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Successful Employee Retention Strategies in Childcare Centers

Ahmad Shaheen
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Ahmad Shaheen

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Review Committee

Dr. Mohamad Hammoud, Committee Chairperson, Doctor of Business Administration
Faculty

Dr. Beverly Muhammad, Committee Member, Doctor of Business Administration
Faculty

Dr. Jim Savard, University Reviewer, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
2016

Abstract

Successful Employee Retention Strategies in Childcare Centers

by

Ahmad Shaheen

MS, Ashford University, 2013

BS, Ashford University, 2011

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

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Abstract

Fifty percent of childcare employees leave their jobs by the close of their 5th year of experience. The purpose of this exploratory single case study was to explore what retention strategies some childcare center directors use to retain their employees in the Columbus, Ohio metropolitan area. The research population consisted of 5 childcare center directors who successfully implemented retention strategies in 5 different childcare centers. The conceptual framework for this study was the Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman motivation-hygiene theory. Data were collected via semistructured interviews with the directors and from centers' handbooks and strategic plans. Coding, word frequency, and thematic analysis were conducted, and member checking was employed to bolster the trustworthiness of interpretations. Three main themes emerged: the importance of employee compensation, communication and culture, and education and training to retain childcare center employees. Understanding the strategies to retain employees may help childcare center directors reduce the turnover and ensure stability for employees in that industry. The implications for positive social change include lower unemployment rates and a more stable childcare labor market.

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Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral study to my wife, Sarah, and my children, Sharief and Adam. I strive to be the best I can be to make sure that you do the same. Put God first and always believe that he will put you on the right path. Second, I dedicate this to my father and my mother, who gave up many things in life to provide me with everything I have. Finally, I dedicate this to my brother, Farzat, and brother-in-law, Hamza, who always pushed me to complete my education.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

To achieve excellence in this rapidly changing and competitive economy, the demand for highly skilled professional employees is always increasing in organizations (Rabe & Giacomuzzi, 2012). Because of this organizational leaders are paying more attention to employee turnover; a lack of attention from organizational leaders creates dissatisfied employees, whose departure causes increases in unemployment rates and hiring costs (Heavey, Holwerda, & Hausknecht, 2013). The cost to recruit, hire, and train new talent is more than an hourly worker's salary (McKeown, 2010). During the past few years, employee turnover in the United States has continued to increase (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015).

Childcare administrators are facing significant challenges to retain highly qualified employees to provide quality care. Most contemporary organizations make a strategic priority of retaining employees who have specialized skills (Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012). Teachers are a key determinant of positive preschool classroom experiences (Jamil, 2013). Teacher behavior, especially high-quality teacher-child interactions, is important in promoting children's academic skills and social-emotional competence (Hamre, Hatfield, Pianta, & Jamil, 2013). According to Hanushek (2007), as many as 50% of teachers leave the profession by the close of their 5th year of experience. There are similar determinants that may cause childcare employees to leave their jobs. Wells (2015) suggested that preschool teachers are resistant to quitting unless they have several risk factors that shape their minds to leave the profession. Ghapanchi and Aurum (2011) pointed out that it is critical for organizational leaders to understand those

determinants that influence the retention of employees, so that they can prevent high turnover rates across their organizations. In order to create future sustainability, leaders should understand effective strategies for retaining a high-quality labor force. Teachers' attrition comes at a cost both to individual teachers and to the community (Buchanan, 2010). Therefore, retention of teachers has become an important current concern in many countries (Scheopner, 2010).

Background of the Problem

Employee turnover inflicts severe harm to organizations, both financially and psychologically (Shah, 2014). In the United States, there were 4.7 million total employee turnovers in the month of July 2015, edging down from June 2015 (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). The turnover of employees is one of the large, but widely unknown, costs within an organization (Laddha, Singh, Gabbad, & Gidwani, 2012). Overcoming employee turnover and improving employee retention rates has been a challenge for managers for years. The question of employee turnover has gained greater attention for all organizations because of the losses caused due to the costs that follows the employees' departures and the process of recruiting new employees (Heavey et al., 2013). Mohlala, Goldman, and Goosen (2012) revealed that the major challenges that hinder managers in retaining skilled employees include not honoring promises, continuous restructuring, not empowering senior managers in managing salary issues, and relying on old types of technology. However, researchers have suggested other influencing motivational variables, such as training, challenging and interesting work,

freedom for innovative thinking, and job security, as important factors in retention strategies (Samuel, 2013).

Problem Statement

Despite efforts to decrease employee turnover, retention costs continue to rise (Rizwan & Mukhtar, 2014). Employee turnover costs businesses in the United States billions of dollars annually (Wallace & Gaylor, 2012). The general business problem is that employee turnover affects the economic profitability of childcare centers. The specific business problem is that some childcare center directors lack the retention strategies needed to retain employees of childcare centers.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory single case study was to explore the retention strategies that some childcare center directors use to retain their employees. The research population consisted of five directors who successfully implemented retention strategies in five different childcare centers in the Columbus, Ohio metropolitan area. Understanding the strategies used to retain employees may help childcare center directors reduce the turnover cost and ensure stability for employees in that industry. Retaining childcare employees may help the children develop a strong emotional attachment to the employees that will allow the children to develop a sense of trust that may help them build healthy relationships with others. In addition, skilled teachers will help develop the children and better prepare them for the future. The results of this study may influence positive social change by availing the retention strategies that childcare center directors can use to improve the quality of their childcare center workplaces. A clean and healthy

environment produces a good citizen (Tsai, 2011). Poor quality in early childhood education can be detrimental to the development of children, particularly if teachers fail to equalize some of the disparities and disadvantages that children face in the early developmental stages of their lives (Manning, Garvis, Fleming, & Wong, 2014).

Nature of the Study

I chose the qualitative approach as the research method for this study. My intent in conducting the study was to explore the retention strategies needed to reverse employees' intentions to leave their current childcare center. A qualitative method enables the researcher to see the phenomena from the perspective of the participants by exploring the experiences of the participants (Wilson, 2015).

A quantitative method is appropriate when the researcher tests a theory and uses the data for inferential statistical testing (Hoare & Hoe, 2013). Johnson and Christensen (2014) noted that in quantitative research, researchers test hypotheses and look at causes and effects based on predictions. I did not plan to test a theory, use the data retrieved for inferential statistical testing, or test hypotheses and look at causes and effects based on predictions, and thus the quantitative method was not an appropriate choice for this study.

I also considered a mixed method approach for this study. However, mixed method researchers use a combination of both qualitative method and quantitative method (Hayes, Bonner, & Douglas, 2013). The mixed method approach is an appropriate approach when neither a quantitative nor a qualitative approach is acceptable by itself to explore the research topic, or when the researcher has the need for one method to inform and another to clarify (Wisdom, Cavaleri, Onwuebbuzie, & Green, 2012). The

mixed method did not fit this study because my focus was on identifying the retention strategies needed to change employees' intentions, not on testing hypotheses.

A single exploratory case study design was the most appropriate design for this study. Yin (2013) described the qualitative case study design as an in-depth exploration strategy to enable the researcher to explore a specific and complex phenomenon within its real-life context. In addition, Yin noted that a case study enables the investigator to conduct exploratory or explanatory research and ask how or what questions to comprehend the characteristics of real-life events.

In creating the study, I considered the following other qualitative designs: phenomenology and ethnography. The primary goal of phenomenological research is to explore the human experience from those living the phenomenon (Wilson, 2015), which was not the objective of this study as my intent was to explore the retention strategies needed to reverse employees' intentions to leave their current childcare centers. An ethnographic study is appropriate when the researcher is studying an entire culture of people to gain a better perspective of the members in that culture (Renedo & Marston, 2015; Yin, 2016). This was not an appropriate choice for design, as I did not plan to study an entire culture of people.

Research Question

The research question that I created to align with the purpose of this study and the specific business problem was: What are the retention strategies that some childcare center directors use to retain their employees?

Interview Questions

1. What makes the employees satisfied with their current job in the center?
2. What makes the employees dissatisfied with their current job in the center?
3. What are the elements that motivate the employees in their current job in the center?
4. What are the work-related factors that contribute to employee turnover in your center?
5. What is the relationship between you and the employees?
6. What strategies do you use to retain the employees?
7. What aspects ensure that the employees will stay in their current job?
8. What aspects of the job are stressful and can cause the employees to leave their current job?
9. Do you have any additional information, documentation, or processes that will help in this research?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this qualitative single exploratory case study was the foundation for the study, as job satisfaction factors and motivational factors were the basis I used to explore the retention strategies needed to reverse employees' intentions to leave their current childcare centers. The two-factor theory of Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1959) served as the foundation from which to explore the retention strategies that some childcare center directors use to retain their employees. Leaders of an organization should understand the retention strategies that may lead to job

dissatisfaction as well as those that may affect employees' intentions to stay with the organization. The two-factor theory of Herzberg et al. contains the premise that there are two causes for an employee's state of being, job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction, which are determinants that may affect employees' intent to stay with or leave the organization. When they developed the two-factor theory in 1959, Herzberg et al. used the data from interviewing accountants and engineers to explore the factors that motivated them and caused them to be satisfied or dissatisfied with their jobs. In the original study, Herzberg et al. focused on how an organization can help its employees achieve their goals and ensure that they have the opportunity to grow. Job satisfaction and compensation were among the factors that caused employees' dissatisfaction; in the same context, those factors motivated the employees (Herzberg et al., 1959). In the two-factor theory, factors such as job satisfaction, motivation, and communication are direct factors that lead to a reduction in the turnover rates and that help organizations retain employees (Herzberg et al., 1959).

Operational Definitions

Job dissatisfaction: Job dissatisfaction is an unpleasant emotional state, possibly arising from an employee's perception that the job is frustrating or prevents the employee from perceiving value in their work (Yucel, 2012).

Retention: Retention is an action that an organization takes to encourage professionals to maintain employment with the organization for the maximum period of time (James & Mathew, 2012; Ratna & Chawla, 2012).

Retention challenges: Retention challenges are those difficulties encountered during the process of keeping the loyalty of existing employees and persuading them not to work for another company (Collin, 2009).

Strategic management: Strategic management is the process of developing corporate strategies (Collin, 2009).

Strategic planning: Strategic planning is the process of deciding upon the future work of a company (Collin, 2009).

Turnover: Turnover is when an employee totally separates from an organization and includes cessations, resignations, layoffs, and discharges (Hom, Mitchell, Lee, & Griffeth, 2012; U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are statements that researchers take for granted or consider true, even though the statements remain untested (Grove, Burns, & Gray, 2013). Furthermore, assumptions serve as the basic foundation of any proposed study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). I assumed that individuals would be willing to participate in the interview when they were not working. I also assumed that the participants would provide truthful answers to the interview questions. My final assumption was that the interviews would contain sufficient information to explore the retention strategies used to retain employees within the participant childcare centers in Columbus, Ohio.

Limitations

Simon (2013) defined limitations as potential weaknesses of a study and noted that those factors tend to be out of the researcher's control. One key limitation of this study was that my wife's professional background as a childcare center director could potentially influence the research approach and analysis of the data. My discussions with my wife about the study and the findings created a conversation that could have potentially influenced my thoughts and views. I had opinions about what determinants were causing the high turnover rate. However, to minimize bias and address this limitation, I blocked my views and followed the research protocol without forcing my own observations. Symon and Cassell (2012) suggested that within qualitative research, epoché highlights a particular period when significant events occur in the experiences of a researcher, but any impact from the memory of the events needs to be put aside during data collection. In addition, Wilson (2015) added that in order to attenuate a biased stance, a researcher could pinpoint the bias, expose the characteristics, and eliminate them.

Delimitations

Leedy and Ormrod (2012) referred to delimitations as being what the researcher is not going to do within the study. The first delimitation for this study was that I did not include any childcare employees in the research. I delimited this study by interviewing only childcare center directors who had successfully implemented employee retention strategies. The second delimitation was the geographical location of the population, which I restricted to the metropolitan Columbus, Ohio area.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

When childcare center executives understand the retention strategies that are in place they will have insight on the successful and effective process to retain the employees, reduce the costs associated with employee turnover, and maintain high-performing employees (Vasquez, 2014). Childcare center directors may also use the findings from this study to assess the overall effectiveness of the strategies they currently have in place in an effort to adjust the policies and prevent future employee turnover (Sandhya & Kumar, 2011). Ghapanchi and Aurum (2011) pointed out that it is critical for organizational leaders to understand the strategies that influence the retention of employees, so that they can prevent high turnover rates across the organization. In order to improve sustainability, leaders must understand the effective retention strategies, identify the necessary changes in their strategies, and make the adjustments for the future (Ghapanchi & Aurum, 2011).

Implications for Social Change

The results of this study may contribute to a positive social change by helping childcare center executives understand the most effective strategies that they can use to retain their employees. Rizwan and Mukhtar (2014) noted that it is a common belief that employees will give their best if the employer provides employees with peaceful work, reasonable wages, and a conducive environment. Information about retention strategies may help leaders in organizations by capitalizing on the factors that will help the performance of the employees. In return, higher retention rates may help society by

decreasing the unemployment rates and by creating a stable labor market, which improves the lives of individuals. A stable labor market enables employees to plan and live their lives with fewer risks (Estes & Polnick, 2012). In addition, findings from the study will be valuable because childcare center employees provide development and support for children, and a reduction in the turnover levels may help the growth of the children, as the children create a special relationship with the teacher. Johnson, Kraft, and Papay (2012) found that favorable conditions of work for educators predict higher rates of student academic growth, even when comparing schools serving demographically similar groups of students.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the retention strategies some childcare center directors use to retain their employees. In this review, the academic literature provides a foundation for the topic of employee turnover. I conducted the research using multiple academic resources available through academic libraries, databases, and books. To find the relevant literature, I used databases including ABI/INFORM Global, Business Source Complete, and ProQuest. In my search for literature, I used the key words *employee turnover*, *job satisfaction*, *job dissatisfaction*, *talent management*, *retention challenges*, and *retention strategies*. The sources I used in this research proposal consisted of 371 references from different sources such as journals, books, and dissertations. There were 343 peer-reviewed articles, representing 92% of the total sources. Of the 371 total sources, 319, or 86%, have a publication date from 2012 to 2016, while 52, or 14%, have a publication date before 2012.

Relevant Theories

Employees are essential for organizations; therefore, one of the most important concerns and a base of any organization is the satisfaction of employees (Gesinde & Adejumo, 2012; Obineli, 2013; Zaim, Kurt, & Tetik, 2013). Scholars such as Maslow (1943) and Alderfer (1972) have put forth various theories to better understand employees and their jobs' characteristics and how these relate to job satisfaction. These theories provide the basis for describing and gaining a deeper understanding of what satisfies or motivates individuals in the workplace (Zhillia, 2013). Among the many theories in the literature, prominent theories include Herzberg et al.'s (1959) hygiene theory, Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, Locke's (1976) range of affect theory, Hackman and Oldham's (1976) job characteristics model, equity theory, and expectancy theory. After deep examination of these theories, Saif, Nawaz, Jan, and Khan (2012) revealed that in these theories, the theorists express different interpretations of the same reality and that the differences exist because of how the theorists conceptualize main aspects of satisfaction. Saif et al. recommended testing these theories against emerging factors of positive psychology. There are a number of studies where the authors found an agreement with these theories (Bader, Hashim, & Zaharim, 2013; Uduji, 2013). Most of these studies are relevant to motivation theories, as job satisfaction and motivation interrelate.

Herzberg et al.'s (1959) hygiene theory, also known as the two-factor theory, is one of the forerunners of the job satisfaction theories. According to Herzberg et al. (1959), different factors determine satisfaction and dissatisfaction. One set of factors,

called motivators, causes happy feelings or job satisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). These factors include recognition, achievement, growth, advancement, and responsibility. The other set of factors, called hygiene, are relevant to dissatisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). These factors include interpersonal relations connected to salary, supervisor, and subordinates; peers; company policy and administration; working conditions; factors in personal life; status; and job security (Herzberg et al., 1959). Motivators come from the job itself, whereas hygiene comes from circumstantial factors surrounding the work.

More than 50 years have passed since Herzberg et al. (1959) first devised the two-factor theory, yet scholars still support this theory today. Researchers have based various studies on the dimensions from Herzberg's theory. In a study on the relationship of Herzberg's theory and performance, Tamtekin (2012) concluded that employees' job satisfaction depends on intrinsic factors such as interpersonal relationships and the nature of the work. In addition, Tamtekin suggested that autonomy increases the employees' self-esteem, leading to higher performance and job satisfaction. In another study, Khan, Shahid, Nawab, and Wali (2013) explained that hygiene factors such as the level of supervision and the current work environment need to be acceptable to the employees. Their finding aligns with Herzberg et al.'s two-factor theory.

Researchers have studied various fields in light of Herzberg's two-factor theory, addressing factors of job motivation and satisfaction (Malik & Naeem, 2013; Minai & Almansour, 2013; Mokaya & Gitari, 2012; Nwude & Uduji, 2013; Uduji, 2013). Yusoff, Kian, and Idris (2013) suggested a remodel of the two-factor theory to determine employees' job satisfaction factors. Furthermore, Yusoff et al. revealed that extrinsic

factors, which should only turn up with job dissatisfaction or neutral feelings toward jobs, have indeed affected respondents' job satisfaction. Therefore, Yusoff et al. found that implementation of the two-factor theory may be less practical in employee motivational studies.

Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs theory is another groundbreaking theoretical framework in the field of job satisfaction. Maslow ranked the human needs from low to the top of the hierarchy. Maslow described these needs as including the lower level needs, which include physiological needs (basic needs such as food, drink, etc.), then safety needs, then belongingness (social recognition status), followed by esteem needs, and at the top of the hierarchy, self-actualization. Although some researchers have criticized the hierarchy of needs theory as Maslow failed to consider cultural influences (Adiele & Abraham, 2013; Nain, 2013; Taormina & Gao, 2013), Kaur (2013) employed the theory in a study of employee motivation and satisfaction, as the theory is still utilized by scholars as a foundation ground for employee satisfaction research. Babic, Kordic, and Babic (2014) conducted a study on differences in the motivation of healthcare professionals in public and private healthcare centers. They found significant differences between healthcare professionals working in public and private healthcare centers. In fact, Babic et al. discovered differences that aligned with the framework provided by Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs. Healthcare workers in the private sector reported higher satisfaction when it came to existence, safety, and self-actualization than did those workers in the public sector (Babic et al., 2014).

In Locke's (1976) range of affect theory, also known as value theory, the overall job satisfaction of employees depends on how much one values various facets of their job. For example, if one gives a high value on the ability to maintain autonomy, then attaining autonomy will be predictive of overall job satisfaction. The main premise of the theory is that in order to achieve satisfaction in jobs, one must feel fulfilled in one's personal values and needs (Locke, 1976). Locke's range of affect theory is a principal theory of job satisfaction in the field of industrial and organizational psychology (Colquitt, LePine, & Wesson, 2012).

Vroom (1964) created the expectancy theory and stated that the performance of an individual is based on the belief in the attainment of other outcomes (e.g., financial rewards, promotions, and public recognition); one would not be motivated to perform or make efforts to exceed performance standards if the outcome they received is not worth the effort. This theory provided an important basis for understanding the motivation and job satisfaction for many years (Zhu, 2012). Estes and Polnick (2012) suggested that if teachers work hard and show high performance, and in return they receive rewards, their motivation will increase depending on whether or not they value the reward. On the other hand, if teachers do not receive rewards for their performance, the outcome may decrease their motivation, because they will consider their performance as not contributory in bringing valued reward (Estes & Polnick, 2012). In a similar study, Yuan et al. (2013) found that teachers did not feel motivated to improve teaching practices because they did not expect to receive a bonus.

In the equity theory, Adams (1965) proposed that the satisfaction level of an employee depends on one's perception of equities and inequities about the working environment; the crux of this theory is that when employees feel that the workplace is fair, they feel more motivated and satisfied. In a 2015 study, Gameda and Tynjälä noted that low motivation and loss of interest in teaching occurred because of inequity in received salary. In the study, the teachers' salary was not only below the living wage, but also low compared to other professions. Therefore, teachers perceived unfair treatment and pleaded for reasonable pay (Gameda & Tynjälä, 2015).

In their job characteristics model, Hackman and Oldham (1976) concluded that there are five core job characteristics that affect employees' motivation, satisfaction, and performance; these characteristics are: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback. In the existence-relatedness-growth theory, Alderfer (1972) developed and condensed Maslow's five-needs hierarchy into three, which include existence, relatedness, and growth needs. The Lent and Brown (2006) model comprises five classes of predictor variables: personality/affective traits, participation in/progress at goal-directed activities, self-efficacy expectations, work conditions, and environmental support and obstacles. Badri, Mohaidat, Ferrandino, and El Mourad (2013) provided support for the Lent and Brown theory and model with their findings, as the employees will perform at a better rate if they are provided with a supportive environment.

Employee Turnover

Employee turnover is one of the most important and challenging issues in human resource management (HRM; Armstrong, 2014). Accordingly, management scholars,

experts, and industrial psychologists around the globe pay serious attention to employee turnover (Bryant & Allen, 2013; Hom et al., 2012; Yücel, 2012). From suffering the financial costs from 90% to 200% of annual pay (Bryant & Allen, 2013) and losing investment to intruding operations (Killumets, D’Innocenzo, Maynard, & Mathieu, 2015), and from losing talent and causing scarcity of experts (Becker & Cropanzano, 2011) to decreasing the customer service quality (Hancock, Allen, Bosco, McDaniel, & Pierce, 2013), turnover has experiential and evidence-based detrimental effects to the organizations (Heavey et al., 2013). Employees run organizations, and organizations become successful because of their top talent (Hom et al., 2012). Therefore, retaining key employees is a critical issue for organizations in today’s competitive business world and has become a significant concern for organizations as turnover rates increase (Alias, Noor, & Hassan, 2014; Swider & Zimmerman, 2014).

From the first half of the 20th century to the dawn of the 21st century, researchers and theorists have put forth various theories and models to explain better and understand employees’ quits. All have contributed well in providing the basis for our present advancement in comprehending the subject. Although there are diverse explanations, they follow a similar sequence: Distal antecedents (e.g., job characteristics, personality) lead to attitudinal antecedents (e.g., job satisfaction) and then to criterion space (quit intentions and voluntary quits; Hom et al., 2012).

There is a strong positive relationship between job satisfaction and organization performance (Edmans, 2012), and HRM practices such as supervision, job training, and pay practices have positive correlations with employees’ job satisfaction (Yücel, 2012).

Changes in the level of job satisfaction in a given period of time are exceptionally significant to employees and drive them in making turnover decisions (Garner & Hunter, 2014; Hinken, Holtom, & Liu, 2012). On-the-job and off-the-job embeddedness is also important, as it negatively relates to employees' turnover intentions (Jiang, Liu, McKay, Lee, & Mitchell, 2012). According to Boswell, Zimmerman, and Swider (2012), a job search encompasses activities to generate new employment chances in other organizations. Job searches are also a strong predictor of employee turnover when there is a high level of job opportunities available and a low level of embeddedness (Reitz, 2014). Furthermore, another important factor is the attitude toward benefits; researchers, Frazis and Loewenstein (2013) found that employees' quit rates correlated to benefits more than to wages. In another study related to three- and five-star hotels in Kenya, the researchers, found that some employees resigned because their employers did not allow them to be involved in the decision-making process directly related to their jobs (Kuria, Alice, Peter, & Wanderi, 2012).

Administrators in the teaching industry have expressed concern about turnover rates because they see a shortage of competent teachers, as teacher attrition rates are high worldwide, regardless of differences in education systems in various countries (Hong, 2012). There are many factors involved in teachers' turnover. Norwegian researchers Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2014, 2015) conducted two studies with elementary and middle school teachers; their findings showed that factors including supervisory support, relations with colleagues, relations with parents, time pressure, and discipline problems were related to job satisfaction and teachers' motivation to leave the profession.

Researchers have also noted that stress related to students' behavior and the workload is a significant contributing factor in shaping teachers' behavior as it leads to increased burnout, reduced job satisfaction, and reduced commitment (Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014).

Characteristics of Childcare Educators

Ohi (2014) noted that childhood teachers tend to perform a complex array of roles that requires them to contribute far more than just their teaching skills and knowledge. These teachers must concurrently enact the roles of educator, leader, advocator, communicator, counselor, and administrator while juggling everyday challenges, including a lack of time, the need for further support and more resources, and the need to forge positive partnerships with parents (Ohi, 2014). Childhood teachers structure the preschool daily schedule in different ways and spend varying amounts of time engaging and interacting with children in particular settings and learning activities (Fuligni, Howes, Huang, Hong, & Lara-Cinisomo, 2012; Zachrisson, Janson, & Nærde, 2013). Personality analysis of early childhood preschool teachers showed high levels of extraversion, agreeableness, consciousness, openness to experience, and social conformity in these teachers (Tatalović Vorkapić, 2012).

Weber-Mayrer, Piasta, and Yeager Pelatti (2015) suggested that early childhood educators' characteristics are important factors in adult learning theory with implications for the design, implementation, and evaluation of adult learning. Considerable variability exists in characteristics of these educators (Weber-Mayrer et al., 2015). Diversity in the early childhood education workforce, particularly with respect to early childhood

educator qualifications, may lead to variability in the provision of high-quality early childhood education experiences. In general, early childhood educators tend to have less formal training than those in other educational sectors (Rhodes & Huston, 2012). Childcare workers have indicated that they lack formal qualifications and would like to improve their skills and knowledge (Javanovic, 2013). The link between teachers who carry a bachelor's degree and high-quality teacher-child interactions is stronger than the link between the teachers with a bachelor's degree and children's development outcomes, both in terms of a larger effect size and in terms of a more consistent research base (Commodari, 2013).

In a study of job satisfaction among childhood educators, although teachers reported caregiving involvement and job satisfaction, most teachers expressed dissatisfaction with their current income levels (Hossain, Noll, & Barboza, 2012). Researchers noted that low wages, stressful conditions, highly demanding work, and undervaluation by society all characterize the childcare educators' profession (Andrew & Newman, 2012; Boyd, 2013; Wagner et al., 2013). Early educators earn an hourly wage that is among the lowest of any profession in the United States, with a mean of \$10.09 per hour (Rhodes & Huston, 2012). Researchers reported that stress is a prominent issue for childcare workers (Corr, Davis, LaMontagne, Waters, & Steele, 2014; Groeneveld, Vermeer, Van Ijzendoorn, & Linting, 2012).

High-quality early education experiences for children enhance children's development in many domains and improve opportunities for success in later learning; highly trained and satisfied early childhood educators are essential for these high-quality

educational experiences to occur (Tayler, 2012). As there is an increase in the female labor force participation, the result is an expansion of preschool enrollments, which further emphasizes the need for early childhood workforce (Bassok, Fitzpatrick, Loeb, & Paglayan, 2013). Early childhood educators' work involves caregiving and nurturing children, facilitating children's learning, observing and assessing children's development, and professional advocacy (Phajane, 2014). Childcare teaching involves emotional labor where teachers need to suppress or exhibit particular forms of expression to provide quality care for children and their families. Emotional burnout and emotional exhaustion serve as a potential predictor of teacher job dissatisfaction and the intention to leave (Jovanovic, 2013). Other factors presented in the professional literature include lack of training opportunities, high workload, inadequate facilities, lack of career development or staff retention programs, and no significant increase in salaries (Wells, 2015).

Childcare business operators are facing significant challenges to retain qualified childcare teachers to provide quality care. Boyd (2014) and Rhodes and Huston (2012) proposed various strategies to retain a qualified workforce, such as improving working conditions, providing adequate compensation, and providing opportunities for advancement. Managers or owners of childcare centers should encourage good internal communication with their employees by providing regular meetings, learning what their employees need and want in their work, and then trying to fulfill their employees' needs and desires (Sulaiman et al., 2013).

Retention Challenges

With the emergence of a global competitive economy and shortage of labor, leaders in organizations now realize that human capital is critical to the success of the firm (Unger, Rauch, Frese, & Rosenbusch, 2011). According to the theorists of the resource-based view theory (Holland, Sheehan, & De Cieri, 2007), there are three types of resources: organizational capital, human capital, and physical capital. The most important and critical resource is human capital because it can give the competitive edge to an organization due to its uniqueness (Holland et al., 2007). Moncarz, Zhao, and Kay (2009) defined retention as a voluntary move by an organization to create an environment that engages employees for a long term. Retention is a major concern for organizations. In addition, Olson (2010) suggested that leaders in organizations see many positive results from a motivated workforce.

Researchers have described many challenges that organizations face in retaining valuable and talented employees (Armstrong, 2014; Ferguson & Brohaugh, 2009; Solnet, Kralj, & Kandampully, 2012). Employees may leave voluntarily because they find better options (Armstrong, 2014). For example, Ferguson and Brohaugh (2009) concluded that for skilled and talented employees there are alternatives available, so it becomes a concern of employers to retain them. Solnet et al. (2012) noted that workers have different perspectives than those from a few decades ago. Employees are unlikely to remain with the same organization throughout their entire careers, as other employment opportunities are present. Management should recognize these changes in the job demand by acting proactively to retain talented employees. Mohlala et al. (2012) revealed that

major challenges that hinder managers in retaining skilled employees include not honoring promises, continuous restructuring, not empowering senior managers in managing salary issues, and relying on old types of technology.

Similarly, the teaching industry is facing challenges in retaining high-quality teachers. Teachers' attrition comes at a cost both to individual teachers and to the community as a whole; therefore, retention of teachers has become an important current concern in many countries (Buchanan, 2010; Scheopner, 2010). According to Hanushek (2007), up to 50% of teachers leave the profession by the close of their 5th year of experience. Along with many other challenges, dealing with stress is a major concern in employee retention, as researchers showed that teaching is a stressful career and results in teachers suffering from burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014). Meeting pay expectations is also an issue for organizations. For example, from their pilot study of 78 teachers who worked in a childcare center in Texas, Russell, Williams, and Gleason-Gomez (2010) indicated that the teachers' thoughts of leaving their current job aligned with their perception of fair pay. Furthermore, in a study that involved observations and interviews with 28 childcare center educators from South Australia, the author concluded that legislative, structural, and operational requirements constrain the ability of participants to collaborate across the board and to enhance the quality of their educative care (Jovanovic, 2013).

Retention Strategies

Employee retention strategies are those efforts by employers to create an environment that encourages current employees to remain employed with the policies and

practices in the workplace (Vaiman, 2008). In most contemporary organizations, the retention of employees who have specialized skills is a strategic priority (Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012). Achieving employee retention entails effective leadership with long-term vision (Ratna & Chawla, 2012). Employee motivation is one of the important factors that help leaders in organizations to improve employees' performance (Sandhya & Kumar, 2011). Sandhya and Kumar (2011) concluded that various motivation practices such as open communication, employee reward program, career development program, performance-based bonus, recreation facilities, and gifts at some occasions had a positive effect on employee retention. Researchers noted other significantly influencing motivational variables such as training, challenging/interesting work, freedom for innovative thinking, and job security as important factors in retention strategies (Samuel, 2013).

Social organizational support is an important component in retaining employees. In a 2010 study of 35 managers from various fields, Scott-Ladd, Travaglione, Perryer, and Pick found that the role of the leadership in organizations in providing social support to employees was long overdue. Furthermore, workplaces will be more employee-friendly, more attractive to employees, and encourage employee retention if they implement social organizational support. In addition, Lueneburger (2012) suggested that to motivate and retain talented people, employers must understand employees' strengths and maximize their opportunities to apply these strengths. Human resources practices including communication, job enrichment, and trust also influence employee retention (Anis & Athar, 2012).

Belbin, Erwee, and Wiesner (2012) assessed the awareness of participants and the effectiveness of retention strategies; the strategies that ranked as most effective included those that provided a monetary advantage. Other strategies detailed in the literature included good working environment (Vasquez, 2014), equipping employees with the skills they need (Singh, 2012), and excellent management-employee relations (Suleiman AlBattat & Mat Som, 2013). Additional retention strategies included keeping workers involved or granting them decision-making leverage (Keeling, McGoldrick, & Sadhu, 2013), commitment to development from top management and leadership (Govaerts, Kyndt, Dochy, & Baert, 2011), and motivation along with empowerment (Albrecht, 2012).

Education administrators are also implementing strategies for retention of qualified teachers, as teaching is a stressful profession. Educators who use specific stress-reducing tactics may become more contented and more willing to remain in the profession (Hong, 2012). Teachers' perceptions of the school administration have a great influence on teacher retention decisions (Boyd et al., 2011). Ashiedu and Scott-Ladd (2012) suggested that if school principals select teachers who possess the right personal characteristics, these selected teachers will stay in the profession if reasonable extrinsic factors in the form of strategies for enhancing working and school conditions are in place. Other strategies to retain employees include building a stronger community of practice and providing greater support to early career teachers (Ado, 2013), offering teachers training opportunities, providing job advancement and job recognition (Lane, Prokop,

Johnson, Podhajski, & Nathan, 2014), increasing salaries, reducing their workloads, and striving to improve parent and student participation (Hughes, 2012).

Job Satisfaction

Ivancevich, Konopaske, and Matterson (2013) defined job satisfaction as the state of feelings that workers have and how well they are in an organization. Job satisfaction is one of the main factors involved in the efficiency and effectiveness of business organizations (Mahdi, Mohd Zin, Mohd Nor, Skat, & Abang Naim, 2012). To achieve excellence in this competitive global economy with rapid technological changes, the demand for highly skilled and professional employees is increasing in organizations (Rabe & Giacomuzzi, 2012). In addition, satisfied employees are valuable assets for organizational effectiveness (Rahman, 2014). Lack of satisfaction leads to lack of commitment to organizations, which ultimately leads to increases in turnover intentions (Yang, 2010). Majumder (2012) suggested that job satisfaction, along with other factors, is strongly related to HRM practices. In addition, deficiency of effectual HRM practices reduces employees' job satisfaction (Javed, Rafiq, Ahmed, & Khan, 2012).

Many studies are emerging across a broad range of industries, showing the strong association of specific HRM practices, such as supervisory relationship, training, and promotion (Yücel, 2012), job rotation (Foss, Pedersen, Fosgaard, & Stea, 2014), selection, performance appraisal, and compensation packages (Anis & Athar, 2012), with commitment to the organization and job satisfaction. Researchers also noted the importance of motivational factors such as recognition, the work itself, opportunity for advancement, professional growth, and responsibility (Ahmed et al., 2010). Emotional

intelligence is another factor with a positive correlation with job satisfaction (Ealias & George, 2012). Researchers found that pay level (Abdullah et al., 2012), academic qualification (Ahmed et al., 2010), fairness, rewards, and social support all have a direct effect on job satisfaction (Lobburi, 2012).

With the rise of maternal employment, childcare centers have become a vital component of the social infrastructure (Tang, Coley, & Votruba-Drzal, 2012). Accordingly, the satisfaction of daycare workers contributes to the quality of the childcare centers (Doyle, Logue, & McNamara, 2011). Researchers described various factors contributing to job satisfaction of daycare workers. Wong (2010) found a direct relationship between educators' job satisfaction and a daycare center's ownership, as well as whether it is non-profit-making or profit-making. Researchers noted an association between working for parents' initiatives and greater job satisfaction on average (Kusma, Groneberg, Nienhaus, & Mache, 2012). Hossain et al. (2012) found a positive correlation between teachers' job satisfaction and their interactions with children and colleagues, resources, and training, while teachers' job satisfaction negatively correlated with burnout. Meeting the needs of employees remains the prime employee satisfaction enhancement strategy, which fosters employee retention (Giannikis & Mihail, 2011).

Stress and Turnover

In the professional literature, researchers documented many serious negative effects of organizational stress. Stress also leads to employees' turnover (Ahmad, Shahid, Huma, & Haider, 2012; Qureshi et al., 2012). Jain, Giga, and Cooper (2013) defined work-related stress as the physical and emotional response that people have when

presented with work demands and pressures that do not match their knowledge, skills, or abilities; work-related stress affects employee health and well-being (Nilsen et al., 2014). In addition, other factors such as decreased involvement with the job and decreased organizational commitment to reducing the productivity are direct causes of employee stress (Ahmed & Ramzan, 2013; Nagar, 2012).

Researchers studied stress at work across many different professions. Researchers found many factors that create work stress among nurses and healthcare employees, including inadequate resources, insufficient salary, lack of control over work, too much responsibility and too little authority, poor social support, job insecurity, poor opportunities for advancement, poor management styles, inequality at work, staff shortages, lack of promotion prospects, time pressure, and lack of management support (Adib-Hajbaghery, Khamechian, & Alavi, 2012; Mosadeghrad, 2013). Furthermore, these stressors forced nurses to leave their workplace (Almalki, FitzGerald, & Clark, 2012). O'Neil and Davis (2011) interviewed 164 managerial and hourly workers employed at 65 different hotels for 8 consecutive days. They found that the most common stressors were interpersonal tensions at work and overloads. Researchers noted other stressors including role ambiguity, role conflict (Sheraz, Wajid, Sajid, & Rizwan, 2014), technological problems at work, insufficient time for family, job worries at home (Al-Kahtani & Allam, 2013), conflicts, work intensification, relationship with colleagues, unfavorable working conditions (Ismail & Teck-Hong, 2011), and inequitable work environments (Robbins, Ford, & Tetrick, 2012).

Helping professionals such as social workers (Hamama, 2012), early career nurses (Rudman & Gustavsson, 2011), and childcare educators report experiencing more stress and burnout than the general public. Stress is also common in teaching professions. Researchers Reddy and Poornima (2012) found that 74% of university teachers experience moderate and high levels of occupational stress, and 86% of teachers had profession burnout. Researchers recognized the effects of teachers' stress on their performance, as stress has very negative effects on morale, absenteeism, teaching quality, and student satisfaction, and leads to a high turnover rate (Tahir, 2011). Teachers' stress negatively affects their performance by lowering their productivity (Khan, Shah, Khan, & Gul, 2012). Stress and turnover are strongly related to teachers' working conditions, excessive workload, and discipline (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014, 2015). Sources of stress for teachers include role overload, student disruptive behaviors, accountability pressures, lack of resources (Shernoff, Mehta, Atkidns, Torf, & Spencer, 2011), teaching to students' needs, disruptive student behavior, value conflicts, lack of autonomy, teamwork, and lack of status (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015).

Talent Management

Talent management encompasses all organizational activities for the purpose of attracting, selecting, developing, engaging, and retaining the best employees in the most strategic roles on a global scale (Kibui, Gachunga, & Namusonge, 2014). Talent management has become a key strategic issue in today's rapidly moving, dynamic, uncertain, and highly competitive global market (Schuler, Jackson, & Tarique, 2011), as it adds value above other strategic HRM practices (Huang & Tansley, 2012). Talent

management is integral to business transformation success (Swapna & Raja, 2012).

Leaders who create an effective process to manage the talents of their employees will be able to identify succession, talent gaps, plan goals, develop strategies for critical performance appraisal, average prior experience, skills, average tenure, retirements, and turnovers (Bano, Khan, Rehman, & Humayoun, 2011). In addition, researchers noted that the use of talent management practices by the leaders increases efficiency and productivity of organization and employees (Hanif & Yunfei, 2013) and increases retention and job satisfaction (Tiwari & Shrivastava, 2013).

Knowledge workers play important roles in today's business organizations; therefore, leaders seek to select and retain competent and committed employees in these positions. Leaders recognize the importance of talent management, but often fail to manage it effectively (Alias et al., 2014). There is a positive correlation between the use of talent management strategies by leaders and their retention of talented employees and decreased employee turnover. Plansongnern, Anurit, and Kuyawattananonta (2011) explored talent management strategies in three leading cement companies in Thailand and revealed that robust talent management planning was crucial to keeping talent rooted to organizations.

In other studies, researchers found that when employers provided their employees with satisfactory talent management practices, such as managerial support, employee career development, and rewards and recognitions, the employees engaged more fully with the job and organization. Therefore, they tended to remain in the same organization for a long period (Alias et al., 2014; Mustafa Kamil, Abdul Hamid, Hashim, & Omar,

2011). On the other hand, lack of commitment toward talent management practices can lead to the turnover intention of employees (Barkhuizen, Welby-Cooke, Schutte, & Stanz, 2014).

High Turnover and Organizational Culture

Organizational culture encompasses a combination of values, beliefs, assumptions, and underlying interpretive processes that characterize an organization (Bligh & Hatch, 2011). Organizational culture has a direct influence on staff commitment, satisfaction, and learning (Wang, Chen, & Chen, 2012). An organization's culture also has an effect on organizational efficiency (Aktaş, Çiçek, & Kiyak, 2011), performance (Zehir, Ertosun, Zehir, & Müceldili, 2011), effectiveness (Hartnell, Ou, & Kinicki, 2011), and employees' work outcomes (Mathew, Ogbonna, & Harris, 2012). The culture within an organization is crucial, playing a significant role in whether it is a happy and healthy environment in which to work (Tsai, 2011). Nongo and Ikyanyon (2012) stated that organizational culture is significant in improving the level of employee commitment to the organization. Strong organizational commitment drives and shapes the organizational culture, promoting a sense of belonging and ownership that is essential for satisfied, productive, and loyal employees (Hussain & Asif, 2012).

Organizational culture is strongly associated with employee turnover (Islam, Khan, Aamir, & Ahmad, 2012; Nelson, 2011). Shim (2014) investigated the effects of organizational culture on employee turnover at public child welfare agencies. Low-turnover agencies have more positive or constructive organizational culture and climate than high-turnover agencies. Additionally, researchers found that an emphasis on rewards

among organizational culture subscales has a significant and negative effect or reduction on employee turnover rates (Shim, 2014). In addition, lowering staff turnover must also create a proficient culture that makes the leadership expect their workers to be competent and responsive (Williams & Glisson, 2013).

Researchers also studied types of organizational culture and their varying effects on employee turnover. Shafiq and Qureshi (2014) found a negative relationship of innovative and bureaucratic culture types with turnover, predicting a low turnover in these cultures. Knowledge sharing appears to act as a mediator between organizational culture and turnover intentions. For example, in a cross-sectional field survey of 530 nurses in private and provincial hospitals in South Africa, Jacobs and Roodt (2011) found a positive correlation between organizational culture and knowledge sharing, but a significant negative correlation existed between organizational culture and turnover intentions, as well as between knowledge sharing and turnover intentions. Finally, they noted that knowledge sharing mediates the relationship between organizational culture and turnover intentions (Jacobs & Roodt, 2011).

Organizational Commitment and Turnover Intentions

Organizational commitment is the employees' emotional attachment to the organization (Okubanjo, 2014). Researchers found that organizational commitment is the most effective contributor to the prediction of turnover intention (Okubanjo, 2014). In addition, it provides employers a roadmap for improving their turnover rates (Brewer, Kovner, Greene, Tukov-Shuser, & Djukic, 2012). A negative relationship exists between organizational commitment and turnover intention (Hussain & Asif, 2012; Maheshwari &

Maheshwari, 2012) and a positive relationship exists between job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Nagar, 2012; Sims & Sun, 2012).

Organizational commitment has three dimensions: (a) affective, (b) normative, and (c) continuance (Jonathan, Thibeli, & Darroux, 2013). All three dimensions have an effect on teachers' intentions to leave their jobs (Jonathan et al., 2013). In addition, researchers noted that early childhood educators' commitment to their job can even compensate for low salary, benefits, and work-related stressors (Gerstenblatt, Faulkner, Lee, Doan, & Travis, 2014; Hossain et al., 2012).

Khan, Phil, and Phil (2014) found that a key reason for lack of teachers' commitment is the offered reward. Furthermore, researchers noted a higher level of organizational commitment among employees in childcare settings where the management developed individual reward systems and performance reviews, changed hours of work, and provided training and a flexible physical setting (Sulaiman, Othman, Perumal, & Hussin, 2013). Sulaiman et al. (2013) also found that employees in childcare settings reported higher levels of organizational commitment when the management responded to employees' wants and needs regarding benefits.

What makes an employee leave or intend to leave is a major question for any company to consider (Mahdi et al., 2012). Furthermore, James and Mathew (2012) suggested that an increase in employee turnover in organizations will negatively impact productivity and the future sustainability of the organization. In a recent study to measure the impact of training on organizational commitment and turnover intentions, Jehanzeb, Rasheed, and Rasheed (2013) administered a questionnaire to 251 respondents. The

researchers found employees' training to be significantly correlated with organizational commitment, turnover intentions, and the commitment-turnover relationship (Jehanzeb et al., 2013).

A good fit between organizations and employees is important, especially when considering the impact of work-related factors such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee turnover, which are important work outcomes for competitive advantage (Alniaçik, Alniaçik, Erat, & Akçin, 2013). In a study to explore the different dimensions of organizational commitment and turnover intentions on private universities' employees in Ogun State, Nigeria, Adenguga, Adenuga, and Ayodele (2013) revealed that organizational politics, job satisfaction, and work ethics significantly predicted organizational commitment and turnover intention among the employees. Islam et al. (2013) performed a study to explore the issue of employees' turnover intentions in the Malaysian banking sector. They noted that perceived organizational support helped employees to enhance their affective and normative commitment, which ultimately reduces their intentions to leave the organization.

Lower morale and job dissatisfaction, acts of sabotage, increased labor turnover, and increased absenteeism rates rather than increased profitability are all factors that negatively impact the competitiveness of the new organization (van Dierendonck & Jacobs, 2012). Puangyoykeaw and Nishide (2015) noted that the challenge of how organizations can retain and motivate low-skilled workers remains a major issue. Managing a low-skilled labor force is a challenging task for managers and companies because of the workers' limited skills and competencies, meaning that a limited number

of motivational techniques and tools are effective for managers to foster employee retention (Puangyoykeaw & Nishide, 2015).

Turnover intention can result in losses to a firm through the loss of talented human capital and the possible leakage of firm know-how to competitors (Khan et al., 2014). In addition, several researchers noted that job satisfaction has a significant relationship with the three dimensions of organizational commitment and an inverse relationship with turnover intention (Mahdi et al., 2012; Yucel, 2012). Shin, Taylor, and Seo (2012) found that employees who have committed to their jobs do not intend to quit. However, Mohlala et al. (2012) noted that improper retention strategies lead organizations to have higher turnover rates.

Age, Diversity, and Reasons for Turnover

Employees' demographic characteristics such as age, education, and marital status are some of the most commonly studied variables in relation to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover. Some researchers noted the inconsistent results in terms of the relationship between these demographic factors and teachers' turnover (Katoch, 2012; Khan et al., 2014). Kabungaidze, Mahlatshana, and Ngirande (2013) found a relationship between demographic factors such as age and turnover intentions of teachers. In a recent research that included academicians, Khan et al. (2013) concluded that a negative association exists between age and turnover intention. Researchers Cho and Lewis (2012) noted that not only intention to leave, but actual turnover has been shown to have a statistically significant relationship with age.

Jonathan et al. (2013) noted that there is a high turnover in young employees as compared to older employees. Almalki and other colleagues (2012) conducted a study of primary healthcare nurses in Saudi Arabia and found that younger nurses were more likely to indicate turnover intention compared to older nurses. Researchers Kabungaidze et al. (2013) drew similar conclusions. One possible explanation for this finding could be that with age, older workers become more mature, have longer experience with the organization, and enjoy better positions in the organization (Nagar, 2012).

Workplace diversity encompasses differences between people in terms of race, gender, ethnic group, age, personality, education, background, and more. Within an organization, workplace diversity positively correlates with employee satisfaction and negatively correlates with turnover intentions (Goyal, 2013). Organizational diversity helps managers improve creativity and decision making, better serve customers, and enhance organizational flexibility (Mujtaba & Cavico, 2013), but it also leads to synergistic performance when team members are able to understand and appreciate each other and capitalize on one another's experiences, knowledge, and perspectives (Elsaid, 2012). Mismanagement of diversity and lack of diversity awareness programs within an organization lead to dissatisfaction of employees (Munyeka, 2014).

Age diversity helps in knowledge transfer as older and more experienced employees act as mentors for the younger employees (Backes-Gellner & Veen, 2013). A moderate level of gender diversity increases competitive advantage (Gupta, 2013). In order to enjoy more creative decision making, a satisfying work environment, and better products, every organization should embrace management of workforce diversity. In such

an environment, all employees felt involved and encouraged to contribute in a meaningful way (Morais et al., 2014; Munjuri & Maina, 2013).

The question of employee turnover has come to gain greater attention for all organizations as it causes a loss because of the cost that follows the employees' departure and the process of recruiting new employees (Heavey et al., 2013). In the case of daycare services, researchers explored various reasons for dissatisfaction and turnover among child care teachers. Wells (2015) claimed that preschool teachers remain resistant to quitting unless they have several risk factors for leaving the profession.

The most common reasons for turnover in childcare centers include continuously increasing workloads (Bullough, Hall-Kenyon, MacKay, & Marshall, 2014), emotional and physical exhaustion (Rentzou, 2012), not wanting to stay in the early childhood field, having high stress, and not working well with co-workers (Hall-Kenyon, Bullough, MacKay, & Marshall, 2013). In addition, reasons for turnover include student behavior problems, low pay, lack of promotion opportunities, poor work environment, working with fewer highly qualified colleagues, changes in management, perceived lack of respect for the field from the public and government, and perceived better job alternatives (Bullough et al., 2012). Furthermore, in the United States, lack of health insurance (Taguma, Litjens, & Makowiecki, 2012; Wynes, Gemici, & Stanwick, 2013) and lack of future prospects are main causes for high turnover (Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014).

Education and Turnover

Having a quality education and skills is highly significant for childcare educators. The professional development of employees, including educational qualifications, is

directly linked to the services provided (Rhodes & Huston, 2012). A better-educated staff is positively associated with quality children's development (Bauchmüller, Gørtz, & Rasmussen, 2014). According to the Australian government, over 82% of paid contact staff had an early childhood education and care-related qualification (Department of Social Services, 2013). One in six teachers had a bachelor's degree or higher. Over one-third of paid preschool staff had a bachelor's degree or a higher qualification. The science teacher candidates lacked qualifications in terms of their knowledge level in relation to applications (Alisinanoglu & Inan, 2012).

On the other hand, researchers have found that more education and skills are directly related to the turnover of employees (Wells, 2015). In addition, Wells (2015) concluded that preschool teachers' educational levels are significantly related to preschool teachers quitting their positions. For example, Kord and Tamini (2012) noted a negative relationship between education and job satisfaction of the employees, while the same variables correlated positively with turnover intentions of the employees. One of the reasons for such behavior is that the employees with higher educational qualifications have more expectations from their organizations in terms of salary packages and other benefits that organizations cannot fulfill (Khan et al., 2013). Adenguga et al. (2013) studied the effect of demographic factors on organizational commitment and turnover intentions. They noted that educational qualifications were the most potent factor predicting turnover intention. Furthermore, Adenguga et al. suggested that employees with good and high qualifications are likely to leave and look for more fulfilled jobs in spite of the type of jobs they are doing.

Asegid, Belachew, and Yimam (2014) found no statistically significant relationship between educational qualifications and turnover. However, Gupta, Pasrija, and Bansal (2012) revealed that teachers who have higher education such as a postgraduate degree had better qualifications than other teachers with lower degrees. In addition, Mosadeghrad (2013) added that employees with little educational background find less pay unsatisfactory, and they are more likely to quit. An employee who has a higher education level and occupies an inferior position within an organization can develop an inferiority complex, which not only affects a person's skills but also has a negative impact on organizational performance (Mating et al., 2012).

Organizational Change

Organizational change encompasses changes in existing work practices and strategies that affect a whole organization (Battilana & Casciaro, 2012). The topic of organizational change is a vastly motivating topic for both scholars and practitioners because of more failure rates along with the continuous pressure of productivity and other transformation requirements for organizations (Battilana & Casciaro, 2012). Samuel (2013) suggested that change is important for organizations to be successful, as they are being influenced by continuously evolving external forces. If an organization does not introduce and embrace change, the organization will be unfit to compete positively with others due to a lack of productivity (Samuel, 2013). Employees are mostly resistant to change, and leaders should have proper training and education to meet this challenge (Bateh, Castaneda, & Farah, 2013). The relationship between employees and leadership plays an important role in such change contexts (Carter et al., 2012).

Scholars noted that leadership strongly relates to organizational culture, which makes leaders' presence critical in changing, electing, and planning appropriate change management approaches and implementing a new and safe environment (Belias & Koustelios, 2014). Because of the importance of leadership in this context, scholars strongly suggest educating future leaders about organizational change preparation and skills (Levine, Christian, & Lyons, 2013). According to Crawford (2013), for any organizational change to be useful and productive, strategies must consider the organization's current capabilities, the organization's competencies, and the agreed change management model for the needed change of the organization. Wittig (2012) noted that the role of employees is significant for the proper implementation of changes within organizations. Employees react to changes; emotions and cognitions, communication, and participation in decision making affect their reactions (Wittig, 2012). Wright and Christensen (2013) suggested that employees' values are also important for the acceptance of change, especially the public service motivation. In addition, Wright and Christensen concluded that employee motivation, especially public service motivation, is positively related to the commitment to change. Practitioners and change agents should give importance to experiences of employees with organizational change and frequency of change for better results (Nazir, 2015).

In the professional literature, researchers observed a positive relationship between organizational change and the quit intentions of some employees. Researchers suggested that one of the reasons for such intentions is threat appraisal during organizational change (Fugate, Prussia, & Kinicki, 2012). In addition, Bryson, Barth, and Dale-Olsen (2013)

noted a direct association between organizational change and increased job-related anxiety and lower job satisfaction.

Commitment to organizations lowers the turnover intentions of employees during organizational change (Shin et al., 2012). In their study with a sample of 234 employees and 45 managers, Shin et al. (2012) found a negative relationship between two types of commitment (normative and affective) and employee turnover and a positive relationship between normative and affective commitment and behavioral and creative support for change. Furthermore, in a study to investigate the attitudes of employees toward organizational commitment and change, Nafei (2014) concluded that organizational commitment plays an important role in employees' acceptance of the change. If employees find satisfaction in their jobs, their satisfaction becomes a mediator between leadership change and commitment to change (Wulandari, Mangundjaya, & Utoyo, 2015). Employees with trust and positive psychological capital are less resistant to changes in organizations and favorable toward organizational change (Saruhan, 2013).

Transition

In this section, I introduced the background of the problem and clearly stated the problem. The purpose of this qualitative exploratory single case study was to explore the retention strategies that some childcare center directors use to retain their employees. The research question was: What are the retention strategies that some childcare center directors use to retain their employees? Nine interview questions narrowed the research question, but kept the questioning open-ended to gather rich and in-depth data from the participants. An explanation of the qualitative nature and conceptual framework of the

study followed the interview questions. I described operational definitions; assumptions, limitations, and delimitations; the significance of the study; its contribution to business practice; and the study's implications for social change. Next, I presented a review of the relevant literature.

In the second section of this study, I will describe the study in detail. This section will include information about the role of the researcher, choice of research method and design, and selection of population and sampling studied, as well as ethical issues, data collection, organization, and analysis, and consideration of the study's dependability, credibility, transferability, confirmability, and data saturation. The third section of this research will include possible applications for professional practice and implications for social change. Recommendations for action and further research, as well as reflections and conclusions, will follow.

Section 2: The Project

Employee turnover costs businesses in the United States billions of dollars annually (Wallace & Gaylor, 2012). Employee turnover is one of the most important and challenging issues in HRM (Armstrong, 2014). The purpose of this qualitative exploratory single case study was to explore the retention strategies that some childcare center directors use to retain their employees. In this section, I described the purpose for this study, my role as researcher, participants, research method and design, population and sampling, ethical research, and data collection of this research study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory single case study was to explore the retention strategies that some childcare center directors use to retain their employees. The research population consisted of five directors who successfully implemented retention strategies in five different childcare centers in the Columbus, Ohio metropolitan area. Understanding the strategies used to retain employees will help childcare center directors reduce the turnover cost and ensure stability for employees in that industry. Retaining childcare employees will help the children develop a strong emotional attachment to the employees that will allow the children to develop a sense of trust that will help them build healthy relationships with others. In addition, skilled teachers will help develop the children and better prepare them for the future. The results of this study may influence positive social change by availing the retention strategies that childcare center directors can use to improve the quality of their childcare center workplace. A clean and healthy environment produces a good citizen (Tsai, 2011). Poor quality in early childhood

education can be detrimental to the development of children, particularly if teachers fail to equalize some of the disparities and disadvantages that children face in the early developmental stages of their lives (Manning et al., 2014).

Role of the Researcher

During my study, I was the main data collection instrument. While engaging in research, it is crucial to keep personal perceptions and beliefs away by reporting all of the data (Berger, 2015; Tracy, 2013; Tufford & Newman, 2012). I was familiar with the topic of this study because I have helped multiple childcare center owners and directors establish effective policies and implement different strategies. Financial performance, employee productivity, policy structure, and selection process are some of the areas in which I have helped directors.

It is the researcher's role to eliminate or minimize any biased views they hold that may potentially affect the data in any shape or form (Berger, 2015; Henry, 2015; Tracy, 2013). I conducted the doctoral research in the metropolitan area where I lived, but I did not use any center with which I had been involved. In addition, I maintained a journal to help me review all the information in the future, and I employed bracketing or *epoché*. Researchers bracket their preconceived notions or ideas by journaling their reflections about any assumptions that they may hold prior to the proposed research (Tufford & Newman, 2012).

Some research requires that participants give informed consent, and therefore, researchers must offer a simple language statement and consent forms to the ethics committee (Harris & Robinson Kurpius, 2014; Islam, 2014; Morgans & Allen, 2012;

Naanyu, Some, & Siika, 2014). The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is responsible for safeguarding that all Walden University research conforms to the university's ethical standards as well as U.S. federal regulations (Walden Research Center, 2015).

Additionally, I abided by the *Belmont Report's* principles and ethical standards in conducting my research involving human subjects and followed the three core principles identified in the *Belmont Report*: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1979).

I was not an employee of the childcare centers that were the subjects of this research and did not have any relationship with the participants. I accessed the research participants by obtaining their telephone numbers from the centers' websites, then telephoned each potential participant to discuss my research and invited him or her to participate in this study. Furthermore, I obtained the strategic plans, and employee handbook from the center director at the time of the interview, and followed the interview protocol for this study.

In qualitative inquiry, the purpose of an interview protocol is to ensure standard procedures from one interview to the next (Baille, 2015; Leonidaki, 2015; Swafford, 2014). In order to create and follow the interview protocol, the researcher must understand the previous literature on the topic (Gubrium, 2012). The researcher then develops questions from the literature, in order to enhance and extend the knowledge base (Gubrium, 2012). In the interview protocol (see Appendix A), the interviewer generally asks each participant an icebreaker question followed by four to five open-

ended questions that the interviewer asks of each participant in their interview (Swafford, 2014).

Participants

Based on the research objectives of my study, I selected five directors from five different childcare centers in the Columbus, Ohio metropolitan area to participate in the study. In addition, I obtained a copy of documents, from each of the centers that participants directed, of the different programs that were available to help retain employees such as employee benefits, health insurance, sick leave, vacation days, financial benefits, and tuition assistance. Proper selection of participants has key importance in any study (Cleary, Horsfall, & Hayter, 2014; Gul & Vuran, 2015; Johnson & Christensen, 2014). In order to attain good research outcomes, the researcher must carefully choose the participants. I obtained contact information for the directors from the centers' websites in order to contact the directors to invite them to participate in my research. The eligibility criteria were that the directors had to have successfully implemented retention strategies at their childcare center.

Informed consent is central in conducting any professional research (Harris & Robinson Kurpius, 2014; Islam, 2014; Naanyu et al., 2014). I made initial contact with directors by telephone and clarified the purpose of the study and their role before requesting consent. By giving their informed consent, participants indicated that they understood how much time they would have to spend and that their queries had been answered. Participants continued to re-affirm their consent to participate throughout the study (Western Institutional Review Board [WIRB], 2016). After they expressed their

acceptance to participate in the study, I asked the participants to sign a consent form to serve as evidence that they were willing to partake voluntarily in the study.

As described in the *Belmont Report*, the autonomy of participants is also important in research studies (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1979). I took all possible measures to guarantee the participants' autonomy. Protecting the participants by informing them of their rights through the informed consent form is paramount (Aluwihare-Samaranayke, 2012; Harris & Robinson Kurpius, 2014; Islam, 2014; Naanyu, Some, & Siika, 2014). In this study, I protected my participants by informing them of their rights through the consent form. I also maintained a positive, ethical, and professional relationship with the participants during my study, which is essential in qualitative studies (Wang, 2013).

Research Method and Design

Research Method

When a researcher is trying to choose a research method, the researcher must select the most effective method to meet the goals of the study (Hayes et al., 2013). It is important for the researcher to provide a rationale for choosing the key methodologies in the study (Hallberg, 2013). A lack of such information may lead to disorganized reporting by the researcher and thus lower the quality and credibility of the study (Hyett, Kenny, & Dickson-Swift, 2014).

In this study, I explored the retention strategies that some childcare center directors use to retain their employees. Researchers have employed qualitative case study methods in studying the work satisfaction and employee relationships of night-shift

nurses employed in hospitals (Powell, 2013), as well as in a study of mental health workers employed in a large mental health agency (Moll, 2014), and in a study of teachers involved in coteaching students with disabilities (Ashton, 2014). Powell (2013) noted that a qualitative case study approach allowed for a deeper understanding and insight into the real experiences of the nurses who participated in the research; Moll (2014) selected a qualitative case study inquiry in order to learn about the employees' perceptions and experiences, whereas Ashton (2014) selected the qualitative case study research design in order to understand teachers' perceptions of coteaching students with disabilities. Learning from the research design employed by previous researchers, I thoughtfully constructed a qualitative case study design that enabled me to understand the real-life experiences of childcare center employees better, by connecting with directors through the interviews.

In addition, Yin (2013) described the qualitative case study design as an in-depth exploration strategy to enable the researcher to explore a specific and complex phenomenon within its real-life context. Using the qualitative method enabled me to comprehend problems better from the directors' standpoints (Wahyuni, 2012). In addition, the method helped me to identify those factors that directors see as potential contributors to employees' turnover intentions. Jamshed (2014) suggested that use of the qualitative method helps the researcher to uncover the preconceived concepts as well as to explore the issues from an in-depth perspective.

Researchers use the quantitative method in studies where there is a need of collecting numerical data and inferring through statistical analysis (Hoare & Hoe, 2013).

A quantitative method was not appropriate for this study because I did not test a theory and did not obtain data for inferential statistical testing (Hoare & Hoe, 2013). Johnson and Christensen (2014) noted that in quantitative research, researchers test the hypotheses and make predictions about causes and effects. Fassinger and Morrow (2013) noted that researchers using quantitative methods employ statistical measures and hypothesis testing. In this study, I neither tested hypotheses nor employed statistical measures.

I also considered a mixed methods research approach for this study. Mixed methods researchers use a combination of both qualitative method and quantitative method (Arnold, 2011; Hayes et al., 2013). The mixed method approach is an appropriate strategy when neither a purely quantitative nor a purely qualitative approach is acceptable by itself to explore the research topic or when the researcher is in need of one method to inform and another method to clarify (Arnold, 2011; Hayes et al., 2013; Wisdom et al., 2012). The mixed method approach did not fit my study because my focus was on identifying and exploring retention strategies needed to change employees' intentions and not on testing hypotheses related to this topic.

Research Design

I chose an exploratory single case study design for my study. The reason for employing a single case study is that this type of research enables the researcher to capture conditions of commonplace situations (Cronin, 2014; Lipscomb, 2012), which in this study was employee retention in childcare centers. The rationale for a single case study approach was that I was trying to understand the phenomenon of employee retention by examining the views and experiences of childcare center directors (Cronin,

2014; Lipscomb, 2012; Waibel et al., 2015). The description of human experiences is central in such studies (Wilson, 2015). The nature of case study inquiry is to address research questions that require the researcher to understand the social and organizational processes (Moll, 2012; Powell, 2013).

In qualitative inquiries, data saturation is the point when the additional collection of data would not further illuminate the topic being investigated (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Qualitative researchers design their research studies with data saturation as a consideration (Cleary et al., 2014; Eslamian, Moeini, & Soleimani, 2015; Molefe & Sehularo, 2015). In qualitative studies, a limited sample size might still represent a research population (Dworkin, 2012; Farrokhi & Mahmoudi-Hamidabad, 2012; Yang, Wan, & Fu, 2012). Glaser and Strauss (1967) noted that if the sample is too large, the researcher may have repetitive data. Researchers Bush, Hux, Guetterman, and McKelvy (2016), Laliberte, Perreault, Damestov, and Lalonde (2013), and Ryan (2005) all conducted their qualitative case studies with a sample size of five participants. These researchers noted that this sample size was adequate to reach data saturation; Ryan defined saturation as “informational redundancy” (p. 1103). Accordingly, I determined that a sample of five participants from five different childcare centers was adequate to accomplish data saturation in this study.

In designing the study, I considered the following other qualitative designs: phenomenology and ethnography (Vasquez, 2014; Wang, 2013; Wilson, 2015). The primary goal of phenomenological research is to explore the human experience from those living the phenomenon (Wilson, 2015). This goal was not the objective of this

study, as my intent was to explore the retention strategies some directors of childcare centers use to retain their employees. An ethnographic design was also not appropriate for this study because in the ethnographic method, the researcher attempts to study an entire culture of people to gain a better perspective of the members in that culture (Renedo & Marston, 2015; Wang, 2013).

Population and Sampling

Choosing an ideal population is the first step in conducting research (Edwards, 2014). It is essential for researchers to clearly describe the strategy and rationale for sampling, as well as the criteria for inclusion (Palinkas et al., 2013; Robinson, 2014). In order to obtain participants for my study, I selected a total of five center directors from five different childcare centers in the Columbus, Ohio metropolitan area who fit the criteria for this study. The eligibility criteria were that the directors had successfully implemented retention strategies at their childcare centers.

Qualitative researchers who seek rich and insightful information from individual participants meeting certain criteria employ purposive sampling (Escandari, Simbar, Vadadhir, & Baghestani, 2015; Gul & Vuran, 2015; Molepo & Delpor, 2015).

Researchers have demonstrated the value of thoughtfully setting criteria for sampling (Ari, 2014; Chen, Lee, Liang, & Liao, 2014; Topkaya, 2015). In this approach to sampling, the researcher carefully and purposely determines the criteria for selection of participants (Burgaz & Kocak, 2015; Yilmaz & Kilicoglu, 2013). Researchers Ari (2014), Ashworth (2015), and Dudley et al. (2015) demonstrated the use of purposive sampling in their qualitative studies. Specifically, I chose to use purposive criteria sampling in

designing my study, in which I interviewed childcare center directors who had successfully implemented retention strategies at their childcare centers. I chose purposive sampling for my study because of my intention to explore the retention strategies needed to reverse employees' intentions to leave their childcare center.

Along with sampling technique, it is also important to consider that the chosen sample size is adequate to reach data saturation (Cleary, Horsfall, & Hayter, 2014; Guetterman, 2015; Marshall, Cardon, Podar, & Fontenot, 2013) and to provide valid findings (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Oppong, 2013; Schiller et al., 2015). In qualitative studies, a limited sample size might still represent a research population (Dworkin, 2012; Farrokhi & Mahmoudi-Hamidabad, 2012; Yang, Wan, & Fu, 2012). The population for this study was five childcare center directors. If the sample is too large, data become repetitive and, eventually, superfluous (Dworkin, 2012). Dworkin (2012) noted that authors of a number of articles, book chapters, and books recommended anywhere from five to 50 participants as adequate sample size for data saturation. Many researchers found five participants to be an adequate sample size to reach data saturation in case studies (Bush et al., 2016; Laliberte et al., 2013, Ryan, 2005; Smith & Roysircar, 2010). If a researcher remains faithful to the principles of qualitative research, sample size in the majority of qualitative studies should generally follow the concept of saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Furthermore, data for this case study came from various sources including interviews as well as strategic plans and employee handbooks from the center directors. The outputs of different informal and formal instruments add value to each other by

explaining different aspects of an issue (Badley, 2015). This use of multiple data sources enabled me to eliminate the need for a larger sample size. Researchers can increase their confidence in the findings of their studies by employing methodological triangulation (Badley, 2015; Denzin, 2012; Heale & Forbes, 2013; Tracy, 2013; Walsh, 2013).

I held interviews in the director's office with each participant one on one, to ensure the privacy of the information and ensure that the participants were comfortable with the setting. Participants' comfort is an important aspect of establishing trust between researcher and participants, resulting in more effective qualitative interviews (Thomson, 2013; Wahyuni, 2012; Yin, 2016). I audio-recorded the interviews, which I transcribed. In addition, I reviewed the strategic plans and employee handbooks that I received from the center directors to ensure that the documents were correct.

Along with sampling technique, it is also important to consider that the chosen sample size is adequate (Cleary et al., 2014; Guetterman, 2015; Marshall et al., 2013) so that the researcher can conclude valid findings and reach data saturation in the study (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Oppong, 2013; Schiller et al., 2015). Accordingly, I selected five total participants in order to ensure that sufficient data were available for my study. In a qualitative study using interviews as the main form of data collection, Azami-Aghdash, Ghojazadeh, Aghaei, Naghavi-Behzad, and Asgarlo (2015) described data saturation as that point where no fresh, new ideas are likely to be obtained by interviewing additional participants.

The researcher should remain reflexive throughout the process of data collection and analysis, noting when participants' responses to the questions in the interview

protocol yield new material and when the material discovered in the interview responses is repetitive (Azami-Aghdash et al., 2015; Guetterman, 2015; Marshall et al., 2013). In a systematic review of qualitative sampling practices and sample sizes from various qualitative research studies, Guetterman (2015) concluded that some qualitative studies appeared to have unnecessarily large sample sizes. Guetterman noted the importance not only of sample size but of the quality and intentionality of sampling procedures, as well as the researcher's reflexivity throughout the study. Accordingly, if during the data collection and data analysis phases of the study, all of the participants responded with significantly different or new ideas and there was little repetition, I would have increased the sample size to accomplish data saturation. However, there was no need to increase the sample size.

Ethical Research

Informed consent is one of the most important criteria that must be approved by the IRB, and it is a significant component of ethical research. To protect each research participant ethically, I first received approval from the Walden University IRB to begin the research with approval # 07-20-16-0483527. Participants gave their informed consent, ensuring that they had a full understanding of the study's purpose and requirements. Each participant had a clear understanding of the consent form. For this purpose, I prepared an informed consent form that included enough information on all facets of participation. Additionally, I conducted discussions with participants about the nature of the study and their consent. Disclosing enough information about the nature and purpose of the study and about the participants' rights is an efficient strategy in improving participants'

understanding (Nishimura et al., 2013; Tamariz, Palacio, Robert, & Marcus, 2013; Thomson, 2013). I contacted potential participants by telephone to ask them if they had successfully implemented retention strategies at their childcare center and for their agreement to participate in the study. In the telephone conversation, I also requested that they bring a copy of the employee handbook and strategic plan document to the interview. We scheduled the interview together.

Based on the recommendations of Nishimura et al. (2013), Tamariz et al. (2013), and Thomson (2013), I met with the participants and explained each detail of the study in simple, easy-to-understand language, which is important for participants to give informed consent including the purpose of the study, study procedures, potential risks and benefits of the study, level of confidentiality, disclosure of possible conflict of interest, and most importantly their rights as participants. I also explained that participants could withdraw from the study verbally, by phone, or in writing, with or without stated reasons, before or during the interview. Finally, each participant signed the consent form. Each participant had no concern or hesitation in signing the consent form and agreed to participate in the study. In case any participant left the study, I would cease all research actions involving that participant. I would not attempt to interact with that participant or obtain more private information related to the study involving that participant. However, every participant engaged and remained in the study. I did not offer incentives for participation in this study.

I took every essential step to keep the roles and identities of the participants confidential by assigning special codes corresponding to each participant in order to

protect the participant's identity. I assigned the code P1 to Participant 1, and so on. I used checklists to log all activities with participants and removed every possible identifier such as picture, name, address, phone, and e-mail address from documents. I had only limited access to participants' information. Furthermore, I will keep the data safely in a locked file for 5 years, at which time I will destroy the material.

Data Collection Instruments

I was the main instrument for collecting the data. I collected data through thoughtfully designed in-depth structured interviews, as this is one of the key methods for collecting qualitative data (Leonidaki, 2015; Roller & Lavrakas, 2015; Swafford, 2014). I interviewed participants face to face. As Sparkes and Smith (2014) recommended to researchers, I personally contacted each participant one day before each interview to give a reminder of the upcoming interview. I scheduled each interview at the participant's workplace, free of distractions. Before conducting each interview, I made sure that all the arrangements and preparations had been made and that I was fully aware of the goals I was going to achieve in the interview.

I started by introducing myself and the purpose of the study while remaining mindful of the ethics and professionalism required. I followed the interview protocol during each interview (see Appendix A). After addressing the interview format and anticipated time with the participant, I reassured the participant that their participation was voluntary and that if they felt uncomfortable, they could verbally ask for a break or they could cease participating at any time. I asked the participant to read and sign the Informed Consent Form, which included their consent for the interview to be audio taped.

I made clear to the participant that I would transcribe these tapes and that no unauthorized person would gain access to these tapes. I informed the participant that I would destroy the tapes after 5 years. I asked them if they had any questions or queries before starting. I used feedback expressions such as “Thanks; this is really helpful” and “This is what I am looking for” during the interview to motivate the participant. I also made sure that the participant fully understood what I wanted to ask. At the conclusion of the interview, I thanked the participant for participating.

Reliability and validity are important in qualitative studies (James, 2013; Yanchar, 2015; Zohrabi, 2013). Strategies to ensure the credibility of the study’s findings include: (a) accounting for personal biases; (b) keeping careful records throughout the study; (c) employing methodological triangulation by using more than one method of obtaining data; and (d) inviting participants to review and verify the final interview transcripts, for respondent validation (Noble & Smith, 2015). By employing these strategies, researchers can increase the dependability, confirmability, credibility, and transferability of a study, which is essential when designing and performing qualitative research (Hallberg, 2013; Leung, 2015; Noble & Smith, 2015). I followed the strategies suggested by Noble and Smith (2015) to increase the dependability, confirmability, credibility, and transferability of my study.

I achieved methodological triangulation by requesting the strategic plans for each of the childcare centers and obtaining a copy of the employee handbook from each of the childcare center directors, to identify the strategies that are in place to retain current and future employees. In addition, I obtained a copy of documents of the different programs

that were available in helping employees retain their jobs, such as employee benefits, health insurance, sick leave, vacation days, financial benefits, and tuition assistance. I extracted and analyzed the information in the strategic plans in the handbook to look for retention strategies. This information supplemented the interview transcript data, thus creating methodological triangulation (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012; Heale & Forbes, 2014; Kornbluh, 2015).

Data Collection Technique

Houghton, Casey, Shaw, and Murphy (2013) recommended the use of person-to-person interview techniques to collect the data for qualitative studies and emphasized practices that help to create rigor in case study research. Interviews took place at the participants' workplace, in a room that offered privacy and confidentiality. I started by developing an affinity with the participant by sharing a handshake and thanking them for coming. Before asking questions, I invited the participant to review the Informed Consent Form, which we both signed. During the interview, I made sure that the participant had a complete understanding of the questions, and I also elicited responsiveness. Researchers use interview procedures to improve the rigor of a study (Houghton et al., 2013; Leonidaki, 2015; Sparkes & Smith, 2014; Swafford, 2014). I asked questions in the language and order indicated in the Interview Protocol (see Appendix A) and attempted to eliminate any bias. First welcoming the participant, I then proceeded to ask the questions as listed in the Interview Protocol. To wrap up the interview, I said:

Thanks again for sharing your experiences with me today. It has been very helpful! I will be e-mailing you soon with a summary of your interview so that

you can check to see that it is accurate, and you can share any other thoughts you may have with me. You have my e-mail and phone information on the consent form. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or any other thoughts you may have.

By interviewing participants face to face, a researcher can elicit detailed responses from the participants (Leonidaki, 2015; Redlich-Amirav & Higginbottom, 2014; Swafford, 2014). There is absolute certainty that the selected participant is answering, rather than someone else at his or her place. If the interview is face to face, then a long session may be easier to tolerate. In face-to-face interviews, the participant has an opportunity to ask for clarification of the questions if there is any doubt. During the interview, if any of my participants were hesitant in responding to a question, I did not force him or her to respond. I obtained sufficient answers for my questions by asking the questions again, showed consideration and compassion to my participants, and repeated their responses as suggested by Heale and Forbes (2014), who recommended that the advantage of face-to-face interviews is that the researcher asks questions in a specific order, following the interview protocol; this approach eliminates any chance for the participant to flip to any questions to respond such as in research studies that use a questionnaire or survey instrument as their data collection instrument.

Face-to-face interviews cost time and money, and require special arrangements. The selected location for the interview can affect the participant. In a face-to-face interview, there is a chance of the participant jumping from one subject to another. Face-

to-face interviews may not be suitable when participants come from a large geographical area (Leonidaki, 2015; O’Cathain et al., 2014; Swafford, 2014).

In addition to interviews with the five directors, I asked each center director to provide me with the strategic plans for the center and a copy of the employee handbook. I extracted and analyzed the information in the strategic plans and in the handbooks by going over the different determinants that might play a role in retaining the employees. I used the information from the strategic plans and the handbooks to supplement the interview transcript data, thus creating methodological triangulation, as recommended by Bekhet and Zauszniewski (2012), Heale and Forbes (2014), and Kornbluh (2015).

I employed an additional form of data collection through the member checking process, which consisted of respondent validation from each participant. Kornbluh (2015), Marshall et al. (2013), and Tracy (2013) recommended the use of member checking in qualitative research. After I read and analyzed the interview transcript, I prepared a brief summary of each individual participant’s responses and shared the summary with that participant via e-mail. I asked the participant whether the summary accurately represented his or her intended responses; there were no discrepancies.

Data Organization Technique

Following the data collection phase of the study, I transcribed the audiotapes. I kept these transcripts confidential; they do not contain the participants’ names or other identifying information. As recommended by Sparkes and Smith (2014), Swafford (2014), and WIRB (2015), I identified individual participants by number, such as P1, P2,

P3, and so on. I will keep the audiotapes and printed transcripts in a locked file cabinet for 5 years following the study's completion; I will destroy the tapes after that time.

Additionally, I kept a journal throughout the study, reflecting on the process and on my experiences and emotions throughout the research process, as recommended by Cope (2014), Doyle (2013), and Tufford and Newman (2012). I kept this journal electronically on a password-protected computer. I will keep any printed materials such as interview transcripts and consent forms in a locked file cabinet to preserve the participants' privacy and confidentiality.

Data Analysis

I analyzed the qualitative data collected during my study by using methodological triangulation, the coding process of qualitative analysis, and respondent validation. Denzin (2012), Syed and Nelson (2015), Torrance (2012), and Walsh (2013) recommended these approaches during data analysis in qualitative research. Transcripts of the interviews comprised the main data source for this study, supplemented by notes made during the data collection process as well as data from those printed materials received from the center directors, specifically the strategic plans and employee manuals. I shared brief summaries of each participant's interview with the individual participants for respondent validation, which helped to deepen the results (Bergen, 2015; Doyle, 2013; Swafford, 2014). As Torrance noted, respondent validation may include research participants checking transcripts and summaries of interviews for accuracy.

Based on the recommendations of Thomson (2013), following the transcription of the interviews, I made printouts of each interview and immersed myself in repeated

readings of the interviews. After extensive, repeated readings of the interview transcripts, I began to create a written list of codes that emerged from the material. I then manually wrote the codes onto the printouts of the interviews. This process was recursive in that new codes emerged as the process continued, and I returned to each transcript multiple times to add more codes.

Following the coding of the transcripts, I grouped the codes together under several themes, which emerged from the analysis. Dudley et al. (2015), Syed and Nelson (2015), and Tracy (2013) recommended that researchers take these steps when coding and identifying themes in qualitative analysis. These themes closely resembled those themes explored during the literature review phase of my study; additional themes also emerged. I then grouped the codes under the themes, anticipating that some codes would belong with more than one theme.

Throughout this process, I thought about the themes and how they relate to the research questions and conceptual framework of my study (James, 2013; Swafford, 2014; Syed & Nelson, 2015). I also performed additional keyword searches and literature review on an ongoing basis. I located additional relevant peer-reviewed research articles that could enhance my research during 2016.

Reliability and Validity

Hallberg (2013) noted that all research, irrespective of method, should meet the same criteria of quality, validity, and trustworthiness. In qualitative inquiry, researchers must be mindful of dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability, as compared to researchers doing quantitative studies concerned with reliability and validity

(Leung, 2015). Additionally, the researcher must consider data saturation when designing and undertaking a qualitative study, in order to ensure that it is rich, diverse data (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, & Neville, 2014; Fusch & Ness, 2015; O'Reilly & Parker, 2013).

Establishing validity and reliability in qualitative studies differs from that of quantitative studies, where statistical methods determine validity and reliability (James, 2013; Noble & Smith, 2015; Syed & Nelson, 2015). In qualitative studies, scholars refer to the qualities of dependability, confirmability, credibility, and transferability; these terms are equivalent to validity and reliability (Cope, 2014; Elo et al., 2014; Whiting & Sines, 2012). It is the responsibility of the researcher to make sure that his or her study meets the quality standards and shows trustworthiness (Baille, 2015; Elo et al., 2014; Henry, 2015).

Dependability and Confirmability

Dependability in qualitative studies refers to the stability of data and is analogous to reliability in quantitative studies, whereas confirmability is related to the accuracy of data (Kemperaj & Chavan, 2013). Uniformity in data is the crux of reliability in qualitative studies (Grossoehme, 2014). Researchers employ similar strategies to ensure the dependability and confirmability of a qualitative study. To enhance dependability and confirmability in my study, I used an audit trail, which Houghton et al. (2013) described as a thorough description of all steps in the research process that will provide the reader justifications for all methodological, analytical, and interpretative decisions made during the study. According to Kemparaj and Chavan (2013), for better audit trail that will

establish dependability, it is important to have six cases of records, which are (a) raw data, (b) data reduction and analysis products, (c) process notes, (d) materials relating to intentions and dispositions, (e) instrument development information, and (f) data reconstruction products. Another strategy that I used to ensure dependability and confirmability in my study was reflexivity, which Berger (2015), Doyle (2013), and Houghton et al., described as the process of reflecting on the researcher's own actions that can affect any aspect of research.

Credibility

Credibility in qualitative studies refers to the value of findings and the extent to which they are believable (Kornbluh, 2015). To ensure credibility in the study, participants had the opportunity to provide their feedback for respondent validation (Kallemeyn, Hall, Friche, & McReynolds, 2015; Oliver, Aicken, & Arai, 2013; Torrance, 2012). I gained a better understanding of the phenomenon of turnover by engaging in the in-depth case study and by supplementing the interview data with data obtained from printed materials, including employee manuals and strategic plans. This methodological triangulation enhanced the research results.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the applicability of research findings to similar situations, such as similar populations or settings (Houghton et al., 2013). I attempted to obtain transferability in my study by the use of thick description, which is describing the original context of research, methods, and examples adequately (Houghton et al., 2013; Leung, 2015; Noble & Smith, 2015). By providing the readers of this study with

sufficient thick description, I will enable them to form an opinion about the transferability of this research, its method, and results.

Data Saturation

Data saturation, which is the point when the additional collection of data would not further illuminate the topic being investigated, was one of the goals of the research process (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Fusch and Ness (2015) stated that when designing research, researchers may use interviews as one method of data collection to reach data saturation, by using an interview protocol and asking each participant the same questions. According to Azami-Aghdash et al. (2015), a researcher reaches the point of data saturation when additional interviews with new participants would yield no distinctly new ideas. I attempted to reach data saturation through the process of obtaining five rich, in-depth interviews and their transcriptions, as well as by the use of respondent validation. If I had not reached data saturation after the five interviews, I would have invited additional participants to be interviewed. Through the process of member checking, I obtained respondent validation from each participant, based on the recommendations of other researchers (Carter et al., 2014; Eslamian et al., 2015; Kornbluh, 2015; Marshall et al., 2013; Molefe & Sehularo, 2015; Tracy, 2013). After reading and analyzing the interview transcripts, I prepared a brief summary of each individual participant's responses and shared the summary with that participant via e-mail. I asked the participant if the summary accurately represented his or her intended responses. The participants did not identify any discrepancies. If there had been

discrepancies, I would have added material to the interview transcript and noted it as additional material from the participant.

Transition and Summary

In this section, I described my study in detail, including my role as researcher, choice of participants, setting, case study design, and qualitative method. In addition to detailing the processes of selecting and recruiting participants through purposive criteria sampling, I also described ethical and methodological issues as well as specific plans for data collection, organization, and analysis. Finally, I considered the important aspects of the study's dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability as well as the issue of data saturation.

In the third section of the doctoral study, I will present my findings by analyzing the results. In addition, I will address possible applications for professional practice and implications for social change. The third section will also include recommendations for action and further research, as well as reflections and conclusions.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory single case study was to explore the retention strategies that some childcare center directors use to retain their employees. Based on analysis of the data from the interviews and the collected documents, my findings consisted of five themes regarding the strategies that childcare center directors use. These themes included (a) employee compensation, (b) communication and culture, (c) education and training, (d) supportive work environment, and (e) perception of management.

Presentation of Findings

In this study, I used interviews to gain an in-depth understanding of the strategies that childcare center directors use to retain their employees. During my review, I also used the childcare center handbook and the strategic plans provided by each childcare center director to help enhance the triangulation of data for this study. I conducted the interviews at each center in the director's office; no interview lasted more than 45 minutes. After I conducted each interview, I transcribed the audio recordings and uploaded the transcription into a journal to identify the common themes and codes from each interview and document. In the process, I replaced the names of each center director with names of P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5 to protect their identity. Once I had coded all of the data and there were no new themes emerging, I then performed member checking by sending the participants a summary of the transcription of their interview to help close any gaps or correct any inaccurate statements. During the interview process, the center

directors provided their experiences, ideas, and insights regarding the strategies used to retain the employees. The five center directors participated in the interviews and responded to the research question: What are the retention strategies that some childcare center directors use to retain their employees? The five themes generated from their responses were (a) employee compensation, (b) communication and culture, (c) education and training, (d) supportive work environment, and (e) perception of management.

Theme 1: Employee Compensation

Employee compensation consists of salary and other benefits that may include different packages such as flexible schedule, recognition programs, and employee perks that can help center directors with a strategic advantage when retaining employees (P1, P2, P3, P4, & P5). The five center directors agreed that employees are satisfied with their jobs, motivated, and committed when the benefits package is enhanced and indicates that the management cares about the employees. P1 indicated that a “Good pay scale will help in the level of satisfaction of the employees.” P2 pointed out that pay scale and employee benefits are the focal points for employee satisfaction. P3 indicated that ensuring that the employees have enough hours helps in improving their pay and making sure that they are satisfied. P4 defined the level of satisfaction as ensuring that the employees understand their benefits packages because the employees feel valued with an ample salary. P5 indicated that more hours would lead to a higher salary and that a good rewards package and flexibility with hours are the main factors in satisfying the employees.

Compensation is an essential component in retaining employees and influencing them to stay in their current job (Torres & Adler, 2012). Conversely, the lack of an

adequate system to compensate the employees will increase employee turnover (Barnes, Reb, & Ang, 2012). P3 stated that it is important to be competitive with employee salaries so that experienced employees will receive a higher salary, but also so that the inexperienced teachers should receive a fair amount, to keep everyone satisfied. However, Idris's (2014) findings contradicted the participants' opinions, as Idris noted that financial benefits are not a sustainable retention strategy.

P1 and P2 defined flexible hours as an option to help employees receive schedules that they are comfortable with and to ensure that the employees work with the center directors to adjust their schedules when necessary. P5 noted that flexible hours help employees balance their life outside of the center. P2, P3, and P5 also opined that being involved in a good relationship helps when adjusting the hours of the employees and in knowing whether they need to provide extra hours or point them toward a certain benefit that they missed. P2, P3, and P5 indicated that helping the employees when they have family issues and understanding their situations by providing them with unplanned time off enables the employees to balance their work and home lives. P4 stated that understanding that the employees have personal lives and that they are responsible for families is an area that directors must consider when creating the schedule and rewarding employees.

P2 and P3 indicated that the employees are always willing to stay in their current job as long as salaries stay competitive and the health insurance rates are realistic to what they earn. P5 noted that allowing the employees to have input on the benefits that are in place and giving them options will increase their level of satisfaction, and in turn,

increase the director's ability to retain the employees. This finding aligns with the research of Vidal-Salazar, Cordon-Pozo, and de la Torre-Ruiz (2016), who noted that organizations with flexible employee benefits had improved rates of employee retention and satisfaction.

Reilly, Nyberg, Maltarich, and Weller (2014) stated that voluntary employee turnovers are a result of an increase in the job demand and different level of satisfaction among the employees. The five center directors praised their staff and had different incentives throughout the year. For example, P5 offered employees an extra day off if the employees did not miss any days of work and arrived on time during the winter months. This finding regarding offering incentives to employees aligns with the findings of Mertler (2016). Mertler noted the importance of recognizing and acknowledging teachers' value by providing them with opportunities for professional development and collaboration as well as incentives such as increased pay and flexible benefits. Whiteoak and Manning (2012) indicated that when employees are given the opportunity to participate in important decisions in the business, the employees better understand their value and renew their commitment to the job. P4 stated that the employees would have the ability to shape the center, as they would assist in structuring the different benefits.

Theme 2: Communication and Culture

Shim (2014) indicated that low-turnover agencies have more positive or constructive organizational culture and climate than high-turnover agencies. In addition, communication across the organization helps employees to interact as effective communication requires the employees to exchange information across the organization

(Shoss, Eisenberger, Restubog, & Zagenczyk, 2013). P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5 all indicated that communication across the center and ensuring that everyone is involved are essential in helping employees maintain high levels of satisfaction, and ultimately, in retaining them. P1 suggested that having weekly meetings with the staff and hearing their issues by maintaining open communication has helped the employees' overall level of satisfaction. P2, P3, P4, and P5 agreed that effective communication requires having an open door policy that serves everyone in the center by approaching every situation properly, as the employees can go directly to the person in charge. P1 and P3 suggested that showing the employees that they care for them and are there to support them will ease the communication. These findings align with the research of Ekowati, Abdullah, and Sunaryo (2016), who found a positive and significant direct effect of organizational culture, communication, and transformational leadership on teachers' job satisfaction. Management's effective listening will provide a positive reflection on the organization (Shoss et al., 2013).

P2 suggested that employees must communicate with the parents, as they may not understand the perspective of the teachers, and that the ability to communicate will reduce employees' stress and help increase their level of satisfaction. P4 added that parents are a key aspect of the center and communicating with them will reduce the stress of the teachers and provide a positive relationship between the parents and the employees. Conversely, P3 and P5 noted that a lack of communication with the parents and not approaching them properly about issues with their children tends to cause stress for the teachers, resulting in dissatisfaction and employees leaving the job.

Theme 3: Education and Training

Mondal and Saha (2016) noted that in general, teachers are dissatisfied in spite of different plans and programs that supervisors have implemented to improve their job satisfaction. However, Alasadi and Al Sabbagh (2015) suggested that individuals can capitalize on the skills they learn from education and training to improve their job satisfaction. The five center directors highlighted the importance of higher education and training among the staff. P1, P3, and P4 concluded that during the hiring process, an in-depth interview is conducted to capture the education and the training of the candidates and how they align their future goals with their careers. P1 and P4 explained how they valued those well-rounded employees who had education and previous experience compared to those who did not possess the qualifications. Only P2 and P4 indicated that they invested time, efforts, and resources to educate their staff and support them to gain further education by providing in-service teacher training, a reward system for educational accomplishments, and an increase in pay following certification in certain areas.

The five center directors offered professional development throughout the year for the employees, and the directors concluded that attending the professional development sessions is a requirement. P4 indicated that because of the lack of benefits and the low compensation rates, it is difficult to attract highly qualified individuals. However, P1 and P5 noted that offering educational perks, such as tuition reimbursement, contributed to employees' overall satisfaction, as they can grow personally with the center. Strategic plans and employee handbook and procedures from all centers included a variety of

educational and training opportunities. Yong (2013) indicated that when employees have the opportunities to advance their knowledge, skills, and abilities, they are less likely to leave their jobs.

P1 shared that employees who only possessed lower education, such as a high school diploma, are easier to train and tend to be receptive, as they show a higher level of excitement when learning new knowledge or skills. Individuals who obtain higher education and learn the skills for the job tend to improve their performance (Alasadi & Al Sabbagh, 2015). P4 suggested that the development of the employees through training and education helps the employees improve their performance and gain the knowledge needed for their future positions. P3 stated that employees who have been teaching for a longer period tend to stay, regardless of how much training they receive.

Each of the five center directors conducted monthly staff meetings and arranged meetings with each employee when they could review the different factors that might cause dissatisfaction and stress for them. In these meetings, the directors provided the employees with areas that they needed to focus on and highlighted the areas that directors would need to review for future adjustments. P5 offered small online training sessions to employees. P3 provided employees with refresher e-mail about the policies that the employees should focus on from the standard operating procedures. P5 provided training in the form of a cultural awareness class that helped employees adapt to one another and understand the parents and their expectations. Organizational diversity helps managers to improve creativity and decision making, better serve customers, and enhance organizational flexibility (Mujtaba & Cavico, 2013), but it also leads to synergistic

performance when team members can understand and appreciate each other and capitalize on one another's experiences, knowledge, and perspectives (Elsaid, 2012).

In order to provide a collective understanding and break down the different aspects of the job, employers must define the responsibilities and provide general training to the employees (Call, Nyberg, Polyhart, & Weekley, 2015). All of the center directors indicated that at the time of hiring, employees receive formal training and shadow another teacher for at least a week. This finding also aligns with the research of Shantz, Alfes, and Latham (2014), who concluded that maintaining an educational and training plan for the employees helps to improve their knowledge and performance and in return, increases their level of satisfaction. P1 noted that having the employees share their experiences and concerns provided them with the ability to learn from each other and enhanced their relationships in the center.

Theme 4: Supportive Working Environments

The culture within an organization is crucial, playing a significant role in whether it is a happy and healthy environment in which to work (Tsai, 2011). Accordingly, Mondal and Saha (2016) noted that improper working conditions that repetitively disturb or annoy the employees tend to cause stress and lower employees' job satisfaction. Nongo and Ikyanyon (2011) stated that organizational culture is significant in improving the level of employee commitment to the organization. Strong organizational commitment drives and shapes the organizational culture, promoting a sense of belonging and ownership that is essential for satisfied, productive, and loyal employees (Hussain & Asif, 2012).

P1 and P2 indicated that the work environment must be positive and supportive of the employees to improve the level of satisfaction and the overall performance of the employees. P5 suggested that creating effective work environments that are focused on teamwork and providing strong management support are key factors in retaining employees. P3 stated, "If I am not able to provide the employees with better benefits, I should focus on creating comfort for everyone in the center to retain employees, increase enrollment, and satisfy the parents." P4 noted that the management set the tone by creating ease in the interaction between the employees and the parents by staying professional and supportive. This finding aligns with the research findings of Lewis (2013) that professionalism in the workplace contributes to uniqueness and positive and improved business practices. P5 explained that creating a good morale motivates the employees and helps retain them, yet inadequate working conditions cause a lack of motivation and increase the turnover of employees. P2 stated that "my employees like the work environment, and it is not necessarily about the pay as the morale is determining factor." P1 and P5 suggested that promoting respect in the exchange between the employees, management, parents, and children reduce the tension and the stress that may cause employee turnover.

Theme 5: Perception of Management

The fifth theme that participants identified was the employees' perception of management; unfair treatments and favoritism among the employees caused an increase in employee turnover. However, all of the participants agreed that treating the employees fairly and providing the employees with a transparent system that favors all employees

equally helps in retaining the employees. These findings align with the research findings of Huhtala and Feldt (2016), who noted that a supportive and open organizational culture that employees perceive as ethical could contribute to employee retention and satisfaction. P2, P4, and P5 indicated that unfair treatment leads to employee dissatisfaction, and favoritism among the employees leads to higher employee turnover. P3 stated, “Having a good relationship with the employees, and getting to know them will help reduce favoritism, and ensure that everyone is comfortable.” P3 indicated that “if employees feel they are not receiving a fair treatment, they will simply leave.” This finding aligns with the findings of Gameda and Tynjälä (2015), who noted that low motivation and loss of interest in teaching was because of inequity in received salary. Their salary was not only below the living wage, but also low compared to other professions. Therefore, teachers perceived unfair treatment and pleaded for reasonable pay.

Findings Related to Herzberg et al.’s Theory

The two-factor theory of Herzberg et al. (1959) served as the foundation from which to explore the retention strategies that some childcare center directors use to retain their employees. Leaders of an organization should understand the retention strategies that may lead to job dissatisfaction and may affect employees’ intentions to stay with the organization. The two-factor theory of Herzberg et al. contains the premise that there are two causes for employee state of being: job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction, which are determinants that may affect employees’ intent to stay with or leave the organization. When they developed the two-factor theory in 1959, Herzberg et al. used the data from

interviewing accountants and engineers to explore the factors that motivated them and caused them to be satisfied or dissatisfied with their jobs. In the original study, Herzberg et al. focused on how an organization's leaders can help employees achieve their goals and ensure that they have the opportunity to grow. Job satisfaction and compensation were among the factors that caused employees' dissatisfaction; in the same context, those factors motivated the employees. In the two-factor theory, factors such as job satisfaction, motivation, and communication are direct factors that lead to a reduction in the turnover rates and help organizations retain employees (Herzberg et al., 1959).

I used the Herzberg et al. (1959) two-factor theory in this study to explore the retention strategies that some childcare center directors use to retain their employees. Leaders of an organization should understand the retention strategies that may lead to job dissatisfaction and may affect employees' intentions to stay with the organization. In my findings, I noted that employee compensation, communication and culture, education and training, supportive work environment, and perception of management were strategies that center directors used to retain their employees and reduce employee turnover. Incorporating Herzberg et al.'s two-factor theory in the conceptual framework of this study enabled exploration of the strategies that center directors use to achieve employees' satisfaction and improve employee retention while reducing employees' dissatisfaction and reducing employee turnover.

Certain themes in the literature contain descriptions of the strategies that center directors use to retain employees. Education administrators are also implementing strategies for retention of qualified teachers, as teaching is a stressful profession.

Educators who use specific stress-reducing tactics may become more contented and more willing to remain in the profession (Hong, 2012). There is a prolific amount of literature containing support for the problem of employee retention strategies. Scholars such as Maslow (1943) and Alderfer (1972) put forth various theories to better understand employees and their jobs' characteristics and how these relate to job satisfaction. An increase in employee turnover prompts center directors to seek effective strategies to retain employees. However, the strategies might differ depending on what the employees value most.

From the results of this study, childcare center directors may learn strategies to limit employee turnover, implement change across their centers, and retain employees. With the information from this study, future researchers may better understand the successful determinants to reduce employee turnover. In addition, the study can be used as a foundation for further future research in a larger capacity.

Yin (2013) described the qualitative case study design as an in-depth exploration strategy to enable the researcher to explore a specific and complex phenomenon within its real-life context. Furthermore, using the qualitative method enabled me to comprehend problems better from the directors' standpoints; Wahyuni (2012) asserted that the involvement of the managers provides the researcher with a broader perspective on the issue. In addition, the method enabled me to identify those factors that directors see as potential contributors to employees' job dissatisfaction that leads to turnover intentions. Jamshed (2014) suggested that use of the qualitative method helps the researcher to uncover the preconceived concepts as well as to explore the issues from an in-depth

perspective. In this study, I used the qualitative method to identify employee retention strategies to fill the gap in the literature.

Application to Professional Practice

The directors highlighted the importance of training the employees. Center directors can provide their employees with training that can aid them with their jobs. Ashar, Ghafoor, Munir, and Hafeez (2013) noted that training helps employees in developing a sense of emotional attachment to the organization by giving the perception that the organization cares about the employees and their well-being; employees who received training and developed this attachment were likely to stay in their jobs. Russell et al. (2010) provided reasons for employee turnover but did not indicate successful strategies to retain childcare center employees. Childcare center directors can use the findings from this research study to retain their employees and reduce the employee turnover.

Childcare center executives are required to look for the areas of concern for their employees for them to capitalize on the research findings. Understanding the environment and the determinants that the employees are concerned with can be the first step for childcare executives and directors to improve employee job satisfaction and retention and reduce employee job dissatisfaction and turnover. Executives who compensate their employees well may have to look for different areas to improve their employees' satisfaction and reduce their dissatisfaction. Furthermore, even though compensation is important to employees in general when working in career fields that require certain knowledge, skills, and abilities, employees look for more than simply the

compensation. Therefore, it is important for executives and center directors to understand the factors that drive their employees' job satisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959).

The themes in this research are areas that childcare center directors can use to improve the satisfaction of the employees, but at the same time, each director should understand what dissatisfies her or his employees. Furthermore, during the selection process, the directors can gain an understanding of the areas that the employees are mainly concerned with and make adjustments based on the selected employees' concerns. Ensuring that the strategic plans of the center meet the current economic standards and fit the lifestyle of the employees will ensure a higher job satisfaction rate and an improved retention rate.

These directors should adopt strategies that help them facilitate factors that satisfy employees and reduce the likelihood of employee dissatisfaction. By adopting effective strategies, childcare directors will achieve a reduction in employee turnover in childcare centers and will thus help teachers lead children to higher rates of academic growth. In addition, sustainable business practices will enable executives to reduce employee turnover (Zhang, 2016). Sustainable business practices create an environment that cultivates job satisfaction, which may reduce voluntary employee turnover.

Implications for Social Change

The findings of this study may contribute to increasing the retention rate in childcare centers. Directors of childcare centers may use the strategies identified in this study to maintain valued human resources and reduce retention rates. Rizwan and Mukhtar (2014) noted that it is a common belief that employees will give their best if the

employer provides employees with peaceful work, reasonable wages, and a conducive environment to grow. Information about retention strategies may help center directors by capitalizing on the factors that will help improve the performance of their employees, as the directors may fill the gaps in the organizations to increase productivity. In return, higher retention rates will help society by decreasing the unemployment rates and by creating a stable labor market, which improves the lives of individuals. Adopting the strategies from this study in retaining childcare center employees will help in developing children who are ready to face the challenges of the future. Johnson, Kraft, and Papay (2012) found that favorable conditions of work predicted higher rates of student academic growth, even when comparing schools serving demographically similar groups of students.

Recommendations for Action

Childcare executives can use the information in this study to assist them in using the strategies to retain their employees and reduce employee turnover. Childcare center executives can use the information provided in this study to retain the employees and create a stable workforce and a sustainable future. The findings from this study are important to childcare center owners, executives, directors, and future administrators. The successful retention strategies to retain employees and reduce their turnover may assist executives in focusing on the development of the children; the growth of the business, and the hiring of highly qualified professionals. I recommend that childcare executives review the findings of the study to implement the effective strategies that may fit their employees and centers. I will disseminate the findings from the research through various

methods. I will share a summary of my findings with the five directors who participated in the interviews, by sending each participant an e-mail with a summary of the findings. I will publish the study through ProQuest/UMI dissertation database for researchers and others. I will also present the findings of this study in conferences, training sessions, and business-related development meetings.

Recommendations for Further Research

Recommendations for further research include focusing on different sample sizes, similar industries, and varying geographical locations. Future researchers should also consider studying voluntary employee turnover, as well as the profitability of the centers that can retain employees. Future research in such areas could enable center executives to create a sustainable workforce and a sustainable economy for the local community. Additional research could add to the limited scholarly knowledge and improve the understanding of successful strategies used to retain childcare center employees.

The central limitations of this qualitative single case study were that the collected data did not represent all childcare centers. Recommendations for further research include more studies with similar industries, such as preschools, charter schools, private schools, and public schools. I focused on childcare centers in a specific area. Other researchers may extend this research to other areas. I also recommend exploring a different and larger geographical location other than the Columbus, Ohio metropolitan region. Researching with a larger population and different environment could have an impact on the findings and thus different themes and strategies would emerge (Robinson, 2014).

Reflections

In conducting this study, I realized that the employee retention process was much more complicated than just improving the compensation. During my interviews with the participants, they were helpful and welcoming as they provided me with in-depth information about their centers. While conducting this study, I was able to minimize errors and eliminate researcher bias. I was concerned that the participants would not have enough time in their schedules and would not be able to cooperate with the demands of the interview. However, this was not the case. The participants scheduled interview times with me right away, and they replied back to me about the member checking in sufficient time. Furthermore, the participants had a positive attitude and were open about their responses. After completing the study, I believe that I have increased my knowledge level on successful strategies to retain employees in childcare centers, from both the findings of the study and the review of the literature.

The findings from this study exposed me to the areas that I have always overlooked while dealing with employees in my current job. As a human resources manager, I can use the strategies that I have learned to retain my employees and ensure that they are satisfied with their jobs. Although, after completing my research, I now believe that the childcare industry is in need of a larger community support effort to ensure that the development of our children does not fail with consistent employee turnover.

Conclusion

Despite efforts to decrease employee turnover, retention costs continue to rise (Rizwan & Mukhtar, 2014). Employee turnover costs businesses in the United States billions of dollars annually (Wallace & Gaylor, 2012). Employees want to improve their lives and ensure that their futures are brighter versus maintaining the status quo. Their leaders must pave the path for them by aligning their organizational goals in consideration of their employees. Retention strategies might differ in each childcare center, but all the strategies require the executives and the employees to work together to reduce the turnover. Executives must realize that employee turnover is a hidden cost and a reduction in turnover is also a strategy for future sustainability. Effective relationships between the executives and the employees can be a starting point for the managers to understand the areas that might spark and motivate their employees as well as areas that might demotivate their employees. However, executives must realize the importance of a strong workforce that possesses the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed in order to shape future generations. Reducing the costs associated with employee turnover will help executives improve the performance of the employees and create a sustainable workforce.

In conclusion, employee turnover is an area that managers must examine constantly and ensure that they effectively use the strategic plans that are in place to retain their employees. In addition, managers must understand the different trends that affect their employees, in order to take corrective actions in a timely manner to avoid employee turnover. The five identified themes can serve as the basic foundation to retaining employees and the strategies shared when implemented should help executives

reduce employee turnover. Executives can implement and adjust these strategies to fit the needs of their employees and centers.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research and for signing the consent form. I appreciate your time today. Please feel free to ask me any questions at any time during the interview.

Interview Questions

1. What makes the employees satisfied with their current job in the center?
2. What makes the employees dissatisfied with their current job in the center?
3. What are the elements that motivate the employees in their current job in the center?
4. What are the work-related factors that contribute to employee turnover in your center?
5. What is the relationship between you and the employees?
6. What strategies do you use to retain the employees?
7. What aspects ensure that the employees will stay in their current job?
8. What aspects of the job are stressful and can cause the employees to leave their current job?
9. Do you have any additional information, documentation, or processes that will help in this research?

Thanks again for sharing your experiences with me today. It has been very helpful! I will be e-mailing you soon with a summary of your interview, so that you can check to see that it is accurate and you can share any other thoughts you may have with

me. You have my e-mail and phone information on the consent form. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or any other thoughts you may have.