate challenging customer environments (Zablah et al., 2012). Several factors associated with recruitment in the sales organization affect organizational performance and sustainability (Evanschitzky, Sharma, & Prykop, 2012). Research conducted by Evanschitzky et al. (2012) established the impact of sales associates CO on customer

satisfaction as a determinant for profitable relationships. Furthermore, their research determined that dominance traits in some sales roles negatively affected customer satisfaction and management needs to consider during the recruitment process (Evanschitzky et al., 2012). HRM and sales managers should consider CO as a critical component of recruitment practices and not be tempted to curtail financial investments in ongoing CO training and development related expenses (Zablah et al., 2012).

Training and development positively affect retention results (Govaerts et al., 2011; Samson, 2013; Wang & Howell, 2012). Businesses need to establish robust programs with an environment conducive to learning and working (Govaerts et al., 2011; Samson, 2013; Wang & Howell, 2012). Govaerts et al. (2011) discussed the gap and appreciative approaches to creating a learning environment focused on further development of employee strengths. This research focused on the organization and employees, validating both approaches have a positive effect on voluntary employee turnover and return on investment (Govaerts et al., 2011; Perez et al., 2013). Govaerts et al. concluded successful training and development strategies have a positive effect on voluntary employee turnover and recruitment efforts. Equally important, employee perception as to the value and benefits of education and development practices affect job satisfaction and voluntary employee turnover (James & Mathew, 2012).

Turnover, whether voluntary or intentional, negatively influences the organization (Batt & Colvin, 2011). Strong performers were more likely to quit for pay or career growth opportunities (Batt & Colvin, 2011). Some organizations choose to manage labor costs through relatively high rates of turnover (Batt & Colvin, 2011; Maertz et al., 2012).

Others, such as GE, implement annual labor reductions designed to affect bottom-tier performers (Batt & Colvin, 2011; Maertz et al., 2012). Batt and Colvin (2011) analyzed employment systems that considered the work organization, incentives encouraging long-term commitments, and rewards designed to drive short-term performance improvements against voluntary turnover and layoffs or terminations. Their research specifically targeted the call center industry, representing approximately 3% of the U.S. workforce, historically experiencing high levels of turnover (Batt & Colvin, 2011). Batt and Colvin (2011) concluded that, from an HRM practices and employment systems design, similarities existed in voluntary turnover and terminations as companies attempted to find ideal levels of employee turnover rates.

Corporations' leaders implemented various strategies positively affecting retention and recruitment practices. These plans included employee referral bonuses, comprehensive new hire immersion programs, team building, enrichment, and engagement programs (James & Mathew, 2012; Maertz et al., 2012). The strategies provided some promise, but considerable room for improvement existed, leading to research by Maertz et al. (2012). They developed a survey tool designed to enable early detection of withdrawal and job satisfaction issues when time to influence attitudes still exists. Development of strategies designed to improve recruitment and retention, begin with understanding the nature of these phenomena (Maertz et al., 2012).

Workplace social and organizational connection for new hires determines whether they stay for an extended period or leave within a few short months (Smith, Amiot, Callan, Terry, & Smith, 2012). Use of technology for communications influenced job

embeddedness and diminished employee loyalty (Charlier, Guay, & Zimmerman, 2016). Organizations needed to be aware of the negative and positive implications of technology on job embeddedness and employee retention (Charlier et al., 2016). Research has shown workplace connection and embeddedness has a positive influence on retention of new hires (Smith et al., 2012). Fairness and trust, not necessarily apparent during the recruitment process, quickly become apparent from the first day of employment as a new hire, affecting retention decisions (Smith et al., 2012). Favoritism, unethical behavior by leadership and team members, lack of organizational support, and poor communications increase the negative impact on voluntary employee turnover (Smith et al., 2012). Identity through social and organizational connection increases retention rates by moving the new hire from a self-perceived outsider to an insider (Smith et al., 2012).

Measuring the success of HRM practices designed to improve job satisfaction remains critically important (Maertz et al., 2012). Survey tools provide a readily accessible, easily distributed mechanism regularly implemented enables close monitoring of employee morale and job satisfaction (Maertz et al., 2012). Maertz et al. (2012) highlighted the many aspects necessary for coverage of data collected in these surveys. Job satisfaction, organizational commitment, trust, ethics, work-life balance, social integration, career growth, advancement opportunities, compensation, and benefits round out the list (Maertz et al., 2012). The scope of an all-inclusive survey was purposely limited to avoid burnout, exhaustion, and eventual frustration and lack of patience (Maertz et al., 2012). Maertz et al. established a platform that addressed these concerns,

identifying eight distinct forces affecting retention and recruitment strategies and incorporating a 7-point scale that ranged from strongly disagrees through strongly agrees.

Organizational commitment involves employee attachment, loyalty, membership, attitude, emotional connection, and identity as powerful concepts (Benjamin, 2012b; Lee, 2012). These concepts had greater positive impact on reducing voluntary employee turnover and job satisfaction (Benjamin, 2012b; Lee, 2012). Organizational commitment is a two-way process whereby employees receive recognition, rewards, benefits, and financial compensation (Benjamin, 2012b; Lee, 2012). In return, employers receive labor, knowledge, innovation, productivity, and commitment (Benjamin, 2012b; Lee, 2012). Improvements in job satisfaction yield productive employees and increase retention rates (AlBattat & Som, 2013). Dissatisfied employees can remove themselves physically or mentally; their withdrawal hurts the organization (AlBattat & Som, 2013). Similarly, disgruntled individuals will consider other work environments and accept employment elsewhere (AlBattat & Som, 2013; Batt & Colvin, 2011). Job seekers will completely drop out of the labor force when treated as a commodity (AlBattat & Som, 2013; Batt & Colvin, 2011). Between October 2012 and October 2013, 3.7 million people dropped out of the U.S. labor force (BLS, 2013). The number of people available for work, but no longer interested in a job, increased from 80.7 million in 2008 (BLS, 2013) to 94.7 million in 2015 (BLS, 2016). Unemployment rates were high during this period of global economic collapse, and yet the number of workers voluntarily leaving the workforce continued to grow (James & Mathew, 2012). Decreased labor participation provided strong indication employees were not pleased with the work environment during this

period. Leadership behavior and qualities influence job satisfaction, performance, productivity, and employee turnover (Wells, Welty Peachey, & Walker, 2014; Welty Peachey, Burton, & Wells, 2014). Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory highlighted the relationship between workplace motivation and voluntary employee turnover.

Training and development. Globalization and rapid changes in technology increase the need to develop strategic HRM policies and procedures for attracting and retaining top talent (Govaerts et al., 2011; Khattak et al., 2012). Herzberg's two-factor theory highlighted the relationship between workplace motivation and voluntary employee turnover. Training and development employee opportunities represent motivational characteristics improving job satisfaction (Cooper & Quinn, 1993; Herzberg et al., 1959). Strategies to attract and retain top talent are required to address investment losses associated with employee turnover (Govaerts et al., 2011; Khattak et al., 2012). Knowledge management, loss of confidential information, and replacement costs represent additional investment losses (Govaerts et al., 2011; Khattak et al., 2012).

An aging workforce combined with decreased entry into the labor force by Millennials increased future challenges for recruitment of skilled and experienced workers (Govaerts et al., 2011). Training and development of employees resulted in reductions of voluntary employee turnover and increased job satisfaction, although Baby Boomers may be less motivated at this point in their careers (Govaerts et al., 2011). Sales managers need to understand the differences between millennials and baby boomers as to variations in approach to selling (Schultz & Schwepker, 2012). Schultz and Schwepker (2012) highlighted several distinct differences in sales strategies, communication styles, and

reward and recognition motivators between millennials and boomers. Knowledge of these differences positively affects sales management's ability to deliver on organizational objectives (Schultz & Schwepker, 2012).

Several studies confirmed the benefits of leadership training and development, and leadership in reducing turnover (Govaerts et al., 2011). Recruitment and retention of top talent are required to meet future goals and objectives, drive innovation, and remain competitive (Govaerts et al., 2011; Tuzun & Kalemci, 2012). Talented employees provide a competitive advantage; however, these workers demand improved flexibility in job opportunities and compensation (Govaerts et al., 2011; von Wobeser, Escamilla, & von Wobeser, 2013). Talented employees motivation increases through personal growth opportunities and conversely diminish when growth opportunities decline, often looking elsewhere for employment (Govaerts et al., 2011; Khattak et al., 2012). Training and development lead to promotions, increased pay, additional responsibility, and new challenges positively improving job satisfaction and retention (Govaerts et al., 2011; Khattak et al., 2012). Training and development strategies traditionally align with long-term organizational strategies (Jehanzeb et al., 2013; Tuzun & Kalemci, 2012).

Leadership development programs have a positive effect on financial performance (Salas et al., 2012). Leadership training, commonly referred to as continuous management training (CMT), has a history of inconsistency (Aragon & Valle, 2013). Companies implement CMT programs but periodically either discontinue them or cancel them all together (Aragon & Valle, 2013). Companies chose not to invest in CMT because of an assumption managers possess the necessary skills to manage a diverse set

of circumstances (Aragon & Valle, 2013; Khattak et al., 2012). Companies are concerned about CMT and voluntary leadership turnover negatively affecting return on investment; therefore, minimizing investments (Aragon & Valle, 2013; Tuzun & Kalemci, 2012). Leadership voluntary turnover is costly to the organization in replacement costs and has a much broader impact than the turnover of individual contributors (Maertz et al., 2012). Leadership training improves employee satisfaction and retention and reduces voluntary turnover (Maertz et al., 2012).

Corporate leadership historically questioned HRM budget requests for employee training and development (Aragon & Valle, 2013). The historical justification for these budget requests considers the return on investment associated with increases in revenue, profitability, and market share, and improved employee and customer satisfaction (Maertz et al., 2012). Most companies lack internal processes for measuring the return on investment in training and development, typically resulting in disproportionate budget cuts when profitability numbers miss targets (Khattak et al., 2012). Corporate leadership lacks understanding the benefits of training and development programs (Khattak et al., 2012). This lack of understanding leads to the outsourcing of HRM responsibilities (Khattak et al., 2012). Herzberg's (1959) theory validated the concept personal growth, opportunity, and achievement through training and development programs lead to improved job satisfaction, motivation, productivity, and organizational commitment.

Leadership

Leadership awareness of job satisfaction. Developing the two-factor theory, Herzberg (1959) explored the strategies that influenced workplace motivation and

voluntary employee turnover. Evanschitzky et al. (2012) determined that employee satisfaction leads to increased customer satisfaction. There exists a strong correlation between job satisfaction and employee turnover and retention (Batt & Colvin, 2011; Siddiqui et al., 2012). Voluntary turnover begins with job dissatisfaction initiating a desire to resign (Siddiqui et al., 2012). The desire to leave leads to looking for other job opportunities and voluntarily leaving the company (Siddiqui et al., 2012). Job dissatisfaction and voluntary turnover are contagious and can lead to additional retention challenges (Batt & Colvin, 2011; Siddiqui et al., 2012). While some turnover is necessary, control of this process is important to minimize loss of top talent and diminished capabilities in the recruitment process. Establishing an active connection between the employee and the organization represents a critical success factor in managing employee turnover and retention (Siddiqui et al., 2012). Supportive leadership, positive feedback, consistent management communications, and behavior improved job satisfaction and employee well-being (Winkler, Busch, Clasen, & Vowinkel, 2015).

Turnover intention represents a reliable indicator of an employee decision for voluntarily resignation (Lee, 2012; SHRM, 2012; Siddiqui et al., 2012). Workplace autonomy, job satisfaction, and a feeling of belonging represent deterrents to sales associate turnover intentions (Christ, Emett, Summers, & Wood, 2012). In the absence of systems and processes identifying turnover intentions of sales associates, turnover will occur (Batt & Colvin, 2011).

Development of the self-determination theory provided for the explanation that a work environment sustains and promotes autonomy, value, self-worth, belonging, and

teamwork (Boles et al., 2012). These factors have a positive impact on organizational commitment, reducing turnover intent and improving job satisfaction (Boles et al., 2012). Intrinsic motivation assumes employees are motivated and excited about work activities, finding them challenging and rewarding (Batt & Colvin, 2011). Creating opportunities to expand skills and abilities resulted in improved job satisfaction and decreased voluntary employee turnover (Batt & Colvin, 2011). Intrinsic motivation assumes employees are motivated and excited about work activities, finding them challenging and rewarding (Batt & Colvin, 2011).

Rockstuhl et al. (2012) conducted research involving 282 employees across 23 countries and the effectiveness of LMX. LMX considered the relationship between management and employees, and the impact of that relationship on organizational performance (Rockstuhl et al., 2012). The LMX theory supported the philosophy that a positive dyadic relationship between manager and employee based on supportive, resourceful, and responsive leadership motivated desired subordinate behavior (Rockstuhl et al., 2012). Rockstuhl et al. maintained that a positive dyadic relationship resulted in subordinates (for example sales associates) increased prospecting activities and closed business. Rockstuhl et al. research determined that increased LMX relationships positively influenced organizational performance through increased sales associate commitment to leadership and the company, and decreased voluntary turnover.

Management and leadership. Strategies to achieve leadership behavior and qualities directly affect job satisfaction, performance, productivity, and employee turnover (Wells et al., 2014; Welty Peachey et al., 2014). Successful leaders can motivate

employees to follow and push themselves to accomplish the impossible. Motivation includes recognition and reward systems, growth opportunities, training and development, and career opportunities (Herzberg et al., 1959). Career practice management for sales leadership was a strong predictor of voluntary turnover (Korsakienė, Stankevičienė, Šimelytė, & Talačkienė, 2015). Job satisfaction improvements yield productive employees and increased retention rates (AlBattat & Som, 2013). Dissatisfied employees can remove themselves physically through voluntary turnover, or mentally, through disengagement (AlBattat & Som, 2013). This behavior hurts the organization (AlBattat & Som, 2013). Employees value meaningful work, career opportunities, empowerment, leadership integrity, BI, training and development, and job security (Tacchino, 2013). Employees also value physical work conditions, quality of products and services, social commitment, environmental concerns, reward, recognition, pay, and benefits. Work-life balance, culture, ethics, and leadership style affect recruitment and retention (Benjamin, 2012a; Das, 2012; Devrimci & Cicekli, 2013; Govaerts et al., 2011; James & Mathew, 2012).

Leadership behavior and qualities directly affect job satisfaction, performance, productivity, and employee turnover (Wells et al., 2014; Welty Peachey et al., 2014). Successful leaders motivate employees to follow and push themselves to accomplish the impossible (Quigley, 2013). Leaders own the vision and responsibility to build a team that can execute on that vision, overcoming all obstacles. Effective corporate leadership requires the development of an organization capable of handling rapid change, global competition, and stakeholder demands (Carson et al., 2012). Recruitment and retention of

top talent risk compromise by poor leadership behavior (Batt & Colvin, 2011).

Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory explains the relationship between employee motivation and voluntary employee turnover.

Leading by example is a behavioral component that has a positive effect on the relationship between management and direct reports (Quigley, 2013). Demonstrations of competence and support by leadership improve job satisfaction (Quigley, 2013). Strong leaders visibly support team members, motivate, and encourage innovation (Quigley, 2013). Leadership ability to execute on these concepts improves job satisfaction, commitment, innovation, stronger organizational performance, and reduced voluntary employee turnover (Quigley, 2013). Leadership is critical, and turnover at the executive levels can be disruptive for all stakeholders.

Motivation, organizational connection and commitment, trust, innovation, productivity, quality, and customer satisfaction disappear during leadership transition (Lindrianasari & Hartono, 2012; Welty Peachey et al., 2014). Job security becomes an issue for everyone in the organization and impacts job satisfaction (Lindrianasari & Hartono, 2012; Welty Peachey et al., 2014). Job security concerns increase stress, health, and well-being for employees (Griep et al., 2016). Change and fear of the unknown can last for several months with leadership transitions (Lindrianasari & Hartono, 2012; Wells et al., 2014; Welty Peachey et al., 2014). Leadership derailment, a phenomenon based on failed employee transition to leadership positions can have a negative impact on organizational performance (Carson et al., 2012). Executive level replacement costs equate to two or three times the executive's annual salary (Carson et al., 2012; Welty

Peachey et al., 2014). Diminished financial performance and a high probability of increased voluntary turnover exist where derailment symptoms surface (Carson et al., 2012; Welty Peachey et al., 2014). Leadership has a powerful influence on employee job satisfaction, strongly associated with a voluntary turnover or retention (Tuzun & Kalemci, 2012). Herzberg's theory of job satisfaction confirmed the link between leadership behavior and employee job satisfaction. Leadership behavior witnessed through actions demonstrating trust, honesty, fairness, collaboration, and empowerment create a shared purpose between the organization and employee (Kasemsap, 2013). Empowerment supportive of job designing, resulted in improved job fit, meaningful work, and increased employee retention (Chen, Yen, & Tsai, 2014; Lu, Wang, Lu, Du, & Bakker, 2014; Tims, Derks, & Bakker, 2016). Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory provided strategies leadership could employ in driving organizational performance through workplace motivation to reduce voluntary employee turnover.

The Workplace

Voluntary employee turnover characteristics. Turnover intention is a reliable predictor of voluntary turnover, typically preceded by deterioration in organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Benjamin, 2012b). Eight motives defining criteria leading to voluntary turnover: affective, calculative, contractual, behavioral, alternative, normative, moral and ethical, and constituent forces exist (Maertz et al., 2012). These forces describe emotional and psychological feelings employees deal with in deciding to stay or go. Career growth, opportunities, social connections, external forces, and ethics, affect employee decisions to leave a job (Maertz et al., 2012). Challenging and

meaningful work, career opportunities, job security, reward, recognition, pay, and benefits influence voluntary turnover (Maertz & Boyar, 2012; Tacchino, 2013).

Turnover, whether voluntary or intentional, negatively affects the organization (Batt & Colvin, 2011). Organizational restructuring activities, layoffs, mergers and acquisitions, and similar corporate events lead to concerns for job security and career opportunities (Klehe, Zikic, Van Vianen, & De Pater, 2011). These concerns lead to career exploration of external opportunities combined with initiating professional development activities (Klehe et al., 2011). Klehe et al. (2011) suggested business leader transparency regarding potential job losses resulted in more of a contrarian attitude by employees. Job satisfaction leading to voluntary turnover of top talent and skilled resources remains detrimental to organizational performance.

Workplace identity. Identity in the workplace influences employee turnover and job satisfaction. Das's (2012) research of call centers in India highlighted the challenge of identity in the workplace (Benjamin, 2012b). Call centers represent two-thirds of all customer interactions (Das, 2012). India and the Philippines make up the majority of call centers, based on cheap labor costs and strong skills in spoken English (Das, 2012). Das (2012) sought to understand the reason for the exceptionally high turnover rates, estimated between 30% and 70% annually, far greater than the industry average globally and found identity was a contributing variable. Das found identity issues developed in call center workers in India because of the requirement to assume foreign customer languages, accents, and name changes. Furthermore, they were required to create a perception of being located in the same country as their clients (Das, 2012). Concealing

one's social identity was the primary driver for job dissatisfaction (Das, 2012).

Ultimately, this led to higher than average turnover rates based on core cultural values that conflicted with job requirements (Das, 2012). Das's exploratory study concluded identity conflicts had an adverse impact on job performance, satisfaction, and voluntary turnover.

Workplace diversity. Minimizing voluntary employee turnover requires leadership styles to recognize diversity in the workplace (Benjamin, 2012b). Diversity and identity in the workplace play a role in an employee's decision to leave a job (Das, 2012). Women respond more favorably to job satisfaction but experience higher rates of voluntary turnover than men do (Lee, 2012). By 2009, women were twice as likely to leave their jobs in the information systems industry (Armstrong, Riemenschneider, Nelms, & Reid, 2012). Women and minorities receive a higher percentage of IS-related college degrees than men do while men hold a disproportionate percentage of leadership positions (Armstrong et al., 2012). Technology and workplace flexibility positively affect job satisfaction, reducing stress and work-family conflict (Armstrong et al., 2012). High turnover rates among women existed based on gender-specific drivers such as pregnancy and mobility (Lee, 2012). Accounting for pregnancy and similar personal reasons, turnover in the workplace among men and women are approximately similar (Lee, 2012). HRM processes and procedures designed, in a way, more accommodating to women leads to increased job satisfaction and reduced turnover (Armstrong et al., 2012; Lee, 2012).

Workplace stress. Work-life balance (WLB) directly affects the health and wellbeing of individuals. WLB influences organizational performance, both financial and non-financial (Magee, Stefanic, Caputi, & Iverson, 2012; Zheng, Molineux, Mirshekary, & Scarparo, 2015). Organizations and individuals share WLB responsibilities, and both benefit from achieving this balance (Magee et al., 2012; Zheng et al., 2015). WLB practices include a culture of caring and compassion for individual employees (Magee et al., 2012; Zheng et al., 2015). Stress in the workplace is a concern for companies, adversely affecting job satisfaction and recruitment efforts, leading to increases in voluntary employee turnover (Benjamin, 2012a). Rapid change, globalization, economic, financial, social, and geopolitical disruptions create stress (Benjamin, 2012a; Dong, Mitchell, Lee, Holtom, & Hinkin, 2012). Workplace stress undermines employee commitment and morale through diminished perceived organizational value and belonging (Benjamin, 2012a). Internal team and organizational communications, leadership behavior, and bullying, result in damage to long-term corporate sustainability, profitability, and productivity (Benjamin, 2012a). Successful HRM strategies for reducing workplace stress begin with a focus on developing employee skills required to meet organizational goals and objectives, rather than focusing on individual weaknesses (Khattak et al., 2012).

Business ethics creates additional stress in the workplace (Chen, Lin, & Lien, 2011; DeTienne, Agle, Phillips, & Ingerson, 2012). Seventy-eight percent of 800 adults in a 2007 survey preferred financial concessions rather than work in an unethical environment (DeTienne et al., 2012; Karatepe & Vatankhah, 2014). Unethical behavior at

any level has a negative impact on organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover (Karatepe & Vatankhah, 2014). BI creates a stressful environment that fatigues employees resulting in reduced job performance, productivity, and profitability (Chen et al., 2011; DeTienne et al., 2012). Job stress varies depending on occupation, profession, demographics, risk, security, and competitiveness (Chen et al., 2011). Research on the impact of stress on the employee and organizational performance validates the concern of HRM to identify, minimize, and manage stress (Chen et al., 2011). Research conducted by Chen et al. included survey results of 255 employees from six financial institutions in Taipei, confirming workplace stress as a determining factor affecting voluntary turnover and retention decisions. Internal conflicts, job responsibility ambiguity, and increasing workloads represent the most frequently reported stress factors affecting job satisfaction and turnover and retention decisions (Chen et al., 2011).

HRM Practice Systems

High-performance HR practice systems balanced the needs of the business with those of employees (Patel et al., 2013). Employee access to perceived valuable training and development leading to greater workforce skills affected their commitment to the organization and improved motivation. Desired behavioral outcomes including positive behavior, organizational commitment, performance, and engagement represented typical results from successful high-performance HR systems (Kehoe & Wright, 2013). Kehoe and Wright (2013) determined that employee perception as to the value of HR high-performance systems equally affected motivation, organizational performance, job satisfaction, and turnover considerations. Job satisfaction of sales associates resulting

from effective HR practices directly influenced customer satisfaction (Evanschitzky et al., 2012). Research conducted by Evanschitzky et al. (2012) established the impact of sales associates CO on customer satisfaction as a determinant for long-term profitable relationships. Oasis HR implemented an employee engagement program to reduce turnover and increase sales, customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction, and corporate image (Barr, 2015). Oasis HR implemented this strategy in 2013 and the first year recognized a 49.3% reduction in turnover and a 10.8% increase in sales (Barr, 2015). The following section provides a review of the literature exploring those categories research identifies as strategic models affecting job satisfaction and organizational behavior. HRM practices do not necessarily affect job satisfaction equally, but they significantly affect employee turnover (Slavianska, 2012). This review highlights and expands upon each of the factors, providing a summary of the existing research related to job satisfaction, organizational behavior, and voluntary turnover. I also explain how each of these factors affects organizational performance.

Agile methodology. The agile framework resulted from the efforts of a few software developers who sought to create a friendlier and more productive development environment (Scully, 2013; Stoica, Mircea, & Ghilic-Micu, 2013). Four overlying principles resulted from the agile manifesto. First, individuals and teamwork are more important than business process development and associated tools designed to automate and standardize (Scully, 2013; Stoica et al., 2013). Second, development of software that works is more important than creating stacks of documentation as to how the product should work. Third, customer engagement throughout the development process is far

more important than contract negotiations and development of rigid requirements with no flexibility (Scully, 2013; Stoica et al., 2013). Fourth, the ability to change directions based on current market conditions, rather than following rigid plans (Scully, 2013; Stoica et al., 2013).

Organizations experience increasing economic change and complexity, demanding the development of adaptive, agile workforce (Alaa & Fitzgerald, 2013; Scully, 2013; Stoica et al., 2013). Business agility in complex environments creates strategic advantage, innovation, flexibility, and adaptability (Scully, 2013; Stoica et al., 2013). Agile solutions enable organizations to react quickly to changing market conditions and product requirements in real-time (Scully, 2013; Stoica et al., 2013). Traditional business methodologies such as waterfall support development of goods and services through requirements identified and built over an extended timeline (Stoica et al., 2013). Conversely, agile development occurs through continuous process design, development, testing, and release using adaptability and flexibility in managing requirements that can change continuously (Stoica et al., 2013).

Agile HR focuses on employees, collaboration, and understanding the corporate strategy (Scully, 2013). Focus is on the individual, removing rules that stifle innovation and create an organization that readily adapts to change (Scully, 2013). Traditional waterfall and similar frameworks use a command-and-control leadership or top-down approach while agile frameworks assume leadership and collaboration within small self-empowered teams (Scully, 2013; Stoica et al., 2013). Organizations and high-

performance work teams function best when respect, collaboration, empowerment, and individual value recognition exists (Scully, 2013).

Vroom (1995) developed the expectancy theory to explain that employees make decisions with uncertain outcomes based on perceived value to the individual and organization. The expectancy theory specifies that different choices combined with uncontrolled external events lead to specific outcomes (Vroom, 1995). Specifically, employees make decisions based on what they perceive leads to high performance resulting in outcomes most desirable to them through diminished pain or increased pleasure (Vroom, 1995). Business agility infers trust and empowerment of employees (Scully, 2013) that, when combined with motivational incentives for high performance and repercussions for poor performance, affects employee decisions (Vroom, 1995).

Traditional work environments based on the waterfall methodology (Stoica et al., 2013) or similar frameworks bring work to employees (Scully, 2013). The agile framework allows employees to pull work from a prioritized list based on what the team can handle in a relatively short period (Scully, 2013; Stoica et al., 2013). This process improves employee morale and job satisfaction by creating an environment where individuals and teams can work successfully (Scully, 2013; Stoica et al., 2013). Teams are empowered, and committed to smaller amounts of work, rather than overwhelmed with an exhaustive list of requirements (Scully, 2013; Stoica et al., 2013). Competitive advantage requires the ability to change quickly and adapt to global economic variations (Scully, 2013). Innovation and agility are critical to the development of new products and services using minimal resources yielding high-quality customer-valued solutions

(Scully, 2013; Stoica et al., 2013). Scully (2013) believed agility represents the greatest opportunity towards HR transformation in providing business value.

Complex Adaptive Systems (CASs). CASs are described as the interaction between individuals or employees and their ability to experiment, self-organize, learn, and respond to changing situations (Alaa & Fitzgerald, 2013). Organizational strategies based on CAS include employees, teams, divisions, entire companies, customers, partners, and vendors. Human beings are adept at adjusting to changes, learning, and adjusting their environment to survive, and achieve superiority (Alaa & Fitzgerald, 2013). Successful organizations seeking to remain competitive and innovative assume a strategy that borders on chaos, maintaining just enough control to remain sustainable. Industries in which the cost of entry is low, and competition is fierce, driving constant change, would likely adopt a CAS strategy to stay relevant and sustainable (Alaa & Fitzgerald, 2013).

Adaptive selling results in higher levels of customer satisfaction and development of long-term profitable relationships (Evanschitzky et al., 2012). Sales managers should consider adaptive sales capabilities during the recruitment process. Ongoing training and development of adaptive selling skills for sales associates leads to greater understanding of client needs and the ability to adapt sales strategies (Evanschitzky et al., 2012).

The global recession that began in late 2008 escalated the need for innovation bringing new high-quality products to market more rapidly and cheaper (Alaa & Fitzgerald, 2013). The global financial crisis of 2008/2009 made it difficult for businesses to plan, predict, and manage to desired outcomes (Alaa & Fitzgerald, 2013; Stoica et al.,

2013). Business agility transformation through the adoption of a CAS strategy became even more critical to long-term sustainability and organizational performance (Alaa & Fitzgerald, 2013). Sales managers need to develop a strategic sales model capable of adapting and changing rapidly based on economic conditions and global disruptors (Alaa & Fitzgerald, 2013; Stoica et al., 2013). The agile framework aligns well with a CAS strategy in the development of a sales organization looking to succeed in a highly competitive global economy (Alaa & Fitzgerald, 2013).

HPWSs. Recruitment and retention of top talent have been a historical priority within HRM and corporate leadership. Equally important was the need to leverage talents in creating a strategic advantage (Coulson-Thomas, 2012; Ferri-Reed, 2012; Razi & More, 2012). Managing and retaining talented employees can be a daunting task based on the special treatment they receive, creating a disparity among other employees (Coulson-Thomas, 2012). Highly talented people quickly become bored and constantly need challenging, requiring skilled leadership to recognize the full potential of these individuals (Coulson-Thomas, 2012; Wallner & Menrad, 2012). Less noticeable employees may have specialized but limited skill sets, adding value that provides higher returns (Coulson-Thomas, 2012). The challenge for HR is to develop a high-performance company based upon high-performing teams (Coulson-Thomas, 2012; Ferri-Reed, 2012; Razi & More, 2012; Wallner & Menrad, 2012). Coulson-Thomas (2012) maintained that even highly talented employees performance varies from one group to the next based on the work environment and leadership abilities. According to Herzberg et al. (1959), highly motivated employees in a high hygiene environment have the greatest potential to

drive positive job satisfaction, retention, and recruitment results. Furthermore, little motivation in a low hygiene environment has a negative impact on job satisfaction, retention, and recruitment results (Herzberg et al., 1959).

HPWSs take advantage of employee knowledge and skills through empowerment. Empowerment drives innovation, quality, productivity, performance, job satisfaction, and customer delight (Fu, 2013; Razi & More, 2012; Solis, Sinfield, & Abraham, 2013). HPWS typically led through HRM practices, represents business investments in employees with the primary objective of improving organizational performance (Fu, 2013; Razi & More, 2012). Combining and sharing of knowledge, skills, and lived experiences between senior and junior level employees or existing and newly hired workers creates value (Fu, 2013). Highly motivated employees in a high hygiene environment have the greatest potential to drive positive job satisfaction, retention, and recruitment results (Herzberg et al., 1959).

HRM processes integrate self-organized learning into HPWS practices (Wallner & Menrad, 2012; Solis et al., 2013). Self-organized learning combined with HPWS enables companies to reinvent themselves and their products and services on a continuous basis through increased innovation, creativity, and experience (Fu, 2013; Wallner & Menrad, 2012). HPWS processes developed by HRM engage leadership, work groups, individuals and customers on a continuous basis, improving organizational performance (Fu, 2013; Wallner & Menrad, 2012). Within the HPWS framework, numerous training opportunities exist resulting from empowerment and control at the individual and team level, creating a greater sense of ownership and responsibility (Wallner & Menrad, 2012).

Empowerment increases individual desire to learn, add value and drive innovation through analysis, creativity, and improved problem-solving skills (Wallner & Menrad, 2012). Through their research, Wallner and Menrad (2012) determined that self-organized teams operating in HPWS environments shared knowledge willingly and openly, enhancing the practice of knowledge management. Furthermore, HPWS encourages the development of self-organized learning (Fu, 2013; Razi & More, 2012; Solis et al., 2013; Wallner & Menrad, 2012).

Corporations can have the best HRM practice systems in place but if their employees are not a part of the process, organizational performance suffers (Hancock et al., 2013). I decided on a multiple case study research method for this purpose, allowing me to explore the strategies software manufacturing company sales managers used to reduce voluntary employee turnover of sales associates. Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory provided a well-designed framework for this research. Using these structures enabled me to focus on the strategies sales managers can use to help reduce voluntary employee turnover within sales organizations.

Transition

Voluntary turnover and loss of top talent continues an important issue for sales managers as it leads to substantial and meaningful consequences for organizational performance. Employee turnover is both costly and disruptive negatively impacting organizational performance (Bryant & Allen, 2013; Tariq et al., 2013). Between October 2012 and October 2013, 3.7 million people dropped out of the U.S. labor force (BLS, 2013). The number of people available for work, but no longer interested in a job,

increased from 80.7 million in 2008 (BLS, 2013) to 94.7 million in 2015 (BLS, 2016). Voluntary turnover of sales associates remained at the forefront of leadership challenges to developing a sustainable global workforce. At the request of leadership, HRM increased organizational value by implementing a comprehensive workforce management solution that minimized turnover, improved retention rates, and attracted top talent. HRM professionals needed to reinvent their roles to move towards that of a strategic business partner capable of enabling change and innovation in the development of a sustainable workforce (Jehanzeb et al., 2013).

The purpose of this study was to explore strategies that helped reduce voluntary employee turnover and increased retention rates of sales associates. Providing the best possible workforce will drive change, innovation, new products and services, revenue growth, and greater profitability while minimizing employee turnover and related costs. Pay and benefits no longer represented the only drivers for improving job satisfaction and reducing voluntary employee turnover. CO, work environment, organizational behavior, training and development, career opportunities, recognition, WLB, and improved job security were additional motivating factors. Business agility and development of a CAS represented successful strategies for sales organizations (Alaa & Fitzgerald, 2013; Scully, 2013; Stoica et al., 2013). Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory articulated leadership's behavior and HRM practice systems influence on workplace motivation and voluntary employee turnover.

Section 1 included the foundation of the study including an extensive literature review. Section 2 includes the research methods and design for this doctoral study.

Topics covered in Section 2 include a restatement of the research project purpose, the role of the researcher, population, and sampling, and details of the participant process. Additionally, ethical research, data collection techniques, instruments, and organization, data analysis, reliability, and validity were covered. In Section 3, I provide a presentation of the results and analysis of participant interviews responses as to the applicability in business practice.

Section 2: The Project

In this section, I provide detailed information as to the methods and design for this qualitative multiple case study. The purpose of this study was to explore strategies used by sales managers to help reduce voluntary employee turnover within software manufacturing companies. Purposively selected sales managers from software manufacturing companies located in the southeastern United States represented the targeted population. Section 2 begins with a restatement of the research project and description for the role of the researcher. Furthermore, I included a description of the participant process, research method and design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection techniques, data instruments, data organization, data analysis, and reliability and validity. Finally, I concluded this section with a transition and summary.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies software manufacturing company sales managers used to reduce voluntary employee turnover of sales associates. The research population consisted of sales managers selected from software manufacturing companies headquartered in the southeastern United States. Findings from this study might make a positive impact on social change by increasing awareness of employee retention strategies. Findings of this study may empower corporate sales managers to develop strategies that minimize employee turnover. Positive work environments lead to improved organizational performance, revenue growth,

profitability, and decreased workplace stress (Fortado & Fadil, 2014; James & Mathew, 2012; Salas et al., 2012).

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher represents the primary data collection instrument (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013; Pezalla, Pettigrew, & Miller-Day, 2012). Face-to-face semistructured interviews using open-ended questions represent a primary instrument for data collection (Jamshed, 2014; Rowley, 2012; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2012). My role as a researcher in this multiple case study was to conduct interviews and collect data without bias, maintaining a high level of validity and integrity. This study included methodological triangulation of multiple data sources to validate equivalent conclusions. Use of methodological triangulation for this study encompassed semistructured interviews, observations, and analysis of company-related documents. The recorded participant interview sessions included the use of Dragon Naturally Speaking Voice Recognition software to transcribe verbatim. QSR International NVivo Version 10 software was a leading data analysis solution for qualitative research (Trotter, 2012). Importing data into NVivo software enabled me to code, organize, and analyze data. Yin (2014) detailed a method for analyzing data through the process of compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding.

Self-reflection regarding any topic or participant relationships represented a critical aspect of removing potential bias (Cairney & St Denny, 2015; Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013; Yin, 2014). Previous job roles, personal relationships, and other areas

needed consideration in maintaining an absence of bias through self-awareness. For more than 20 years, I served in multiple sales roles, witnessing successful and failed management strategies. Experiences included personal relationships with peers and management, providing many opportunities to observe social and behavioral characteristics. These experiences allowed me to observe the extent of the challenges associated with turnover and retention within sales organizations. I was able to witness firsthand the reasons for voluntary employee turnover and targeted HRM strategies leading to increased employee retention. Previous experience included working as an individual contributor, vice president, and business owner, allowing me the opportunity to witness firsthand implications of successful and failed job satisfaction practices affecting voluntary employee turnover. Finally, during the period from 1999 to 2002, I worked for five different companies. These were small, medium, and large enterprises, all of which went out of business, providing me with intimate knowledge as to individual and community impact.

Ethical research begins with the adoption of the Belmont Report protocol and adherence to basic ethical principles established by the National Research Act signed into law July 12, 1974 (Greaney et al., 2012). Every effort throughout the research process should ensure the absence of bias, driving credibility, and integrity (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Tufford & Newman, 2012). In accordance with the Belmont Report protocol, and as the researcher, I made every effort to respect participant autonomy, allowing them to speak freely and openly without prejudice or manipulation. Additionally, I protected participant identity and the content of their interview responses,

maximizing beneficence. Finally, use of a consent form provided detailed information about the research, ensuring participants' comprehension and establishing that this was voluntary. The consent form contained background information, procedures, nature of the research, risks, and benefits of participating in this study. Additionally, the form included information defining payment, privacy, and security processes for the data collected. Finally, the consent form included my contact information as the researcher and a statement of consent that requested signature and date. The consent form highlighted that interview sessions would be audio-recorded, purely for transcribing the information later. For confidentiality purposes, participant coding utilized a C1 through C5 structure, aligning with the five companies participating. Depending on the number of participants from each company, coding followed a P1 through P4 sequence. C1P1 coding identified the first participant interviewed at the first company, and continued through C5P1 for the last person interviewed.

Throughout the interviews and the entire research process, I worked to prevent any personal bias or beliefs from infiltrating data collection and analysis. Removing personal bias requires focus on the data collected rather than personal judgment (Yin, 2012). Yin (2012) suggested using data collection processes described in previous case studies on employee turnover. Use of self-reflective journals minimized researcher bias (Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013; Pezalla et al., 2012). Using a reflective journal guarded against bias by documenting and recognizing researcher subjectivity balanced with observed phenomenon (Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013; Pezalla et al., 2012). I used a reflective journal to mitigate bias and view data through a personal lens.

The qualitative multiple case study research constituted an appropriate methodology for investigating the employee experiences based on real world events and problems (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2012). Qualitative multiple case study research was appropriate for in-depth investigation of organizations, events, or persons (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2012). Multiple case study research includes interviews, preferably conducted in person, designed to allow the researcher to listen and observe the behavior and environment (Bernard, 2013; Stake, 1995; Yin; 2012).

My part in the interview process was to pose open-ended questions that explored the strategies software manufacturing company sales managers used to reduce voluntary employee turnover of sales associates. Interviewing was the most common form of data collection in qualitative research (Jamshed, 2014). Interviewing participants requires a high degree of ethical behavior and responsibility for the data captured throughout the process. The information contained in Appendix A defined the protocol used for conducting interviews. The protocol served as a researcher tool to verify completion of specific processes, such as ensuring that participants signed the consent form and agreed to recording of interview sessions. Furthermore, the interview protocol included a reference to journal entries and interview questions contained in Appendix A. Finally, the protocol served as a reminder that there was no specific sequence for interview questions and they may have required additional probing questions. The protocol provided a list of steps to follow for the primary objective of ensuring successful interviews. A well-designed interview protocol enhances a researcher's ability to collect the best information

from study participants (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). Following the steps highlighted in Appendix A protected against missing critical processes.

Participants

Qualitative multiple case study research included specification of eligibility criteria for participants. The process involved selecting company sales managers of sales associates from five software manufacturing companies headquartered in the southeastern United States. Participant selection criteria constituted being in their current position for at least 12 months and having a minimum of 5 years cumulative leadership experience managing sales associates. Individual participant eligibility included sales management responsibility for a minimum of five employees in sales associate roles. Participants had strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover of sales associates.

Successful research included gaining access to study participants possessing appropriate insights aligned with the primary research question (Yin, 2014). Skelton (2015) used a working knowledge of the demographics and organizational structure to target companies and participants. Research methods training qualified me to conduct interviews. My familiarity of software companies located in the southeastern United States in targeting businesses for study participants. Over the past 15 years, I had worked with dozens of software companies headquartered in the Southeast. Experience with these companies provided a working knowledge of their organizational structure. Additionally, I had relationships in the organizations enabling me to solicit HR introductions. Existing relationships within targeted companies existed within the IT organizations. I had no previous working knowledge of potential participants from within the sales business

units. Thomas (2015) collaborated with the HR department in identifying potential study participants. I worked with the HR departments to identify participants. The HR department provided contact information for sales managers meeting these criteria including e-mail address, office phone number, and mobile phone number. The process of engaging with HR did not begin until approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

In establishing a working relationship with potential participants, I started with the individually addressed e-mail distribution of consent forms describing the purpose of this confidential study. Furthermore, scheduling a 1-hour information session (Appendix B) provided interested participants an opportunity to better understand the study purpose, ask questions, and learn about their role in the research. Scheduling of the information session occurred upon identification of 20 qualified candidates. Rowan (2012) provided a consent form to study participants to escalate the confidentiality. Use of consent forms established the confidentiality and data protection of the interview process for participants and the organization (Salih, 2012). Participants were to contact me directly by e-mail to volunteer. Participant acceptance or exclusion notification occurred within 72 hours by responding to individual volunteer e-mails. Exclusion notifications included a thank you for volunteering, and indicated that an adequate participant pool currently existed, but that additional volunteers might be necessary later. Specific assurances provided to participants helped ensure their awareness of exclusion of their names from data records and identity-protection to maximize data integrity and increased openness with responses (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I am the only person who knew the

participant's actual identity with access to the confidential data. Brimstin (2013) used consent forms to inform members as to the purpose and nature of the research study.

Research Method and Design

The specific business problem was that some software manufacturing sales managers had limited strategies to reduce voluntary turnover of sales associates. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies software manufacturing company sales managers used to reduce voluntary turnover of sales associates. This study constituted a qualitative case research approach rather than quantitative or mixed methods. The qualitative multiple case study research constituted an appropriate methodology for investigating the employee experiences based on real world events and problems (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2012). Qualitative multiple case study research appeared as the best approach for exploring strategies software manufacturing company sales managers used to reduce voluntary employee turnover of sales associates.

Research Method

Qualitative research allows the researcher to explore and identify questions for social issues businesses seek to understand (Yin, 2012). Qualitative studies involve individuals or groups of people and their experiences, social or human (Yin, 2012). Qualitative research requires the development of an in-depth narration based on a relatively small sample within a particular setting (Venkatesh et al., 2013). Exploring business problems in which statistical data are difficult to capture, qualitative research enables contextual data gathering (Yin, 2014). The qualitative methodology represents a

framework allowing for the exploration of social and human experiences in a flexible manner (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2012).

Exploring the human responses and reactions to situations within their environment requires the use of qualitative research methods (Yin, 2012). The intent was to gain a better understanding of how people behaved in certain circumstances (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Petty, Thomson, & Stew, 2012; Yin, 2012). The qualitative research incorporates textual and narrative data that help researchers to identify and understand a particular theme (Bansal & Corley, 2012; Venkatesh et al., 2013; Yin, 2014). The theme is inclusive of an in-depth narration based on relatively small samplings of a particular setting lacking generalization (Bansal & Corley, 2012; Venkatesh et al., 2013).

Qualitative research methods enable the understanding of individual perceptions of actual events they experienced. Furthermore, qualitative research supports the development of an understanding as to how people processed events (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014).

Two additional research methodology options available include quantitative and mixed methods. The goals and objectives for quantitative research differ from that of qualitative research (Barnham, 2012). The quantitative study defines research using numerical values, inferential statistics, and extensive samplings based on specific questions or hypotheses (Bansal & Corley, 2012; Venkatesh et al., 2013; Yin, 2012). Quantitative research involves an extensive period collecting numerical data, perhaps years, and then analyzing through extensive statistical analysis (Yin, 2012). Quantitative research involves the development of hypotheses, and then testing and proving them as true or false (Echambadi, Campbell, & Agarwal, 2012; Yin, 2012). Quantitative research

tests and explores existing hypotheses as well (Echambadi et al., 2012; Yin, 2012). Additionally, quantitative research includes dependent and independent variables, comparing and contrasting them to prove or disprove the relationship (Echambadi et al., 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2012). Furthermore, the quantitative research methodology involves the use of experimentation and statistical analysis in removing bias establishing reliability and validity (Bansal & Corley, 2012; Venkatesh et al., 2013; Yin, 2012). Quantitative research did not allow for the exploration as to strategies sales managers used to reduce voluntary employee turnover and was not appropriate for this study (Yin, 2012). Mixed methods incorporate a combined qualitative and quantitative approach. Mixed methods require additional effort and time to complete the process making it a less desirable way than the quantitative approach (Bansal & Corley, 2012; Venkatesh et al., 2013). Qualitative research best suited this research by supporting the goal of gaining additional insights, learning about new strategies and concepts reducing voluntary employee turnover.

Research Design

Qualitative research includes multiple case study, ethnographic, narrative, and phenomenological methodologies (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2012; Yin, 2014). Qualitative multiple case study research is appropriate for in-depth investigation of the organization, event, or person (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2012). Case studies involve the research of a particular case or set of events based on a set of parameters or boundaries (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Stake (1995) and Yin (2012) described multiple case study research from constructivists' paradigm in that perception more closely represents truth

rather than fact. Multiple case study research is to understand a phenomenon based on experiences and perceptions (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Petty et al., 2012; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2012). Multiple case study research is appropriate when phenomenal relevancy is established requiring the use of multiple sources for analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2012). Heilmann, Saarenketo, and Liikkanen (2013) used a case study design to research the impact of employer branding on recruitment and job satisfaction. Case study research was the design used by Bigliardi, Dormio, Galati, and Schiuma (2012), to explore the impact of organizational culture on job satisfaction. A multiple case study method was appropriate for this study to explore complex business issues such as job satisfaction and voluntary employee turnover.

Ethnographic research is useful for exploring cultural issues representative of a particular culture-sharing group and involves immersion, allowing for observation (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2012). Using an ethnographic approach, the researcher explores the way in which a particular culture-sharing group interacts and performs during a typical day, and typically requires more than 20 interview participants (Yin, 2012). Multicultural groups prevented utilizing ethnography. Narrative research includes both interviews and review of existing documentation used for data analysis in developing a narrative story about an individual's chronological life (Yin, 2012). The person interviewed discusses their personal stories in their words (Yin, 2012). The researcher uses this information to determine how the storyteller perceived the experience (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2012). This study did not focus on research about an individual; therefore, the narrative design was not appropriate. Phenomenological research is useful for exploring lived experiences for

a particular event that happened to them, and their perceptions of understanding and interpreting the phenomenon (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2012). The phenomenological research applies in those situations where very little information exists about how employees perceived a particular event (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2012). Company internal policies and business practices vary, preventing the use of phenomenological research.

While several similarities exist across qualitative research methodologies, specific methodological limitations exist precluding their use. Ethnographic methods require the researcher to have acute knowledge of the cultural dynamics associated with the target study group (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2012). Narrative researches and documents events taking place in an individual life (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2012). Finally, phenomenological methods involve the exploration of lived experiences for a specific event experienced by individuals or a group of people (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2012). Case study research allowed me to explore the strategies that software manufacturing sales managers used to reduce voluntary turnover of sales associates.

A multiple case study enables researchers to explore several environments in better understanding the differences and similarities between the environments (Yin, 2014). The multiple case study design involved research exploring lived experiences of sales managers with strategies that helped reduce voluntary employee turnover. Multiple case study research incorporates multiple data sources captured through observations, participant interviews, company documents, and other artifacts (Yin, 2014). Multiple case study research enables the development of in-depth knowledge of the organization, event, or person (Yin, 2014). Multiple case studies provide an opportunity for others to learn

and benefit from the research (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2012). Multiple case studies provide a chance to use purposeful sampling in studying a particular case (Stake, 1995). Using multiple case study methodology, the researcher explores specific details of problems that occurred in a given setting, capturing all details and contextual material (Miles & Huberman, 1994). A multiple case study research include gathering information associated with a particular event or location (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The information includes a deeper analysis and understanding of the phenomenon of interest through individual interviews (Lee, 2012; Yin, 2012). Multiple case study design represented the best design for this research in understanding the human phenomenon associated with job satisfaction and voluntary employee turnover. Multiple case study research enables the understanding of a phenomenon based on individuals or groups directly affected or having witnessed an event (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2012). Stake (1995) and Yin (2012) described case study research from constructivists' paradigm in that perception more closely represents truth rather than fact. Research performed by Heilmann et al. (2013) and Bigliardi et al. (2012) studied employee perceptions of work experiences and impact on job satisfaction. Similarly, a multiple case study was appropriate for research in studying strategies used to reduce voluntary turnover of sales associates.

Data saturation occurs in the absence of any new data, themes, or coding emerging from the research (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012). The use of open-ended questions and unplanned follow-up questions enable data saturation (Yin, 2014). Failing to achieve data saturation negatively affects the perception of trustworthiness and content validity

(Fusch & Ness, 2015). Quality of data is more important than the quantity of data (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Questionnaires often result in brief responses to open-ended questions (Elo et al., 2014). Face-to-face open-ended questions enhanced with unplanned follow-up questions increase trustworthiness (Elo et al., 2014). An adequate number of qualified leaders existed within the population should any of the 10 participants have dropped out. Follow-up questions provide additional clarification and further enhance data saturation (Yin, 2014). In the absence of data saturation after interviewing 10 participants, the process of participant recruitment and interviewing would have continued until saturation. Achieving saturation occurs when no additional information exists (Yin, 2014). Additionally, no further coding is feasible, no new themes emerge, and replication of the study yields the same results (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012; Petty et al., 2012; Yin, 2014).

Purposeful sampling increases the success rate of data saturation (Moss, 2013). Purposeful sampling method allows a relatively small number of participants in support of qualitative multiple case study research (Moss, 2013). Moss (2013) added participants to the process until the establishment of a deep understanding of the study. Saturation occurs when two consecutive interviews reveal no new information (Moss, 2013; Yin, 2014).

Yin (2012) postulated that qualitative research supports the goal of establishing personal experiences of specific situations at a particular time and place, in the identification of applicable data. Interview questions designed for this study allowed flexibility in the conversation and extensive data collection. The interview protocol

process provided participants with offsite face-to-face semistructured interviews in a relaxed environment (Doody & Noonan, 2013; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). Furthermore, the process began with small talk enabling each participant to speak freely and openly (Doody & Noonan, 2013; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). Employee perception of HRM practices creates a greater impact on job satisfaction than the intentions of HRM programs (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2012). Multiple case study research allowed me to develop a solid understanding of employee perceptions of events that led them to quit their job, and reasons for their particular reaction. Investigation of this phenomenon incorporated the research methods and design detailed in the following subsections in establishing relevance.

Population and Sampling

Purposive sampling is a popular process used in qualitative research (Palinkas et al., 2013). Purposeful sampling based on opportunistic or emergent sampling is the foundation for the interview process (Bernard, 2013; Yin, 2014). The purposive sampling technique involves the process of identifying and selecting interview participants with knowledge and experience in a specific phenomenon (Palinkas et al., 2013; Robinson, 2014). Purposeful sampling includes the flexibility to take advantage of opportunities exposed during face-to-face discussions and subsequent follow-ups (Bernard, 2013; Yin, 2014). Interview participants purposely selected involves the use of specific criteria (Patton, 2002; Robinson, 2014; Yin, 2012). Thomson (2013) utilized purposeful sampling facilitated by face-to-face semistructured interviews in exploring the true nature of participant experiences. Members represented a subset of a larger corporate leadership

team, selected for the purpose of data collection. Purposive sampling serves as a process enabling detailed, in-depth interview sessions based on a small subset of participants, which was perfect for this study (Yin, 2012). Metcalf (2013) used purposive sampling to study a particular population for a specific reason. Purposeful sampling was an appropriate method for exploring the strategies software manufacturing company sales managers used to reduce voluntary employee turnover of sales associates. Purposive sampling was the best method allowing me to develop a qualified list of participants that could answer specific research questions.

Qualitative studies support data collection from small groups, while quantitative research requires large data samples in establishing statistical significance and validity (Dworkin, 2012; Yin, 2012). Dworkin (2012) specified that an acceptable number of study participants could range between five and 50. Porter (2014) started with ten participants, but required two additional participants to achieve data saturation. Failing to achieve data saturation negatively affects the perception of trustworthiness and content validity (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The data gathering for this study initially targeted 10 sales managers selected from five software manufacturing companies with strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover of sales associates, headquartered in the southeastern United States, using a semistructured process. Determining participant sample size required rigor (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013). Data saturation and ensuring a large enough group of individuals for the study further supported the need to begin with a minimum of 10 participants. Achieving data saturation occurred when no additional information existed (Marshall et al., 2013). Additionally, no further coding

was feasible, no new themes emerged, and replication of the study would yield the same results (Petty et al., 2012; Yin, 2014). A direct relationship exists between participant sample size and data saturation (Marshall et al., 2013). Predefined open-ended interview questions maintained consistency throughout the process (Bernard, 2013). Researcher follow-up questions provided additional clarification and data saturation (Yin, 2014). In the absence of data saturation after interviewing 10 participants, the process of participant recruitment and interviewing would have continued until saturation. Purposeful sampling increased the success rate of data saturation (Moss, 2013). Metcalf (2013) highlighted the disparity in minimum participant numbers that existed within the literature. Purposeful sampling method includes a relatively small number of participants in support of qualitative multiple case study research (Moss, 2013). Moss highlighted the challenge of determining the actual number of participants prior to the interview process needed to achieve saturation. Moss added participants to the process until the establishment of a deep understanding of the study. Saturation occurred when two or more consecutive interviews revealed no new information (Moss, 2013; Yin, 2014).

Participant Selection

Metcalf (2013) purposively selected participants based on specific criteria demonstrating in-depth knowledge and experience of the research topic. I worked through HR in obtaining a fully executed letter of cooperation in preparation for the initial potential participant contact and requirement (see Appendix C). The HR department provided contact information for the leadership meeting these criteria. Contact information included e-mail address, office phone number, and mobile phone

number. The purposeful selection process involved specific criteria including leadership experiences with employee turnover, recruitment, retention, and knowledge of internal business practices (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2014).

Interview Setting

Participants purposefully selected for this research all worked in offices located in the southeastern United States. Conducting interviews offsite enhanced the effort to establish greater confidentiality and openness in participant responses (Yin, 2012). Date and time options were available for members any day of the week and any time of the day, based on what was most convenient for them. Cooper (2013) selected locations based on convenience and comfort to the interview participants. Possible location options included anywhere in the southeastern United States at a quiet neutral location such as a hotel lobby. Coffey (2013) interviewed participants in their offices or a conference room to maintain privacy. The selected locations were conducive to a private, safe, and secure environment that was free from distraction. Consideration of a date, time, and location of individual interviews involved reaching an agreement with participants primarily addressing the need to remove stress, enhance openness, and maximize commitment.

Ethical Research

Engagement with software manufacturing companies began upon approval of this study proposal by the IRB. Additionally, ethical research started with the adoption of the Belmont Report protocol and basic ethical principles established by the National Research Act (Pub. L. 93-348) signed into law July 12, 1974. The Belmont Report summarized research ethics protecting people participating in biomedical and behavioral

research (U.S. National Commission, 1979). This study did not include any prisoners, children, or any other protected group. No participants under the age of 21 were included in this study.

Ethical issues might surface during the process of interviewing study participants (Yin, 2012). Informing study participants throughout the data collection process provided transparency and minimized the risk of ethical issues (Yin, 2012). Establishing a working relationship with potential participants began with the e-mail distribution of consent forms describing the purpose of this study. Furthermore, scheduling an information session (Appendix B) provided interested participants the opportunity to better understand the study purpose, ask questions, and learn about their role in the research. The consent form contained background information, procedures, nature of the research, risks, and benefits of participating in this study.

The consent form included information for withdrawing from the study at any time by notifying the researcher via e-mail or phone call. I informed participants in person of their right to withdraw from the study at any point throughout the research process. Additionally, the consent form included information pertaining to payment, privacy, and security processes for the data collected. Participation in this study was voluntary. Participants could opt out of this voluntary study at any time. Data collected from any participants that later opted out of the process, would not be included in the final documentation.

Candidate notification for this study occurred individually and confidentially, removing any chance others were aware of a member's decision to participate or

terminate participation throughout the process. Voluntary participants in this study received no compensation for their involvement. Study participation did not include incentives. Study participants benefit knowing that they contributed to the development of strategies minimizing employee turnover. Consent forms provided participants with an understanding of the purpose of specific research and their role in the process (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). The consent form included researcher contact information and a statement of consent, which required participant signature and date. I used the consent form to highlight that interview sessions would be audio-recorded to allow for transcription later. Skelton (2015) used the consent form in providing interview participants detailed information regarding the study. Cooper (2013) used a consent form to confirm participation and understanding of the study. The consent form was an appropriate tool for providing participants with detailed information about the study.

Each interview began with a review of the consent form to ensure candidates understood the purpose of this research and his or her role in the process (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). Brimstin (2013) incorporated a review of the consent form prior to each interview to reinforce an understanding of the research purpose. E-mails (Appendix D) sent 48 hours to participants prior to the interview confirmed each meeting; included a copy of the consent form to serve as a reminder, minimizing cancelations, and reschedules. Additionally, this e-mail (Appendix D) communication notified all participants of session recording and reminded them that data storage occurred in a secured safe located at home. The consent form included permission for recording the session and was mandatory for participation.

My responsibility as a researcher was to secure and protect all data sources (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Data retention incorporated storage using a fireproof secure safe at home for 5 years. After a period of 5 years, complete destruction of all hard and soft copies of data will occur. Hard and soft copies of the data will be shredded and then burned (Brimstin, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Salih, 2012).

Research involving human participants included some degree of risk mitigated using assigned identification markings (Cronin, 2014). Member identification incorporated the use of P1, P2, P3, and so on, further protecting identities (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The research document did not include participant names or other identifiable information of individuals or organizations. E-mails sent at the conclusion expressed sincere appreciation for their support. Final doctoral manuscript includes the Walden IRB approval number. The Walden IRB approval number for this study is 01-05-16-0350969, and expires on January 4, 2017. Finally, e-mails assured members that storage of information occurred in a safe at home for 5 years, and then destroyed through shredding and incineration, protecting confidentiality and the rights of participants.

Data Collection Instruments

Description of Instrumentation

In qualitative studies, the researcher is an instrument, making observations and interpretations based on their personal experiences (Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013; Yin, 2012). I represented the primary data collection instrument. Semistructured interview questions uncovered strategies software manufacturing company sales managers used to reduce voluntary employee turnover of sales associates. Data collection involved

semistructured interviews exploring the strategies software manufacturing industry sales managers used to reduce voluntary turnover of sales associates. Face-to-face semistructured interviews using open-ended questions (Appendix A) represented the secondary instrument used for data collection. Situations requiring greater anonymity required telephone interviews (Block & Erskine, 2012; Irvine, Drew, & Sainsbury, 2013). Protocol for the interview process applied to all participants, and included explanation as specified in Appendix A.

Methodological triangulation further enhances saturation, reliability, and validity using multiple data sources (Denzin, 2012; Yin, 2014). Data collection in this study combined participant interviews with a review of existing organization documents describing internal HR employee processes and policies. Data collection efforts included company and archival documents provided by HR, or publicly available and readily accessible. Specifically, data collection efforts targeted internal HR policies and procedures affecting job satisfaction, employee retention programs, employee training opportunities for career growth, and leadership training. Additionally, data collection activities included documents detailing management reports for employee turnover, job satisfaction, and organizational performance. Wang and Brennan (2014) researched document studies that included information on company policies, management reports, contracts, and customer related communications. Skelton (2015) reviewed publicly available company information to gain additional insights into marketing strategies and business processes. In addition to internal company documents, I reviewed publicly available information contained within the organization websites to explore the strategies

software manufacturing company sales managers used to reduce voluntary employee turnover of sales associates.

Informal conversations guided any need for further sessions with members, driving greater learning and immersion (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). General interview questions allowed flexibility to ask follow-up questions while enabling a structured format improving the chances of achieving a comprehensive data collection process (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2012). The semistructured interview process began with identical standardized questions (Appendix A) presented to each participant in exactly the same way, allowing for open-ended responses. Open-ended questions allowed members to provide broader scope responses decreasing the potential for bias and minimizing any possible restrictions (Doody & Noonan, 2013; Yin, 2012). Based on participant responses, further probing questions enabled a complete research study (Doody & Noonan, 2013; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012).

Data Collection Instrument Use and Technique

Semistructured interviews incorporate the flexibility to take advantage of opportunities exposed during face-to-face discussions and subsequent follow-ups (Doody & Noonan, 2013). To avoid demonstrating any bias required caution as it was important not to show any emotions, attempt to lead the participants in any particular direction, or display attitude (Yin, 2014). Pre-defined open-ended interview questions enabled the interviewer to maintain consistency throughout the research process (Bernard, 2013; Doody & Noonan, 2013), allowing for follow-up questions, additional clarification, and data saturation (Yin, 2014).

The consent form included prior approval for recording interviews using a Live Scribe Echo Pen, and transcription utilizing Dragon Naturally Speaking Voice Recognition software. A reflective journal provided for recording the time of day, day of the week, date, location, and any environmental anomalies (weather, power outage, workplace disruptions, etc.). Use of self-reflective journals minimized researcher bias (Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013; Pezalla et al., 2012). Reflective journal use guarded against bias by documenting and recognizing researcher subjectivity balanced with observed phenomenon (Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013; Pezalla et al., 2012). Documenting events that occurred to the interviewee days prior to, or after, enhance validity and reliability (Bernard, 2013). Notification of these events came from the participants, company websites, the media, and social networks.

Data collection consisted of face-to-face semistructured interviews. Semistructured interviews (Doody & Noonan, 2013; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Yin, 2014) using open-ended questions served as a guide in gaining detailed reasons employees voluntarily decided to quit their jobs. Semistructured interviews allowed participants to answer the questions, as they desired, and provided flexibility for broad responses on their experiences (Doody & Noonan, 2013; Granot, Brashear, & Motta, 2012; Rowley, 2012). Telephone interviews reduce trust minimizing participant openness and forthrightness in sharing information (Block & Erskine, 2012; Irvine et al., 2013). Semistructured face-to-face interviews in a natural setting support the capture of detailed explanations and insights (Doody & Noonan, 2013; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). These insights supported the conceptual analysis, identification,

and validation based on real-world experiences (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Additionally, semistructured interviews provided for flexibility in sequencing the questions and further probing (Doody & Noonan, 2013; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Yin, 2012).

Reliability and Validity

Reliability was achieved by following a defined multiple case study protocol. Yin (2014) suggested that construct and internal validity and reliability testing occurs throughout the study process. After data analysis and interpretation, member checking allowed interview participants to confirm findings were reasonable, accurate, and credible (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The member checking process allowed for establishing data validity and accuracy (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Finally, member checking allowed interview participants the opportunity to further clarify responses (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Etienne (2012) used member checking to review and validate data analysis and interpretations with all study participants.

Participant interview recordings utilized a Live Scribe Pen to support credible transcription. Interview recordings included supplementing with extensive reflective journal entries describing each session, participant actions, behaviors, and environmental conditions (Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). Review of recordings assisted in determining the need for additional follow-up questions and clarification. Upon completion of the data collection, interpretation, and analysis, study participants viewed results for validation that the themes uncovered were reasonable, accurate, and credible. Follow-up meetings

provided participants the opportunity to review and validate results of the data interpretation and analysis. Participants had the option of reviewing results via e-mail if their schedules did not support time for a face-to-face interview. E-mailing copies of the data analysis and interpretation results to the study participants provided the opportunity for member checking. Upon receipt of the e-mailed data analysis and interpretation results, interview participants received 72 hours to review, provide additional clarification, and then e-mail back to me. Within 24 hours of receiving corrections, scheduling of follow-up phone calls to discuss and finalize corrections completed the review process. At the completion of the review process, each participant was required to delete all research material. Member checking allowed interview participants the opportunity to further clarify responses (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). If the study participants did not validate that the themes uncovered were reasonable, accurate, and credible, I continued member-checking interviews to clarify what the participant's original meaning was, and asked additional clarifying questions as needed. Skelton (2015) incorporated member checking to enhance data reliability and validity.

Validity and reliability addressed data saturation through interviewing candidates extensively, with well-considered questions (Wahyuni, 2012). Use of qualitative research allows the researcher to explore the experiences and interpretations of the organizational phenomenon (Parker, 2012; Wahyuni, 2012). Dependability defines reliability through repeatable and replicable research results, established through saturation in performing qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Methodological triangulation further enhances saturation, reliability, and validity using multiple data sources (Denzin, 2012;

Yin, 2014). This study incorporated semistructured face-to-face interviews, direct observations, and review of company related documents to establish methodological triangulation. Discussion sessions and responses were suitable in length and breadth to capture in-depth details of participant's experiences with voluntary turnover and organizational performance.

Data Collection Technique

Data collection in this study combined semistructured interviews with a review of existing organization documents describing internal processes. The process for conducting semistructured interviews began with a plan to arrive at the interview location 30 minutes prior to the scheduled time. Prior to each participant interview, reflective journal entries detailed the date, environmental conditions, significant world events (if applicable), and setting. A reflective journal used in conjunction with the interview process enhanced the capture of additional data observations including participants' demeanor, the environment, and demographics (Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). Upon participant arrival to the interview location, the process began with introductions, and rapport development. The interview process commenced based on the interview protocol referenced in Appendix A. The interview protocol served as a guide, but the process remained flexible to deviations when appropriate. A Live Scribe Echo Pen recorded each participant interview. Coffey (2013) recorded interview sessions to enhance reliability and validity. An iPad provided for back-up recording purposes. Dragon Naturally Speaking Voice Recognition software provided a solution for transcribing the interview data from voice to text. Upon completion of the data collection, interpretation, and

analysis, study participants received a copy of the analysis to validate that the themes uncovered were reasonable, accurate, and credible, satisfying member checking requirements as a part of methodological triangulation. Methodological triangulation further enhances saturation, reliability, and validity using multiple data sources (Denzin, 2012; Yin, 2014). If the study participants did not validate the themes uncovered were reasonable, accurate, and credible, member-checking interviews continued, clarifying what the participant's original meaning was, and asking additional questions as needed. All participant interviews followed the same general procedure.

Document data collection included data from company and archival information for company policies, training, and management reports. Yin (2012) suggested using data collection processes described in previous case studies on employee turnover. Wang and Brennan (2014) researched document studies that included information on company policies, management reports, contracts, and customer related communications. Skelton (2015) reviewed publically available company information to gain additional insights for marketing strategies and business processes. I reviewed publicly available information contained within corporate websites to explore the strategies software manufacturing company sales managers used to reduce voluntary employee turnover of sales associates. The process for conducting document data collection began with scheduling a meeting with HR to discuss available documents describing internal HR employee processes and policies. I made the request of HR for access to company and archival documents. Specifically, I requested documentation detailing internal HR policies and procedures affecting job satisfaction, employee retention programs, employee training opportunities

for career growth, and leadership training. Additionally, I requested documents detailing management reports for employee turnover, job satisfaction, and organizational performance. I searched company websites for any additional information specific to data highlighted in the previous item. Finally, I searched for publicly available and readily accessible documents using Yahoo and Google search engines, including Yahoo Finance. Keywords for the research included *HR, human resources, management report, job satisfaction, employee retention, employee voluntary turnover, employee turnover, training, career, leadership, and strategy.*

Upon receipt of the e-mail confirmation including a scanned copy of the signed consent form, verbal approval via a phone call from me completed the approvals process. The primary purpose of the data collection process involved validation as to the sequence and content of questions and driving productive dialog exploring the reasons for voluntary employee turnover (Yin, 2012). Scheduling of 90 to 120-minute face-to-face semistructured interview sessions took place at a remote location.

Recording of the interview sessions utilized the Live Scribe Echo Pen, and iPad as a backup recording device. I used the Dragon Naturally Speaking Voice Recognition software to help transcribe the interview data. Coffey (2013) recorded interview sessions to enhance reliability and validity. Skelton (2015) recorded participant interview sessions using Dragon Naturally Speaking software to transcribe the data incorporating NVIVO for analysis.

Several data collection options exist in performing qualitative multiple case study research, each with their own advantages and disadvantages (Yin, 2014). Data collection

options included, but were not limited to, archival records, observations, interviews, and previous research (Yin, 2014). I selected the semistructured interview process for data collection. Semistructured interviews incorporated the flexibility to take advantage of opportunities exposed during face-to-face discussions and subsequent follow-ups (Doody & Noonan, 2013). Using semistructured interviews allowed participants to answer interview questions providing for flexibility of broad responses on their experiences (Doody & Noonan, 2013; Granot et al., 2012; Jamshed, 2014; Rowley, 2012). Beginning interview questions with *why* needs avoidance as this placed the participants in a defensive position stifling further dialogue (Onwuegbuzie, Leech, Slate, Stark, & Sharma, 2012). Open-ended questions were for members to provide broader scope responses decreasing the potential for bias and minimizing any possible restrictions (Doody & Noonan, 2013; Yin, 2012). Based on participant responses, further probing questions enabled a complete research study (Doody & Noonan, 2013; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). Structured interviews included a specific line of questioning without the flexibility to deviate based on participant responses (Yin, 2014). The benefit of structured interviews includes the ability to focus questioning based on thematic data points (Yin, 2014). Group interviews highlight internal dynamics further highlighted by observed participant interactions (Yin, 2014).

Yin (2013) indicated that pretest case study interviews refine data collection content and processes. Piloting of the interview was the process to validate and adjust questions and processes prior to the formal participant engagement (Yin, 2013). Coffey (2013) implemented a pilot in testing and evaluating the research instrument for validity,

accuracy, and fairness. Skelton (2015) tested the research instrument confirming interview questions for clarity. I conducted a trial run interview with the support of a friend testing the data collection process to validate interview protocol and activities.

At the completion of the data analysis and interpretation process, member checking allowed interview participants to confirm findings were reasonable, accurate, and credible. The member checking process allowed for establishing data validity and accuracy (Houghton et al., 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Finally, member checking allowed interview participants the opportunity to further clarify responses (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Etienne (2012) used member checking to review and validate data analysis and interpretations with all study participants. If the study participants did not validate that the themes uncovered were reasonable, accurate, and credible, I continued member-checking interviews to clarify what the participant's original meaning was, and asked additional clarifying questions as needed.

Data Organization Technique

Proper data storage organized for future retrieval and analysis represented a critical component in confirming reliability (Gajewski, 2013; Yin, 2012). A laptop and Universal Serial Bus (USB) thumb drive as a backup appliance, stored interview data using the Live Scribe Echo Pen, and an iPad as a backup recording device. Creation of paper files for each participant's interview included labels matching their individual coded identity (e.g., C1P1, C1P2, C1P3, and so on). Gajewski (2013) used the identifiers *M* for managers and *E* for employees, similar to my choice of *P* for each participant business leader and *C* for each company, to establish confidentiality. Trotter (2012) and

Skelton (2015) utilized similar coding systems to enhance confidentiality. A master list provided easy access to all data allowing for readily available member information (Gajewski, 2013). The master list stored in a secure safe prevented anyone other than me from accessing the data. These files allowed for storage of audio recordings, hard copies of transcribed data using Dragon Naturally Speaking Voice Recognition software, and reflective journal entries.

I used a reflective journal entry to document the date, time, location, and relevant environmental conditions for each participant interview. A reflective journal used in conjunction with the interview process enhanced the capture of additional data observations including participants' demeanor, the environment, and demographics (Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). Coffey (2013) used journaling to document observed participant behaviors during the interview process. Skelton (2015) used a field journal to document both the participant behavior and environmental conditions. Reflective journals provided a solution for capturing issues and follow up items post interview requiring additional clarification (Bernard, 2013).

Trotter (2012) and Skelton (2015) used QSR International NVivo Version 10 software for data analysis. QSR International NVivo Version 10 software provided a solution for organizing and analyzing unstructured interview data. Additionally, NVivo software included an option for pattern-based coding to identify themes and trends.

Data existed in a reflective journal, additional personally produced documentation, and electronic storage media in the form of a USB thumb drive. Trotter (2012) and Skelton (2015) planned to store data in a locked filing cabinet for 5 years. All

data remains in a fireproof secure safe for 5 years. Brimstin (2013) planned to shred and burn data after storing for 5 years. I will destroy all data using a destruction method appropriate to the storage medium.

Data Analysis

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies software manufacturing company sales managers used to reduce voluntary employee turnover of sales associates. The qualitative multiple case study research constituted an appropriate methodology for investigating the employee experiences based on real world events and problems (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2012). Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory described the alignment of traditional employment drivers and workplace motivation with job satisfaction and organizational commitment affecting voluntary employee turnover. Yin (2014) detailed a method for analyzing data through the process of compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding. The main objective of data analysis was to answer the primary research question: What strategies did software manufacturing sales managers use to reduce voluntary employee turnover of sales associates?

This research utilized methodological triangulation of multiple data sources producing equivalent conclusions. Use of methodological triangulation for this study encompassed semistructured interviews with sales managers from five software manufacturing companies located in the southeastern United States. Triangulation included the method of using multiple types of data sources to enhance reliability and validity (Denzin, 2012; Heale & Forbes, 2013). Methodological triangulation for this

study incorporated the use of semistructured face-to-face interviews, direct observations, review of the company related documents, and member checking. Methodological triangulation involved the use of various information sources for data collection enhancing data validity and interpretive confidence (Denzin, 2012; Heale & Forbes, 2013; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2014).). For this study, methodological triangulation ensured development of comprehensive and well-developed themes.

The initial step in the analysis process involved data preparation and compilation (Yin, 2014). The recorded participant interview sessions included the use of Dragon Naturally Speaking Voice Recognition software to transcribe verbatim into a text format. Skelton (2015) recorded participant interview sessions using Dragon Naturally Speaking software to transcribe the data incorporating NVIVO for analysis. Microsoft Word software provided the solution used to capture text. Transcribing interview recordings required additional effort to ensure readability (Yin, 2014). I validated accuracy of the transcription process through multiple reviews. Within 24 hours of recording participant interviews, I transcribed the data into a Word document and refined notes from observations, and any documents collected from each company. At the completion of all participant interviews and data collection activities, I compiled all notes into an order aligned with employee retention strategies. Categories captured during the literature review process combined with the conceptual framework, began the process. This process assisted in the identification of strategies that sales managers used to reduce voluntary turnover of sales associates. Data imported from Microsoft Word into NVivo software enabled the ability to code, organize, and analyze data.

The next step involved disassembling and reassembling the data in preparation for coding, theme identification, and analysis assistance by using NVivo software. QSR International NVivo Version 10 software was a leading data analysis solution for qualitative research (Trotter, 2012). Yin's (2012) approach incorporated data grouping, scrubbing, organizing, theme identification, textural description construction, both individual, and summarized, and the meanings of each participant's experience. Thomson (2013) utilized a subset based on relevance, in analyzing social and environmental issues. Furthermore, using Yin's method for analysis provided an opportunity to discover the real meaning of the phenomenon of voluntary turnover analyzing data collected throughout the interview process.

Disassembling the data was the next step in the process following compilation (Yin, 2012). The process of disassembling results in categorized and grouped data (Yin, 2012). Coding of category names and groups enables the development of patterns and themes (Yin, 2012). NVivo software includes an auto-coding feature that assists in the identification of patterns and themes. Yin described the process of reassembling in the context of theme emergence based on multiple iterations of data reassembling. Iteratively processing the data several times provides an opportunity to identify congruent themes between existing literature and participant interview responses (Denzin, 2012). I reassembled the data several times, using lists. This iterative processing of the data continued until no new themes emerged ensuring data saturation. At this point, Yin defined interpretation of the data patterns and themes as the next step in the process. NVivo software functionality included pattern-based auto-coding to identify themes,

subthemes, and categories (Trotter, 2012). Tripp (2013) used NVivo software to analyze transcripts collected through the participant interview process gaining a better understanding of individual beliefs and social values. Upon emergence of a key theme or themes resulting from the data analysis and interpretation, the researcher formulates a concluding answer to the primary question (Yin, 2012). The coding process leading to theme identification, achieving saturation, demonstrates credibility, reliability, and validity (Denzin, 2012).

Upon the completion of data analysis and interpretation, member checking is used to further establish credibility, reliability, and validity (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The member checking process allows for establishing data validity through verification of the data analysis and interpretation (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Qualitative multiple case study research includes data analysis and interpretation (Yin, 2014). Additionally, after data analysis and interpretation, member checking allows interview participants to confirm findings are reasonable, accurate, and credible (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Member checking allows interview participants the opportunity to further clarify responses (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Etienne (2012) used member checking to review and validate data analysis and interpretations with all study participants. Skelton (2015) incorporated member checking to enhance data reliability and validity. I used member checking to allow interview participants the opportunity for additional clarifications, validate data analysis and interpretation, and enhance credibility, validity, and reliability.

The literature review, in alignment with the conceptual framework, provides literature related to specific themes identified in the problem statement, purpose

statement, and research questions. Specifically, the literature review includes a discussion on three main areas including financial impact, Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory, and HRM strategies. Subsections cover the financial impact of employee turnover on organizational performance, job satisfaction, organizational culture, values, retention, recruitment challenges, company strategies, training, leadership, the agile framework, CASs, and HPWSs. The literature review areas, in alignment with the conceptual framework, guided the development of research questions. Iteratively processing the data several times provides an opportunity to identify congruent themes between existing literature, the conceptual framework, and participant interview responses to research questions (Denzin, 2012). Furthermore, the coding process leading to theme identification achieving saturation demonstrates credibility, reliability, and validity (Denzin, 2012). Herzberg's two-factor theory explored the characteristics of organizational behavior affecting job satisfaction, and voluntary employee turnover. This research study uses Herzberg's two-factor theory to explore the relationship of employee motivation and job satisfaction with voluntary turnover.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity of qualitative research align with dependability, creditability, transferability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The use of qualitative research allows for the exploration of an organizational phenomenon (Parker, 2012; Wahyuni, 2012). Quantitative reliability and validity encompass research and data from a relatively small sampling generalized to a much larger population (Wahyuni,

2012). Qualitative reliability and validity focus more on a specific localized social phenomenon (Wahyuni, 2012).

Reliability

Reliability constitutes ratings based on the consistency of data measurements validated through repeatable research yielding similar results (Wahyuni, 2012).

Dependability defines reliability through repeatable and replicable research results established through saturation in performing qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Determining the reliability and dependability in research requires a relentless interview process with the goal of developing saturation and accurate transcription of participant responses (Wahyuni, 2012; Yin, 2014). The interview process needs to remain absent of any bias by the researcher (Bernard, 2013; Cairney & St Denny, 2015; Yin, 2012). Further establishment of dependability includes detailed documentation of the research and interview process to include a list of interview questions. In establishing reliability and dependability, maintenance of detailed documentation for the research process includes participant validation of data interpretations and analysis (Wahyuni, 2012). Member checking of data interpretation and transcription reviews for accuracy enhance dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2014). Member checking allows interview participants an opportunity to review and confirm the data interpretation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Furthermore, the member checking process allows interview participants the opportunity to further clarify previous responses and include additional information (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Incorporating a continuous member-checking process throughout the data

collection process enhances reliability (Harvey, 2015). If the study participants did not validate that the themes uncovered were reasonable, accurate, and credible, I continued member-checking interviews to clarify what the participants' original meaning was, and asked additional clarifying questions as needed.

Validity

Validity is a measure of the extent that research analysis accurately reflects observed phenomena (Wahyuni, 2012). Use of triangulation through member checking, review of interview data and archived documents enhance validity (Denzin, 2012; Yin, 2014). Creditability, transferability, and confirmability methods provide for the establishment of validity (Houghton et al., 2013; Wahyuni, 2012). I used methodological triangulation and member checking to establish validity.

Creditability describes internal validity and accuracy of the observed phenomenon about the intended research (Wahyuni, 2012). Trustworthiness represents the qualitative equivalence of quantitative validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Ensuring creditability requires authenticity and trustworthiness of the data interpretation and analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Methodological triangulation enhances saturation and creditability using multiple data sources (Denzin, 2012; Yin, 2014). Triangulation for this study incorporates the use of semistructured face-to-face interviews and review of company documents. Skelton (2015) used triangulation to increase study validity. The member checking process allows for establishing data creditability through verification of the data analysis and interpretation (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Etienne (2012) used member checking to review and validate data analysis and interpretation with all study

participants. At the completion of all interviews, participants were required to confirm accuracy and approval of the data analysis and interpretation.

Establishing transferability and confirmability within the research involves an exhaustive peer review, interview participant checking, crosschecking of the data, and detailed information regarding processes and analysis (Parker, 2012; Wahyuni, 2012). I will leave the transferability of findings to the reader and future researchers to determine. The objectivity of the researcher through ensuring findings represent those of the participants, absent of any researcher bias, exemplifies confirmability (Wahyuni, 2012). Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined confirmability based on auditability and research absent of bias. Etienne (2012) used journaling to document personal reflections throughout the process to remove bias. A reflective journal used throughout the research will enhance confirmability by constantly raising bias awareness. Consent form use and conducting interviews in a controlled environment further supported internal and external validity (Yin, 2014). I made every effort to host meetings in similar quiet and relaxing locations and without distraction. The discussions occurred at the same time of day, in the middle of the week, and accommodated schedules. Using dependability, creditability, transferability, and confirmability address and ensure reliability and validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Data saturation occurs in the absence of any new data, themes, or coding emerging from the research (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012). Failing to achieve data saturation negatively affects the perception of trustworthiness and content validity (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Quality of data is more important than the quantity of data (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Questionnaires often result in brief responses to open-ended questions (Elo et al., 2014). Face-to-face open-ended questions enhanced with unplanned follow-up questions increase trustworthiness (Elo et al., 2014). An adequate number of qualified leaders existed within the population should any of the 10 participants drop out. Researcher follow-up questions provide additional clarification and further enhance data saturation (Yin, 2014). Achieving saturation occurs when no additional information exists (Yin, 2014). Additionally, no further coding is feasible, no new themes emerge, and replication of the study yields the same results (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012; Petty et al., 2012; Yin, 2014).

Purposeful sampling increases the success rate of data saturation (Moss, 2013). Purposeful sampling method allows a relatively small number of participants in support of qualitative multiple case study research (Moss, 2013). Porter (2014) started with ten participants, but required two additional participants to achieve data saturation. Determining participant sample size requires rigor (Marshall et al., 2013). Data saturation and ensuring a large enough group of individuals for the study further supported the need to begin with a minimum of ten participants. Saturation occurs when two consecutive interviews reveal no new information (Moss, 2013; Yin, 2014). The use of open-ended questions and unplanned follow-up questions enable data saturation (Yin, 2014). In the absence of data saturation after interviewing ten participants, the process of participant recruitment and interviewing will continue until saturation. Moss (2013) highlighted the challenge of determining the actual number of participants prior to the interview process

needed to achieve saturation. Moss added participants to the process until the establishment of a deep understanding of the study.

Transition and Summary

In Section 2, I provided detailed processes for implementing a qualitative multiple case study exploring strategies software manufacturing company sales managers used to reduce voluntary employee turnover of sales associates. A qualitative methodology was the best strategy to explore voluntary employee turnover, gaining firsthand knowledge of strategies. Using a multiple case study design approach based on face-to-face semistructured interviews allowed me to perform in-depth questioning and analysis with people directly experiencing these events. I used QSR International NVivo Version 10 software to facilitate the organization and analysis of unstructured interview data. Additionally, NVivo software supported pattern-based coding and identification of themes and trends. This section concluded with the incorporation of a detailed plan establishing reliability and validity throughout the research study, removing all personal bias and preferences. Section 3 includes detailed information and analysis resulting from participant interviews, implications for social change, and application for leadership and HRM toward reducing voluntary employee turnover.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Section 3 includes a presentation of the findings, applications to professional practice, implications for social change, recommendations for action, and future research. Research findings resulted in 11 major themes represented by tables and associated details discussed in the presentation of findings section. Finally, I concluded this section with some reflections, and a conclusion.

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies software manufacturing company sales managers used to reduce voluntary employee turnover of sales associates. I selected Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory as the conceptual framework for exploring the relationship between job satisfaction and voluntary employee turnover. I completed interviews with 10 participants from five software manufacturing companies headquartered in the southeastern United States. Use of methodological triangulation for this study encompassed semistructured interviews, observations, and analysis of company-related documents. Interview questions represented categories designed to identify retention strategies, critical success factors, establishment of retention objectives, establishment of retention metrics, and training. Importing data into NVivo software gave me the ability to code, organize, and analyze data.

Interview data analysis revealed the importance of both intrinsic and extrinsic strategies in reducing voluntary employee turnover. Furthermore, pay and benefits alone were not enough to retain software sales associates. Successful leaders motivated

employees to follow and push themselves to accomplish the impossible. Sales managers increased employee retention by incorporating improved communications, attainable performance objectives, emotional attachment, organizational commitment, stronger social connections, management training, and a better, more purposeful work environment.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question was the following: What strategies did software manufacturing sales managers use to reduce voluntary employee turnover of sales associates? Yin (2014) detailed a method for analyzing data through the process of compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding. Data saturation occurs in the absence of any new data, themes, or coding emerging from the research (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012). Data saturation occurred after interviewing 10 participants from five software manufacturing companies headquartered in the southeastern United States.

After data analysis and interpretation, member checking allows interview participants to confirm findings were reasonable, accurate, and credible (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The member checking process allows for establishing data validity and accuracy (Houghton et al., 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Finally, member checking allows interview participants the opportunity to further clarify responses (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

For confidentiality purposes, participant coding followed a C1 through C5 structure aligning with the five companies participating. Depending on the number of

participants from each company, coding followed a P1 through P4 sequence. C1P1 coding identified the first participant interviewed at the first company, and continued through C5P1 for the last person interviewed. Data analysis yielded 11 themes highlighting the methods sales managers used to improve employee retention. Based on methodological triangulation, 11 themes emerged from the data:

Theme 1: Career growth opportunities are essential.

Theme 2: It all begins with communications.

Theme 3: Compensation plans are still relevant.

Theme 4: Leadership qualities can be the difference in retention.

Theme 5: Leadership training is critical to developing great managers.

Theme 6: Performance appraisals matter.

Theme 7: Recognizing and rewarding performance.

Theme 8: Retention metrics highlight turnover trends.

Theme 9: Social connection is critical to increasing employee tenure.

Theme 10: Work environment based on honesty and fairness is critical.

Theme 11: Purposeful work is critical for employee retention.

Theme numbering does not suggest any level of importance. The following subsections include theme identification and analysis of findings, and whether they confirmed, disconfirmed, or extended knowledge in the discipline by comparing findings with other peer-reviewed studies. Furthermore, the process included integration of participant interview findings, conceptual framework, and existing literature on effective business practices.

Theme 1: Career Growth Opportunities are Essential

Career growth opportunities emerged as a theme positively influencing employee retention. All participants identified career growth opportunities as a critical strategy for improving employee retention of sales associates. Strong performers were more likely to quit based on a lack of career growth opportunities (Batt & Colvin, 2011). Herzberg's (1959) theory validated the concept that personal growth, opportunity, and achievement through training and development programs lead to improved job satisfaction, motivation, productivity, and organizational commitment. Training and development employee opportunities represented motivational characteristics improving job satisfaction (Cooper & Quinn, 1993; Herzberg et al., 1959). Table 2 contains a list of subthemes interview participants associated with career growth, and it includes the number and percentage of participants discussing each strategy.

Table 2

Career Growth Strategies

Participant Strategy	Number	Percentage
Career Development Plans	10	100%
Certification Training	5	50%
Clear Path	4	40%
Cross Training	3	30%
Dev Plans are Partnership	3	30%
Employee Initiative	6	60%
Increased Value to Business	5	50%
Promotions	5	50%
Self-Improvement Training	8	80%
Special Assignments	4	40%
Time Off for Training	3	30%

Pollitt (2014) explained National Instrument's focus on job satisfaction and employee retention strategy through encouraging inspiration, originality, recognition programs, training, development, career growth opportunities, and a work environment supported by trust and openness. Focusing on these elements resulted in turnover rates 47% lower than the U.S. industry average (Pollitt, 2014). When asking participants to identify factors they considered as critical to retaining sales associates, responses included career growth opportunities, active and visible support by management, and individual ownership. Career growth opportunities as defined by the participants included

promotions, certification training, cross training, self-improvement training, and special assignments.

Technology employees identified a lack of career growth opportunities as a major factor leading to voluntary turnover (Vinit & Patel, 2013). Nawaz and Pangil (2016) determined that organizations should provide employees with career counseling, ongoing training options, mentoring opportunities, detailed career paths, and periodic career planning workshops. Active management support concepts included career development plans, defining a clear path to career growth opportunities, mutual investment in the plan by both manager and sales associate, opportunities to participate in special projects or assignments, and time-off for training. Individual ownership required that employees take responsibility for career growth through self-motivation and personal commitment of time and resources.

Eighty percent of the participants identified training opportunities through special assignments, industry certifications, and cross training, as factors critical to job satisfaction. Furthermore, 50% of participants explained that training opportunities enabled sales associates to increase their value to the organization. Training and development provided for promotions, increased pay, additional responsibility, and new challenges, positively improving job satisfaction and retention (Govaerts et al., 2011; Khattak et al., 2012). Finally, all interview participants agreed that tuition reimbursement for self-motivated sales associates willing to commit personal resources and time to further development improved job satisfaction leading to improved employee retention.

All participants suggested that opportunities for promotions into leadership positions represented a critical success factor. Identifying employee knowledge, skills, and abilities, and then aligning with organizational needs was a major part of the career growth process (Vaiman et al., 2015). Based on research conducted by Nawaz and Pangil (2016), promotion speed and remuneration growth represented significant career growth strategies most aligned with employee turnover intention. Voluntary turnover within the information technology industry frequently occurred based on career growth opportunities and job satisfaction (James & Mathew, 2012; Kim, 2012). Sixty percent of the participants explained that promotions from within was a priority for them.

Sixty percent of the participants viewed career growth as a shared responsibility between leadership and sales associates. Participant C5P1 said:

We will help our sales associates implement a mutually agreed upon career plan, by giving them the training, give them the assignments, and give them the time, to do what they need to do, in support of their career path.

Career practice management was a critical factor in developing a sustainable and committed workforce (Nawaz & Pangil, 2016). Appropriate career growth practices enhanced employee connection to the organization, resulting in extended careers (Nawaz & Pangil, 2016). The path to career growth needed to be clear and concise (Vaiman et al., 2015). Training and developing employees results in a motivated skilled workforce and positively influences employee retention.

Theme 2: It All Begins with Communications

Communications emerged as a very popular theme that all interview participants spoke of extensively. Specifically, communications strategies included maintaining an open door policy, frequent interactions with employees, consistent concise feedback for good and poor performance, and company state of the business information. Furthermore, interview participants discussed bidirectional communication strategies between leadership, the company, and sales associates. Communications between employees and leadership was one of the top five job satisfaction areas identified in an SHRM (2012) report. Successful HR practices required effective communications of value and purpose aligning perception and reality (Chrobot-Mason & Aramovich, 2013; Kehoe & Wright, 2013). Open and frequent communications, constant performance feedback, and transparency aligned well with the tenets of Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory. Each of the 10 participants spoke passionately about the value and need for frequent communications with team members. All participants felt that communications was critical to employee retention. Table 3 contains a list of subthemes interview participants associated with communications and the number and percentage of participants discussing each strategy.

Table 3

Communication Strategies

Participant Strategy	Number	Percentage
Address Poor Behavior/Performance	10	100%
Career Advancement Opportunities	6	60%
Clear/Concise Communications	7	70%
Company Performance	4	40%
Company Successes	4	40%
Direct Feedback	10	100%
Ego Stroking	5	50%
Frequent Communication	7	70%
Job Satisfaction Surveys	10	100%
Newsletter	2	20%
Open Door Policy	10	100%
Positive/Negative Feedback	7	70%

Supportive leadership, positive feedback, consistent management communications, and behavior improved job satisfaction and employee well-being (Winkler et al., 2015). Poor communications increased the negative impact on voluntary employee turnover (Smith et al., 2012). Winkler et al. (2015) determined that successful managers of individual contributors needed to be the communication conduit between their employees, leadership, and the organization. Furthermore, Winkler et al. identified communications and information sharing as primary leadership responsibilities. All

participants acknowledged the importance of having an open-door policy and providing sales associates with easy access to management. Furthermore, 100% of the participants indicated that frequent, honest, open, and respectful conversation was critical to increasing employee organizational commitment.

Use of technology for communications influenced job embeddedness and diminished employee loyalty (Charlier et al., 2016). Organizations needed to be aware of the negative and positive implications of technology on job embeddedness and employee retention (Charlier et al., 2016). One hundred percent of participants identified the value in communicating frequently with employees. All participants discussed the importance of frequent face-to-face communications with their sales associates. Furthermore, participants discussed the importance of handling performance issues privately, providing for two-way dialogue and the opportunity to vent. Participant C3P2 stated that:

Providing sales associates with an opportunity to vent and then move on, often allowed employees to get back on track, removing any stress associated with their mistake, and thus preventing it from spiraling out of control, possibly resulting in unwanted turnover.

Furthermore, participants agreed that publicly celebrating sales associate success was critical to job satisfaction and retention. Poor internal team and organizational communications, poor leadership behavior, and bullying did damage to long-term corporate sustainability, profitability, and productivity (Benjamin, 2012a).

Interview participants indicated that communications needed to be clear and concise, while also addressing good and poor performance. Participants stressed the

benefits of continuous feedback on performance and job expectations throughout the year. Job security concerns increased stress, health, and well-being for employees (Griep et al., 2016). Leadership needs to invest more attention to job insecurity and unemployment, during communications with employees, minimizing unnecessary stress in the workplace (Griep et al., 2016). Communications represent a critical business practice affecting employee retention.

All of the participants identified that transparency and communicating regularly as to how the company was doing, upcoming projects, big wins, and more personal information improved organizational commitment. Participant C2P1 had a monthly newsletter that goes out to all employees and customers, highlighting company successes, organizational structure, upcoming training opportunities, a list of names of employees who had completed recent training and certification programs, schedule for upcoming projects, and personal things such as baby announcements or recent weddings. The newsletter began with a safety tip and included pictures of employees on job sites, at their wedding, or receiving a college degree. Participant C2P1 said that, “Visibility in the newsletter highlighting recent training and certifications, gets other employees looking at this and saying, hey my name is not on that list, I need to be taking some of this training.” The newsletter provided transparency and expanded communication options with employees and customers.

All participants discussed the use of job satisfaction surveys as a critical strategy for improving retention of sales associates. One hundred percent of participants discussed the use of job satisfaction surveys as a method for enabling the voice of employees and

that issue identification occurred quickly. Sixty percent of the participants suggested performing job satisfactions surveys quarterly or semiannually. Herzberg et al. (1959) determined job satisfaction was critical to employee motivation and retention.

Knowledge sharing and transfer within technology companies was critical to organizational success (Tong et al., 2015). Successful leaders develop a culture based on openness, trust, compassion, and giving. The primary message behind Theme 2 is that continuous communication is critical to improving job satisfaction, employee attachment, and organizational commitment. Additionally, useful feedback motivating targeted behaviors results in positive development choices and increased organizational performance (Lee, 2012; SHRM, 2012).

Theme 3: Compensation Plans are Still Relevant

Traditional drivers, including pay and benefits, remained relevant to the recruitment and retention process (Cooper & Quinn, 1993; Herzberg et al., 1959). Compensation emerged as a theme that 100% of participants identified. Specifically, compensation strategies included sales associate compensation plans, pay and benefits, retirement programs, vacation, paid time off, industry organization memberships, top performance rewards, tuition reimbursement, and participation at industry related marketing events. Pay and benefits were core components of HRM systems (Olafsen et al., 2015). Table 4 contains a list of subthemes participants associated with compensation, and includes the number and percentage of participants discussing each strategy.

Table 4

Compensation Strategies

Participant Strategy	Number	Percentage
401K/Retirement Plans	10	100%
Industry Membership	3	30%
Marketing Events	4	40%
Pay and Benefits	10	100%
Time Off	10	100%
Top Performance Perks	2	20%
Tuition Reimbursement	10	100%

Development of the self-determination theory provided for the explanation that a work environment sustains and promotes autonomy, value, self-worth, belonging, and teamwork (Boles et al., 2012). These factors had a positive impact on organizational commitment, reducing turnover intent and improving job satisfaction (Boles et al., 2012). Monetary rewards and job motivation directly correlated with self-determination theory (Olafsen et al., 2015). Herzberg (1959) identified pay and benefits as a traditional driver of employment. Pay and benefits was one of the top five job satisfaction areas identified in an SHRM (2012) report. Strong performers were more likely to quit for pay or career growth opportunities (Batt & Colvin, 2011). Compensation emerged from 100% of the participants identifying the need for industry competitive pay and benefits plans. All participants confirmed the value of competitive pay and benefits, but 70% suggested that most sales associates voluntarily leave their job for other reasons beyond compensation.

Employee voluntary turnover rarely occurred because of compensation alone (Bryant & Allen, 2013; Govaerts et al., 2011; James & Mathew, 2012). Fair and equitable compensation plans, employee stock option plans, and retirement programs vesting over a longer period of time, improved recruitment success (Bryant & Allen, 2013).

HRM policies based on providing pay increases to employees who threatened to leave for a better paying job set a precedence that might be quite costly to the business (Bryant & Allen, 2013). Attracting and retaining highly skilled employees required HRM processes beyond pay and benefits (Bryant & Allen, 2013; Samson, 2013; Wang & Howell, 2012). Participants C1P1, C1P4, C2P1, and C3P1 identified flexibility in paid time off as a benefit that improved sales associate job satisfaction and morale. Participants discussed the use of additional rewards to increase retention of sales associates. Herzberg et al. (1959) identified recognition and rewards systems as important variables improving job satisfaction, motivation, and employee retention.

Wide discrepancies between low and high wage employee compensation, and perceptions regarding pay fairness, negatively impacted turnover, while the use of stock options positively affected retention (Bryant & Allen, 2013). Fair and equitable compensation plans, employee stock option plans, and retirement programs vesting over a longer period improved the recruitment success (Bryant & Allen, 2013). Pay and benefits no longer represented the only drivers for improving job satisfaction and reducing voluntary employee turnover. Work environment, organizational behavior, training and development, career opportunities, recognition, WLB, and improved job security were additional motivating factors. According to Olafsen et al. (2015), the

interpersonal environment had a greater impact on motivation and employee retention than monetary compensation. Olafsen et al. added that pay equality, and the manner in which communication of pay determination occurred, were the only variables affecting employee compensation satisfaction.

Theme 4: Leadership Qualities Can Be the Difference in Retention

Herzberg's (1959) theory of job satisfaction confirmed the link between leadership behavior and employee job satisfaction. Leadership behavior witnessed through actions demonstrating trust, honesty, fairness, collaboration, and empowerment created a shared purpose between the organization and employee (Kasemsap, 2013). The environment that leads to high employee retention begins with successful leadership qualities. Leadership represented the ability of a person to achieve a corporate strategy or common goal, through influencing employees (Northouse, 2015). These qualities as identified by participants included honesty, trust, integrity, openness, transparency, and supportiveness. Managers need to know their employees as individuals, and employees need to know their managers as individuals. Leadership qualities emerged as a theme from 100% of the participants identifying various characteristics of great leaders. Table 5 contains a list of subthemes associated with leadership qualities, and includes the number and percentage of participants discussing each strategy.

Table 5

Leadership Qualities

Participant Strategy	Number	Percentage
Get to Know Employees	6	60%
Honesty, Trust, Integrity	10	100%
Invest Time in Employees	6	60%
Let Employees Know You	6	60%
Loyalty to Org. and Emp.	4	40%
Make Emp. Feel Valued	5	50%
Supportive	8	80%
Transparency	5	50%

Leadership behavior and qualities directly affected job satisfaction, performance, productivity, and employee turnover (Wells et al., 2014; Welty Peachey et al., 2014). Job dissatisfaction factors included ineffective or inefficient policies, incompetent management, and interpersonal relationships (Herzberg et al., 1959). Successful leaders motivated employees to follow and push themselves to accomplish the impossible (Quigley, 2013). Leaders own the vision and responsibility to build a team that can execute on that vision, overcoming all obstacles. Recruitment and retention of top talent risked compromise by poor leadership behavior (Batt & Colvin, 2011). Strong leaders visibly supported team members, motivated, and encouraged innovation (Quigley, 2013).

LMX considered the relationship between management and employees, and the impact of that relationship on organizational performance (Rockstuhl et al., 2012). The

LMX theory supported the philosophy that a positive dyadic relationship between manager and employee based on supportive, resourceful, and responsive leadership motivated desired subordinate behavior (Rockstuhl et al., 2012). Rockstuhl et al. (2012) maintained that a positive dyadic relationship resulted in subordinates (for example sales associates) increased prospecting activities and closed business. Rockstuhl et al. research determined that increased LMX relationships positively influenced organizational performance through increased sales associate commitment to leadership and the company, and decreased voluntary turnover.

Participants C2P1 and C3P1 were passionate in describing the importance of being a great leader. Participant C3P2 stated that, “A good manager is often the difference between an employee staying or leaving, and a good manager can have a significant effect on job satisfaction.” Employee respect, trust, and appreciation for their manager are critical for employee retention. Knowing your people, and letting them get to know you were characteristics expressed by 60% of the participants. Employees need to understand what their job responsibilities are, and how their actions affect organizational success. Participants explained that they offer employees a career path, making significant investments of time, effort, training, and developing sales associates. Furthermore, they suggested these investments result in increased job satisfaction and retention rates. Managers must know how to develop an emotional attachment with their employees (Naqvi & Bashir, 2015).

Successful leadership includes a balanced approach between loyalty to company and employees. Managers need to demonstrate value towards their employees by being

supportive, transparent, acknowledging success privately and publicly. Successful sales managers support, empower, respect, appreciate, and trust their employees. Leadership has a powerful influence on employee job satisfaction, strongly associated with employee retention (Tuzun & Kalemci, 2012). Herzberg's (1959) theory of job satisfaction confirmed the link between leadership behavior and employee job satisfaction.

Leadership behavior witnessed through actions demonstrating trust, honesty, fairness, collaboration, and empowerment created a shared purpose between the organization and employee (Kasemsap, 2013). Herzberg's two-factor theory provided strategies leadership employed to improve organizational performance through workplace motivation and reduced voluntary employee turnover.

Theme 5: Leadership Training is Critical to Developing Great Managers

Participants from four of the five companies identified formal leadership training programs with their current employer. Leadership training programs designed to improve sales associate retention begin with accountability and concepts on becoming a valued leader. Sales managers need to learn how to develop their sales associates to achieve greatness. All participants agreed that leadership training and development was critical to building a high performing sales organization. Several studies confirmed the benefits of leadership training and development, and leadership in reducing turnover (Govaerts et al., 2011). Career practice management for sales leadership was a strong predictor of voluntary turnover (Korsakienė et al., 2015). Table 6 contains a list of subthemes associated with leadership training, and includes the number and percentage of participants discussing each strategy.

Table 6

Leadership Training

Participant Strategy	Number	Percentage
Accountability	2	20%
Different Monthly Topics	1	10%
Employee Development	3	30%
Employee Average to Great	1	10%
Employee Motivation	4	40%
How to Influence	2	20%
How to Lead	8	80%
Identify Poor Performance	4	40%
Job Satisfaction	8	80%
Love Languages-Appreciate	2	20%
Top Performer Retention	2	20%
Terminating Employees	5	50%
Valued Leader	7	70%

Leadership involved influence and the ability of a manager to motivate employees to follow them in achieving company goals (Northouse, 2015). Strategic HRM practice systems combined with leadership training and development improved job satisfaction resulting in reduced voluntary turnover costs (Kehoe & Wright, 2013). Participants C1P1 and C3P1 highlighted the value of leadership accountability and ownership for team results. Furthermore, participants C1P1 and C3P1 stressed that accountability and

ownership lead to becoming a valued leader to the organization, and to employees. Individuals develop relationships with their fellow employees, managers, the organization, and the community (James & Mathew, 2012; Khattak et al., 2012). These linkages were broken when an employee decided to resign their position affecting many other individuals (James & Mathew, 2012; Khattak et al., 2012). Successful leaders excel in retaining top performers, while identifying and terminating poor performers. C2P1 explained that a critical component of their leadership training included teaching managers how to move their sales people from average to great. HRM practices addressed leadership training in recognizing employee withdrawal, a process that typically plays out over an extended period (Bryant & Allen, 2013; Wang & Howell, 2012).

Knowledge management, unique skills, personality, workload, and other social characteristics, for which the resigning employee was responsible, disappeared (Khattak et al., 2012). The remaining employees must now fill this void. Voluntary turnover results in decreased morale, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and increased turnover (James & Mathew, 2012; Khattak et al., 2012). This scenario further highlights the need for leadership training in the recognition of employee withdrawal, job embeddedness, and organizational commitment (Bryant & Allen, 2013; Khattak et al., 2012; Wang & Howell, 2012). Participant C5P1 discussed the value of training on the five love languages of business and demonstrating appreciation for employees. All participants explained that sales managers who treats there employees well, realize lower than normal attrition rates. Winkler et al. (2015) stressed the value of positive

management interactions with employees contributing to employee health and well-being.

Proper management training included the ability to recognize individual profiles, specific job related skills, previous work experiences, personality, and motivational factors (Naqvi & Bashir, 2015). Managers must know how to create an emotional attachment between sales associates, their manager, and the organization (Naqvi & Bashir, 2015). Perceived organizational support management training was an important factor affecting employee turnover intentions (DeConinck, DeConinck, & Lockwood, 2015). Sales managers capable of demonstrating a supportive relationship resulted in improved employee behavior and diminished interest in leaving the company (DeConinck et al., 2015). Teaching managers how to increase emotional attachment, organizational commitment, and improved work-life balance with their employees increased employee retention (Deery & Jago, 2015). Relationship building is critical to management success. Managers must believe in their people, understand individual talents and needs, increase organizational commitment, and develop emotional connections between employees and the organization.

Theme 6: Performance Appraisals Matter

Eighty percent of the participants identified performance appraisals as a factor affecting employee retention. The primary theme that emerged was that companies need performance appraisals based more on objective rather than subjective criteria that are reasonable and attainable. Addressing employee performance continuously throughout the year prevents surprises during the annual performance appraisal process.

Additionally, research participants suggested formal or informal performance appraisal reviews should occur quarterly or semi-annually. Regular and frequent reviews continuously reinforce metrics removing ambiguity during the annual performance appraisal review. Employee perception of job fit, perceived organizational and manager support, and organizational identification, correlated directly with turnover decisions (DeConinck et al., 2015). Table 7 contains a list of subthemes associated with performance appraisals, and includes the number and percentage of participants discussing each strategy.

Table 7

Performance Appraisals

Participant Strategy	Number	Percentage
Annual Perf Appraisal	8	80%
Attainable	8	80%
Continuous Feedback	4	40%
Fair and Balanced	4	40%
Measureable	2	20%
Not Just Quota Based	1	10%
Objective not Subjective	8	80%
Quarterly Reviews	2	20%
Real-Time Feedback	4	40%
Top Performer Perks	1	10%

Vinit and Patel (2013) identified four specific areas affecting voluntary turnover of technology employees. The lack of an appraisal process emerged as the primary factor influencing voluntary turnover of technology employees (Vinit & Patel, 2013). Additional areas included a lack of training opportunities, organizational transparency, and flexibility (Vinit & Patel, 2013). Participant C4P1 stated that:

Managers need to make sure they have the performance appraisal criteria clearly and concisely identified, be committed, over communicate it, so everyone fully understands the what, and why, talk about the execution, and continuous performance, and then execute, and adjust as needed.

An objective performance appraisal is critical to job satisfaction and employee retention. Sales managers need to communicate performance results throughout the year to avoid surprises during the annual appraisal review.

Sales territories can vary considerably based on geography, customer size, opportunity potential, and other criteria. Performance appraisals need to be fair and balanced across similar territories, and adjusted as needed. Fair and balanced performance criteria for sales associates contain reasonable quota objectives combined with effort, pipeline activity, and other considerations based on management observation. Sales managers with team members experiencing poor quota performance need to be engaged enough to determine whether the territory or sales associate caused the problem. Fair and attainable performance objectives are critical business practices affecting employee retention. The performance appraisal process was a collaborative opportunity between employee and manager to provide constructive feedback (Budworth et al.,

2015). Managers and employees discussed previous and future performance in support of organizational needs (Budworth et al., 2015). Outcomes of the performance appraisal process had implications for compensation, promotions, transfers, and termination (Budworth et al., 2015). The performance appraisal process, if not conducted properly, can lead to employee dissatisfaction and voluntary turnover (Budworth et al., 2015; Vinit & Patel, 2013).

In 2010, Kluger and Nir developed the feedforward interview methodology as an enhancement to the feedback performance appraisal process (Budworth et al., 2015). The feedforward interview process focused on positive accomplishments during the current review period, while standard performance appraisals focused on both good and bad performance (Budworth et al., 2015). Focusing on positive accomplishments leads to improved future performance and favorable behavioral changes (Budworth et al., 2015). Furthermore, the feedforward methodology improved the overall performance appraisal process and perceived fairness (Budworth et al., 2015). Finally, a positive performance appraisal experienced results in increased organizational commitment and employee retention (Budworth et al., 2015; DeConinck et al., 2015; Vinit & Patel, 2013).

Theme 7: Recognizing and Rewarding Performance

Appreciation emerged as the primary theme critical to employee recognition strategies, discussed by 100% of the participants, and identified as an important leadership quality. In addition to appreciation, several other themes including public and private recognition, and periodic reports shared with everyone, highlighted the value of recognizing successes. Herzberg (1959) identified recognition as an intrinsic process

supporting increased employee motivation. Examples of intrinsic factors included sense of achievement, public recognition, responsibility, advancement opportunities, and the work itself (Herzberg et al., 1959). Table 8 contains a list of subthemes associated with recognition, and includes the number and percentage of participants discussing each strategy.

Table 8

Recognition Strategies

Participant Strategy	Number	Percentage
Appreciation	10	100%
Celebrate Success	4	40%
Competition	3	30%
Monthly Reports	3	30%
Private Recognition	6	60%
Public Recognition	5	50%
Quarterly/Annual Report	5	50%
Ring the Bell	8	80%
Shout Outs	3	30%

A work environment sustains and promotes autonomy, value, self-worth, belonging, and teamwork (Boles et al., 2012). These factors had a positive impact on organizational commitment, reducing turnover intent and improving job satisfaction (Boles et al., 2012). Participant C5P1 stated that:

Employees would receive commissions for closing business, and the money was great, but because they were not valued as an employee, and because the companies rewarded revenue growth, giving the appearance that they were only interested in making money, left employees feeling underappreciated and undervalued.

Recognition and useful feedback motivating targeted behavior resulted in positive development choices and increased organizational performance (Herzberg et al., 1959; Lee, 2012; SHRM, 2012).

Recognition typically occurred as a non-controlled event leading to increased motivation and a positive experience of individual achievement (Cerasoli et al., 2014; Olafsen et al., 2015). Perceived fairness was critical to recognition as an intrinsic motivator (Olafsen et al., 2015). Monetary recognition rewards can lead to undesirable productivity and performance results in that they did not promote intrinsic motivation (Cerasoli et al., 2014; Olafsen et al., 2015). Shout outs, ringing of the bell, and other forms of public recognition lead to improved job satisfaction, motivation, appreciation, and emotional attachment. Thirty percent of the participants suggested that competitions were a great way to give all team members an opportunity to be recognized and for their successes. Intrinsic motivation assumed employees were motivated and excited about work activities, finding them challenging and rewarding (Batt & Colvin, 2011). Feedback from research participants confirmed the self-determination theory and further supported Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory.

Theme 8: Retention Metrics Highlight Turnover Trends

Use of exit interviews emerged as the primary theme critical to employee retention strategies, identified by 100% of the participants. All participants indicated that conducting exit interviews occurred with departing employees and their peers. In addition to exit interviews, research participants identified several other themes including company-wide retention metrics, use of job satisfaction surveys, and trending analysis. Table 9 contains a list of subthemes associated with retention metrics, and includes the number and percentage of participants discussing each strategy.

Table 9

Retention Metrics

Participant Strategy	Number	Percentage
Average Time in Service	3	30%
Company-Wide Retention Metrics	8	80%
Exit Interviews of Peers	10	100%
Leadership Retention Metrics	3	30%
Job Satisfaction Surveys	4	40%
Trending and Analysis	4	40%
Sales Associate Exit Interview	10	100%

Measuring the success of HRM practices designed to improve employee retention remained critically important (Maertz et al., 2012). Use of survey tools provided a readily accessible, easily distributed mechanism, that regularly implemented, enabled close monitoring of employee morale and job satisfaction (Maertz et al., 2012). Maertz et al.

(2012) highlighted the many aspects necessary for coverage of data collected in these surveys. Job satisfaction, organizational commitment, trust, ethics, work-life balance, social integration, career growth, advancement opportunities, compensation, and benefits round out the list (Maertz et al., 2012). Improvements in job satisfaction yielded productive employees and increased retention rates (AlBattat & Som, 2013). Dissatisfied employees remove themselves physically or mentally, and their withdrawal hurt the organization (AlBattat & Som, 2013). Similarly, disgruntled individuals might consider other work environments and accept employment elsewhere (AlBattat & Som, 2013; Batt & Colvin, 2011). Some job seekers completely dropped out of the labor force when treated as a commodity (AlBattat & Som, 2013; Batt & Colvin, 2011). Leadership behavior and qualities influenced job satisfaction, performance, productivity, and employee turnover (Wells et al., 2014; Welty Peachey et al., 2014). Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory highlighted the relationship between workplace motivation and voluntary employee turnover. Attrition metrics and trend analysis provide real-time visibility into poor leadership performance. Developing and tracking retention metrics are critical to identifying trends. Retrospectives on retention metrics need to be conducted regularly leading to increased causal identification and solution development.

Turnover rates of sales associates and the cost of replacing them was quite high (DeConinck et al., 2015; Naqvi & Bashir, 2015). Organizational and manager support for sales people, perceived to be weak, can increase turnover rates (DeConinck et al., 2015; Naqvi & Bashir, 2015). Specifically, perceived organizational support, job fit, and emotional attachment represented critical factors affecting sales associate decision to quit

their jobs (DeConinck et al., 2015; Naqvi & Bashir, 2015). Increased demand for highly skilled software sales associates required organizations to demonstrate respect and appreciation for them as individuals (Naqvi & Bashir, 2015). Organizational commitment needed to be demonstrated to sales associates through equity sharing, advancement, empowerment, training opportunities, organizational commitment, recognition, work-life balance, and an opportunity to learn and innovate (DeConinck et al., 2015; Deery & Jago, 2015; Naqvi & Bashir, 2015).

Theme 9: Social Connection is Critical to Increasing Employee Tenure

Social connections in the work environment emerged as a theme critical to employee retention strategies, identified by 100% of the participants. In addition to making a social connection, research participants identified several subthemes including caring about each other, having a flexible work environment, fun team building activities, and having a social connection between manager and employee. Engaging employees with organizational social initiatives increased organizational commitment and emotional attachment (Bode et al., 2015). Table 10 contains a list of subthemes associated with social connections, and includes the number and percentage of participants discussing each strategy.

Table 10

Social Connection

Participant Strategy	Number	Percentage
Care About Each Other	10	100%
Employee Org Bond	5	50%
Empowerment	4	40%
Flexible Work Environment	3	30%
Fun Activities	3	30%
Innovation	6	60%
Know Each Other	5	50%
Mental Workload	5	50%
Motivation	8	80%
Physical Workload	4	40%
Social Bond Mgr and Emp		
Team Building Activities	3	30%

Workplace social and organizational connection determined whether newly hired employees stayed for an extended period or left within a few short months (Smith et al., 2012). Research had shown workplace connection and embeddedness positively influenced retention of new hires (Smith et al., 2012). Fairness and trust, not necessarily apparent during the recruitment process, quickly became apparent from the first day of employment as a new hire, affecting retention decisions (Smith et al., 2012). Favoritism, unethical behavior by leadership and team members, lack of organizational support, and

poor communications increased the negative impact on voluntary employee turnover (Smith et al., 2012). Identity through social and organizational connection increased retention rates by moving the new hire from a self-perceived outsider to an insider (Smith et al., 2012).

Development of the social exchange theory resulted in a framework researchers used to explore the impact of employee relationships with managers, organizations, or both, in defining commitment as a determinant of turnover intention (Tuzun & Kalemci, 2012). Fairness and trust in organizational interactions, processes, and procedures, was critical to social exchange (Osman et al., 2016). Participant C2P1 discussed the value in developing a strong social bond between employees, their managers, and the organization, resulting in reduced voluntary turnover. Teamwork occurred in an environment based on trust, fairness, openness, and honesty, resulting in knowledge sharing and the development of long-term relationships (Osman et al., 2016). Knowledge sharing and transfer within technology companies was critical to organizational success (Tong et al., 2015). Employment relationship represented a major variable in turnover intentions (Avanzi et al., 2014). Improving perceived social identification and organizational support reduced job related stresses, resulting in decreased employee turnover intentions (Avanzi et al., 2014).

Relationships between employee and manager represented a critical factor in voluntary turnover decisions for top performers (Biron & Boon, 2013). Trust, respect, empowerment, open communications, and organizational support were critical factors in retaining technology professionals (Ertürk & Vurgun, 2015). Social exchange, in the

form of organizational justice, organizational trust, and teamwork, affected employee turnover intentions (Osman et al., 2016). BI issues increased focus on corporate social responsibility, not just financially, but to all stakeholders and local communities (Leroy et al., 2012). Employee perception of leadership and the organization risked compromise based on a lack of support, and poor ethical behavior observed or perceived (Tuzun & Kalemci, 2012). Job satisfaction peaked when a substantial connection exists between the employee and his or her manager, peers, and the organization (Tuzun & Kalemci, 2012). This connection resulted in improved commitment and performance, and reduced voluntary employee turnover (Tuzun & Kalemci, 2012).

Theme 10: Work Environment Based on Honesty and Fairness is Critical

Business ethics and organizational culture in the work environment emerged as critical themes affecting employee retention strategies, identified by 100% of the participants. Business ethics affected employee commitment, voluntary turnover, and retention (Prottas, 2013). In addition to business ethics and organizational culture, participants identified honesty, trustworthy, respect, and fairness as values affecting employee voluntary turnover. Furthermore, participants discussed the importance of employees feeling empowered, having the tools required to do their job, working where innovation and customer satisfaction were valued. Table 11 contains a list of subthemes associated with work environment, and includes the number and percentage of participants discussing each strategy.

Table 11

Work Environment

Participant Strategy	Number	Percentage
Business Ethics	10	100%
Culture	10	100%
Customer Satisfaction	5	50%
Employee empowerment	4	40%
Fairness/Honesty/Respect	7	70%
Innovation	3	30%
Proper Tools To Do the Job	2	20%
Quality of Life	6	60%
Treat Everyone Equally	6	60%
Workload	5	50%

Employee commitment to company mission, strategy, and success increased through the establishment of a strong organizational culture (Tong et al., 2015). Gilbert's (1978) BEM considered the work environment and employee in determining organizational performance. Gilbert focused on the work environment including the physical workspace, working relationship between employee and management, and availability of appropriate tools and resources required to support desired performance. Organizational culture and values directly affected employee commitment to the organization (James & Mathew, 2012; Karatepe & Vatankhah, 2014). Employee commitment began with belief in the goals and objectives of leadership, motivating the

employee to work harder and desire linkage with the organization (James & Mathew, 2012; Karatepe & Vatankhah, 2014). An employee must believe in the products, services, and long-term goals of the company, strongly enough in compelling them to work harder than expected, and establish an active connection (James & Mathew, 2012; Karatepe & Vatankhah, 2014).

Business ethics and industry reputation are critical business practices affecting employee recruitment and retention goals. Participant C4P1 said, “If you work for someone that you think is ethical and trustworthy, then you are more likely to stay there.” Participant C3P1 added that, “Business ethics are owned by all employees, and any violations affect all stakeholders including employees, customers, and investors.” Companies known for having bad business ethics, find difficulty in attracting and retaining top performing sales people.

Work-life balance (WLB) directly affects the health and wellbeing of individuals. WLB influenced organizational performance, both financially and non-financially (Magee et al., 2012; Zheng et al., 2015). Organizations and individuals shared WLB responsibilities, and both benefitted from achieving this balance (Magee et al., 2012; Zheng et al., 2015). WLB practices included a culture of caring and compassion for individual employees (Magee et al., 2012; Zheng et al., 2015). Sixty percent of participants suggested that flexibility in the workplace improved overall quality of life, both at work and at home, resulting in improved job satisfaction, employee morale, and employee retention. Stress in the workplace was a concern for companies, adversely

affecting job satisfaction and recruitment efforts, leading to increase voluntary employee turnover (Benjamin, 2012a).

Turnover intention was a reliable predictor of voluntary turnover, typically preceded by deterioration in organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Benjamin, 2012b). Eight motives defining criteria leading to voluntary turnover: affective, calculative, contractual, behavioral, alternative, normative, moral and ethical, and constituent forces existed (Maertz et al., 2012). These forces described emotional and psychological feelings employees dealt with in deciding turnover intentions. Career growth, opportunities, social connections, external forces, and ethics, affected employee decisions to leave a job (Maertz et al., 2012). Organizational restructuring activities, layoffs, mergers and acquisitions, and similar corporate events resulted in concerns for job security and career opportunities (Klehe et al., 2011). Job satisfaction leading to voluntary turnover of top talent and skilled resources remained detrimental to organizational performance.

Theme 11: Purposeful Work is Critical for Employee Retention

Herzberg et al. (1959) research findings concluded that job satisfaction consisted of intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions. The intrinsic dimension classified job satisfaction based on factors such as a need for self-actualization and self-realization (Herzberg et al., 1959). The two specific needs included an avoidance of pain, and a need for psychological growth, and stimulation (Herzberg et al., 1959). Purposeful work emerged as a primary theme for creating value and personal gratification in the workplace as identified by 100% of the participants. Company reputation, commitment to the

community, and environment, emerged as contributors to work value. Furthermore, participants shared that employees needed to feel as though they were contributing to the company's success, and that they were a part of something meaningful. Table 12 contains a list of subthemes associated with work value, and includes the number and percentage of participants discussing each strategy.

Table 12

Work Value

Participant Strategy	Number	Percentage
Company Reputation	6	60%
Contribute to Org Success	5	50%
Employee Feels Part of Something	7	70%
Environmental	3	30%
Good for Community	3	30%
Purposeful Work	10	100%

Challenging and meaningful work, career opportunities, job security, reward, recognition, pay, and benefits, influenced voluntary turnover (Maertz & Boyar, 2012; Tacchino, 2013). Empowerment supportive of job designing, resulted in improved job fit, meaningful work, and increased employee retention (Chen et al., 2014; Lu et al., 2014; Tims et al., 2016). Job crafting incorporated current job requirements with employee self-management behavior based on individual abilities and needs (Tims et al., 2016). Participant C2P1 stated that “As a leader, I need to make their work more purposeful, making them feel like they are contributing to the whole of the company, and not just

toward monetary gains alone.” One hundred percent of participants identified purposeful work as a critical theme for improving sales associate retention. Not only do leaders need to make work more purposeful, they need to involve employees in this process. Hiring the right candidates required alignment of organizational mission with employee for achieving meaningfulness (Smith, 2016). Alignment of sales associates with company mission resulted in higher productivity and meaningfulness of work (Smith, 2016).

Herzberg’s (1959) two-factor theory included the characteristics of organizational behavior affecting job satisfaction and voluntary employee turnover. Herzberg et al. (1959) identified career growth as a primary factor affecting job satisfaction and employee retention. Traditional drivers of employment included pay, benefits, work environment, leadership quality, job security, and company reputation. Modern drivers include recognition and reward systems, growth opportunities, training and development, and career opportunities (Herzberg et al., 1959). Methodological triangulation based on participant interviews, review of company related documents, observations, and literature research confirmed Herzberg’s two-factor theory.

Applications to Professional Practice

Corporate sales managers may use the 11 themes identified in this research to improve business practices by developing strategies that minimize employee turnover. These 11 themes may provide researchers with a basis for further studies. The practical application of these themes applies across all industries and may provide future managers globally, with strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover. I used Herzberg’s (1959) two-factor theory to guide my research exploring the relationship between employee

motivation and job satisfaction with voluntary turnover. Frederick Herzberg was a renowned psychologist known for his research on the correlation between workplace motivation and employee satisfaction (Herzberg, 1959). Positive work environments resulted in improved organizational performance, revenue growth, profitability, and decreased workplace stress (Fortado & Fadil, 2014; James & Mathew, 2012; Salas et al., 2012). Based on participant feedback, career growth, communications, leadership qualities, recognition, and social connection, were the most significant business practices affecting job satisfaction and employee retention.

Career Growth

Retaining top performers is critical to sales manager and organizational success. Career growth and employee development is a critical business practice contributing to employee retention. Top performers were more likely to quit based on a lack of career growth opportunities (Batt & Colvin, 2011). Herzberg's (1959) theory validated the concept that personal growth, opportunity, and achievement through training and development programs lead to improved job satisfaction, motivation, productivity, and organizational commitment. Career practice management was a critical factor in developing a sustainable and committed workforce (Nawaz & Pangil, 2016). Technology employees identified a lack of career growth opportunities as a major factor leading to voluntary turnover (Vinit & Patel, 2013). Nawaz and Pangil (2016) indicated that organizations should provide employees with career counseling, ongoing training options, mentoring opportunities, detailed career paths, and periodic career planning workshops. Identifying employee knowledge, skills, and abilities, and then aligning with

organizational needs was a major part of the career growth process (Vaiman et al., 2015).

Career growth is a shared responsibility between leadership and sales associates.

Appropriate career growth practices enhanced employee connection to the organization resulting in extended careers (Nawaz & Pangil, 2016). The path to career growth needed to be clear, concise, and fair to all employees (Vaiman et al., 2015).

Communications

Communications throughout the organization is critical to achieving stakeholder value and another critical business practice affecting employee retention. Frequent, honest, open, and respectful conversation is important across all levels to increasing employee organizational commitment. Winkler et al. (2015) determined that successful managers of individual contributors needed to be the communication conduit between their employees, leadership, and the organization. Knowledge sharing and transfer within technology companies was critical to organizational success (Tong et al., 2015).

Companies need to build a culture based on openness, trust, compassion, and giving, fostering an environment based on teamwork and sharing of valuable information.

Leadership should provide many opportunities for employees to demonstrate appreciation using shout outs and other forms of public and private recognition acknowledging support that they received from another team member.

Successful managers maintain an open door policy where employees feel comfortable speaking openly, respectfully, and frankly about any subject.

Communications work best when they involve two-way dialogue. Listening is more important than speaking. Sales managers need to have frequent interactions with their

sales people, providing consistent concise feedback for good and poor performance, and sharing of company related information. Face-to-face conversations are critical and should occur frequently, especially with a geographically distributed work force. Poor performance and mistakes need addressing immediately and privately. At the conclusion of poor performance conversations, the employee should feel as though the matter has been resolved. Unless a pattern of poor performance exists, address the issue and move on, as this removes stress and enables the employee to get back on track quickly.

An unlimited number of ways exists for companies to communicate with employees, vendors, customers, and communities. Communications can occur through company websites, newsletters, conferences, marketing events, and social media including Twitter and Facebook. Maintaining a good balance between technology and face-to-face interactions requires frequent communications between management and employees. Employee communications include individual and company successes, employee training and certification accomplishments, promotions, organizational changes, upcoming projects and opportunities, and job openings. Personal announcements such as weddings, childbirth, college graduations, and team successes represent additional opportunities leading to enhancing the work environment. Use of job satisfaction surveys provides an opportunity for employee communication back to the business, early identification of issues, and identification of innovative ideas for new products and services.

Internal team and organizational communications, leadership behavior, and bullying, resulted in damage to long-term corporate sustainability, profitability, and

productivity (Benjamin, 2012a). Open and frequent communications, constant performance feedback, and transparency, aligned well with the tenets of Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory. Supportive leadership, positive feedback, consistent management communications, and BI, improve job satisfaction and employee well-being (Winkler et al., 2015).

Compensation

Compensation in the form of pay and benefits affected recruitment and retention, but they no longer represented the only factors. Employee voluntary turnover rarely occurred because of compensation alone (Bryant & Allen, 2013; Govaerts et al., 2011; James & Mathew, 2012). Attracting and retaining highly skilled employees required HRM processes beyond pay and benefits (Bryant & Allen, 2013; Samson, 2013; Wang & Howell, 2012). Work environment, organizational behavior, training and development, career opportunities, recognition, WLB, and improved job security are additional motivating factors. According to Olafsen et al. (2015), the interpersonal environment had a greater impact on motivation and employee retention than monetary compensation. Olafsen et al. added that pay equality, and the manner in which communication of pay determination occurred, were the only variables affecting employee compensation satisfaction.

Leadership Development

Sales manager training and development is another critical business practice contributing to employee retention. Leadership behavior witnessed through actions demonstrating trust, honesty, fairness, collaboration, and empowerment, created a shared

purpose between the organization and employee (Kasemsap, 2013). Managers need to know their employees as individuals, and employees need to know their managers as individuals. Herzberg's (1959) theory of job satisfaction confirmed the link between leadership behavior and employee job satisfaction. Job dissatisfaction factors included ineffective or inefficient policies, incompetent management, and interpersonal relationships (Herzberg et al., 1959). The LMX theory supported the philosophy that a positive dyadic relationship between manager and employee based on supportive, resourceful, and responsive leadership motivated desired subordinate behavior (Rockstuhl et al., 2012). Managers must know how to develop an emotional attachment with their employees (Naqvi & Bashir, 2015). Successful leaders motivated employees to follow and push themselves to accomplish the impossible (Quigley, 2013). They accomplish this by owning the vision and responsibility to build a team capable of executing on that vision, overcoming all obstacles.

Sales managers need to ensure that employees clearly understand where they belong in the organization, and feel empowered to take ownership and make decisions without fear of punishment. Strong leaders visibly supported team members, motivated them, and encouraged innovation (Quigley, 2013). Development of the self-determination theory provided for the explanation that a work environment sustains and promotes autonomy, value, self-worth, belonging, and teamwork (Boles et al., 2012). These factors had a positive impact on organizational commitment, reducing turnover intent and improving job satisfaction (Boles et al., 2012). Individual and team performance produce better results when they have a personal investment in their manager. Sales managers

gaining employee trust, respect, and employee attachment, results in greater organizational commitment.

Sales managers need to learn how to develop their sales associates to achieve greatness. This process begins with knowing how to make people feel valued and appreciated. The book “5 Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace” written by Dr. Chapman and Dr. White, is a great training resource. Cultural, leadership, motivational, and sensitivity training are required for managers experiencing higher than normal attrition rates. HRM practices addressed leadership training in recognizing employee withdrawal, a process that typically plays out over an extended period (Bryant & Allen, 2013; Wang & Howell, 2012). Proper management training included the ability to recognize individual profiles, specific job related skills, previous work experiences, personality, and motivational factors (Naqvi & Bashir, 2015). Managers must know how to create an emotional attachment between sales associates, their manager, and the organization (Naqvi & Bashir, 2015). Sales managers capable of demonstrating a supportive relationship resulted in improved employee behavior and diminished interest in leaving the company (DeConinck et al., 2015). Winkler et al. (2015) stressed the value of positive management interactions with employees contributing to employee health and well-being. Teaching managers how to increase emotional attachment, organizational commitment, and improved work-life balance with their employees increased employee retention (Deery & Jago, 2015).

Performance Appraisals

According to the participants, developing and implementing a performance appraisal process based on objective, fair, and attainable goals is an important business practice contributing to employee retention. Outcomes of the performance appraisal process had implications for compensation, promotions, transfers, and termination (Budworth et al., 2015). A performance appraisal process might lead to employee dissatisfaction and voluntary turnover (Budworth et al., 2015; Vinit & Patel, 2013). The performance appraisal process was a collaborative opportunity between employee and manager to provide constructive feedback (Budworth et al., 2015). Managers and employees discuss previous and future performance in support of organizational needs (Budworth et al., 2015).

In 2010, Kluger and Nir developed the feedforward interview methodology as an enhancement to the feedback performance appraisal process (Budworth et al., 2015). Use of the feedforward interview process enabled managers to focus on positive accomplishments during the current review period, rather than both good and bad performance (Budworth et al., 2015). Focusing on positive accomplishments resulted in improved future performance and favorable behavioral changes (Budworth et al., 2015). Furthermore, the feedforward methodology improved the overall performance appraisal process and perceived fairness (Budworth et al., 2015). Finally, a positive performance appraisal experience resulted in increased organizational commitment and employee retention (Budworth et al., 2015; DeConinck et al., 2015; Vinit & Patel, 2013).

Recognition and Reward

Participants identified employee recognition and rewards as another critical business practice contributing to employee retention. Herzberg (1959) identified recognition as an intrinsic process supporting increased employee motivation. Sales associates regardless of high commissions will voluntarily leave for another opportunity if they do not feel valued. Recognition occurring as a non-controlled event resulted in increased motivation, and a positive experience of individual achievement (Cerasoli et al., 2014; Olafsen et al., 2015). Perceived fairness was critical to recognition as an intrinsic motivator (Olafsen et al., 2015). Shout outs, ringing of the bell, and other forms of public recognition lead to improved job satisfaction, motivation, appreciation, and emotional attachment.

Retention Metrics

Participants identified retention metrics and trending analysis as another critical business practice contributing to employee retention. Turnover rates of sales associates and the cost of replacing them was quite high (DeConinck et al., 2015; Naqvi & Bashir, 2015). Use of attrition metrics and trend analysis provided real-time visibility into poor leadership performance. Perceived organizational support, job fit, and emotional attachment represented critical factors affecting sales associate decisions to quit their jobs (DeConinck et al., 2015; Naqvi & Bashir, 2015). All participants indicated that conducting exit interviews occurred with departing employees and their peers. Retrospectives and gaining additional insights for unwanted employee turnover provides sales managers an opportunity to influence retention. Survey tools provided a readily

accessible, easily distributed mechanism, that regularly implemented, enabled close monitoring of employee morale and job satisfaction (Maertz et al., 2012). Maertz et al. (2012) highlighted the many aspects necessary for coverage of data collected in these surveys. Job satisfaction, organizational commitment, trust, ethics, work-life balance, social integration, career growth, advancement opportunities, compensation, and benefits rounded out the list (Maertz et al., 2012). Job satisfaction surveys, average length of employment, turnover rates, and exit interviews, are strategic indicators used to set leadership training objectives and affect HRM practices.

Fairness and trust, not necessarily apparent during the recruitment process, quickly became apparent from the first day of employment as a new hire, affecting retention decisions (Smith et al., 2012). Favoritism, unethical behavior by leadership and team members, lack of organizational support, and poor communications increased the negative impact on voluntary employee turnover (Smith et al., 2012). Identity through social and organizational connection increased retention rates by moving the new hire from a self-perceived outsider to an insider (Smith et al., 2012).

Social Connection

Participants identified developing a social bond between employees and the organization as another critical business practice contributing to employee retention. Job satisfaction peaked when a substantial connection existed between the employee and his or her manager, peers, and the organization (Tuzun & Kalemci, 2012). Engaging employees with organizational social initiatives increased organizational commitment and emotional attachment (Bode et al., 2015). Workplace social and organizational

connection for new hires determined whether they stayed for an extended period or left within a few short months (Smith et al., 2012). Research has shown workplace connection and embeddedness had a positive influence on retention of new hires (Smith et al., 2012).

Development of the social exchange theory resulted in a framework researchers used to explore the impact of employee relationships with managers, organizations, or both, in defining commitment as a determinant of turnover intention (Tuzun & Kalemci, 2012). Fairness and trust in organizational interactions, processes, and procedures, was critical to social exchange (Osman et al., 2016). Increased employee loyalty results from improved social connectivity and minimizes thoughts of leaving. Team building exercises, off-site fun team activities, and family inclusive activities increase emotional attachment and social bonding. Improving perceived social identification and organizational support reduced job related stresses, resulting in decreased employee turnover intentions (Avanzi et al., 2014). Social exchange in the form of organizational justice, organizational trust, and teamwork, affects employee turnover intentions (Osman et al., 2016).

Work Environment

Creating the right work environment is another critical business practice contributing to employee retention. Employee commitment to company mission, strategy, and success increased through the establishment of a strong organizational culture based on ethics, values, flexibility, and work-life balance (Tong et al., 2015). Employee commitment began with a belief in the goals and objectives of leadership, motivating the

employee to work harder and desire linkage with the organization (James & Mathew, 2012; Karatepe & Vatankhah, 2014). Companies known for ethics violations, low quality products and services, and high employee turnover rates struggle to attract and retain top sales performers.

Flexibility in the workplace improves quality of life at work and at home. Work-life balance directly affects the health and wellbeing of individuals. Furthermore, WLB influenced organizational performance, both financially and non-financially (Magee et al., 2012; Zheng et al., 2015). Organizations and individuals shared WLB responsibilities, and both benefitted from achieving this balance (Magee et al., 2012; Zheng et al., 2015). WLB practices included a culture of caring and compassion for individual employees (Magee et al., 2012; Zheng et al., 2015). Organizational restructuring activities, layoffs, mergers and acquisitions, and similar corporate events resulted in concerns for job security and career opportunities (Klehe et al., 2011). Stress in the workplace was a concern for companies, adversely affecting job satisfaction and recruitment efforts, leading to increased voluntary employee turnover (Benjamin, 2012a).

Purposeful Work

Finally, participants identified purposeful work as a critical business process contributing to employee retention. The intrinsic dimension classified job satisfaction based on factors such as a need for self-actualization and self-realization (Herzberg et al., 1959). Empowerment supportive of job designing, resulted in improved job fit, meaningful work, and increased employee retention (Chen et al., 2014; Lu et al., 2014; Tims et al., 2016). Job crafting combine current job requirements with employee self-

management behavior based on individual abilities and needs (Tims et al., 2016).

Organizations and sales managers need to make work purposeful resulting in employees feeling like they are contributing to the company and community.

Differences exist in retention strategies across industry segments, but the themes identified have general applicability globally. Employee retention strategies start at the top with visible support and investments demonstrating commitment. Business practices based on actions, and not mission statements, motivate employees and improve job satisfaction. Recruiting, training, and developing great managers result in a committed workforce that delivers great results. Nothing is more powerful than social bond, emotional attachment, and organizational commitment in achieving high employee retention rates.

Implications for Social Change

Eleven themes emerged from the 10 participant interviews. All themes provided insights into strategies that software sales managers can use to minimize unwanted employee turnover. Findings from this study might make a positive impact on social change by increasing awareness of employee retention strategies. Positive work environments resulted in improved organizational performance, revenue growth, profitability, and decreased workplace stress (Fortado & Fadil, 2014; James & Mathew, 2012; Salas et al., 2012). Identification of 11 critical business practices enables HRM organizations to modify employee and leadership training strategies. Recruitment and retention of top performers provides significant tangible organizational benefits. Employees empowered, supported, appreciated, respected, with workplace flexibility,

and work-life balance results in higher levels of job satisfaction, organizational performance, and employee retention. Delighted employees committed to organizational success and strategic objectives results in better quality products and services for consumers. Productivity improvements may lead to lower cost products and services improving community prosperity. Additionally, consumers may benefit from new products and services getting to market quicker improving quality of life.

Organizational leadership may use strategies identified in this study to improve work-life balance and establish flexibility in the workplace. WLB directly affects the health and wellbeing of individuals. WLB influenced organizational performance, both financially and non-financially (Magee et al., 2012; Zheng et al., 2015). According to Herzberg et al. (1959), highly motivated employees in a high hygiene environment had the greatest potential to drive positive job satisfaction, retention, and recruitment results. Reduction of job related stress improves employee quality of life in the workplace and at home. Improved company performance reduces employee layoffs and increases job growth and increased career opportunities. Leaders could therefore affect social change and behavior to the benefit of their organization, employees, and the community.

Recommendations for Action

While research from this study focused on software sales managers, the retention strategies identified have applicability across all industries and throughout organizations. Based on research analyzing employee turnover conducted by Hancock et al. (2013), the more a group relied on talent, skills, and knowledge, the greater negative impact on financial and organizational performance. I have included three specific

recommendations for action by business leaders and sales managers. Job satisfaction and employee retention directly affects employees throughout organizations, and therefore executive leadership, managers, and individual contributors represent the target audience for this study.

Communications

Participant C1P3 stated that, “There is a saying in presentations, tell them what you are going to tell them, tell them, and then tell them what you just told them; this works great for employees too.” Communications throughout organizations is critical in keeping everyone focused and aligned with strategic goals and objectives. Employees need to understand and comply with laws dealing with such things as business ethics, employee relations and harassment, healthcare regulations, and financial regulations. Managers should communicate performance appraisal objectives continuously, clearly, and concisely, throughout the year. In situations involving mergers and acquisitions, frequent employee communications reduces stress and anxiety. Organizational restructuring activities, layoffs, mergers and acquisitions, and similar corporate events resulted in concerns for job security and career opportunities (Klehe et al., 2011). Organizations utilize a variety of formats to communicate with their employees, vendors, partners, customers, stakeholders, and communities. Utilizing company intranet and internet websites, newsletters, conference calls, video conferencing, documentation, and social media, represent a partial list of communication options. Winkler et al. (2015) determined that successful managers of individual contributors needed to be the communication conduit between their employees, leadership, and the organization. Open

and frequent communications, constant performance feedback, and transparency, aligned well with the tenets of Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory. Management at all levels needs to communicate frequently with their subordinates.

Work Environment

Sales managers may find development of a personal relationship with each of their employees, individually, to be difficult. Furthermore, managers may not possess the necessary skills to connect and interact on a social level developing employee attachment and a social bond. Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory clearly established leadership value and responsibility for developing a workforce committed to management and the organization. Employee commitment to company mission, strategy, and success increased through the establishment of a strong organizational culture (James & Mathew, 2012; Karatepe & Vatankhah, 2014; Tong et al., 2015). Participant C4P2 stated that, "Not feeling valued or appreciated, overworked and underappreciated, for the work that they have done, leads to increased voluntary employee turnover." Recruiting, training, and developing managers with these skills are critical to achieving organizational performance objectives. Management recognition of employee contributions is critical, and acknowledgement both privately and publicly improves job satisfaction. Successful managers notice the little things, they gladly celebrate team successes, and they visibly support their teams through actions.

Business ethics created additional stress in the workplace (Chen et al., 2011; DeTienne et al., 2012). Seventy-eight percent of 800 adults in a 2007 survey preferred financial concessions rather than work in an unethical environment (DeTienne et al.,

2012; Karatepe & Vatankhah, 2014). Participant C1P3 stated that “Any dishonesty, lack of respect and trustworthiness, even among peers, needs to be addressed by management quickly, removing any appearance that this is acceptable behavior.” Business ethics begin at the top, but every employee in the company has ownership. Organizational commitment to business ethics, morals, and values should be visible throughout all offices, and communicated regularly to everyone.

Lastly, work-life balance is critical to job satisfaction, motivation, and organizational commitment. Participant C4P2 stated that, “Flexibility in the workplace improves overall quality of life, both at work and at home, increasing job satisfaction, employee morale, and employee retention.” WLB directly affected health and wellbeing of individuals, and influenced organizational performance, both financially and non-financially (Magee et al., 2012; Zheng et al., 2015). Today’s managers face the challenge of managing a workforce with major generational differences. Sales managers needed to understand the differences between millennials and baby boomers as to variations in approach to selling (Schultz & Schwepker, 2012). Schultz and Schwepker (2012) highlighted several distinct differences in sales strategies, communication styles, and reward and recognition motivators between millennials and boomers. Knowledge of these differences positively affected sales management’s ability to deliver on organizational objectives (Schultz & Schwepker, 2012). Flexibility and knowing employees individually is a critical business practice contributing to employee retention. Management training and development programs may include practical learning options further enhanced through the opportunity to mentor with successful experience leaders.

Social Connection

Establishing a social bond with employees includes overlap with the communications and work environments previously discussed. Teamwork occurred in an environment based on trust, fairness, openness, and honesty, resulting in knowledge sharing and the development of long-term relationships (Osman et al., 2016). Participant C2P1 stated that, “The more connection we can generate with an employee, the more we recognize a strong loyalty from them.” Workplace social and organizational connection for new hires and existing employees, determined whether they stayed for an extended period or left within a few short months (Smith et al., 2012). Participant C2P1 said that, “If there is not a social bond, you are just open to another company coming along and making your employees a better offer.”

Development of the social exchange theory resulted in a framework researchers used to explore the impact of employee relationships with managers, organizations, or both, in defining commitment as a determinant of turnover intention (Tuzun & Kalemci, 2012). Employee perception of leadership and the organization risked compromise, based on a lack of support and poor ethical behavior observed or perceived (Tuzun & Kalemci, 2012). Job satisfaction peaked when a substantial connection existed between the employee and his or her manager and the organization (Tuzun & Kalemci, 2012). Engaging employees with organizational social initiatives increased organizational commitment and emotional attachment (Bode et al., 2015). Eco-innovation and environmental awareness served as economic drivers enabling innovation and employee loyalty resulting from self-pride in working for an organization committed to a greener,

healthier environment (Doran & Ryan, 2012). Offsite meetings including annual sales kick-off meetings present an excellent opportunity to incorporate a social activity focused on giving back to community. A successful business practice contributing to employee retention involves providing employees with a specified amount of time off for charitable community work.

Managers at all levels and across all industries need to pay attention to the results of this study and the exhaustive research on job satisfaction, motivation, and employee retention strategies. An expectation for the results of this study to assist future doctoral students exists. Future doctoral students and researchers may use this study to build upon the topic of employee retention. This study provides valuable information that may be helpful to HRM in developing management training and development programs. My plan is to disseminate results from this study to organizations that I work for, work with, at industry conferences, and with other business acquaintances. Finally, leadership and HRM conferences may benefit by incorporating the findings of this study into training sessions.

Recommendations for Further Research

The purpose of this study was to explore the strategies software manufacturing company sales managers used to reduce voluntary employee turnover of sales associates. The research population consisted of sales managers selected from software manufacturing companies headquartered in the southeastern United States. Specifically, I focused on gaining a better understanding as to the critical success factors contributing to employee retention. Expectations were that findings from this study might make a

positive impact on social change by increasing awareness of the adverse organizational effects of voluntary employee turnover. I noted several study limitations previously in Section 1, Limitations.

Limitations represented a restrictive weakness based on limiting conditions (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Limitations of this study included interviewing only leaders to the exclusion of employees limiting the research breadth. A future study might focus on individual employees. Participation was limited to sales managers selected from five software manufacturing companies, headquartered in the United States, with offices in the Southeast. Not every theme identified in this study results in global applicability, but a subset most likely applies. The population sampling size was small, and interviews conducted within a single industry (software manufacturing) infer findings may not prove generalizable to a broader population (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2012). Future research might focus on additional industries and include a much broader population sampling. Phenomenological research studying employee lived experiences and their perceptions of understanding and interpreting the phenomenon of employee retention might be insightful. Additional limitations included the number of participants, local culture, and employment rates that varied significantly on a per state basis (BLS, n.d.b). Use of a multiple case study design limited the types of insights derived from the study. Finally, limitations of skills and ability as a researcher limited the depth and richness of the data collected.

Reflections

Reflecting on experiences within the DBA doctoral study process has been enlightening and rewarding. Previous job roles, personal relationships, and other areas needed consideration in maintaining an absence of bias through self-awareness. For more than 20 years, I served in multiple sales roles, witnessing successful and failed management strategies resulting in sales associates voluntarily leaving their job. I personally have quit sales jobs for many of the reasons highlighted in this study. Realizing that these experiences would most likely create bias and influence the process, I committed to developing processes that would minimize the impact. These processes began with a focus on the data collected rather than personal judgment. Secondly, I used a self-reflective journal to further guard against bias by documenting and recognizing researcher subjectivity balanced with observed phenomenon. Finally, I posted a note in my workspace regarding bias as a constant reminder. Even with all of these measures, several opportunities existed in which, I may have inadvertently demonstrated bias, most specifically during the participant interview process. Removing bias is challenging when participants attempt to pull researchers into the conversation. During the initial interview, the participant asked for my opinion about critical success factors contributing to retention, catching me unprepared.

Further reflection of experiences within the DBA doctoral study process leaves me with a feeling of personal growth and accomplishment. Certainly, moments of frustration, disappointment, and the feeling of being overwhelmed surfaced, but never once did I consider quitting. I was amazed and pleased with the willingness of people to

participate and freely communicate their thoughts. Equally amazing, were the insights that participants identified throughout the process. I knew far less about the subject than originally assumed. Throughout the process, whether performing literature reviews, research, interviewing participants, or scholarly writing, my skills continuously improved. Finally, the study results were encouraging and rewarding knowing that, even if only in small part, the business practices identified might contribute to future research on employee retention.

Conclusion

Reducing voluntary turnover within sales organizations is critical to maintaining a competitive advantage and sustainability. Sales managers who relied on a highly skilled and talented technology sales organization could not afford to lose top performers (James & Mathew, 2012). HRM development of improved practice systems began with developing an understanding of why employees voluntarily quit their jobs (James & Mathew, 2012). Minimizing voluntary turnover of top performing sales associates required causal identification and change initiatives leading to increased job satisfaction (Boles et al., 2012).

Development of new products and services requires revenue generated by the efforts of sales organizations. Building companies from startup to global organizations, employing potentially hundreds of thousands of people, requires funding. These companies rely on innovative products and services to fund future growth, preserve job security, and provide opportunity to global and emerging economies. Revenue growth and profitability supported additional hiring and community growth, which, in turn,

increase charitable donations and volunteering (Bryant & Allen, 2013). The environment that results in high employee retention begins with successful leadership qualities.

Participant C2P1 stated that, “We tell our managers that they need to be taking care of their people, and we help them understand that their teams can make or break their careers.” Sales managers capable of gaining employee trust, respect, and employee attachment, results in greater organizational performance. Sales managers need to learn how to develop their sales associates to achieve greatness. This process begins with knowing how to make people feel valued and appreciated.

Research from this study provided 11 business practices contributing to employee retention. Specifically, this study contributes to existing research providing recommendations for action and future research. Building on Herzberg’s (1959) two-factor theory explaining the relationship between job satisfaction, organizational performance, organizational behavior, and voluntary employee turnover, revealed the criticality of developing great leaders. Attracting and retaining top performers requires development of leadership that is honest, trustworthy, supportive, fair, ethical, socially engaging, compassionate, and flexible, with excellent communication skills, and who values their people and the organization equally.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Date _____ Location _____

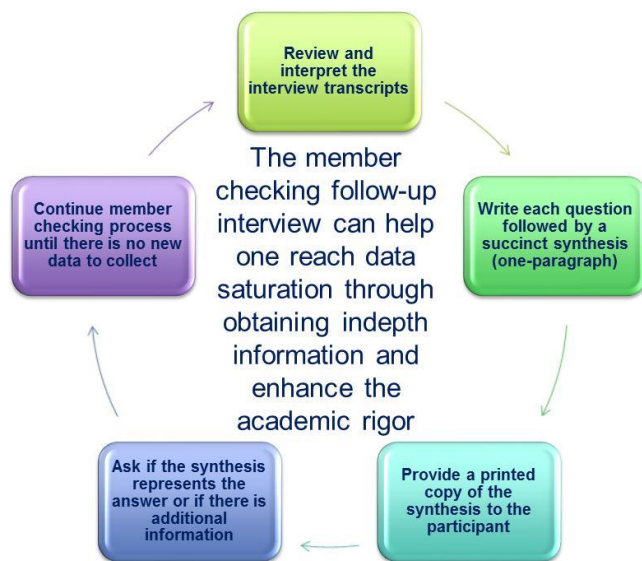
Interviewer _____ Participant _____

Interview Protocol	
What I will do	What I will say—script
Introduce the interview and set the stage—often over a meal or coffee	<p>Good morning/afternoon, thank you for making time for me, I very much appreciate and value your contribution.</p> <p>I would like to review the consent form and share my problem statement and purpose statement with you in setting the stage for today’s discussion. I would like the process to be very interactive, so please feel free to interrupt and ask questions at any time. After this, I will be asking a set of questions and capturing your responses. Are you ready to begin?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch for non-verbal queues • Paraphrase as needed • Ask follow-up probing questions to get more in-depth 	<p>1. What strategies do you use to retain sales associates?</p> <p>2. What do you consider as the critical success factors to retain sales associates?</p> <p>3. How do you establish retention objectives for sales associates?</p> <p>4. How do you measure performance in meeting employee retention objectives?</p> <p>5. What training programs designed to reduce voluntary employee turnover have you participated in during the past 3 years?</p> <p>6. Finally, what additional information would you like to add that I did not ask?</p> <p>Are there things that I could have done to improve this experience for you? Thank you for taking time out of</p>

	<p>your day to support my research, please know how much I appreciate this. Once I have completed all of the interviews, there may be a need for follow up questions and clarifications. Would you prefer face-to-face follow up sessions, phone conversations, or email communications? Do you know anyone else that might be interested in participating in this research? Upon completion of the data collection, analysis, and interpretation process, I would like to meet with you to discuss and validate. I will reach out to you schedule in the next few weeks. Do you have any additional questions for me? Thank you again, we will be speaking soon.</p>
	<p>Upon completion of the data collection, analysis, and interpretation process, I would like to meet with you to discuss and validate. I will reach out to you schedule in the next few weeks. Do you have any additional questions for me? Thank you again, we will be speaking soon.</p>
<p>Wrap up interview thanking participant</p>	<p>Upon completion of the data collection, analysis, and interpretation process, I would like to meet with you to discuss and validate. I will reach out to you schedule in the next few weeks. Do you have any additional questions for me? Thank you again, we will be speaking soon.</p>
<p>Schedule follow-up member checking interview</p>	<p>Thank you for supporting this important research. An important part of the research process is validation. After an extensive data collection effort, data analysis, and data interpretation process, certain conclusions became apparent as to potential strategies leadership could use to reduce voluntary turnover of sales associates. I would</p>

like to discuss these conclusions with you in an effort to validate. Your feedback is a critical component in the process and impacts credibility and validity.

Follow-up Member Checking Interview



<p>Introduce follow-up interview and set the stage</p>	<p>Question and succinct synthesis of the interpretation—perhaps one paragraph or as needed</p>
<p>Share a copy of the succinct synthesis for each individual question</p>	<p>Question and succinct synthesis of the interpretation—perhaps one paragraph or as needed</p>
<p>Bring in probing questions related to other information</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Question and succinct synthesis of the interpretation—perhaps one paragraph or as needed
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Question and succinct synthesis of the interpretation—perhaps one paragraph or as needed
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Question and succinct synthesis of the interpretation—perhaps one paragraph or as

<p>that you may have found—</p> <p>note the information must be related so that you are probing and adhering to the IRB approval.</p> <p>Walk through each question, read the interpretation and ask:</p> <p>Did I miss anything? Or, What would you like to add?</p>	needed
	4. Question and succinct synthesis of the interpretation—perhaps one paragraph or as needed
	5. Question and succinct synthesis of the interpretation—perhaps one paragraph or as needed
	6. Question and succinct synthesis of the interpretation—perhaps one paragraph or as needed
	7. Question and succinct synthesis of the interpretation—perhaps one paragraph or as needed
	8. Question and succinct synthesis of the interpretation—perhaps one paragraph or as needed

Appendix B: Information Session

Date _____ Location _____

Purpose: To provide interested participants an opportunity to understand the study purpose, ask questions, and learn about their potential role in the research.

Process:

1. Discuss the Problem and Purpose Statements
2. Review the consent form.
3. Assure the participant of confidentiality and anonymity.
4. Review the list of interview questions identified in Appendix A as a guide.
5. The order of interview questions potentially varies for each interview.
6. Additional probing questions may be required to explore deeper meanings.
7. Thank the participant for his/her potential participation.
8. Remind potential participants of the possibility for additional follow-up questions.

Appendix C: Letter of Cooperation Example

[Southeastern United States software manufacturing company]

[Contact Information]

[Date]

Dear Pete,

Based on my review of your research proposal and the written approval of the Walden University Institutional Review Board (included as attachment), I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled "Exploring Strategies Software Company Sales Managers Implemented to Reduce Voluntary Employee Turnover" on (company name) premises or via video teleconference calls with our employees. As part of this study, I authorize you to conduct audio-recorded interviews, data collection, and follow-up employee interactions related to interview responses. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: providing access to meeting rooms used to conduct interviews (as required) and authorize employees to participate in the study on dates and times convenient to (company name). The HR department will provide contact information for sales managers meeting these criteria to include e-mail address, office phone number, and mobile phone number. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the research team without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,
Authorization Official
Contact Information

Walden University policy on electronic signatures: An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically. Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Electronic signatures are only valid when the signer is either (a) the sender of the e-mail, or (b) copied on the e-mail containing the signed document. Legally an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, their e-mail address, or any other identifying marker. Walden University staff verifies any electronic signatures that do not originate from a password-protected source (i.e., an e-mail address officially on file with Walden).

Appendix D: Interview Session Confirmation E-mail

Dear Pete,

The purpose of this email is to confirm our meeting on (date and time). We will be meeting at the Starbucks located at (address). I have included a copy of the consent form containing detailed information. The purpose of this form is to provide background information, procedures, nature of the study, risks, and benefits in participating in this study. Please review the consent form prior to our meeting. I look forward to our visit and sincerely appreciate your support in participating in this research.

Kindest regards,
Pete

