


2017

# Minimizing Nepotistic Practices in Family Owned and Operated Businesses: The Private Sector

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*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Darlene Thomas

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Walden University  
2017

Abstract

Minimizing Nepotistic Practices in Family Owned and Operated Businesses: The Private

Sector

by

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MBA, Strayer University, 2010

BS, Strayer University, 2009

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

March 2017

## Abstract

Owners of family businesses in the private sector must be cognizant of nepotism to reduce skilled employee turnover. Guided by Herzberg two-factor theory as the conceptual framework, the purpose of this multiple case study was to explore strategies used by family owned and operated business leaders to minimize nepotistic practices that reduce skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover. The population for this study included 3 family owned and operated funeral establishments in the Midwest region of St. Louis, Missouri. These participants had sustained their family businesses longer than 5 years while minimizing skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover. Data were collected from semistructured face-to-face interviews, the review of proprietary documents, and public information. Data analysis included a 5-step process: compiling the data, disassembling the data into common codes, reassembling the data into themes, interpreting their meaning, and then reporting the themes. Member checking and methodological triangulation increased the trustworthiness of interpretations. Five themes emerged from the data analysis: work environment, effective communication, education and training, promotion opportunities, and policies and procedures. The implications for social change include (a) reducing nepotistic employment practices in family owned and operated businesses; (b) increasing economic growth potential while simultaneously benefiting employees, families, and communities; and (c) decreasing the unemployment rate. Family owned and operated business leaders can use the results of this study to implement change and to motivate and retain their skilled nonfamily employees.

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## Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral study to my two granddaughters, Iyana Darlene Thomas and Briyani Darene Thomas. Second, I dedicate this journey to my son, DeMille F. Thomas and my daughter, Yolonda W. Williams. I pray that GOD's light shines bright enough through me that you will never give up on broadening your minds. If I can reach higher grounds and achieve the best, so can you. Remember to never give in to the obstacles placed before you. With GOD in your life, all things are possible just believe in yourself.

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## Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Family owned and operated businesses are critical to the growth of the global economy because they significantly contribute to economic growth (Owens, Kirwan, Lounsbury, Levy, & Gibson, 2013). Besides contributing to the gross national product (GNP), family owned and operated businesses in the United States are responsible for employing more than half of the workforce (López-Delgado, & Diéguez-Soto, 2015). In 2013, the Small Business Administration (SBA) reported 23 million small businesses in the United States, represented 54% of all U.S. gross domestic product sales. Michelacci and Schivardi (2013) conducted a quantitative study and found that U.S. family firms positively affected economic productivity growth over the last two decades. Family owned and operated businesses are pivotal in continuous economic growth through creation, innovation, and employment opportunities (Jo, 2014; Kozan & Akdeniz, 2014).

A common practice for family businesses is to attract talented individuals, who invent new products or devise new solutions for current problems (De Mattos, Burgess, & Shaw, 2013). Most family owned and operated business leaders recognize employees as their most valuable assets (Brock & Buckley, 2013). However, some owners of family businesses in the private sector must be cognizant of nepotism to reduce skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover (Safina, 2015). The voluntary turnover rate of skilled employees in the private sector was 1.6 million in September 2009 (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012), and increased to 2.9 million at the end of December 2015 (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). I explored strategies that some owners of family businesses used to minimize nepotistic practices that reduce skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover.

## **Background of the Problem**

The history of family owned and operated businesses dates back as far as Nathan Rothschild (1777-1836), a British textile merchant who later formed a financial services business that evolved into a family dynasty (Ferguson, 1998). Another pioneer of vision, Cornelius Vanderbilt (1794-1877) founded a family dynasty in the shipping and railroads business (Ferguson, 1998; Grant, 2011). In this study, family *business* referred to a family owned and operated organization. By definition, family businesses employ 62% of the U.S. workforce, or an estimated 82 million individuals (López-Delgado & Diéguez-Soto, 2015).

A problem facing some family owned and operated business leaders is minimizing nepotistic practices, which lead to skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover. Historically, a culture grounded in strong family ties can give rise to nepotism (Barnett, 1960). While statistical data does not specifically address the turnover rate of skilled nonfamily member employees, deductive reasoning suggests that the lack of hygiene and motivator factors may lead to such turnover. Traditionally, in a nepotistic work environment, family business leaders were less likely to foster an environment that nurtured the professional desires of nonfamily employees (Salter & Harpending, 2013). Some scholars suggested nepotism drives a wedge between family and nonfamily employees (Frank, 2013; Salter & Harpending, 2013).

## **Problem Statement**

Some owners of family businesses in the private sector must be cognizant of nepotism to reduce skilled employee turnover (Safina, 2015). The voluntary turnover rate of skilled employees in the private sector increased to 2.9 million at the end of December 2015 (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). The general business problem is that if family business

owners limit preferential employment practices to only family members, they may experience increased skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover. The specific business problem is that some owners of family businesses lack strategies to minimize nepotistic practices that result in skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies some owners of family businesses used to minimize nepotistic practices that reduce skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover. The population for this study included three family owned and operated funeral establishments in the Midwest region of St. Louis, Missouri; and consisted of three owners, who had sustained their family owned businesses longer than 5 years while minimizing skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover. Evidence of minimum skilled nonfamily turnover was accessible through exploring the staff biography link on the businesses' websites. The implications for social change included the potential to reduce nepotistic practices in family owned and operated businesses that can negatively affect skilled nonfamily employees causing voluntary turnover, increase economic growth potential while simultaneously positively benefiting employees, families, and communities.

### **Nature of the Study**

There are three types of research methods, qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method (Yin, 2014; Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin, 2013). Qualitative researchers seek to explore social life aspects regarding experiences, attitudes or behaviors with data consisting of text, interviews, records, and observations (Marshall & Ross, 2016; Yin, 2014). In contrast, quantitative researchers use statistical methods to examine relationships or differences among

variables to understand phenomena (Yilmaz, 2013). In a mixed method approach, researchers apply both qualitative and quantitative methods in a single study (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). Completing this multiple case study did not require examining relationships or differences among variables. Therefore, quantitative and mixed methods were inappropriate. A qualitative methodology was best suited for this multiple case study.

Three key qualitative designs are (a) ethnography, (b) phenomenology, and (c) case study (Marshall & Ross, 2016). Researchers seeking a detailed portrait of a cultural-sharing group regarding beliefs and feelings pursue an ethnography design (Ayar, Bauchspies & Yalvac, 2015). Researchers wishing to explore the lived experiences of participants utilize a phenomenological design (Marshall & Ross, 2016; Moustakas, 1994). Case study design reflects an in-depth exploration of a single social unit in its natural habitat without manipulation (Raeburn, Schmied, Hungerford & Cleary, 2015; Yin, 2014). The focus of this study was to explore the *how* and *what* questions of organizations' key strategies, not cultural groups, world-views or lived experiences. Therefore, I chose a case study for answering the research question.

### **Research Question**

The overarching research question for the qualitative multiple case study was: What strategies do some owners of family businesses use to minimize nepotistic practices that reduce skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover?

### **Interview Questions**

1. What strategies have you utilized to keep nonfamily employees interested in their jobs?

2. What barriers if any, did you encounter in developing and implementing your strategy?
3. How did you address the barriers to implementing your strategy?
4. How did or do you assess the effectiveness of your strategy?
5. How do you treat nonfamily employees to promote retention?
6. What strategy do you use to minimize nepotistic practices?
7. What other information not asked can you share on this topic?

### **Conceptual Framework**

Herzberg (1959) developed a two-factor theory based on motivation and hygiene factors. Herzberg used the theory to offer an explanation for what issues affected employee satisfaction or dissatisfaction and motivated or demotivated employees. Herzberg identified the following key tenets underlying the two-factor theory: Motivation (a) success, (b) recognition for success, (c) responsibility for task, (d) interest in the job, (e) development of higher level tasks, and (f) progression; Hygiene (a) working environments, (b) value of supervision, (c) remuneration, (d) status, (e) security, (f) organization, (g) job, (h) organizational policy and administration, and (i) interpersonal relations. As applied to this qualitative multiple case study, Herzberg (1959) two-factor theory was appropriate because the premise is motivation and hygiene factors affect voluntary turnover. Owners of family businesses can experience challenges retaining skilled nonfamily employees. The two-factor theory aligned well with answering the research questions and understanding my study's findings.



## **Operational Definitions**

*Hygiene Factors:* Hygiene factors are elements of the workplace that stimulate employees enough to remain satisfied, but not motivated to go higher (Herzberg, 1965).

*Motivation Factors:* Motivation factors are influential elements of the workplace that stimulate internal generators inside employees to reach the highest level of performance (Herzberg, 1965).

*Nepotism:* Nepotism is the employment practice of giving preferential treatment to family and friends of the family (Lokaj, 2015).

*Nonfamily Employees:* Nonfamily employees are individuals who are not related to family owned and operated business leaders (Farrington, Venter & Sharp, 2014).

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

With regard to the qualitative multiple case study, assumptions and limitations are uncontrollable. Assumptions are facts that I accepted as truthful, but cannot confirm. Limitations offer potential weaknesses in my qualitative multiple case study. As the researcher, delimitations are controllable and are bounds for my qualitative multiple case study.

### **Assumptions**

Assumptions are unproven facts viewed as the truth, (Foss & Hallberg, 2014). This case study included two assumptions. First, I assumed that the participants will show unbiased when responding to the interview questions. The second assumption was that the participants will respond to the interview questions truthfully.

**Limitations**

Limitations are potential shortfalls that are uncontrollable for researchers (Yavchitz, Ravaud, Hopewell, Baron, & Boutron, 2014). There were three limitations associated with this research study. The first limitation was sampling size of participants. The second was the scheduling of interviews due to time constraints. The third limitation was the geographical location of only St. Louis, Missouri as the findings represented only the family owned and operated business leaders in that location and did not represent other leaders in the nation.

**Delimitations**

Delimitations are blueprints designed to outline and control the scope of a research study, and the researcher imposes such boundaries for the scope of a research study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The first delimitations for this qualitative multiple case study included a sampling size of at least three participants, who currently owned a family business. The chosen geographical location for the family owned and operated businesses was in St. Louis, Missouri. The third delimitation was only including family owned and operated businesses in the funeral home industry with employment retention of nonfamily employees for 5 years or more.

**Significance of the Study**

This qualitative multiple case study is of value to the practice of business because, some owners of family businesses, in the private sectors, are unaware that nepotistic practices can increase skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover. Family owned and operated business leaders may consider the findings from this study as a contributory guide to decrease skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover. The implications for positive social change include the potential for owners of family businesses to use the strategies because their use can be

conducive to minimizing nepotistic practices that can increase skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover, increase profitability, sustainability, and economic growth; while simultaneously having a positive impact on employees, families, and communities.

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

In conducting the literature review, sources were primarily from searching business and management databases within Walden University Online Library. I used the following databases to identify relevant literature: ABI/INFORM Complete, Business Source Complete, Emerald Management, Google Scholar, ProQuest Central, PsycArticles, PsycInfo, Sage Research Premier, Sage Research Methods Online, Science Direct, ScholarWork, Thoreau-Multi-Database, and SBA and U.S. Census Bureau websites. In searching the databases, I used the following keywords: *Herzberg, motivation, employment practices, family businesses, family firms, employees, HRM practices, small businesses, nepotism, and nonfamily employees.*

I conducted an exhaustive review of the literature using the Herzberg two-factor theory as my conceptual framework. Comprehensively, the review includes the exploration of diverse applications of Herzberg's theory. I documented my literature sources in a WORD document that enabled me to ensure the sources chosen met the minimum of 85% peer reviewed within 5 years of the publication date requirement. I utilized EXCEL to create a summary of all sources used in Section 1 and Section 2.

Table 1 contains a summary of 172 total sources of which 92% represents 158 scholarly and peer reviewed sources. As required by Walden University's 85% rule, 148 of the scholarly and peer reviewed sources represents 86 % of sources less than five years of CAO approval.

Table 1

Summary of Sources by Reference Type				
Reference Type	Total	< 5 Years	% of total references	> 5 Years
Scholarly / peer reviewed journals /articles	158	148	92%	10
Other literature (seminal books, book, and government reports)	14	8	8%	6
Total	172	156	100%	16

The organization of the literature review included a restatement of the purpose of the study. A critical analysis and synthesis of the Herzberg two-factor theory, includes supporting and contrasting theories. The study includes a discussion covering four literature themes relevant to the Herzberg two factor theory. Finally, provided is support for the relationship of the study to the literature sources.

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies some owners of family businesses use to minimize nepotistic practices and thus reduce skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover. The population for this study included three family owned and operated funeral establishments in the Midwest region of St. Louis, Missouri; and consisted of three owners, who had sustained their family owned businesses longer than 5 years while minimizing skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover. Evidence of minimum skilled nonfamily turnover was accessible through exploring the staff biography link on the businesses' websites. The implications for social change included the potential to reduce nepotistic practices in family owned and operated businesses that can negatively affect skilled nonfamily employees causing voluntary turnover, increase economic growth potential while simultaneously positively benefiting employees, families, and communities.

## **Herzberg Two-factor Theory**

Herzberg (1959) developed a two-factor theory based on motivation and hygiene factors. Herzberg used the theory to offer an explanation for what issues affected employee satisfaction or dissatisfaction and motivated or demotivated employees. The following key tenets underlie the two-factor theory: Motivation (a) success, (b) recognition for success, (c) responsibility for task, (d) interest in the job, (e) development of higher level tasks, and (f) progression. Hygiene (a) working environments, (b) value of supervision, (c) pay, (d) status, (e) security, (f) organization, (g) job, (h) organizational policy and administration, and (i) interpersonal relations.

Herzberg (1965) suggested that job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction epitomized two distinctly different work experiences and not simply opposed to one or the other. Herzberg (1974) noted that some employees desire job satisfaction (hygiene factors), whereas other employees desire job substance (motivator factors). The premise of the two-factor theory was to explore if motivation and job satisfaction influenced employees' decisions to remain with their current employers. Herzberg (1965; 1974) found that employees' job dissatisfaction linked contextually to hygienic factors, whereas employees' job satisfaction linked to those motivating factors associated with job content. In a qualitative study conducted in Finland including 139 Finnish supervisors in various industries, Herzberg (1965) found that 80% of the participants expressed dissatisfaction stemming from hygiene factors.

In contrast, 90% of the participants expressed positive feelings based on motivator factors. The essence of motivator factors in contrast to hygiene factors is the long-term effect on employees' attitudes (Herzberg, 1985). Herzberg (1965) suggested hygiene factors are not the proper antidote for psychological growth, and only through the perseverance of completing a

task will a person develop competence and capabilities. Furthermore, an organization can maximize performance capacity by employing those individuals who are highly passionate about the content of their work.

### **Alternative Theories**

Bakker and Demerouti (2014) discussed and critiqued the combined principles of Herzberg (1966) two-factor theory, Hackman and Oldham (1980) job characteristics model, Karasek (1979) demand-control model, and Siegrist (1996) the effort reward imbalance model. The scholars, Bakker and Demerouti, noted four consistent problems with each of the earlier models concerning job stress and work motivation. First, all the models were one-sided in terms of focusing on job stress or job motivation while ignoring research on the other side. Second, each model appeared simple in that there was no mention of the other existing models. Third, the job characteristics and effort-reward imbalance models are stagnant; there is an assumption that the models with specific variables are applicable across all possible work environments. Fourth, as societies change, the nature of jobs is rapidly changing, and current job stress or motivation models lack design to take into account such volatility.

Bakker and Demerouti (2014) noted an important contribution of Herzberg's (1966) work in that he made other researchers and practitioners aware of the possibility for job enrichment, such as job redesigning and job enlargement to increase motivation and job satisfaction. Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory holds the notion that the mental processes relating to choices of self-interest are an alignment of rewards with employees' wants, and the connections among expected behaviors, rewards, and organizational goals. Employees seek out ways to fulfill their goals and desires. The assumption is that employees' behavior is the

consequence of or reflects conscious choices made in an effort to escalate pleasure and minimize pain.

Vroom (1964) argued that employees' performance is contingent upon five individual factors, personality, experience, knowledge, skills, and abilities. The five factors have less to do with linking self-interest to rewards, but more so with employees achieving an expected outcome. The expectancy theory contains the prediction that employees are motivated when they perceive putting in more effort might yield greater job performance; and greater job performance may lead to organizational rewards, in terms of increased salary or other advantages. In comparison to Herzberg's two-factor theory, which contains an emphasis on the relationship between employees' internal needs and resulting efforts, Vroom (1964) separated effort performance and outcomes. As such, I did not believe Vroom's expectancy theory is a perfect fit to aid in answering the overarching research question of "*What strategies do some owners of family businesses use to minimize nepotistic practices that reduce skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover?*"

Maslow's (1943) triangular hierarchy of needs theory suggested that individuals look to satisfy their needs in a bottom to top process. Using a triangle structured pyramid, Maslow highlighted five elements of human needs starting with the most important at the bottom. The five elements presented two categories of needs, which are deficiency needs (physiological and safety) and growth needs (social, self-esteem, and self-actualization). In a work environment, employees' basic physiological needs set the stage for job satisfaction and motivation. Second, employees look to fulfill their needs in terms of securing a safe work environment and job security. Third, employees' need socialization, the suggestion is that employees need to feel a

sense of belonging to aid in their growth (Maslow, 1943). Fourth, employees look to fulfill their need of achieving self-esteem through efforts such as training, assigned responsibilities, encouragement, promotion, and recognition (Maslow). Fifth, employees need to reach the level of self-actualization to incur motivation and job satisfaction, to include growth through autonomy and creative challenges.

The similarity between Herzberg and Maslow is that both theorists focused on the internal aspects of job satisfaction and job motivation. Maslow indicated that unfulfilled needs lower on the pyramid compromise an individual's ability to reach the next level. As such, Maslow's theory is not a perfect fit to aid in answering the overarching research question: What strategies do some owners of family businesses use to minimize nepotistic practices that reduce skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover? In contrast to Herzberg's two-factor theory and Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, Hackman and Oldham's (1976) job characteristics model (JCM) is based on the premise that the task itself is the major key to employee motivation Hackman and Oldham's JCM (as cited in Ali et al., 2014). According to the JCM, five major job characteristics impact three psychological states resulting in employee motivation. The characteristics include skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback. The three psychological circumstances referenced are (a) meaningfulness of work, (b) responsibility for outcomes, and (c) knowledge of outcomes results in giving employees constructive criticism or compliment.

The implication is that intrinsic needs noted by both Herzberg and Maslow are less relevant factors of employee motivation or job satisfaction. Hackman & Oldham failed to consider other factors outside of job content, such as recognition, rewards, and physiological



needs. The JCM is not a good fit for answering the overarching research question: What strategies do some owners of family businesses use to minimize nepotistic practices that reduce skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover? Adam's (1963) equity theory contains the premise that individuals pursue a balance between their inputs, and the received outcomes, to those of others. The perception of fair treatment becomes a factor of motivation when compared to others in a similar or identical situation. Based on the equity theory, pay and work conditions alone do not determine job motivation. Moreover, giving one employee a promotion or pay increase may have a demotivating effect on others. The notion is that employees value fair treatment, which in turn creates a continuous motivation to retain the fairness upheld within the relationships between their co-workers and organization.

Like Herzberg, Adam (1963) acknowledged certain variable factors (pay and work conditions) influence an individual's assessment and perception of their relationship with both job content and the employer. In contrast, Adam's equity theory contains the premise that employees perceive equality or inequality as the primary basis for determining job motivation. Such implication greatly differs from the two-factor theory of job motivator or demotivator factors. However, in evaluating the equity theory, it does in part support the business problem in the study. The specific business problem is that some owners of family businesses lack strategies to minimize nepotistic practices that result in skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover.

I provided an overview of alternative theories and evaluated their ability to explore strategies some owners of family businesses use to minimize nepotistic practices that reduce skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover. Each theorist, Adam (1963), Hackman and Oldman (1980), Maslow (1943) and Vroom (1964) all support a different purpose, contrary to

addressing my study. Herzberg (1959) two-factor theory of motivation and hygiene comprises the constructs needed for the study. Therefore, the conceptual framework selected in this study is appropriate. Herzberg's theory is widely diverse and lacks continuity. The literature themes are a depiction of the versatility utilized in the application of Herzberg's two-factor theory. The qualitative multiple case study comprises four literature themes that contain details of how researchers applied Herzberg's theory in traditional and nontraditional organizations.

### **Herzberg Applied in the General Workforce**

Mangi, Kanasro, and Burdi (2015) conducted a qualitative study to discuss the impact of motivation on the performance of employees, and the effect on organizational success. Mangi et al. (2015) argued in favor of the possibility to motivate employees to perform better when utilizing motivational tools in organizations. In a focus group setting with employees of different organizations, the researchers found that the participants all agreed that motivation influenced their performance. Mangi et al. (2015) found that motivation, spirit, working ability, and performance of employees contributed to organizational success. The results of Mangi et al. (2015) study supports Herzberg's theory, in relation to motivating (*extrinsic*) factors and hygiene (*intrinsic*) factors with one exception. Not aligned with Herzberg was that all the participants viewed pay and job security as motivator factors, versus hygiene factors.

Similarly, if not the same Pandža, Galamboš, and Galamboš (2015) applied the Herzberg two-factor theory in conducting a quantitative study to determine the primary intrinsic and extrinsic factors associated with employee motivation. Those determined factors were further examined to measure the impact on provided service quality in the Postal Traffic department in Novi Sad. The participants included 60 Novi Sad employees who completed a three-part

questionnaire to address questions relating to demographics, intrinsic (motivators) factors and extrinsic (hygiene) factors. Pandža et al. (2015) found an inconsistency with Herzberg's theory regarding motivating factors. Salary correlated significantly as a factor that caused employees' unhappiness and lack of motivation. In contrast to Herzberg (1966), Pandža et al. (2015) found salary as a motivating factor for the participants in this study. Furthermore, two other researchers found flaws with the tenets of Herzberg's theory. Vijayakumar and Saxena (2015) conducted a quantitative study to investigate Herzberg's two-factor theory of job satisfaction. The focus of the study was on the relationship between motivator and hygiene factors, social cultural invariance of the theory and the place of monetary aspects of a two dimensional framework.

Vijayakumar and Saxena (2015) mailed approximately 300 questionnaires to randomly selected managers in Central and Southern India, with only 144 participants viable for the study. The researchers, Vijayakumar and Saxena (2015) argued the tenets of the two-factor theory were too weak and inconsistent. They found Herzberg two-factor approach inadequate to explain job satisfaction and workplace motivation. Further noted, was that those factors of job satisfaction were not contested invariant; and the socio-cultural setting within an organization operates to influence perceived valuable and invaluable attributes (Vijayakumar and Saxena, 2015). Based on one research study, cultural settings may influence what participants perceive as motivator and hygiene factors. Kim, Kim, Shin and Kim (2015) applied the Herzberg two-factor theory in conducting a quantitative study to identify motivation factors that influenced cultural differences of laborers and their impact on productivity.

The researchers surveyed 1,168 construction workers, 548 Korean workers, and 620 foreign workers from 14 construction sites. The questionnaire included 27 motivator factors

divided into three sub-sections, 5 economic factors, 11 social factors and 11 psychological factors. Kim et al. (2015) found differences in motivator factors amid Korean and foreign workers to include social security insurance, participation in decision making and cultural differences. In contrast to Vijayakumar and Saxena, Hsieh (2016) conducted a quantitative study to investigate the differences and similarities of public, private and nonprofit employees by examining precursors of job satisfaction and job performance. In a cross-section survey of public, private and nonprofit sector employees in Taiwan, the aim was to compare employees' behaviors and attitudes.

In applying Herzberg's two-factor theory, Hsieh (2016) found that job performance and job satisfaction are synchronized influences on each other. Conversely, the effect of job satisfaction is stronger than that of job performance among employees of all three sectors. The researcher, Hsieh (2016) noted the findings coincide with Herzberg's theory of suggesting that employees with higher satisfaction will exhibit better job performance. Also, found was that mutable work motivation generated significant increases in job satisfaction in all three sectors, which supports Herzberg's theory that work motivation contributes to job satisfaction (Hsieh, 2016). Lee and Lin (2014) found that the tenets of Herzberg's two-factor theory in relation to *salary* aligned as suggested. Lee and Lin (2014) applied the Herzberg two-factor theory in conducting a quantitative study to explore the relationship between salary satisfaction, psychological contracts, and job enthusiasm.

The participants included 254 randomly selected employees from various organizations. Lee and Lin found that psychological contracts had a mediating effect amid salary satisfaction and job enthusiasm. There was no connection found between salary satisfaction and

psychological contracts. The researchers, Lee and Lin suggested that although employees perceived salary and rewards, does not mean that salary and rewards motivate employees. In an opposing viewpoint of Pandža et al. (2015), the researchers argued that employers must hire employees with the skill sets they are seeking. Based on the findings, coupled with deductive reasoning *salary* is not a motivating factor.

Similarly, Sihombing, Yuhazri, Yahaya, Kamely and Rahimah (2014) applied the Herzberg two-factor theory in conducting a study to determine how best to measure and find out employees' satisfaction. The researchers, Sihombing et al. (2014) utilized KANO method and Likert scale as instruments to compare and measure the results. The participants included 100 operators in the manufacturing industry, who received and completed questionnaires. Sihombing et al. (2014) found that the Likert scale aligned consistently with Herzberg's theory relating to employees' satisfaction. The hygiene factors included *interpersonal relation, status, working condition, job security, and salary*. Whereas the motivator factors included *growth, work itself, responsibility, achievement, advancement, and recognition*. The measurements of what factors constitute as job satisfaction were dissimilar to the findings of Mangi et al. (2015) study.

Moreover, Sypniewska (2014) conducted a quantitative study to identify and assess factors that influenced satisfaction and dissatisfaction with work, and the impact of those factors on job satisfaction. The participants included 215 randomly selected individuals who worked in various positions for various forms of employment, such as long and short termed contract work, or unique specialty work. The age of the participants, 153 women, and 62 men ranged from 20 to 60 years, with employment ranging between 1 and more than 10 years of experience. Sypniewska (2014) applied Herzberg's two-factor theory as the conceptual framework and found

that the *economic aspects of work, stability of employment and interpersonal work relationships* influenced job satisfaction. In addition, Sypniewska found that depending on the work performed or position held the weight attributed to factors influencing job contentment changed. In support of Herzberg's theory, the researcher found that the factor with the greatest influence on job satisfaction was the work atmosphere and the factor with the least impact was the culture of the company. Echoing the findings of Sihombing et al. (2014), the most important factors included *interpersonal relations, economic aspects of the work, and employment stability* (Sypniewska, 2014).

### **Herzberg Applied to Healthcare Profession**

Several researchers, (Adegoke, Atiyaye, Abubakar, Auta and Aboda, 2015; Babić, Kordić, and Babić, 2014; Holmberg, Sobis, and Carlström, 2016; Knecht, Milone-Nuzzo, Kitko, Hupcey and Dreachslin, 2015; Raines, 2015; and Somense and Marocco Duran, 2015) utilized Herzberg's two-factor theory in their research study to investigate, explore and gain knowledge related to job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction in the healthcare profession. Babić, Kordić, and Babić (2014) conducted a quantitative study to examine the differences in motivational needs in healthcare professionals. The major focus was on differences amid health care professionals employed in public and private health care centers in Belgrade.

Babić et al. (2014) applied Maslow and Herzberg's theories of motivation in the designing of a two-part questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire had designs based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory and the second part of the questionnaire had designs based on Herzberg two-factor theory. The participants included 100 health care professionals, 15 men

and 85 women whose ages ranged from 20 to 66 years. The participants work experience ranged from four months to 39 years, 43 were in the nursing professional, and 57 were doctors.

The researchers, Babić et al. (2014) found that Herzberg's motivation factors correlated significantly with Maslow's theory of needs; with the exception of *sociability*, which Herzberg referred to as *interpersonal relations* a hygiene factor. The takeaway from the study was that *sociability* appeared as a relevant motivator, but not as important as other motivators. Successful *interventions toward patients, obtaining knowledge and professional growth* ranked highest as motivator factors of health care professionals (Babić et al., 2014). Similarly, Raines (2015) applied the Herzberg's theory in conducting a quantitative study. The researcher examined those factors associated with the perception of a group of accelerated second degree nursing graduates. The participants included 49 ethnically diverse five years' graduates, employed in the nursing profession who responded to four open-ended questions.

Raines (2015) found that the participants experienced job satisfaction in terms of their *role and career fulfillment with respect to the economic aspects of nursing, job flexibility, autonomy and new learning opportunities*. All the positive aspects identified by the participants aligned with Herzberg's description of intrinsic characteristics associated with the nature of the job. Likewise, those factors identified as frustrating or as job dissatisfaction such as *short staff, gossip, policy, and lack of pay increase* aligned with Herzberg's theory. In a descriptive mixed method study Adegoke, Atiyaye, Abubakar, Auta and Aboda (2015), explored and investigated the job satisfaction and retention of women employed with the National Midwifery Service Scheme (MSS). The participants included 119 MSS midwives in Northern states of Nigeria.

Adegoke et al. (2015) examined the results of questionnaires, focus group discussions, and in-depth interviews through quantitative and qualitative instruments.

The researchers, Adegoke et al. (2015) applied Herzberg's two-factor theory to highlight and discuss those factors associated with lack of hygiene and motivation. Aligned with Herzberg, Adegoke et al. noted *inadequate supervision, irregular and delayed payment of salary and allowances, inadequate working condition and poor accommodation* contributed to the midwives having a higher degree of job dissatisfaction than job satisfaction. Those factors contributing to a higher degree of job demotivation, than job motivation, *were inadequate promotion opportunities and the absence of a defined career pathway* for MSS midwives. In comparison, Somense and Marocco Duran (2015) applied the Herzberg two-factor theory in conducting a mixed method exploratory, descriptive study. The purpose of the study was to identify hygiene and motivational factors in the work of nurses with respect to professional satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The participants included nine nurses from the cardiology ward of a hospital in the State of Sao Paulo.

The researchers, Somense and Marocco Duran (2015) found 78% of the participants were satisfied with their work in terms of *autonomy, team spirit, job assignment, content, and responsibility*. Factors associated with dissatisfaction were *professional growth, work conditions, political and administration conditions, management style and lack of support*. In contrast to Herzberg two-factor theory, Somense and Marocco Duran found that *professional growth* was not a significant factor of dissatisfaction. Another researcher, Holmberg, Sobis, and Carlström (2016) noted that some of their study results were contrasting to Herzberg. The researchers



applied the Herzberg two-factor theory in conducting a quantitative study to identify factors associated with having a positive impact on job satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

The participants included 118 nursing professionals in a Swedish inpatient psychiatric clinic. Holmberg et al. (2016) found that motivational factors such as *relationships* and *recognition* significantly correlated with job satisfaction. In contrast to Herzberg's theory, Holmberg et al. (2016) found that *salary* correlated significantly with job dissatisfaction and decreased work motivation. Likewise, Knecht, Milone-Nuzzo, Kitko, Hupcey, and Dreachslin (2015) conducted a quantitative study to examine the attributes of licensed practical nurses (LPN) job satisfaction and dissatisfaction in long-term care settings. Knecht et al. (2015) utilized Herzberg's two-factor theory in a focus group setting of 37 LPNs in Philadelphia. The contributory themes of job satisfaction for LPNs were *value*, *real connection*, *empowerment*, and *growth*. Whereas the contributory themes of job dissatisfaction for LPNs included components of *working conditions*, such as *excessive workload*; *inadequate staff and equipment*; *time concerns*; and *the burden of administrative policy changes and mandates*. Identical to Holmberg et al. (2016) study, Knecht et al. (2015) found that *value* and *recognition* were significantly associated with job satisfaction. Although researchers, (Adegoke, et al., 2015; Babić, et al., 2014; Homberg, et al., 2016; Knecht et al., 2015; Raines, 2015; and Somense and Marocco Duran, 2015) used Herzberg's two-factor theory to test their hypotheses in the healthcare industry, Herzberg two-factor theory was tested in international education and academia sectors.

### **Herzberg Applied in Education and Academia**

In preparation of fulfilling final academic requirements, some students may start to ponder which trajectory to pursue in the workforce. Ko and Jun (2015) conducted a quantitative

study to examine how different job motivators and perception toward public service influenced university students' propensity to choose public sector jobs over private sectors in a comparative context. The participants included 1,882 students from prestige universities in China, Singapore, and South Korea. The researchers, Ko and Jun (2015) found a significant amount of difficulties and commonalities among students' motivation in all three countries. The researchers Ko and Jun suggested that students' *career intentions* to work in the public sector over the private sector were unexplainable based on a single-based motivator, *chance to benefit in society*. In contrast, *career intentions* were a mixture of other extrinsic motivators, to include students' perception of their government.

Inconsistent with Herzberg's theory, the researchers Ko and Jun found that *job security* and *salary* ranked highest as an important motivator for the students in all three countries. Yet from a different perspective of Ko and Jun, in another study, Kurland and Hasson-Gilad (2015) examined school level factors that supported teachers' learning commitment. Participants in the study included 1474 teachers from 104 public elementary schools in Israel. The researchers, Kurland and Hasson-Gilad applied Herzberg two-factor theory to examine the mediating effect of job satisfaction in relation to patterns linking together school organizational learning (SOL), teacher job satisfaction (TJS), and teacher extra effort (TEE). Kurland and Hasson-Gilad (2015) found TJS mediated the relationship between SOL and TEE. The researchers noted that their findings aligned with Herzberg's argument that factors involving job content (motivator) such as *involvement in decision making*, *growth potential*, and *recognition* lead to job satisfaction.

## Herzberg Applied in the Use of Technology

With a different focus on the many uses of technology, Najmul (2014) conducted a study based on the Herzberg two-factor theory to examine factors that caused user satisfaction and dissatisfaction after the post-adoption usage of an information system. The participants in the study included 166 educators and 148 students who were registered users of Moodle, an online learning management system. Najmul (2014) found that *environmental* factors were more significant toward producing dissatisfaction, while *job specific outcome* factors were more significant towards producing satisfaction. Based on the researcher's study, Najmul (2014) and in support of Herzberg two-factor theory, factors causing satisfaction might differ from those factors that cause dissatisfaction. In a similar approach, Gonen and Lev-Ari (2016) conducted a quantitative study to examine the perceptions of educators in the nursing field relating to their work *environment* in the use of Information Technology (IT).

The focus of the study included *self-efficacy, innovativeness, attitudes, intention to use and use of IT*. The population of the study included 109 nursing instructors from ten different nursing schools in Israel. The researchers used Herzberg theory of job satisfaction to support their claim that work climate is a predictor of organizational influence and personality traits. In contrast to Najmul (2014), Costello and Welch (2014) applied the Herzberg two-factor theory in conducting a qualitative study to understand factors effective in online education. The participants included six (two males and four females) instructors and 10 (four males and six female) students within the same online courses at a Midwestern college. All the participants responded to open-ended questions related to understanding hygiene (*sustaining*) factors

associated with establishing effective online educational communities; and motivators (*learning enhancement*) factors.

Costello and Welch (2014) found that students focused more on sustaining factors and gave no thought to learning enhancement factors. In comparison, instructors had a balance between sustaining factors and learning enrichment factors. The researchers', Costello and Welch findings based on Herzberg supported, instructors needed to apply more work toward utilizing both hygiene and motivator factors in their online courses. Heekyung, Suhyun, Insung, and Seung-Jun (2015) found an interest in exploring motivator factors associated with organizational performance and commitment in the technology profession. Heekyung et al. (2015) conducted a quantitative study to explore the effects of information security actions on organizational performance. The researchers, based on Herzberg's theory aimed to identify those motivator factors that may influence information protection activities.

The population and participants in the study included employees of domestic branch offices in 16 securities firms that are members of the Korea Financial Investment Association. Heekyung et al. (2015) found that investment and activities associated with IT service infrastructure, information sharing, and information security were motivator factors. In view of organizational commitment, Saleem and Saleem (2014) conducted a quantitative study in Pakistan to explore the role of job satisfaction amid employee's motivation and normative organizational commitment. The participants of the study included 200 employees, 121 men and 79 women from three telecom based multinational companies. The researcher used Herzberg two-factor theory to explore three objectives.

The first objective included those factors contributing to employee motivation, followed by the second objective to identifying the effect of job satisfaction. The third objective included answering recent calls to discover the mediating role of job satisfaction amid customary organizational commitment and factors of employee motivation. Saleem and Saleem (2014) found motivator factors, such as a *reward system; salary; coworker relationship; work itself; and career growth opportunities* caused satisfied employees, which in turn gave birth to organizational commitment. To further support Saleem and Saleem (2014) findings in relation to a reward system, another researcher found similar results. Sinha and Trivedi (2014) conducted a quantitative study using a descriptive design to measure employee engagement in IT companies. The participants included 65 IT professionals in Baroda, who completed a structured questionnaire. The researchers had two objectives, to include gaining an understanding of employees' perception towards their employer's reward system; and to gain an understanding of employees' perception towards their relationship with superiors. Utilizing Herzberg two-factor theory, coupled with leaders member exchange theory, Sinha and Trivedi found that in the IT profession intrinsic and extrinsic rewards correlated significantly with employee qualifications and their perception towards organizational rewards.

Huang and Cheng (2015) applied the Herzberg's theory in conducting a quantitative study to examine patenting behaviors by differentiating capability factors (*hygiene*) and willingness factors (*motivator*). The primary purpose of the study was to make a distinction between the patenting behaviors of two diverse groups: firms that never patented and firms that always patented. The participants included a mixture of 165 CEOs and senior level managers of Taiwanese Information and Communication Technology firms listed on the Taiwanese Stock

Exchange. The participants responded to 12 items relating to patenting behavior. Huang and Cheng (2015) found that capability (hygiene) factors such as *firm size, research and development (R&D) efforts, core technology, core business, human capital, and R&D autonomy* directly influenced firms' propensity to patent. Likewise, willingness (motivator) factors such as *process innovation; product innovation; new to the firm or world innovation; and external R&D* played a moderating role between capability factors and propensity to patent.

Taking a nontraditional approach, researchers Briggs and Thomas (2015); Chun-Ying (2014); Sang-ug, Seungbum, and Sangwon (2014); and Tuch and Hornbeak (2015) applied Herzberg's theory to studies outside of the designed purpose of focusing on behaviors within organizations. For example, Chun-Ying (2014) conducted an exploratory quantitative study to examine the perspectives of both buyer and supplier firms in relation to vendor selection (VS) criteria. The participants in the study included five functional managers of buying firms and seven from supplier firms all with 15 years of operating history in their business.

The researcher, Chun-Ying (2014) applied Herzberg's theory to an empirical VS discussion and found that motivators (vantage) factors originated from implicit *management systems, response time, improvement and order fulfillment systems*. In contrast, explicit performance indicators such as *price, quality, and service of a supplier* might represent hygiene (maintenance) factors. Chun-Ying suggested that the availability of explicit indicators is not solely sufficient to motivate vendor selections. Furthermore, the implicit motivator criteria can create buyer satisfaction. In another study, researchers Tuch and Hornbeak (2015) focused on smartphone users' attitudes, experiences, and behaviors. Tuch and Hornbeak applied the Herzberg two-factor theory in conducting a quantitative study to analyze how users felt about

their smartphones. The participants included 303 smartphone users, who responded to 14 open-ended interview questions replicated from Herzberg 1959 study. Taking an online approach, the Tuch and Hornbeak collected data on description events in which users had good and bad experiences with their smartphones. The purpose was to identify factors that affected users' experience and work as hygiene or motivator factors.

Tuch and Hornbeak (2015) found nine factors in total: two identified as hygiene factors (*technical quality and price*), for which users associated with negative feelings towards their smartphone; two factors (*utility and convenience*) identified as motivators for which users had positive feeling about their smartphone; and five factors (*lifeline, owning, social, physical quality, and interaction*) had no correlation towards hygiene or motivator. Tuch and Hornbeak demonstrated through Herzberg's theory how users' experiences related to psychological needs, which consequently affects users' attitude and behavior towards smartphones. Sang-ug, Seungbum, and Sangwon (2014) conducted a quantitative study to explain consumers' willingness to subscribe to new television (TV) media packages.

Sang-ug et al. (2014) utilized Herzberg's two-factor theory as the basis for understanding consumers' preference between Internet Protocol TV (IPTV) and digit cable TV (DCTV). The participants for the study included 621 users of various ages, with more than three months of IPTV/DCTV service subscription. The participants downloaded a software application onto personal mobile devices and expressed their experience through questionnaires. Sang-ug et al. (2014) found that both interactivity and media richness directly influenced *acceptance attitude* and *intention to use*, but *quality of experience* (QE) did not. The researchers found an alignment to Herzberg's theory in relation to factors influencing new media subscription and consumer

satisfaction. In another study similar to Sang-ug et al. (2014), researchers Briggs and Thomas (2015) examined consumer's willingness to embrace technology. Briggs and Thomas conducted a qualitative study on future identity technologies. They created an inclusive value sensitive design process to capture those sectors of society that are missing the benefits of technology.

The participants included six different community groups to include young and old people, refugees, black minorities, ethnic women and physical and mentally challenged individuals. Briggs and Thomas (2015) used Herzberg two-factor theory to identify and support hygiene and motivation factors associated with citizens' willingness to embrace or stay clear from identity technologies. Briggs and Thomas found common values associated with dissatisfaction linked to hygiene factors in relation to worries such as *cost, theft, usability, quality, losing the electronic device, and potential to cause to harm*. In contrast, motivator factors that differentiated in relation to value across communities included *convenience, personalization, and taste*.

### **Family Businesses**

In retrospect, 30% of large and small family businesses are a part of the Standard & Poors (S&P) 500 stocks, to include Ford, News Corp, and Walmart (Block, Millán, Román, & Haibo, 2015; Braun, Latham, & Porschitz, 2016). An obvious point of view is that family businesses' contribution to the economy proves valid. Regardless of how anyone defines the criteria for determining the makeup of family businesses, the facts are clear that family businesses represent a significant margin of the U.S. economy (Huang, Li, Meschke & Guthrie, 2015). The continuous growth and longevity of family businesses may occur with the strategic alignment between performance and professional practices. Sanchez-Famoso, Akhter, Iturralde,



Chirico and Maseda (2015) conducted a quantitative study to investigate the dynamics of social capital (SC) in family firms. The participants in the study included one family member and one nonfamily member per each 172 family firms, with the same level of employment status.

First, the researchers found that both family and nonfamily SC had positive effects on firm performance. Second, Sanchez-Famoso et al. (2015) found that the positive effect of nonfamily SC on family firm performance had a stronger effect than family SC. Third, nonfamily SC positively mediated the relationship between family SC and firm performance. Based on the evidence, the researchers suggested further exploration for developing a wider understanding of both family and nonfamily SC in relation to firm performance. Family involvement in the overall decision making and operations of a family business may offer some challenges. Dekker, Lybaert, Steijvers, and Depaire (2015) conducted a quantitative study to examine the relationship between professionalization and firm performance work in privately held family businesses. The participants in the study included 523 private Belgian family businesses. The researchers, Dekker et al. (2015) found three elements of professionalization associated with improving performance in privately held family businesses.

Dekker et al. (2015) suggested if family owned and operated business leaders wanted to positively influence firm performance by way of professionalization, focus on diminishing family involvement in governance systems. In instances where the family owns a significant portion of shares, family owners view governance structures as a means to emphasize their control, and sway decisions in favor of family (Memili, Chang, Kellermanns, & Welsh, 2015; Perry, Ring, Matherne, & Markova, 2015). Family owned and operated business leaders impede firm's performance by excluding the value added participation of nonfamily employees in the

decision making process. The inclusion of nonfamily executives in family firms is critical to improving firm's performance (Patel & Cooper, 2014). Second, an increased utilization of a human resources (HR) system will aid in overcoming issues related to nepotism. Cruz, Larrazakintana, Garcés-Galdeano, and Berrone (2014) noted the presence of altruism could cause irregularities in applying organizational rules depending on whether the employee is a family or nonfamily member. Harmony within family businesses such as trust, equality, and participation impacts firm's performance in terms of profitability, longevity, and group unity (Fachrunnisa, Adhiatma & Mutaminah, 2014; Ruiz Jiménez, Vallejo Martos, & Martínez Jiménez, 2015). Third, the researchers found that decentralizing organizational authority and increasing the level of nonfamily involvement would counteract issues associated with entrenchment (Dekker et al., 2015).

Kroon, Voorde, and Timmers (2013) noted effective strategic decision making sets the stage for implementing employees' ability, motivation, and opportunity practices (AMO). The researchers suggested employee empowerment and involvement are positive underlining elements of high performance work practices (HPWP) in family owned and operated businesses. Based on Kroon et al. (2013) study, employees in family firms may perceive ability motivation and opportunity where business owners adopted an innovative HR strategy. Pittino, Visintin, Lenger, and Sternad (2016) found that HPWP contributed to the retention of skilled (*valuable*) employees in family firms versus nonfamily firms. As such, Block et al. (2016) noted the preference of some job seekers to work in family firms versus nonfamily firms.

## **Nonfamily Employees**

Ramos, Man, Mustafa, and Ng (2014) conducted a quantitative study to investigate the moderating role of family and nonfamily employees' work attitudes and behaviors. The participants in the study included 40 family and 63 nonfamily employees from 20 small family owned and operated Chinese companies in Malaysia. Ramos et al. (2014) noted that family status might influence the attitudes and behaviors of employees. Nonfamily employees were more reluctant to experience feelings of organizational based ownership (OBO) than family employees were (Ramos et al., 2014). However, nonfamily employees experienced the same sense of job based ownership (JBO) as family employees. Given the fact that the majority of employees in a family business are nonfamily employees, De Massis, Frattini, Pizzurno, and Cassia (2015), the need for citizenship behavior is apparent. Furthermore, Azoury, Daou, and Sleiaty (2013) found that individuals employed in family firms are more engaged to their organization than individuals employed in nonfamily firms.

Farrington et al. (2014) suggested family businesses should develop and conform to practices that foster job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Critical to the success of family businesses is making sure nonfamily employees remain satisfied. In instances where nonfamily employees perceive and imbalance in fairness relating to decision making, decision outcomes, and processes, then attaining organizational commitment becomes difficult. Farrington et al. (2014) conducted a quantitative study to examine the relationship between compensation, promotion opportunities, and job security against job satisfaction and organizational commitment of nonfamily employees, working in family businesses. The researcher found that 54% of nonfamily employees felt optimistic about long term job security,

and 43% felt that their compensation package was appropriate. Based on the findings, Farrington et al. made several strategic suggestions to ensure and enhance nonfamily employees' citizenship, which leads to greater performance.

First, family owned and operated business leaders may want to consider honesty, transparency, and disclosure in terms of the state of the business; not detailed financial records but enough information so that nonfamily employees are aware of any threats that may affect job security (Farrington et al., 2014). Second, including nonfamily employees in any discussions and decisions relating to succession planning alleviates stress caused by perceived job insecurity (Farrington et al., 2014). According to Basco (2013), many family businesses subjectively limit their strategic goals to revolve around the needs of family and may sub-optimize business related outcomes accordingly. Liu, Eubanks, and Chater (2015) noted a weakness of strong family ties is that leaders make the wrong conclusion of thinking family members are better qualified to lead than external candidates are. Family picked successors often result in a decline in performance due to the lack of qualification of the successor and the nepotistic aroma. Third, the practice of ensuring fair compensation packages, coupled with promotion opportunities for both family and nonfamily employees increases the likelihood of greater performance (Farrington et al., 2014).

### **Nepotism**

Wated and Sanchez (2015) noted the history of nepotism dates back to or before the fourteenth century. Nepotism is a problematic phenomenon in most, if not every country (Lokaj, 2015; Rowshan, Ghasemnezhad, & Hemmat, 2015). Oppenheimer (2016), a clinical law professor noted the disappearance of voluntary affirmative action and equality among U.S. public and private employers. Public and private organizations alike patronize the employment

needs of relatives and friends, leaving the skilled and qualified unemployed. In broad terms, nepotism is an act of preferential treatment provided to relatives and friends in hiring practices (Lokaj, 2015). Riggio and Saggi (2015) noted nepotism conveys a negative connotation, favoring a family member or friend in a hiring situation while disregarding the candidates' suitability for the job.

According to Kilani, Al Junidi, and Al Riziq (2015), nepotistic behaviors are the result of dissimilarities amid culture, thoughts, background, beliefs, and social statuses. Jones and Stout (2015) referred to nepotism as the actual and perceived notion of granting preferential treatment to one family member to another. Another depiction of nepotism is the preferential hiring and promotion of family employees with no regard to his or her skills or qualification (Darioly & Riggio, 2014; Padgett, Padgett, & Morris, 2015). A symptomatic morbidity of an organizational culture and processes is nepotism (Sidani & Thornberry, 2013; Vveinhardt & Petrauskaite, 2013).

Allen and Shanock (2013) conducted a quantitative study and found that socialization tactics positively correlated with perceived organizational support and job embeddedness. The findings also correlated positively to organizational commitment, and negatively to voluntary turnover. Altruism within family organizations renders higher performance when nonfamily employees feel a sense of equality and inclusion rather than inequality and exclusion (Guinot, Chiva & Mallén, 2016; Hauck, Suess-Reyes, Beck, Prügl & Frank, 2016). Scholars refer to *altruism* similarly, but in slightly different ways. For example, Šebek (2016) noted altruism contributes to feelings of belonging to a group often expressed through ethnicity, kinship, and family. Guinot et al., 2016 referred to altruism as a conceived feeling of concern and empathy for

the wellbeing of others, to include acting in a manner that benefits those of interested concern.

Human altruism is a prevailing force with different heterogeneity (Guinot et al., 2016).

Interaction amid altruists and selfish individuals is vital to human cooperation (Jones, 2016).

Jones (2016) conducted a quantitative study focused on forced nepotism and found that evolved social norms could strengthen kin altruism, giving rise to an unfamiliar human approach of kin based sociality distinct from impulsive altruism among close kin. In terms of family businesses, Furnham, Treglown, Hyde and Trickey (2016) referred to altruism as the desire of family members to take care of one another. In contrast, ensuring equality in family businesses means that the leaders should adopt what Šebek (2016) termed as *fair altruism*. The perception of *fair altruism* to some is that trusting a stranger diminishes trust in ethnicity, kin or family (Šebek, 2016). For some heterogeneity societies, the pressure remains to preserve altruism through an obligation of moral norms of a particular moral sense. Such norms contribute to the preferences shown to family, hence committing nepotistic acts in the name of altruism. In contrast, the moral sense requires fairness in pay distribution, political engagement, and administrative policies, in the spirit of altruism (Šebek, 2016).

Perry et al. (2015) conducted a quantitative study to examine how family influence in a family business affects human resources management (HRM) practices, which ultimately effects firm performance. The researchers found that family influence positively correlated with pro-family hiring, promotion and compensation preferences. Based on the findings, family business leaders compromise growth potentials by implementing HRM policies and practices that favor family employees over nonfamily employees. In support of nepotism in family businesses, Jones and Stout (2015) argued that an antinepotism policy is a form of unfair discrimination. Such

policies do not consider the needs of stakeholder's interest, utilizing an applicant's status as a family member as the primary basis for hiring or not hiring is stereotypically unfair. Jones and Stout (2015) warned that organizational leaders trying to eradicate natural family and friend systems without empirical evidence about the contextual form of such relationships are likely to experience ineffective and catastrophic outcomes.

The researchers suggested that employers must manage the common prejudices against family social connection preferences SCP (Jones & Stout, 2015). In favor of Jones and Stout (2015), Colarelli (2015) viewed nepotism as less of a threat and more of a benefit to the family businesses. In the same manner, Biermeier-Hanson (2015) agreed with Jones and Stout by suggesting that formalized policing of SCP is ineffective, and constitutes the potential for unfair discrimination against the hiring of family employees. Biermeier-Hanson (2015) suggested SCPs present fewer detrimental effects when there is a transparent culture around SCP that also values merit for nonfamily employees. Cucina and Votraw (2015) found no fault with family owned and operated business leaders' nepotistic practices in promoting family members to key positions. The decision to hire less qualified family or friend candidates presents a risk to the organization that only the owner assumes.

In contrast to the beliefs of Jones and Stout (2015), Colarelli (2015), and Biermeier-Hanson (2015), the presence of nepotism compromises the good will of businesses (Ko, Hur, & Smith-Walter, 2013). Pearce (2015) noted that nepotism positions loyalty and obligations to one's family over obligations to one's employer. Such behavior is damaging because any claims that family employees make must supersede any organizational requirements. Consequentially, nepotism damages the kinds of social relationships that suffice for a humane and tolerable work

environment and for fostering organizational performance (Pearce, 2015). Riggio and Saggi (2015) noted the possibility of referring to nepotism in the same manner as what economists call “*pareto optimal*” to benefit one party without harming another. The scholars argued that if organizations implemented best practices in hiring, evaluating, and promoting employees, then the act of nepotism could prove beneficial without causing harm to an organization or its employees.

Alternatively, organizations plagued with negative perceptions of nepotism and unfair practices, face the potential for adverse effects on employee satisfaction, loyalty, and performance, which might influence the overall productivity of organizations (Riggio & Saggi, 2015). Wated and Sanchez (2015) suggested the need for family business leaders to implement culture congruent HR practices to affect mission driven changes in talent management practices. Minimizing nepotistic practices in family owned and operated businesses increases the potential for retaining skilled nonfamily employees. Safina (2015) noted nepotism is a barricade to effective competition, impede high performers’ career growth, and adversely affect organizational and economic development. Ultimately, nepotistic practices may lead to skilled nonfamily employees’ voluntary turnover.

### **Employee Turnover**

Turnover intentions resonate silently without any warning to the employer. Khanin (2013) defined turnover intentions as the anticipation of leaving one’s job. Christian and Ellis (2013) noted that turnover intentions contribute to the rates at which employers experience interruptions in day-to-day operations due to the loss of employees. Khanin, (2013) defined voluntary turnover as an employee leaving his or her place of employment willingly, as opposed



to being told to leave by the employer. Voluntary employee turnover is a down sided problem small business owners as well organizational leaders face (Paillé, 2013). Voluntary turnover results in a loss of knowledge, and productivity (Palanski, Avey & Jiraporn, 2014). Furthermore, the voluntary turnover rate of skilled employees in the private sector increased to 2.9 million by the end of December 2015 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016).

Another downside to voluntary employee turnover is that it starts the wheels in motion towards voluntary turnover intentions from the remaining employees (Campbell, Im, & Jisu, 2014; Christian & Ellis, 2013). A counter action to reduce voluntary turnover intentions, employers may want to consider providing employees with opportunities to enhance their professional growth, education and training (Bianchi, 2013; Kim, 2015). Acar and Acar (2014) and Reilly, Nyberg, Maltarich, and Weller, (2014) concluded in a forever changing business environment organizational success is contingent upon business leaders altering current strategies to remain competitive and reduce voluntary turnover. Job dissatisfaction is the primary cause for employees voluntarily leaving their employers (Paillé, 2013; Soltis, Agneessens, Sasovova, and Labianca, 2013), which aligns with Herzberg's theory.

Gialuisi and Coetzer (2013) found that, in small businesses, voluntary employee turnover occurs for different reasons, but mainly employees cited reasons associated with relationship conflict with management and co-workers. Such reasons as relationship conflicts amid management and coworkers create distrust, which sparks an employee's intentions to leave their employer (Ertürk, 2014). According to Diestel, Wegge, and Schmidt (2014) and Kuo-Chih, Tsung-Cheng, and Nieu-Su (2014), an effective predictor of voluntary employee turnover is job satisfaction. Biermeier-Hanson (2015) and posited that skilled individuals who are not socially

connected (*nonfamily members*) might be more prone to turnover because of a misfit with the culture. Unable to adapt to organizational cultures contributes to turnover intentions and ultimately voluntary turnover (Campbell & Göritz, 2014; Warren, Gaspar & Laufer, 2014). Family owned and operated business leaders might want to access factors relating to skilled nonfamily employees level of job satisfaction. Examining job satisfaction predicts ways to counteract and contain voluntary employee turnover (Diestel et al., 2014; Nobuo, 2014). Family business owners can take steps to reduce skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover, increase morale, and create a work environment that portrays altruism for everyone. Heavey, Holwerda, and Hausknecht (2013) agreed that the implementation of plans and retention strategies to decrease voluntary employee turnover and retain valuable employees is worthwhile.

### **Transition**

In summarizing, the purpose of the qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies some owners of family businesses use to minimize nepotistic practices that reduce skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover. In the literature review, I presented a critical analysis and synthesis of the conceptual framework. An analysis of four other theories provided insight on alternative supporting and contrasting theories for the study. A discussion of the literature themes expanded on how other researchers applied the conceptual and theoretical framework of Herzberg to various social problems. In support for the relationship of the study, researchers expounded on discussions relating to family businesses, nonfamily employees, nepotism, and employees' voluntary turnover.

Section 2 contains (a) the business project purpose, (b) the role of the researcher,

(c) the selected participants, (d) a detailed description of the research methodology and design, (e) the population and sampling, (f) ethical research, (g) data collection instruments and technique, (h) data organization technique, (i) data analysis, and (j) reliability and validity.

Section 3 begins with an introduction including the purpose statement, research question, and findings. Section 3 includes an application to professional practice, implications for social change, recommendations for action and further study, and a conclusion of researcher reflections.

## Section 2: The Project

In Section 2, I restated the purpose of the study. I discussed my role as the researcher, the participants and provided an outline of criteria for the participants. The qualitative multiple case study included a discussion of the research methodology and design, followed by the chosen population for and a sampling size of the participants. Further, in Section 2, I provided an understanding of and commitment to adhering to ethical research practices. The qualitative multiple case study contained clarity regarding the data collection process regarding instruments, techniques, organization, and analysis. Finally, in Section 2, I provided the steps taken to ensure reliability and validity of data in the research study. Section 3 includes a presentation of findings, application to professional practices, the implication for social change, recommendation for action and further research, reflections, and a conclusion.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of the qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies some owners of family businesses use to minimize nepotistic practices that reduce skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover. The population for this study included three family owned and operated funeral establishments in St. Louis, Missouri; and consisted of three owners, who had sustained their family owned businesses longer than 5 years while minimizing skilled nonfamily employee turnover. Evidence of minimum skilled nonfamily turnover was accessible through exploring the staff biography link on the businesses' websites. The implications for social change included the potential to reduce nepotistic practices in family owned businesses that can negatively affect skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover, increase economic growth potential while simultaneously positively benefiting employees, families, and communities.

### **Role of the Researcher**

My role as the researcher in the data collection process included conducting face-to-face interviews using a semistructured interview technique. The benefit of qualitative interviews is that researchers get to see that which is not ordinarily on view and examine that often looked at but seldom seen (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The researcher's role in qualitative research is to explore social life aspects regarding experiences, attitudes, or behaviors using data consisting of text, interviews, and observation (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2014).

My relationship with the topic of minimizing nepotistic practices in family owned and operated businesses derived from me being a current and previous employee of family owned businesses. However, no employment relationship ever existed with any of the participants selected for this study. Moustakas (1994) suggested researchers should remain neutral and free of bias. I set aside any personal experiences of nepotism, beliefs, attitude, culture and generational views of family owned and operated businesses so as not to introduce personal bias.

The researcher's role in relation to ethics and the Belmont Report (1979) protocol is to adhere to the three ethical principles of research. The three basic ethical principles of research outlined in the Belmont Report (1979) include (a) the principles of respect of persons, (b) beneficence, and (c) justice. As the researcher, I made sure to protect the confidentiality of participants; treated the participants with respect, and honored participant's decision to resend their offer to voluntarily participant in my study.

I applied an interview protocol for member checking and data saturation to mitigate bias and viewed data through a personal lens. Moreover, I employed a process of epochè to reduce bias and realize data saturation. The rationale for an interview protocol is to guide the researcher

toward accuracy in data saturation. Qualitative researchers utilize an interview protocol to ensure consistency and reliability of the research, coupled with achieving data saturation (Foley & O'Connor, 2013; Fusch, & Ness, 2015).

### **Participants**

The participants in the study included 3 family business owners in 3 funeral homes, in, St. Louis, Missouri selected because each has implemented strategies to minimize skilled nonfamily employee turnover. From a practical standpoint, the size of a sample used for a qualitative study requires a provisional decision in the initial stage (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016; Robinson, 2014). In qualitative research, using a smaller sample size instead of a larger sample size is sufficient (Robinson, 2014).

The business leaders sustained their business status for a minimum of 5 years in St. Louis, Missouri. My strategy for gaining access to the participants included exploring the staff biography link on the businesses' websites, coupled with utilizing other business leaders by snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is a technique that researchers utilize to access potential participants through word of mouth from people who know what cases are information rich (Emerson, 2015; Olsen, Orr, Bell, & Stuart, 2013).

Researchers found that snowball sampling improved opportunities to recruit relevant and rich participants (Ardern, Nie, Perez, Radhu, & Ritvo, 2013; Palinkas et al., 2015). In purposeful sampling, researchers hone in on their decision-making skills to select participants based on the study criteria (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). Once I identified potential participants, the next step included exploring the company's website as a way of recognizing those nonfamily employees, in addition to the applied snowball sampling technique. Researchers implied that snowball and

purposeful sampling aligns well with qualitative research (Olsen, Orr, Bell, & Stuart, 2013; Robinson, 2014).

The next step included making the initial contact through a phone call, email and in person visit. Once I gained access, the strategy for establishing a professional working relationship with the participants included following an interview protocol (see Appendix B). An interview protocol is the means for researchers to ensure clear, unbiased steps to follow (Brown et al., 2013; Platt & Skowron, 2013). Siu, Hung, Lam, and Cheng (2013) endorsed keeping the relationship amid researchers and participants strictly professional. I conducted the entire qualitative multiple case study with unbiased professionalism. Rubin and Rubin (2012) and Brewis (2014) stressed the importance of researchers building a trustworthy relationship with participants.

### **Research Method and Design**

When considering a research method and design, the researcher can identify the most operative method of achieving the goals of the study, coupled with answering the research question. Qualitative researchers seek to explore social life aspects regarding experiences, attitudes or behaviors with data consisting of text, interviews, records, and observations (Marshall & Ross, 2016). A qualitative methodology was best suited for this multiple case study in exploring the overarching research question: *What strategies do some owners of family businesses use to minimize nepotistic practices that reduce skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover?*

## Research Method

Qualitative researchers seek to explore social life aspects regarding experiences, attitudes or behaviors with data consisting of text, interviews, records, and observations (Marshall & Ross, 2016). I interpreted data from the study in a practical view that was problem centered in relation to family owned and operated businesses. Researchers interpret data from a practical view (Massis & Kotlar, 2014). Li, Westbrook, Callen, Georgiou, and Braithwaite (2013) and Heale and Forbes (2013) suggested that collaborating with participants is how researchers facilitate data interpretation and themes. I facilitated data interpretation and themes by collaborating with participants. Utilizing a qualitative approach helped me collect data needed to answer the overarching research question. *What strategies do some owners of family businesses use to minimize nepotistic practices that reduce skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover?*

In contrast, quantitative researchers use statistical methods to examine relationships or differences among variables to understand phenomena (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Hoare & Hoe, 2013). In a mixed method approach, researchers apply both qualitative and quantitative methods in a single study (Patton, 1990; Hayes, Bonner, & Douglas, 2013). I did not require any variables or statistical analysis to understand a phenomenon. Therefore, a quantitative methodology was not appropriate for the multiple study in exploring the overarching research question: *What strategies do some owners of family businesses use to minimize nepotistic practices that reduce skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover?*



## **Research Design**

Researchers seeking a detailed portrait of a cultural-sharing group regarding beliefs and feelings pursue an ethnography design (Ayar, Bauchspies & Yalvac, 2015; Dowden, Gunby, Warren & Boston, 2014). Researchers wishing to explore the lived experiences of participants utilize a phenomenological design (Moustakas, 1994). In contrast, case study design reflects an in-depth *how* and *what* exploration of a single social unit in their natural habitat without manipulation (Cronin, 2014; Raeburn, Schmied, Hungerford & Cleary, 2015).

The purpose of this study was to explore the *how* and *what* questions of organizational leaders' key strategies in minimizing nepotistic practices in family owned and operated businesses, not cultural groups, world-views or lived experiences. Therefore, I chose a case study for seeking answers to addressing my specific business problem. Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, and Fontenot (2013) suggested that collecting sufficient data to explore a research problem is contingent upon data saturation with a purposeful sample of any size. I asked all participants; three family owned and operated business leaders the same questions until data saturation rendered repetitive information and did not introduce new research themes. According to Anyan (2013) and Fusch and Ness (2015), researchers reach data saturation when no new information or themes occur. Data saturation occurs when the information becomes repetitive (Robinson, 2014).

### **Population and Sampling**

A case study comprises an in-depth exploration of a small sum of cases or a single case (Cronin, 2014). I purposefully selected participants for the study using criterion sampling as the primary technique and snowballing as a secondary technique. Criterion sampling is a technique targeted at a population of participants that meets specific criteria customized by the researcher

(Angelos, 2013; Brewis, 2014). Moreover, I set criteria and picked all cases that met those criteria. Criterion sampling is a very strong quality assurance process (Patton, 1990; Suri, 2011). This qualitative multiple case study included three original family owned and operated business leaders in the St. Louis, Missouri with funeral establishments. The participants sustained their businesses for at least 5 years. Furthermore, the business owners had not experienced any skilled nonfamily employee voluntary turnovers within the past 2 years.

Snowball or chain sampling is a technique used to identify cases of interest from people who know people that may provide rich information (Angelos, 2013; Patton, 1990). I solicited help from selected participants, and local churches in the Midwest regions of St. Louis, Missouri. I used the criteria established in my study to ensure the participant criteria matched the overarching research question. Olsen, Orr, Bell, and Stuart (2013) and Suri (2011) suggested purposeful sampling designs are a means to ensure data saturation. To ensure data saturation, I asked all participants the same questions until data saturation rendered repetitive information and did not introduce new research themes. Data saturation occurs when the information becomes repetitive, and no new themes are evident (Anyan, 2013; Robinson, 2014).

According to Cairney and St Denny (2015) and Yin (2014), one of the most important sources of case study evidence is the interview. As such, the participants of the study received a formal invitation to participate in the form of an email. One day after sending the invitation, I conducted a follow-up phone call to explain the purpose of the research and requested participation. According to Check, Wolf, Dame, and Beskow, (2014) and Dekking, van der Graaf, and van Delden (2014), it is appropriate for researchers to provide participants with an informed consent form. Researchers should seek confirmation of participants willingness to

participate in a study (Kumar (2013). Participants who agreed to participate in the study received an informed consent form, by email asking to confirm their consent to participate by email reply. They replied via email with the words “I consent.” Erlich and Narayanan (2014) suggested researchers conduct their interviews in an environment that is most comfortable for the participants. Each interview took place in an agreed upon setting most comfortable for the participant, and I protected the confidentiality of the participants. Yin (2014) suggested researchers should limit their interviews to no more than an hour. I was able to limit all interviews to one hour.

### **Ethical Research**

Ethical researcher practices are the epitome of creating trustworthiness, and cohesiveness in maintaining the integrity of the research (Beskow, Check, & Ammarell, 2014). Erlich and Narayanan (2014) posited consideration for the well-being of research participants is a critical concern that must always remain at the forefront of all research decisions. In advance of conducting the study, I sought approval through Walden University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). In adherence to Walden University’s IRB process, I followed all ethical standards before and during all phases of conducting my research.

Check, Wolf, Dame, and Beskow (2014) noted that informed consent forms should provide information outlining the purpose of the research. I emailed participants an informed consent form with details outlined to explain the purpose of the research. The informed consent form included an explanation of the data collection process, benefits to the participants and the business industry, and the preservation of the participants’ confidentiality before, during and after the study. Researchers should make no offers of any monetary or material incentives to

participants for participating in a study (Greenwood, 2016). I offered no monetary or material incentives to the participants for participating in the study. Participants may withdraw from a study at any time without reason or retaliation (Belmont Report, 1979).

If the participant wanted to withdraw, she or he could send an email to [darlene.thomas3@waldenu.edu](mailto:darlene.thomas3@waldenu.edu) requesting to withdraw from the study with no retribution and I would destroy the participants' responses, if necessary. All three of my participants remained committed to the end of the study. The participants who agreed to participate received a copy of the interview questions and protocol (see Appendix A and B). I protected the participant's identity and personal information by assigning each participant to a code consisting of two letters and a number uniquely (BL1, BL2, and BL3). Yin (2014) posited using pseudonyms as privacy control to protect research data relating to participants.

The certificate of training acquainted me with the rules for conducting ethical research with human subjects (Certification Number: 2003248). The confidentiality of the participants' research information will remain locked for 5 years in a small safe, to which only I have the means to open. After 5 years, I will responsibly destroy all the participants' data. Protecting the confidentiality of participants is a part researchers' ethical responsibility (Beskow, Check, & Ammarell, 2014).

### **Data Collection Instruments**

I was the primary instrument to collect and analyze data in the study. Leedy and Ormrod (2013) and Yin (2014) suggested qualitative researchers serve as the sole instrument for data collection. In using a face-to-face semi structured interview technique, the primary data collection included participants' responses from open-ended questions. The interview is the

primary data source to aid in answering the *how* and *what* questions in a case study (Dasgupta, 2015). I gathered secondary data from the businesses' websites and available historical documents, such as employment and termination records to depict job titles and sustained tenure of nonfamily employees. Case study researchers must use at least two of six data retrieval sources, to include: (a) archival records, (b) direct observations, (c) documentation, (d) interviews, (e) participant-observation, or (f) physical artifacts (Yin, 2014). In addition to the primary data, I requested the participants provide documents, such as policies, procedures, and employee's manual that aided in collecting secondary data to support key strategies aligned with job titles and sustained tenure of nonfamily employees.

I developed and followed an interview protocol (see Appendix B), to guide my collection. I followed a case study protocol as described by Yin (2014) to enhance reliability. A case study protocol consists of (a) an overview of the case study, (b) data collection procedures, (c) data collection procedures, and (d) a guide for the case study report (Yin, 2014). With permission from the participants, I audio recorded responses to the opened ended interview questions, and I took detailed field notes. Scheduling time for each interview took one hour. After completing the interviews, I listened to the audio recordings and reviewed my field notes.

I utilized member checking to ensure that my analysis and interpretation of the results were valid. The participants had the opportunity to inform me of any oversights or misperceptions relating to the findings. Member checking is the process of requesting that participants review findings to confirm accurate data representation (Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). I used NVivo 10 software for Windows to aid in my ability to code and identify themes and patterns during the data analysis phase of the study. NVivo software has a benefit in

managing data and ideas, querying data, modeling visually, and reporting may considerably improve the quality of research (Hilal & Alabri, 2013).

### **Data Collection Technique**

After receiving IRB approval (02-08-17-0598013), the participants of the study received a formal invitation, which included an informed consent to participate by email. One day after sending the invitation, I followed-up with a phone call to explain the purpose of the research and requested participation. The participants who agreed to participate in the study provided consent by email using the words “I consent.” The data collection process included using a face-to-face semistructured interview technique.

The goal of the primary data collection was to gather the participants’ responses from open-ended questions included in the interview protocol (see Appendix A). The interview technique is the primary data source for answering the how and what questions in exploring case study topics (Yin, 2014). I purchased an audio device to record responses to the opened-ended interview questions and took detailed field notes. Each interview lasted one hour, and took place in an agreed upon setting that was comfortable and private for the participants. Coupled with utilizing a semistructured interview technique, I asked the participants to provide any additional documents, such as policies, procedures, and employee’s manual to aid in data triangulation. Wilson (2014) suggested that data triangulation is not a tool to validate data, but an alternative tool to aid in validating multiple forms of qualitative data.

After the interviews, I synthesized the data from the participants and asked each participant to review my material to validate that I had captured the content of the interviews accurately. Member checking confirms the information collected is accurate and is in alignment

with the process of data analysis – it occurs before data analysis (Harvey, 2015). The participants had the opportunity to inform me of any oversights or misperceptions relating to the content and additional thoughts, at which point I modified my findings accordingly. I concluded that I had data saturation when no new information or themes emerged from the data collection process.

Milne (2014) offered some advantages to interviews, to include the opportunity for researchers to clarify questions, follow up on unclear responses, achieve higher response rate; participants are free of outside influences, and the likeliness of obtaining detailed information regarding personal feelings and perceptions. In contrast, disadvantages include the cost of travel to conduct interviews, the possibility of the participants becoming apprehensive and refrain from participating (Yin, 2014).

### **Data Organization Technique**

I used NVivo 10 software to aid in my ability to code the collected data from my interviews and identified themes and patterns during the data analysis phase of the study. Researchers can ensure confidentiality and privacy by assigning generic codes to participants (Gibson, Benson, & Brand, 2013). I protected the participant's identity and personal information by assigning each participant to a code consisting of two letters and a number uniquely (BL1, BL2, and BL3). Yin (2014) posited using pseudonyms as privacy control to protect research data relating to participants.

Researchers are ethically responsible for ensuring the confidentiality of data and protection rights of all participants (Taylor & Land, 2014). I ensured confidentiality of data and protection of the rights of all participants. All research information shall remain on my password protected laptop and locked in a small safe, to which only I have the means to open. After 5

years, I will responsibly destroy all the participants' data in a manner such as shredding documents and erasing the flash drive.

### **Data Analysis**

Qualitative data analysis entitles reviewing data to provide a more direct analysis as themes become seeming (Elo et al., 2014). For this study, I developed interview questions based on Herzberg's two-factor theory of hygiene and motivating factors to explore the overarching research question for the study: *What strategies did some owners of family businesses use to minimize nepotistic practices that reduce skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover?* I used a semistructured interview technique with opened ended questions as one part of the methodological triangulation. I used member checking as the second part of the methodological triangulation. Wilson (2014) noted users of methodological triangulation compare the findings from different data sources to add richness in explaining real world situations.

Yin (2014) noted triangulation is the convergence of collected data from various sources, to verify the consistency of a finding. Heale and Forbes (2013) noted a benefit of using methodological triangulation is that researchers can get a richer picture than opting for the use of one type of data collection. Burau and Andersen (2014) posited that a researcher's choice in selecting multiple data resources for gathering data help to ensure reliability and validity. Yin (2014) illustrated five steps in data analysis to include: (a) compiling, (b) dissembling, (c) reassembling, (d) interpretation, and (e) the conclusion.

### **Reliability and Validity**

According to Houghton, Casey, Shaw, and Murphy (2013) qualitative research necessitate a creative and dynamic approach to assessing quality. In qualitative research, the



essence of a rich portrayal of interview material can support the ability to draw accurate and valid outcomes based on patterns of behaviors. Frels and Onwuegbuzie (2013) noted the design and data of the study must hold the ability to make truthful conclusions. Moustakas (1994) posited that reliability is a direct consequence of data collection that allows for study duplication in an alternative setting. In qualitative research, there are 4 elements used to achieve reliability and validity: dependability; credibility; transferability; and confirmability (Cope, 2014).

### **Reliability**

**Dependability.** According to Munn, Porritt, Lockwood, Aromataris and Pearson (2013), the expressions reliability and internal validity in quantitative research are one in the same as dependability and credibility in qualitative research. In conducting interviews, I followed an interview protocol (see Appendix A). Yin (2014) noted researchers should follow an interview protocol. To aid in data triangulation, researchers may gather secondary data such as company handbooks, financial records or other types of proprietary documents (Wilson, 2012). Furthermore, I collected historical company documents such as employment and termination records that depict job titles and sustained tenure of nonfamily employees from each participant for the purpose of data triangulation.

After the interviews, I emailed each participant my completed analysis and interpretation to give them an opportunity to review for inaccuracy or inconsistency in the data collected. Researchers should collaborate with participants to ensure accurate interpretation of information (Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). I used NVivo 10 software for Windows to advance the dependability of the study. NVivo 10 is sufficient to aid in the dependability of data (Hilal & Alabri, 2013). The multiple case study involved exploring strategies that some family owned and

operated business leaders used to aid in minimizing nepotistic practices that reduce skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover.

### **Validity**

**Creditability.** In qualitative research, the construct of credibility provides an alternative criterion for judging internal validity. Such alternative criterion provides a passage for other researchers to replicate the same study using the same procedures (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Credibility warrants truths in providing affirmation that data collection was accurate (Frost et al., 2011). Second, credibility guarantee findings, interpretations, and conclusions materializing from research are factual and an accurate portrayal of real world situations (Frost et al., 2011). As the researcher, to ensure credibility I used NVivo 10 software for Windows in conjunction with replicating data analysis until themes and patterns were unmistakably clear. NViVo software has a benefit in managing data and ideas, querying data, modeling visually, and reporting that may considerably improve the quality of research (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013).

According to Munn et al. (2014), credibility assesses the equivalency between the source of data collected and the interpretation of the researcher. Further, to enhance credibility through member checking and methodological triangulation, I emailed each participant my completed analysis and interpretations to give them an opportunity to review for inaccuracy or inconsistency in data collected. Member checking confirms the information collected is accurate and not associated with the process of data analysis – it occurs before data analysis (Harvey, 2015). Second, I compared and contrasted data collected from the responses of opened end questions and historical company documents, such as employment and termination records of

nonfamily employees. Wilson (2014) suggested that data triangulation is not a tool to validate data, but an alternative tool to aid in validating multiple forms of qualitative data.

**Transferability.** Transferability is the fortitude of qualitative findings that can transfer to other contexts or settings outside of the research (Houghton et al., 2013). The ability to apply research findings that are meaningful to individuals who are not a part of a study researchers refer to as transferability (Burchett, Mayhew, Lavis, & Dobrow, 2013). Marshall and Rossman (2016) noted that the burden of demonstrating transferability of a set of findings to another context belongs to another researcher, not the original researcher. As a researcher, to enable others the latitude of transferability in this study I adhered to data collection and analysis techniques discussed earlier regarding the interview protocol, member checking, triangulation and data saturation.

Employees and stakeholders of family owned and operated businesses can use the results of this study to advocate for the implementation of strategies to minimize nepotistic practices. Readers of this study might be able to apply the findings to their family owned and operated businesses in developing and implementing strategies that may reduce skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover. Future researchers might be able to utilize this study as an instrument to advance further research of undiscovered themes and strategies relating to skilled nonfamily employees in family owned and operated businesses.

**Confirmability.** Researchers ascertain validity in case study research by exhibiting credibility and confirmability (Houghton et al., 2013). As the researcher, I established confirmability by using interviews, proprietary documents such as employment records, and member checking by methodological triangulation. Researchers can achieve confirmability

through interviews and follow up member checking (Munn et al., 2014; Foley & O'Connor, 2013). This study included three participants, for which methodological triangulation and member checking aided in achieving data saturation while adding strength to the credibility of the study.

### **Transition and Summary**

In Section 2, I included an introduction, stated the purpose statement of study, described the role of the researcher, discussed the selected participants, and detailed the research methodology and design. Next, I shared the description of the (a) population and sampling method; (b) ethical research; (c) data collection instruments, technique, and organization; and (d) data analysis techniques. Section 2 contained a discussion of the methods and techniques for assuring the reliability and validity of my study.

Once I received IRB approval, I conducted my research and completed the following parts in Section 3: (a) introduction, to include restating the purpose of the study and the research question; (b) presentation of findings; (c) application to professional practice; (d) implications for social change; (e) recommendations for action; (f) recommendations for further research; (g) researcher reflections; and (g) my conclusion.

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

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies some owners of family businesses used to minimize nepotistic employment practices that reduce skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover. I explored the strategies of three family owned and operated business leaders of funeral establishments in the Midwest region of St. Louis, Missouri. I used a semistructured interview technique to gain an in-depth understanding of those strategies family owned and operated business leaders use to minimize nepotistic employment practices. I reviewed public records, historical and current company documents. The findings contained strategies used by the family owned and operated business leaders to minimize nepotistic employment practices and reduce skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover. I identified five key themes related to the research topic. The themes emerged from three of my seven questions: (a) work environment, (b) effective communication, (c) education and training, (d) growth opportunity, and (e) policy and procedures. In Section 3, I outline and discuss (a) the presentation of findings; (b) their application to professional practice; (c) the implication for social change; (d) recommendations for action; (e) recommendation for further research; (f) reflections; and (g) conclusion.

#### **Presentation of the Findings**

The overarching research question for this qualitative multiple case study was as follow: *What strategies did some owners of family businesses use to minimize nepotistic practices that reduce skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover?* I used a semistructured interview technique to gain an in-depth understanding of the strategies family owned and operated business

leaders use to minimize nepotistic employment practices. I reviewed public records and historical and current company documents. I conducted one-on-one interviews at the time and in the location chosen by the participants. Each interview lasted one hour as scheduled. After the interviews, I assigned each participant a code consisting of two letters and one number uniquely (BL1, BL2, and BL3) to protect their identities.

After the interviews, I transcribed word for word and then summarized the participants' recorded responses. I performed member checking by providing each participant with a summary of the interview transcription to ensure the accuracy of my interpretation. I used NVivo 10 software for Windows to organize participants' responses according to likeness and themes for coding. After I coded all the data and no new themes emerged, I performed data triangulation. I compared and contrasted the following data: (a) interview responses; (b) public records (i.e. company and nonfamily employees' biographies on business' websites); (c) historical and current company documents, such as employment and termination records of nonfamily employees; (d) employee's handbook; and (e) company policies and procedures handbook. During the interview process, the participants offered ideas, shared experiences, and insights relating to minimizing nepotistic practices. These three family owned and operated business leaders participated in semistructured interviews and responded to seven questions relating to the overarching research question, What strategies do some owners of family businesses use to minimize nepotistic practices that reduce skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover? Five themes emerged from three of the seven questions. The five themes emerged were as follow: (a) work environment, (b) effective communication, (c) education and training, (d) growth opportunity, and (e) policy and procedures. I did not gain any relevant knowledge from

participants' responses to interview questions 2, 3, 4 and 7. All three participants noted having no barriers to implementing their strategies; and had no additional information to add on the topic during or after the interview. All three participants noted the effectiveness of their strategies were evident through the long term retention of skilled nonfamily employees.

**Theme 1: Work Environment.** Allen and Shanock (2013) posited socialization tactics positively correlates with perceived organizational support, job embeddedness, and organizational commitment. All three of the family owned and operated business leaders acknowledged the value in creating a work environment that promotes and demonstrates equality among all employees, both family and nonfamily. When asked, what strategies have you utilized to keep nonfamily employees interested in their jobs, BL1 indicated having more nonfamily employees, than family employees. There are more than 100 funeral homes in the Midwest region of St. Louis, Missouri, which makes keeping talented nonfamily employees interested in their job key. Given the fact that most employees in a family business are nonfamily employees, De Massis, Frattini, Pizzurno, and Cassia (2015), the need for citizenship behavior is apparent. If the work environment is one that concedes to nepotism, then no strategy will keep nonfamily employees interested in their job. BL1 noted strategies to keep nonfamily employees interested in their jobs included maintaining a work environment that fosters respect, unity, equality, and opportunity.

According to Perry et al. (2015), family business leaders compromise growth potentials by implementing HRM policies and practices that favor family employees over nonfamily employees. BL2 indicated that as a family owned and operated business leader, establishing and maintaining a work environment free of conflicts start at the top level. Making a distinction

between nonfamily and family employees would hurt the business and their customers who are grieving families. Jones and Stout (2015) referred to nepotism as the actual and perceived notion of granting preferential treatment to one family member to another. BL2 emphasized it is difficult for nonfamily employees to find interest in their jobs if shadowed with insecurities and uncertainties brought about by images of unfair superiorities. BL2 noted strategies to keep nonfamily employees interested in their jobs included nurturing strengths, showing respect, and embracing creativity.

BL3 indicated having an even balance of both family and nonfamily employees. The strategies include fostering a work environment that adhered to workplace equality, meaning no employee received preferential treatment and respect for others is mandatory. BL3 indicated that there are no lines drawn between nonfamily and family employees. Farrington et al. (2014) posited in instances where nonfamily employees perceive an imbalance in fairness relating to decision making, decision outcomes, and processes, then attaining organizational commitment become difficult. Second, BL3 noted that aside from the formal education and training needed to work in the funeral home business every employee had something new to offer and to learn. The weekly in-house teach and learn strategy allows everyone to discuss their professional interest, showcase strengths, discover new skills, and pursue professional desires as a family team.

The three family owned and operated business leaders concluded the most successful strategy for keeping nonfamily employees interested in their jobs is respect, inclusion, equal involvement, and embracing creativity. Likewise, De Massis et al. (2015) posited the need for citizenship behavior is apparent. Jones and Stout (2015) suggested that employers must manage the common prejudices against family social connection preferences (SCP). Gialuisi and Coetzer



(2013) found that, in small businesses, voluntary employee turnover occurs for different reasons, but mainly employees cited reasons associated with relationship conflict with management and co-workers. Such reasons as relationship conflicts amid management and coworkers create distrust, which sparks an employee's intentions to leave her or his employer (Ertürk, 2014).

**Theme 2: Effective Communication.** In addition to the work environment, the three family owned and operated business leaders contributed their success in minimizing nepotistic practices that reduce skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover in part to open effective communication. When asked about the treatment of nonfamily employees to promote retention, BL1 noted effective two-way open communication and building interpersonal relationships among all employees is crucial to the success of the funeral home business. BL1 indicated effective two-way open communication as the mutual exchange of sending and receiving information and ideas. Nonfamily employees are privy to the same information and shared ideas as family employees. BL2 suggested the benefit of genuine open communication allows nonfamily employees to feel secure about their jobs. Making nonfamily employees feel valued through open communication creates a genuine sense of belonging.

BL2 indicated experiencing a higher level of commitment from nonfamily employees over family employees. BL2 stated that the higher level of commitment is because of genuine open communication. Answering the same question, BL3 indicated, promoting retention of nonfamily employees takes effort in applying clear communication early. From day one of employment the tone is set, nonfamily employees were involved in daily meetings and asked to share ideas, thoughts, and opinions. BL3 said, "Retaining talented nonfamily employees in the funeral business does not have to be difficult, just build relationships based on communication,

trust, honesty and respect.” Farrington et al. (2014) noted including nonfamily employees in any discussions and decisions relating to succession planning alleviates stress caused by perceived job insecurity. Family owned and operated business leaders might want to consider honesty, transparency, and disclosure in terms of the state of the business.

**Theme 3: Education and Training.** An action to reduce voluntary turnover or turnover intentions, employers may want to consider providing employees with opportunities to enhance their professional growth through subsidized education and training (Bianchi, 2013; Kim, 2015). A second theme emerged from asking about the treatment of nonfamily employees to promote retention. BL1, BL2, and BL3 noted opportunities to engage in continuous education and training. BL1 noted the funeral industry is a unique business that requires professional education and training. BL1 suggested other family business leaders should focus on identifying potentials, offer education and training opportunities, and not focus on the status quo of family versus nonfamily employees. Ramos et al. (2014) noted that family status might influence the attitudes and behaviors of employees. BL2 noted investing in the education and training of nonfamily employees sends a clear message of fairness for all employees. BL3 noted nonfamily employees are encouraged to take advantage of the same education and training opportunities as family employees. Family business owners that limit education and training to family members are doing a disservice to their business, family, and customers. BL3 experienced a longer retention rate of nonfamily employees that were afforded formal education and training opportunities, than family employees.

**Theme 4: Promotion.** Promotion opportunities contributed to the retention of skilled nonfamily employees. BL1, BL2, and BL3 contributed their success of retaining skilled

nonfamily employees to promotion opportunities. BL1 noted promotions are based on and granted to the most qualified, and are not limited to only relatives. BL2 indicated that constantly promoting skilled and unskilled family employees over skilled nonfamily employees increases the likelihood of low morale in the work environment. BL3 noted family business owners who favor family over talent might be putting their business at risk in the long term. The practice of ensuring promotion opportunities for both family and nonfamily employees increases the likelihood of greater performance (Farrington et al., 2014).

**Theme 5: Policy and Procedures.** When asked about strategies to minimize nepotistic practices, all three participants acknowledged following established guidelines in an employee handbook. All three participants' shared their employee's handbooks which were consistent with their responses. BL1 suggested the best strategy for any family business to stay clear of or to minimize the perception of preferential treatment is to create and enforce written guidelines. BL1 cautioned the absence of policies and procedures in family owned and operated businesses is a breeding ground for nepotism in the workplace. BL2 admitted for the first three years of being in business not having a company policy and procedures manual. As a result of unintentional practices of nepotism, BL2 experienced a high degree of divisiveness and conflict among family and nonfamily employees. BL2 noted, since the inception of a detailed standard policy and procedures handbook, both family and nonfamily employees understand their roles in the business, opportunities for growth, and steps to take in addressing conflicts. BL3 noted experiencing nepotism as an employee in family owned and operated businesses and believes creating and following policies and procedures is the best strategy towards minimizing nepotistic practices. Pearce (2015) affirmed that nepotism damages the kinds of social relationships that

suffice for a humane and tolerable work environment and for fostering organizational performance.

**Findings Related to the Herzberg Theory.** I chose the Herzberg two-factor theory to expand my understanding of factors associated with employees' satisfaction or dissatisfaction and motivated or demotivated employees. I used Herzberg two-factor theory in this study to explore strategies used by family owned and operated business leaders to minimize nepotistic practices that may result in skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover. Herzberg (1959) developed a two-factor theory based on motivation and hygiene factors. Herzberg used the theory to explain issues affecting employee satisfaction or dissatisfaction and motivated or demotivated employees. Herzberg (1959) identified the following key tenets underlying the two-factor theory: Motivation (a) success, (b) recognition for success, (c) responsibility for task, (d) interest in the job, (e) development of higher level tasks, and (f) progression. Hygiene (a) working environments, (b) value of supervision, (c) pay, (d) status, (e) security, (f) organization, (g) job, (h) organizational policy and administration, and (i) interpersonal relations.

Herzberg (1965) suggested that job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction epitomized two distinctly different work experiences and not simply opposed to one or the other. Herzberg (1974) noted that some employees desire job satisfaction (*hygiene factors*), whereas other employees desire job substance (*motivator factors*). The premise of the two-factor theory was to explore if motivation and job satisfaction influenced employees' decisions to remain with their current employers. Herzberg (1965; 1974) found that employees' job dissatisfaction linked contextually to hygienic factors, whereas employees' job satisfaction linked to those motivating factors associated with job content. The unification of Herzberg two-factor theory into the

conceptual framework of this study assisted in identification and exploration of family owned and operated business leaders' strategies to minimize nepotistic practices that may result in skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover.

Some of the themes in my literature review described nepotism as a business problem in family owned and operated businesses. There is an ongoing need for strategies to minimize nepotistic practices in family owned and operated business that may result in skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover in the United States. The practice of nepotism in business has caused family owned and operated business leaders to seek strategies to minimizing such practices. Based on the research and review of the literature, strategies for minimizing nepotistic practices in family owned and operated businesses are rarely mentioned and under researched.

The results of this study provided information that other family owned and operated business leaders can use to implement change, motivate and retain skilled nonfamily employees. When asked, about assessing the effectiveness of their strategies, all three participants referred to having a low turnover rate of nonfamily employees. The five themes emerged from this study were: (a) work environment, (b) communication, (c) education and training, (d) promotion opportunity, and (e) policy and procedures revealed a tie to the tenets of Herzberg two-factor theory of motivation (job substance) and hygiene (job satisfaction). The findings confirmed and added to the scarce body of knowledge in the field of nepotistic practices in family owned and operated businesses.

### **Applications to Professional Practice**

The purpose of the qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies some owners of family businesses used to minimize nepotistic employment practices that reduce nonfamily

skilled employees' voluntary turnover. The population of this study afforded evidence on how to reduce skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover in family owned businesses. The evidence offered by three family owned business leaders contributed to social change through the construction of strategies to minimize nepotistic employment practices that reduce skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover.

There is a plethora of research evidence, which offered reasons for employee turnover, but little to no research evidence on how nepotistic employment practices may lead to skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover in family owned businesses. As a result, there is little to no research evidence on strategies to minimize nepotistic employment practices to reduce skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover. Leaders of family owned and operated businesses can use this research to reduce imminent skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover caused by nepotistic employment practices. The intended contribution to existing research literature is to offer knowledge to family owned and operated business leaders on the importance of having strategies to minimize nepotistic employment practices. Second, family owned and operated business leaders can use this knowledge to help balance equality in work environments to foster job substance and satisfaction for both family and nonfamily employees.

### **Implications for Social Change**

This qualitative multiple case study is significant to creating strategies to minimize nepotistic employment practices to reduce skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover. The central objective of the study was to explore strategies some owners of family businesses use to minimize nepotistic employment practices that reduce nonfamily skilled employees' voluntary turnover. While the strategies as noted by family owned and operated business leaders may aid

some family businesses in minimizing nepotistic employment practices, understanding the critical factors associated with the workplace perceptions and desires of nonfamily employees may aid in overcoming ineffective strategies or barriers.

As family owned business leaders understand these strategies, the results of the study may aid family business leaders in cultivating effective non-nepotistic employment practices to retain skilled nonfamily employees. Current and future family owned business leaders may consider the findings from this study as a contributory guide in developing strategies aligned with non-nepotistic employment practices. The implications for social change include (a) the potential to reduce nepotistic employment practices in family owned businesses that can negatively affect skilled nonfamily employees by causing voluntary turnover, (b) increase economic growth potential while simultaneously positively benefiting employees, families, and communities, and (c) decrease the unemployment rate.

### **Recommendations for Action**

Family owned business leaders could use the information in this study to aid in building strategies to minimize nepotistic employment practices that reduce skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover. The information offered in this study may contribute to family owned business leaders effectively minimizing nepotistic employment practices while ensuring skilled nonfamily employees perceive workplace equality. Non-nepotistic employment practices offer benefits to family businesses in terms of talent retention, growth, and sustainability. The findings from this study are vital to current and future family owned business leaders. The enactment of strategies to minimize nepotistic employment practices may aid other family owned business leaders in effectively reducing skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover, increase

productivity, experience growth, and sustainability. I recommend family owned business leaders review the findings of this study to devise and implement strategies in their family business.

Dissemination of the findings from this research study may occur by several methods. I plan to give research participants a compendium of this study to circulate among peers of other family owned businesses and organizational leaders. A published version of this study will be available through ProQuest/UMI dissertation database for academia and others. Upon request and given the opportunity, I will present the findings of this research in various business related forums, training seminars, and leadership conferences.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

The purpose of the qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies some owners of family businesses used to minimize nepotistic employment practices that reduce skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover. The findings from this study extend to the existing research needs for strategies family owned business leaders use to minimize nepotistic employment practices. There was very little research on strategies that family owned business leaders can use to minimize nepotistic employment practices. Recommendations for further research include strategies focused on non-nepotistic employment practices in the United States on a broader scale. Conducting a study of this degree can offer family, as well as nonfamily owned business leaders strategies and resources to minimize nepotistic employment practices to reduce skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover.

Future research should consider a quantitative or mix method design to examine the cause and effects of nepotistic employment practices, skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover and the associated business cost of sustainability in family owned businesses. Future



research on nepotistic employment practices could help expand positive dialogues in specific areas of employment practices that have received little to no attention. Further research could add to the limited scholarly data and understanding of strategies family owned business leaders use to minimize nepotistic employment practices to reduce skilled nonfamily voluntary turnover.

**Representation.** The key limitation of this qualitative multiple case study was that the data collected may not represent all family owned and operated business leaders.

Recommendation for further research includes additional studies on family owned and operated business leaders in different industries. Another recommendation is to extend research outside of the family owned and operated business leaders, to leaders in large and small government agencies, public organizations, and leaders of state, local and federal political agendas. I focused solely on family owned and operated business leaders' in the funeral industry.

**Location and Sampling Size.** I also recommend researchers consider exploring different geographical locations outside of the Midwest region of St. Louis, Missouri. Second, researchers should consider increasing the sampling size of participants. Expanding research to other geographical areas and increasing the number of participants could add richer data to the study.

### **Reflections**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies some owners of family businesses used to minimize nepotistic employment practices that reduce skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary turnover. The Doctor of Business Administration doctoral study process was unlike any previous experiences during my life long academic journey. The magnitude of detail and alignment required throughout the research process challenged every

aspect of my academic competence. Any preconceived notions I had prior to conducting this research vanished with every achieved milestone.

During the interview process, I followed my interview protocol, which helped with staying on script as to respect participants' time. All three of the participants were forthcoming with more information than I requested. I anticipated delays because of participants' limited schedules and their inability to cooperate within a specific window of time, on the contrary, this was not the case. Furthermore, I scheduled time for member checking.

During this research process, I remained unbiased and gained a clear perspective of the information shared with me by the participants. The participants spoke with passion and concern, which made me feel resolved about their responses. After completing the doctoral research study process, my level of knowledge and understanding increased on the importance of implementing strategies to minimizing nepotistic employment practices, in not only family owned businesses but in all types of businesses. The findings from this study exposed me to additional opportunities to inform and help all business leaders implement useful strategies to minimize nepotistic employment practices.

### **Conclusion**

Some owners of family businesses in the private sector must be cognizant of nepotism to reduce skilled employee turnover (Safina, 2015). The voluntary turnover rate of skilled employees in the private sector increased to 2.9 million at the end of December 2015 (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). The general business problem is that if family business owners limit preferential employment practices to only family members, they may experience increased nonfamily skilled employees' voluntary turnover. The specific business problem is that

some owners of family businesses lack strategies to minimize nepotistic practices that result in nonfamily skilled employees' voluntary turnover. The purpose of the qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies some owners of family businesses used to minimize nepotistic practices that reduce nonfamily skilled employees' voluntary turnover. Further, the objective was also to answer the following overarching research question: What strategies did some owners of family businesses use to minimize nepotistic practices that reduce nonfamily skilled employees' voluntary turnover?

Three family business owners with funeral homes in the Midwest region of St. Louis, Missouri participated in semistructured interviews. I triangulated the data by comparing the participants' public and proprietary documents, interview data and current literature to support the study findings. After data collection, five themes emerged from the data including (a) work environment, (b) effective communication, (c) education and training, (d) growth opportunity, and (e) policy and procedures. Based on study findings, an indication was made as to some strategies that family owned and operated business leaders used to minimize nepotistic employment practices.

The implications for social change include (a) the potential to reduce nepotistic employment practices in family owned businesses that can negatively affect skilled nonfamily employees causing voluntary turnover, (b) increase economic growth potential while simultaneously positively benefiting employees, families, and communities, and (c) decrease the unemployment rate. The intended contribution to existing research literature is to offer knowledge to family owned and operated business leaders on the importance of strategies to minimize nepotistic employment practices to reduce skilled nonfamily employees' voluntary

turnover. Second, family owned and operated business leaders can use this knowledge to help balance equality in work environments to foster job substance and job satisfaction for both family and nonfamily employees.

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Cengage Learning.

### Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. What strategies have you utilized to keep nonfamily employees interested in their jobs?
2. What barriers did you encounter in developing and implementing the strategies?
3. How did you address the barriers to implementing your strategies?
4. How did or do you assess the effectiveness of your strategies?
5. How are nonfamily employees treated to promote retention?
6. What strategies do you use to minimize nepotistic practices?
7. What other information not asked can you share on this topic?

## Appendix B: Interview Protocol

- I. Introduce myself to the participant(s).
- II. Give participant copy of consent form
  - I. Go over contents, answer questions, and concerns of participant(s).
  - II. Ask permission to turn on the audio recording device
- III. Turn on the audio recording device.
- IV. Introduce participant(s) with pseudonym and coded identification; note the date and time
- V. Begin interview with question #1; follow through to the final question.
- VI. Follow up with additional questions and collect company employee handbook.
- VII. End interview sequence; discuss member checking with participant(s).
- VIII. Reiterate contact numbers for follow up questions and concerns from participants
- IX. Thank the participant(s) for their part in the study.