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The Effects of Management on Commitment in the Retail Industry

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Abstract

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MBA, Grantham University, 2011

BS, Saint Vincent College, 2005

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

The lack of employee commitment costs retail organizations billions of dollars annually in the form of decreased effectiveness, profits, and retention rates. The purpose of this case study was to identify effective strategies used by retail store managers that lead to employee commitment to increase business performance. The study population was 8,230 retail store managers in the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania area. The conceptual framework for this study was the Meyer and Allen 3-component model of commitment. Participants were purposefully selected for their knowledge, experience and success in implementing effective retention strategies. Data were collected via face-to-face semistructured interviews, indirect participant observations, and archival document reviews with 5 retail store managers. The data analysis process involved organizing the interviews, color coding themes, and using NVivo software to interpret the data. Three themes emerged: Employee engagement increased employee commitment to the organization, managers decreased employee turnover by taking a personal interest in employees, and employee empowerment increased organizational commitment. Increasing employee commitment contributes to social change by providing organizational managers and leaders with important insights. Enhancing employee commitment contributes to society through increased organizational profitability resulting from improved retention strategies.

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Dedication

The completion of this doctoral journey was made possible by my personal Lord and savior Jesus Christ. I owe everything to him and the strength he provided me to endure everything I have went through to finish. I want to dedicate this doctoral study to my family and loved ones who supported me throughout the entire process. My mother, Sharon Johnson, receives a special dedication because of the influence on my life that she has had. Her hard work and dedication to our family and her own education continues to be an inspiration to me, which drives me to strive for more. This doctoral study is also dedicated to all of the mentors I have had throughout my professional and academic career. I would not be where I am today without you. Thank you.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Turnover is a challenge for businesses at all organizational levels (Hur, 2013).

Turnover costs billions for U.S. organizations (Bebe, 2016). Employee turnover

contributes to the loss of revenue, knowledgeable employees, and experienced personnel

within organizations (Major, 2016). Hiring and training costs for employees who decide

to leave organizations cost businesses in excess of $2.7 billion annually (Harhara, Singh,

& Hussain, 2015). Turnover is costly and highlights the need for new research that

provides more insight into the issue.

Leaders face many challenges when trying to decrease organizational turnover.

The difficulties associated with retention include; providing competitive compensation,

competitive working conditions, job satisfaction, and maintaining suitable workplace

relationships (Abii, Ogula, & Rose, 2013). Shifts in organizational priorities across all

industries seek to strengthen retention initiatives (Bebe, 2016). Employee turnover costs

organizations between 30% and 300% of the annual compensation of employees (Craig,

2015). Costs are not the only concern for organizations with turnover problems. Keskes

(2014) suggested that recruitment screening strategies affect employee retention rates.

Organizations approach the challenges presented by employee turnover in a

variety of ways. Harrison and Gordon (2014) posited that some corporate decision

makers feel the key to improving retention is monetary and employees will commit to

their organization once their salary is competitive. Other organizational leaders support

the idea that reducing turnover is a matter of managing people effectively (Palanski,

Avey, & Jiraporn, 2014). Engaging employee commitment coincides with an atmosphere

that promotes employee appreciation, provides an opportunity for growth, provides a friendly and cooperative environment, and creates a sense of being a second employee home (Koutroumanis, Alexakis, & Dastoor, 2015).

Background of the Problem

Businesses experienced varied levels of employee turnover since 2012. At the end of 2012, the total number of employee separations reached 50 million (Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2013). Employee separations increased to nearly 52 million by December 2013 (BLS, 2014). By December 2014, over 55 million people were separated from their jobs, many of which were the result of employees quitting (BLS, 2016a). Leaders within organizations must put forth maximum effort to implement strategies that reduce employee turnover and strengthen retention numbers (Zatzick, Deery, & Iverson, 2015). Putting forth the effort requires taking physical action as well as adjusting strategies because leadership strategies can profoundly influence the intent of employees to leave or stay with an organization (Liu, Cai, Li, Shi, & Fang, 2013).

Problem Statement

An estimated 60 million United States employees quit their jobs in 2015 (BLS, 2016a). The United States retail industry experienced a 98% turnover rate in 2015 (BLS, 2016b). The general business problem is retail business managers who fail to adopt effective employee retention strategies may experience lowered business performance. The specific business problem is that some store managers in the U.S. retail industry lack management strategies that lead to employee commitment to increase business performance.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore U.S. retail store manager strategies that lead to employee commitment to increase business performance. The target population for the study was 8,230 retail store managers in the greater Pittsburgh area (BLS, 2016). Of that target population, I used a purposeful sample of five participants for my interview pool. The results of the research may positively impact business practice by lowering hiring costs in retail operations. Store managers may use the findings to improve employee retention rates. Improved employee commitment may benefit society through economic and overall quality of life improvements.

Nature of the Study

The research method selected for this study was qualitative. Qualitative research is applicable when seeking objective evidence from participants (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013). Quantitative research is appropriate for testing a theory, examining relationships, or analyzing statistical data (LoBiondo-Wood & Haber, 2013). The quantitative research approach was not appropriate because the purpose of the study was to explore store manager views rather than to test an employee turnover theory. The mixed methods research approach involves a combination of both qualitative and quantitative research methods to enhance the study (Hancock & Algozzine, 2015). The mixed methods approach was not the best method for this study because there was no need to both explore and examine the research topic.

A case study research design was selected for this study because case studies are appropriate when exploring effective management strategies (Houghton et al., 2013).

Case study research helps to provide enhanced insight through participant experiences in specific situations (Cronin, 2014). Ethnographical and phenomenological research were among other available qualitative designs. Ethnographical research involves utilizing observations and interviews to gather data over extended periods on specific cultural groups in natural settings (Corley, 2015; Hammersley, 2016). The data collection methods made the ethnographical research design inappropriate for this study. Phenomenological research involves exploring the lived experiences of participants (Van Manen, 2014). I sought to explore the comprehensive explanations of participants about employee commitment strategies and develop themes regarding their detailed accounts of the specific problem.

Research Question

What management strategies do store managers in the U.S. retail industry use that lead to employee commitment to increase performance?

Interview Questions

Participants answered the following questions concerning personal background and individual insights on employee commitment:

1. What qualities do you display that you feel contribute to the emotional attachment of your employees to the company?

2. What strategies have you used that influence the desire of employees to stay with the organization?

3. How much of a factor do you think organizational norms play in the commitment level of your employees?

4. How would you assess the commitment level of employees resulting from their loyalty to the organization?

5. What aspects of the organizational culture do you feel contribute to employees remaining with the company?

6. How would you assess the effectiveness of your leadership in implementing strategies that influence employee commitment on a personal level?

7. What information can you provide that I did not address in the interview questions?

Conceptual Framework

The Meyer and Allen three-component model of commitment was the conceptual framework for the study. The three components of the model are affective, continuance, and normative commitment (Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993). The first component in the model is affective commitment. An emotional attachment to the organization defines affective commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990). The level of affective commitment increases or decreases depending on an employee's outlook about the quality of the workplace experience (Meyer et al., 1993). Affective commitment pertains to the fit between the internal sociocultural expectations of the workers and the organizational expectations (Meyer & Allen, 1991b). Continuance commitment develops in reaction to circumstances that increase the price connected with leaving the job (Powell & Meyer, 2004). The connected costs associated with leaving an organization extends beyond the typical financial cost aspect (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Normative commitment represents a sensed moral obligation to stay with an organization (Allen & Meyer, 1996). Normative

commitment derives from both the quality of transactional history and norms of a specific organizational culture (Powell & Meyer, 2004).

The conceptual framework for this study provides a baseline for identifying different organizational aspects that affect employee turnover and commitment. The selected theory aligns with the proposed study because the commitment level of workers plays a key role in retention and turnover. The three-component model of organizational commitment was a fitting model for this study because each area of emphasis throughout the literature review corresponds to something that affects the level of commitment employees have to a company. The level of commitment is a significant factor in the decision of an employee to leave or remain with an organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991a).

Operational Definitions

Affective commitment: Affective commitment is the desire to maintain membership in an organization (Keskes, 2014).

Continuance commitment: Continuance commitment is commitment derived from costs and benefits associated with remaining with the organization (Joung, Goh, Huffman, Yuan, & Surles, 2015).

Job satisfaction: Job satisfaction is a set of favorable or unfavorable feelings or emotions with which employees view their work (Srivastava, 2013).

Normative commitment: Normative commitment is as an attachment based on motivation to conform to social norms regarding attachment (Miao, Newman, Schwarz, & Xu, 2013).

Organizational culture: Organizational culture consists of shared values, beliefs, and assumptions that exist among employees within a company that help guide and coordinate behavior (Cravens, Goad Oliver, Shigehiro, & Stewart, 2015).

Quit intentions: Quit intentions are the most immediate psychological determinants for leaving an organization (Nguyen, Felfe, Fooken, & Ngoc, 2015).

Retention: Retention pertains to organizational actions taken to create an environment that makes employees choose to remain with the organization (Davis, 2013).

Turnover: Turnover is the departure of an employee from an organization despite an opportunity to stay (Regts & Molleman, 2013).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are thoughts believed to be factual without a means to verify whether or not they are (Humphrey, 2014). The assumptions about the characteristics of the studied problem and its environmental relationship impact the transfer of knowledge from subfields to the larger scope of the study (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Four assumptions may influence the overall results of this study. The first assumption is all participants will provide honest answers. Second, all interviewees will likely participate in the interview outside of work hours. The third assumption is all participants will respond promptly and openly without outside influences. Fourth, conducting all scheduled interviews on time and as planned is assumed.

Limitations

Limitations of a study are factors that threaten the strength of a research study (Denscombe, 2014). Two limitations will exist for the study. First, the possibility of not gaining participant consent for the study was a limitation. The second limitation was the restraint on time for the participants. This limitation may decrease the diversity and variations in the responses of the participants, which in turn may weaken the study and reduce the generalizability of the results to a broader population.

Delimitations

Delimitations are conditions intentionally established to slim down the scope of a study for the researcher (Holloway & Galvin, 2016). Three delimitations existed for this study. The first delimitation was the geographical location. Second, the purposeful sample of at least five store managers with a minimum of 2 years of retail experience was a delimitation. The third delimitation was limiting the research to the retail industry.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

The results of the study may positively affect the way business managers implement strategies to retain employees. Also, the findings could significantly reduce employee turnover. Leaders have a critical role in managing retention efforts because of the link between employee retention and organizational performance (Ryu & Lee, 2013). Corporate leaders may refer to the results of the study to start initiatives within other organizations to ensure better practices are used to retain and empower employees, which increases productivity. Successful companies implement business strategies that

encourage employees to engage as this can help decrease the impact of employee turnover (Kumar & Pansari, 2016). Businesses cannot operate without employees who perform day-to-day tasks and the individuals who supervise, manage, and lead those employees. The leaders and managers responsible for ensuring the completion of organizational objectives provide an opportunity to gain a better understanding of positive influences on employee commitment. Understanding the views of those store managers can provide a broader perspective and strengthen the findings of the study. Businesses that implement practices to encourage supervisor and team leader involvement are more likely to experience minimized effects of employee turnover (Alex & George, 2014). The results of the study may contribute to better business practices by influencing how store managers operate to encourage employee growth and commitment. Business leaders may use the findings to help establish new programs that address employee turnover concerns.

Implications for Social Change

The positive social impact from organizations utilizing improved retention practices is important for businesses, employees, and consumers. When employee turnover increases, an organization's ability to make significant societal contributions is threatened due to the potential reduction in productivity and growth (Mousavi Davoudi & Fartash, 2013). This study may contribute to the development of more efficient retention practices and thereby decrease turnover rates. Increased efficiency in retention practices may lead to higher levels of business success and sustainability. Effective retention

practices may also lead to higher employment rates, more disposable income, and increased societal stability.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore U.S. retail store manager strategies that lead to employee commitment to increase business performance. The review of the academic and professional literature helped provide a better understanding of employee turnover and some underlying reasons that cause employees to decide to separate from or remain with organizations. The literature review involved utilizing numerous resources, including the Walden academic library, books, and databases. Research databases used to retrieve source material included SAGE Premier, ABI/INFORM Complete, Business Source Complete, and ProQuest. Relevant search terms used to locate the literature included *employee turnover, employee retention,* and *retention strategies.* I utilized different combinations of the search terms. The literature review contains a total of 141 peer reviewed sources. The literature review also contains relevant journal sources of which 90% are less than 5 years removed from the reference year of 2017. Subsections of the literature review include the following sections: (a) Three-component model of commitment, (b) challenges in retention, (c) organizational commitment, (d) employee empowerment, (e) leadership, (f) job satisfaction, (g) organizational culture, and (h) retention strategies.

Three-Component Model of Commitment

The three-component model of commitment consists of reflecting upon three common themes that resonate when defining commitment: Affective attachment to a

company, the perspective of the costs linked to leaving the business, and the sense of

having a duty to remain with the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991a). Meyer and Allen

(1991a) referred to the aforementioned common themes as affective commitment,

continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Affective commitment is the

emotional attachment to the organization, or the connection of affectivity and emotion to

the company (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Allen and Meyer (1990) referred to this type of

commitment as one that implicates enjoyment and increased involvement in the

organization. Continuance commitment is cost-driven and referred to as an individual's

commitment based on their realization of the costs affiliated with leaving an organization

(Allen & Meyer, 1990; Powell & Meyer, 2004). Allen and Meyer conveyed that

normative commitment is based on the individual belief that they must act in a way that

fits the needs of the organization. Also, normative commitment is viewed as the reason

individuals display behaviors associated with committed employees exclusively because

they feel a sense of moral obligation (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

The relationships between all three components of the commitment model

influence behavioral outcomes at a higher level than focusing only on a single element of

the commitment model (Meyer & Allen, 1991a). For example, an employee can decipher

the commitment level more efficiently by analyzing both the affective and normative

components of their commitment instead of only focusing on the continuance element.

The three-component model of commitment also involves taking a deeper look into the

nature of commitment. The attitudinal and behavioral aspects of commitment compose

the nature of commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991a). Attitudinal commitment involves the

process of how individuals view their relationships to the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991a). Attitudinal commitment is a frame of mind that compares the level of compatibility between the goals and values of the individual to those of the organization. Behavioral commitment refers to the course by which individuals become rooted in an organization and how they manage the rootedness (Meyer & Allen, 1991a). With this understanding of the nature of commitment, Meyer and Allen incorporated these behavioral perspectives into the framework to argue that commitment is a mindset that can emulate a need, want, and duty to remain affiliated with an organization.

Jaros and Culpepper (2014) expounded upon the commitment model and argued that normative and continuance commitment are attitudes directed towards behavior while organizational commitment was understood best from views concerning the organization. Jaros and Culpepper suggested that the three-component model of commitment is an unsuccessful basic model for organizational commitment and is better suited for predicting turnover. The validity of the organizational commitment framework subscales needed improvement from a nonstatistical point of view (Khan, 2015). Khan (2015) felt the need existed for an analysis of the three-component model from the perspective of assessing the relativity of the different commitment scales to their corresponding constructs. The Meyer and Allen three-component model of commitment is considered by many to have the largest contribution to the creation of a multifaceted approach to organizational commitment (Wolowska, 2014). Yousaf, Sanders, and Abbas (2015) inferred an association between the commitment model components and the well-being of employees. Yousaf et al. (2015) also insisted the welfare of workers extends far

beyond physical health. The well-being of employees also corresponds to professional and personal growth, as well as employees being in ideal situations within their organizations (Yousaf et al., 2015).

The commitment of employees to their respective organizations has been one of the most researched topics since the mid-1980s. Meyer and Allen's three-component model of organizational commitment was at the heart of that research (Powell & Meyer, 2004). Wolowska (2014) conducted a quantitative study to decide which factors within the work environment and individual work factors of an organization positively related to commitment. Implications of the research suggested that in relation to the three commitment components, employees who felt they were actively involved in decision-making and felt a sense of control over their environment displayed higher levels of commitment (Wolowska, 2014).

Joung et al. (2015) tested the generalization of Meyer and Allen's three-component model of commitment in a study. The researchers sought to determine what employees viewed as critical aspects of their work surroundings in relation to their perspectives associated with normative, affective, and continuance commitment (Joung et al., 2015). The results of the study indicated a high level of significance existed between quit intentions and commitment. Kaur and Mahajan (2014) suggested organizational commitment is not the only predictor of turnover intentions for employees; however, commitment is a major indicator across different organizations in terms of the normative, affective, and continuance aspects.

Schoemmel, Jønsson, and Jeppesen (2015) said that affective, continuance, and normative commitment were strongly associated with their corresponding commitment scales. Each component in the model is considered a reliable predictors of job satisfaction and turnover intention (Kaur & Mahajan, 2014). Stanley, Vandenberghe, Vandenberg, and Bentein (2013) further suggested affective, normative, and continuance commitment influence both quit intentions as well as turnover. Employers face retention challenges that are at the center of the employee turnover issue because the measures established to mitigate turnover determine the degree of employee commitment (Nguyen et al., 2015). The steps employers take to ensure employees have a feeling of value and worth within the organization will help make employees feel a sense of empowerment and increased job satisfaction (Gillet, Gagne, Sauvagere, & Fouquereau, 2013). Employee empowerment can contribute to increasing the commitment level of workers from both an affective and normative commitment standpoint because workers tend to remain loyal to employers who give them an opportunity to make decisions and contribute (Jernigan, Beggs, & Kohut, 2016).

The leadership within organizations is a significant factor in affecting the mindsets of employees regarding commitment (Wolowska, 2014). First-line leaders and team leaders are often in regular contact with workers who perform day-to-day tasks. Good leaders and managers have a better chance of gaining the loyalty of employees, which ultimately leads to the employees remaining with the organization (McAuliffe et al., 2013). Leadership can also contribute to the turnover problem if individuals in positions of leadership and management are ineffective (Kessler, 2014). Workers may

seek employment at organizations with better leadership. Organizational culture is linked to commitment because if workers have a positive perception of the corporate culture, the likelihood of them remaining associated with that company is increased (Kessler, 2014). Although the points of emphasis in the literature review are not the only determining factors of organizational commitment, they are important and must be acknowledged.

Herzberg's Two Factor Theory

The supporting theory for this study was Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, also recognized as the two-factor theory. Herzberg established the motivation-hygiene theory in 1959 after analyzing data collected from a study of 203 workers. Herzberg (1959) identified that the workers described their life experiences specifically highlighting satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their jobs. The two-factor theory highlighted components that influenced job satisfaction, job dissatisfaction, employee turnover, and commitment. Okan and Akyüz (2015) connected employee commitment with increased productivity. Sypniewska (2014) stated employee dissatisfaction negatively impacted worker commitment. The two-factor theory is appropriate for this study because management strategies to increase employee commitment are connected to worker satisfaction. The two-factor theory helps to explore the significant components of employee commitment that store managers in the retail industry must address (Pryce, 2016). Using the motivation-hygiene theory during the research process helps to understand the cognitive and organizational factors affiliated with commitment (Ben Slimane, 2017).

Herzberg's two-factor theory was useful for examining business problems related to employee job satisfaction and commitment (DeNisi, Wilson, & Biteman, 2014; Issa Eid, 2016). Herzberg (1959) stated that, when exploring the motivation-hygiene theory, motivating factors such as challenging work and added responsibility for employees lead to job satisfaction. In contrast, the absence of hygiene factors such as good pay, job security, and organizational status lead to job dissatisfaction. Herzberg indicated that leaders cultivated the elements ensuing from vertical job loading, which refers to job enrichment. Vertical job loading aspects are growth and learning, personal achievement, responsibility, advancement, internal recognition, and recognition. Many of the job loading aspects referred to by Herzberg coincide with employee commitment and the different concepts for this study, including empowerment, leadership, and organizational culture.

Herzberg (1959) stated intrinsic motivational factors were essential in understanding worker behavior. Herzberg indicated that intrinsic factors emerged when employees were satisfied with their jobs. Conversely, hygiene factors associated with the dissatisfaction of employees and their work or working environment. Dissatisfaction with the work environment is detrimental to the level of employee commitment in the organization (Pryce, 2016). Issa Eid (2016) explored job satisfaction and motivation and distinguished between both the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards experienced by the employees when performing their duties. Fareed and Jan (2016) stated intrinsic rewards persuaded worker behavior while extrinsic rewards deterred dissatisfaction on the job.

Herzberg (1959) created the theory to better comprehend the reasons why employees became satisfied or dissatisfied with their jobs. Okan and Akyüz (2015) stated that understanding what satisfies workers on the job helps to better determine effective retention strategies. Jena (2014) stated employee commitment is high when employees gain satisfaction in accomplishing their tasks. Herzberg indicated dissatisfaction and unfulfilled needs produce tension and emotions that may lead to turnover intentions.

Herzberg (1959) explored motivation and the effects of job revisions on worker motivation. Herzberg said motivators exist when workers have satisfying experiences that are intrinsic to their actual jobs. Herzberg also argued that disposing of the causes of dissatisfaction by focusing on hygiene factors would not cause an increase in worker satisfaction; instead, satisfaction would derive from managers through their use of motivators. Using Herzberg's two-factor theory, Fareed and Jan (2016) found a connection between motivation and job satisfaction in a study of over 400 participants in the private banking industry. The research results indicated worker achievements, employee recognition, and job advancement positively affected job satisfaction. Agrawal and Agrawal (2014) posited leaders increased employee retention as motivation levels increased. Sheikh Ahmed, Oyagi, and Tirimba (2015) said that workers with concerns about a lack of professional growth opportunities experienced low job satisfaction. Conversely, Benzer and Horner (2015) underscored that unacceptable working conditions caused dissatisfaction for employees.

Sheikh Ahmed et al. (2015) defined motivation as an individual's willingness to apply increased levels of effort to achieve organizational goals. Fareed and Jan (2016) stated Herzberg's two-factor theory continuously applied in employee commitment research that linked to employee motivation. Furthermore, Ben Slimane (2017) suggested influencing worker turnover by utilizing the motivation-hygiene theory. Rukh, Choudhary, and Abbasi (2015) described salary as any form of payment workers receive for doing their jobs; the researchers also indicated that factors such as increased motivation, pay, and job dissatisfaction increase employee turnover. Researchers exploring the motivation-hygiene theory focused on how employers could meet employee needs. Ali, Edwin, and Tirimba (2015) stated promotions and wage increases were instrumental in increasing employee satisfaction levels, while absenteeism increased with job dissatisfaction and is reduced with job satisfaction. Rukh et al. (2015) stated low wages and noncompetitive benefits packages were common reasons for decreased employee commitment. Ali et al. indicated employees working in low wage professions tended to have less than competitive benefits and displayed turnover intentions.

The two-factor theory included the concepts of both job satisfaction and dissatisfaction, which affects production and employee attitudes in the workplace (Fareed & Jan, 2016). Job satisfaction negatively impacted turnover; conversely, when job satisfaction decreased, turnover levels increased (Ben Slimane, 2017). Agrawal and Agrawal (2014) indicated that reducing environment factors that obstruct intrinsic satisfaction increases commitment and advocates long term employment. Environmental

factors in the workplace referred to the physical surroundings where employees performed their work tasks (Herzberg, 1959).

Benzer and Horner (2015) confirmed employee turnover reduced organizational effectiveness and indicated a correlation between leadership behavior in the work environment, employee commitment, and job satisfaction. Ashkanasy, Ayoko, and Jehn (2014) stated that encouraged employees, raised production, and reduced stress resulted from an improved work climate. Herzberg (1959) stated that leaders could positively affect employee retention, raise job satisfaction, and increase productivity if they committed to meeting employee needs. Herzberg also indicated that workers maintained loyalty to the organization when they viewed their jobs as productive. Hygiene factors caused both worker dissatisfaction and satisfaction and impacted decisions of employees to separate from organizations by choice (Herzberg, 1959). Herzberg highlighted the importance of understanding the factors that affect both an employee's decision to quit their job and what motivates them to stay affiliated with an organization.

Challenges in Retention

Singh and Gupta (2015) exposed the need for exploring models that identified reasons why employees lack commitment. Organizational leaders address employee retention is a variety of ways, especially when considering the financial burden placed upon the company (Laschinger, Wong, Cummings, & Grau, 2014), reduced productivity (Harrison & Gordon, 2014), and the reduction in organizational performance (Hancock, David, Bosco, McDaniel, & Pierce, 2013). Deery and Jago (2015) found that as employee turnover increased, adverse effects on organizational productivity also

increased. Diminished employee commitment hinders efforts to reduce costs and increase productivity, which significantly affect organizational performance negatively (Hernández, Ramírez Escamilla, & Wobeser, 2013). Gialuisi and Coetzer (2013) suggested employee turnover is costly to businesses and significantly increase direct costs associated with general administration, training, and recruitment. Also, for the organizations with a higher demand for their services or products, employee turnover could set back needed process changes due to lack of personnel (Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013).

Numerous variables influence fluctuations in employee commitment within organizations (Panaccio, Vandenberghe, & Ayed, 2014). Chepkemboi, Kiriago, and Iravo (2013) explored the determination of leadership influence, enumeration, and working conditions of employees within the Teaching Service Commission in Kenya. Data analysis revealed that 57% of the respondents felt their organization did not provide adequate and fair pay for the work performed and that their pay did not compare favorably to other agencies regarding earning potential and that pay increases (Chepkemboi et al., 2013). Pay and benefits are among the major contributing factors to the lack of commitment and employee attrition (Kwok, 2013).

Employee retention is a major problem in the United States (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). Costs associated with employee turnover continue to be a large concern for many organizations (Bauer, 2012; Christian & Ellis, 2014; Davis, 2013). Employees are critical to organizational success, as workers perform the tasks necessary for operation (Kumar & Pansari, 2016). Losing employees contributes to decreases in

organizational performance, which can negatively influence productivity due to a reduction in employee quality (Duggal & Verma, 2014). One key determinant in the decision to leave an organization is the lack of communication between management and staff personnel. Nwagbara, Smart Oruh, Ugorji, and Ennsra (2013) examined the impact of communication on employee intentions to leave the First Bank of Nigeria (FBN), the country's largest bank and financial services provider. The level of effective or ineffective communication between staff members and management significantly affects the commitment level of employees within the organization (Nwagbara et al., 2013).

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is an essential link in the chain that connects employees to the company (Dotun, 2014). The level of commitment an employee has to an organization will significantly affect the degree of motivation an employee has to leave or remain with that group (Ghosh, Satyawadi, Jagdamba, & Mohd. Shadman, 2013). A major determinant of the commitment level of workers is the amount of commitment and support perceived to be displayed by the organization to their well-being (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Khattak, Inderyas, Hassan, and Raza (2014) explored the impact of perceived organizational support (POS) on the turnover intentions of the Chinese employees. POS is positively related to affective organizational commitment, which in turn, negatively associated with turnover intentions (Khattak et al., 2014).

Commitment is the intent to persist in a plan of action (Meyer & Allen, 1991a). The level of employee commitment to the organization is essential because of the effect on organizational stability (Yousaf et al., 2015). Committed employees tend to put forth

the most effort in accomplishing organizational goals (Uysal, 2015). Khan, Salleh, and Bin Hemdi (2016) posited organizational commitment is a valid predictor of work outcomes because committed employees are more likely to work harder because they feel bound to the company. The commitment of workers extends beyond just to the organization and the commitment of employees to achieving their own personal and professional goals is a factor (Khan et al., 2016; Tang, Liu, Oh, & Weitz, 2014). Pursuing an education and obtaining vocational training are examples of goals that employees can commit to that do not necessarily have to be completed with their current organizations in mind. More often than not, if those employees feel bound to the organization, they will pursue those professional goals with intentions of advancing within their existing organizations as opposed to other companies (Khan et al., 2016).

Employees are likely to remain with a company if they feel the organization has their best interest in mind (Deery & Jago, 2015). Commitment leads to increased loyalty to the organization, which helps contribute to the retention of employees with high-level abilities, skills, and knowledge (Phipps, Prieto, & Ndinguri, 2013). Utilizing Meyer and Allen's three-component model of organizational commitment as precedent, Dotun (2014) examined if a significant relationship existed between quit intentions and the commitment level of an organization. Data examination consisted of surveys from 148 employees of a paramilitary organization in Akure, Nigeria indicated an extremely negative association in the relationship between organizational commitment and the intention to leave the organization (Dotun, 2014). Organizational commitment to employees leads to more workers becoming attached to individuals within the

organization that are in contiguity with them and interact with them on a regular basis (Simosi, 2013).

Decision-makers in business organizations must understand the importance of strengthening efforts to increase employee commitment (Messner, 2013). The level of organizational commitment contributes to consistent production levels and increased levels of job satisfaction for employees (Zatzick et al., 2015). Phipps et al. (2013) suggested that committed employees put forth a better effort towards meeting organizational needs than uncommitted employees. Committed workers are more productive, and commitment is directly linked to organizational success (Phipps et al., 2013). Organizational leaders with aspirations to retain employees must have the ability to show employees that commitment to the organization is beneficial for both the employee and the organization (Messner, 2013). Employees who remain with an employer because they feel obligated to do so typically perform better than employees who do not share the same sense of obligation (Juhdi, Pa'wan, & Hansaram, 2013).

Employee Empowerment

The concept of employee empowerment, structured work atmospheres, and the effects on employee turnover, performance, and organizational success have grown since 1994 (Malik, Wan, Ahmad, & Rehman, 2015). Jernigan et al. 2016 posited that empowerment had a significant influence on commitment levels to the organizational leadership. Employee empowerment is essential to any business with goals of becoming successful and remaining successful (Alex & George, 2014). Encouragement of workers to contribute new ideas and concepts can help companies strengthen sustainability efforts

(Malik et al., 2015). Many in the business world believe employees are a critical resource that organizations need to gain a competitive advantage and be successful (Appelbaum, Karasek, Lapointe, & Quelch, 2015).

The manner in which organizational leaders show employees the organization wants them involved and intends to provide the necessary stewardship contributes to positive change in the organization (Kumar & Pansari, 2016). Malik et al. (2015) highlighted the positive impact empowerment has on employee attitudes, which reduces the likelihood of a decrease in employee commitment. Iftikhar, Shahid, Shahab, Mobeen, and Qureshi (2016) referred to research that suggested psychological empowerment has a strong link to increased commitment among employees. Empowering employees has contributed to reduced quit plans, and empowerment also mediated between quit intentions, psychological capital, and transformational leadership (Iftikhar et al., 2016).

Nair, Salleh, and Nair (2014) suggested empowerment is a useful tool in showing employees they have the trust of the organization to perform well and make positive contributions. Tariq, Jan, and Ahmad (2016) conducted a review of relevant literature to determine the role of empowerment, and how empowerment linked human resource management and performance. Tariq et al. (2016) inferred that empowerment in organizations had a positive relationship with the commitment level of employees. Committed employees are less likely to leave the organization, which contributes to reducing employee turnover and increased commitment (Kim, Henderson, & Eom, 2015). Employees in organizations that involve them in decision-making and create a sense of empowerment have increased levels of job satisfaction that ultimately reduce quit

intentions (Carasco-Saul, Kim, & Kim, 2015). Encouraged employees result in the completion of organizational objectives at a higher success level (Alex & George, 2014).

Employees working in an atmosphere that encourages active engagement are more likely to feel valuable to the organization (Kumar & Pansari, 2016). The same employees are more inclined to feel empowered to be active and make a more asserted effort to contribute new ideas and potential strategies (Kumar & Pansari, 2016). Kumar and Pansari also suggested when employees feel empowered in an organization their intentions to leave are reduced. Ugwu, Onyishi, and Rodríguez-Sánchez (2014) examined the fields of psychological empowerment and work engagement. Psychological empowerment affected work engagement and led to high innovation and lower turnover intention (Ugwu et al., 2014).

An employee may feel a lack of trust in their abilities from the organization if the employees are not empowered (Regts & Molleman, 2013). A lack of trust can also lead to detrimental effects on the organization because employees may have good ideas and not be inclined to communicate the ideas for fear of being disregarded by decision-makers in the organization (Appelbaum et al., 2015). Employees positioned in meaningful job situations, increase competence levels and create opportunities to positively impact their work environment (Mangundjaya, 2015). These employees are more likely to remain loyal to the organization and increase commitment (Mangundjaya, 2015). The effectiveness of empowerment applies not only on an individual level but also from a team perspective. Singh and Gupta (2015) extended research on voluntary turnover and concluded that psychological empowerment mediated the main effect of

autonomy orientation, the interactive effect of autonomy support, and its differentiation on voluntary turnover of team members.

Work atmospheres that consist of empowering managers contribute to an enhanced sense of meaningfulness, competence, and control for employees (Ugwu et al., 2014). Nair et al. (2014) suggested while these effects pertain to the direct impact on employees, the indirect effects are just as important. The concept of engaging employees and creating work atmospheres that offer challenging assignments contributes to increased commitment because of the perceived worthiness of the work (Preenen, van Vianen, & De Pater, 2014). The indirect impact pertains to the engagement level and quit intentions of those employees (Nair et al., 2014). Ahmad et al. (2014) argued that employee empowerment positively influenced worker behavior, as well as employee engagement. Employee engagement mediates the impact of empowerment on affective commitment, which in turn influences turnover intentions (Ahmad et al., 2014). Carasco-Saul et al. (2015) suggested that entrusted workers gain inspiration to remain committed to the organization.

Leadership

The leadership within organizations consists of the individuals who have the authority to implement changes to policies, procedures and work processes (Zhiqiang, Zhenyao, Ji L., Shengping, & Yongqing, 2013). These are the same individuals who have authority to put subordinates in positions to help make a positive impact on the organization through their actions. Leaders with high moral competence are more likely to focus on the developmental needs of the employees, which provides employees with

opportunities to develop individual leadership styles (Kim & Kim, 2013). Leaders are considered facilitators of team building and communication that attempt to enhance organizational performance and employee effectiveness (Pradhan & Pradhan, 2015). Managers and leaders have a responsibility to employees in their charge to create an atmosphere that fosters encouragement and professional growth (Gatling, Kang, & Kim, 2016).

Leader behavior and employee commitment are positively linked (Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016). Palanski et al. (2014) conducted a study of 1,319 alumni from a Midwestern United States university comprised of large organization partners, senior leaders, and business owners. Leadership displayed in the organization had a significant effect on job satisfaction, commitment, and job search behaviors (Palanski et al., 2014). Leadership roles are an important factor in the turnover process (Evans, 2013; Mathieu, Fabi, Lacoursière, & Raymond, 2016).

The role of leaders in employee retention is critical since leadership styles are crucial in determining whether employees leave or stay with the organization (Zhang, Avery, Bergsteiner, & More, 2014). Eliophotou-Menon and Ioannou (2016) examined the direct and indirect effects of transformational leadership on turnover intentions. The results of the study revealed that transformational leadership had both direct and indirect positive effects on turnover intentions. Green, Miller, and Aarons (2013) suggested transformational leadership was not only a necessary factor in increasing employee commitment but also the emotional exhaustion of workers.

Singh and Gupta (2015) examined the relationship between immediate supervisors and senior management on employee motivation and intent to remain with the organization. Both immediate supervisor and senior management support had positive relationships with employee commitment, however, senior management support proved to have a greater impact on commitment (Singh & Gupta, 2015). Senior leaders have a significant impact on the quit intentions of employees due to their influence on the quality of workplace relationships (Buttigieg & West, 2013).

Individuals in leadership roles heavily influence their workers (Oni-Ojo, Salau, Dirisu, & Waribo, 2015). Effective leadership impacts employees across multiple industries when workers consider the possibilities of leaving or remaining with a company (Major, 2016). Alonderiene and Majauskaite (2016) explored the influence of leadership styles on academic staff retention in higher education institutions. Leadership styles significantly influenced the commitment levels of the academic staff (Alonderiene & Majauskaite, 2016). As supported by Zhu, Wang, Zheng, Liu, and Miao (2013), implications for future research suggested the need for organizational leadership to embrace leadership styles that promote staff retention for these institutions to create sustainability. Sustainability is a goal for all business organizations, and leadership within organizations must consist of individuals that employees identify with and desire to follow (Zhu et al., 2013).

Leadership roles may be the deciding factor in workers deciding to leave or remain with an organization (Elanain, 2013). Karwacka and Kitzman (2014) explored the relationship between leadership and retention in both public and non-governmental

organizations (NGOs). The results indicated that the leadership strategies of managers

played a significant role in the retention of both public and NGO employees Karwacka &

Kitzman, 2014). Employees that desire to remain with an organization tend to perform at

higher levels than those who do not (Alonderiene & Majauskaite, 2016). The support of

employees from supervisors and leaders promotes job embeddedness, which leads to

increased effectiveness, employee performance, and increased employee commitment

(Bebe, 2016). Karatepe (2013) posited that job embeddedness mediated the relationship

between supervisor support and valuable organizational objectives such as service

recovery performance, job performance, and employee commitment.

Leadership personnel within businesses play pivotal roles in influencing workers,

and those individuals must work to build relationships with employees to strengthen their

influence (Elanain, 2013). Positive interactions between leaders and their subordinates

are critical to successful operations within an organization (Elanain, 2013; Singh &

Gupta, 2015). Oni-Ojo et al. (2015) explored the impact of both financial and non-

financial incentives on motivation and retention of health workers in Ghana's district

hospitals. Financial incentives significantly influenced motivation and worker intentions

to remain in the district hospital (Oni-Ojo et al., 2015). Non-financial incentives

consisting of leadership training and supervision, opportunities for continuing

professional development, and leadership with sufficient managerial qualities predict

employee commitment levels (Ling, Qing, & Shen, 2014).

Characteristics and traits of organizational leaders must be above reproach

because the effect leaders have on employee commitment is a significant determinant of

the success or failure of an organization (Phipps et al., 2013). De Clercq, Bouckenooghe, Raja, and Matsyborska (2014) explored the relationship between the emotional intelligence (EI) of managers and organizational goals. Organizations may improve their employment quality, increase commitment, and raise productivity by stressing the development of EI in management personnel (De Clercq et al., 2014).

Competing organizations across all industries are in search of creative ways to increase employee commitment (Mekraz & Rao Gundala, 2016). To accomplish this efficiently, organizational leaders must transition away from traditional leadership styles that do not involve employee engagement (Carasco-Saul et al., 2015; Yozgat, Serim, & Cem Dikmen, 2014). Leaders within businesses are instrumental in this process of transformation because leaders have control over the work environment and the systems in place (Ahmad et al., 2014). Overstreet, Hazen, Skipper, and Hanna (2014) indicated employees are more committed when they feel the leaders provide opportunities to do meaningful work in supportive roles.

Job Satisfaction

Much research has linked job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Huang & Gamble, 2015). Zatzick et al. (2015) asserted that dissatisfied service workers and a revolving door concept kept commitment low, which contributed to increasing turnover costs, and lower quality of care. Ahmad and Rainyee (2014) conducted a review of relevant literature concerning the relationships between organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. From the literature reviewed, a positive

correlation existed between job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Ahmad & Rainyee, 2014).

Workers are more likely to leave an organization if they feel no sense of identity, significance, and meaningfulness in their jobs (Zatzick et al., 2015). The lack of meaningfulness leads to a state of dissatisfaction for employees and increases the likelihood of workers searching for a different job. Abu Elanain (2014) studied the relationship between job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions of employees. Job satisfaction positively influenced affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment while negatively impacting turnover intentions (Abu Elanain, 2014). High levels of job satisfaction lead to greater devotion to the organization and minimizes the chances of employees leaving an organization (Sahin, Akyürek, & Yavuz, 2014).

Employees who feel involved and think they have a certain level of responsibility will normally have a higher sense of satisfaction with their role in the organization (Ahmad & Rainyee, 2014). Promoting an atmosphere of collective decision-making and employee engagement are also viewed as having a positive effect on the level of satisfaction on the job and in organizational commitment for employees (Cheung, Wu, & Wong, 2013). Sajuyigbe, Owomoyela, and Itiola (2013) argued that job satisfaction directly impacts the levels of commitment, performance, and absenteeism for employees. Employees that do not feel the organization values their ability to provide essential feedback and input are more likely to search for positions within other companies (Sajuyigbe et al., 2013).

Employee turnover severely impacts the ability of an organization to meet objectives and goals (Davis, 2013). Job satisfaction has a direct impact on the level of employee commitment (Allisey, Noblet, Lamontagne, & Houdmont, 2014). Ahmad and Afgan (2016) conducted a study to contend that job satisfaction, job stress, and burnout would have a negative association with the turnover intentions. These factors had significant associations with quit intentions and commitment levels of employees (Ahmad & Afgan, 2016). Organizational decision-makers must place a greater emphasis on the job satisfaction of employees (Shih-Tse Wang, 2014).

Organizations are impacted in many ways when dissatisfied employees leave the company. One significant impact is the negative effect on employees that remain with the organization (Siddiqui, Syed, & Hassan, 2012). Often when employees leave an organization, situations are created that cause those still employed with the organization to assume responsibility for the workload of the former employees (Siddiqui et al., 2012). These situations cause issues with the job satisfaction of the current employees, which compound the loss of the former employees. Other studies focused on the importance of the organization displaying a stronger commitment to prioritizing internal employee needs. George and K.A. (2015) explored the effects of job satisfaction and job-related stress across both public and private banking corporations. The results of the study indicated that job satisfaction directly impacted organizational commitment (George & K.A., 2015). Mehta and Maheshwari (2013) affirmed that job satisfaction indicates a passion and devotion to the job, which leads to increased commitment levels.

Chang (2014) investigated whether job satisfaction enhanced organizational commitment among nurses, to include whether the perception of organizational support had a moderating effect on the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Perception of organizational commitment would develop a sense of belonging for the employees, which would help increase the job satisfaction of nurses and organizational commitment (Chang, 2014). The organization should care about the personal lives of employees as well as encourage training and personnel development (Cheung et al., 2013). Encouragement will improve the chances of increased job satisfaction because employees are more confident in their abilities (Leisanyane & Khaola, 2013).

Job satisfaction is an important attitudinal variable that leads to turnover intentions, and eventually turnover (Allisey et al., 2014). Hofaidhllaoui and Chhinzer (2014) expounded upon existing models involving turnover by examining the relationship between work satisfaction, supervisor satisfaction, and turnover intentions. Hofaidhllaoui and Chhinzer identified a significant and negative correlation between job satisfaction and turnover intentions, as well as satisfaction with supervisor and turnover intentions. Successful employee retention depends on the ability of individuals within organizations to determine why employees want to leave (Abu Elanain, 2014).

Jena (2014) stated that employees view job satisfaction as fulfillment from the job. Ali et al. (2015) viewed job satisfaction as a feeling of emotional gratification because of completing the necessary work. The definition of what job satisfaction varies across organizations, but the importance of job satisfaction in the workplace is

undeniable. Ashkanasy et al. (2014) indicated that job satisfaction has a significant effect on employee attitudes and turnover intentions. Jena (2014) suggested corporations with high job satisfaction experience higher performance levels and profitability than those organizations with low job satisfaction. Unhappy employees tend to exhibit behavior conducive to voluntary turnover intentions (Pryce, 2016).

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is a critical element in establishing and maintaining optimal success levels for organizations (Davis, 2013). Decision-makers in organizations must strive to create a work climate conducive to a diverse workforce (Chrobot-Mason & Aramovich, 2013). Employees that do not connect with the culture of an organization are more likely to develop turnover intentions (Ghosh et al., 2013). A lack of connection with the organizational climate can negatively impact the affective commitment of employees due to the weakened sense of identification with the company (Meyer & Allen, 1991b).

Employees with a positive perception of an organization's culture remain part of that organization longer than those with opposite perceptions (Kessler, 2014). Corporate culture is the foundation that guides behaviors and practices within an organization (Messner, 2013). The extent to which employees can relate to the culture of a company weighs heavily on their decisions to leave or remain with the organization (Koutroumanis et al., 2015). IpKin and Jennifer (2014) explored the effect of perceived corporate social responsibility (CSR) on employees' affective commitment through the mediating role of perceived corporate culture. The results of the research indicated that employee

development, harmony, and customer orientation of the corporate culture entirely

mediated CSR to employees and customers (IpKin & Jennifer, 2014). Kontoghiorghes

(2013) argued that employees prefer a corporate culture that best fits their personal

interests and beliefs.

When employees first join an organization, the culture of that company plays a

significant role in determining how well employees satisfy their basic needs of wanting to

build positive relationships and construct perceptions of organizational support (Allen &

Shanock, 2013). Selden, Schimmoeller, and Thompson (2013) explored factors

associated with turnover for newly hired employees within U.S. state governments. The

results of the research indicated state governments fostering a culture which supported

pay for performance incentives, devotion to employee training, and alternating job

assignments experienced significant increases in employee commitment (Selden et al.,

2013). Organizations that show support and a general concern for workers contribute to

strengthening the connection between the organization and employees (Rathi & Lee,

2015).

Suliman and Obaidli (2011) argued that perceptions of corporate climate by

employees played a significant role in the rate of employee turnover. The corporate

climate is a major factor in explaining the variance in employee commitment for

organizations (Suliman & Obaidli, 2011). Employees within organizations fostering a

culture of learning have fewer intentions to leave the company as opposed to workers in

organizations unsupportive of a learning culture (Islam, Saif ur, Ungku Norulkamar, &

Ahmed, 2013). Organizational culture contributes to employees understanding the

collective history and universal practices that are considered norms within their organization (Cravens et al., 2015).

Organizational cultures based on ethical values and other favorable business practices are more likely to produce increased levels of employee commitment (Jain, Giga, & Cooper, 2013). Valentine, Godkin, Fleischman, and Kidwell (2011) assessed the degree to which perceived corporate ethical values work collaboratively with group creativity to influence both job satisfaction and turnover intention. Group creativity and corporate ethical values had a positive relationship and both variables were associated with increased organizational commitment (Valentine et al., 2011). When the fit between an organization and employee is optimal both the individual and organization benefit from the level of increased commitment (Merecz & Andysz, 2012).

Strategies for Retention

Businesses cannot remain competitive if the businesses are consistently losing employees. Employee retention strategies are instrumental to the competitive state of the organization and are major factors in keeping valued employees (Guha & Chakrabarti, 2016). Comprehending the nature of employee turnover and formulating effective strategies to retain employees increase the level of employee commitment to the organization (Rehman, 2012). Stability and company growth require a devoted effort to implementing strategies that decrease retention obstacles (Deery & Jago, 2015).

Many factors influence worker commitment, including job satisfaction, compensation, and health benefits (Bryant & Allen, 2013). The implementation of retention strategies that consist of improving employee compensation and benefits can

help reduce turnover (Bryant & Allen, 2013). Leaders in organizations must also invest in retention strategies that focus on the professional development of employees (Islam, Ahmed, & Ahmad, U. N. B. U., 2015). Hutchings, De Cieri, and Shea (2011) explored 56 Australian organizations in the resources sector to explore how the effects of the industry influenced retention efforts. The research indicated that 77% of the respondents felt a need for improved retention strategies focusing more on employee training and development opportunities.

Strategies for retaining seasoned employees must be centralized on what is necessary to be competitive with other organizations seeking to lure those employees away (Juhdi et al., 2013). Bandura and Lyons (2014) explored information and research concerning the retention of employees, associated costs of retention, and job satisfaction. Organizations should develop detailed strategies for clearly identifying staffing needs and building an archive of job candidates for both short-term and long-term employee needs (Bandura & Lyons, 2014). Organizational leadership must implement transparent approaches to ensure employees are informed about how their individual performance contributes to the achievement of organizational goals (Bambacas & Kulik, 2013; Bandura & Lyons, 2014). Retention strategy initiatives are essential to the vision and mission of any organization (Cloutier, Felusiak, Hill, & Pemberton-Jones, 2015).

Organizations face a dwindling pool of skilled employees and demand has elevated for these workers (Cravens et al., 2015). The need for experienced employees, places organizations under considerable pressure to devise retention strategies that help improve worker commitment (Mekraz & Rao Gundala, 2016). The lack of effective

retention strategies hinders the ability of organizational leaders to identify and retain

personnel that possess critical skills (Mekraz & Rao Gundala, 2016). Many retention

issues are avoidable by placing more emphasis on recruiting strategies (Vispute, 2013).

The culture of an organization has a significant effect on employees, and the level of

effectiveness could depend on the employee selection process (Vispute, 2013). If

employees are selected accurately and brought into organizations that have work climates

that appeal to their values, beliefs, and morals, the chances are higher that workers will

remain committed to the group (Boon & Kalshoven, 2014).

The importance of implementing retention strategies affects not only lower level

employees, but also mid to high-level managers (Deery & Jago, 2015). Yang, Wan, and

Fu (2012) explored determinants of management-level employee turnover and identified

existing practices in human resource retention strategies. The researchers interviewed

hotel workers from Taiwan and revealed that over 80% of the respondents had resigned

from a job to pursue career advancement (Yang et al., 2012). Formulating retention

strategies that emphasize the importance of identifying specific professional employee

needs is critical to organizational sustainability (Jing, Avery, & Bergsteiner, 2014).

The ability of employers to establish and maintain employee commitment is

instrumental to the success of their businesses (Slagle, 2013). Organizations that

incorporate retention strategies involving employee participation in decision-making,

particularly relating to training and development, and the perceived fairness of

performance appraisal practices, contribute to feelings of perceived organizational

support (Duggal & Verma, 2014). Retention strategies are crucial to organizations

because retaining workers is considered a critical success factor for businesses (Ertürk, 2014).

Managers have a responsibility to ensure the most effective methods of retaining employees are in place (Yi-Feng, 2016). Although many factors exist that impact the decisions of employees to leave or remain with an organization, managers must apply strategies that appeal to their specific workforce (Agrawal & Agrawal, 2014). Yi-Feng (2016) stated to apply the most effective retention strategies, managers must be familiar with workers and understand what is important to them. Decision makers can use this knowledge to formulate strategies that will increase the level of employee commitment to the organization and reduce the likelihood of employees severing the employee/employer work relationship (Sypniewska, 2014).

Transition

Lack of employee commitment has detrimental ramifications for all organizations regardless of size or location (Bauer, 2012). As employee retention declines, adverse impacts span from organizations to communities, and the economy (Shore, 2013). The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore U.S. retail store manager strategies that evoke employee commitment to increase business performance. The findings in the study may help business leaders improve retention practices. Developing effective retention plans can minimize costs affiliated with employee turnover and improve the overall level of organizational commitment. Leadership within organizations has the power to establish cultures that resonate with employees (Harrison & Gordon, 2014). Work environments that resonate with employees increase the likelihood of higher

commitment levels (Bauer, 2012). Section 2 of this study will contain an elaboration on the methodology specifying the focus of this qualitative study. Also, Section 2 of the study encompasses a discussion about the research design used to examine the detailed accounts of the participants about the problem. Section 3 of this study will include a discussion regarding the findings of the research, suggestions for further research, and implications for social change.

Section 2: The Project

Increased turnover rates impact both the employees and organizations in a negative way (Shore, 2013). Research that explores the specific accounts of individuals within a target population working in the retail industry may help contribute additional information to the existing academic knowledge on employee turnover. This section of the study includes the following subsections: (a) the purpose statement, (b) the role of the researcher, (c) participants, (d) research method, (e) research design, (f) population and sampling, (g) ethical research, (h) data collection instruments, (i) data collection technique, (j) data organization techniques, (k) data analysis, and (l) reliability and validity.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore U.S. retail store manager strategies that lead to employee commitment to increase business performance. The target population for the study was 8,230 retail store managers in the greater Pittsburgh area. Of that target population, I used a purposeful sample of five participants for my interview pool. The results of the research may positively impact business practice by lowering hiring costs in retail operations. Store managers may use the findings to improve employee retention rates. Improved employee commitment may benefit society through economic and overall quality of life improvements.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher's role is to search for participants, perform data collection as the data collection instrument, and explore new knowledge (Anderson, 2010). Siegle,

Rubenstein, and Mitchell (2014) stated the researcher protects the participants from harm and seeks a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. My roles as the researcher incorporated the suggestions of Anderson and Siegle et al. and expanded to data analysis and synthesis of literature relevant to the business problem. I have no prior personal relationship with any of the study participants. However, familiarity with the geographical location of the participants is noted because of prior residency in the area. With respect to the Belmont Report and basic ethical principles, the actions of the researcher must be respectful, ethical, and fair to the participants (Hancock & Algozzine, 2015). The meticulous collection and interpretation of data is imperative in alleviating personal bias in the research (Anyan, 2013). Mitigating personal bias in the research process helps ensure the effectiveness of the data collection and analysis processes (Gibbins, Bhatia, Forbes, & Reid, 2014). The interview protocol (Appendix A) allows the researcher to explore the subjectivity of the participants' perspectives, which justifies the rationale for an interview protocol (Patterson, 2013).

Participants

Utilizing specific criteria to purposefully sample participants is necessary for the researcher to collect relevant knowledge on the research topic (Lewis, 2015). Pryce (2016) posited that retail store managers who have been in their positions for a minimum of 2 years with a turnover rate of 7.5% are deemed successful at developing strategies to increase employee commitment. The purposely-sampled participants for this study consisted of five individuals with a minimum of 2 years of retail store management experience located in the vicinity of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In addition, the

participants had an average turnover rate of less than 7.5% during their tenure as store managers.

Eriksson and Kovalainen (2015) suggested that accessing individual participants should include informing them about the intent of the researcher and how the research may be beneficial to them. Strategies to gain access to participants and communicate critical information consisted of making telephone calls, email communication, and face-to-face meetings. I utilized phone calls, email correspondence, and face-to-face meetings to establish and maintain working relationships with the participants once participation in the study was confirmed. Keeping participants abreast of what their contribution to the study entails and specifics of the research intent will help establish a better working relationship with them (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015; Yin, 2013). The participants aligned with the overarching research question because they could provide meaningful data for the study due to their insight on how they affect organizational commitment in the retail industry (Pryce, 2016).

Research Method and Design

Research Method

A qualitative research method was appropriate for the study because this method is used to seek an in-depth account of commitment from the perspectives of the participants (Houghton et al., 2013). Quantitative research is more appropriate than qualitative research to test a theory, examine relationships, or analyze statistical data (LoBiondo-Wood & Haber, 2013). The quantitative research approach was not appropriate for this study because the intent of the research was to explore the views of

U.S. retail industry store managers and not to examine a relationship or test a theory concerning employee commitment and other variables.

Performing a mixed methods study places responsibility on the researcher to gather and interpret both quantitative and qualitative data. A mixed methods research approach requires a simultaneous combination of both quantitative and qualitative research methods to enhance the study (Hancock & Algozzine, 2015). Depending on the specific needs of the researcher, a mixed methods study may be a lengthier and more time-consuming process than necessary (Venkatesh, Brown, & Bala, 2013). The mixed methods research approach was not selected for this study because this method would not offer an exhaustive description of the strategies implemented successfully by the participants to increase employee commitment (Groeneveld, Tummers, Bronkhorst, Ashikali, & van Thiel, 2015). The mixed methods research method was not selected for this study because mixed methods includes a quantitative component, which was not appropriate to explore the views of U.S. retail store managers.

Research Design

I used an exploratory case study design to explore the detailed accounts of store managers in the U.S. retail industry in order to identify strategies that evoke employee commitment to increase performance. The use of semistructured interviews allows for theme development and the acquisition of insight on the meaning regarding participant responses (Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). The exploratory case study design is appropriate when seeking an in-depth account of the particulars of the problem from the perspectives of the participants (Houghton et al., 2013). A case study research design

was selected for this study because case studies are appropriate when exploring effective management strategies (Houghton et al., 2013).

Case study research helps to provide enhanced experiences in specific situations (Cronin, 2014). Ethnographical and phenomenological designs are among other available qualitative designs. Ethnographical research involves using observations and interviews to gather data over extended periods on specific cultural groups in natural settings (Corley, 2015; Hammersley, 2016). The data collection methods meant the ethnographical research design was inappropriate for this study. Phenomenological research involves exploring the lived experiences of participants (Van Manen, 2014). I sought to explore the explanations of the participants and develop themes regarding their detailed accounts of the specific problem. Conducting interviews until new data ceases to emerge from the responses of the participants will ensure data saturation (Hancock & Algozzine, 2015).

Population and Sampling

I used a purposeful sample of five retail store managers in the greater Pittsburgh area from a list of potential participants generated by a simple search of the retailers in the area. Each participant met the criteria of having a minimum of 2 years in their current management positions, and an employee turnover rate of 7.5% or less. With the monthly turnover rate being high in the retail industry, managers successful at effectively retaining employees for a 2-year period should have ample experience to provide valuable insight for the study. The participants had adequate knowledge and contributed answers relevant to the research question about strategies that evoke employee commitment. Purposeful

sampling was beneficial to the study because the selected participants had the required knowledge to contribute answers relevant to the research question of the study (Granot, Brashear, & Motta, 2012).

The number of participants was appropriate because interviewing five store managers allowed for an in-depth analysis of the participants' experiences and the discontinuance of repetitive themes. Conducting interviews until no new information emerges from the responses of the participants ensures data saturation (Hancock & Algozzine, 2015). I also conducted interviews in a private setting away from the usual work atmosphere of the participants. Administering interviews in a private location creates a comfortable environment for the participants and increases the probability of obtaining honest and reliable responses (Houghton et al., 2013).

Ethical Research

Participants in the study signed a consent form that explained the study, background information, and details about the research. Participants retained signed copies of the consent form for their personal records. The consent form for this study included the approval number of the International Review Board (IRB) once Walden University granted permission to conduct the research. As supported by Vanclay, Baines, and Taylor (2013), individuals were afforded the opportunity to rescind their decision to participate in the research study at any time and for any reason. All research participants received an email address and contact number to utilize if they have any questions about the study. The participants may have withdrawn their participation via phone call or email notification at any time during the research process.

Participation in the research was voluntary, and none of the participants received any form of payment or other incentives for their cooperation. The researcher is responsible for minimizing risks to the ethical protection of participants (Houghton et al., 2013; Vanclay et al., 2013). The research process posed minimal risk to the participants. I solidified the confidentiality of the participants and their organizations by maintaining collected data in a secure location restricted to my access only. Data protection will continue for a minimum of five years. The consent form for this study included the approval number of the International Review Board (IRB) once Walden University granted permission to conduct the research.

Data Collection Instruments

As the researcher, I was the primary means of data collection for the study. I conducted semistructured interviews face-to-face and only planned to use telephone interviews if face-to-face interviews did not work. Semistructured interviews allow for the exploration of in-depth accounts of participants using open-ended questions (Hancock & Algozzine, 2015; Yin, 2013). I recorded all interviews with a hand held digital recording device. The specifics of the interview protocol are available in Appendix A. I enhanced the reliability and validity of the data collection process through the use of member checking, transcript reviews, and in-depth analysis of organizational documents. The execution of trial interviews using the data collection instruments before the actual interviews for the study ensured proper functioning of the equipment. As the researcher, careful observation, documentation, and examination of the participants' responses are

required (Covell, Sidani, & Ritchie, 2012; Silverman, 2016). The interview questions for the study are accessible in Appendix B.

Data Collection Technique

The potential participants for the study received a formal recruitment letter (Appendix C) after being identified. The participants who showed interest in participating in the study, received a consent form to read, sign, and formally commit to participate in the study. I conducted face-to-face semistructured interviews. I utilized a digital recording device, archival document review, and indirect observation of the participants. The semistructured interviews commenced in a private area at the work location for the participants, but the setting was away from the normal work environment. The duration of the interviews was approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour.

One advantage of administering face-to-face interviews is the opportunity to observe the responses and actions of the participants (Hancock & Algozzine, 2015). Conducting face-to-face interviews, however, does create possibilities of incurring costs and losing time associated with travel to the designated locations (Patterson, 2013; Silverman, 2016). Soliciting feedback from participants to ensure the accuracy of interpretations of their responses and reviewing interview transcripts increase the effectiveness of the data collection technique (Davis, 2013). Member checking helps reinforce the accuracy of the study and decrease opportunities for misinterpretation (Revsbaek & Tanggaard, 2015).

Data Organization Technique

Both paper and digital formats were the preferred methods I chose to maintain

data. Multiple forms of data storage are necessary (Lewis, 2015; Mertens, 2014). I

maintained hard copy data in file folders labeled I1 through I5. Each folder contained all

data about a particular interviewee. Likewise, digital folders containing the same

information as the paper files remained under password protection. I broke down themes

generated from data analysis and store the data in file folders. As suggested by Anderson

(2010), I identified the file folders by individual themes. Color-coding was the chosen

method for distinguishing one code from another. I will store both digital and paper data

in a secure location requiring key access for a minimum of 5 years.

Data Analysis

Methodological triangulation of the data includes utilizing multiple data sources

(Wynn & Williams, 2012). In addition to the interview data, I analyzed exit interview

documents, retention policies, and retention strategy documents. The process of data

analysis will include the following procedures: (1) gathering open-ended data, (2)

organizing the data, (3) triangulating data for analysis, (4) developing a deeper

understanding of the data, and (5) interpreting the data. I utilized NVivo software to

analyze the data. NVivo software is used to interpret and analyze analytical data (Woods,

Paulus, Atkins, & Macklin, 2015). The software is beneficial to the research because the

software allows for a steady coding process during the analytical stages of research

(Woods et al., 2015). Coding is used in research to organize the data before making an

interpretation of the data (Granot, Brashear, & Motta, 2012; Wynn & Williams, 2012).

The coding of the data helps to highlight and correlate key themes in regards to the

theoretical framework and literature referenced in the study (Woods et al., 2015). Coding

for the study consisted of the letter "I" (interviewee) followed by a number for each

corresponding interviewee.

Reliability and Validity

Strategies to create and implement validity and reliability are crucial in ensuring

the legitimacy and dependability of a study (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The reliability and

validity section of the study distinguishes how trustworthy analysis results from reliable

and valid data (Hutchinson, 2010; Pocock, 2015). Both internal and external threats are

possible if the researcher in unable to delineate from the data and accurately link the

research to the participants (Cronin, 2014).

Reliability

Internal and external validities form the basis of reliability in case study research

(Cronin, 2014). Pocock (2015) stated reliability strengthens the dependability and

trustworthiness of the study results. During the process of transcript reviews, comparing

transcripts to the recorded interviews verify the accuracy of the transcripts (Gibbins et al.,

2014). Member checking helps to strengthen the accuracy of the study and reduce

opportunities for misinterpretation (Revsbaek & Tanggaard, 2015). Data analysis

software, member checking, and utilizing numerous sources of data enhance reliability

(Gibson, Webb, & Lehn, 2014). Mitigating bias and the probity of the data addressed

dependability. Janghorban, Latifnejad Roudsari, and Taghipour (2014) stated pilot

studies are applied to evaluate the acceptability of interview protocols and identify issues

recruiting participants. Because I consistently adhered to the interview protocol throughout the course of the interview process for each participant, I elected not to conduct a pilot study for this study. Gibbins et al. (2014) postulated the role of the researcher requires accurate collection and interpretation of data and mitigating bias.

Validity

Data triangulation ensures the credibility of the research. Methodological triangulation of the data includes contrasting numerous sources of data, including exit interview documents, retention policies, and retention strategy documents in addition to the interview data (Wynn & Williams, 2012). Credibility concerns are also addressed through member checking and thorough transcript reviews, as stated by Covell et al. (2012). I persistently sought to enhance the credibility of the research by continuously reviewing all interview transcripts in depth. The results of the study may be transferable to future studies because of the methods used to ensure validity. Future researchers for similar studies may utilize the findings in this research because I checked for errors and ensured the meticulous documentation of all steps and procedures in the research process. Checking data multiple times throughout the course of research will help enhance confirmability (Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). Continuing to collect data until themes become repetitive from the participant responses ensures data saturation (Hancock & Algozzine, 2015).

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Transition and Summary

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Section 2 of this study included a summary of the purpose statement, the role of the researcher, and the participants. Also, included in Section 2 of the study is an

explanation of the research method, design, and participant population employed. The

results of the research may contribute to the current body of knowledge about employee

commitment in the retail industry. Section 3 of the study contains a detailed discussion

of the findings, implications for social change, and recommendations for future research.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Section 3 consists of an introduction to the study and the presentation of the findings. Also, this section includes the application to professional practice and the implications for social change. There is also a discussion that provides managers with action recommendations. Section 3 also includes suggestions for future research on employee commitment. The reflections section includes an elaboration on my doctoral study experience. I conclude with an overview focusing on the importance of implementing effective strategies to increase employee commitment.

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore U.S. retail store manager strategies that lead to employee commitment to increase business performance. Lack of employee commitment can lead to costly problems for businesses in the retail industry. Improving employee commitment levels requires the involvement of management and upper-level leadership, which in turn, reduces the loss of trained employees and declined business performance (Khattak et al., 2014). The negative effects of employee turnover highlight the need for retail store managers to instill effective strategies to increase employee commitment (Deery & Jago, 2015). I researched effective strategies by interviewing five retail store managers in the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania area. Each participant had knowledge and experience executing strategies to increase employee commitment. Data analysis included transcript comparisons, a review of interview notes, and company documents on employee retention to ensure validity and reliability. The data analysis revealed that store managers were able to increase commitment by

incorporating more ways to include employees in decision making and other aspects of the job, taking an interest in the personal well-being of employees, and increasing the level of autonomy for employees on the job.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question for this study was: What management strategies do store managers in the U.S. retail industry use that lead to employee commitment to increase performance? I used semistructured interviews with open-ended questions to enable participants to provide detailed information on effective strategies they used to reduce employee turnover. Also, I reviewed company documents related to employee commitment and retention to enhance data triangulation for my research. Each participant signed a consent form before the interviews started and received a signed copy of the consent form for record keeping. I conducted interviews in a private setting away from the normal work atmosphere of the participants, and the interviews lasted between 45 minutes and an hour.

The interviewees were identified by labels (I1-I5) for identity protection, where I1 means Interviewee 1. Upon completion of all transcriptions, the interviewees confirmed the accuracy of the transcriptions. I used NVivo to code the data after the interviewees validated the transcriptions. Utilizing NVivo software was instrumental in helping me to familiarize myself with the research data. NVivo was primarily used for coding but was also utilized to check word frequencies, which helped identify recurring themes from the interview data. Data analysis revealed the following themes relevant to the central research question and conceptual framework of the study:

• Employee engagement increased employee commitment to the organization.

• Managers decreased employee turnover by taking a personal interest in employees.

• Employee empowerment increased organizational commitment.

Theme 1: Employee Engagement Increased Employee Commitment to the Organization

The first theme that emerged from data analysis involved employee engagement and how employee engagement increased employee commitment. I1, I3, and I4 explained that as managers, seeking ways to involve employees helps reduce employee turnover and raises the commitment levels of employees. I3 said, "I have a high level of respect for the company, and I have a high level of engagement for the company; therefore, the employees seem to follow suit." I2 and I3 stated that employees are more likely to remain with their organizations if they respect their managers. Store managers gain respect when they include employees in decision-making and other aspects of the company (Chib, 2016). I5 suggested job satisfaction suffers when employees do not feel involved in what happens in the workplace. Reduced job satisfaction is a key reason why many employees develop quit intentions (Ahmad & Rainyee, 2014). I3 stated, "I feel I have contributed to employee commitment by being supportive, remaining transparent, and making sure everyone understands the why behind what we do."

Some participants also said that employees who had managers who implemented engaging management styles experienced lower levels of employee turnover than those managers who did not display management styles that supported employee engagement

(I1, I3, I4, and I5). Engagement is important for managers to discern because disengaged employees lead to feelings of detachment and turnover intentions (G. & Kavitha, 2015). Two participants (I1 and I4) stated that since disengaged workers lead to decreases in employee commitment, managers must devise ways to communicate with team members to better identify which workers are experiencing disengagement. Overall, all five participants suggested that employee engagement was an effective strategy to increase employee commitment. I2 and I3 stated that engaging managers reduce worker turnover because employees view them as concerned mentors. Each interviewee articulated that using an engaging management style was a useful strategy that increased employee commitment because employees considered them approachable and insightful. I5 stated, "I spend a lot of my time making sure my employees are involved as much as possible; from my first year with the company until now, I have had very few workers leave the organization for reasons associated with lack of engagement."

An in-depth analysis of interview data and exit interview documents led to findings supported by Hassan, Wright, and Park (2016), in which employee engagement increased employee commitment. Hassan et al. (2016) posited employee engagement was found to increase work performance because of decreased employee work exhaustion and increased worker commitment. Managers can improve job retention rates through the inclusion of individuals in decision making on the job, which leads to increased self-confidence (Chib, 2016). Employees solicited for information in decision-making tend to acquire higher levels of self-motivation, which leads to higher commitment levels (Chib, 2016).

According to the store managers, engaging management styles helped sustain employee commitment (I1, I2, I3, and I5). When asked, what strategies were effective in reducing employee turnover, I2 had the following response:

> After years of experience, I found myself set on doing things one way. I trained my subordinates the same way I received training. As time went on and technology improved, I started to see that there were more efficient ways to do things. At some point in my career over the years, I found out that if one of my employees came to me with a better idea, then I should listen. If the employees can sell me on it, the idea will certainly be implemented. If we can save time and involve the employees in making improvements, that will increase commitment because employees like to be involved. I would encourage anybody to include employees in making improvements because like I said, I trained them in the ways that I knew. Today people are smarter and have great ideas. With the amount of technology available today things are much easier to figure out. Even a simple spreadsheet. It may have taken us ten times longer to do the same thing by hand 20 years ago. Things are much simpler, and we have to be willing to listen to new ideas from employees.

Some participants shared that engaging managers increased job satisfaction and reduced stress levels of employees (I1 and I4). According to I1, in their experience, job dissatisfaction is one of the leading reasons for retail employees leaving their organizations. Increased job satisfaction leads to higher productivity levels and reduced employee turnover (Gupta & Sharma, 2016). I5 expressed, "In my experience,

improving the job satisfaction of employees increases production levels and has significantly contributed to reducing the turnover levels in the company." I4 stated managers that look to include employees are more effective at increasing employee commitment than managers who do not include employees because employees want to work for managers who value their input.

Employee engagement and initial interactions with management often influence the level of turnover intentions for a worker (Kim & Fernandez, 2016). I5 explained, "New employees initially experience high stress levels; by allocating extra time to mentor and support new employees, I can help advance their skills and increase their commitment levels." Data analysis supported the idea that managers can improve job satisfaction, which in turn reduces employee turnover. Participants stated that employee support was crucial to the success of their organization because supportive managers help increase team production and influence the desires of employees to work for them (I1, I2, I3, and I5). I4 mentioned that managers allocate a significant amount of time to coach employees and help develop new skills that lead to increased productivity and a sense of organizational commitment. Employees that feel high levels of organizational commitment will most likely display higher levels of commitment to the organization (Hassan et al., 2016).

Engaged workers are less likely to leave their organizations when compared to employees who are less engaged (I3). I1 said, "My goal as a manager is to provide support for my employees and to help them become more productive; when I help employees become more productive, I help to improve their job satisfaction, and I help to

keep employee turnover down." Two participants suggested that engaging workers allows for us as managers to develop team members and gain a better understanding of their strengths and weaknesses (I3 and I4). I5 posited that engaging managers in their organization have more knowledge of worker strengths and weaknesses because employees are more likely to have meaningful and productive interactions with engaging managers. I2 stated, "I try to be an approachable manager so that I increase the chances of having positive interactions with my employees; positive interactions help to establish an emotional connection with employees, which increases employee commitment levels. Employee engagement involves a heightened emotional association that a worker feels for the organization that leads to a deeper attachment to the organization (G. & Kavitha, 2015).

Theme 2: Managers Decreased Employee Turnover by Taking a Personal Interest in Employees

The second theme that emerged from data analysis pertains to how managers decrease turnover when a personal interest in employees is taken. Turnover intentions decline when workers believe managers within the organization consider the well-being and best interests of employees (Soltani & Hajikarimi, 2016). I3 stated that employees show a different level of motivation towards the job when they feel managers care about them on a personal level. Other participants stated that workers put forth more effort if employees feel management views employees as more than just employees (I1, I2, and I3).

Thiel, Griffith, and Connelly (2015) stated that managers must be empathetic towards workers, which in turn, builds trust and strengthens the emotional connection between the employee and organization. I4 expressed that commitment increases when managers take the time to communicate with employees about personal issues and other aspects of their lives. Managers must utilize flexible management approaches that involve understanding the domestic and personal challenges of workers (West & Murphy, 2016). I3 stated managers emphasize approachableness and openness with employees about a variety of topics, including family issues; this has helped to establish and maintain healthy employee relationships.

Organizational commitment increases if employees feel managers invest in creating a culture of caring and self-care (Richards, 2016). I1 and I5 stated a clear difference existed between workers who felt managers cared about them as people as opposed to managers who felt employees were less than people. I4 revealed that one of the concepts that contributed to employee retention was taking an interest in helping workers set and achieve professional goals. Taking an interest in workers shows employees that the manager does care about enhancing the employees' career. The analysis of exit interview documents revealed that manager and employee relationships were a leading cause of turnover, along with workers searching for jobs with higher wages. I1 mentioned the personal interest taken in the lives of workers was a large reason why some employees initially left the job for higher paying opportunities, and eventually returned to previous jobs. Employees want to work for managers that display high levels of compassion and concern for them (Haynes, Josefy, & Hitt, 2015).

I1, I3, and I4 acknowledged that making a concerted effort to get to know employees beyond the basic worker/manager relationship contributes to high levels of commitment. Soltani and Hajikarimi (2016) emphasized the positive relationship between considerate and supportive managers to organizational commitment. I1 stated that considering the personal aspects of employee lives helps to build trust and respect between the manager and worker. Mutual respect between employees and the individuals the employees work for contributes to reduced employee turnover (Soltani & Hajikarimi, 2016).

I5 feels that employees are more likely to work for managers that do not come off as selfish. Other participants felt the more concern shown for employees, the more the employees would respond to management in a way that was favorable to the company (I1, I2, I3, and I4). Managers that seek to maximize personal gains as opposed to the best interests of employees will experience lower commitment levels and reduce organizational effectiveness (Haynes et al., 2015). When asked about the different strategies used to approach employee well-being, I3 had the following response:

> Each store location is different in regards to this, but we have a special team in our store that we call "Team Echo." Everyone on this team helps one another in focusing on the needs of the employees within the store. Team members are out there listening to the needs and desires of employees. Management teams have regular meetings to discuss the findings of the team, and the team implements fun activities for employees. The activities managers implement are work-focused, but the team attempts to make activities enjoyable, so the employees want to

work. The corporate office conducts employee opinion surveys once per year. Our store location consistently scores high on these surveys because of what we do on a daily basis to look out for the best interests of our employees.

Managers must create a work environment that encourages and supports employee self-care (Richards, 2016). I4 felt that taking care of employees was one of the most important aspects of a manager role within a company. I2 stated employees will work considerably harder on the job when managers go the extra mile and show care and compassion for employees. Other interviewees revealed that being compassionate and understanding when addressing employee concerns reduces the possibility of staff turnover (I1, I3, and I5). Managers that make an asserted effort to value employee self-interest contribute to the mental and emotional health of employees (Jit, Sharma, & Kawatra, 2017).

I1 stated that workers sense when managers are empathetic and truly care about helping them. Strong relationships developed by managers that take the necessary actions to help employees, increases commitment (Friedman & Gerstein, 2017). I4 and I2 revealed that employees are more likely to continue working for managers that seek to understand what the workers are going through in their lives. Workers develop a special relationship and cohesiveness with their supervisors when the supervisors show a desire to put the workers' best interests before their own (Haynes et al., 2015). When asked about effective strategies that increase employee commitment, I4 had the following response:

I think that one of the most effective strategies for increasing commitment is

getting to know my employees and connecting with them on a person-to-person

level. I try to get employees to understand that I am a human being just like the

employees are and that I have been in similar positions. I let workers know I am

here for them. To me, I represent our company, and employees will have a

positive view of the company if the employees see that I care about them. People

want to work for a company that cares.

Empathetic leaders have a significant impact on employee turnover intentions (West &

Murphy, 2016). I2, I4, and I5 believe their commitment to the well-being of employees

creates the personal bond with workers that leads to long-term commitment.

Theme 3: Employee Empowerment Increased Organizational Commitment

Employee empowerment and the positive impact on employee commitment was

the third theme that became evident from data analysis. Supported by Kim and

Fernandez (2016), the findings implemented empowerment is a psychological state that

causes employees to experience intensified feelings of self-efficacy. Other research

indicated direct links between empowerment, higher commitment levels, and improved

organizational performance (Gupta & Sharma, 2016). Some participants revealed they

experience better results when they give employees more control over how the employees

complete their tasks (I1, I2, I3, and I5). I4 stated looking for different ways to allow

employees to make decisions provides employees with an opportunity to grow and

develop.

I2 emphasized the importance of showing confidence in employees to make decisions. I1 believes employees must have opportunities to show the capability to make important decisions without being told what to do. I5 gave the following response when asked about the most effective methods of gaining worker commitment:

I understand that there are just certain things that we cannot allow employees to do. However, I still try to allow as much freedom that I can in regards to letting employees decide how they handle certain aspects of their jobs. I think employees can see that I want to afford them opportunities to show can make responsible decisions. Affording employees opportunities to make decisions allows me to gain their trust but it also allows for me to help develop employee skills. Employees are more likely to want to work for you if they feel you give them opportunities to show their worth.

Organizations that do not implement management strategies that include empowerment opportunities for employees, risk incurring disruptive and costly problems that hinder organizational performance (Wilson & Chaudhry, 2017). Some interviewees insisted a lack of motivation occurs when opportunities for workers to have some sense of control over the performed work are non-existent (I2, I3, and I5). I4 felt that some of the better results from employees derived from the employees being allowed to use their creativity to complete the tasks. Psychological empowerment of employees is a form of intrinsic motivation that leads to better worker attitudes on the job (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2015). Furthermore, the empowerment of employees leads workers to feel a sense of meaningfulness in the performed tasks (Jernigan et al., 2016). I1 expressed the

employees are more inclined to stay with the company if the employees feel the work has an important purpose. I3 and I5 added purposeful work usually deters employees from seeking employment at other organizations.

Employee empowerment results in higher levels of commitment between the employee and management, as well as between the worker and the organization as a whole (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2015). Organizational employees are more likely to display higher levels of commitment when the responsibilities bestowed upon them have significant impacts on the achievement of organizational goals (Srivastava, 2017). Some participants felt that workers showed an increased willingness to contribute on the job when their work was viewed as impactful (I1, I2, and I5). I2 stated that assigning employees specific and meaningful tasks contributed to relationship building between them and the employee. Healthy collaborative relationships between managers and employees have positive long-term effects on worker commitment (Limpanitgul, Boonchoo, Kulviseachana, & Photiyarach, 2017).

Islam, Khan, and Bukhari (2016) posited employee empowerment directly links innovation and reduced quit intentions. I2 stated the following:

> From my own experiences as an employee, I remembered how I felt when I did not have the opportunity to figure out things on my own. The feeling I had was one of diminished trust in me from my supervisors. I felt that I deserved a chance to show my higher leadership that I could do the jobs the leaders asked me to do without my supervisor standing over my shoulder telling me what to do. That

experience caused me to have thoughts of looking for another job; a job that

allowed me to show off my skills and to advance.

I1 and I3 insisted delegating work tasks and allowing employees the freedom to complete

the tasks with minimal interference from the managers helped instill a sense of self-

determination within those workers. The effective delegation of tasks also contributes to

instilling a sense of self-competence in the employees because of employee exposure to

opportunities for self-directed learning (Wilson & Chaudhry, 2017). I5 insisted the

empowerment of workers increased the belief of the employees that they can accomplish

more. I5 also stated that allowing workers more freedom in how they accomplish tasks

impacts the likelihood of the employees developing a sense of pride and accomplishment.

When employees take pride in completing meaningful tasks, they seek more meaningful

tasks to complete and increase commitment levels to the job (Amundsen & Martinsen,

2015). Organizations that seek to empower workers will experience increased levels of

commitment because employees will have strong beliefs in their abilities and their

influence on the organization (Srivastava, 2017).

Applications to Professional Practice

Employee commitment positively affects productivity and leads to higher

retention rates for organizations (Khan et al., 2016). Retaining talented employees also

contributes to the sustainability of organizations because of the increased knowledge

levels of workers (Deery & Jago, 2015). Store managers must be active when addressing

employee commitment because lack of worker commitment leads to organizational

collapse (Chib, 2016). Implementing effective strategies that promote employee growth,

development, and well-being increases the chances of sustained success for organizations (Gupta & Sharma, 2016; Hassan et al., 2016). A review of the academic literature revealed that by increasing employee commitment, managers might increase performance, which contributes to organizational success.

Business managers can use effective worker commitment strategies to help retain skilled workers that create costly issues for the company when the skilled workers quit (Wilson & Chaudhry, 2017). Although many managers understand that lack of employee commitment has negative effects on a company, managers still may benefit from obtaining new insight on strategies used by other managers deemed effective in increasing employee commitment. While a variety of management strategies are used to increase worker commitment, participants expressed that engaging employees, taking a personal interest in workers, and empowering employees, were successful strategies to increase commitment. Comprehending the benefits associated with implementing effective commitment strategies can save organizations significant amounts of time and resources resulting from turnover. Furthermore, retail store managers may use the findings of this study to acquire new knowledge, which could prove useful when implementing employee retention strategies.

The knowledge shared by the participants may provide retail store managers and other business leaders with critical information that might strengthen employee commitment levels at their organizations. The shared knowledge by the participants included feasible and inexpensive management approaches that may increase performance and sustainability. Turnover is higher in the retail industry than in most

industries (BLS, 2016b; Major, 2016), which highlights the need for retail managers to explore new strategies that may increase employee commitment. My intent is for the study findings to provide retail store managers and leaders with insight on new approaches that may help them effectively reduce worker turnover.

Implications for Social Change

This qualitative case study on employee commitment is meaningful to social change because retail store managers may utilize the findings to increase employee commitment through the execution of significant strategies. The focus of this research was to explore effective management strategies used to increase employee commitment in the retail industry. Worker retention is an ongoing problem for retail store managers because organizations with low retention rates experience decreases in both performance and profitability (Allisey et al., 2014; George & K.A., 2015). Managers must understand the importance of implementing appropriate strategies, as well as determine which strategies are most useful for their specific organizations (Guha & Chakrabarti, 2016). Managers may apply the strategies that emerged from the data analysis results to contribute to organizational commitment and employee growth. Employee commitment and growth may also lead to lucrative employment opportunities and improved economic conditions for employees in the future.

Increasing employee commitment helps organizational managers put employees in positions to create positive social change within their respective communities (Ahmad & Afgan, 2016). Increased employee commitment leads to increased customer satisfaction (Panaccio et al., 2014). Committed employees result in thriving businesses,

which leads to business growth (Dotun, 2014). Growing businesses create more job opportunities and increase the potential for community support through monetary contributions, resource allocation, or other community programs that may benefit the community (Major, 2016). Employee turnover is a threat to the organizational life cycle, which affects the capability of a company to make societal contributions (Koutroumanis et al., 2015). Furthermore, lack of employee commitment contributes to declines in organizational profits, revenues, and future investment opportunities (Palanski et al., 2014). Increasing employee commitment enables organizational managers to be a continued source of positive social change as the result of sustainability created from retaining talented workers (Dotun, 2014).

Recommendations for Action

Retail store managers may use the explored strategies in this study to strengthen current retention approaches that lead to increased employee commitment at their organizations. By implementing some of the strategies suggested by the study participants, managers can reduce employee turnover levels, which may improve organizational productivity and create long-term success. The ideas shared in this research could help lower turnover rates for retail managers and contribute to the overall success of retail organizations experiencing high employee turnover. This shared knowledge supplies store managers with critical information needed to enhance current strategies that target employee engagement, empathetic management, and employee empowerment, which all contribute to employee commitment (Chib, 2016; Kim & Fernandez, 2016; Soltani & Hajikarmi, 2016). Implementing successful strategies to

increase employee commitment may contribute to the prevention of key personnel losses that are difficult to recover from because of experience and knowledge levels of those employees.

I recommend retail store managers and organizational leadership assess the findings from this research and look to integrate part or all of the strategies into their current strategies for retention. Dissemination of the research findings for this study will occur through various methods. Leaders from the participating organizations, to include the interviewees, will receive a 1-2 page summary of the findings to distribute among colleagues and other business leaders. This study will also be obtainable through the ProQuest/UMI dissertation database for future reference and other contributions to research associated with employee commitment and turnover. I will also inquire about potential opportunities to discuss the findings of this research with interested business professionals via organizational training, leadership workshops, and at management conferences.

Recommendations for Further Research

The purpose of this study was to explore U.S. retail store manager strategies in the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania area that lead to employee commitment to increase business performance. The results of this specific research extend the existing research on employee commitment; however, employees leave their organizations for a variety of reasons. Since employee commitment is a sophisticated business problem, future qualitative researchers should examine strategies that emphasize worker retention. Gaining the perspective of employees about the management strategies they feel are

effective may also provide important insight on this issue. Future qualitative research recommendations also involve exploring management strategies in retail organizations across different geographical areas. Exploring different management strategies across different geographical areas may allow future researchers to collect a broader range of data. Furthermore, research expanding across different types of retail stores may also help enhance future research. Exploring management strategies within different types of retail organizations across different geographical locations may allow scholars to better contribute to the comprehension of employee commitment and turnover.

A variety of causes exist that could impact employee commitment and turnover. Quantitative researchers should explore the different relationships among the various causes and worker commitment. Quantitative researchers should contemplate examining the relationship between worker commitment and other variables such as organizational leadership, corporate culture, and professional development programs. Future exploration in these areas could provide organizational leaders and decision-makers with better insight to increase employee commitment, which may contribute to increased organizational performance.

<div align="center">**Reflections**</div>

Reflecting on the doctoral study process presented the opportunity to consider the various stages involved throughout the journey, including the proposal, data collection, and data analysis stages. During the proposal stage, I determined the foundational aspects for the basis of conducting this research. The proposal stage allowed for me to gain the necessary knowledge I needed to comprehend the research process. My previous

work experiences provided me with some understanding of employee commitment, so I had to concern myself with any personal biases to ensure reliability and validity of the findings.

As the data collection instrument for this research, one obstacle I faced was preventing my personal biases from influencing the outcome of the research. As a current organizational leader, I had a pre-determined perception of what strategies would increase employee commitment. To eliminate personal biases, I was more deliberate in following the ethical requirements throughout the research process. I also conducted practice interviews to increase my comfort level with the interview questions and interview procedure. To remove biases during the participant recruitment process, I extended invitations to a variety of retail store managers in the area who met the research criteria. I provided each potential participant an equal opportunity to participate in the research. Furthermore, I consistently utilized the established interview protocol to collect the research data.

I understood that embarking upon this research journey would be a difficult task, and I experienced difficulty during each stage of the research process. Early in the process, I became frustrated because of my failure to grasp the concept of establishing a sufficient business problem to research. Constructing the literature review also caused high levels of frustration because of the difficulty synthesizing a large number of resources in a manner that was clear, concise, and aligned with the conceptual framework of the study. The completion of the data collection allowed for an enhanced understanding of the research problem. The responses and different perspectives of the participants helped me gain a better understanding of the participant viewpoints. I was

surprised by the responses from the interviewees because I did not expect the level of openness in the responses that I received. The interviewees displayed high levels of desire to participate and discuss their experiences, which resulted in more data than originally expected.

Although frustration was evident throughout my doctoral journey, I also experienced a high level of satisfaction and sense of accomplishment once I completed the journey. Upon completion of the research, my thought process changed about the complexity of the employee commitment issue and the difficulty of implementing effective strategies. I felt that higher level leadership was just as important as the store managers in accomplishing the overall goals of increasing employee commitment and reducing turnover. Since many variables effect employee commitment, store managers experiencing low levels of worker commitment must comprehend the value of their employees when formulating retention strategies.

Conclusion

The findings from this qualitative case study indicated that retail store managers might increase employee commitment by engaging employees, taking a personal interest in workers, and empowering employees. Research participants indicated managers should consider implementing the management strategies identified in the research into overall organizational retention strategies. The outcomes of this study also indicated that applying management strategies that emerged from the research data could benefit organizations by helping to improve organizational performance. Furthermore, the

strategies indicated in the research are less expensive options for managers and organizational leaders to implement.

Increases in employee commitment improve the chances of long-term success for organizations. The volatile nature of the business environment solidifies the need to develop and implement effective strategies that strengthen the commitment of employees. When organizations experience high rates of worker turnover, the sustainability of those organizations becomes vulnerable because of the loss of valuable employees. I suggest retail store managers, academic scholars, and research practitioners utilize the findings and recommendations of this research to acquire new insight on effective strategies that positively impact employee commitment and performance.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

The interview protocol will include the following steps:

1. An introductory statement;

2. Semistructured interview questioning;

    a. What qualities do you display that you feel contribute to the emotional attachment of your employees to the company?

    b. What strategies have you used that influence the desire of employees to stay with the organization?

    c. How have you helped create a sense of moral obligation for employees to stay with the company?

    d. How would you assess the commitment level of employees resulting from their loyalty to the organization?

    e. What aspects of the organizational culture do you feel contribute to employees remaining with the company for cost-based reasons?

    f. How would you assess the effectiveness of your leadership in implementing strategies that influence employee commitment on a personal level?

    g. What information can you provide that I did not address in the interview questions?

3. Follow up or probing questions;

4. Theme verification by participants;

5. Revision of themes as necessary if warranted by participants;

6.   Documentation of any reflexive notes.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Semistructured interviews questions include the following:

1. What qualities do you display that you feel contribute to the emotional attachment of your employees to the company?

2. What strategies have you used that influence the desire of employees to stay with the organization?

3. How have you helped create a sense of moral obligation for employees to stay with the company?

4. How would you assess the commitment level of employees resulting from their loyalty to the organization?

5. What aspects of the organizational culture do you feel contribute to employees remaining with the company for cost-based reasons?

6. How would you assess the effectiveness of your leadership in implementing strategies that influence employee commitment on a personal level?

7. What information can you provide that I did not address in the interview questions?

Appendix C: Recruitment Letter for Study Participants

RE: A RESEARCH STUDY OF POSSIBLE INTEREST

Dear [Name]:

My name is Terrance Smith, and I am currently a doctoral candidate in Business Administration – Project Management at Walden University. I am researching the effects of management influence on employee commitment. The study is titled "The Effects of Management on Commitment in the Retail Industry."

I aim to conduct face-to-face interviews with retail store managers who meet the following criteria:

- Store managers must have a minimum of 2 years of retail management experience
- Demonstrated success in retaining employees (<7.5% turnover rate)
- Store managers must be at least 18 years of age
- Store managers must be currently employed in a retail organization within a 50-mile radius of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

I constructed the selection criteria to ensure the study participants will likely possess input relevant to the study. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw your decision to participate at any time. The identity of you and your company will be protected. Your individual responses to interview questions will not be made public and will only be recorded for analysis. In addition to interview data, I will be formally requesting for organizational documents regarding employee commitment, retention, and turnover. Findings from the study will be shared with the study participants, other scholars, and leadership within the organizations of the participants.

I am formally requesting that you participate in this study. Please contact me at xxx-xxx-xxxx if you are interested in participating in this research. I will also contact you within the next 7 days to request your participation. Your time and consideration is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Terrance D. Smith
Doctoral Candidate
Doctor of Business Administration Program
Walden University