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Successful Strategies for Reducing Employee Turnover in the Restaurant Industry

Jaun Derek Smith
Walden University

Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Jaun D. Smith

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Review Committee
Dr. Annie Brown, Committee Chairperson, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Erica Gamble, Committee Member, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Patsy Kasen, University Reviewer, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
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Abstract

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MBA, Anglia Ruskin University, 2015

MET, San Fernando Technical Institute, 1997

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Employee turnover remains a ubiquitous phenomenon that could negatively impact the operations and profitability of any business entity. For decades, managers, business leaders, and individuals in academia have devoted considerable time and resources to understanding and reducing the phenomenon. This qualitative multiple case study was conducted to explore the successful strategies that restaurant managers used to reduce employee turnover. The population sample consisted of 4 restaurant managers from Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago who had successfully used strategies to reduce employee turnover. The conceptual framework used was the transformational leadership model. Data for the study were gathered using semistructured interviews, employee records, and company documents. The data were analyzed using cross-case synthesis. The findings included 4 emergent themes. Two themes were tethered to the transformational leadership model with the focus on the constituents of individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation. One theme was linked to the transactional leadership style under the element of management by exception active approach. The 4th theme was unexpected and tethered to practice; actions involved the use of various labor configurations to reduce employee turnover. The results of the study might be beneficial to managers not only in the restaurant industry but within the wider business ecology. With the implementation of successful strategies to reduce employee turnover, business operations and profitability could be spared degradation from operational disruptions due to frequent recruitment and labor shortages. The improved margins could be reinvested towards improving the communities and the lives of workers through positive changes in wages, therefore, contributing to positive social change.

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Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral study to my wife Adalia Smith and our two children Omiria Smith and Jaun-Louis Smith. I also dedicate this research to my father George Romilly and my mother, Joyce Smith. Although my mother is no longer with us in the flesh, I could recall her endless love and support toward me striving to become the best.

To God be the Glory for the great thing he has done, is doing, and yet to do in my life. To you heavenly Father, our sovereign God, through your son Jesus, I thank you for the knowledge resources, and mercy you afforded to me during this journey. I will always remember, that I can do all things through Christ Jesus, the living word, who strengthens me.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

The restaurant industry is a crucial component of society. In developed nations such as the United States of America, 90% of patrons enjoy weekly visits, and over 50% of patrons regard restaurants as an integral part of their lifestyles (Sukhu, Bilgihan, & Seo, 2017). The harmonious relationship between restaurants and patrons remains in existence for centuries, predating the 1700's (Freedman, 2014). Managers of restaurants use an operating model that facilitates satisfying the fundamental human need for food. Food according to Maslow (1954) is a physiological need that is common to all human beings. Although the demand for food is ubiquitous, restaurants managers must demonstrate a high level of creativity and innovation around their offerings to provide a competitive advantage for ensuring profitability.

The restaurant industry is a critical constituent of some of the world's major sectors. Knani, 2014; Nikbin, Marimuthu, and Hyun (2016) argued that the restaurant industry is a subset of the hospitality and tourism industries. The hospitality and tourism industries represent two of the world's largest sectors that contribute significantly to the gross domestic product and employment generation (Karavardar, 2014). Restaurant organizations are useful in providing significant opportunities for job creation and economic growth (H. Parsa, van der Rest, Smith, Parsa, & Bujisic, 2014). Restaurants are unique institutions that facilitate the exposure of patrons to various cultures and cuisines from around the world as part of the in-house dining experience (Hwang, 2015). The exposure to multiple cultures could create a greater appreciation for diversity, adding to the value of the restaurant industry to society.

Although the restaurant industry has high levels of economic, cultural, and social influence, restaurant managers face numerous threats to business operations, including employee turnover. Due to the various issues negatively affecting business operations which include employee turnover, investors regard the sector as high-risk (Hua, Dalbor, Lee, & Guchait, 2016). Tews, Michel, and Allen (2014) stated that employee turnover is a significant threat to the operations of restaurant establishments. Managers of restaurants must devise strategies for reducing employee turnover to bolster operating efficiencies for improving the firm’s longevity.

Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, and Carsten (2014) stated that restaurant managers struggle to reduce employee turnover due to the numerous causal factors. Employee turnover could negatively impact operating costs and the preservation of skill sets that are necessary for maintaining business operations and competitive advantage (Kessler, 2014). The loss of essential personnel, such as chefs, servers, and entertainers due to employee turnover could affect a restaurant’s competitive advantage. Therefore, it imperative that managers of restaurants understand and implement strategies to reduce employee turnover to facilitate the survival of their businesses.

Background of the Problem

Employees are a critical component to the success of restaurant organizations. Sperber (2014) argued that the restaurant industry is a highly competitive and dynamic environment that hinges on service quality as the primary differentiator. Employees represent a crucial resource that can affect the longevity and profitability of the firm (Fleisher & Bensoussan, 2015). The labor-intensive operating model that managers of restaurants use remains susceptible to high rates of employee turnover that could adversely impact the firm's ability to stay competitive (Han, Bonn, & Cho, 2016). High employee turnover could result in significant operational disruptions that could negatively influence the firm's profitability (Gupta & Shaw, 2014). When employees quit their jobs, managers lose valuable skill sets resulting in service efficiency deteriorations and customer dissatisfaction (Utoro & Gustomo, 2014). Customer satisfaction results in a competitive advantage, which further increases the need for the implementation of retention strategies within the restaurant industry.

Active customer-employee relationships are crucial to restaurant business operations. Dusek, Ruppel, Yurova, and Clarke (2014) argued that the severing of client-employee relationships could negatively influence the perception of the restaurant brand, affecting future loyalty and patronage. The absence of strategies for managing employee turnover should be a cause for concern; however, not enough organizational leaders have taken steps to develop and implement strategies to reduce employee turnover (Cascio, 2014). This study could provide useful information that managers of restaurants could use to develop strategies to reduce employee turnover.

Problem Statement

Employee turnover is a ubiquitous phenomenon, affecting business entities of all sizes and types (Grzenda & Buezynski, 2015). The average annual rate of employee turnover among restaurant workers can exceed 50% (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). Managers within the hospitality industry, which consists of restaurants and hotels, regard employee turnover as a significant challenge (Tews et al., 2014). The general business problem is that high employee turnover can significantly disrupt operational continuity and reduce profitability. The specific business problem is that some restaurant managers lack leadership strategies to reduce employee turnover.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory multiple case study was to explore the leadership strategies used by restaurant managers to reduce employee turnover. The population consisted of restaurants managers located in the city of Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The purposeful selection of four restaurant managers from four restaurant organizations provided the basis for data collection because these managers have implemented successful strategies to reduce employee turnover. The restaurant industry remains a valuable component of business ecology, positively influencing job creation and economic growth (H. Parsa et al., 2014). The implications for positive social change include the identification of crucial information toward improving the employees' experiences that resides within the leader's control. Qazi, Khalid, and Shafique (2015) argued that a reduction in employee turnover could positively influence cost control and profit margins by lessening the need for frequent recruitment and training of new personnel. The applied cost savings can be used to sustain business operations within the community and contribute to the prosperity of employees and their families.

Nature of the Study

For this study, I used the qualitative method. The qualitative method is useful when viewing a phenomenon through a participant's lens within a real-world context (Gill, 2014). Sneison (2016) posited that in qualitative research, the attached meanings and perspectives of the participants are important in understanding a phenomenon. When conducting qualitative research, the researcher is allowed the opportunity to engage with participants while gathering information about the phenomenon (Rossetto, 2014).

Conversely, the quantitative method is useful in understanding a phenomenon through the examination of variables, relationships, and differences (Pearce, Christian, Smith, & Vance, 2014; Reio & Shuck, 2014), which was not my intent for the study. Meanwhile, the mixed methods approach is useful in understanding a phenomenon by combining the qualitative and quantitative methods (Archibald, Radil, Zhang, & Hanson, 2015; Morgan, 2016). My study did not contain any quantitative elements for examination, disqualifying the mixed methods approach.

Five research strategies are available for conducting a qualitative study (Yin, 2014). Of the five strategies, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and the narrative designs did not align with my intent for the study. The phenomenology design is suitable for the exploration of a phenomenon through the perspectives and lived experiences of the participants (Letourneau, 2015; Walsh et al., 2015). The grounded theory strategy applies to the development of theory (Corley, 2015). Ethnography is beneficial when exploring cultures and the underpinning patterns of behaviors (Rashid, Caine, & Goez, 2015; Reich, 2015). The narrative design is useful in identifying and exploring the participants' experiences through their stories (Bruce, Beuthin, Sheilds, Molzahn, & Schick-Makaroff, 2016). For this study, I used the multiple case study design. Yin (2014) regarded the case study design as a useful strategy in providing an in-depth exploration for understanding a phenomenon using numerous distinct case units as information sources.

Research Question

What strategies do restaurant managers use to reduce employee turnover?

Interview Questions

1. What leadership strategies have you used and found to be most effective in reducing employee turnover of restaurant employees?
2. What leadership strategies have you used and found to be least effective in reducing employee turnover of restaurant employees?
3. What leadership characteristics did you find best facilitate the reduction of employee turnover of restaurant employees?
4. From your experience, what are the barriers to reducing employee turnover of restaurant employees?
5. How did you address the key barriers to implementing the leadership strategies for reducing employee turnover in your restaurant?
6. What additional information would you like to share about reducing employee turnover among restaurant employees?

Conceptual Framework

Leadership is a crucial antecedent to higher employee engagement, optimal performance, and overall employee well-being (Carasco-Saul, W. Kim, & Kim, 2015). I used the transformational leadership theory to underpin my research. Burns (1978) first introduced the concept of transformational leadership and articulated that transformational leaders can elevate the operating levels of their followers. There are four major parts of the transformational leadership model: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

The transformational leader embodies the four major constituents of the model in an idiosyncratic manner that encourages employees to surpass expectations and reinforces organizational loyalty (S. Pradhan & Pradhan, 2016). Mekraz and Gundala (2016) argued that the transformational leadership model is related to reducing employee turnover. Lin and Hsiao (2014) posited that a transformational leader could bring about a positive change in the way employees view their jobs. The revised outlook attributed by employees to a leader's transformational style could be useful in reducing employee turnover. Caillier (2014) argued that the transformational leadership model could be helpful in reducing employee turnover intentions. Hence, the robust positive influence projected by the transformational leader could make employees less likely to leave an organization.

Operational Definitions

Employee retention: Employee retention refers to the preservation of an existing employment relationship (Michael, Prince, & Chacko, 2016).

Employee turnover: Employee turnover is the separation of an employee from their source of employment, through voluntary or involuntary means (Kam & Meyer, 2015).

Idealized influence: Idealized influences are role-model qualities and self-confidence that make subordinates consider imitating their leader (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Individualized consideration: Individualized consideration is the provision of the requisite support and attention needed in overcoming issues as a sense of fairness to all parties involved (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Inspirational motivation: Inspirational motivation is the vision-centric invigoration of followers, that creates the impetus for achieving higher performance (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Intellectual stimulation: Intellectual stimulation is the encouragement of follower-based ideation and innovation toward improving the status-quo (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Laissez-Faire Leadership: Laissez-Faire leadership is a leadership style that denotes the absence of leadership, the protagonist provides no involvement in the direction of subordinates (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Transactional leadership: Transactional Leadership is a leadership style, that involves the principle of exchange and tethers to the contingent reward, the management by exception passive or active models (Bass, 1985).

Transformational leadership: Transformational Leadership is subordinate motivation and empowerment toward the achievement of extraordinary outcomes (Geier, 2016).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are those aspects of a study that the researcher believed to be true without proof (Lips-Wiersma & Mills, 2014). As the researcher, I assumed that the problem of dealing with employee turnover was a subject of importance to the society. I also expected that participants understood various leadership styles, particularly the transformational leadership model. I also assumed that during the interviews all participants responses to the questions were honest and accurate. Furthermore, I assumed that all participants had experiences with dealing with employee turnover within the restaurant industry. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) stated that integrity of the participants' responses could affect the reliability of a study. I also assumed that all participants understood the interview questions, as aligned responses are crucial to the understanding of a phenomenon according to Marshall and Rossman (2016). Therefore, participants were provided with the interview questions in advance, allowing for sufficient time for any clarifications before the interviews.

Limitations

Limitations represent factors or issues that reside outside of the researcher's control (Henderson, 2014). For this study, I have identified several limitations. The first was that I collected only data from restaurant managers. Secondly, the area of Port of Spain provided a geographic limitation for the study. The use of participants from within the restaurant industry could limit the transfer of the findings to other industries about employee turnover. Another limitation existed in the participants' possible lack of real qualifications other than word of mouth as being implementers of successful strategies for reducing employee turnover.

Delimitations

Delimitations are the boundaries or scope of the research (Crossman & Kazdin, 2016). In this study, I explored the successful strategies used by four managers belonging to four different restaurants in the city of Port of Spain. The managers who participated in the study, may not have been representative of all restaurant managers in Trinidad and Tobago. However, only those managers of restaurants within the city of Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago who have successfully applied strategies to reducing employee turnover were considered acceptable. The city of Port of Spain is the capital of Trinidad and Tobago, having the most extensive array of restaurants and significant business activity (Cameron, 2014), making the city better suited for gathering data for my study.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

The success or failure of an organization hinges on the leader's prowess and ability to respond to challenges within the business environment. Cismas, Dona, and Andreiasu (2016) posited that the leaders of successful firms acquire solutions to business problems through stratagem, communication, and the empowerment of others. The results of this research could be beneficial to managers of restaurants who are interested in addressing the business problem of employee turnover through the development of successful strategies. Also, the results of the study could be useful for the creation of financial benefits to restaurant establishments in the form of cost savings. Qazi et al.

(2015) argued that a reduction in employee turnover can have a positive influence on cost control and profit margins by reducing the need for frequent personnel recruitment and retraining. A decrease in the need for retraining and recruiting employee replacements could lead to the preservation of skill sets within the organization that can help provide a competitive advantage.

Implications for Social Change

The results of the study could be beneficial to restaurant managers, employees, and the communities they serve. Steiner and Atterton (2014) argued that as businesses succeed, avenues for positive social change can emerge. Hence, the implementation of successful strategies for reducing employee turnover could create environments that enhance the employees' work experiences. Also, the cost savings to the company attributed to a reduction in employee turnover can be redirected to offset positive adjustments to the minimum wage (Gittings & Schmutte, 2015), further contributing to the prosperity and social mobility of families while sustaining business operations for the benefit of local communities served by restaurants.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the successful strategies used by restaurant managers to reduce employee turnover. Gallardo and Thunnissen (2016) argued that the retention of employees is crucial to achieving competitive advantage. Hence, the understanding of the successful strategies for reducing employee turnover could benefit managers in the restaurant industry. For the literature review, I used keywords from the research topic along with related subjects to create themes for exploration.

The transformational leadership theory was the basis of the conceptual framework for this study, with emphasis on the four *Is,* subcomponents of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1985). Other themes included a review of the restaurant industry, employee turnover, employee retention, pseudotransformational leadership, leader-member exchange (LMX), transactional leadership, and the laissez-faire leadership model.

To find peer-reviewed sources on the research topic, I used Google Scholar and databases like ProQuest, Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, Hospitality and Tourism Complete, Emerald Insight, SAGE Journals, ScienceDirect, Project Muse, and the ABI/INFORM Collection. For this study, the literature review contained 203 sources of which 93.1% were peer-reviewed journals. The entire proposal included 314 references, of which 92.3% were peer-reviewed journals.

When conducting searches within the various databases, the use of keywords and amalgamations was crucial. Some search keywords and phrases used in this study included the following: *transformational leadership, employee turnover, turnover intention, transactional, laissez-faire, retention, intellectual stimulation, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, pseudotransformational, voluntary turnover, strategy, hospitality, and restaurant industry.*

Transformational Leadership

Burns first introduced the transformational leadership model. Burns (1978) articulated that a transformational leader elevates the operating levels of their followers. Effelsberg, Solga, and Gurt (2014) stated that a transformational leader could create positive shifts in the perceptions of followers toward achieving a common outcome, making the transformational leadership model ideal for team building. Bass (1985), in expanding on the work of Burns, developed the Bass transformational leadership theory and articulated that people will follow an individual who displays confidence, passion, and inspires them toward the achievement of a collective good. The adoption and development of an appropriate leadership style by managers, such as the transformational style, is crucial to the success of an organization. Therefore, leaders must understand the importance of their role in influencing the attitudes and behaviors of their subordinates when developing strategies for reducing employee turnover.

The transformational leadership model is a versatile style of leadership. The transformational leadership model is useful in addressing many organizational problems (Ariyabuddhiphongs & Khan, 2017; Dinh, Gardner, Meuser, Liden, & Hu, 2014; Martin, 2017; Salem, 2015). Paladan (2015) posited that the transformational leadership model is a crucial constituent in understanding and resolving various phenomena affecting business operations. One phenomenon that is ubiquitous and could negatively impact business operations is employee turnover. The transformational leadership model could be useful to restaurant managers when developing retention strategies.

Many leadership styles could be useful in solving organizational problems. The most common leadership styles include the transformational and transactional leadership styles. The transactional leadership style involves the use of extrinsic motivators, rewards, and punishments to drive employee participation (Bass,1985). Burns (1978) stated that, in addressing organizational issues, a manager could display a transformational or transactional style but never both. Bass (1985) argued that a leader's behavior may not be mutually exclusive to demonstrating the transformational or transactional leadership styles but remains dependent on the context. Therefore, it is crucial that leaders understand the benefits and limitations of the various leadership styles when developing strategies for dealing with a complex phenomenon like employee turnover.

Although Burns is the originator of the transformational leadership model, Bass was fundamental in the model's conceptualization. Fernet, Trepanier, Austin, Gagne, and Forest (2015) argued that Bass's input led to the operationalization of the transformational leadership model. The implementation of the transformational leadership aggregate consisting of individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, idealized influence, and inspirational motivation is useful in solving many business problems. Bass and Avolio developed the full-range leadership model that includes the transformational, transactional, and the laissez-faire leadership styles (Bass & Avolio, 1994). The full-range model is useful for providing the reference for measuring a leader's effectiveness along a continuum ranging from laissez-faire or non-leadership, the transactional, and to the transformational leadership style. A leader's assessment of their style along the full-range continuum could be useful in determining what strategies are necessary to improve their effectiveness in strengthening relationships with workers and establishing proper alignment with the vision of the company.

Transformational leaders are active in positively transforming the behaviors and skill sets of their subordinates. The followers of transformational leaders may demonstrate the following behaviors: an interest in viewing their jobs from a different perspective, the desire to replace their interests with those of the organization, and the acceptance and alignment with the organization's vision (Bass & Avolio, 1994). The transformational leadership style is useful when organizational change is necessary, especially during periods of crisis (Bass, 1985). Hence, the transformational leadership style could be helpful in addressing major operational issues relating to employee turnover within the restaurant industry.

The transformational leadership model is beneficial in addressing many organizational issues. The transformational leadership theory could be helpful in the successful exploration of organizational phenomena (Gyensare, Anku-Tsede, Sanda, & Okpoti, 2016; Stempel, Rigotti, & Mohr, 2015). Employee turnover is a phenomenon worth exploring due to the operational disruptions that arise as managers of businesses lose valuable staff members. Managers of restaurants could benefit from the understanding and implementation of the various aspects of the transformational leadership model toward the development effective retention strategies.

It is essential that leaders empower their followers to achieve organizational success. Transformational leaders use intrinsic forms of motivation to boost employee enthusiasm toward accomplishing the goals of the company (Wang, Kim, & Lee, 2016). Bass and Riggio (2006) claimed that a transformational leader enables their followers toward attaining transcendence from self-interests toward the fostering of a team spirit. The transformational leadership theory is one of the most popular approaches for influencing positive change within organizations (Caillier, 2014). Transformational leaders create a sense of purpose and empowerment that attract workers to the leader, bolstering loyalty toward the firm, which could be useful in reducing employee turnover.

Transformational leaders also articulate a compelling vision and create a high-quality exchange between the leader and followers. Gross (2016) stated that the elements of the transformational leadership model are useful in forming effective employer-employee relationships, enhancing job commitment and performance. The transformational leader could represent the change agent who provides the catalyst for ushering in organizational transformation, inspiring innovation, and creating job satisfaction (Khan, Asghar, & Zaheer, 2014; Liu, Jing, & Gao, 2015). The establishment of stable relationships could be beneficial in positively influencing the way restaurant employees view the leader and their contribution to the establishment, making employees less likely to quit their jobs.

Leaders must create an environment that facilitates productive employee engagements. Mozammel and Haan (2016) argued that transformational leaders strive to create an engaging environment for their followers, which is vital to organizational success. To encourage employees to become more engaged with their jobs, an atmosphere of confidence must exist within the organization. Trust is a mediating factor in employer-employee relationships and could attenuate employee turnover intentions (Marzucco, Marique, Stinglhamber, DeRoeck, & Hansez, 2014). Garg and Dhar (2014) stated that trust remains a crucial element in the development of an active relational exchange and is necessary for bolstering the level of commitment between employer and employee. Staff and managers who share a common vision are more likely to go above and beyond in the interest of the firm. Employees that align with their employer's ideas and values may demonstrate higher levels of engagement and are less likely to leave an establishment.

A leader must demonstrate that they are trustworthy. Ramthun and Matkin (2014) argued that the confidence placed in a manager and the perception of the manager's competence is essential in getting followers to perform in their jobs, especially under extreme circumstances. Mittal (2016) posited that the transformational leader focuses on developing strong relationships with their followers, which are vital in influencing the levels of commitment toward achieving the firm’s objectives. Employees who have faith in their leaders are more likely to embrace the vision and goals of the company, as they believe that the leader has their best interest in mind.

The communication of clear expectations is crucial in the building of productive employer-employee relationships. Madera, Dawson, and Neal (2014) argued that overall improvements in communication within a firm could improve leader-follower relationships and reduce employee turnover. Managers must establish an efficient process for conveying and receiving information within an organization, regardless of the circumstance. Caillier (2014) posited that the transformational leader communicates clear goal expectations while raising the level of self-efficacy among subordinates. The transformational leader also creates an environment that facilitates the emergence of exceptional behaviors in followers (Perko, Kinnunen, Tolvanen, & Feldt, 2016). Managers of restaurants must remain truthful and communicate their expectations to their employees to build an environment of respect and transparency that can strengthen work relationships and loyalty.

A feeling of happiness and comfort could influence an employee’s job perception. Transformational leaders positively impact on their employee’s well-being (Salem, 2015; Schmidt et al., 2014; Walsh, Dupre, & Arnold, 2014). Arnold (2017) stated that causality is challenging to prove concerning the transformational leadership style and employee well-being. Wegge, Shemla, and Haslam (2014) posited that, although employee well-being remains a complicated subject, leaders should not disregard the versatility of the transformational leadership model in addressing various issues. A transformational leader devotes time to understanding the individual needs of their followers, which could positively impact each subordinate’s behavior and sense of well-being.

Transformational leaders could have an adverse impact on many organizational issues, such as employee turnover. Fernet et al. (2015) posited that transformational leaders are effective in reducing employee-burnout, improving job commitment, minimizing turnover intent, and improving professional efficacy. Salem (2015) argued that leaders of businesses should adopt the transformational leadership style when establishing effective strategies for solving organizational issues. Hence, leaders in the restaurant industry who experience high employee turnover could benefit from adopting and implementing the tenets of the transformational leadership style.

Managers of restaurants may face challenges or crises that test their leadership prowess. Geier (2016) posited that leaders could switch leadership styles based on the circumstances, and the transformational leadership style might become the default under normal working conditions. However, in a crisis, some leaders may replace their transformational approach with a transactional approach which involves the use of extrinsic motivators. Conversely, Ramthun and Matkin (2014) argued that the switching from a transformational to a transactional style in a crisis is not a rule, as leaders may still exhibit the transformational style in extreme situations. A transformational leader draws upon the strengths of the organization to encourage employee ideation under a single vision, which is essential to overcoming a crisis.

The relationship between a leader and follower is crucial to business success. Transformational leaders not only invest in individual relationships with subordinates but facilitate an environment that encourages a mutual response from subordinates (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Leaders who are attentive and relational in their approach to subordinates could positively influence their employees' perceptions of their jobs (Lee & Taylor, 2014), strengthening the employees' commitments to achieving the organization's goals. However, the perception of negative bias toward an employee by the leader could positively influence employee turnover (Daniel, Lee, & Reitsperger, 2014). A leader could reduce turnover by remaining cognizant of their actions, avoiding ambiguities, and the mixing of signals that could lead to employee conflict, frustration, and eventual turnover.

Effective leadership is crucial for the development of healthy employee-employer relationships. Employees who consider their relationship with their leaders as positive are less likely to leave the firm (Kwak & Choi, 2015). Martin (2017) stated that the creation of healthy relationships between a leader and follower aligns with the transformational leadership theory through the sub component of individualized consideration. Transformational leaders through the implementation of the four core components of individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, idealized influence, and intellectual stimulation (Bass 1985), could facilitate the creation of healthy relationships. Hence, restaurant managers could benefit from implementing the transformational model toward the development and empowerment of the employees creating a sense of loyalty and purpose that strengthens the employer-employee bond that could be useful in reducing employee turnover.

Individualized consideration. Individualized consideration is one of the elements of the transformational leadership model. Individualized **consideration** strengthens organizations through the leader's placement of focus on the development of followers (Paladan, 2015). Zineldin (2017) stated that, through individualized consideration, the transformational leader assumes the role of coach and advisor while providing equal attention to followers. A manager's expression of concern for the needs and interests of employees could improve the level of loyalty and organizational commitment. Gyensare et al. (2016) argued that leaders who focus on the development of followers through individual attention could bolster the employee's sense of obligation, that can negatively impact employee turnover intentions. Kim and Parks (2014) mentioned that subordinates who have faith in their leaders are more satisfied with their jobs and are less likely to leave. Leaders who demonstrate individualized consideration can achieve better engagements with followers and create vision-centric alignments, as a follower may be more receptive to a directive from a leader who pays attention to their needs and concerns.

Managers must express interest in the issues affecting the performance of their employees. Martin (2017) argued that the transformational leader establishes a relationship with their followers through understanding the personal goals and needs of their subordinates. A leader who focuses on the thoughts and feeling of their subordinates may exercise empathy and apologize if found to be in error, thereby, attracting followers by the portrayal of being trust-worthy (Basford, Offermann, & Behrend, 2014). Although managers must possess expert knowledge, it may not be possible to avoid errors in judgment. Therefore, leaders who have gained the respect of their followers could recover from mistakes in judgment quicker than those who lack the confidence of employees.

A manager who earned the confidence of his or her employees can be an active agent of change. Employees are more likely to listen to the advice or counsel of a leader they trust to resolve conflicts (Yang, 2014). The element of individualized consideration is essential in building employee confidence in the leader, thus, improving an employee's well-being and state of mind. Leaders who use individualized consideration encourage subordinates to express their emotions. Martin (2017) argued that if an individual believes that a leader cares about their thoughts and feelings, they are more likely to express them. The freedom to express emotions could lead to happier and stress-free environments that could have positive effects on overall productivity, organizational loyalty, and turnover reductions.

Managers must exercise caution and tact when dealing with employees' emotions. Cho, Rutherford, Friend, Hamwi, and Park (2017) argued that the failure of a manager to treat successfully with the feelings of their employees could positively influence employee turnover. Scholars of the American Institute of Stress (2014) stated that the mismanagement of employee emotions could negatively affect an organization's bottom-line from the creation of costs relating to employee health, absenteeism, and job stress. Within the United States, the annual cost of dealing with employees' emotional issues could average $300 billion (American Institute of Stress, 2014). Hence, managers of restaurants must understand the causal factors of emotional disruptions among their employees and devise abatement strategies which could improve each employee's positive frame of mind. The development of a positive mindset toward work could be useful in reducing employee turnover.

Managers should pay attention to the thoughts and feelings of their workers. Managers demonstrating individualized consideration could cultivate an environment of certainty, respect and the freedom of expression (Okcu, 2014). Zineldin and Amsteus (2014) warned that leaders who suppress their employees' needs for freely expressing their emotions could create toxic work environments that impact negatively on the mental health of workers. Transformational leaders develop environments of free expression that could bolster emotional commitment. S. Kim and Kim (2014) argued that a leader's affective commitment not only relates to the transformational leadership subcomponent of individualized consideration but also the subcomponent of inspirational motivation. Bass and Riggio (2006) stated that a leader's demonstration of emotional commitment could create stronger employer-employee bonds. The formation of stronger employer-employee relationships could strengthen a worker's sense of loyalty toward an employer which could improve employee retention.

Inspirational motivation. The motivation of employees toward achieving the firm's vision is crucial to success. Holstad, Korek, Rigotti, and Mohr (2014) stated that the transformational leader invigorates followers by communicating a clear vision that serves to empower subordinates by tapping into their emotions while retaining a moral appeal. Leaders that focus on inspirational motivation are active listeners, promote empowerment through delegation, and lend support to subordinates (Elo et al., 2014). Nguyen, Mujtaba, and Ruijs (2014) argued that motivated individuals experience significant reductions in their stress levels and are better contributors to the organization. The existence of a motivation-centric culture within an establishment could be of benefit to both the manager and employees. Managers could create a sense of urgency to motivate workers around the firm's vision by explaining the importance of all staff members to the success of the business. Workers experiencing a sense of purpose could express higher levels of commitment to the company and may be less likely to contemplate leaving the company.

Employee motivation and performance could arise from numerous sources. Managers can use direct financial rewards, job security, or create compliance through fear and punishment to achieve employee performance (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Maslow (1954) regarded motivation as the driving force leading to the satisfaction of an individual's needs. An employee who can adequately provide for their needs through their compensation package could achieve satisfaction with their job and may be less likely to leave the company.

Motivation could arise from negative as well as favorable circumstances. Edwards (2009) argued that the level of uncertainty in the business environment could lead to the emergence of fear-motivation as a dominant intrinsic driver resulting in increased employee stress. Conversely, Panagiotakopoulos (2014) argued that a leader exercising inspirational motivation would create a more significant benefit to the organization surpassing the influence of fear-motivation in the long-term. The transformational leader motivates and empowers followers by dispelling job-stress, and fears relating to the uncertainty of the work environment (Lan & Chong, 2015). A transformational leader exercising inspirational motivation gathers the employees' optimism around the firm's vision and helps employees to find purpose in their jobs that could improve work outputs, profitability, and could reduce employee turnover.

A nurturing environment is essential to an employee's development and overall job satisfaction. Employees experience increases in job satisfaction from the efforts of their leaders who place significant focus on providing an environment of motivation and inspiration (Haile, 2015). Employees that are satisfied with their jobs are more likely to remain with an organization (Hofaidhllaoui & Chhinzer, 2014; Mathieu, Fabi, Lacoursiere, & Raymond, 2015). Employers must understand how to communicate a clear vision that reflects a sense of purpose to empower and motivate employees. Hence, the motivation of employees through the creation of a sense of purpose could lead to happier workers that are less likely to leave their jobs.

Leaders must possess the ability to unify subordinates under a single cause. Arnold, Loughlin, and Walsh (2017) stated that transformational leaders develop and effectively communicate a clear vision for their followers creating a call for unification. Peachery, Burton, and Wells (2014) posited that the transformational leader in displaying inspirational motivation focuses on aligning employees with the vision by communicating the importance of each member to the success of the business. A sense of purpose is essential in building organizational commitment, which could be a strong predictor of productivity and employee turnover (Malik, Javed, & Hassan, 2017). Inspirational leaders could motivate employees by enhancing the sense of purpose and teamwork within the firm that could positively impact the employee's sense of loyalty and their decision to remain in an organization.

Leaders must find ways to inspire workers especially during times of uncertainty. Bass (1985) stated that through inspirational motivation a manager could inspire and encourage individuals using an attractive and uplifting vision. Employees that embrace the firm's vision could develop a sense of loyalty toward the firm. Salem (2015) posited that the inspirational motivation of subordinates could negatively influence the level of organizational stress, employee burnout, and reduce employee turnover intentions.

Inspirational leaders are active during times of uncertainty and crisis (Patton, 2015). Molenberghs, Prochilo, Steffens, Zacher, and Haslam (2015) argued that the motivation of subordinates is not solely dependent on the inspirational rhetoric of the leader during times of uncertainty, but on the strength of the group-based relationship. Leaders must forge strong relationships for achieving the establishment’s goals by creating an environment of respect and a sense of purpose.

Organizational success could depend on an employee’s ability to adapt to changes in the work environment. Zacher (2014) posited that leaders using inspirational motivation could improve career adaptability. Career adaptability is essential for dealing with the challenges within a dynamic work environment by fostering a proper person-environment fit (Konstam, Celen-Demirtas, Tomek, & Sweeney, 2015). Employees that are an excellent fit, or adapt well, to the organization are less likely to leave as the values of the firm, and that of co-workers align with their own (Gould-Williams, Mostafa, & Bottomley, 2015). A leader demonstrating inspirational motivation could positively influence career adaptability by creating a sense of purpose for workers within the organization (Schuesslbauer, Volmer, & Goritz, 2017; Shulman et al., 2014). Leaders must motivate and nurture their staff toward developing the confidence to adapt quickly to the unpredictable changes in the work environment to maintain a competitive advantage. An employee that is confident within their job may be less likely to leave a firm.

The perception and attitudes of employees could impact business operations and employee turnover. Otchere-Ankrah, E. S. Tenakwah, and Tenakwah (2015) stated that an employee’s attitude and level of satisfaction with their job could influence turnover intentions. Sachdeva (2014) said that higher levels of job satisfaction and positive employee attitudes could negatively affect employee turnover. Otchere-Ankrah et al. argued that employees who possess a negative attitude toward their jobs are more likely to leave an organization. A leader’s ability to inspire and motivate employees could facilitate the creation of an enabling environment for building positive work attitudes that may improve employee retention.

A leader’s style is critical in determining a worker’s attitude and view toward a firm. Chan et al. (2015) argued that an inspirational leader could positively impact a subordinate’s perspective, by creating healthy relationships that align with the goals of the company. Employers cannot barricade employees against the natural allure of other job opportunities. Nevertheless, the impetus for forging strong employer-employee relationships is not to bind the employee to a firm forever but to increase their loyalty for the duration of their employment (Kashyap & Rangnekar, 2014). The forging of strong manager-employee relationships through the inspirational motivation of workers could be useful in extending the time an employee remains with an organization allowing for a better return on the investment in the human resource.

The existence of long-term manager-employee relationships is essential to business success. Peng, Lee, and Tseng (2014) argued that over time an employee’s commitment may equate to a level of personal investment, resource accumulation, and recognition, that could positively influence followership-behaviors making it less likely for an employee to pursue another job. Effective leaders through inspirational motivation can provide the right environment to facilitate future temporal focus that could positively influence an employee's attitude, level of motivation, and overall behavior (Weikamp & Gortiz, 2016). Restaurant managers could benefit from retention strategies involving the use of inspirational motivation, which facilitates the creation of stronger relationships by inspiring and motivating their staff to achieve the goals of the firm.

Idealized influence. Leaders of firms must be positive role models for their followers. Pohler and Schmidt (2016) submitted that the image and behavior of a leader could have an impact on an employee's commitment and performance. The transformational leader behaves and projects a positive image that builds trust, respect, and admiration from their followers (Zineldin, 2017). The way a leader projects him or herself must remain unambiguous in the eyes of followers. The false perception of a leader's position or intent by subordinates could lead to an attenuation of morale, commitment and an increase in turnover intentions (Kang, Gatling, & Kim, 2015). Hence, effective leaders must remain good role-models displaying behaviors and attitudes that are of the highest standards for attracting and retaining followers.

A leader's positive behavior must match the perception held by their followers. Verissimo and Lacerda (2015) articulated that transformational leaders always act with integrity. However, Hofaidhllaoui and Chhinzer (2014) argued, that although an employee may be satisfied with a leader's behavior, the perception of limited organizational support or the presence of external opportunities with greater appeal can positively impact an employee's decision to leave the firm. A leader's actions must serve to invigorate followers and create a sense of commitment and alignment toward the organization (Raes & DeJong, 2015). Employees that view their leaders as good role models are more likely to demonstrate their dedication and loyalty toward the leader and the firm. Consequently, the transformational sub-dimension of idealized influence could be useful in developing strategies for reducing employee turnover.

Leaders must remain decisive when communicating with followers. Martin (2017) argued that when a leader demonstrates idealized influence, their actions remain clear and always align with the values of the establishment, making it easier for subordinates to identify with the leader. Idealized influence could also be synonymous with displays of self-confidence and charisma by the leader (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Martin argued that the respect and admiration for the leader by their followers could become a source of significant power, making the exercising of discretion and sobriety necessary for control. Leaders should always use their influence for the good of their followers and the organization. Restaurant managers that are transformational leaders would place the vision of the company above their interests and use their influence and charisma to attract followers toward the vision. The leader would also redirect efforts and energies stemming from their charismatic influence toward the development of autonomy and long-term improvements for followers.

The leader's personality could be a critical component in building productive relationships. Brown, Chen, and Donnell (2017) argued that a leader demonstrating idealized influence could positively affect the leader-member exchange. The values, behaviors, and self-confidence of the leader could provide attractive qualities for followers to imitate and thus strengthen the relationships with members (Rana, Malik, &

Hussain, 2016). With stronger relationships existing with the leader, employees could feel more comfortable in expressing their ideas, particularly, those that could be useful in improving business operations and the creation of competitive advantage.

Intellectual stimulation. Restaurant managers may not always have the answers to all problems facing the firm. Managers must demonstrate prowess in tapping into useful resources of ideation to address business problems. The stimulation of ideation and creativity within an organization is crucial in establishing competitive advantage and enhancing a firm's longevity (Wang, H. Tsai, & Tsai, 2014). Bass (1985) stated that intellectual stimulation as a constituent of the transformational leadership model that is useful in harnessing the creativity and innovativeness of followers. Zineldin (2017) said that when a leader demonstrates intellectual stimulation, the leader builds trust as a good listener, who also respects the ideas and feelings of subordinates. Leaders that promote employee ideation could respond quicker in times of crisis as there are more inputs from the collective that could be useful in solving problems. Also, the drawing of ideas and concepts from the collective could establish a sense of teamwork and trust that could provide a competitive advantage and even reduce turnover intentions.

The creation of a competitive edge is essential to business longevity. Bass and Riggio (2006) argued that the transformational leader through the component of intellectual stimulation encourages subordinates to challenge the status-quo by re-examining traditional operational assumptions. Rana et al. (2016) posited that intellectual stimulation is essential for productivity as the leader encourages employee creativity and innovation. Leaders that facilitate intellectual stimulation could choose to motivate their followers by nurturing and rewarding an employee's critical thinking and innovative approaches to performing their jobs (Peng et al., 2015). Managers that promote intellectual stimulation could foster a sense of teamwork and mutual respect that could be useful in inspiring workers to perform at their best. Employees may feel a sense of inclusion created by the leader's respect and appreciation for their ideas that could improve the level of their employees' engagements and overall attitudes toward their jobs.

Restaurant managers should always strive to improve employee engagement. Karatepe and Karadas (2015) posited that employees who experience greater work engagement confess to feeling more energetic and display exceptional dedication to their jobs. Lee and Ok (2015) suggested that employee engagement could provide a useful panacea for coping with uncertainty and environmental turbulence. Managers that encourage employee ideation through intellectual stimulation could create a sense purpose and inclusion among their staff bolstering the level of employee engagement and may reduce turnover intentions and eventual turnover.

Managers must be cognizant of an employee's perception of what is necessary for worker-stimulation and motivation. Smothers, Doleh, Celuch, Peluchette, and Valadares (2016) argued that although employees may perceive their managers as individuals of integrity and great prowess. However, if the manager fails to stimulate their employees intellectually, the outcome would be a lack of empowerment and a reluctance to take future initiatives. Scheers and Botha (2014) argued that employers taking the time to consider the ideas of employees could serve as a motivating force toward increasing job satisfaction. Hence, workers could feel a greater sense of job satisfaction, motivation, and ownership when their ideas are beneficial to the organization. If employees are satisfied with their jobs and the contributions they make, they may be less likely to leave the firm.

Managers must strive to improve the overall level of job satisfaction of their employees. Yasin, Nawab, Bhatti, and Nazir (2014) argued that leaders who intellectually stimulate their followers could create meaningful work engagement by encouraging innovation. Also, a manager who establishes an environment of self-efficacy, innovation, and creativity could positively enhance an employee's level of participation and job satisfaction (Chang, 2016). When employees feel that their ideas form valuable inputs toward resolving organizational issues, they may experience feelings of happiness and satisfaction with their jobs (Malik et al., 2017). Employees that experience job satisfaction could display more commitment and loyalty toward their leader and the company and may be less likely to leave.

Background of the Restaurant Industry

Restaurants organizations are subsets of some of the world's largest sectors. Two aggregate industries of restaurants are the hospitality industry (Backman, Klaesson, & Oner, 2017; National Restaurant Association, 2014) and the Tourism industry (Nikbin et al., 2016). The hospitality and tourism industries are ubiquitous and represent two of the most significant sectors in the world (Karavardar, 2014), contributing significantly to employment and the gross domestic product. Tracey (2014) argued that firms within the hospitality industry that includes restaurants are labor-intensive. Managers of labor-intensive businesses could benefit from fewer operational disruptions relating to their workforces, mainly from employee turnover, that could influence the achievement of competitive advantage and the maintaining of overall profitability.

Despite the extensive benefit attributed to the restaurant industry, managers face numerous challenges in conducting business operations. Hua et al. (2016) claimed that restaurant ventures are fragile high-risk businesses that are immensely competitive. Restaurant managers find it difficult to expand business operations due to the high degree of fragmentation and maturity within the sector (Jogaratnam, 2017). The saturation of the restaurant sector could impede business growth. For example, new entrants to the industry inadvertently result in incumbent restaurant owners experiencing sharp reductions in margins as high as 17.6% (Coelho, 2017). Managers belonging to highly competitive saturated environments are less likely to share information on strategies out of fear of losing their competitive advantage (Chawinga & Chipeta, 2017). The need for strategies to reduce employee turnover becomes critical, to restaurant managers for retaining valuable staff members toward maintaining the competitive advantage that is crucial to the overall business success.

Owners of restaurants through their taxes are significant contributors to the gross domestic product. H. Parsa et al. (2014) pointed out that the restaurant industry exists as a crucial component of job creation and economic growth. In the United States (U.S.) alone the projected revenue for the year 2016 from the restaurant industry was $783 billion (National Restaurant Association, 2016). Although the potential of income and contribution to local economies remain significant, the success within the industry remains fragile due to operational threats stemming from a gamut of issues that include employee turnover.

With the high level of sensitivity to change within the restaurant industry, a manager's display of prowess in strategic thinking is necessary for organizational longevity. Rosalin, Poulston, and Goodsir (2016) argued that apart from the highly competitive ecology, the lack of strategic thinking is a significant contributor to business failures. The presence of subpar management skills can create weaknesses, particularly, in the service industry that could negatively affect overall business operations. L. Lee, Lee, and Dewald (2016) pointed out that unlike other service industries, restaurant managers experience above average staff employee turnover rates. Therefore, increasing the need for managers to identify and implement successful strategies for reducing employee turnover that could bolster the firm's operating efficiency and profitability.

The restaurant environment remains dynamic and sensitive to shifts in customer demands. L. Lee et al. (2016) posited that restaurants are no longer institutions established solely around the serving and consumption of food but are destinations of subjective hedonic experiences driven by the needs of society. The achievement of competitive advantage hinges on a manager's understanding and reaction to the evolution of the restaurant patrons' wants and needs (National Restaurant Association, 2015). Restaurant managers must remain current and innovative to stay profitable. Hence, the retention of a highly creative and efficient staff could be of great importance, strengthening the need for adequate retention strategies.

Nevertheless, the restaurant operating model remains relatively straightforward with little barriers to entry. Many restaurant organizations operate primarily with a utilitarian approach to food service (Jogaratnam, 2017). The simplistic and ubiquitous operating model of restaurants increases the sector's level of saturation, raising the need for strategies for the retention of employees, particularly, with valuable skill sets that could serve as a differentiator toward the creation of competitive advantage.

The strategic prowess of managers is essential for business success. Although the restaurant model is simplistic and highly imitative, complications arise, from the actions or inactions of management (Seo, Kim, & Sharma, 2017). Tang et al. (2014) stated that the decisions of a manager remain crucial to the overall success of any establishment. Although managers are essential to the business operation, there are other stakeholders to consider. Orlowski, Murphy, and Severt (2017) stated that the consistency in service quality and operating efficiency not only hinges on a manager's prowess but the stability and perceptions of the workforce. However, despite the importance of promoting a sense of collective responsibility among stakeholders, management remain ultimately responsible for the organization and must continue to be under scrutiny (Society of Human Resource Management, 2014). The existence of shortcomings in a manager's decision-making process could negatively affect the firm's margins, damage the brand, diminish employee morale, and could lead to employee turnover. Restaurant managers must take responsibility for developing the necessary strategies to preserve business operations and for reducing employee turnover.

The role of a manager is not the only factor affecting the overall success of a company. Jang and Hur (2017) contended that the relationships between employees and customers could also affect the overall business success. Nikbin et al. (2016) highlighted that the highly interactive nature of the restaurant business could augment the customers' experiences creating competitive advantage. Managers who understand the importance of the client-employee bond must create an environment that facilitates staff retention toward preserving existing relationships (George & Zakkariya, 2015). With the role of employees being of considerable importance to the success of the business, managers must take steps to preserving their staff by implementing strategies to reduce employee turnover within the restaurant industry.

The human element within an organization can be a source of contention. Kim and Jang (2016) argued that human error and inconsistencies in service quality correspond to a significant portion of the failures within the restaurant industry. With great shortcomings surrounding service quality, raises the need for managers to implement efficient staff training protocols. However, high rates of employee turnover can render employee training exercises useless to the firm, as employees do not remain with the firm long enough to implement. The high rate of employee turnover within the restaurant industry renders training initiatives less efficient as an employee may not stay long enough for the manager to receive the benefit or return on the investment (Liang, Chang, Ko, & Lin, 2017). Fernet et al. (2015) added that despite the challenges in retaining skilled staff the achievement of competitive advantage and the guarantee of organizational continuity hinges on the adoption of effective business practices that facilitates the functioning of high-quality teams. Therefore, it is imperative that managers of restaurants develop creative ways to implement strategies that will retain valuable staff members and maintain a competitive advantage.

The perception of the customers is crucial to the survival of any restaurant organization. The clients' impressions and experiences at a restaurant could be a predictor of future patronage (DiPietro, Khan, & Bufquin, 2017; Liat, Mansori, & Huei, 2014). The preservation of high client satisfaction bolsters the need for reducing operational disruptions and failures arising from the frequent recruitment and replacement of staff. Managers of restaurants must understand thoroughly the practices and strategies that are necessary to retain a highly skilled workforce that will be useful in preserving productive customer relationships.

Employee Turnover

Managers of restaurants face numerous challenges in preserving business operations. Schlechter, Syce, and Bussin (2016) stated that employee turnover remains one of the most significant threats to business operations. Employee turnover according to Kam and Meyer (2015) is the separation of an employee from his or her source of employment, through voluntary or involuntary means. Dusek et al. (2014) argued that employee turnover is the rate or frequency of employees leaving an organization in a given year. Regardless, of the definition, employee turnover remains a significant problem for restaurant managers. Due to employee turnover, the routine restaurant operations will be difficult to execute when critical staff members are no longer with the company.

Restaurants are service-oriented businesses that rely on employee performance and efficiency to create competitive advantage. Employees are the most valuable asset of any organization (Idris, 2014). The managing of issues relating to employees, such as retention, could have a significant impact on the overall business operations. Despite developments in understanding the consequences of employee turnover, some managers continue to have trouble in retaining their staff (Soundarapandiyan & Ganesh, 2015). Consequently, increasing the need for the implementation of strategies to maintain those employees, particularly, with the skill sets that could enhance the operations of the business.

The rate of employee turnover could vary significantly from one industry to the next. Despite the significant variance in the rate of employee turnover, Grzenda and Buezynski (2015) argued that the phenomenon of employee turnover remains ubiquitous. Nonetheless, employees belonging to customer service sectors might experience more stress related to their jobs than other industry peers (Karatepe, 2015). Han et al. (2016) posited that employee turnover rates among restaurant entities were 20% higher than the rates of employee turnover among other service-oriented businesses. Managers of restaurants could benefit from less operational disruptions and reductions in operating cost arising from understanding and implementing strategies for reducing employee turnover.

Many factors could contribute to high employee turnover. Kim (2015) stated that high employee turnover within an organization could stem from a lack of job motivation, social support, and burnout. A better understanding of the causes and the impact of employee turnover could bolster the need for the development of retention strategies. However, the variations in management philosophies could attenuate the development of retention strategies, as all stakeholders may not view the phenomenon as a threat to the firm (Guilding, Lamminmaki, & McManus, 2014). Employee turnover may be difficult to quantify, because some employees may return to the firm (Shipp, Furst-Holloway, Harris, & Rosen, 2014). Returning employees could possess valuable experience and skill sets that could create both short and long-term benefits toward bolstering the firm's competitive advantage. Also returning employees could positively influence the company's bottom-line as acclimation costs and training may not be necessary.

The work environment could influence employee turnover. Arekar, Jain, Desphande, and Sherin (2016) argued that the dynamic nature of the business ecology provides many elements that could form the catalyst for an employee's decision to leave an establishment. Griffeth, Hom, and Gaertner (2000) claimed that employee turnover could stem from employee demographics, job conditions, and factors innate to the internal and external business environments. Managers must ensure that the work-environments they create remain appealing to their employees that could positively influence an employee's sense of loyalty and overall productivity.

Managers must provide clear guidelines to employees always to reduce employee turnover. The conflict between an employer and employee could arise from implicit work parameters. Conflict can stem from the existence of less apparent or latent expectations relating to the psychological contract between employer and employee (Clinton & Guest, 2014; Trybou & Gemmel, 2016). Understanding the various causal factors of turnover, particularly, the psychological contract could be useful in the formulation of an effective retention strategy. Leaders must remain cognizant of the many factors that contribute to an employee's perception of the job and manage the expectations of their employees toward reducing turnover intentions and eventual turnover.

Managers could use employee turnover to benefit the firm. Lee (2017) posited that employee turnover could be useful in providing managers with an opportunity for improving organizational performance by optimizing staff requirements. Lee added that organizations with moderate to high turnover already possess low human capital and could develop human capital through new hires, much more than a firm with low turnover where gaps that are more significant exist between incumbents and new hires. Gittings and Schmutte (2015) argued that the rate of employee movement from one job to another could serve as a barometer for measuring the health of the labor markets and the degree of competitiveness in the industrial ecology. Managers must have a clear understanding of what human resource models are necessary to optimize their organizations and implement strategies that could leverage employee turnover to achieve organizational objectives.

Regardless of the possible benefits of employee turnover, the phenomenon remains a significant problem for managers. Dusek et al. (2014) stated that managers should strive to reduce employee turnover to limit the disruption to business operations, lower operating costs, and to avoid the degradation of performance due to novices filling vacancies. Tracey (2014) stated that labor-intensive sectors, that include restaurants, the preservation of a stable workforce is essential to achieving business growth. For this reason, it is imperative that managers place each scenario relating to the retention or turnover of workers into the proper context and carefully weigh the impact when implementing strategies.

Managers must develop an awareness of the impact of employee turnover, to establish effective retention strategies. Idris (2014) posited that strategies to reduce employee turnover must reflect greater rigor to include the recruitment stage, with the intent of selecting employees with greater staying potentials. Tews, Stafford, and Michel (2014) stated that entry positions within firms have the highest rates of employee turnover. Addressing turnover by implementing greater rigor at the recruitment stage is tantamount to an effective preventative strategy. Preventative measures could provide significant benefit to a firm, as exercises toward staff retention cost significantly less than activities involving staff replacements (Guilding et al., 2014). With the development of retention strategies arising from the selection of workers who are a better fit, restaurant managers could achieve competitive advantage from the optimization of the labor force contributing positively to the firm’s bottom-line.

Determining the cost impact of employee turnover is crucial to the development of strategies. Kim (2015) identified that some of the common factors contributing to employee turnover costs could relate to overall dissatisfaction, job motivation, social support, and burnout. The failure of management in understanding the causes, consequences, and the cost implications of turnover could result in an attenuation of the drive for developing strategies. Schlechter et al. (2016) stated that to measure the cost-benefit of a retention strategy efficiently; managers should include the cost of recruiting direct staff replacements as well as the lost time and voids in productivity existing between the quit to rehiring phases. Although managers of businesses are familiar with the negative operational impacts of employee turnover, they seldom make it a priority to quantify the financial implications that could affect the perception of the phenomenon.

Understanding of the financial impact of employee turnover could be beneficial in the creation of a sense of urgency toward the implementation of strategies. Hom, Mitchell, Lee, and Griffeth (2012) stated that the financial impact of employee turnover could cost an organization in the range of 90% - 200% the annual compensation to the job position. Richards (2016) argued that employee turnover costs could span from three-quarters to double the salary of the departing employee. With the implementation of successful strategies, managers could experience savings from reducing the need for frequent replacement and recruitment of staff that could affect positively on the firm's bottom-line.

Employee turnover not only increases operating costs due to the replacement of personnel, but also the ability of the company to generate revenue. Wang, Zhao, and Thornhill (2015) argued that the loss of creative and innovative personnel due to employee turnover could affect negatively on the revenue generation capabilities of a firm. Also, the loss of tacit knowledge from the departure of expert staff members could have an adverse impact on the quality of client-employee relationships (Eckardt, Skaggs, & Youndt, 2014). The existence of knowledge gaps among remaining employees could lead to reductions in the overall operational efficiency of the organization further bolstering the need for retention strategies.

The establishment of effective customer relationships remains a complex exercise for managers requiring much due diligence. Managers of restaurants must also pay close attention to their employees' emotional states when preserving customer relationships. Jung and Yoon (2014) stated that the emotions communicated at customer contact points in the food service industry remain a crucial factor in enhancing competitiveness. Restaurant managers must be aware of the factors leading to emotional stress and employee dissatisfaction that could result in employee turnover. Hossain and Bray (2014) claimed that businesses with high rates of employee turnover are prone to subpar customer ratings. Restaurant managers would benefit from the implementation of strategies to positively impact employees' emotional states, work attitudes, and morale. Employees that are happy and satisfied with their jobs are more likely to sustain healthy customer relationships and tend to remain with the company.

Organizational success could hinge on managers and employees sharing a common understanding of the job. The implicit elements within any job-agreement could form the premise for conflict, and eventual separation from employment as the interpretations and perceptions of an employer and employee may not always align. The presuppositions of employer and employee could influence the type of rewards and the effort put toward a job (Sherman & Morley, 2015). The failure of a manager or employee to fulfill implied expectations increases the need for examining the role of the psychological contract (Trybou & Gemmel, 2016). A breakdown in understanding between a manager and employee could severely erode the foundations of trust and loyalty that could lead to feelings of dissatisfaction and eventual turnover. Hence, the communication of clear intentions and expectations could be useful in reducing employee turnover within the restaurant industry.

Another factor that could influence employee turnover is compensation. Connelly, Hayes, Tihanyi, Gamache, and Devers (2014) pointed out that the dispersion of pay differences within an organization could impact negatively on an employee's attitude and behavior toward the job. Wang et al. (2015) explained that employees could demonstrate the propensity for comparing compensation packages with their peers. The discovery of significant differences in compensation among peers could affect an employee's behavior, participation level, and turnover intention. Managers must treat and compensate workers fairly and find ways to motivate employees to become happier with their jobs by creating affinities toward intrinsic rewards and not solely on extrinsic.

A leader's style and ability to motivate followers is essential to the success of an organization. Dinh et al. (2014) stated that leadership could influence employee turnover. Mekraz and Gundala (2016) agreed with Dinh et al. and posited that the role of leadership is essential for reducing employee turnover. An active leadership style could be useful for improving the way employees view an organization. Tejeda (2016) indicated that the adoption of successful leadership strategies could reduce issues relating to followership that could negatively influence business operations. Eckardt et al. (2014) posited that weak and ineffective leadership could affect a manager's ability to create long-term value for workers. Leaders must be able to create value for their followers. If workers are unable to perceive value or a future containing attractive prospects, they may consider leaving the firm.

Managers of businesses must act for the good of all employees, although it may be difficult to guarantee that their efforts will be favorable to all employees. Tejeda (2016) argued that it remains the responsibility of the manager to provide an environment for fairness and stability. Cerasoli, Nicklin, and Ford (2014) claimed that managers should demonstrate their prowess in devising creative means of nurturing a culture that facilitates employee inspiration and self-worth. Cohen and Abedallah (2015) argued that a leader’s style and display of support for subordinates could influence the firm’s culture and an employee’s turnover intention. Employees that experience support and a feeling of self-worth from their manager may demonstrate loyalty to the manager and the establishment, that could negatively influence employee turnover.

Managers may overlook the importance of effective leadership within an organization. Ariyabuddhiphongs and Khan (2017) stated the summation of the various human resource initiatives for reducing employee turnover in the restaurant industry, remains unequivocal in effectiveness to the transformational leadership style. Waldman, Carter, and Hom (2015) posited that the transformational leadership style could affect the push-and-pull-to-leave factors negatively within an organization. The transformational leadership style could form the basis of a valid retention strategy from creating value and a sense of worth by aligning an employee’s efforts with the company’s vision.

Despite the effectiveness of the transformational leadership model toward positively influencing organizational change. Voluntary employee turnover is still likely to occur due to other factors, such as compensation and an employee’s perception toward their work-input (Wang et al., 2015). Managers must be creative in finding ways to keep workers attracted to their jobs. As employee compensation could significantly influence the recruitment, and retention of staff in diversely competitive markets (Tracey, 2014). Transformational leaders maintain a working knowledge of the environment and take the time to understand the needs of their followers to create alignments that could facilitate the generation of mutual benefits for achieving the organization's goals.

Employee Retention

There are many reasons for employee turnover. Sarmad, Ajmal, Shamin, Saleh, and Malik (2016) argued that the causes of employee turnover could range from an employee's perception of their job to an array of economic factors. Managers must be aware of the causes of employee turnover and implement strategies to retain their labor force. Restaurant managers rely on their labor force at all stages of the business from the preparation to the serving of the food for the creation of competitive advantage (Rathi & Lee, 2015). Hence, employees remain the most valuable assets within an organization (Kamalzaman, Zulkeflee, Hamid, Sahari, & Halim, 2015). Any disruption involving the human element, such as the turnover of staff, could negatively affect the primary function of the restaurant firm. Restaurant managers must increase their knowledge of the implementation of strategies for improving employee retention, that remains essential for business continuity and the creation of competitive advantage.

With the low barriers to entry and the highly competitive nature of the restaurant industry, managers could benefit from the retention of a competent workforce. Vasquez (2014) argued that understanding the factors influencing employee turnover could be helpful in shaping the strategies for improving the retention of staff. Employee retention according to Armstrong and Taylor (2014) is the consequence of the effective policies and practices that tether to addressing the various needs of employees. Employers that value the needs of employees and seeks to motivate could create strong bonds with their staff, which could positively influence employee retention (Sarmad et al., 2016). Poonam and Jasleen (2015) defined employee motivation as the force behind an action that could stem from internal or external factors influencing an employee's commitment toward staying in a job. The forging of strong employer-employee and employee-client bonds could provide a competitive advantage and improve employee retention, as service quality and customer relationships are crucial to the longevity of the restaurant business.

The transactional leadership style could affect employee retention. Employee retention strategies should include an adequate rewards system (Michael et al., 2016). Osibanjo, Adeniji, Falola, and Heirsmac (2014) argued that strategies involving compensation and rewards could ensure the satisfaction and retention of employees as compensation is an immediate benefit an employee could experience. Conversely, Robinson, Kralj, Solnet, Goh, and Callan (2014) contended that the solution to employee retention goes beyond the single dimension of compensation but relate to job-embeddedness. Although the transactional style could be useful, it may not satisfy all employee retention scenarios. Therefore, the approach a manager uses to retain workers remains individualistic.

Effective retention strategies could include job embeddedness. Tews, Michael, Xu, and Drost (2015) argued that strategies involving job-embeddedness could improve employee retention. Deery and Jago (2015) posited that job embeddedness is a function of achieving an adequate work-life balance. Employees need to find meaning in their jobs and must be able to enjoy the benefits of their labor otherwise they could become dissatisfied and contemplate leaving the company.

Factors external to the work environment could also influence employee retention. Huffman, Casper, and Payne (2014) posited that spouses could exercise significant influence on an employee's quit intentions, as exampled by, married employees averaging 4 years more in a job than single employees. Conversely, Reio and Shuck (2014) posited that an employee's family or the need to achieve a work-life balance had less of an impact on employee retention than the influence of job demands. The employee's decision to remain in a job could vary depending on their perception of what is essential. Managers must take the time to understand the various factors influencing an employee's decision process to develop effective retention strategies.

Restaurant managers should consider the option of career mobility when developing retention strategies. Training and promotional opportunities could increase an employee's self-worth and sense of loyalty toward the employer and the organization (Mandhanya, 2015). A work environment that facilitates employee training and mobility can reduce employee turnover according to Ahmed, Phulpoto, Umrani, and Abbas (2015). Santhanam, Kamalanabhan, and Dyaram (2015) agreed with Ahmed et al. and stated that training forms part of a viable employee retention strategy, creating job satisfaction and job-embeddedness. Training and promotions are sources of motivation that could trigger positive behaviors toward the demonstration of exceptional results (Salau, Falola, & Akinbode, 2014). Managers of restaurants should consider the development of training schemes and provide opportunities for career mobility, which could improve an employee's sense of worth, as a part of the firm's retention strategies.

Effective leadership is an essential part of an employee retention strategy. Lalitha and Singh (2014) stated that effective leaders demonstrate confidence, provide a supportive work environment, encourage employee autonomy, which positively influences employee retention. Transformational leaders are effective leaders (Waldman et al., 2015). The transformational leadership style is useful in providing the basis for retention strategies (Ariyabuddhiphongs, & Khan, 2017). Restaurant managers could benefit from adopting the transformational leadership style when developing strategies to improve employee retention.

The transformational leadership style may not satisfy all criteria for employee retention. Liang, Tang, Wang, Lin, and Yu (2016) posited that the transformational leadership model could form the baseline for retention strategies through facilitating cultural improvements and job satisfaction. Brewer et al. (2016) contended that there is no significant relationship between a leader's transformational style and an employee's intention to remain with an organization. Conversely, Fischer (2017) argued that the transformational leadership model could influence an employee's intent to stay in an establishment. Buck and Doucette (2015) stated that although a leader demonstrating the transformational leadership style may not satisfy all scenarios affecting the firm, the model is useful in unifying employees toward the goals of the organization. Despite the arguments for and against the use of the transformational style of leadership, effective leadership remains essential in providing a sense of direction for the development of employees that may improve employee retention.

Pseudotransformational Leadership

The actions of a leader remain a crucial factor in determining the development or collapse of an organization. The transformational leader creates a vision-centric alignment between the leader and follower that elevates the level of morality and motivation (Burns, 1978). Conversely, pseudotransformational leaders represent the antithesis of transformational leadership, where the manager displays selfish, deceptive, and exploitative behaviors toward subordinates (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Northouse (2016) regarded the pseudotransformational leadership model as the dark-side of the transformational leadership model. Managers of businesses must ensure that their actions remain transparent. The manager’s actions must reflect a sense of fairness and regard for the development of subordinates, thus, fostering strong positive relationships that could reduce employee turnover.

A leader must be clear in displaying their intentions to followers. Yasir and Mohammad (2016) argued that both the transformational and pseudotransformational leaders can exhibit the same behavioral characteristics it is the leader’s intention that remains the differentiator. Although a pseudotransformational leader may possess the ability to display similar characteristics as the transformational leader such as intellectual stimulation, confidence, and charisma, the focus is always toward immoral or unethical pursuits (Copeland, 2016). Consequently, pseudotransformational leaders genuinely fail to motivate followers (Lin, P. Huang, Chen, & Huang, 2017). Dames (2014) posited that a pseudotransformational leader acts as a nemesis to the authentic transformational leader in expressing unrealistic expectations that tether to manipulative demands. Leaders of firms must remain mindful of the impact their actions could have on subordinates and the longevity of the organization. Leaders must take steps to ensure their actions are transparent, not self-serving, and remain in the best interest of all stakeholders.

A leader must remain authentic in the eyes of his or her subordinates. Lin et al. (2017) argued that the pseudotransformational leader uses cunningness in manipulating the elements of the transformational leadership style to solicit support from subordinates to promote selfish ends. Lin et al. added that the perception of subordinate manipulation by the leader could create a significant degree of disconnect within the organization leading to an unwillingness to perform. Bass and Riggio (2006) argued that subordinates of pseudotransformational leaders exhibit over-dependence, unrealistic loyalty, and fear toward the leader. Managers that are selfish and manipulate workers could create sterile work environments that could lead to dissatisfaction and feelings of distrust toward the leader resulting in subpar performance, a loss in competitive advantage, and eventual employee turnover.

Theoretical Evolution

The transformational leadership model is useful in providing the basis for developing other theories and concepts. Deinert, Homan, Boer, Voelpel, and Gutermann (2015) asserted that the transformational leadership theory is the harbinger of the leader-member exchange theory (LMX). Jing and Baiyin (2015) indicated that the LMX theory is an aggregate of both the transformational and transactional approaches. Boer, Deinert, Homan, and Voelpel (2016) posited that the establishment of beneficial interpersonal relationships or leader-member exchanges provides an efficient way for transformational leaders to influence organizational outcomes. Conversely, the LMX could appear as a transactional tool that could tie compensation to a manager's bias toward a worker. Huang, Wang, and Xie (2014) argued that the quality of the LMX could facilitate preferential treatments for some subordinates that could tether to exceptional rewards and promotions. Furthermore, the nature and strength of the exchange remain crucial in determining the subordinate's reciprocation of feelings toward the leader and the sense of commitment toward the organization that could influence an employee's turnover intention.

Leaders must define clear expectations for their followers. Zacher, Pearce, Rooney, and McKenna (2014) stated that a leader must have a clear understanding of the firm's objectives to create a meaningful exchange with subordinates. The LMX model includes the building of one-on-one relationships that tie to a sense of fairness and mutual support (Kwak & Choi, 2015). Men (2014) posited that the clear communication of expectations improves the exchange dyad and employee satisfaction. Bass and Avolio (1994) stated that transformational leaders are competent in creating positive, meaningful relationships with their followers. The establishment of significant leader-member relations along with the communication of clear expectations could be useful in creating an environment of trust and loyalty and may reduce employee turnover.

The quality of the leader-member exchange could determine the level of employee engagement. Kim, Liu, and Diefendorff (2015) argued that the relationship quality between a leader and follower is of considerable importance in influencing the behavior of employees toward their jobs providing the basis for organizational success or collapse. The use of abusive power in a relationship could negatively affect the leader-member dyad, resulting in resentment, mistrust, and fear (Chan & McAllister, 2014). Van der Kam, van der Vegt, Janssen, and Stoker (2014) contended that the perception of a leader as being transformational by subordinates has the propensity for the establishment of higher-quality exchanges and engagements between the leader and followers. An employer who supports an environment where employee engagement is high is less likely to experience significant employee turnover (Memon, Salleh, Baharom, & Harun, 2014). Hence, restaurant managers must establish clear expectations for their workers through the forging of meaningful relationships that could benefit the establishment, leading to higher performance and even reducing employee turnover.

The perception held by a leader and members could influence the quality of the exchange. Van der Kam et al. (2014) contended that the impression an individual hold toward a leader is an amalgamation of how they view themselves and the view of others. Nevertheless, the follower’s perception of the leaders is valuable in the forging of robust and meaningful relationships. For example, an employee’s perception of fairness that underpins the relationship with the manager could determine the level of satisfaction and turnover tendencies (Daniel, Lee, & Reitsperger, 2014; P. Kim, Gazzoli, Qu, & Kim, 2016). Therefore, managers of the restaurants must be transparent about the intentions behind the exchanges with employees to facilitate an environment of mutual trust and commitment that could improve employee retention and organizational success.

An opaque leader-member exchange could be a catalyst for employee turnover. Within the hospitality industry, LMX agreements could adversely impact on employee turnover intentions (P. Kim et al., 2016; Kim, Poulston, & Sankaran, 2017). Although turnover intentions represent an employee's intent to quit a job, it remains a useful metric toward predicting actual turnover (Wang, Kim, & Milne, 2017). Managers of restaurants must communicate a clear vision to employees that includes the value of the members' roles in achieving the company's vision. Transparent communication is useful in removing doubts, which could be helpful in boosting trust and loyalty among subordinates and may improve employee retention.

Not all exchanges between leaders and followers may align with organizational goals. Lee and Taylor (2014) argued that managers could forge specific relationships to satisfy peer-to-peer competitions without necessarily contributing to the benefit of the company. Leaders must establish exchanges that could improve employee engagement, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction (Bhuvanaiah & Raya, 2014). Boer et al. (2016) stated that transformational leaders build strong relationships by aligning members with the firm's vision. Transformational leaders would establish exchanges on a mutual-loyalty and dependability deriving from their follower's sense of need (McCleskey, 2014). A transformational leader inspires followers to take ownership of the work-process creating a more robust exchange (Seyranian, 2014). The transformational leadership model could be useful to restaurant managers in building high-quality relationships that empower employees toward accomplishing organizational goals through the establishment of meaningful exchanges.

Transactional Leadership

The approach to leadership within an organization remains contextual in requiring specific responses from the manager. Bass (1985) argued that a leader's style could exist along a full range continuum that includes the laissez-faire, transactional and the transformational leadership models depending on the situation. Rana et al. (2016) argued that the transformational and transactional styles are useful for solving a broad range of organizational issues and are popular among managers of various businesses. Atta and Khan (2015) found that the transformational and transactional leadership styles are useful in influencing and promoting exceptional practices through the development of positive organizational citizenship behavior. Bass argued that the transactional and transformational leaders focus on the establishment of essential relationships with subordinates. A transactional leader motivates followers through a system of rewards and punishment, expects unquestionable obedience, micromanages subordinates, and takes a straightforward approach (Smith, 2015). Although the transactional style could be quite useful, no leadership style satisfies all organizational issues facing restaurant managers. The demonstration of a restaurant manager's leadership prowess will tether to his or her understanding of the context underpinning the phenomenon affecting the firm, before the adoption and implementation of a leadership style.

The worth of a transaction between a manager and employee hinges on the value each party assigns. Transactional leaders strive to achieve a mutual benefit between the leader and the subordinate (Gross, 2016). The premise of achieving a desirable outcome using transactions or extrinsic rewards may prove useful in building strong relationships between a leader and follower. Consequently, the transactional approach is the most common strategy managers use to retain employees (AlBattat, Som, & Helalat, 2014). Bass (1985) posited that the transactional approach could include one of three strategies the contingent reward, management by exception passive, and management by exception active. Although each of the three approaches remains transactional by design, the impact on the firm could be entirely different. Leaders must place focus on the context underpinning an exchange before adopting an approach to achieve an acceptable outcome, particularly, when dealing with a complex phenomenon like employee turnover.

A transactional leader could base the dispensing of rewards and punishments on various criteria. Bass (1985) argued that some managers use a contingent approach to rewarding employees on the achievement of a goal. Other leaders manage workers by exception using a passive method, where the manager only intervenes when an issue arises (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Conversely, some leaders manage their followers by exception using an active approach, where the leader remains in a state of monitoring to ensure a smooth issue-free workflow (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Regardless the transactional approach managers may use to influence the performance of workers. The manager should establish clear expectations and guidelines for the evaluation of performance. The establishment of clear expectations could prevent feelings of disenchantment and mistrust when issues arise or during times of uncertainty that could lead to employee turnover.

Compensatory packages are useful motivators. Transactional leaders motivate followers through the process of exchange (Arzi & Farahbod, 2014). Transactional leaders could forge relationships by linking financial rewards and benefits to explicit or implicit expectations (Schlechter et al., 2016). However, within the restaurant industry, compensation remains relatively small creating the need for innovations linking to supplemental tipping (Lin, 2014). Schlechter et al. argued that employees receiving attractive pay packages and benefits demonstrate a higher attraction to their jobs. The motivation of an individual could hinge upon their desire to satisfy their fundamental needs (Maslow, 1954). The use of appropriate extrinsic rewards such as the increasing of an employee's compensation could be a useful strategy for improving the level of overall job motivation and satisfaction and could negatively influence employee turnover.

Restaurant managers must find creative ways to reward and motivate employees. Gross (2016) claimed that the transactional leadership style is a critical constituent for employee motivation and positively correlates with organizational growth and performance. Conversely, Gellatly, Cowden, and Cummings (2014) submitted that leaders should avoid the use of strategies that involve the use of compensation and benefits to retain workers, as the employee's commitment may tether to the reward and not the company. Also, Qui, Haobin, Hung, and York (2015) posited that the establishment of relationships that facilitate an adequate work-group bond with the leader's support could positively influence performance and commitment. Karatepe and Kilic (2015) asserted that a genuine display of support from the leader could prove to be a more efficient and cost-effective strategy than a transactional approach to reducing employee turnover. Leaders through the establishment of meaningful relationships must focus on understanding the motivational triggers of each employee to influence behavioral outcomes. A leader must take the time to assess each situation affecting the organization and apply an appropriate leadership style that will motivate their subordinates toward achieving the establishment's goals.

The leadership style a manager adopts could depend on the situation facing an organization. Kim, Kang, and Park (2014) posited that leaders of firms in crisis are less likely to use the transformational leadership style and revert to the transactional approach. Transactional leaders place a significant utility on continually evaluating an employee against the criteria of rewards and punishment that could be tantamount to a mechanism of control (Love & Roper, 2015). The direct approach a transactional leader uses when communicating with subordinates could be daunting and demotivating to some subordinates (Arzi & Farahbod, 2014). Despite the downside to the transactional model, during a crisis, managers require quick results and exercise a higher affinity toward the transactional style than the transformational leadership style (Deichmann & Stam, 2015; Geier, 2016). Rodrigues and Ferreira (2015) argued that the transformational leadership style outweighs the transactional method in bringing about positive change within an organization. Nevertheless, the transactional leadership style could be beneficial in overcoming organizational impediments especially during times of crisis as the leader offers rewards to stimulate employee ideation and performance. However, the challenge facing transactional leaders would be in determining and sustaining the type of extrinsic rewards that will encourage exceptional performance and a lasting commitment toward the firm.

The setting of achievable goals could be useful in providing motivation. Ahmad, Adbul-Rahman, and Soon (2015) stated that the transactional leader encourages their employees to set and satisfy ambitious targets using various forms of external motivation. Conversely, Burns (1978) argued that the setting of ambitious goals is also a skill of the transformational leader but hinges on creating motivation from an intrinsic perspective. Martin (2015) suggested that the appropriate mixing of the transformational and transactional leadership styles as a valid approach, particularly, when treating with complex organizational problems. The integration of the transformational and transactional styles was not a contemporary suggestion. Bass (1985) argued that leaders should exercise both transactional and transformational methods according to the situation. Employee turnover remains a complex issue that restaurant managers must solve. Therefore, it is crucial that managers of restaurants determine what leadership style or amalgamation will underpin their retention strategies.

Laissez-faire Leadership

Managers may use various approaches to leadership when dealing with issues involving their staff. Although managers can exercise a level of indecisiveness when choosing between the transactional and the transformational approaches to leadership (Deichmann & Stam, 2015; Smith, 2015), both methods require action or engagement on the part of the leader in treating with organizational issues. However, some managers take an avoidant or laissez-faire approach to leadership (Bass, 1985). The term laissez-faire as a form of leadership could trigger conflicts arising in the justification of the absence of leadership as a style or an appropriate strategy for achieving organizational objectives.

A passive or avoidant approach to leadership could be tantamount to a leader absconding from their responsibility. Buch, Martinsen, and Kuvaas (2015) argued that the laissez-faire leadership style is not a form of leadership, but the antithesis and could promote destructive behaviors within organizations. Wong and Giessner (2015) submitted that the laissez-faire leader consciously dismisses the needs of the subordinates when adopting the passive or avoidant approach. Conversely, I. Yang (2015a) argued that the laissez-faire style is not synonymous with the philosophy of no leadership. Although, the laissez-faire or inactive leader could have an adverse impact on an employee's attitude and performance according to Bass and Avolio (1994). The Laissez-faire style could be of value, as not all employees require the same approach or degree of support when resolving issues affecting an establishment. Some employees need their leader to provide support through evidence or action, while others may prefer to address the issues on their own. However, it is still incumbent upon the leader to understand the capabilities of his or her employees and their developmental needs, before adopting a leadership style to achieve the best results.

The hand-off or laissez-faire approach used by some managers may not be to the detriment of the organization. Zareen, Razzaq, and Mujtaba (2015) posited that the laissez-faire leadership style much like the transformational and transactional styles could have a positive impact on employee motivation. Amundsen and Martinsen (2014) stated that the laissez-faire style could facilitate the development of self-determination, selfcontrol, and greater autonomy among subordinates. Zhang and Zhou (2014) indicated that the absence of the leader's role or the presence of the laissez-faire style could be synonymous with the eradication of organizational bureaucracy that can constitute a form of empowerment for subordinates. Sharma and Kirkman (2015) contended that the arguments in favor of the laissez-faire style are paradoxical, as any empowerment would require a leader's involvement. The benefit of an active or inactive leadership style remains contextual hinging on the perception of the followers who will determine the level of input from their leader that is necessary to inspire performance.

The maturity of staff members and the level of understanding of the organizational requirements could invigorate self-sufficiency. I. Yang (2014) argued that the active presence of a leader is a crucial component in the development of follower-readiness toward establishing competent and vigorous teams. For a leader to justify a passive-avoidant approach toward his or her staff, the employees should already demonstrate high levels of maturity and experience. Also, I. Yang stated that the time an employee requires to develop personal competencies could determine the effectiveness of the laissez-faire approach. The absence of the leadership role could be useful in accelerating the learning and skill development within employees as a form of self-preservation, that is tantamount to self-determination and autonomy. I. Yang (2015b) stated that Asian companies promote high levels of collectivism and regard a laissez-faire style as an act of respect toward members. Nevertheless, the existence of the various arguments for and against the avoidant or the laissez-faire approach could be useful in supporting the premise that there is no unique approach to leadership. Managers must understand the organizational context underpinning the need for a leadership style and the capabilities and requirements of their followers to determine the appropriateness and potential effectiveness, mainly, when treating with a complex phenomenon like employee turnover.

Transition

Section 1 of the study includes information on the background of the business problem, the problem statement, purpose statement, conceptual framework, and the nature of the study. Other elements included assumptions, limitations, delimitations, the significance of the study, and a review of the extant literature. The literature review consisted of an in-depth exploration of the following themes: transformational leadership theory, the restaurant industry, employee turnover, employee retention, the evolution of the transformational leadership theory, pseudotransformational leadership, transactional leadership, and the laissez-faire style of leadership. Section 2 consists of the researcher’s role, participant selection, research method, research design, data collection, data organization, data analysis and the establishment of research rigor. In section 3, I presented the research findings, recommendations for the practical application of the collected data, a reflection on the doctoral journey, and a definite conclusion.

Section 2: The Project

Section 2 of this study contains an overview of the research method, strategy, population sample, participant selection criteria and the geographic area. Section 2 also includes information on the role of the researcher as the primary instrument, the treating with personal bias in research. Other elements of the section include ethical considerations, data collection, data organization, data storage, and data analysis. There are also discussions about the crucial aspects in achieving research reliability, validity, and data saturation in qualitative research.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory multiple case study was to explore the successful strategies used by restaurant managers to reduce employee turnover. The population consisted of restaurant managers from the city of Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The purposeful selection of four restaurant managers from four restaurant organizations provided the basis for the data collection because these managers have implemented successful strategies for reducing employee turnover.

The restaurant industry remains a valuable component of business ecology, positively influencing job creation and economic growth (H. Parsa et al., 2014). The implication for positive social change includes the identification of crucial information for improving the employees’ experiences that reside within the leader’s control. Qazi et al. (2015) argued that a reduction in employee turnover could positively influence cost control and profit margins by lessening the need for frequent recruitment and training of new personnel. Managers could apply the cost savings from the reduction in employee turnover toward sustaining business operations within the community further contributing to the prosperity of employees and their families.

Role of the Researcher

For this qualitative study, I was responsible for numerous roles, which included participant protection, data collection, data storage, and the analysis of the findings. Yin (2014) posited that, in a qualitative case study, the role of the researcher as the data collection instrument is crucial. The qualitative researcher gathers the participants' experiences and applies them to the study, with a sense of impartiality and awareness of personal values and culture (Siegle, Rubenstein, & Mitchell, 2014). As the data collection instrument, I engaged with the participants using semistructured interviews and presented their experiences for the development of a deeper understanding of the phenomenon.

As the researcher, I had no business or personal connections with the participants within the study. My interest stemmed from a customer's perspective of observing the frequency in personnel changes due to the cyclical nature of employee turnover at various restaurant establishments. I understood the multiple challenges that employers could face in preserving business operations stemming from the frequent recruitment and replacement of employees. Gupta and Shaw (2014) argued that employee turnover could have an adverse impact on an organization's operations and bottom-line. Although there remain significant challenges that managers face when dealing with employee turnover, there are those managers who were successful in reducing the spread of the phenomenon within their businesses. For my research, I was interested in exploring those successful strategies managers in the restaurant industry used to address the phenomenon of employee turnover.

An interview protocol (Appendix A) is useful for gathering information from participants. Interview protocols are necessary for maintaining consistency when conducting qualitative interviews (Dikko, 2016). Using a protocol, the researcher can ensure the standardization of the participants' interview experiences and mitigate any biases. All participants' interviews were semistructured and consisted of open questions. Marshall and Rossman (2015) argued that open questions are useful in probing and encouraging participants to share more details about a topic of interest. The use of semistructured interviews and an interview protocol containing open questions were beneficial in achieving a deeper understanding of those successful strategies that restaurant managers used to reduce employee turnover.

As the researcher, I ensured the protection of all human participants when conducting my research. For this study, I strictly adhered to the guidelines and requirements of Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). I acknowledged and adhered to the findings of the Belmont Report (Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1979). I ensured the protection of all participants through the adoption of the principles of justice, beneficence, and the respect for human rights. I understood the importance of protecting human participants when conducting research and submitted the National Institutes of Health Office of Extramural Research certificate as validation of my competency (Appendix B).

Researchers can experience numerous challenges that can lead to ethical conflicts when conducting qualitative research. Berger (2015) recommended that researchers engage in frequent self-assessments and retain responsibility for personal factors while remaining cognizant of their role in the study. Researchers may have feelings and opinions toward a phenomenon or the participants. Researchers must keep their views in check to avoid their biases from influencing the research. Researchers can mitigate bias in qualitative research by using member checking and an interview protocol (Harvey, 2015; Overgaard, 2015). Other methods for reducing bias include the use of multiple data sources and the achievement of data saturation (Yin, 2014). For my study, I used various sources of data. I carefully reviewed all interview transcripts, employee records, and other forms of company documentation that supported the participants' claims to facilitate the extraction of useful information about the strategies for reducing employee turnover in the restaurant industry.

Participants

In qualitative research, the utility of the findings depends on the quality of the data. The quantity of cases for the exploration of a phenomenon is not indicative of the researcher achieving a deeper understanding of a phenomenon but depends on the data quality. Lucero et al. (2016) posited that the use of single or multiple data sources could be equally useful to qualitative researchers. Researchers must use an interview protocol and apply techniques for mitigating bias to ensure the best chance of acquiring valuable data.

Before engaging with participants, researchers must seek approval from the University. I applied to the Walden University IRB for permission to conduct the research. My IRB approval number is 01-26-18-0643310. After receiving IRB approval, I contacted the local Chamber of Industry and Commerce in writing (Appendix C), requesting information on the restaurant listings for the area of Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The Chamber of Commerce does not provide approval or access to participants. The role of the Chamber in my study was as a repository of the listing of all businesses operating in the city and country including all restaurants. By using the Chamber's resources, I was able to save time from having to acquire this information on my own.

I used the Chamber's listing, to select four restaurant managers from four different organizations to participate in the study. Each participant received a formal request via a letter of invitation that included an informed consent form. A letter of cooperation was used to gain access to those participants who required the permission from an authorizing representative before being approached to participate in my study. I formally engaged with the authorizing representative of the firms, using a letter of cooperation (Appendix D) to gain their approval before contacting the participants.

To ensure that the authorizing representative had sufficient information to make their decision on allowing my engagement with the potential participating manager(s). I included with the letter of cooperation a copy of the informed consent form and the research protocol with guiding questions. The inclusion of the informed consent form and the research protocol were essential in providing clarity about the study, toward receiving permission from the authorizing representative to engage with participants. The authorizing representatives demonstrated their approval by signing the letter of cooperation.

As the researcher, I was responsible for delivering all invitation letters to the participants by hand to ensure receipt and timely delivery. Each letter of invitation to the participants included a copy of the informed consent form that contained the reason for the research, the participant selection criteria, ethical considerations, benefits of the findings to the restaurant industry, and the participants' rights to refuse participation without prejudice. Eligible participants were asked to demonstrate their agreement to take part in the research by signing the informed consent form. I provided each participant with a copy of the signed informed consent form for their records.

The usefulness of the data for my study hinged on the participants' expert skills. Heywood, Brown, Arrowsmith, and Poppleston (2015) argued that researchers using the case study approach must include participants who have adequate knowledge and experience relevant to the research topic. Knowledgeable participants are useful in creating a fuller and deeper understanding of the research phenomenon (Hoyland, Hollund, & Olsen, 2015). The purposeful selection of participants is helpful when acquiring critical knowledge to facilitate the understanding of a phenomenon (Kazadi, Lievens, & Mahr, 2015). For this study, four managers from four different restaurant organizations were purposefully selected to participate that have successfully implemented strategies for reducing employee turnover.

The selection of appropriate participants was imperative to the gathering of useful data for my research. Elder (2014) argued that the establishment of an adequate participant selection criteria is critical when conducting research. Efficient selection criteria can minimize time wastage in engaging with participants that cannot add to the understanding of a phenomenon. Participants that are knowledgeable can provide useful information that could deepen the researcher's understanding of the strategies for reducing employee turnover. The inclusion of a participant eligibility criteria is helpful in enhancing the credibility of the study (Teeuw et al., 2014). The requirements for selection involved the self-report of the participants who claimed to have used successful strategies for reducing employee turnover. To participate, all participants must have been a restaurant manager in the city of Port of Spain, able to write and speak fluent English, and the participants must have implemented successful strategies to reducing employee turnover.

Participants must feel comfortable when participating in research. The place and time for conducting the interviews must be conducive to the exercise to ensure that participants engage fully. Robinson (2014) argued that the interviewer must select a location that the interviewee is comfortable with and has no privacy concerns. All participants were given full autonomy in choosing the time and the venue on site that they thought would be the best fit for conducting the interviews—such as a back room or office—to ensure that participants felt secure and comfortable during the interview process.

When conducting research, it is imperative that the researcher's actions remain transparent. The building of trust through clear communication is essential to the establishment of a mutually respectful relationship between a researcher and participants (Siegle et al., 2014). Participants may feel more comfortable in taking part in the exercise when they know more about the researcher and the research. Before conducting the interviews, the participants and I reviewed the informed consent form. During the reviewing of the informed consent document, I provided insight on the purpose and benefits of the study and answered all the participants' questions. Additional efforts to bolster the participants' trust included the maintaining of confidentiality and the entitlement of the participants to share in the findings of the study.

Research Method and Design

Research Method

Choosing the right research method is an essential task when conducting any research. Teeuw et al. (2014) argued that the selection of an appropriate research method is crucial to achieving a deeper understanding of a phenomenon. For this study, I chose the qualitative method. The qualitative method is useful when viewing a phenomenon through the participant's lens within a real-world context (Gill, 2014). Sneison (2016) posited that in qualitative research, the attached meanings and perspectives of the participants are essential for understanding a phenomenon. Bevan (2014) added that the qualitative method is helpful in providing the researcher with a means to observe and document participants' behaviors within a natural setting. Qualitative researchers can use the opportunity to engage with participants while gathering information about the phenomenon (Rossetto, 2014). By using the qualitative method, I was able to comprehend through the participants' accounts and perspectives those successful strategies for reducing employee turnover within the restaurant industry.

In the social sciences, other methods such as the quantitative and mixed methods are useful for conducting research. The quantitative approach is beneficial when exploring a phenomenon through the examination of variables, relationships, and differences (Pearce et al., 2014; Reio & Shuck, 2014). Quantitative researchers do not require the participants' experiences to understand a phenomenon (Groeneveld, Tummers, Bronkhorst, Ashikali, & van Thiel, 2015). Instead, in a quantitative study, the researcher seeks to analyze data numerically (Allen, 2015), which was not the intent of my research.

Researchers can also use a mixed methods approach to conducting research. The mixed methods approach is useful in understanding a phenomenon by combining the distinctions in the qualitative and quantitative methods (Archibald et al., 2015; Morgan, 2016). Jervis and Drake (2014) indicated that the mixed methods approach is useful as a triangulation method, but requires considerable time to develop, as the researcher must execute both the quantitative and qualitative methods efficiently. For the study, there were no quantitative elements for examination. Therefore, I did not use the mixed methods approach.

Research Design

Qualitative researchers can choose from an array of strategies to gain a deeper understanding of a phenomenon. Yin (2014) argued that there are five research designs for conducting a qualitative study. Of the five models, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and the narrative design did not align with my intent for the study. The phenomenology design is suitable for the exploration of a phenomenon through the lived experiences of the participants (Letourneau, 2015; Walsh et al., 2015). Elo et al. (2014) stated that the exploration of a topic from various perspectives of the participants is useful in creating a greater understanding of the phenomenon as the essence behind the meanings could emerge through the shared experiences. The phenomenology design was not suitable for this study, as I did not intend to explore the phenomenon of employee turnover through the participants' lived experiences.

Another useful qualitative strategy is the grounded theory design. A grounded approach is helpful in the development of theory (Achora & Matua, 2016; Corley, 2015). El Hussein, Hirst, Salyers, and Osuji (2014) highlighted that researchers explore human experiences and behaviors present in the data to create inductively useful theoretical, conceptual categorizations relating to the views of the participants. I did not consider the grounded theory for my study because my intent was not to develop theories on employee turnover.

Qualitative researchers could use culture as a lens for understanding a phenomenon. In qualitative research, ethnography is beneficial when exploring the cultures and the underpinning patterns of behaviors of participants (Rashid et al., 2015; Reich, 2015). Tobin and Tisdell (2015) argued that with the ethnographic strategy the researcher explores culture through close observations and the reading of relevant literature to formulate interpretations. For this study, it was not my intent to explore cultures or behavioral patterns concerning employee turnover.

The narrative design is useful in the identification and exploring of the participants' stories about their experiences (Bruce et al., 2016; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). People relate to the same phenomenon in different ways and assign unique meanings and interpretations to their experiences. Joyce (2015) stated that a researcher using the narrative design focuses primarily on the meanings and stories people attribute to their reality to better understand a phenomenon. The narrative design was not suitable for my study, as it was not my intention to focus on the meanings or the stories participants attributed to the phenomenon of employee turnover.

For my research, I chose to use the multiple case study design, to explore the successful strategies restaurant managers used to reduce employee turnover. Yin (2014) regarded the case study design as a beneficial strategy in providing an in-depth exploration for understanding a phenomenon using numerous distinct case units as information sources. Kidd et al. (2016) argued that the case study design is useful when the researcher intends to focus on specific events or situations. For the study, I used four distinct cases consisting of four different restaurant managers to explore the strategies for reducing employee turnover in the restaurant industry.

There are numerous approaches to conducting multiple case study research. Qualitative researchers can use one of three multiple case study strategies (Cronin, 2014). For multiple case research, the qualitative researcher could select from among the descriptive, explanatory, and the exploratory strategies (Yin, 2014). The descriptive strategy is helpful when researchers are seeking to create descriptions of a phenomenon that focuses on specific characteristics (Hall & Jurow, 2015). The descriptive multiple case strategy was not acceptable as I was not seeking to create descriptions about employee turnover. The explanatory multiple case study strategy is useful for the clarification of causal relationships when developing a theory (Yin, 2014), which was not my intent for the research.

I chose the exploratory multiple case study design. The exploratory multiple case study strategy is beneficial when the researcher is studying a phenomenon with distinct patterns in the supporting data and models (Hibbert, Sillince, Diefenbach, & Cunliffe, 2014). Yin (2014) stated that exploratory multiple case research includes the gathering and interpreting of data from the interview process. Hibbert et al. (2014) stated that researchers using the exploratory strategy focus on answering *what* or *how* questions. Hence, I used an exploratory multiple case study design, to explore the research question on what successful strategies restaurant managers use to reduce employee turnover. In my review of the existing literature, limited articles existed on the exploration of the successful strategies restaurant managers used to reduce employee turnover. Therefore, the findings of my study could be beneficial toward bolstering the existing body of literature on reducing employee turnover within the restaurant industry.

Population and Sampling

When conducting research, it is not always possible for a researcher to gather information from everyone. Emmel (2015) stated that researchers focus on a group of individuals from which they will select a suitable sample for data collection. Colombo, Froning, Garcia, and Vandelli (2016) stated that researchers must determine if the target population is accessible and aligns with the research topic. To maintain population alignment with my research topic, I selected managers of restaurants that belong to the city of Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago who met the study selection criteria.

For this exploratory multiple case study, I used the purposeful selection of participants as part of the data collection exercise. Researchers using purposive sampling rely on personal judgment and experience for the selection of participants who they think possess useful information about the research topic (Heywood et al., 2015; Turner, Kim, & Anderson, 2014). Barratt and Lenton (2015) posited that purposive sampling is helpful in meeting the participant selection criteria as the researcher has the flexibility in governing the participant selection process according to the relevant knowledge and experiences relating to the research topic. The population for this qualitative multiple case study consisted of managers belonging to the restaurant industry.

The sample comprised of four restaurant managers belonging to four different restaurants from the city of Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago who satisfied the selection criteria for the study. The number of participants belonging to the target subset of the population refers to the sample size (Fugard & Potts, 2015). The right sample size was critical when conducting the research, as the intent was to extract quality data. Researchers must engage with sufficient participants and explore enough sources to allow for data saturation or the exhaustive production of useful information about the topic (Morse, 2015a). As the researcher, I collected data from four managers belonging to four different restaurant organizations. I also reviewed the respective employee records and other available relevant company documentation to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of employee turnover.

When collecting data in qualitative research, it is essential to achieve data saturation. Data saturation occurs when there is no further emergence of new information, codes or themes from the data (Elo et al., 2014; Siegle et al., 2014). When conducting case study research, data saturation occurs with the use of multiple sources of data (Harvey, 2015). For my research, I used four different managers from four different restaurant organizations to collect data along with employee records and company documents for exploring the successful strategies restaurant managers used to reduce employee turnover within the city of Port of Spain. The number of participants participating in any study does not guarantee data saturation. Fusch and Ness (2015) argued that data saturation is not, particularly, about the number of sources, although the likelihood of saturation could increase with the number of sources but toward the establishment of productive and thick information about the phenomenon. If I were unable to achieve data saturation, I would have conducted additional interviews to ensure that no new themes, codes or information emerges.

The size of the sample does not reflect the likelihood of achieving reliable data. However, a sample size of four participants was adequate for student researcher Gandy (2015), in researching the small business strategies leaders used to promote company profitability and sustainability. Researcher Gandy's sample size was similar to the population sample size I used to explore the successful strategies restaurant managers used to reduce employee turnover. Also, researchers can use the process of triangulation to achieve data saturation (Ramthun & Matkin, 2014). I chose to incorporate the transcripts from the interviews of the four participating managers and triangulated using the employee records and company documents to achieve productive and thick data.

The quality of the data in qualitative research is dependent on the credibility of the sources. Heywood et al. (2015) argued that case study researchers must use participants who have adequate knowledge and experience relevant to the research topic. Knowledgeable participants are useful in creating a fuller and thicker understanding of the research phenomenon (Colombo et al., 2016; Hoyland et al., 2015). For my research, I used an interview protocol to explore the self-reports of the four participating managers and reviewed the available respective employee records and documentation to support their claims of having experience with the implementation of strategies for reducing employee turnover.

Ethical Research

When conducting qualitative research, the researcher must understand and adhere to the acceptable codes and practices for dealing with human participants. To ensure the protection and appropriate treatment of participants in research, it is mandatory that researchers receive approval from the requisite Institutional Review Board (IRB) (Fiske & Hauser, 2014). Before attempting to engage with participants, I received permission from the Walden University's IRB. Upon the receipt of IRB approval, the institution provided me with the IRB approval number 01-26-18-0643310, which I included in the informed consent form for the benefit of participants. When conducting research, researchers should acknowledge and adopt the principles of the Belmont Report, which includes practices that reflects justice, beneficence, and the respecting of human rights. For my research, I adhered to the principles of the Belmont Report. To ensure that participants felt comfortable participating in the study, I reviewed with each participant the details of the informed consent form to ensure that all participants receive sufficient information to determine if they would like to be a part of the study.

The purpose of the study was to provide a deeper understanding of the strategies that restaurant managers used to reduce employee turnover. I acquired the data for this research without causing harm to the participants or their firms. The process of informed consent remains useful in protecting participants and their organizations from problems arising from unethical research practices (Judkins-Cohn, Kielwasser-Withrow, Owen, & Ward, 2014). Participants engaging in informed consent will have the opportunity to ask questions and provide permission through the signing of the informed consent form agreeing to participate (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The informed consent form contained a personal introduction, the IRB approval number, a background of the study, the importance of participating, the benefits of the research to business practice, and the positive social impact of the results of the study. The informed consent form included notification of the need to record all interviews to minimize data loss. Also, the recording of all interviews was beneficial in preserving the accuracy of the participants' contributions during the transcribing process. The informed consent form also contained information concerning the participants' rights to decline participation or to withdraw from the study at any time in writing or phone call without prejudice.

Researchers must treat participants with respect whether they participate in the study or decline to participate in the study. Should the need have arisen, I would have destroyed all data about participants who chose to withdraw from the study. Any participants who decided to withdraw from the study would not have received any further communication or engagement. The protection of an individual's rights and privacy must remain a priority (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014). Although researchers can offer incentives to participants in the form of money, gifts, or items of monetary value in exchange for participation, the researcher must ensure that the incentive would not influence the reliability of the data the participants provides (Bouter, 2015). To avoid any potential conflicts, it was my preference to obtain voluntary participation from participants without the use of incentives. All participants were notified of the need for voluntary participation in the informed consent form to ensure that participants remained clear on the rules of engagement.

For security reasons, all information will be treated as confidential and kept secure for a 5-year period using Microsoft Office with password encryption, with CD and flash-drive backups and stored in a cabinet safe at my home office. After the 5-year period of storing the data from the participants, I will destroy all physical CDs by shredding and deleting all electronic backups. It remains imperative that researchers protect all participants' rights to confidentiality and privacy (Wall & Pentz, 2015). No participant who agreed to take part in the study was asked to provide their name or that of the company they represented for inclusion in the final research report. I identified the participants and their respective businesses using alphanumeric tags, for example, P1 and R1 represented the Participant 1 and the Restaurant 1 as a secure form of reference.

Data Collection Instruments

Qualitative researchers can use several sources and approaches to gather data about a topic or phenomenon. Some approaches to gathering qualitative data could include the use of document reviews, observations, focus groups, semistructured interviews, archival records, physical artifacts, or an amalgamation of these approaches (Elo et al., 2014; Ozer & Douglas, 2015; Wiewiora, Murphy, Trigunarsyah, & Brown, 2014). Houghton, Murphy, Shaw, and Casey (2015) argued that multiple sources of data are beneficial in establishing various perspectives toward the development of a deeper understanding of a topic or phenomenon. Multiple sources are useful in improving the reliability and validity of data that is essential to produce quality research (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Yin (2014) regarded the use of multiple sources in a case study design as a useful strategy for providing an in-depth exploration of the understanding of a phenomenon. For the study, I collected data from four distinct cases, through semistructured interviews, employee records, and company documents to explore the strategies for reducing employee turnover within the restaurant industry.

The primary data collection method included the use of interviews. Yin (2014) stated that there are three types of interviews the semistructured, structured, and unstructured. The structured interview protocol was not suitable for this study, as the questions tend to be set and do not allow for follow-up questioning. Also, the unstructured approach was not appropriate as that approach did not facilitate the standardization of the wordings and questioning (Yin, 2014). For the study, I chose the semistructured interviews approach to data collection. Wiewiora et al. (2014) argued that semistructured interviews are useful in providing a more in-depth exploration of a topic about a phenomenon. With the semistructured interview process, researchers can establish an effective rapport with participants using additional follow-up questions (Ashton, 2014; Bowden & Galindo-Gonzalez, 2015; Yin, 2014). Follow-up questioning was beneficial in expanding the discussions toward understanding the participants' perspectives on the phenomenon of employee turnover in the restaurant industry.

For this qualitative study, I conducted face-to-face interviews with the participants. Qualitative research involves the display of interpersonal skills and emotional maturity when gathering data (Collins & Cooper, 2014). Face-to-face interviews remains a crucial part of data collection in qualitative research (Ziebland & Hunt, 2014). Muskens et al. (2014) regarded the face-to-face method as the most efficient technique for conducting interviews as the researcher could witness all reactions to the questioning. Barr et al. (2017) argued that the face-to-face interview method is useful in guiding follow-up questions stemming from verbal and nonverbal feedback. I used the semistructured, face-to-face interview approach, as I intended to acquire the most feedback from the engagements with the participants in understanding the strategies used to reduce the phenomenon of employee turnover.

When conducting interviews, a consistent approach is essential. Interview protocols are useful in guiding the researcher during the interview process through the standardization and consistency in the questioning format for all participants. For this study, the interview protocol included six open questions (Appendix A). Open questions are not restrictive to the interviewees and facilitate free discussions that lead to the provision of full descriptions of the participants’ experiences (Bowden & Galindo-Gonzalez, 2015; Fleming, Phillips, Kaseroff, & Huck, 2014). Runge, Waller, Mackenzie, and McGuire (2014) argued that open questioning is beneficial in acquiring a holistic view that could lead to the formulation of effective strategies. Using open questions, I gathered useful information on the successful strategies restaurant managers used to reduce employee turnover.

Quality data must be reliable and valid. In qualitative research, to improve reliability and validity of the study, researchers could exercise member checking (Harvey, 2015). Member checking is the process of using the participants to verify the content of the data (Allen, 2015). Member checking is useful in the development of trustworthiness, that is an essential element in qualitative research (Brit, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). After conducting the interviews, I provided a summary of the highlights and interpretations of the transcripts to the participants to verify the accuracy of the content.

Data Collection Technique

The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study was to explore the successful strategies that restaurant managers used to reduce employee turnover. To gather sufficient data to answer the central research question, I used an interview protocol, which included six open questions (Appendix A). Other data collection approaches comprised of the reviewing of employee records and company documents. In qualitative research, researchers can use numerous methods to conduct interviews. The four main interview techniques for conducting qualitative research are as follows: focus groups, face-to-face, e-mail, and telephone interviews (Cleary, Horsfall, & Hayter, 2014). Ziebland and Hunt (2014) posited that face-to-face interviews are beneficial in allowing the researcher to engage in follow-up questions arising from verbal and non-verbal responses. Follow-up questions are also useful in achieving data saturation. For this study, I used follow-up questions to explore further the points of interest that arose during the interviews to the extent that no new information emerged and to ensure that I achieved data saturation.

There are advantages and disadvantages to conducting interviews. Krall, Wamboldt, and Lohse (2014) stated that some disadvantages to performing interviews relate to the high consumption of time, sample size limits, and the reliance on the participants' subjective experiences. Nonetheless, Yin (2014) regarded the interview process as a useful technique for data collection in qualitative case research. All participants' engagements took place using the face-to-face interview method to acquire the necessary data for gaining an in-depth understanding of the research topic on the successful strategies that restaurant managers used to reduce employee turnover.

When conducting research, it is essential to gather data that are reliable and valid. Qualitative researchers can improve the validity and reliability of the research through the process of member checking (Wang, 2015). Andraski, Chandler, Powell, Humes, and Wakefield (2014) argued that member checking is essential in qualitative research and is useful in enhancing the credibility of the research through participant verification. Morse (2015a) explained that there are four steps in the member checking process: (a) collection of the interview data, (b) transcribing, (c) interpreting the interview data, (d) and providing the interpretation summary for participant verification. Qualitative researchers can use member checking to ensure the accurate interpretation of the data that could bolster the reliability and validity of the research.

In qualitative research, the extraction of data could occur from the exploration of sources other than interview transcripts, such as archival employee records and any company documentation relating to employee turnover or employee retention. I reviewed company documents and employee records upon the completion of each interview to strengthen the data gathering process. The review of employee records and documentation, along with face-to-face interviews, was useful in enhancing the validity of the data, that was essential for producing quality research (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Some advantages to reviewing documents and records when conducting qualitative research include the following: content authenticity, the content is unaffected by the participant's mood, not time-dependent, and the process is inexpensive (Yin, 2014). Employee records and company documents were useful in validating the claims of participants in the implementation of successful strategies for reducing employee turnover.

Conversely, there are disadvantages to reviewing documents and records. Some challenges to reviewing documents and records included the following: the participants' fears of sharing official information belonging to their firms, the subjectivity of the data, and the high consumption of time (Zhang, Ni, & Xu, 2014). The informed consent form included an official request for participants to provide all available relevant company documents and employee records to be reviewed by the researcher. To alleviate the participants' fears of sharing records and documents, I included in the informed consent form, the importance of confidentiality and the level of security that remains in place to safeguard all information for the stipulated 5-year period. Also, I used alphanumeric tags to replace the names of the participants and their organizations to preserve the participants' rights to privacy and confidentiality. Other useful tactics for convincing participants to take part in the study included the reiteration of the importance of the participant's involvement in the study, the potential positive impact on society, and the benefits of the findings toward improving business practices within the restaurant industry.

Data Organization Technique

When conducting research, researchers will have access to multiple bits of data. It is essential to organize data using an efficient labeling system. Researchers who use an efficient labeling system in their data organization technique can manage data more efficiently (Check, Wolf, Dame, & Beskow, 2014). I chose alphanumeric tagging to enhance the organization of the data. Alphanumeric tagging was not only useful for protecting the participants and their respective restaurant organizations' identities but facilitated easy access and labeling of the data. Wall and Pentz (2015) argued that researchers should make every effort to protect participants' rights to privacy and confidentiality. The letter P represented each participant in part, and the letter R represented each restaurant firm in part. To complete the tagging or full identification of each participant and their respective firms. For each letter, I assigned numbers to reflect the order of engagement with each participant or restaurant. For example, the alphanumeric tags P1, P2, P3, and P4, represented the four restaurant managers who participated in the study. Likewise, the alphanumeric tags R1, R2, R3, and R4 represented the restaurant organizations.

The labeling of all data files remains essential when conducting qualitative research. I converted all interview recordings into transcripts within Microsoft word, with password protection, and assigned appropriate nametags for each file. For example, the transcript file belonging to a meeting with the first manager-participant of the first restaurant included the alphanumeric nametag P1R1. The respective documents and records reviewed also reflected a similar naming system, corresponding to each company. Each document or record corresponding to the restaurant included in the file nametag the document type and the suffix R1, R2 etcetera. For example, a copy of an employee incentive plan for the workers of the restaurant establishment 2 corresponded to the following file nametag: Employee Incentive Plan R2.

The privacy and protection of the participants and their organizations remained essential when conducting the research. All data will remain confidential and secured for a 5-year period using Microsoft Office with password encryption, with CD and flash-drive backups and stored in a cabinet safe in my home office. After the 5-year period of storing the data from the participants and organizations, I will destroy all the data in keeping with the guidelines of the University (Walden University, 2016). The process of destruction will include the shredding of all physical files and CDs along with the deletion of all electronic backups.

Data Analysis

For this qualitative multiple case study, the data collection process comprised the use of numerous sources, which included interviews, employee records, and company documents. The data analysis consisted of the assignment of codes, that formed aggregate themes stemming from patterns, central ideas and critical element within the data. Yin (2014) stated that five techniques are available for analyzing case study data these are as follows: exploration building, pattern matching, cross-case synthesis, the logic model, and time-series analysis. I chose to use cross-case synthesis to analyze the data. Cross-case synthesis is useful when dealing with multiple case studies by enhancing the possibility of generalizability by exploring the outcomes emerging across numerous cases (Yin, 2014). Researchers can treat each case as a separate study and affix codes upon reviewing all the transcripts, records, and documents. The records and documents considered in this research were useful in triangulating the data from the interviews to develop rigor toward achieving data saturation.

For the analysis of multiple case data, the consideration of each case, in turn, could be advantageous. Yin (2014) argued that the separate consideration of each case is useful for maintaining the comparative focus, preserving each case's uniqueness. For each case, code assignments arose from reading the data several times and identifying critical points, common ideas, concepts, and patterns. Tuck and Yang (2014) argued that codes are abstract representations or designations that are useful in highlighting common ideas, trends, or disaggregate of themes that provide meaning. Researchers can link codes to the conceptual framework, keywords in the research question, or components from the contents of the literature review.

For this research, I chose to present the themes of the study in table form. Using cross-case synthesis, I applied an aggregated approach for the data analysis, examining the assignment of the codes and central ideas across the four cases creating further amalgamations for the refining of the supporting codes where necessary to develop the themes. The analysis of the key themes that emerged involved the identification of links and justifications using the extant literature toward the provision of a deeper understanding of the successful strategies for reducing employee turnover.

The data analysis also involved a comparison to the conceptual framework. The conceptual framework was useful in providing a link between the research findings, literature, and methodology (Bodenmann et al., 2015). The conceptual framework for the study was the transformational leadership model. By comparing the extant literature with the findings, gaps could be identified adding to the body of knowledge. The literature review also contained other relevant theories for comparison such as the transactional, LMX, pseudotransformational, and laissez-faire leadership models.

Reliability and Validity

The aim of conducting qualitative research was to achieve the provision of a more profound understanding of a topic or phenomenon. In qualitative research, it remains imperative that the researcher develops each of the components of the manuscript with rigor. The provision of valid and reliable findings is useful in confirming that the research has rigor (Auer et al., 2015; Morse, 2015b). Reliable and valid results are crucial in the development of a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of employee turnover.

Reliability

In qualitative research, a researcher's work is reliable when it is consistent and repeatable. Yin (2014) argued that in a qualitative case study the reliability of the research emerges from achieving repeatability and coherence throughout the procedures. Researchers can achieve study reliability through the establishment of a reflective journal that includes details of the research procedures (Morse, 2015b). For this qualitative multiple case study, I was the data collection instrument and responsible for the organization and analysis of the data. I used a reflective journal to document all procedures to facilitate the achievement of research reliability.

There are many approaches to determine reliability in qualitative research. Marshall and Rossman (2016) stated that methodological triangulation is a useful method for determining research reliability. The gathering of data from multiple sources such as semistructured interviews, employee records, and company documents allowed for data triangulation. During the interview process, an interview protocol was beneficial in ensuring consistency in the engagement and the line of questioning for each participant. Upon the completion of the interviews, the process of member checking was implemented to ensure the accuracy of the interpretations.

Validity

In qualitative research, the determination of the accuracy and trustworthiness of

the

findings are crucial. Barkhordari-Sharifabad, Ashktorab, and Atashzadeh-Shoorideh (2017) stated that qualitative researchers refer to the elements of transferability, credibility, confirmability, and dependability, which contribute to validity in research. Kawabata and Gastaldo (2015) argued that researchers must use data to underpin all claims toward demonstrating the validity of the results. For this study over 90% of the literature stemmed from peer-reviewed journals along with the purposive selection of participants, employee records, and documentation to bolster the validity of the research.

Transferability. Research findings, although contextual, can be useful to other researchers in other fields. When conducting qualitative research, the transferability of results is beneficial in the extrapolation of findings from one research context to another (Elo et al., 2014). Marshall and Rossman (2016) posited that transferability is not necessarily valuable to the researcher of the original work. The onus is on future researchers to determine what connections could exist to justify the extrapolation of the findings.

Credibility. Researchers must ensure that their work is credible. Morse (2015b) regarded credibility as the present-day version of validity in qualitative research. Research credibility is useful in describing procedures that preserve trustworthiness in research. To increase credibility in research, the process of member checking is beneficial in enhancing the accuracy of the data by having the participants review the interpretation of the transcripts (Barkhordari-Sharifabad et al., 2017). For my study, I used member checking. Also, the achievement of data saturation could enhance the quality of qualitative research. Rooddehghan, ParsaYekta, and Nasrabadi (2015) argued that attaining data saturation in qualitative research could also improve the credibility of the research findings. For this study, the data sources consisted of the following: semistructured interview transcripts from four restaurant managers, respective employee records, and company documents. If I did not achieve data saturation during the data gathering process, I would have conducted additional interviews to ensure that no new information emerged.

Confirmability. When conducting qualitative research, the researcher must avoid expressing bias. Yin (2014) stated that confirmability pertains to the level of objectivity, truthfulness, and corroboration of the interpretations reflective of the participants' perceptions that remain free of researcher bias. Throughout the data gathering exercise, I maintained a reflective journal for keeping a record of personal reflections that were helpful in eliminating bias.

Dependability. When conducting qualitative research, attention to detail is necessary for future reference. Dependability refers to the consistency in findings from the procedures and meanings upon the replication of a study. Munn, Porritt, Lockwood, Aromataris, and Pearson (2014) argued that researchers must remain cognizant of all alterations in the research procedures and protocols and should document these changes for future reference. Munn et al. also stated that member checking is useful in confirming research dependability. Member checking includes the interpretation of the data and using the participants to verify the accuracy (Hazavehei, Moonaghi, Moeini, Moghimbeigi, & Emadzadeh, 2015). The interpretation and participant verification of the interview transcripts were critical components for ensuring the dependability of the findings of my study.

Data saturation. To ensure a deeper understanding of a phenomenon the data must be exhaustive. Data saturation occurs when no additional information emerges from the data collection exercise (Yin, 2014). The procedures a researcher uses when conducting research are essential in determining the validity of the research findings. Orri, Revah-Levy, and Farges (2015) argued that the number of participants a researcher uses should be sufficient to create a deeper understanding of the topic. McNulty et al. (2015) stated that qualitative researchers must select a sample that is of adequate size for addressing the research question and is not too large to impede an in-depth analysis. Hence, researchers must use appropriate techniques to ensure the extraction of quality data regardless the sample size. I chose to use the purposive selection of four restaurant managers and an interview protocol to provide the best opportunity for collecting high-quality data for my research.

The sample size consisted of four restaurant managers from four different firms to explore the strategies for reducing employee turnover in the restaurant industry. The sample selection process remained purposive that hinged on the perception that the selected participants could provide useful data (Suen, Huang, & Lee, 2014). Data saturation occurs when no new information emerges from the data (Murgatroyd, Lockwood, Garth, & Cameron, 2015). Additional interviews may be necessary to achieve data saturation to ensure the generation of data that are rich and thick. However, for my study, additional interviews were not necessary, as the four cases provided rich, thick data. Shahgholian and Yousefi (2015) stated that researchers could use other sources to triangulate to achieve data saturation. Data triangulation could occur from the use of multiple sources. For my study, the semistructured interview transcripts were triangulated using the available employee records, and company documents.

Transition and Summary

Section 2 of this study include the researcher's role as the data collection instrument. Section 2 also consists of the participant selection criteria, research methodology, ethics, data collection, data organization, data storage, data analysis, and research rigor. Section 3 of this research covers the presentation of the findings, application to professional practices, implications for social change, recommendations for action, and recommendations for future study. I closed section 3 with my reflection on the doctoral journey and the overall conclusions that stemmed from the analysis of the research findings.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory multiple case study was to explore those successful strategies used by restaurant managers to reduce employee turnover. Four restaurant managers from four different restaurant establishments were selected based on their prowess in the implementation of successful strategies for reducing employee turnover within the Port of Spain area of Trinidad and Tobago. I used cross-case synthesis to analyze the case study data. Yin (2014) argued that cross-case synthesis is beneficial when analyzing multiple case study data. Cross-case synthesis is useful in facilitating the possibility of generalizability of the findings emerging across numerous cases.

Presentation of Findings

I used numerous sources to obtain data for this research. Sources of data included the following: semistructured interviews, the reviewing of employee records, and company documents. I converted the interview data into transcripts that were interpreted, summarized, and verified by the participants. The participant verification process is called member checking.

The analysis of the data led to the identification of four themes. Three of the four themes were about traditional leadership methods related to the transformational and the transactional leadership styles. However, the fourth theme related to a pragmatic approach to the supply of labor, which remained effective in bolstering employee loyalty, organizational commitment, and reduced staff turnover. The four emergent themes were as follows: (a) the building of meaningful relationships, (b) competitive compensation and benefits, (c) employee empowerment and motivation, and (d) labor inversion. I assigned codes to keywords and phrases within the transcripts for consolidation and generated themes according to the frequency and significance. Table 1indicates the frequency of keywords and phrases that led to the creation of the themes.

Table 1

Frequency of Keywords and Phrases for Generating Themes

Themes	Frequencies
The Building of Meaningful Relationships	27
Competitive Compensation and Benefits	22
Employee Empowerment and Motivation	18
Labor Inversion	16

Theme 1: The Building of Meaningful Relationships

According to all the participants in this study, the building of meaningful relationships based on a mutual understanding, empathy, and trust was essential in reducing employee turnover. The managers interviewed, successfully created environments that facilitated the open sharing of information for understanding the perspectives and constraints of employer and employees with the focus toward developing trust. Martin (2017) posited that the transformational leader establishes a relationship with followers through understanding the personal goals and needs of subordinates. P1 reported that restaurant employees were at a disadvantage. The restaurant worker population consisted of individuals who were victims of various socioeconomic problems that included limited education, minimum wage, and broken or single parent homes. P2 claimed that if a manager does not take the time to understand the needs and challenges of their workers, it is unlikely that workers will demonstrate their loyalty by remaining with the organization. Hence, it is essential for restaurant managers to exercise empathy and to show genuine concern for their employees.

The building of productive relationships between a manager and subordinates aligns with the transformational leadership model. The four constituents of the transformational leadership model include individualized consideration, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation (Bass, 1985). The component of individualized consideration involves the formation of meaningful relationships that focus on the development of employees (Paladan, 2015). P1 stated that the creation of meaningful relationships has allowed for counseling to be offered by the manager, helping workers to cope with the challenges that originated outside of the work environment that tend to impact their performance within the firm negatively. Managers that take the time to help their employees to work through difficult issues could create an environment of trust and loyalty that could be beneficial for obtaining employee support for achieving the company’s vision.

Individualized consideration is a useful strategic component for reducing employee turnover. Zineldin (2017) argued that by applying individualized consideration, a transformational leader can assume the role of coach and advisor providing equal attention to their subordinates. Workers are more likely to listen to the advice or counsel of a leader they trust to resolve conflicts (Yang, 2014). Therefore, restaurant managers that demonstrate genuine concern for the needs and interests of employees could improve the level of loyalty, organizational commitment, and employee retention.

However, not all relationships are beneficial for achieving the goals of an organization. P1 argued that the relationships forged between a manager and their employees must never exist outside a professional scope and must be conducive to achieving the goals of the firm. P4 stated that the effectiveness of building meaningful relationships based on mutual understanding has led to the return of some employees to the establishment, consequently, maintaining current employment tenures that are well over 5 years and some over 10 years.

The establishment of meaningful relationships is crucial to employee retention. Managers must remain cognizant that the highest degree of professionalism and discipline must exist for the creation of meaningful relationships. P2 argued that despite the fostering of healthy open relationships, managers must remind workers of the disciplinary parameters within the firm. P2 added that a manager must unambiguously communicate the boundaries associated with the engagement of workers to prevent the disregarding of the rules of the business and the allowance for shifts from the company's strategic objectives. P3 and P4 stated that they had decided to limit socializing with workers outside of the job. Both P1 and P2 have adopted a zero tolerance for socializing outside the workplace as they believed that this could lead to relaxed behaviors and disrespect. The establishment of clear boundaries governing the building of meaningful relationships is critical to the longevity of the organization and for reducing employee turnover according to all participants.

Theme 2: Competitive Compensation and Benefits

The conceptual framework that underpinned this study was the transformational leadership model (Burns,1978). From the data analysis of Theme 1, the transformational leadership element of individualized consideration was found to be a valuable strategic component for reducing employee turnover of restaurant workers. Participants P2 and P3 stated that restaurant industry is a competitive and saturated ecology, making creativity and innovation essential for the company to remain of going concern. Apart from strategic pricing, restaurant managers used various methods of entertainment, genres, and cuisines to attract and retain patrons. The training of staff in support of an initiative for positively differentiating the organization could be very costly and time-consuming. Hence, the retention of employees remains a high priority, mainly in restaurants offering special menus, entertainment, and services.

Restaurant managers seldom get to pick employees from the top of the workforce. P1 claimed that most employees possess lower levels of education and endure numerous socioeconomic constraints, which justifies the minimum wage. P1 added that most restaurant workers who belonged to the establishment R1 were single parents who came from low-income areas and struggled to afford their children’s education, which could perpetuate the cycle of poverty. Restaurant managers that have a clear understanding of their employees’ backgrounds were better at implementing compensation and benefit strategies that would be useful to their workers and could lead to improvements in employee retention.

By understanding the various economic constraints of employees, restaurant managers could make special provisions for improving an employee’s standard of living. For example, P1 agreed to pay workers above the minimum wage and offered a performance bonus at the end of each year. P2 and P3 also made the decisions to pay their workers above the minimum wage. Also, the workers of R2 and R3 were eligible for benefits such as pensions, group medical plans, and end of year bonuses depending on the organization’s financial performance, as incentives for enhancing staff retention and increasing self-worth. However, P4 did not offer a pension or group health plan for employees. P4 acknowledged the attractiveness of providing such programs but could not afford to do so. Instead, P4 has implemented an equitable distribution of the service charges among the staff, and this has proven to be useful in demonstrating their appreciation through the added compensation of workers.

The use of competitive compensation and benefits is beneficial to employee retention. A transactional leader is an advocate for providing workers with financial and tangible benefits to improve productivity and employee retention. Gross (2016) posited that a transactional leader strives to achieve a mutual interest between the leader and subordinates. However, transactional leaders tend to micromanage and may take a straightforward approach (Smith, 2015). P1 stated that most of the day's activities were replete with deadlines, adding to the competitiveness of the sector. P1 added that most patrons do not want to be kept waiting unnecessarily for food they could get somewhere else. Consequently, P1 remained involved in what the staff was engaged in to prevent unwanted delays and offered small incentives depending on the criticality of the operations. P2, P3, and P4 used similar approaches to P1 in working alongside their staff, especially on major events. The methods used by P1, P2, P3, and P4 aligned with the transactional leadership style of managing by exception active approach. Therefore, the transactional leadership style could be beneficial in improving the operating efficiency of the business, overall worker performance, and employee retention.

Managers working alongside and closely monitoring their staff could be a source of benefit or issue for employees. Nevertheless, P1, P2, P3, and P4 believed they had struck a meaningful balance between the way they presented themselves when working closely with and monitoring their employees. The managers believed that the environments were considered more nurturing and task-focused. Bass and Avolio (1994) stated that working closely with and monitoring of employees was indicative of the transactional leadership style of managing by exception active approach. Bass and Avolio argued that a manager’s heavy involvement and intimate approach could serve to guarantee smooth, issue-free workflows. The presence of issue-free workflows may correspond to less job stress and may reduce employee burnout, therefore, enhancing employee retention.

Competitive compensation and benefits are useful motivators for restaurant employees. Lin (2014) argued that to curb employee turnover in the restaurant industry, creative measures linking to supplementary tipping by customers are essential. P2 stated that the government had set the industrial minimum wage at $15.50. Restaurant managers P1, P2, and P3 have implemented wage increases for their staffs that were considerably higher than the minimum wage. P1, P2, and P3 stated that if a worker could meet the cost of living, they would be more comfortable and would tend to remain longer with the company. Hence, the implementation of wages above the minimum industrial rate might be a useful strategy for improving employee retention.

The payment of high compensation packages is a compelling incentive for reducing employee turnover. The restaurant manager, P2, paid the workers of the establishment R2 wages that were two and a half times the minimum wage. The implementation of such a significant wage increase occurred from the first day of business of the R2 restaurant in 2009 and had equated to an average turnover rate to date of less than 2% per annum. P2 added that the impetus for the significant wage increase was due to the highly specialized culinary field and associated forms of entertainment involving fire and sword tricks that were critical parts of the dining experience at the R2 restaurant. Hom et al. (2012) posited that the financial impact of employee turnover could cost an organization’s management around 90% - 200% the annual pay of the departed worker. Richards (2016) argued that employee turnover costs could span from three-quarters to double the salary of the departing employee. Therefore, restaurant managers of organizations like R2 that achieved competitive advantage by offering unusual events and cuisines tend to attract substantial patronage and could support the higher pay for their workers creating a win-win scenario.

Theme 3: Employee Empowerment and Motivation

Employee empowerment and motivation are essential strategic components to improving the retention of workers. P3 stated that workers that were motivated and were encouraged to share their ideas and provide feedback to management were more likely to remain with the company. Restaurant managers P2, P3, and P4 claimed that the conducting of daily pep talks with staff at the start of each work shift provided forums to complement, inspire, and even correct behaviors. Restaurant managers P2, P3, and P4 claimed that during the pre-shift pep talks they discussed the statuses of the businesses. Employees used opportunities during the pep talks to suggest ways of improving the customers' experiences. Holstad et al. (2014) stated that the transformational leader invigorates followers by communicating a clear vision that serves to empower and motivate subordinates. Hence, the engagement of workers as described by the managers P2, P3, and P4 were characteristic of the transformational leadership model.

Employee motivation is a subset of the transformational leadership model. Bass (1985) posited that the transformational model consists of inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, idealized influence, and individualized consideration. Nguyen et al. (2014) argued that motivated individuals experienced significant reductions in their stress levels, were better contributors to the establishment and were less likely to leave. P4 stated that the employees of the firm R4 frequently received compliments from the management as a way of boosting employee self-worth and a sense of belonging. P4 believed that the creation of an environment of motivation and support could be responsible for the staff forgoing offers by other organizations or even returning after leaving the firm. Hence, restaurant managers could consider evaluating the utility of intrinsic forms of motivation when formulating their retention strategies.

Employee motivation could arise from extrinsic or intrinsic sources. Restaurant manager P3 stated that incentives and other tangible rewards could not compare to intrinsic rewards and the feeling of internal satisfaction. P2 claimed that it was the leader's responsibility to inspire and motivate workers at all times. P3 stated that getting his workers to feel good about what they do outweigh any compensation package an employer could offer. Also, P3 believed that the real reason the staff at R3 remained with the firm was that of intrinsic motivation. Therefore, the transformational leadership constituent of inspirational motivation remains a valuable component for building effective strategies for reducing employee turnover.

Another subset of the transformational model is intellectual stimulation, that is synonymous with employee empowerment and ideation. When employees can provide their ideas, they tend to take ownership of the process and are more empowered. Leaders that facilitate intellectual stimulation can choose to motivate their followers by nurturing and rewarding an employee’s critical thinking and sense of innovation (Peng et al., 2015). P4 provided an example of how workers offered a solution to curb patrons from stealing food during buffet events using a table tab system. The successful implementation and recognition of the table tab system led to more workers looking for innovative ways to address other issues within the organization. Scheers and Botha (2014) argued that employers taking the time to consider the ideas of employees could serve as a motivating force toward increasing job satisfaction. Consequently, a satisfied employee will be less likely to leave an organization.

Theme 4: Labor Inversion

The fourth theme was unexpected. During the coding process, I identified practices involving the use of labor through buffer staffing and alternative recruitment options. The practices remained intriguing and were considered by participants as essential to their strategies for reducing employee turnover. The methods surrounding labor usage and recruitment if not placed into context may seem like an inversion or opposite to the norms of the industry. However, the practices continue to satisfy the value-rational, and for that reason, I chose to explore the category.

All participants stated that restaurant worker absenteeism could significantly negatively affect the operating efficiency and the level of service quality. Having shortages in the staff complement could be a source of stress for residual workers and could contribute to burnout and eventual employee turnover (Salem, 2015). P1, P2, and P3 in treating with the unpredictability of employee absenteeism and turnover implemented a buffer staffing solution. Buffer staffing is not synonymous with a contingency or reserve staff callouts. Buffer staffing is the permanent addition of excess personnel to the regular staff complement.

The presence of a buffer staff is the inverse of what one will expect in a restaurant organization, as restaurant managers are more likely to explore ways to cut cost, especially on labor, where possible. The buffer staffing strategy represented an inversion of the norm according to P1 and included the hiring of excess staff. The number of excess staff hired could be as much as 20% more than what the typical staffing requirement would be to cover restaurant operations at full capacity. P3 who used a 10% buffer, stated that the restaurant industry is so fragile and saturated that managers cannot anticipate with 100% certainty the days they would have a full booking of patrons. Any obstruction to service excellence due to the cutting of corners by an inundated or stressed staff due to low staff turnouts could negatively affect repeat business according to P1. Hence, the justification for having an excess staff compliment on the payroll every day to compensate for laps in the labor force.

The implementation of a permanent buffer staff could constitute an upfront cost for restaurant managers. However, P1 stated that the additional labor force associated with the implementation of a buffer staff facilitated a reduction in the stress levels of workers. The extra staffing allowed for the equitable distribution of the daily workloads. Employees who have less stress tend to be happier and were less likely to leave an organization (Kim, 2015). The additional labor force provided for greater transparency and better scheduling of employee time-off. As workers could apply for legitimate time-off without the fear of retaliation from management relating to a manager having to deal with short staffing, that could negatively affect profits and service excellence.

Another example, of labor inversion, existed in the recruitment of restaurant workers. The government of Trinidad and Tobago advocated the use of local content in all aspects of operations regardless of the industry (Republic of Trinidad of Tobago, 2015). Local content involves the preference for indigenous resources over foreign. All participants claimed that the local labor force was replete with individuals that were lazy and had poor work ethics. Managers of firms in demonstrating their corporate social responsibility tend to hire individuals that were natives of the countries that their businesses operate. In other words, the ratio of local hires to external or foreign hires should be in favor of the local labor force. Nevertheless, the restaurant industry remains a highly competitive and saturated ecology (Chawinga & Chipeta, 2017), that cannot support prolonged disruptions in service operations. P3 claimed that the dependence on an unreliable workforce was terrible for business especially in a saturated and highly competitive environment like the restaurant industry. Hence, the unsatisfactory state of the local labor force was the impetus for the creation of alternative labor arrangements.

Despite the patriotic call to support local content, the need for an organization to remain of going concern was of a higher utility. All participants expressed the view that foreign workers possessed better attitudes toward work and stayed in the job longer than their local counterparts. P1 stated that the most effective way to reduce employee turnover was to hire people who wanted to work! Idris (2014) posited that strategies to reduce employee turnover must reflect greater rigor to include the recruitment stage, with the intent of selecting employees with greater staying potentials. Restaurant managers have used an alternative recruitment approach that facilitated the hiring of more foreign workers. P2 claimed that the foreign labor force could account for as much as 80 % of the restaurant staff with significantly lower rates of employee turnover. Hence, the labor inversion strategy remained beneficial toward reducing employee turnover within the restaurant industry.

Application to Professional Practice

The findings of this study consisted of four themes. Three of the themes bolstered the extant body of literature on the utility of the transformational and transactional leadership models as effective strategies for reducing employee turnover. This study may be beneficial as it adds to the body of literature on the successful strategies used to minimize employee turnover within the restaurant industry. Ariyabuddhiphongs and Khan (2017) argued that the transformational leadership model is a versatile model for addressing many issues within the firm. The transformational leadership components that emerged from the themes aligned with the element of individualized consideration through the building of meaningful relationships between managers and employees. The other transformational constituents that emerged from the themes tethered to inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation.

Like the transformational leadership model, the transactional leadership model remains beneficial to industry leaders toward addressing numerous business problems including employee turnover. Bass (1985) posited that a leader's behavior might not be mutually exclusive in demonstrating the transformational or transactional leadership styles but remains dependent on the context. From the emergent themes, the use of competitive compensation packages and benefits were identified as critical components of useful strategies to reduce employee turnover in the restaurant industry. Hence, a restaurant manager may benefit from understanding the aspects of the transformational and the transactional leadership models when developing and implementing their strategies to reduce employee turnover.

The fourth theme was unexpected and corresponded to innovative practices involving the use of labor (*labor inversion*) to reduce employee turnover within the restaurant industry. The findings relating to the fourth theme provided insight on how the roles of cultural perception, demographics, and work ethic tied into a recruitment strategy that remained effective. Therefore, the business challenges linking to employee turnover that stemmed from employee burnout, absenteeism, turnover intent, and poor work ethic may be addressed using buffer-staffing and foreign labor pools.

Restaurant managers may use the themes found in this doctoral study to refine their strategies to reducing employee turnover in their organizations. The findings may also apply to other industries and may offer other managers and business leaders with beneficial strategies to reduce employee turnover. Participants and other interest groups may gain access to the results of this study through online databases. This doctoral study may form part of the ProQuest database. Also, I will provide a summary that will be written in an audience-appropriate language containing the results and distribute the summary to the restaurant managers who participated in this research. Also, the findings might be useful to the local Chamber of Commerce to share with the incumbent and future members on addressing the business problem of employee turnover.

Implications for Social Change

The findings of this study provided useful information of the successful strategies that restaurant managers used to reduce employee turnover. Employee turnover remains a significant business problem that could negatively impact the profitability and the operating efficiency of any business (Gupta & Shaw, 2014). With the operations and profit margins of businesses being adversely affected, future employment opportunities and community development initiatives could become difficult to realize. Therefore, reducing employee turnover may contribute to the stabilization of business operations that could enhance service excellence and profitability.

With improvements in the profitability of businesses from reducing employee turnover, employers could make positive contributions to increasing the wages of their workers. Higher wages could contribute to the stabilization of communities, and lead to improvements in the standards of living and social conditions outside of the workplace. Also, with the improved business outlook and profitability from the reduction in employee turnover. Governments will have access to more taxable business revenue that could be used to improve communities and the nation.

Recommendations for Action

Restaurant managers may consider reviewing their strategies for reducing employee turnover against those listed in this study. Restaurant managers should be aware and understand what successful strategies exist that may be useful to address the problem of employee turnover in their organizations. If restaurant managers do not have successful strategies to reduce employee turnover, they should consider developing strategies relevant to their business types after well-known and effective practices. Hence, the findings of this study may be helpful in providing useful information to restaurant managers toward the development of strategies to reduce employee turnover.

The findings of this research may be beneficial to restaurant managers and other business leaders. The implementation of effective strategies to reduce employee turnover could contribute to the retention of valuable human capital. Also, the reduction in employee turnover could contribute to sustaining profitability by enhancing operational performance. Understanding the findings of this research may be particularly useful to the restaurant managers not only in the Port of Spain area but throughout the country and the broader business ecology.

Business leaders belonging to other sectors could also benefit from the findings of this study. Many industries may experience similar operating constraints as the restaurant industry. As employee turnover is a ubiquitous phenomenon, affecting business entities of all sizes and types (Grzenda & Buezynski, 2015). The study will be available through the ProQuest database. Furthermore, I will disseminate the results of this research, through the local Chamber of Commerce, business journals, and other scholarly journals. Also, I may share the results of this study through the various training forums and seminars on reducing employee turnover not only within the restaurant industry but in other sectors.

Recommendations for Further Research

The purpose of this study was to explore the successful strategies restaurant managers used to reduce employee turnover. The finding of the study may be of benefit to the managers of the restaurant industry toward the development and implementation of successful strategies for reducing employee turnover. Recommendations for future research include focusing on restaurant organizations outside of the Port of Spain area. Using the target population of Port of Spain could be a limitation of this study.

Understanding the strategies used on a broader target population could be used in enhancing the generalizability of the findings.

Another area for future research would be to explore the successful strategies managers use to reduce employee turnover within other industries such as the hotel, manufacturing, and retail sectors. Future research in the hotel, manufacturing, and retail sectors would be useful as these segments offer wages that are comparable to the restaurant industry and might attract similar labor forces. Understanding what strategies are common to other areas could be helpful to managers and business leaders with the development and implementation of strategies to improve their operating efficiencies and profitability from the retention of workers.

Further research is also recommended to explore the existence of the fourth theme of labor inversion within restaurant organizations outside of the Port of Spain area. Also, it may be useful to extend the research to explore the existence of the fourth theme within other industries. The fourth theme of this research did not appear to be leadership-centric as the other three themes. Nevertheless, the innovative method used by the restaurant managers to manipulate the way labor is used and sourced to sustain operating efficiencies, reduce burnout, and jobs stress due to short-staffing concerns that could lead to employee turnover could provide an interesting topic for further exploration.

Reflections

The completion of my study toward the award of the title of Doctor of Business Administration has served as a reality check. Over my academic life, I have come across the work other researchers who have impacted positively toward understanding many phenomena affecting business operations. Unfortunately, before this study, I did not have an understanding or appreciation of the quantum of work that goes into the emergence of academic contributions. This Doctoral journey has led to the refining of my attention to detail and my appreciation of the role of research in resolving or understanding problems that affect business operations and profitability.

Before I started collecting data for this study, I thought that getting four managers to engage would be an easy task. I felt that the need to solve or understand the problem of turnover would attract sufficient interest within the business ecology. Conversely, after receiving IRB approval and making numerous formal requests for participation, I realized how difficult it was to draw participants. When I eventually achieved participation approval, I quickly realized how busy the participants were and that time was a precious commodity that they could not waste. I paid close attention to detail, sticking to the protocol, and preserving an ethical awareness toward extracting as much useful information, as I was not sure a second chance might be available.

I am grateful to the Walden University for providing me with the opportunity to take this journey. I am also appreciative of my awareness and development toward working or conducting research in a real-world context. I am now better prepared to embark on future research. The findings of this study and the possible benefits or contributions to the field of business have bolstered my resolve that I can make a difference. Furthermore, I am excited and equipped with the right mindset and expectations aligned with the reality associated with a dynamic business ecology. I am ready to become a change agent!

Conclusion

Employee turnover remains a business problem that has engaged the attention of scholars and business leaders for decades. Grzenda and Buezynski (2015) argued that employee turnover is a ubiquitous phenomenon, affecting business entities of all sizes and types. Managers of businesses could spend up to 200% the annual salary of the departed employees to restore operational continuity (Hom, Mitchell, Lee, & Griffeth, 2012). Not all business leaders or managers possess the necessary strategies to reduce employee turnover. Hence, many businesses are subject to significant operational disruptions and the degradation of profit margins, bolstering the need for research on the phenomenon of employee turnover.

The purpose of the research was to explore the strategies the managers of restaurants used to reduce employee turnover. The target focus was the restaurants in the Port of Spain area in Trinidad and Tobago. The approach to conducting this research included the qualitative method and multiple case study strategy. The lens used for viewing the phenomenon was the transformational leadership model developed by James McGregor Burns. The findings of the study included themes that were in alignment with the transformational model and the transactional model. Also, an unexpected theme involving the use of labor referred to as labor inversion emerged.

The emergent themes of this study were of different categories. The diversity of the findings confirmed that there are many approaches or strategies to dealing with the phenomenon of employee turnover. Also, the results could serve to encourage managers of the restaurants and other organizations to analyze their business practices toward adopting or developing useful strategies to reduce employee turnover.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol and Interview Questions

Interview Protocol

(a) Introduce myself to the participant(s).

(b) Provide participants with the invitation letter and consent form.

(c) Review the contents of the invitation letter and the informed consent form with the participants, answering questions and concerns of the participants.

(d) Participant signs and dates the consent form.

(e) The researcher signs the consent form.

(f) Provide the participant with a copy of the invitation letter and signed informed consent form.

(g) Turn on the recording device.

(h) Follow the procedure to introduce participant(s) with pseudonym/ alphanumeric code for identification, noting the date and time.

(i) Commence the interview with question one, following through to the final question.

(j) Follow up with additional questions stemming from responses or observations.

(k) Complete the interview sequence and discuss member checking with the participant(s).

(l) Thank the participant(s) for their participation in the study. Reiterate all contact information available for follow-up questions and concerns from participants.

(m) End of the protocol.

Interview Questions

1. What leadership strategies have you used and found to be most effective in reducing employee turnover of restaurant employees?
2. What leadership strategies have you used and found to be least effective in reducing employee turnover of restaurant employees?
3. What leadership characteristics did you find best facilitate the reduction of employee turnover of restaurant employees?
4. From your experience, what are the barriers to reducing employee turnover of restaurant employees?
5. How did you address the key barriers to implementing the leadership strategies for reducing employee turnover in your restaurant?
6. What additional information would you like to share about reducing employee turnover among restaurant employees?

Appendix B: National Institutes of Health Certification

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that [redacted] successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 05/11/2016.

Certification Number: 2071864.

Appendix C: Letter to the Chamber of Commerce

<Date>

<Address Block>

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is XXXX XXXXX. I am a doctoral candidate in the Doctoral Business Administration program at the Walden University. According to the program's guidelines, the candidate must perform a doctoral study to fulfill the doctoral degree requirement. The topic of my research is to explore the successful strategies restaurant managers use to reduce employee turnover. I have received approval from the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct this study and was assigned the approval number 01-26-18-0643310. For the proposed study, I will be using a multiple case study design that includes the exploration of four restaurant cases from the Port of Spain area. I am seeking the assistance of the chamber in providing me with a list of restaurant organizations that operate within the Port of Spain area. I will purposefully select four restaurant organizations from the list and invite them to participate in the study.

The results of the proposed study will be useful to managers of restaurants seeking to address the business problem of employee turnover through the development of successful strategies. Also, the results of the study could be useful in the creation of financial benefits to restaurant organizations in the form of cost savings from the reduction in frequent personnel recruitment and replacements. The cost saving could be beneficial for reinvestments or toward making positive adjustments to the compensation of workers.

I appreciate your valuable time and thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Respectfully,

____

Researcher's Signature

Appendix D: Letter of Cooperation

<Community research partner name and contact information>

<Date>

Dear Researcher,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled: Successful Strategies for Reducing Employee Turnover in the Restaurant Industry within the Insert Name of Community Partner. I authorize you to engage with our restaurant managers that operate within the Port of Spain area of Trinidad and Tobago, to conduct and record interviews that are 30-60 minutes in length as part of your data collection process. You are also authorized to have access to the organization's employees' records that reflect hiring and employee departures over a minimum period of one year. However, this access does not include employee medical information or company financials.

I grant access for you to obtain copies of company documents such as pension, incentive plans, and relevant policies etcetera that is considered reflective of the organization's employee retention initiatives. I also, give permission for you to engage in follow up visits to have the participant manager participate in the verification of the transcript's interpretation that could require an additional 20-30 minutes as well as for the dissemination of your results.

I also understand that all individual participation will be voluntary and at the participant's discretion. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change. I understand that the researcher will not be naming our organization or employees in the doctoral project report that is published in ProQuest. I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies. I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the researcher's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Sincerely,

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Contact Information