

2018

# Strategies to Reduce Voluntary Employee Turnover in Business Organizations

Kevin Lance Bernard  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Kevin Lance Bernard

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
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Walden University  
2018

Abstract

Strategies to Reduce Voluntary Employee Turnover in Business Organizations

by

Kevin Lance Bernard

MEd, Strayer University, 2006

MBA, Strayer University, 2005

BBA, Fisk University, 2000

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

Walden University

June 2018

## Abstract

Industry leaders in the United States have spent \$11 billion annually in advertising, hiring, and training expenditures associated with voluntary employee turnover. Using employee turnover theory as the conceptual framework, the purpose of this multicase study was to explore strategies leaders of marketing and consulting firms used to reduce voluntary employee turnover. Participants were purposefully selected based on evidence of their successful experiences in reducing voluntary employee turnover in their organizations. Data were collected by conducting semistructured interviews with 6 leaders in 3 marketing and consulting firms located in the southeastern United States and by reviewing organizational documents related to strategies to reduce employee turnover, including annual reports, newsletters, policy handbooks, and financial statements. Data were analyzed using Yin's 5-phase elements of data analysis: (a) compile, (b) disassemble, (c) reassemble, (d) clarify, and (e) conclude. Three themes emerged from this study: leaders' comprehension of reducing voluntary employee turnover, essential strategies for leaders to reduce voluntary employee turnover, and that employee commitment and performance management to reduce voluntary employee turnover. Leaders of marketing and consulting firms and other business organizations could create positive social change through effective strategies to reduce employee turnover and unemployment. Reducing unemployment is important because unemployed individuals experience detrimental changes in family relationships, higher mortality rates, and increased physical health problems.

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## Dedication

I dedicate this study to God and my Lord and Savior. All glory belongs to God, for, if you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes. I thank my mother, my father, and my sister who have supported and listened to me along this doctoral journey. A special dedication to Bailey, Benjamin and Jay to carry on the torch and to do even greater exploits in this lifetime. You all are the greatest!

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## Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Employee turnover causes direct and indirect costs, such as labor cost increase and intangible asset loss (Sharma & Nambudiri, 2015). For instance, between July 31, 2015, and July 29, 2016, voluntary employee turnover in the United States was 3.4%, resulting in financial losses to U.S. businesses (Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2016). Organizational leaders experiencing voluntary employee turnover in their organizations spend at least 150% of an employee's annual salary in advertising, hiring, and training a new employee (Sharma & Nambudiri, 2015). Roche, Duffield, Homer, Buchan, and Dimitrelis (2015) claimed that U.S. industries have spent \$11 billion annually in advertising, hiring, and training expenditures due to voluntary employee turnover. Organizational leaders must invest in employee turnover-reduction initiatives to avoid the high costs of voluntary employee turnover (Allen, Ericksen, & Collins, 2013; Ashmore & Gilson, 2015).

### **Background of the Problem**

Solaja, Idowu, and James (2016) demonstrated that employees perceiving that their leaders value and support employees' personal development and overall improvement efforts become emotionally attached to their organizations, which reduces voluntary turnover intentions. Employees have a strong desire to receive compensation for their organizational commitment (Solaja et al., 2016). Reed, Goolsby, and Johnston (2016) noted that organizational support plays an important role in enhancing organizational commitment. Understanding the factors that contribute to voluntary

employee turnover is crucial because a stable workforce is necessary to operate a business efficiently and effectively (Reed et al., 2016).

Beek, Taris, Schaufeli, and Brenninkmeijer (2014) claimed that leaders increasingly experience a lack of employee continuity, which increases costs associated with employee recruitment and training to ensure operational effectiveness. Leaders of marketing and consulting firms face all of these important challenges, including the high costs associated with voluntary employee turnover (Allen, Ericksen, & Collins, 2013; Ashmore & Gilson, 2015; Kim, 2016). The voluntary employee turnover challenge highlights the need for formal research that focuses on strategies that leaders of marketing and consulting firms could use to decrease voluntary employee turnover.

### **Problem Statement**

Roche et al. (2015) noted that U.S. industries have spent \$11 billion annually in advertising, hiring, and training expenditures associated with voluntary employee turnover. Between July 31, 2015 and July 29, 2016, voluntary employee turnover in the United States was 3.4%, resulting in financial losses to U.S. businesses (BLS, 2016). The general business problem was that the voluntary separation of knowledgeable employees results in loss of corporate profit in U.S. companies. The specific business problem was that some leaders of marketing and consulting firms lack strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative multicase study was to explore strategies that leaders of marketing and consulting firms use to reduce voluntary employee turnover.

The target population consisted of leaders of marketing and consulting firms in the southeastern United States, possessing successful experience in reducing voluntary employee turnover. The implications for positive social change included allowing other business leaders to gain an improved understanding of the causes of voluntary employee turnover, which may reduce voluntary employment turnover and the overall unemployment rate. Reducing unemployment is critical because unemployed individuals have elevated rates of mental and physical health problems, higher mortality rates, and experience detrimental changes in family relationships (Wahlbeck & McDaid, 2012).

### **Nature of the Study**

Three types of research methodologies exist: (a) quantitative, (b) qualitative, and (c) mixed methods (Yin, 2014). I used the qualitative methodology. The quantitative research method involves statistical data and defined variables (Park & Park, 2016). Quantitative research involves examining and testing a theory, considering relationships, and analyzing statistical data (Hoare & Hoe, 2013). A quantitative method was not appropriate for this study because I did not need to test a theory nor collect numerical data for inferential statistical analyses. Mixed-methods research involved both qualitative and quantitative research methods in tandem to enhance a study (Hoare & Hoe, 2013). Researchers use the mixed-methods research methodology when using quantitative methods to test theories related to the overarching research question (Venkatesh, Brown, & Bala, 2013). Researchers use the mixed-methods research methodology to bring meaning to complex social phenomena; however, the mixed-methods research methodology has challenges for novice researchers because of the high level of

complexity in its design, integration, and rigor (Skalidou & Oya, 2018). I did not select the mixed-methods research methodology for this study because I am a novice researcher and the mixed-methods research methodology requires a high level of sophistication in the design, integration, and rigor associated with the use of both quantitative and qualitative research methods in a single study.

Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, and Fontenot (2013) noted that researchers use the qualitative research method to collect, analyze, and interpret comprehensive narrative and visual data to gain insights into a particular phenomenon of interest. Qualitative researchers collect open-ended and emerging data that they develop into themes (Yin, 2014). Researchers whose goal is gaining an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon conduct qualitative research (Dworkin, 2012). The qualitative research methodology is appropriate for exploring different participants' experiences through thick descriptions of their experiences (Petty, Thomson, & Stew, 2012). Park and Park (2016) wrote that the qualitative research methodology is suitable for gaining a better understanding of the underlying meaning of a situation. In this study, the qualitative research methodology was appropriate because I collected, analyzed, and interpreted comprehensive narrative and visual data to gain insights into a particular phenomenon of interest, which was the exploration of strategies leaders use to reduce voluntary employee turnover.

A case study design allows researchers to conduct an in-depth investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within the phenomenon's real-life context (Yin, 2014). In addition, a case study research design allows researchers to engage in exploratory research by asking *why*, *how*, or *what* questions (Yin, 2014). I selected a case study



design because I conducted an in-depth investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within the real-life context of the phenomenon under investigation. I asked participants *why*, *how*, and *what* questions to explore the problem under investigation. Narrative researchers study the lives of several individuals through these individuals' stories (Bolton, 2015; Clarke, 2013; Yin, 2014). The narrative research design was not suitable for this study because I did not study individuals' lives through these individuals' stories. An ethnographic study focuses on an entire culture to gain the perspective of the individuals who live in that culture (Onwuegbuzie, Leech, & Collins, 2012). Maes, Closser, and Kalofonos (2014) noted that researchers use the ethnographic design when investing long periods of research in the field to study a culture. I did not select the ethnographic research design because I did not study a cultural group of people over an extended period. Phenomenological researchers explore the underlying meaning of the participants' lived experiences (Clarke, 2013). Because I did not explore the underlying meaning of participants' lived experiences, I did not select a phenomenological research design for this study.

### **Research Question**

The overarching research question for this qualitative multicase study was as follows: What strategies do leaders of marketing and consulting firms use to reduce voluntary employee turnover?

### **Interview Questions**

Each interview question could generate information that allowed me to answer the overarching research question for this study. The list of interview questions are below.

1. What strategies have you used that have proven successful in the reduction of voluntary employee turnover?
2. How do you measure the success of the strategies you have used to reduce voluntary employee turnover in your organization?
3. How do you promote policies and values that align with initiatives to reduce voluntary employee turnover in your organization?
4. How are strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover effectively communicated throughout the organizational ranks and among stakeholders?
5. What role does leadership play in the reduction of voluntary employee turnover in your organization?
6. What are some of the consequences of not having strategies for the reduction of voluntary employee turnover in your organization?
7. What more can you add to this study regarding strategies needed to reduce voluntary employee turnover?

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this study was Mobley's (1977) employee turnover model (ETM). Mobley outlined the following 10 stages that an employee experiences in the turnover process: (a) evaluates current job, (b) determines job satisfaction or dissatisfaction, (c) thinks about resigning from current job, (d) evaluates the idea of searching for a new job and the costs related to leaving current job, (e) plans the new job

search, (f) searches for a new job, (g) evaluates alternatives, (h) compares current job to alternatives, (i) plans to resign or stay, and (j) resigns or stays.

Mobley's (1977) ETM was a suitable conceptual framework for this study because business leaders could benefit from understanding the 10 stages that an employee experiences in the turnover process to identify strategies that business leaders could use to reduce voluntary employee turnover. Reed, Goolsby, and Johnston (2016) noted that organizational support has an important role in enhancing employee organizational commitment. Kim and Chang (2014) claimed that business leaders' practices, including recruitment and hiring, compensation and benefits, training and development, and supervision and evaluation, are items that directly influence the level of job satisfaction of new employees as well as their level of commitment to the organization.

Understanding the factors that contribute to voluntary employee turnover is crucial because a stable workforce is necessary to operate a business efficiently and effectively (Reed et al., 2016). Understanding Mobley's stages that an employee experiences in the turnover process allows business leaders to develop strategies to identify an employee experiencing one or more of these stages and, ultimately, respond to the intention-to-resign problem to reduce voluntary employee turnover.

### **Operational Definitions**

*Normative commitment.* Normative commitment is the motivating factors that increase employee engagement (Vandenberghe, Mignonac, & Manville, 2015).

*Organizational commitment.* Organizational commitment is the manner in which a person identifies with an organization and the overall willingness to work for that organization (Posey, Roberts, & Lowry, 2015).

*Psychological contract.* Psychological contract is the perceived reciprocal obligations that characterize a relationship between an employee and organizational entity (Eckerd, Hill, Boyer, Donohue, & Ward, 2013).

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

Foss and Hallberg (2013) noted that assumptions include items that may influence the researcher's true understanding of the study. Limitations are the weaknesses found in the study (Brutus, Aguinis, & Wassmer, 2013). Gutiérrez, Márquez, and Reficco (2016) defined delimitations as those elements of a study that set boundaries and limit the scope of the research.

#### **Assumptions**

The first assumption of this study was the participants respond to the interview questions honestly and without bias. The second assumption was the data that I collected in this study would accurately reflect study participants' experiences. The third assumption was the data I collected are sufficient to answer this study's overarching research question. The fourth and final assumption was the leaders of marketing and consulting firms are willing to participate in this study and company documents for review were accessible.

**Limitations**

A limitation of this study was only leaders from three marketing and consulting firms participated in this study. Another limitation was some leaders possessing knowledge and experience regarding voluntary employee turnover might decide not to participate in this study. Finally, the time limit for interviews was another limitation of this study.

**Delimitations**

In this study, I conducted in-depth, face-to-face, semistructured interviews with leaders of only three marketing and consulting firms located in southeastern United States. I excluded leaders living in geographical areas not included in southeastern United States. I interviewed only selected participants that met the eligibility criteria. I excluded leaders of marketing and consulting firms possessing unsuccessful experience in reducing voluntary employee turnover.

**Significance of the Study**

In almost every industry, top management faces employee turnover, which is one of the most expensive and difficult workforce challenges (Ozcelik, 2015). Whenever leaders reduce voluntary employee turnover, overall unemployment decreases. Decreasing unemployment benefits society because the unemployed experience high rates of mental and physical health problems, higher mortality rates, and negative changes in family relationships (Wahlbeck & McDaid, 2012). In this section, I discuss this qualitative multicase study's potential contributions to business practice and implications for social change.

### **Contribution to Business Practice**

The findings of this qualitative multicase study provided essential information to business leaders related to strategies these leaders used to decrease voluntary employee turnover. Cascio (2014) found that if a company with 1,000 employees has a turnover rate of 10% and an average annual salary of \$50,000, the turnover cost for one employee would be \$75,000, and the cost to replace 100 employees would be \$7.5 million. Reducing employee turnover could increase the financial resources required to fill vacant positions with trained and productive employees (Cascio, 2014). Becton, Walker, and Jones-Farmer (2014) noted that job dissatisfaction, lack of trust, and lack of intrinsic motivation are major factors leading to voluntary employee turnover.

Tourangeau et al. (2015) noted that employee turnover affects productivity and creates many problems for management, such as hiring new employees, bearing the advertising costs, hiring temporary employees, and spending much time and money in the selection of new employees. The findings from this qualitative multicase study helped business leaders decrease voluntary employee turnover. Decreasing voluntary employee turnover allowed business leaders to save the costs associated with advertising, hiring, selecting, and training new employees.

### **Implications for Social Change**

The findings from this qualitative multicase study provided an opportunity for positive social change through the implementation of new knowledge and understanding and through the strategies leaders used to decrease voluntary employee turnover in business organizations. By developing a work environment that was conducive to

reducing voluntary employee turnover, leaders assistance in bringing about positive social change through helping other business leaders gain a better understanding of the causes of voluntary employee turnover, which may reduce unemployment and improve the quality of life of employees. Reducing unemployment is critical because unemployed individuals have elevated rates of mental and physical health problems, higher mortality rates, and experience detrimental changes in family relationships (Wahlbeck & McDaid, 2012).

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

I reviewed the literature using Mobley's (1977) ETM to focus on voluntary employee turnover in business organizations published in various journals and seminal scholarly books. Google Scholar, linked to the Walden University Library's website, served as the primary source for accessing journal articles. The Walden University's Library allowed students access to various databases. Databases used to obtain literature for this study included Business Source Complete, ABI/INFORM Complete, Emerald Management, Sage Premier, Academic Search Complete, and ProQuest Central. I accessed various open journals to obtain literature related to the impact of high voluntary employee turnover on business organizations, specifically for articles relating to the impact of high voluntary employee turnover on business organizations context. AOSIS OpenJournals provides open access to peer-reviewed scholarly journals from various academic disciplines. Similarly, ScienceDirect provides both tolled and open access to a full-text scientific database containing journal articles and book chapters. I accessed government websites to obtain information about demographics, industry statistics, and

regulations about the effect of high voluntary employee turnover on business organizations.

The literature review section has several subsections. The literature review begins with an introduction, which included information about the strategy for searching the literature, the frequencies, and percentages of peer-reviewed articles as well as publication dates. In the next section, I focus on the application of the literature to the research question and include a brief description of the purpose of the study. The themes contained in the literature review are employee turnover, employee retention, job satisfaction, communication, organizational commitment, performance management, relationship management, and training and development. Throughout the literature review, I compare and contrast different academic arguments and the relationship of previous research findings to this qualitative multicase study.

The three themes include subthemes. Under the first theme, leaders' comprehension of reducing voluntary employee turnover, subthemes emerged and are employee turnover and employee retention, which include a critical analysis and synthesis of Mobley's (1977) ETM, using supporting and contrasting theories from relevant literature on the topic of the effect of high voluntary employee turnover on business organizations. The voluntary employee turnover theme includes a review of other relevant theories, such as Lee's (1988) job satisfaction theory, Farrell's (1983) job satisfaction theory, and Maslow's (1943) motivation theory. The first theme's section concludes with a discussion of the effect of voluntary employee turnover on business organizations.



Under the second theme essential strategies for leaders to reduce voluntary employee turnover, subthemes emerged and are job satisfaction and communication, including a brief overview of the development of the impact of high voluntary employee turnover on business organizations over time, which includes common concerns related to employee retention as well as the various definitions, antecedents, and consequences. Under the third theme, employee commitment and performance management reduced voluntary employee turnover, subthemes emerged and are organizational commitment; performance management; relationship management and training and development, including a brief overview of the impact of high voluntary employee turnover on the workplace climate. The theme includes a discussion of the common concerns related to the major elements of employee retention, including salary, benefits, and training. Employees with a lack of understanding of their job duties usually become disappointed with their jobs, which increases employees' intentions to resign. As a result, the employee turnover rate increases (Solaja et al., 2016).

The strategy for searching through existing literature entailed the use of keywords and phrases in the various databases listed above. I applied filters to database searches to narrow down the search results. These filters included specific keywords, a specified period, and specific databases. When using Google Scholar, I gave preference to articles published in or after 2013, ensuring the literature is topical and relevant. Secondly, I gave preference to articles that were available in the Walden University Library. Thirdly, I used the Crossref and Ulrich's Periodicals Directory to verify that the literature is peer-reviewed. The keywords and phrases I used in my search were *employment turnover*,

*employee retention, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, performance management, communication, relationship management, and training and development.*

The 388 references that comprise this study include 367 scholarly peer-reviewed articles representing 94.6% of the total, 21 non-peer reviewed articles representing 5.4%, three government websites representing 7.7%, and 24 books and doctoral dissertation representing 6.2%. The total number of references published within the 2014-2018 period is 330, which is 85.1% of the total number of references. The literature review contains 143 references, with 137 of them published within the 2014-2018 period, representing 96 %, and 141 from scholarly peer-reviewed sources, representing 98.6% of the total. A literature review is a systematic method for identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing the existing body of studies completed by researchers, scholars, and practitioners (Archibald, Radil, Xiaozhou, & Hanson, 2015).

### **Application to the Applied Business Problem**

The purpose of for this qualitative multicase study was to explore strategies leaders of marketing and consulting firms use to reduce voluntary employee turnover. Employee attrition is very costly and an important challenges confronting organizational leaders (Jain, 2013). Developing an understanding of such strategies requires a qualitative approach, more specifically an exploratory multicase study. Clausen, Tufte, and Borg (2014) stated that employee turnover could reflect different types of actions that lead to turnover, such as resigning from a job, being terminated from a job, or optional retirement. The findings from this study provided insight into strategies leaders of marketing and consulting firms used to reduce voluntary employee turnover.

Holtom, Tidd, Mitchell, and Lee (2013) stated that the use and understanding of the factors that affect voluntary turnover should allow leaders and organizations to place more importance on those issues. The findings of the study assisted with the development of industry appropriate strategies. Once an understanding of the underlying meaning emerges, industry-appropriate strategies might equip leaders with the skills to reduce voluntary employee turnover in business organizations. Voluntary employee turnover is a cause for alarm because of the costs associated with recruitment, selection, and training and the increasing scarcity of experienced talent (Khoele & Daya, 2014). The findings from this study-improved business practice by identifying industry appropriate strategies, leading to a reduction in voluntary employee turnover and an increase in productivity and organizational competitiveness. The potential for social change rests in the development of strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover in business organizations.

### **Employee Turnover Model**

This section includes a review of literature related to the way other researchers have used Mobley's ETM in their studies. Finally, this section included a discussion of other contrasting theories. The conceptual framework for this study was Mobley's (1977) employee turnover model (ETM). Mobley outlined the following 10 stages that an employee experiences in the turnover process: (a) evaluates current job, (b) determines job satisfaction or dissatisfaction, (c) thinks about resigning from current job, (d) evaluates the idea of searching for a new job and the costs related to leaving current job, (e) plans the new job search, (f) searches for a new job, (g) evaluates alternatives, (h) compares current job to alternatives, (i) plans to resign or stay, and (j) resigns or stays.

Mobley's (1977) ETM was a suitable conceptual framework for this study because business leaders must understand the 10 stages that an employee experiences in the turnover process to identify strategies that business leaders used to reduce voluntary employee turnover. Reed et al. (2016) noted that job satisfaction and organizational commitment is important regarding the turnover intent of an employee in the organization. A satisfied employee is one who brings a positive effect and work values that leads to increased efficiency and productivity, which leads to lower absenteeism and employee turnover, as well as the reduction of hiring costs (Reed et al., 2016). Rafiee, Bahrami, and Entezarian (2015) noted that organizational commitment has been seen as an interesting and attractive subject, because it helps organizations predict job performance, job rotation, influence the level of job satisfaction, employee absence, and reduce voluntary employee turnover.

Kuria et al. (2012) used Mobley's ETM to determine labor turnover in the service industry across the world and found that the hospitality sector leads in the area of voluntary employee turnover because many employees change jobs from time to time. Consequently, Kuria et al. argued that some causes of labor turnover are due to industry-specific factors. Both internal and external causes of labor turnover affect growth, profitability, and customer satisfaction whenever employee turnover occurs in the workplace. Kuria et al. noted that employers see the process of employee turnover as a natural and inevitable feature of the industry. The main purpose of Kuria et al.'s study was to establish the internal and external causes of labor turnover in three- and five-star rated hotels in Nairobi City (Kuria et al., 2012).

Kuria et al. (2012) used the Employee Attitude Survey to reveal that while the lack of balance between work and personal life was a major cause of job resignation (32%), the lack of staff involvement in decision making accounted for 56% in both sets of hotels. Kuria et al. noted that employees were familiar with job requirements and departmental mission statements, which was beneficial in creating conducive work environments, prompting employees to ask for flexible hours. Respondents cited poor remuneration, with over 60% of the respondents dissatisfied. The undefined reward system was a factor in job resignations, as 46% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the reward system. Kuria et al. noted that leaders should improve the working conditions for their employees, establish training policies to equip employees with job requirements and expectations, and establish a reward system to motivate workers other than monetary remunerations.

Wang, Wang, Xu, and Ji (2014) used Mobley's ETM and found that retaining employees remains a primary concern for many organizations during days of intellectual property because intellectual capital has become a critical component of wealth creation. Wang et al. provided a theoretical overview of the different periods of motives and domains or targets of employee turnover and highlighted the importance of employee performance. Wang et al. stated that the objective of their study was to present literature on the complex relationship between individual performance characteristics and withdrawal tendency based on social capital theory.

In addition, the study revealed that in the traditional attitude turnover model, the process of voluntary turnover is the reversed transformation process of employees'

retention, psychology, and behaviors, mainly consisting of four routes (Wang et al., 2014). Wang et al. (2014) noted that these four routes included the employees' (a) acceptance of job dissatisfaction that leads to the resigning process, (b) search for substitutable jobs before turnover, (c) evaluation of such substitutable jobs, and (d) occurrence of turnover behavior. Finally, Wang et al. proposed an integrative model of the relationship, arguing that performance character may lead to withdrawal tendency even turnover behavior through four different routes with the introduction of the job-coupling variable. Wang et al. claimed that the practical implication of the proposed model for practitioners and researchers encourage further discussion and suggestions.

Lee (1988) tested Mobley's ETM, which posited that job dissatisfaction was a significant predictor of employee turnover when all of the theory's variables were included in the analyses and testing whether Mobley's model predicted a relationship between organizational commitment and job involvement in lieu of job satisfaction. Employees experiencing job dissatisfaction may (a) contemplate resigning, (b) assess the emotional and financial costs of a job search, (c) decide whether or not to search for the job, (d) conduct the job search, (e) evaluate the job search potential, (f) compare potential opportunities to the current position, and (g) decide to leave and actually leave the current position (Lee, 1988). Lee found that not everyone was following the exact same steps or in the same order.

Kim and Chang (2014) used Mobley's ETM to reduce employee turnover through retention practices, which was an area of great interest to employers and depends on a highly skilled cooperative extension workforce. Cooperative extension was a general

term meaning the application of scientific research and new knowledge to agricultural practices through farmer education (Kim & Chang, 2014). Kim and Chang noted that the field of *extension* now encompasses a wide range of communication and learning activities organized for rural people by educators from different disciplines, including agriculture, agriculture marketing, health, and business studies. In recent years, cooperative extension has experienced the loss of many local educators due to the resignation or retirement incentives offered as a cost saving measure to manage reduced funding (Kim & Chang, 2014).

Kim and Chang (2014) noted that due to the type of work, the training needed, and the small pool of qualified applicants, it is important to pay attention to the retention of newly hired extension workers. A linkage of factors was predicted to the likelihood of new employees' intention to resign. Kim and Chang noted that human resource practices, including recruitment and hiring, compensation and benefits, training and development, and supervision and evaluation, are items that directly influence the level of job satisfaction of new employees as well as their level of commitment to the organization.

Hale et al. (2016) used Mobley's ETM to examine employees' perceptions of the external labor market (i.e., expected utility of search and evaluation of alternatives), intentions to search, actual job search activities, and the results of that search upon the turnover decision. Empirical researchers ignore the role that job search plays in turnover (Hale et al., 2016). Hale et al. noted that operationalized concepts of perceptions of the external labor market, the individual's job search, and the results of the job search upon the individual's decision to resign are very important. The subjects were 106 alumni of a

branch campus of a large Midwestern university and the respondents held a variety of managerial and professional employment positions (Hale et al., 2016).

Hale et al. (2016) collected data through phone interviews and assessed employee turnover over a thirteen-month period. Hale et al. predicted turnover accurately by the evaluation of alternatives, intention to search, expected utility of the search, and intentions to resign. Hale et al. revealed that each evaluation accounted for unique variance in the prediction of the intention to search, the expected benefit of the search, and intentions to resign.

Prottas (2013) used Mobley's ETM to retain nurse anesthetists in the profession to meet the increasing demands of the healthcare system. Prottas investigated the relationships between work climate and job satisfaction among Dutch nurse anesthetists, using a questionnaire distributed to Dutch nurse anesthetists to assess their perceptions of their work climates and their levels of job satisfaction. Prottas performed multiple regression analyses to obtain the predictive value of work climate for job satisfaction. All of the work climate characteristics had statistically significant correlations to job satisfaction, and explained 20% of the variance in job satisfaction. Prottas found to achieve a higher level of job satisfaction among nurse anesthetists, it was necessary to improve some essential work climate characteristics, such as (a) making the nurse anesthetist feel an important part of the organization's mission statement, (b) discussing progress at work, (c) giving recognition for delivered work, (d) encouraging development, and (e) providing sufficient opportunities to learn and to grow.



Treuren and Frankish (2014) used Mobley's ETM to compare part-time versus full-time workers' predictability to turnover. Treuren and Franklin used the variables that Mobley hypothesized to precede turnover decisions that showed previous research related to turnover. Treuren and Frankish found that none of the hypothesized antecedent variables significantly related to turnover within the part-time group. Within the full-time group, all of the hypothesized precursors to turnover related to actual turnover. Treuren and Frankish noted that there was evidence to suggest differential predictability of turnover across full-time and part-time employment status groups, suggesting that two groups may have a different psychology of work.

Nwagwu (2014) explored critical issues business leaders face using Mobley's (1977) turnover theory. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that over 4.5 million employees left their jobs due to resigning, termination, or layoffs. Nwagwu noted that hospitality leaders are among those with the highest attrition rates, which was a direct cause of poor customer satisfaction and decreased profitability. Nwagwu conducted interviews with hospitality leaders, examined documents, and wrote a reflective journal. Nwagwu analyzed the data and, as a result, four themes emerged, including the consequences of motivation, leadership characteristics, most effective employee retention strategies, and least effective employee retention strategies.

Nwagwu (2014) defined motivational outcome as the manager's responsibility to recruit, compensate, and manage employees to entice, motivate, and keep the best employees for an organization. Nwagwu noted that leadership characteristics include the ability to ascertain solutions to a variety of problems and convince employees to use

appropriate strategies to keep the organization operating effectively. Leaders use strategies to retain employees effectively, including to support and value employees and to provide a stable work environment during organizational change. Nwagwu argued that least effective strategies leaders use to retain employees was to ignore employee dissatisfaction.

Solaja et al. (2016) studied the employee turnover rate of customer service agents, using Herzberg's two-factor theory, to identify factors that predict employee turnover. The employee's compensation and morale are important to the customer service agents. Solaja et al. noted that the agents rated salary, benefits, and incentives as critical contributors to job satisfaction and their decision to remain in the organization. In addition, when the agents become motivated and willing to remain in the organization if leaders create a supportive work environment in which employee morale is high (Solaja et al., 2016).

Presbitero et al. (2016) used Mobley's ETM to explore high voluntary attrition that threatens the future of downsizing organizations. The purpose of Presbitero et al.'s phenomenological study is to investigate how an employee layoff announcement reduces the perception of organizational commitment to experienced and skilled workers. Presbitero et al. conducted face-to-face interviews with 20 journeyman-level artisans who had witnessed the layoff process. Presbitero et al. analyzed data collected from semistructured interviews using the modified van Kaam method and nine themes emerged. Presbitero et al. found that layoff implementation strategies decrease voluntary

employee attrition. Among these nine themes, job insecurity and mental and emotional stressors are the most important.

Presbitero et al. (2016) noted that a third theme also emerged, employee entitativity, defined as the instances when members of a group share similar attributes and form a more distinct entity than that of other individuals. These themes are associated with employee voluntary attrition. Presbitero et al. found that improving employees' understanding of the layoff process increased employee trust in leadership decisions, reduced voluntary attrition, increased knowledge retention, and improved organizational economic success.

Call, Nyberg, and Ployhart (2015) examined the factors that influence employee turnover, utilizing Mobley's ETM and building upon the context-emergent turnover theory. The factors that influence employee turnover are the changing quality and quantity of human capital assets; turnover dispersion (i.e., how distributed turnover events occur over time); and quality and quantity of replacement hires. Call et al. collected data from a sample of retail employees nested within stores of a prominent U.S. retail chain over five quarters. Call et al. found that the level of employee turnover rate differs conceptually and empirically from turnover rate change and that the two interact with each other to influence changes in unit performance.

Call et al. (2015) found that both the quality of those who leave as well as turnover dispersion moderate the relationship between turnover rate change and change in unit performance. Call et al. tested the turnover rate, staffing, and human capital resource using core context-emergent turnover theory propositions. Call et al. found

*when, why, and how* turnover rate changes, which included the holistic human capital resource system and influence unit performance (Call et al., 2015).

Qazi et al. (2015) used Mobley's ETM to explore the relationship among the perceptions of organizational politics (POP), job insecurity, job embeddedness, and turnover intentions. The worldwide increase in aspirations and provision of premium services in hospitality industry, especially in the five-star category, has led the customers to expect superior service in every interaction. Qazi et al. found that organizations need skilled and customer-oriented staff to maintain the established standards. Loss of such trained staff results in faulty sales experience opportunity costs that was detrimental to the reputation of the hotel, indicating turnover as a major concern in hospitality industry (Qazi et al., 2015).

Qazi et al. (2015) found that there is a need to look through the lens of job embeddedness (JE) and core self-evaluation (CSE) to understand actual and intended turnover, beyond the traditional job satisfaction prism to retain the trained staff. Qazi et al. collected data from employees of five-star hotels. Qazi et al. found that POP and job insecurity (JI) relate positively to turnover intentions (TI). However, the CSE of the employee that influence the employee's experiences, behavior, and intentions moderate the relationship. Qazi et al. noted that job embeddedness (JE) relates negatively to turnover intentions (TI) and enhances the organization-employee fit and linkage.

The development of a retention policy occurs through minimization of POP and enhancement in the JE of employees (Qazi et al., 2015). Individuals establish trust and transparency by sharing information about the transparent reward policies, distinguishing

high-performing employees. A retention policy is particularly important in the hospitality industry of Pakistan, where the level of POP and injustice is high. Employees realizing that they are not being mistreated or manipulated may enhance their embeddedness (Qazi et al., 2015).

Idris (2014) studied how to prevent attrition of gifted workers from highly competitive businesses in developing countries. Increasing financial benefits in order to retain employees is an unsustainable practice. Idris conducted interviews with bank leaders to determine how the environment, culture, and human resource policies contributed to employee retention. The bank leaders reported that flexibility in the workplace leads to job satisfaction (Idris, 2014). However, Idris noted that the need to determine if organizational culture and human resource practices affected attrition in Malaysian banks. Idris raised the need to re-examine organizational culture and human resource management systems in the Malaysian work environment (Idris, 2014).

Al-Emadi, Schwabenland, and Qi (2015) used Mobley's ETM to explore the manner employee retention positively influences an organization's knowledge-transfer outcomes. Individuals recognize this positive relationship through the impact that employee retention has on increasing a firm's level of the knowledge transfer antecedent and absorptive capacity, thereby increasing the potential value of the stocks of knowledge within the organization. Al-Emadi et al. stated that a paradoxical outcome emerges when individuals consider the effect of employee retention on knowledge transfer from the perspective of knowledge flows across the organization rather than knowledge stocks

within the organization. Case study analyses from research conducted in a multinational hotel chain identifies this paradox (Al-Emadi et al., 2015).

Balakrishnan (2014) used Mobley's ETM and found that employees define the companies in which they work. Attracting good talent is one thing, but keeping them is another. Balakrishnan argued that retaining key personnel is essential to long-term success for the organization. Employee retention has become one of the top issues and priorities among organizational agendas in virtually all business industries; as organizations struggle to compete effectively for *employer of choice* status in the ongoing talent war and to sustain and enhance the effectiveness of their overall performance. Balakrishnan noted that an employee retention strategy is essential if the organization is to remain productive over time and can become an important part of the hiring strategy by attracting the best candidates having heard of the excellent record of accomplishment that the organization has for employee care. Employee retention is more than rivaling your competition with higher wages. Balakrishnan noted that employee retention was about creating a work environment that nurtures diversity and mutual trust, providing challenging career opportunities, and treating people with respect and appreciation.

He, Zhang, and Zhang (2014) used Mobley's ETM to show the way individuals applied the Six Sigma DMAIC (Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve, Control) methodology to reduce the voluntary turnover rate of dispatched employees. He et al. identified the root causes of turnover, including salary and benefits, converting opportunity, job hunting, and other factors. He et al. noted that improvement measures included increasing salaries; providing converting opportunities; developing career plans;

and providing training, job rotation, and humane care for the dispatched employees. After taking improvement actions, the weekly average turnover rate of dispatched employees declined from 2.5% to 1.4%, with related savings of human resource costs and improvements in production quality and yield stability (He et al., 2014). As a result, He et al. provided a new perspective for enterprises interested in reducing dispatched employee turnover.

Lin, Ku, and Huang (2014) used Mobley's ETM and found that voluntary turnover is very costly to organizations, particularly in the hi-tech sector, where the cost of their information technology (IT) labor force was expensive. Voluntary employee turnover has a substantial negative effect on the companies, including high costs and potential loss of valuable knowledge, skills, and organizational knowledge. Lin et al. argued that researchers have conducted studies on the causes that lead to voluntary employee turnover; however, the ability to explain and predict employee turnover remains restricted (Lin et al., 2014).

Ukil (2016) found that job satisfaction has five key components: (a) communication, (b) training, (c) employment satisfaction, (d) pay, and (e) benefits. Job satisfaction indirectly affects voluntary turnover intentions and those emotional variables, such as commitment, motivation, and loyalty, mediating voluntary turnover intentions. Ukil found *commitment* as a mediating factor in the relationship between job satisfaction and voluntary turnover intention. Ukil's study has implications for IT organizations and management teams trying to develop a way to prevent voluntary turnover among IT employees and a route to increase their employees' job satisfaction, reduce voluntary

turnover intention, and retain expensive IT human resource in hi-tech companies (Ukil, 2016).

Allen and Shanock (2013) used Mobley's ETM to conduct a study related to the importance of retaining new hires. The relationships between new comers and the organization are important mechanisms through which socialization tactics influence commitment and turnover. Allen and Shanock noted that key theoretical mechanisms connecting socialization tactics to turnover in the model are the extent to which newcomers become embedded in the organization and perceive the relationship with the organization as supportive, caring, and entailing positive social exchanges. Consistent with the hypotheses, socialization tactics influence perceived organizational support and job embeddedness (Allen & Shanock, 2013). In addition, Allen and Shanock found that POS and JE both relate to organizational commitment and voluntary employee turnover, which supports POS and JE as relational mechanisms that bind employees to the organization because of socialization tactics.

AlBattat et al. (2014) used Mobley's ETM and found that turnover crisis reduction is a remarkable research theme in the hospitality industry. Regardless of the significant number of studies on employee turnover, AlBattat et al. argued that employee turnover remains a vague issue and requires further research. AlBattat et al. noted that the service industry is highly dependent on the *human factor*, which has become a major part of the hospitality product. The aim of this study was to give a clearer idea of the role enhancing employment factors play in the prevention of an employee turnover crisis. AlBattat et al. claimed that improving the work environment, increasing wages, analyzing



the internal and external factors could decrease the probability of an employee turnover crisis and employees' intentions to stay within the hospitality organization. Unacceptable working conditions, poor training, and low salaries could lead to higher employee turnover (AlBattat et al., 2014).

### **Other Contrasting Theories**

Exploring the foundation of Mobley's (1977) ETM through the work of Farrell (1983), Holtom et al. (2013), and Maslow (1943) is critical. Farrell noted that Mobley's focus was on six basic aspects of turnover: definition, consequences, measures, control, causes, and future research. Although Mobley's approach was strongly social psychological, economists gladly note careful discussions of pay and labor markets, whereas sociologists welcomed the inclusion of such topics as integration (i.e., close friends), communication, and centralization (Farrell, 1983). Farrell claimed that consequences of turnover receive a balanced treatment. Historically, the major focus of the literature has been on the causes of separation, survival, and wastage rates (Farrell, 1983). Farrell found ample evidence of a strong negative aggregate relationship between unemployment levels and turnover rates.

Farrell (1983) stated that many practical suggestions for the control of employee turnover exist. Leaders must determine whether their organizations are losing their high performers and at the same time, leaders must not try to minimize turnover generally; instead, leaders should encourage employee turnover if it has net positive organizational consequences and, discourage employee turnover, if it is likely to promote net negative organizational consequences (Farrell, 1983). Leaders must determine the extent of

employee turnover according to dimensions important to the organization, such as turnover by positions or by departments. Farrell recommended that researchers conducting employee turnover studies should empirically test the consequences of employee turnover; use multivariable analyses extensively; examine the performance level of the employees resigning from jobs in organizations; use longitudinal designs to estimate the hypothesized process of turnover; investigate the relationship of turnover to other forms of withdrawal, such as absenteeism; and conduct additional employee turnover research studies (Farrell, 1983).

Maslow (1943) recognized that people have five basic needs: (a) physiological, (b) safety, (c) social, (d) esteem, and (e) self-actualization. Maslow proposed that an individual must attain lower needs, such as safety, before attaining higher needs, such as esteem, leading to self-actualization. Maslow claimed that an important limitation to the achievement of self-actualization is that individuals must achieve each need in a fixed hierarchy without variation. For example, an employee may work to fulfill needs more complex than the physiological and neglect to address that need area properly (Maslow, 1943). Maslow argued that neglecting the needs of internal and external stakeholders could prove fatal to the success of an organization.

Employees, on the other hand, motivate themselves by attaining their lowest basic needs that employees have not met (Maslow, 1943). Maslow (1943) motivational theory relates to job satisfaction and the manager's ongoing adaptation to the changing needs of employees to maintain the employees motivated at work. As individuals mature, people change in response to their need for personal growth (Maslow, 1943). Maslow claimed

that to achieve self-actualization, people seek need resolution. For example, the motivation of an employee may represent a commitment to an organization, project or business idea, while another employee seeks employment support to fulfill a need or lifestyle (Maslow, 1943). Using Maslow's theory as a conceptual framework to explore employee retention strategies worked well in developing effective strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover.

Holtom et al. (2013) tested whether Mobley's ETM applied to organizational commitment and job involvement when substituted for job satisfaction. The results indicated that Mobley's model is valid when examining variables that affect the relationship between job satisfaction and employee turnover intention. The overall conclusion was that job attitudes and satisfaction influence employee turnover intention. Holtom et al. found that organizational commitment followed the Mobley (1977) turnover theory and relates significantly to four stages: (a) the intention to resign, (b) comparison of alternatives vs. present job, (c) evaluation of alternatives, and (d) thoughts of resigning. Job satisfaction relates to (a) the intention to resign, (b) comparison of alternatives vs. present job, (c) evaluation of alternatives, and (d) thoughts of resigning; however, the relationships were not as strong as with organizational commitment (Holtom et al., 2013).

When Holtom et al. (2013) substituted job involvement for satisfaction and found that job involvement related significantly to (a) the intention to resign, (b) evaluation of alternatives, and (c) thoughts of resigning. Job involvement did not relate to the comparison of alternative vs. present job (Holtom et al., 2013). Holtom et al. noted that

job involvement predicts employee turnover when using the Mobley model; however, this relationship is weaker than for organizational commitment and job satisfaction.

Leaders may use previous research theories to develop better business practices by examining data in their own organizations on employee turnover, as recommended by several scholars (Farrell, 1983; Holtom et al., 2013; Maslow, 1943; Mobley, 1977).

### **Employee Retention**

Several factors exist that affect employee retention, including balancing work and home life, commitment to the organization, salary and benefits, personal job satisfaction, and intention to leave (Shore, 2013). Leaders and employees must recognize that employees' personal lives influence their satisfaction at work. Employees satisfied with their personal lives are more likely to be satisfied with all aspects of their lives, including work life. Wage satisfaction relates significantly to employee retention in organizations with offshore facilities (Bhave, Kramer, & Glomb, 2013).

Smith (2015) noted that job satisfaction is a theoretical concept; however, human resource leaders rate *satisfaction* using different measures, including environment, job title, and responsibilities. The employees' expectations and attitudes toward their jobs contribute to their level of job satisfaction (Smith, 2015). In a meta-analysis study of retention research, Smith noted that (a) different types of turnover exist, (b) staff does not leave only because of pay, (c) job dissatisfaction accounts for less than half of turnovers, (d) leaders have a significant influence over dissatisfaction and turnover, (e) a one-size fits-all strategy is not effective, and (f) the mix of factors to reduce turnover is context specific. Employees' motivation and satisfaction could indicate how an effective

supervisory influence creates positive employee outcomes (Menguc, Auh, Katsikeas, & Yeon Sung, 2016).

De Brito and de Oliveira (2016) found that organizational performance has a significant negative correlation with employee turnover or organizational size.

Employees' positive attitudes toward their organization results in decreased turnover and increased positive relationships with a diverse group of employees (Younge, Tong, & Fleming, 2015). Turnover decreases when leaders employ strategies that include employee training to improve diversity (Grissom, Viano, & Selin, 2016). Chen, Wang, and Tang (2016) recommended that organizational leaders should provide training and other resources to their employees to allow them to improve their job performance, which increases motivation and overall morale because employees feel that their leaders are interested in their success (Chen et al., 2016).

Khasawneh and Al-Zawahreh (2015) found that human resources development in a fully developed system of employee productivity and incentives is the training support provided to the employees with daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly tasks and duties. Human resource development does for the individual what needs assessment does for the organization, allowing employees to audit their skills and abilities to make necessary improvements to reach personal and organizational goals (Khasawneh & Al-Zawahreh, 2015). Organizational leaders adopting Total Quality Management (TQM) are learning to be more adaptable (Jeffrey, 2015). Organizational leaders must commit and invest in the people who are the heart and mind of the organization (Jeffrey, 2015). Educational leave, tuition incentives, and flexible work hours (i.e., flextime) are some measures of these

activities (Ćwiklicki, 2016). Mayfield and Mayfield (2014) argued that while the relationship between human resources development, total quality management, and productivity incentives is indirect, the relationship does exist. Training and organizational development programs provide employees with the knowledge and skills to achieve those productivity improvements and win the incentive rewards attached to them (Mayfield & Mayfield, 2014).

Since efforts represented by such terms as *total quality management (TQM)* are only now coming into vogue in the public sector, it is very early to expect anything other than marginal relationships to be evident in all but the most highly involved organizations (Hietschold, Reinhardt, & Gurtner, 2014). Hietschold et al. (2014) noted that results are perhaps more likely to be useful as a baseline for measuring future developments. Human resources development parallels the group-level, needs assessment-TQM relationship (Chen, 2013). Akgün, Ince, Imamoglu, Keskin, and Kocoglu (2014) stated the importance of the like-needs assessment because the assessment outlines the plans and goals, allowing the individual performance appraisal process or a management-by-objectives system to guide its implementation and monitor individual efforts. The human resources development – MBO relationship parallels and complements the need assessment TQM relationship, in which each relationship is vested with strengths and weaknesses and, together, these combined relationships support and compensate for the other (Akgün et al., 2014).

Vidal-Salazar, Cordon-Pozo, and de la Torre-Ruiz (2016) found that retention improves when organizational leaders make better recruitment efforts, select the right

person for the job, review job specifications and job descriptions continuously, implement compensation practices, use appropriate leadership and supervision, possess career planning and development plans, improve working condition, builds teams, communicates effectively, involves employees in decision-making processes, and establish turnover policies. Vidal-Salazar et al. found that voluntary turnover relates to inferior organizational performance (Ballinger, Cross, & Holtom, 2016). The comprehensive critical analysis and synthesis of the literature indicates that motivation and organizational commitment has an impact on job performance, voluntary turnover, and employee retention.

### **Employee Turnover**

The literature, both practitioner and academic, included many reasons for the high turnover rates in the hospitality industry where low salaries are often cited as the most common reason for resigning from a job (Gursoy, Chi, & Karadag, 2013). Cahuc, Charlot, and Malherbet (2016) found that while employee inspiration affects employee satisfaction, employee inspiration does not affect employee loyalty. In addition, incentives have an effect on employee loyalty (Cahuc et al., 2016). Gursoy et al. (2013) argued that the most reported reasons for resigning from a job tend to be external to the employee and are specific to the resigning employee. The issue may be internal to the employee resigning because of the nature of the hospitality industry and the relationship between maintaining a high level of customer service and the personality of the worker (Gursoy et al., 2013). Cahuc et al. found that younger employees possessing a higher

level of education demonstrated less loyalty compared to older employees having a lower level of education.

Employees of nonprofit organizations may be more satisfied than for-profit employees because while nonprofit organizations' leaders reward their employees for the positive effect of employees' work, leaders of for-profit organizations use money to reward their employees (Haar & White, 2013). Haar and White (2013) argued that younger, more highly educated employees are less loyal to their employer than older, less educated employees. An organization has to endure the high costs associated with voluntary employee turnover, including downtime, recruiting, interviewing, orientation, and training. Haar and White found that an entry-level position could cost an organization between 50-100% of an employee's wages. Voluntary employee turnover is very high in low paying jobs, such as the cleaning industry, and is mostly due to the characteristics of the work, disparity in work hours, and lack of respect the employees may experience from their employers, other employees, and customers (Mignonac & Richebé, 2013). Mignonac and Richebé (2013) noted that foundation of employee loyalty involves the employees' willingness to do something (i.e., decision-making), which employees obtain by extraneous means such as leaders' use of power of their position.

Nwagbara, Oruh, Ugorji, and Ennsra (2013) found that effective communication reduces turnover intention because employees are reluctant to resign from work environment in which employees feel encouraged to interact with others rather than one-directional communication. Organizational leaders must appreciate this factor for better organizational management and low employee turnover intention (Palanski, Avey, &



Jiraporn, 2014). Ceyda, Hakan, and Gaye (2016) found that high employee turnover disrupts the smooth operation of the organization and affects its success negatively. Employee dissatisfaction relates significantly and negatively to dedication to work, resulting in employees' desire to leave the organization or to lose focus during work hours (Ceyda et al., 2016).

Raglan and Schulkin (2014) argued that an employee may be less likely to share details of the decision to leave the organization. Leaders could take the following steps to decrease employee turnover and motivate staff positively: (a) think about the future, for instance, leaders might question the employees about the kind of proficiency or preparation they might be interested in to execute short-term requirements that will help employees achieve long-term goals, as the organization forges through harsh economic times; (b) encourage a positive work atmosphere, model the behavior of an optimistic leader, and allow employees to emulate that behavior because when employees are happy at work, employees continue to do high-quality work; (c) schedule staff meetings often because these meetings enhance communication and keep employees engaged and inspired, as employees sense their ownership and contribution if the lines of communication are open in staff meetings; and (d) organize interactive team-building activities and set up employee appreciation events, company picnics, or cookouts, which contribute to the enhancement of morale and job performance (Bates & Weighart, 2014).

Employee loyalty is an employee's perspective or feeling of consortium. Nyberg and Ployhart (2013) argued that leaders had better understand the effect of the voluntary turnover rate by examining changes within human capital systems over time. High

compensation enhances work efforts and reduces employee turnover. Structuring a workplace environment that promotes respect and admiration for hard work is a key factor in decreasing employee turnover (Mignonac & Richebé, 2013). In addition, Mignonac and Richebé (2013) noted that employee turnover negatively affects productivity in an organization and leads to a financial burden associated with advertising, selecting, hiring new employees, and the cost of hiring a temporary employee.

### **Job Satisfaction**

Employees experience positive emotional feelings whenever employees are satisfied with their jobs, particularly when employees receive affirmative feedback or have a gratifying experience (Locke, 1976). Leaders of organizations should commit more time and resources in motivating employees to achieve job satisfaction (Allison, Flaherty, Jung, & Washburn, 2016). Yi-Feng (2016) reported that a relationship between job satisfaction and employees' ability on the job exists. While an employee might have the cognitive ability to perform the job, that employee may lack the tools or support necessary to complete the task well (Yi-Feng, 2016). Bozionelos (2016) noted that leaders have the power to improve employees' job performance by applying managerial strategies to increase job motivation and satisfaction. Leaders improve employees' job satisfaction level when focusing on the employees' needs, including recognition of their skills and abilities to contribute to the organization (Bozionelos, 2016).

Pomirleanu and Mariadoss (2015) reported that facets of job satisfaction (i.e., pay, coworkers, supervision, the work itself) had a significant effect on organizational

commitment. The employees whose supervisors used constructive feedback had greater job satisfaction. Employee job satisfaction relates significantly and positively to organizational commitment, general self-esteem, and age in the United States (Robinson, Kralj, Solnet, Goh, & Callan, 2014). However, in Mexico, Robinson et al. (2014) found job satisfaction relates significantly to organizational commitment, general self-esteem, and workgroup autonomy. Leaders creating a caring climate influence the mental well-being of employees (Beek et al., 2014). Shahid and Azhar (2013) argued that a positive relationship between job satisfaction and job performance exists. Job satisfaction has a positive effect on job performance and organizational commitment (Johnson & Friend, 2015).

Jorgensen and Becker (2015) found a positive relationship between employees' organizational commitment and their job performance. The comparative analysis of three dimensions of organizational commitment had a positive and significant effect on employees' job performance (Jorgensen & Becker, 2015). Lu, Guo, Luo, and Chen (2015) found a positive relationship between employees' organizational commitment and employers' organizational support that affects job performance positively. Organizational commitment has a major effect on employee performance and allowed leaders to moderate the relationship between job performance and job-related stress (Kumpikaite-Valiuniene, Glinska, Aslan, & Ramirez, 2016). Ingold, Kleinmann, König, Melchers, and Van Iddekinge (2015) supported the hypothesis that employees with high organizational commitment are less likely to resign.

## **Communication**

Fayol (1916) defined management as a dual structure requiring the integration of task accomplishment with a concern for people. The vast arrays of managerial techniques at the leaders' disposal are not effective if leaders lack the interpersonal skills that are an intricate part of successful leaders (Ocasio, Loewenstein, & Nigam, 2015). Ocasio et al. (2015) found that employee relations focus on the nexus of interpersonal structures that pose serious challenges to supervisors and leaders. Clearly, communication – focusing on performance feedback – is the most essential (Ocasio et al., 2015). As goal-setting research conducted by several experts (Bennett et al., 2013; Boyd, 2014; Eunmi & Joseph, 2016), employees are extremely more productive when they know what they are expected to do at work.

The *knowledge organization* makes communication even more crucial (Salas, Shuffler, Thayer, Bedwell, & Lazzara, 2015). Donati, Zappalà, and González-Romá (2016) argued that today's professional employee is both a worker carrying out tasks and a manager planning for the employee, which makes communication of knowledge essential to achieve success. Feedback is integral to the performance management process (Schaubroeck, Carmeli, Bhatia, & Paz, 2016). Bonaccio, O'Reilly, O'Sullivan, and Chiochio (2016) argued that whether judgmental or developmental purposes are the focus of the management process. Feedback is an essential mechanism for leaders' work and, without an adequate means for informing employees of their performance, desired change in motivation and productivity cannot occur.

Eunmi and Joseph (2016) found that performance management feedback takes place in a number of ways. However, the primary means in which feedback occurs is through the performance appraisal interview (Yi & Kuri, 2016). Yi and Kuri (2016) noted that the appraisal interview is a formal meeting between employee and supervisor explicitly devoted to the discussion of the employee's job performance. Preparations necessary for properly conducting an appraisal interview, along with the required interviewing, are important elements in the supervisor's job domain (Kim, 2016).

Schaubroeck et al. (2016) found that the problem-solving style involves the use of active listening skills on the part of the supervisor. Although this approach could contribute to the employee's growth, organizational problems may not necessarily be solved as the supervisor would hope (Blume, Baldwin, & Ryan, 2013). Bonaccio et al. (2016) noted that active listening is a technique that encompasses a wide range of verbal and nonverbal communication skills. Active listening creates an environment conducive to employee-supervisor dialogue and assists in the effective interpretation of that dialogue (Bonaccio et al., 2016).

Page, Dray, Perez, and Garcia (2016) claimed that active listening removes the behavioral barriers that inhibit effective communication. Premature judging, solution sending, and avoidance habits in which individuals reply before they have received the complete message hinder good dialogue (Winter & Jackson, 2014). Winter and Jackson (2014) argued that, unfortunately, the complexities of modern American society have instilled these behaviors, which are defensive mechanisms of coping with a modern world.

Page et al. (2016) found that instead of listening to what is being said, individuals are engaged in evaluating the incoming message before the sender actually finishes transmitting the message. English grammar, unlike that of such languages as German, does not force the listener to await the verb at the sentence's end in order to evaluate the meaning of the sentence's message (Kim, 2016). Blume et al. (2013) noted that individuals are also likely to respond during this process in such a manner as to affect the remainder of the message transmission, causing the sender to change or abruptly end the message. Individuals may choose to avoid the content of the message either because they prefer not to deal with the message or because they deem the message unimportant in comparison to what they want to say (Blume et al., 2013).

Nonverbal skills focus on demonstrating the listener's participation in the conversation (Winter & Jackson, 2014). Eunmi and Joseph (2016) found that physically, individuals position themselves to catch the speaker's message. The listeners must treat the message very much as if the message were a ball tossed or pitched to them, keeping attention focused on the message (Kim, 2016). Yi and Kuri (2016) noted that such attending skills entail both posture and natural body motions in which avoiding physical distractions are an important consideration. Specific verbal skills are designed to aid the listener in receiving and interpreting the message (Schaubroeck et al., 2016). Schaubroeck et al. (2016) noted that nonverbal skills include those that fall into the more traditional area entailed by deliberative communication, which makes the translation or interpretation of the main or substantive message the focus of attention and analysis.

Other nonverbal skills focus on the medium the sender uses to transmit the message (Bonaccio et al., 2016). Bonaccio et al. (2016) noted that although not focusing on the message's substantive content, nonverbal skills are just as important. Individuals use nonverbal skills to interpret the additional messages that emphasize, reinforce, or negate the substantive content of a message (Salas et al., 2015). Munoz-Gea et al. (2016) noted that questions should be infrequent and open-ended, which individuals design to clarify and encourage the conversation; questions are not meant to serve as analytical vehicles.

Munoz-Gea et al. (2016) argued that reflective skills aid in the interpretation of the message because the listener paraphrases the speaker's message to increase understanding and to verify the content of the message from the speaker. The speaker's emotions and other feelings should be integrated into the spoken message (Robinson et al., 2014). Reflective skills serve as a reality check and convey the important notion of *message received* back to the sender (Liang, Ekinci, Occhiocupo, & Whyatt, 2013). Norman, Butler, and Ranft (2013) noted that a successful method that leads to job satisfaction depends on the leaders' effective communication.

### **Organizational Commitment**

In general, organizational commitment entails the effective commitment of employees to their business (Hasan, 2013). Hung and Wu (2016) found that organizational commitment affects job satisfaction positively. Employees demonstrate more commitment to the organization when employees perceive that leaders make a reasonable effort to provide an ethical climate. A positive relationship between

consultative and participative leadership and employee commitment and job satisfaction exists (Reed et al., 2016). However, Reed et al. (2016) found that one of the most important factors affecting employee organizational commitment is the leadership behavior of leaders. Many factors exist that affect employee job satisfaction and the way an employee feels about organizational commitment (Banhwa, Chipunza, & Chamisa, 2014).

Shrestha and Mishra (2015) noted that employees' commitment has a significant positive influence on employee performance, which, in turn, results in increased organizational performance. Because employees experiencing less politics in their organizations have a high level of public service motivation (PSM) and are more committed to their organizations. Organizations have committed employees if organizational leaders (a) create an organizational environment in which employees perceive prevalence of less politics, (b) use PSM scores for recruiting and selection decisions, and (c) introduce some interventions that help to foster employees' level of PSM (Shrestha & Mishra, 2015). Shrestha and Mishra noted that job satisfaction in an organization has a positive relationship with employee commitment, but not an immediate relationship between moral atmosphere and turnover expectation.

Neubert and Halbesleben (2015) found that intrinsic motivators drive some employees' actions, demonstrating employee conviction and organizational commitment. Therefore, employees control their actions if their emotions inhibit those actions and leaders can influence multiple levels of analysis in and around their organizations. Jernigan, Beggs, and Kohut (2016) argued that considering the positive outcomes



associated with responsible leadership at the macro, meso, and micro levels, leaders influence such outcomes through stakeholder engagement (Bareket-Bojmel, Hochman, & Ariely, 2014). Bareket-Bojmel et al. (2014) noted that sustainability emerged as an important societal issue and one that business organizations have begun to incorporate into their business strategy and their broader social engagement. Organizational leaders are recognizing that responding to sustainability challenges may improve their standing with their stakeholders and potentially translate into a stronger reputation (Srivastava & Tang, 2015). Srivastava and Tang (2015) noted that employees' organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and job proficiency contribute to organizational values, customer approval, and organizational growth and profit.

Seventy-one percent of American laborers experience emotional disengagement (i.e., not captivated or actively disconnected) in a working atmosphere (Suan Choo, Mat, & Al-Omari, 2013). Suan Choo et al. (2013) found that the absence of organizational commitment might be one of the most overlooked reasons for the increase in costs experienced by businesses and society. Employee absenteeism and attrition relate significantly to (a) job stress, (b) career satisfaction, and (c) job satisfaction (Beattie et al., 2014). Beattie et al. (2014) noted that leaders adopting appropriate strategies to address stress or assist employees with career advice and job satisfaction could reduce attrition and absenteeism. Voluntary employee turnover is a person's choice of conduct and organizational commitment affects employee turnover intentions (Bilau, Ajagbe, Sholanke, & Sani, 2015).

Bilau et al. (2015) reported that employees choose their work behavior and level of commitment to the organization and that both variables relate significantly to their intention to leave. Providing feedback and rewards creates positive feelings, leading to higher motivation on the job and lower attrition rates (Bilau et al., 2015). Moussa (2013) noted that leaders should not underestimate the power of an employee's desire for better rewards and recognition. Employees perceiving unfair distribution of rewards respond with diminished commitment to the organization and a stronger desire to leave their jobs (Moussa, 2013). Roberts (2013) claimed that total rewards include the traditional financial rewards of compensation and benefits, including experiential rewards. Employees receiving total rewards create a positive work environment and engage in training and development activities (Roberts, 2013). Pomeranz (2015) noted that rewards increase employees' retention rate and productivity to a quantifiable level.

In addition, employees may have reasons to perceive a sense of job insecurity, regardless of effort or ability (Pomeranz, 2015). Pomeranz (2015) found that the theory of reasoned action (RA) presents a means of gauging the organizational commitment of survivors in downsizing organizations and predictability in employees' behavior. When employees are unable to comprehend the corporate culture of an organization, employees' performance and retention might be affected (Blower & Mahajan, 2013). Strong workplace relationships might lead to employees having higher levels of commitment to the organization and performance.

## **Performance Management**

Boyd (2014) confirmed that emotional intelligence (EI) is a strong predictor of the service performance of employees in the workplace and that high-performing employees usually stay longer in their organizations. Performance management is mainly assessing the effect that emotional intelligence has on the turnover rate of employees in organizations (Boyd, 2014). Braun, Peus, Weisweiler, and Frey (2013) found that a lack of performance appraisal has an adverse effect on employees' motivation and contribute to employees' turnover intentions.

Brown, Thomas, and Bosselman (2015) examined employee performance appraisal and employee perceptions and intentions to leave their organizations. Brown et al. found that when employees perceive political motives for conducting performance appraisals, job satisfaction decreases, and turnover intentions increase. While it is important for organizational leaders to understand the circumstances that influence high-performing employees to seek other employment, Long, Perumal, and Ajagbe (2012) indicated that the relationship between job performance and attrition requires further study. Long et al. found that leaders of organizations traditionally engaged in human resource management (HRM) planning and development for the large number of employees in various positions, roles, and responsibilities. HRM personnel identified future staffing needs through expansion, an increase in business and productions, and employees' development needs (Long et al., 2012). Kinicki, Jacobson, Peterson, and Prussia (2013) found that while career development programs are effective for employee retention, rewards are the most important factor that contributes to job satisfaction and

less turnover. In business organizations, it is important to implement personalized career development programs with much emphasis on employees as individuals, integrating these programs into all other functions of HRM to create synergy (Kinicki et al., 2013).

Bryant and Allen (2013) argued that another method of ensuring retention is defining the values and management needs of each asset, which are a critical task and an important step toward the improvement of the return on marketing investment. Means of achieving a return on marketing investment include appropriately selecting marketing metrics and marketing efficiency measurement methods to evaluate whether marketing activity plays a role in driving base-profit evaluation (Bryant & Allen, 2013). Hadad, Keren, and Laslo (2013) found that an increasing high number of organizations are complementing their analytical methods with managerial judgment and collective stakeholder experiences that include strategic targeting of past performance-based projections, which is a move beyond a narrow dependence on analytical models alone and employees may perceive this effort as organizational support.

Brymer, Molloy, and Gilbert (2013) argued that in developing career strategies within an organization, employees need to understand the organizational structure, including career ladders, the skills needed for each job title in that ladder, the manner in which organizational leaders implement strategic planning, and the way leaders evaluate job performance. In order to plan for succession, organizational leaders must recognize the dynamic procedures when meeting the needs of leaders, employees, and the organization itself (Brymer et al., 2013).

## **Relationship Management**

The basis of relationship management is the social awareness competence to inspire, influence, and develop others; manage conflict; and encourage cooperation (Cappelli & Keller, 2014). Nolan (2015) claimed that relationship management requires that leaders possess social competence to handle and manage emotions of others effectively. Employees perceiving a genuine interest in their development for greater organizational involvement from their leaders may feel a motivated obligation to reciprocate the positive gesture (Nolan, 2015).

Valuable communication between supervisors and employees increases the level of satisfaction employees feel at work (Mumuni & O'Reilly, 2014). Mumuni and O'Reilly (2014) found that appropriate communication between supervisors and subordinates should include clear goals. If leaders do not create positive relationships with their employees, the employees will be less likely to contribute ideas to improve the workplace (Cascio, 2014).

Law, Ennew, and Mitussis (2013) noted that a positive relationship between intrinsic motivation and job fit means that when leaders assign tasks to workers according to employees' capabilities, employees become motivated, which reduced voluntary employee turnover intention. Leaders that develop positive working relationships with and between employees establish confidence and trust (Chauhan, Goel, & Arora, 2014). Chauhan et al. (2014) recognized the importance of the leaders' ability to establish a positive work environment that leads to organizational success.

## **Training and Development**

Organizational leaders must recognize the way employees understand the organizational dynamics and that without proper employee training, employees may not have a clear understanding of the written rules regarding conduct or violations of corporate policy (Choudhary, Akhtar, & Zaheer, 2013). Eckerd et al. (2013) found that organizational leaders must not assume that all employees have the required skills to perform their jobs effectively. Even the most skilled workers need ongoing training to effectively perform their job duties and take advantage of career advancements (Eckerd et al., 2013). Cohen (2013) noted that employees lacking concern for internal system security policies place an organization at risk; however, employees exercise greater caution when they are aware of the risks and vulnerabilities of data.

Leaders need four skills to provide sufficient training to employees, including the ability to (a) assess employees' training needs, (b) understand adult learning theory to assist in the development and execution of training programs, (c) evaluate the success or failure of training programs, and (d) understand action-based training and development techniques (Cohen, 2013). Syrek, Apostel, and Antoni (2013) claimed that employees promoted to management positions must understand their new role as a coach. These new leaders are most effective when they provide sufficient training to their employees.

In the middle of the 20th century, company leaders failed to recognize the importance of training and development (Damij, Levnajić, Skrt, & Suklan, 2015). Damij et al. (2015) explained that leaders hired employees for a specific job, assuming the new hires already possessed the skills necessary to perform their jobs. In the 21st century,

while leaders recognize staff development and training is critical to organizational growth and profitability, many leaders still neglect staff development and training (Shen & Gentry, 2014). Sawitri and Muis (2014) claimed that leaders ignore employee growth as much as leaders fail to maintain facilities and equipment. Leaders should be cognizant of (a) appropriate selection criteria for employees, (b) training and expectations, and (c) appropriate incentives for performance (Daniels, Mackovak, Audia, & Richards, 2013).

Deery and Jago (2015) explained that leaders ignore important issues, such as the hiring process, employee orientation and training, and evaluation and feedback, until the problems become severe and unavoidable. Legislation regulating equal employment opportunity, affirmative action, and multicultural diversity affects hiring and training programs to ensure the organization does not practice ethnic, racial, or gender inequalities (Reilly, Nyberg, Maltarich, & Weller, 2014). de Haan et al. (2014) noted that organizational leaders focusing on existing processes while ignoring relevant alternatives in training negatively influence organizational planning and goal setting. Clear organizational goals that are in line with the organization's mission for staff development and training ensure strong leadership (de Haan et al., 2014).

Deery and Jago (2015) found that while training cannot address all organizational problems, relevant training could stabilize organizational processes. Employees perceive relevant training as addressing department or individual needs (Damij et al., 2015). Damij et al. (2015) noted that if executed correctly, training addresses specific deficiencies in the organization. Organizational leaders should implement training as part of the organization's strategic planning (Dinh et al., 2014). Dinh et al. (2014) noted that

organizational leaders use training to address a variety of issues, including (a) leaders' skills, (b) leaders' supervisory skills, (c) employees' technical skills, (d) employees' communication skills, (e) employees' basic computer skills, and other needs identified by the organizational leaders.

It is not sufficient to identify training needs; organizational leaders must weigh the value of the training in relation to the cost (DiPietro, Kline, & Nierop, 2014). Ameer-ul-Ameer and Hanif (2013) claimed that a holistic view of training in relation to organizational needs is critical to determine if it is worthwhile the effort and commitment. While training in the knowledge industry requires cognitive skills, training in the manufacturing area requires manual skills as well (Kennett, 2013).

Peng et al. (2016) noted that organizations with well-developed training programs consider whether the training meet two objectives. First, leaders must incorporate objectives into the organization's approach to career management, including how employees are rewarded (Peng et al., 2016). Second, organizational leaders must establish training objectives based on specific needs of the individual or department (Braun et al., 2013). Braun et al. (2013) argued that by conducting a needs assessment, leaders encourage employee participation, allowing them to personally invest in the training. The needs assessment also connects (a) organizational objectives, (b) task structure, (c) leaders' perceptions, and (d) employees' needs. Braun et al. noted that quality training cultivates a positive relationship between the employees and their supervisors.



Training and development of employees is an important aspect to attract talent, increase productivity, and improve employee satisfaction and retention (Inabinett & Ballaro, 2014). Ladelsky and Catană (2013) noted that leaders could build an excellent corporate culture through the effective use of employee training and development programs. The corporate culture affects employee behavior, allowing leaders to implement an efficient and effective training and development program that creates a strong and positive culture and successful teams (Downes & Choi, 2014). Milman and Dickson (2014) noted that training and development allow leaders to increase the performance of employees to meet the current and future challenges faced by organizations. Training and development include a wide range of learning actions, ranging from training of the individual for their present tasks and, moreover, sharing knowledge to improve the organization's horizon and customers service.

Skill development of management and employees is essential during change to control the uncertain environment (Olsen & Stensaker, 2014). Ersoy, Derous, Born, and van der Molen (2015) found that organizational leaders must ensure that employee training and development programs align with the organizational business strategies. It is the responsibility of organizational leaders to create and guide successful training and development programs (Ersoy et al., 2015). Ersoy et al. noted that appropriate training for leaders leads to employee empathy, improving the working environment. While empathy is difficult to establish, once present in the workplace, empathy allow leaders to set the tone for positive collaboration (Dinh et al., 2014).

Festing and Schäfer (2014) claimed that profitable organizations owe their success in part to appropriate employee professional development programs. Employees ingest the knowledge from successful training programs, using this information to their advantage at work (Festing & Schäfer, 2014). Ladelsky and Catană (2013) noted that by successfully creating and implementing employee training, employers motivate workers, instill organizational commitment, and provoke job satisfaction. Training promotes employability at the workplace. Employers maximize the advantages of training by (a) designing appropriate training, (b) implementing appropriate assessment methods, and (c) evaluating the success of the program and delivery methods (Ladelsky & Catană, 2013). Khattak, Rehman, and Abdul Rehman (2014) argued that effective training and development programs allow organizational leaders to establish an effective employer-employee relationship.

When organizational leaders manage training from design through assessment, targeted training contributes to increased organizational performance and is an indispensable asset to human resources (Fitzsimmons & Stamper, 2014). Foss and Hallberg (2013) noted that training must include participant assessments, appropriate feedback, and development of new strategies to ensure participants experience personal growth and success. Training mentors should work with leaders to develop action plans to guide participants to meet challenges successfully (Hancock, Allen, Bosco, McDaniel, & Pierce, 2013). Appreciative inquiry, a holistic method of organizational self-examination, and other development tools, motivate employees and organizational leaders to seek new resources and strategies to increase productivity (Watson, 2013).

Smith, Stokes, and Wilson (2014) found that job satisfaction levels in long-term employees do not relate to training and development of employees. In addition, some employers have a different view of training and development, as it relates to employee turnover and retention (Smith et al., 2014).

### **Transition**

Section 1 included a paragraph to introduce the background of the problem; review of the background of the problem; problem and purpose statements; nature of the study; overarching research question; interview questions; conceptual framework for the study; definitions of terms; assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of the study; significance of the study; contribution to business practice; implications for social change; and review of the professional and academic literature.

Section 2 includes the restatement of the purpose statement, role of the researcher, participants, research method and design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection instruments, data collection technique, data organization technique, data analysis, and reliability and validity. Section 3 includes the introduction, presentation of the findings, applications of the study to professional practice, implications for positive social change, recommendations for action, recommendations for future research, reflections, summary, and study conclusions.

## Section 2: The Project

The purpose of this qualitative multicase study was to explore strategies that leaders of marketing and consulting firms use to reduce voluntary employee turnover. Section 2 includes a restatement of the purpose statement, followed by a discussion of my role in the research process and an overview of my participants. The remaining subsections included the research methodology and design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection instruments, data collection technique, data organization technique, data analysis, reliability and validity, and transition and summary.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative multicase study was to explore strategies that leaders of marketing and consulting firms use to reduce voluntary employee turnover. The target population consisted of leaders of marketing and consulting firms in the southeastern United States, possessing successful experience in reducing voluntary employee turnover. The implications for positive social change included allowing other business leaders to gain an improved understanding of the causes of voluntary employee turnover, which may reduce voluntary employment turnover and the overall unemployment rate. Reducing unemployment is critical because unemployed individuals have elevated rates of mental and physical health problems, higher mortality rates, and experience detrimental changes in family relationships (Wahlbeck & McDaid, 2012).

### **Role of the Researcher**

The role of the researcher in the data collection process is to gain access to participants of the study, begin communication with study participants, organize the

research process, conduct the research, and collect and analyze data (Ibrahim & Edgley, 2015). Morse, Lowery, and Steury (2014) argued that the researcher is the main research instrument in charge of controlling all steps of the study, including defining concepts, collecting data from multiple sources, conducting and transcribing interviews, analyzing data, generating codes and themes, and ensuring data saturation. I was the primary research instrument for this study because I defined all concepts, collected data from multiple sources, conducted and transcribed interviews, analyzed data, generated codes and themes, and ensured data saturation. Yin (2014) suggested the use of additional sources of data, such as analyses of company documents. I collected data using additional sources, including analyses of company documents.

Berger (2015) argued that researchers engaging in all phases of a research study develop a deeper, more meaningful understanding of the study. I am familiar with voluntary employee turnover because I have held the position of director in a marketing and consulting firm during the past 7 years. In addition, I possess 10 years of experience in reducing voluntary employee turnover.

Researchers have a moral obligation to conduct research ethically (Bakare, 2014; Yin, 2014) and consistent with the Belmont Report guidelines and protocol (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 1979). Ethical principles of research involving humans include respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 1979). Researchers following the *respect for persons* principle recognize the autonomy of the study participants, ensuring the respect for participants particularly those that may have reduced autonomy (U.S. Department of Health &

Human Services, 1979). Researchers follow the *beneficence* principle by undertaking to bring no harm to participants while maximizing benefits (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 1979). Researchers using the *justice* principle must treat participants fairly in terms of potential harm and benefits that may emerge from conducting the research study (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 1979).

Researchers use the *Belmont Report* protocol to obtain information related to the ethical principles that apply to formal research, including the procedure of informed consent, assessment of risks and benefits, and selection of participants. In terms of informed consent, researchers must understand the importance of disclosing information, understanding that information, and acknowledging that participation is voluntary (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 1979). I followed the ethical principles of the *Belmont Report* protocol, any requirements of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and any additional ethical requirements of the participating organization. After obtaining permission from the IRB to conduct the study, this research study began. I explained the informed consent principle to study participants and obtain signed informed consent forms from study participants before conducting this research study. I treated all participants fairly, remind participants that participation is voluntary, inform participants that they can withdraw at any stage of the study, and ensure participants' confidentiality of information.

Researchers must understand that avoiding the integration of bias into their research studies is difficult (Hudson et al., 2014) because researchers may exhibit confirmation bias, which takes place when researcher may favor evidence that supports

their underlying beliefs over other evidence (Thomas, 2015). To avoid bias, researchers use member checking (Marshall et al., 2013), which takes place when the researcher conducts the interview, interprets what the participant shared, and shares this interpretation with the participant for validation (Yin, 2014). I conducted the interviews, interpreted what the participants shared, and share this interpretation with the participants to avoid bias.

Following an interview protocol is important to a reliable qualitative case study (Yin, 2014). Researchers use an interview protocol that contains information related to the procedures of the interview, including a script of the introduction and the conclusion, reminders for securing signed informed consent forms from study participants, and interview questions and prompts (Anyan, 2013). Researchers use the interview protocol as a procedural guide (Fassinger & Morrow, 2013). I used an interview protocol (see Appendix A), to guide me throughout the interview process and to ensure consistency of information shared with all participants, including information related to the procedures of the interview, a script of the introduction and the conclusion, reminders for securing signed informed consent forms from study participants, and interview questions and prompts.

### **Participants**

When conducting case study research, eligibility criteria for study participants consisted of participants possessing successful real-world experiences directly related to the problem under investigation to be able to provide meaningful information when answering interview questions (Sotiriadou, Brouwers, & Le, 2014; Yin, 2015). The

participants' answers to the interview questions become the data collected for analysis (Dworkin, 2012), which allow the researcher to answer the overarching research question for a given study (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012). Eligibility criteria for this study's participants are leaders of marketing and consulting firms located in southeastern United States possessing successful experience in decreasing voluntary employee turnover. I purposively identify participants for this study from the middle to senior level leadership group of three marketing and consulting firms, based on a list of organizations housed in the local chamber of commerce and other professional associations. In qualitative research, guidelines regarding an appropriate sample size are still vague (Marshall et al., 2013). Sampling in qualitative studies include using a small number of individuals (Chan, Fung, & Chien, 2013; Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013) or locations from which data are collected because a small number of individuals can provide a deep understanding of the issue under study (Yin, 2015). Campbell (2015) used an explorative single case study design and conducted semistructured face-to-face interviews with three participants. The sample size for this study was at least six leaders of marketing and consulting firms selected from three marketing and consulting firms.

Gaining access to participants and organizations to participate in a research study represents a challenge (Palinkas et al., 2013). To overcome this challenge, researchers should consider collaborating with gatekeepers, using additional recruitment tools, and understanding the target population (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012). Researchers recommend the use of phone calls, emails, and Skype to conduct initial exchanges with study participants (Palinkas et al., 2013). Following the recommendations of Palinkas et



al. (2013), I selected three marketing and consulting firms from a list of organizations housed in the local chamber of commerce and other professional associations. I conducted phone calls, send emails, and conducted Skype exchanges to arrange interview appointments with potential participants for this qualitative multicase study.

Researchers use strategies to establish a working relationship with study participants, including communicating the possible benefits that participants may receive as a result of their participation in the study (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013), encouraging understanding of the details of the research study and how the information will be used (Grossoehme, 2014), ensuring the participants are aware of the fact that they can withdraw from the research study at any time, and ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of all participants (Yin, 2014). I communicated with the participants' possible benefits of their participation in this case study, encourage understanding of the details of the research study and how the information will be used, ensured the participants are aware of the fact that they may withdraw from the research study at any time, and ensure the privacy and confidentiality of all participants of this case study.

Researchers ensure alignment between the overarching research question and participants by selecting an appropriate research design (Sotiriadou et al., 2014). Participant eligibility criteria should result in the selection of participants possessing knowledge and experience related to the phenomenon under investigation, allowing the researcher to answer the overarching research question (Yin, 2014). Gould et al. (2015) highlighted the importance of selecting eligible participants that have experience and knowledge related to the phenomenon under investigation. I selected participants

possessing knowledge and experience regarding the phenomenon under investigation to ensure alignment with the overarching research question of this case study. Participants are leaders of marketing and consulting firms located in southeastern United States possessing at least 2 years of successful experience in decreasing voluntary employee turnover. I purposively identify participants for this qualitative multicase study from the middle to senior level leadership group of three marketing and consulting firms, based on recommendations from members of the chamber of commerce and other professional associations.

### **Research Method and Design**

There are three common research methodologies: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods (Yin, 2014). Hayes, Bonner, and Douglas (2013) noted that when selecting a research method, the researcher must use the most effective method for achieving the goals of the study and answering research questions. In this section, I discussed the reasoning behind my choice of the research method and design approach for this qualitative multicase study.

#### **Research Method**

The quantitative research method involves statistical data and defined variables (Park & Park, 2016). Quantitative research involves examining and testing a theory, considering relationships, and analyzing statistical data (Hoare & Hoe, 2013). Christensen et al. (2015) noted that researchers using the quantitative method analyze numerical data, test a hypothesis, and specify the research procedures (Yin, 2014). A quantitative method was not appropriate for this study because I am not examining and

testing a hypothesis or theory or collecting numerical data for inferential statistical analyses.

Bolton (2015) claimed that the mixed-methods research methodology included both qualitative and quantitative data in a single study. Mixed-methods research consists of a combination of qualitative and quantitative research, allowing researchers to address both exploratory and confirmatory research questions (Yin, 2014). Mixed-methods research involves both qualitative and quantitative research methods in tandem to enhance a study (Hoare & Hoe, 2013). Researchers use the mixed-methods research methodology when using quantitative methods to test theories related to the overarching research question (Venkatesh et al., 2013). Researchers use the mixed-methods research methodology to bring meaning to complex social phenomena; however, the mixed-methods research methodology has challenges for novice researchers because of the high level of complexity in its design, integration, and rigor (Skalidou & Oja, 2018). I did not select the mixed-methods research methodology for this case study because the mixed-methods research methodology requires a high level of sophistication in the design, integration, and rigor associated with the use of both quantitative and qualitative research methods in a single study.

Marshall et al. (2013) noted that researchers use the qualitative research method to collect, analyze, and interpret comprehensive narrative and visual data to gain insights into a particular phenomenon of interest. Qualitative researchers collect open-ended and emerging data that they develop into themes (Yin, 2014). Researchers whose goal is gaining an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon conduct qualitative research

(Dworkin, 2012). The qualitative research methodology is appropriate for exploring different participants' experiences through thick descriptions of their experiences (Petty, Thomson, & Stew, 2012). Park and Park (2016) claimed that qualitative research methodology is suitable for gaining a better understanding of the underlying meaning of a situation. In this case study, the qualitative research methodology was appropriate because I collected, analyzed, and interpreted comprehensive narrative and visual data to gain insights into a particular phenomenon of interest, which was the exploration of strategies leaders use to reduce voluntary employee turnover.

### **Research Design**

A case study research design allows researchers to conduct an in-depth investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within the phenomenon's real-life context (Yin, 2014). In addition, a case study research design allows researchers to engage in exploratory research by asking *how* or *what* questions (Yin, 2014). The multicase study research design involves researcher collecting data from multiple sources (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012), to explore underlying principles of events (Dworkin, 2012), individuals, or groups bound by time or space (Yin, 2014). I selected a multicase study design because I conducted an in-depth investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within the phenomenon's real-life context. I asked participants why, *how*, and *what* questions to explore the problem under investigation. The multicase study design was the most appropriate for this study because I collected data from multiple sources to explore strategies that leaders have used successfully to reduce voluntary employee turnover.

Narrative researchers study the lives of individuals through individuals' stories (Bolton, 2015; Clarke, 2013; Yin, 2014). Narrative studies involve obtaining participants' personal stories (Hibbert, Sillince, Diefenbach, & Cunliffe, 2014; Hoare & Hoe, 2013). Previous researchers used many strategies to tell participants' stories, including a narrative approach, by implementing a detailed investigation of events and then interpreting how participants viewed themselves and their experiences (Yin, 2014). I did not select the narrative research design for this study because I was not studying lives of individuals through individuals' stories.

Maes, Closser, and Kalofonos (2014) found that researchers use the ethnographic design when investing long periods of research in the field to study a culture. Ethnographic researchers study a cultural group in their natural setting over an extended period by gathering data through interviews and observations (Kriyantono, 2012). Maes et al. noted that ethnographic research usually requires long periods of research in the field and emphasizes detailed observational and interview evidence of members of a given culture. Ethnographers explore the culture of a unique group in the natural surroundings of the group over time to provide insight from the viewpoint of the members of that culture (Yin, 2015). I did not select the ethnographic research design because I was not studying a cultural group of people over an extended period and my interest was not in how participants view themselves.

Phenomenological researchers explore the underlying meaning of the participants' lived experiences (Clarke, 2013). Phenomenology is the exploration of participants' lived experiences and their meaning (Davis, 2013; Morgan, Ataie, Carder, & Hoffman, 2013).

The phenomenological design approach is only used when researchers seek to explore participants' personal stories (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). Because I did not seek to explore participants' lived experiences or personal stories, the phenomenological research design is not appropriate for this qualitative multicase study.

Researchers must achieve data saturation to satisfy every research design involves interviews to collect data (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012; Vaismoradi et al., 2013; Yin, 2015). Saturation is said to have been achieved when a researcher cannot obtain any new information from the research participants (Doody & Noonan, 2013; Morgan et al., 2013). Data saturation refers to collecting enough information to adequately reflect participants' perspectives (Yin, 2014). Researchers rarely know in advance when during the data collection process the data saturation point will be achieved (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012). The sample size of a study has more to do with saturation than representation (Borders & Clarke, 2014; Kira & Korpelainen, 2013; Marshall et al., 2013). The number of participants is lower in qualitative studies that focus on individual participants and their experiences (Yin, 2013). In qualitative studies, the researcher continues to conduct interviews until no new additional themes emerge (Hanson & Moore, 2014; Sparkes, 2014), making the saturation point an integral part of the qualitative research method (Lambert, Glacken, & McCarron, 2013). To achieve data saturation, I collected data until now new themes emerged from additional interviews. After receiving IRB approval (09-15-17-0122179) for this case study, I interviewed leaders from marketing and consulting firms who had experience and knowledge related

to strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover; data saturation occurred after interviewing six participants.

### **Population and Sampling**

Walker (2012) claimed that researchers use purposeful sampling to intentionally sample a group of people possessing successful experience regarding the problem under investigation. Purposeful sampling is a nonprobability sampling technique most effective when researchers need to understand participants' perspectives (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). Researchers make extensive use of purposeful sampling in qualitative studies to obtain rich and meaningful data (Agyemang, Nyanyofio, & Gyamfi, 2014; Ghariani, Touzani, & Creton, 2015). The purposeful sampling method is appropriate for qualitative studies because researchers select participants possessing specific knowledge about the research topic (Yin, 2014). I used a purposeful sampling to select participants for this case study because purposeful sampling allowed me to understand participants' perspectives, obtain rich and meaningful data, and sample a group of leaders possessing successful experience in reducing voluntary employee turnover.

In qualitative research, guidelines regarding an appropriate sample size are still vague (Marshall et al., 2013). Sampling in qualitative studies includes using a small number of individuals (Chan, Fung, & Chien, 2013; Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013) or locations from which data are collected because a small number of individuals can provide a deep understanding of the issue under study (Yin, 2015). Campbell (2015) used an explorative single case study design and conducted semistructured face-to-face interviews with three participants. The sample size for this qualitative multicase study

was at least six leaders of marketing and consulting firms selected from three marketing and consulting firms.

Researchers achieve data saturation when introducing additional participants does not generate new or relevant data (Baysal, Holmes, & Godfrey, 2013). Data saturation occurs when a researcher is unable to obtain any new information from the research participants (Marshall et al., 2013; Yin, 2014). I conducted face-to-face, semistructured interviews with at least six participants to obtain a variety of information and reviewed organizational documents on employee turnover from 2013-2017. If I am unable to reach data saturation with six participants, I continued interviewing participants until the achievement of data saturation.

Participant eligibility criteria are the parameters researchers establish to ensure that participants qualify for participation in a study (Schoettle & Sivak, 2013). Eligible study participants must possess knowledge and experience related to the problem under investigation (Patton, 2015). Palinkas et al. (2013) argued that participants are eligible to participate in a study if participants have experience and knowledge related to the problem under investigation. The eligibility criteria for this study's participants were based on participants' successful experiences in decreasing voluntary employee turnover. Eligible participants had successful experience with voluntary employee turnover in managerial positions. I purposively identify participants for this study from the senior to middle level leadership group of three marketing and consulting firms. These participants were appropriate for this study because of their collective range of experience and expertise working with reducing voluntary employee turnover.



An appropriate interview setting is one that is accessible, comfortable, available, and private to avoid interruptions (Harrison & Rouse, 2014). The selection of the interview setting has an effect on the content shared (Yin, 2014) and the overall direction of the interview (Venkatesh, Brown, & Bala, 2013; Vaismoradi et al., 2013). I selected the appropriate interview setting because the interview setting had a positive effect on the content that participants share and on the overall direction of the interview. Consequently, I conducted semistructured, face-to-face interviews with participants in an available room at the participants' organizations that was private, accessible, and convenient for participants to avoid interruptions.

### **Ethical Research**

Data collection began after receiving IRB approval (09-15-17-0122179) from Walden University. Scholars must wait to start the data collection after receiving IRB approval (Fiske & Hauser, 2014). In addition to IRB approval, before collecting data, researchers must request permission from prospective organizations and provide participants with an informed consent form (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014). When conducting a research study involving human subjects, a researcher must be mindful of ethical issues, these ethical issues include the ethical principles of respect for people, beneficence, and justice, all of which are reflected in the informed consent form presented before the interviews begin (Mitchell & Wellings, 2013; Morgan et al., 2013; Morse et al., 2014). The informed consent form is a written explanation of the purpose and process of the study, including the voluntary nature of participation, the participants' ability to withdraw from the study at any time without

adverse consequences, and participants' ability to decline to answer any question (Loh, 2013; Marshall et al., 2013; Yin, 2014). I presented an informed consent form to individuals agreeing to participate in this study. The informed consent form included the purpose and process of my study, voluntary nature of participation, the participants' ability to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty, and participants' ability to decline to answer any question. Providing potential participants with an informed consent form prior to interviewing serves as a record that the researcher explained the study process and the participants agreed to participate in the study process (Christensen et al., 2015; Cope, 2014; Yin, 2014). Potential participants will receive an informed consent form that will have a final approval number from the Walden University's IRB.

Boardman and Ponomariov (2014) noted that to avoid coercion, researchers should not offer any incentives for participation in their study. I did not provide any incentives to participants. Another component of ethical practice involves disclosing the purpose of the research study and protecting the privacy and confidentiality of the participants (Khasawneh & Al-Zawahreh, 2015; Mitchell & Wellings, 2013; Yin, 2013). Researchers implement several precautionary measures to protect participants' privacy, including using (a) an assigned identifier instead of participants' names, (b) assigned participant identifier to label participant data, and (c) the assigned identifier to reference participants in the results (Hibbert et al., 2014; Ingold et al., 2015; Mitchell & Wellings, 2013). I communicated the purpose of these research study-to-study participants and protected the privacy and confidentiality of the participants. To protect the privacy of participants, I used a masking code for the participants and their employers. I used

assigned identifiers instead of names of participants and organizations, assigned participant and organization identifiers to label participant data, and the assigned identifiers to reference participants and their organizations in the results. For instance, I labeled participants as P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, and P6.

To protect the participants and their employing organizations, researchers keep all data containing identifiable information related to participants or their employers locked in a secure place for at least 5 years to follow IRB guidelines (Brown et al., 2015; Brutus et al., 2013; Donatelli & Lee, 2013; Doody & Noonan, 2013; Fassinger & Morrow, 2013). Researchers use a masking code for the participants and their employers (Fassinger & Morrow, 2013; Hibbert et al., 2014; Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013). All collected data from the interviews have been safely stored away for 5 years to protect the participants and the organization. Participant and organization names were kept private and are used in the study for privacy and ethical reasons.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) introduced the concept of the researcher as the primary research instrument. Researchers conducting qualitative studies accept that the researcher becomes the research instrument (Houghton et al., 2013). As the research instrument, researchers conduct case study research to collect a variety of data through interviews, observations, and document analysis (Anyan, 2013; Fassinger & Morrow, 2013; Petty et al., 2012). As the researcher, I am the primary research instrument in this study because I am the main data collection instrument. Conducting semistructured interviews allows both the researcher and participants to ask clarifying questions during the interview

process (Black, Palombaro, & Dole, 2013; Christensen et al., 2015). Researchers use semistructured interviews consisting of open-ended questions to gain an understanding of participants' perspectives of the phenomenon under investigation (Bernard, 2013). Collecting rich data through semistructured interviews could lead to the discovery of new themes in the data (Anyan, 2013).

I used semistructured interviews to collect data from purposively selected leaders of marketing and consulting firms located in southeastern United States possessing successful experience in reducing voluntary employee turnover. Conducting semistructured interviews with participants allowed me to gain an understanding of participants' perspectives of the phenomenon under investigation and to ask clarifying questions during the interview process that leads to the collection of rich data, as suggested by Yin (2014). Collecting rich data through semistructured interviews could lead to the discovery of new themes in the data.

Several researchers (Bernard, 2013; Marshall et al., 2016; Yin, 2014) recommended the use of an interview protocol when interviewing participants of a given study, asking the same basic interview questions to each participant. I used an interview protocol to interview participants of this study, asking the same basic interview questions (see Appendix A). I emailed the recruitment letter and reminder recruitment invitation letters to qualified study participants, as stated in the interview protocol (see Appendix C; and see Appendix D). Once potential participants express interest in participating in this study, I sent participants the informed consent form and ask for their signature, as suggested by several authors (Frankfort-Nachmias et al., 2015). After receiving the

signed informed consent forms, I contacted participants to confirm the date and time of the interview (see Appendix E). Participants' availability and location will determine the date and time for the interview meeting. Several researchers (Marshall et al., 2013; Yin, 2014) recommended that researchers ask additional probing questions during the interview, or after the interview, to obtain data that are more specific from study participants. Therefore, I started the interview with introductions, provided a research overview, and asked open-ended questions to ensure participants answer the interview questions in detail. I asked participants additional probing questions to obtain more specific data. Marshall and Rossman (2016) suggested observing each participant's body language and tone during the interview to continually assess a participant's comfort level.

Researchers use document review and analysis as a secondary data collection method (Yin, 2014). In addition, researchers use document analysis and semistructured interview to explore the phenomenon under investigation (Christensen et al., 2015) and to increase rigor, as researchers triangulate data collected (Yin, 2014). Researchers may analyze several organizational documents, such as annual reports, financial statements, and budget justifications (Yin, 2014). Organizational documents could contain specific information regarding the case study (Yin, 2014). I analyzed company documents that contain information relevant to this study. I performed data triangulation using data collected from semistructured interviews and analyzes of organizational documents.

Researchers use member checking to allow participants to correct, confirm, add, and or clarify specific aspects of the data collected (Christensen et al., 2015). Researchers use member checking (Marshall et al., 2013), which takes place after the researchers

conduct interviews, interpret what the participants shared, and shares this interpretation with the participants to mitigate bias (Christensen et al., 2015; Yin, 2014). I used member checking to allow participants to correct, confirm, add, and or clarify specific aspects of the data collected. I interpreted what the participants shared and share this interpretation with the participants to mitigate bias.

### **Data Collection Technique**

When using semistructured interviews to collect data, researchers control the interview process by asking predefined questions and by prompting participants to elaborate on their answers (Boudville, Anjou, & Taylor, 2013). Conducting semistructured interviews allows researchers to grasp participants' experiences and adapt the research questions to ensure participants provide rich and thick data (Yin, 2014). Researchers use open-ended interview questions to allow study participants to describe the phenomenon under investigation in their own words (Harris, 2014). In addition, while researchers use the overarching research question to guide the direction of the interview, researchers use supporting questions to entice the participants to elaborate on their experiences related to the phenomenon under investigation (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). I used in-depth, semistructured interviews to collect data, asked predefined and open-ended questions, and prompted participants to elaborate on their answers to obtain rich and thick data related to the reduction of voluntary employee turnover (Appendix B).

Making handwritten notes during the interviews allows researchers to collect verbal and nonverbal cues, including body language (Bakare, 2014). Collecting verbal and nonverbal cues during the interviews enhance researchers' understanding of the data

collected (Harris, 2014). I made hand-written notes during the interviews to collect verbal and nonverbal cues, including body language, to enhance my understanding of the data collected (see Appendix F; and see Appendix G).

Researchers use document analysis as a data collection technique (Yin, 2014) and use document analysis and semistructured interview data to explore the phenomenon under investigation (Christensen et al., 2015) and to increase rigor, as researchers triangulate data collected (Yin, 2014). Organizational documents could contain specific information regarding the case study (Yin, 2014). I analyzed organizational documents that contained information relevant to this study. I performed data triangulation using data collected from semistructured interviews and analyzes of organizational documents.

The three previous paragraphs contain a discussion of some of the advantages of the data collection techniques that I used in this case study. This paragraph contains a discussion of the disadvantages of such techniques. Thomas (2015) warned researchers of a potential problem with using document analysis. For instance, a policy handbook may be out of date or inaccurate, which would affect the results of the study and, ultimately, lead to invalid results. Conzelmann and Keye (2014) noted that the disadvantages of conducting semistructured interviews include the fact that the flexibility of interviews may lessen reliability and cannot guarantee honesty of participants.

Researchers use member checking to minimize errors (Chronister, Marsiglio, Linville, & Lantrip, 2014), promote the development of a model, and ensure the reliability, validity, credibility, and accuracy of data collected (Yin, 2014). Researchers conduct the interview, interpret what the participants shared, and share this interpretation

with the participants, allowing participants to review their interpreted responses for correctness and accuracy (Beach et al., 2013; Yin, 2014). I conducted the interviews, interpreted what the participants' state, and shared this interpretation with the participants, allowing participants to review my interpretation of their responses to make corrections if needed.

### **Data Organization Technique**

Data organization techniques allow the researcher to maintain the integrity and validity of data collected for the study (Gibson, Benson, & Brand, 2013). Researchers adopting a system to organize data collected are more likely to conduct rigorous research (Yin, 2014). While quantitative researchers may use a database to organize data collected, qualitative researchers compile data in an orderly way (Marshall et al., 2013; Yin, 2014). I used data organization techniques to maintain the integrity and validity of the data collected and was compile data in an orderly way.

I conducted semistructured interviews with at least six leaders using the interview questions (see Appendix B). Researchers use research logs to record the interview process steps (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012), allowing for appropriate organization of data and promoting an effective research process (Thomas, 2015). I recorded the raw data using a digital recorder and used research logs to write everything related to the interviews for accuracy. The process of keeping research logs provides a record of problems, if any, as well as actions taken to correct the problems (Craig et al., 2013). Part of the data organization process includes cataloging the data, labeling data by designated participant code, storing recorded interview content in encrypted computer folders and



external flash drives, and filing a hard copy of interview interpretations (Mitchell & Wellings, 2013; Scheepers-Hoeks, Grouls, Neef, Ackerman, & Korsten, 2013).

Researchers assign each study participant a unique participant code to ensure their confidentiality and privacy (Beach et al., 2013; Doody & Noonan, 2013).

I cataloged the data, label data by designated participant code, store recorded interview content in encrypted computer folders and external flash drives, and file a hard copy of interview interpretations. I used as a coding system to organize the data obtained from the interviews. I used a masked code to protect the confidentiality and privacy of each participant and organization. Labeling each organization and participant in a study will protect the confidentiality and privacy of each participant. I labeled participants as P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, and P6. Regarding document analysis, I referred to them by the official name given by company leaders. I scanned paper documents to organize organizational documents collected. Subsequent filing of electronic documents to a unique folder will facilitate data organization and retrieval.

Storage of collected data should follow established ethical research practices (Yin, 2014) to ensure ethical protection of the participants (Thomas, 2015). I secured all data collected from the interview process in a locked and fireproof cabinet for 5 years. After this 5-year period ends, I will destroy all data, following the recommendation by several scholars (Mitchell & Wellings, 2013; Scheepers-Hoeks et al., 2013; Yin, 2014).

### **Data Analysis**

Researchers use multiple methods to analyze collected data (Thomas, 2015; Vaismoradi et al., 2013), which include member checking and methodological

triangulation (Yin, 2014). Yin (2017) recommended five elements of data analysis: (a) compile, (b) disassemble, (c) reassemble, (d) clarify, and (e) conclude. I followed Yin's five elements of data analysis in this study. I compiled and arranged data collected, disassembled the data by coding data descriptions using nodes, reassembled the data by using organizational documentation to understand the phenomenon, interpreted data using thematic analysis, and formed conclusions and recommendations from the interpreted data. Member checking involves conducting the interview, interpreting what the participant shared, and sharing this interpretation with the participant for validation (Davidson, Simpson, Demiris, Sheikh, & McKinstry, 2013). Methodological triangulation involves the use of multiple qualitative data collection methods to produce sufficient data from different sources (Cao, Chen, & Song, 2013), and to be able to confirm the data (Yin, 2014). I collected data from participants' responses to in-depth questions during face-to-face, semistructured interviews with study participants. I reviewed company documentation. Yin (2014) argued that methodological triangulation allows researchers to display the richness and depth of the data. By triangulating data, researchers explore a phenomenon from different perspectives (Yin, 2014), such as interview data and documentation review (Kemner, Stachecki, Bildner, & Brennan, 2015). I triangulated data collected from conducting semistructured interviews and analyzes of organizational documents using methodological triangulation.

Making observations during the interviews allows researchers to concentrate on participants' verbal and nonverbal communication (Kemner et al., 2015) and generate a large amount of data (Wadham & Warren, 2014). I observed participants' verbal and

nonverbal language during the interviews (Robinson, Brennan, Cobb, & Dean, 2015; Yin, 2014). The use of NVivo 11<sup>TM</sup> software helped me to organize, code, and conduct theme analysis, thereby facilitating the data collection, organization, and analysis processes, as recommended by Davidson et al. (2013). NVivo 11 software was used to code data automatically and quickly (Sotiriadou et al., 2014), and to visualize the results (Thomas, 2015). Using NVivo 11 software enabled me to develop the themes needed to describe participants' perceptions from the data collected during the interviews. Cao et al. (2013) noted that software could assist researchers in uncovering and analyzing complex meanings that may emerge during the data collection, interview transcription, and member checking processes.

After exporting the collected data to NVivo 11 software, researchers begin coding the data (Smit, 2012). Coding consists of creating data categories and listing key words (Thomas, 2015) prior to grouping the data into themes (Wilson, 2012). Researchers use generic coding to represent the participants and organizations using letters and numbers (Davidson et al., 2013). A code letter for participants may be *P* (Smit, 2012), followed by a number ranging from 1 through 6 (Buchanan, 2013). I exported the collected data to NVivo 11 software to begin collecting data by creating data categories and listing key words prior to grouping data into themes and used generic coding to represent the participants and organizations using numbers and letters.

I performed the following actions in this study: (a) store data on a single hard drive for easy access, as recommended by Kemner et al. (2015) in their study; (b) use a unique coding scheme, as suggested by Leech & Onwuegbuzie (2011) in their study; (c)

focus on key themes, as recommended by Yin (2014); and (d) correlate the key themes with previous research and the conceptual framework of the study, as suggested by Wilson (2012). I used the data-coding feature of NVivo 11 to identify patterns and themes. Reassembling is a data analysis process in which the researcher arranges and rearranges the data (Buchanan, 2013) until themes emerge that are satisfactory to answer the overarching research question (Yin, 2014). The conceptual framework represents a link to previous research (Borrego et al., 2014), methodology, and study results (Yin, 2015). I used reassembling as a data analysis process to arrange and rearrange data collected until themes emerge that allowed me to answer the overarching research question for this study. I correlated the patterns and themes with current literature and the conceptual framework for this case study.

### **Reliability and Validity**

Researchers establish reliability and validity in qualitative research studies by addressing Lincoln and Guba's (1985) widely accepted criteria of dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability. Researchers refer to these four criteria collectively as trustworthiness (Houghton et al., 2013; Reilly, Nyberg, Maltarich, & Weller, 2014). By ensuring the trustworthiness of a qualitative research study, researchers address the equivalent of reliability and validity elements of a quantitative study (Ando, Cousins, & Young, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

#### **Reliability**

Reliability is a concern in qualitative research, especially in case studies (Ali & Yusof, 2012). Researchers must ensure the reliability of instruments (Ando et al., 2014)

and measurements to produce compelling and reliable results (Yin, 2014). No single data collection source is better or worse than all the others (Grossoehme, 2014). The various data collection sources, such as semistructured interviews and document analysis, are highly complementary (Loh, 2013). A good case study has as many data sources as possible (Yin, 2014). I used organizational documents analyses and semistructured interviews as sources of evidence in this qualitative multicase study.

**Dependability.** Cope (2014) argued that dependability refers to the steadiness of data over comparable conditions in qualitative research. Dependability is comparable to the concept of reliability in quantitative research (Houghton et al., 2013). Researchers establish dependability by accurately and consistently recording the research methodology and decision-making (Ando et al., 2014). Different ways to ensure dependability exist, including writing research logs to justify and record decisions (Yin, 2014).

The interview process, digital voice recordings (Ando et al., 2014), and meeting log notes outlined the decisions made throughout the research process, as recommended by researchers (Ali & Yusof, 2012). The interview process, digital voice recordings, and meeting log notes process are the basis for achieving the methodological and interpretative judgments of each participant in the study (Yin, 2015). Member checking is a process by which the researcher gives the transcribed interviews to the participants for their review (Charach, Yeung, Volpe, Goodale, & dosReis, 2014). Researchers conduct the interview, interpret what the participants shared, and share this interpretation with the participants, allowing participants to review their interpreted responses for

correctness and accuracy (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013; Yin, 2015), ensuring the dependability of the data.

Recording the interview session allows a researcher to review and reflect upon what the interviewees said during the interview session (Cope, 2014), producing reliable transcripts (Yin, 2014) that reveal patterns and themes. I recorded the interviews, asked interviewees to explain their answers in sufficient detail to ensure my full understanding, and asked participants to elaborate their answers if these answers lack depth or relevance, as recommended by several experts (Houghton et al., 2013). To avoid tainting participants' views (Charach et al., 2014), researchers should not discuss any details about the nature of the study prior to the interviews, which will produce more reliable data (Wahyuni, 2012). To avoid tainting participants' perspectives, I did not discuss with participants any details about the nature of the study before the interview. I followed the interview protocol and did not introduce any new questions to maintain consistency and increase reliability, as recommended by Charleston (2012).

### **Validity**

Credibility, transferability, and confirmability are part of the research validation framework (Cope, 2014). To ensure credibility, researchers use an iterative process of data collection in the case study design approach (Charleston, 2012). The iterative process involves comparing data within and across cases for research validity (Wahyuni, 2012). When there is only one researcher analyzing the data (Yin, 2015), the credibility of the analysis depends on the inclusiveness (Swafford, 2014) and representativeness of the data as a whole (Potter, Mills, Cawthorn, Wilson, & Blazeby, 2013).

**Credibility.** Thoroughly reading interview transcripts establishes data credibility (Black et al., 2013). I performed a thorough review of the interview transcripts to ensure every aspect of the participants' perspectives was captured, as recommended by Swafford (2014). I focused on the similarities and differences within and across the cases represented by the study participants, as recommended by Cope (2014). Researchers implement member checking (Wahyuni, 2012), after transcribing the interviews (Potter et al., 2013) and before analyzing data to ensure the validity of the captured interview data (Poulis, Poulis, & Plakoyiannaki, 2013).

**Transferability.** Researchers (Cambon, Minary, Ridde, & Alla, 2012) claimed that transferability refers to the applicability of the results of the study to those of other studies. Researchers enable readers to transfer the findings from one study to another by providing adequately thick and detailed descriptions of essential aspects of the research study (Sund, 2015). The overall goal of researchers using a case study is to achieve high-quality results by selecting appropriate study participants (Charleston, 2012), obtaining detailed demographic data, performing extensive data analysis (Cambon et al., 2012), and presenting results in an intuitive format to increase transferability (Yin, 2014). I provided adequate, thick, and detailed descriptions of essential aspects of this study to allow other researchers to transfer the findings from this study to another study.

**Confirmability.** Researchers (Ando et al., 2014) claimed that confirmability takes place after researchers have established dependability, credibility, and transferability. Confirmability refers to the researcher's ability to demonstrate that the research data represent the actual interpretation of study participants (Cope, 2014) without the

researcher's biases (Monden et al., 2014). I conducted member checking by making conscious efforts to listen to each participant's interview and record my thoughts, insights, and biases to allow me to exclude those biases from consideration, as recommended by several experts (Black et al., 2013); translated interview answers carefully, as recommended by researchers (Sund, 2015); identified a connection between collected data and results, and used existing literature to increase confirmability, as recommended by Reilly et al. (2014).

Methodological triangulation improves the validity of a case study by utilizing multiple sources of data for confirmation (Houghton et al., 2013). Qualitative researchers using a multiple case study research design collect data from multiple sources (Ng & Chan, 2014) and then utilize methodological triangulation to establish research validity (Yin, 2015). I used methodological triangulation, member checking, and company documentation. Data saturation is the point at which additional data collection (Hortensius et al., 2012) and analyses can no longer reveal any new meaningful information. Without reaching data saturation (Habersack & Luschin, 2013), a researcher is unable to derive conclusive findings (Kratochwill & Levin, 2014); therefore, I ensured data saturation through collecting and analyzing data until I reached the point in which further data did not add meaningful insights to this qualitative multicase study. Data saturation occurred after interviewing six participants.

### **Transition and Summary**

Section 2 included a discussion of the project, purpose statement, role of the researcher, participants, research method and design, population and sampling, ethical



research, data collection instruments, data collection technique, data organization technique, data analysis, and data reliability and validity. Section 3 will include the introduction, presentation of findings, applications to professional practice, implications for social change, recommendations for action, recommendations for future study, reflections, and summary and conclusions.

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

In Section 3, I provide an overview of the purpose of the study, state the research question, and present the findings. I also include the applications of my research to professional practice, implications for social change, recommendations for action and further study, and reflections. Finally, the conclusion encompasses the closing statements for this study.

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative multicase study was to explore strategies that leaders of marketing and consulting firms use to reduce voluntary employee turnover. I conducted individual face-to-face interviews with six leaders at three participating organizations possessing effective strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover and leadership experience at a marketing and consulting firm for at least 2 years. Other sources of data included financial reports, charts, company handbook, and newsletters related to voluntary employee turnover. Analysis of data resulted in three themes, which are leaders' understanding of reducing voluntary employee turnover, essential strategies for leaders to reduce voluntary employee turnover, and employee commitment and performance management reduced voluntary employee turnover.

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

The overarching research question for this qualitative multicase study was as follows: What strategies do leaders of marketing and consulting firms use to reduce voluntary employee turnover? To answer this overarching research question, I conducted

semistructured interviews with six leaders at three case organizations. Following the coding and triangulation process, three themes emerged from data analyses:

- Leaders' comprehension of reducing voluntary employee turnover,
- Essential strategies for leaders to reduce voluntary employee turnover, and
- Employee commitment and performance management reduced voluntary employee turnover.

### **Theme 1: Leaders' Comprehension of Voluntary Employee Turnover**

The first theme that emerged from conducting data analyses was leaders' comprehension of reducing voluntary employee turnover. From analyses of data collected from semistructured interviews and from company archival documents, I identified two comprehensive subthemes associated with turnover that includes employee turnover and employee retention.

**Employee turnover.** P1 noted that the most important factor in reducing employee turnover is consistent communication with staff, which allows employees to take their own career path if done appropriately. P2 noted that the more control employees feel they possess, the more empowered and secured employees feel in the future. P3 noted that regular cadence of career development check-ins, conducted at least quarterly, depending on employee, and a focus on self-generated goals and supervisor-generated goals, produce leader and employee growth and achievement and a positive work environment. P2 commented that leadership and coworker support are features of a supportive work environment working as positive tools of motivation. P3 indicated that

by promoting a supportive working environment of high employee spirit, coworker, and manager support, is essential to motivation and productivity.

P4 commented that by implementing an *One Ups*, which is an employee engagement method, managers enhance productivity, stimulate organizational commitment, and decrease employee turnover. *One Ups* is a formal one-on-one conversation between the new hire and the managers at the 30, 60, and 90-day milestone that occurs during post-employment, monthly unit meetings, and staff huddles. In addition, P4 stated that management plays a significant role in building better workplace relationships and directing employee concerns, which can improve job satisfaction, productivity, and decrease voluntary employee turnover. P4 provided an example of the importance of leaders understanding the positive effect of motivating employees and of employees feeling a part of the company's team goal. To motivate an employee to reduce job dissatisfaction and thereby increase productivity, leaders should consider a combination of the following three strategies: job rotation, job enlargement, and job enrichment.

P5 noted that organizational leaders must keep employees informed of career growth, trainings, and incentives programs, which could result in an increase in employees' organization commitment, job satisfaction, retention and a decrease in voluntary employee turnover. P6 noted that to reduce employee turnover, leaders must conduct efficient employee orientation of the company's corporate culture, clarify job expectations, increase opportunities for staff training twice a month, and implement an unconventional employee recognition program. P1 and P3 noted that an effective

employee engagement strategy between management and employees through feedback and listening to the employees' concerns and taking action immediately, generates high levels of employee satisfaction, engagement, and morale and encourages the free expression of diverse ideas.

In addition, while P3 noted the importance of conducting a total evaluation of salary and ensuring the total evaluation of salary is in the range of the national average, P1 noted that a lack of career growth opportunities is the main reason employees resign from their jobs. P3 noted the importance of reducing employee turnover through offering a competitive healthcare insurance plan, career advancement development, training opportunities, and competitive wages to all employees. P6 believed that when managing a team, one of the most important areas to consider is the quality of communication between the leaders and the team. In addition, if team members have a better understanding of what is expected of them, the better the team can deliver and perform well. P6 stated that

A great way to increase the quality of communication with others is to establish rapport with them. . . . When good rapport is present, you will feel that you are on the same level as the other person and you understand each other well.

Three of the leader participants P1, P3, and P5 shared that hiring the right candidate for the position and going beyond the traditional qualifications for a position, such as degrees and experience has reduced employee turnover. P2 admitted using a technique named *behavioral event interviewing* (BEI), which is a method used for

determining candidates. P1 and P2 use the BEI technique to predict the way the candidates would act in similar situations in the future.

Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty, and Keiser (2012) stated that talented employees are the key to success for an organization and that managers are the critical aspect of developing and managing a successful business organization. Many researchers found that supported leadership reduced employee turnover. For instance, Alshabari et al. (2015) agreed with Lee, Shiue, and Chen (2016) by noting that organizational leaders must recognize the detriment of losing knowledge as a result of employee turnover. Older employees with long-term tenure in an organization are less likely to resign, compared to younger employees (Grissom et al., 2012). P3 commented that management should provide an effective working environment to decrease voluntary employee turnover and increase retention. Companies should take into consideration the importance of building and maintaining good relationships with their employees and designing their jobs in a way that enhances their commitment to their organizations, which will affect their performance positively (Kainkan, 2015).

Khoele and Daya (2014) noted that an increase in employee turnover has an adverse effect on the costs associated with recruitment, selection, and training of employees. In addition, Khoele and Daya found that employee turnover negatively affects organizational talent, performance, and profitability. P6 explained that when key employees leave an organization, a void of knowledge and experience forces business leaders to review their ability to hire and retain qualified individuals as a competitive advantage. P1 suggested that organizations should invest in more training. If the

employee does not feel knowledgeable, the organization should give the necessary training to the employee.

**Employee retention.** P1 reported that continuous communication is the key to employee retention, which provides leadership support, improved work environment, and improved manager/employee relationships. P2 stated that organizations should invest in employees through training to improve employee proficiencies to acquire a greater return in human capital investment through increased job commitment and high employee retention. P3 noted that leaders should assess their employees fairly and make them feel valued and important, which will keep employees satisfied with their job and committed to the organization. In addition, P3 explained that employee retention is greatly enhanced if an enterprise offers a learning environment and career paths that support staff in their personal development and recognize their learning attainments.

P4 stated that training is very important for the organization to succeed and to help retain employees. In addition, P4 reported that employee-training strategies to increase retention include: (a) weekly meetings to keep employees updated on procedures, (b) training and developing the staff to where they know what they need to succeed, and (c) putting the right individual in the right job based upon their knowledge and expertise. P5 explained that businesses should provide training opportunities, which benefit the employees because they become more pro-socially motivated and prepared to invest effort on behalf of the organization. P3 indicated that by promoting a supportive working environment of high employee spirit, coworker, and manager support, is essential to motivation and productivity. P2 commented that leadership and coworker

support are features of a supportive work environment working as positive tools of motivation.

P6 suggested that opportunities for people to share their knowledge and on-the-job experiences via training sessions, presentations, and mentoring and team assignments allows an organizational leaders to increase retention. P6 commented that employers are reluctant to invest in training and development because they fear their employees may leave as a result of their improved skills. P2 and P4 reported that leaders use training and development as a strategy to retain employees and to build organizational capacity. In addition, P2 commented that leaders enjoy sharing what they know which encourages employees to demonstrate responsibility, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Another participant P5 believes that employees know the different levels of support and the leaders are depending on how much the employees know about their job duties. P2 stated,

So if employees do not have appropriate training and the leaders spends little time with the employees. . . . I also observed that employees may feel that the leaders left them on their own without much support or guidance to improve performance.

Upon review of an archival document in P2's organization, I found that continuous and effective communication is a strategy that permeated the organizational document. Another strategy present in P2's archival document was the necessity to train employees in effective and continuous communication. Employee retention refers to employees' tenure in an organization. Organizational leaders use diverse and sound



workplace strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover and retain talented employees (Rathi & Lee, 2015). High employee turnover rates can be a sign of managers' difficulties in retaining employees and, as a result, managers must ensure that staff members feel appreciated and encouraged, retain employees, and act as an organizational sustaining force during change (Shahid & Azhar, 2013). Cohen (2013) noted that understanding the causes of employees' intention to leave or stay and drafting a practical retention policy are critical to reducing employee turnover. The following excerpt from a company training document included a statement to the effect that using the wrong leadership style can easily lead to an unproductive team and leaders should identify a categorization system

that can help leaders decide what style to use in a given situation. . . . Leaders should consider variables such as group moral, productivity, individual's performance and previous experience. . . . Leadership style rests on two fundamental concepts; leadership styles and an individual's maturity.

McClellan, Burris, and Detert (2013) stated that when employees perceive possibilities for improvement, employees are more engaged in the developmental choice, which occurs in speaking up or departing from a group. Leaders increase employee retention by (a) using better recruitment efforts, (b) selecting the best candidate for a given job, (c) reviewing job specifications and descriptions continuously, (d) engaging in fair compensation practices, (e) delivering appropriate leadership and supervision, (f) providing career planning and development, (g) improving working conditions, (h) developing teams, (i) delivering effective communication, (j) committing to providing

counseling to leavers, (k) providing flexible working hours, (l) allowing employees to participate in decision making, and (m) establishing employee turnover and appreciation policies (Cohen, 2013; Mobley, 1977).

Radda, Majidadi, and Akanno (2015) indicated that for employees to find meaning at work, organizational leaders must provide an atmosphere that stimulates employee engagement. Liu and Zhang (2015) commented that incentives in the employment contract and the reputation of management within organizations lead to higher levels of productivity and compensation and lower levels of voluntary employee turnover. Leaders providing incentives to their employees and treating employees as a valuable part of the organization increase the trust between the leaders and employees, achieve higher morale, increase productivity, and decrease voluntary employee turnover. Retention strategies are a necessary part of an organization's business strategy (Ghosh, Satyawadi, Joshi, & Shadman, 2013).

Durocher, Bujaki, and Brouard (2016) explained that leaders desiring to maintain organizational profitability and productivity must manage and engage their workforce and develop efficient retention strategies that offer value to their employees. The limited opportunities to progress within an organization have a negative effect on employee retention, as employees search for other employment opportunities in a competitive job market that eventually leads to employee turnover and a loss of employees' skills, abilities and expertise (Uzonna, 2013). Coates (2015) noted that motivation stimulates people to perform well but motivation appears from within the employees.

**Correlation to the literature.** The findings stated in Theme 1, aligned with the findings of Hale, Ployhart, and Shepherd's (2016) blending theory examined the connection of voluntary employee turnover and employee adaptability. Furthermore, Hale et al. noted that employees prefer organizations with promotions and improved compensation packages, but a lack of employee motivation, poor work–life balance, high job stress, lack of efficient leadership, and lack of recognition lead to a high employee turnover.

Other researchers (Berger-Remy & Michel, 2015; Camps & Rodriguez, 2011; Carasco-Saul et al., 2014; Clark, Sattler, & Leiker, 2016; Gouveia, Milfont, & Guerra, 2014; Kim, 2012; Pawar & Chakravarthy, 2014; Reed et al., 2016; Saini Saini, Gopal, & Kumari, 2015; Steele & Plenty, 2015) suggested that a need for additional research, particularly longitudinal studies to improve the validity and reliability of findings, to understand the impact of high voluntary employee turnover on business organizations using reflective communication skills for employee retention, including (a) increased collaboration, (b) enhanced teamwork, (c) increased employee empowerment, (d) improved communication, and (e) decreased turnover. Hale et al. asserted that employee satisfaction with the job and effective communication have an inherent value rooted in the dyadic relationship between subordinate and superior and their assessment of dyadic as well as leader-centered influences on job satisfaction, communication competence, and communication satisfaction.

**Correlation to the conceptual framework.** Theme 1 relates to Mobley's (1977) framework for employee turnover because the 10 stages of employee turnover are related

to Hale et al.'s blending theory examined the connection of voluntary employee turnover and employee adaptability. In the context of this study, organizational leaders must understand the Mobley's 10 stages of voluntary employee turnover that explains how and why voluntary employee turnover has an effect on employee performance. Hale et al. examined a blending theory on collective turnover and group adaptability consists of two-phase longitudinal on how and why an individual-level turnover event has effects on collective performance. Hale et al. posited that motivation decreases when organizational leaders show no concern toward their employees. As employees begin to feel disconnected from an organization, their motivation tends to decrease (Hale et al., 2016).

Hale et al.'s (2016) blending theory was inspired by Mobley's (1977) model for the 10 stages that an employee experiences in the turnover process. Hale et al. noted that while Phase 1, which is disruption, has a sudden and negative change in unit-level performance, Phase 2, which is recovery, entails a gradual increase in unit performance over time. By identifying the 10 stages that an employee experiences in the turnover process, leaders might be able to develop strategies to decrease voluntary employee turnover and increase employee retention. In addition, there is an interaction between a manager and an employee that significantly decreases performance (Hale et al., 2016).

Hale et al. (2016) noted that voluntary employee turnover and exit interviews are more specifically turned as troubleshooting devices. Leaders developing highly desirable work environments generate high levels of employee satisfaction, engagement, and morale, and encourage the free expression of diverse ideas (Hale et al., 2016). Leaders

using effective employee retention strategies satisfy the needs of employees and decrease voluntary employee turnover (Hale et al., 2016).

## **Theme 2: Essential Strategies for Leaders to Reduce Voluntary Employee Turnover**

The second theme that emerged from conducting data analyses was essential strategies for leaders to reduce voluntary employee turnover. From analyses of data collected from semistructured interviews and from company archival documents, I identified three comprehending subthemes associated with turnover that includes job satisfaction, communication and organizational commitment.

**Job satisfaction.** P1 explained the importance for managers and employees to follow company policy and advocate for what the company promotes, but also respectfully let employees express their thoughts and feelings. P2 stated that one of the most important company policy is conducting mandatory staff training through the organization's human resources/training and development department. In addition, P2 noted the second most important company policy is communication-based relationships between managers and employees during daily, weekly, and monthly staff meetings, which is a way to evaluate job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. P2 commented that an important part of a leader's role is to provide

coaching, mentoring and general support. . . . Your aim is to make your team members grow and become more productive at what they do. . . . it is poor practice to wait until problems develop or when subordinates actively complain before you provide support.

P3 noted two important matrix of company policy are listening and implementing the employees' ideals and taken action were they were needed. In addition, P3 stated that dedicated employees felt empowered and had individual traits to make decisions, be open to changes, learn the growth of work processes, and help train fellow co-workers. P4 noted that an effective company policy strategy to reduce voluntary employee turnover is to obtain a deeper understanding of employee satisfaction and dissatisfaction within the business organization. In addition, P4 noted that employees having completely immersed themselves into the organization have bought into organizational values, which can lead to increased job satisfaction, employee engagement, and decrease voluntary employee turnover. P5 stated that periodic appraisal meetings with team members are

a great way to motivate them and also to quickly understand the underlying nature of any developing issues. . . . In my organization, appraisals are used to make sure an employee remains productive and leaders should center the appraisal meeting on the employee.

I reviewed archival documents in P5's organization and found consistency between the contents of the documents and what P5 noted, which was that high employee engagement is fundamental to minimizing job dissatisfaction and voluntary employee turnover, which may have positive financial implications for the business organization company policy is a major factor of employee satisfaction. P5 also stated that most employees are more concerned with a defined benefit pension plan, quality healthcare insurance, career development, educational opportunities, tuition reimbursement, and fair wages. P6 noted that leaders should review company policy monthly in reference to how

the perceived value of traditional and nontraditional benefits may influence the employee-employer relationship, which may be linked to job performance and voluntary employee turnover intentions. In addition, P6 noted that the importance of an organization being strategic and revisit organizational beliefs, policies, and practices regarding what is an acceptable climate in which employees from diverse backgrounds are comfortable within the business organization.

Islam, Saif ur, Ungku Norulkamar, and Ahmed (2013) emphasized the importance of retaining talented employees by increasing organizational commitment through recognition, rewards, better compensation, and a better work environment. The definition of job satisfaction is how well a worker enjoyed doing the job (Chughati & Perveen, 2013). Internal and external organizational factors influence employee job satisfaction, including working conditions, leadership, office politics, and pay (Sypniewska, 2014).

Kuo-Chih, Tsung-Cheng, and Nien-Su (2014) stated that job satisfaction includes participation through employees in a way that fosters innovation and effective trust between employees and leaders. The manager-employee relationship in some business organizations might be poor because of an abusive supervision, which can encourage an employee to search for other opportunities or leave the organization immediately without advanced notice (Palanski, Avey, & Jiraporn, 2014).

Song and Alpaslan (2015) explained that an individual would be satisfied with a job if the individual obtains things considered important in the individual's professional and personal life. Employees with higher job satisfaction are more loyal to their employer, enjoy their job more, become satisfied because the employer met their needs,

and have positive feelings towards work performance and the business organization as a whole (Tayfun & Catir, 2014).

Secara (2014) explained that the implementation of career promotion opportunities fall in the top three motivators for employees, which means that when employees know that opportunities to progress vertically are available, employees become more engaged. Managers should foster social integration within teams and social relationships among teammates and supervisors providing support because, regardless of the contextual conditions of internal job satisfaction, a lack of social integration results in higher levels of individual absenteeism (Diestel, Wegge, & Schmidt, 2014). Talachi et al. (2014) noted that job satisfaction is an intermediate relation combining job duties, responsibilities, actions and reactions, motivations, encouragements and hopes are the keys to reducing voluntary employee turnover and increase employee retention.

**Communication.** P1 stated that leaders play an important role in employee retention and through receiving feedback is an essential component of the communication and learning cycle. P1 claimed that people do not leave jobs; instead, people leave behind managers not communicating with their employees regarding performance, expectation, corporate culture, and goals. In addition, P1 commented that from an organizational perspective, feedback is an effective way to enhance job performance and to convey to the employees the message of the tasks that employees need to perform. P2 explained that the real purpose of communication is to motivate

the employee, recognize employee growth, appreciate employee ambitions and do everything leadership and the company can do to make the employee deliver more



while feeling satisfied. . . . Invite employees to share ideas on how to make their job less frustrating.

P2 stated that leaders set the tone for the culture of the organization through effective communication between leaders and employees. I reviewed P2's organizational archival documents and found that effective communication between leaders and employees is a major strategy to reduce voluntary employee turnover and increase retention. P2 claimed the importance for leaders to model behaviors and norms that leaders expect from staff in weekly and monthly staff meetings that may communicate corporate policy to reduce voluntary employee turnover and increase retention. In addition, P2 posited that communication and feedback on job performance is a vital mechanism for the organization in other ways as well, which can be a means for clearing misunderstandings and for providing leaders with a better picture or sense of the reasons employees become dissatisfied and leave the organization.

P3 noted that leaders should know their employees' strengths and weaknesses to help them develop based on employees' abilities and resources. P3 explained that leaders are no longer just managing resources, but forming cutting-edge teams that are capable of delivering more than average work performance. P3 commented that leaders should be able to identify miscommunications and clashes and then guide the team members to improve themselves so that each team member achieves a high level of functionality. In addition, P3 reported that under the worst-case scenario, communication and feedback represent the organization's efforts to assist all employees, particularly those with poor work performance.

P4 reported that weekly and monthly meetings with all staff members and individual one-on-one communication sessions are important to allow employees to ask questions and perceive that their managers appreciate them for all their work efforts. P4 commented that communication and feedback might enhance employee job performance, motivation, clear goal setting, and employee retention. In addition, P4 noted that employees seek feedback on their job performance. However, P4 explained that employees seeking feedback on their performance is critical to engage in corrective behaviors. P4 commented that the most important technique used in establishing

rapport with others is to empathize with them and I believe that when I use rapport, people trust you more and are more likely to share their ideas and concerns with you. . . . This can give you great insight into employee behaviors.

P5 stated that performance evaluation is an important method of communicating and gaining feedback to help improve job performance, morale, satisfaction, and employee retention to decrease voluntary employee turnover. Raymond, Marchand, St-Pierre, Cadieux, and Labelle (2013) stated that, psychologically, there is a heuristic tendency to take a specific piece of good or bad feedback performance as an example of an individual employee's normal or typical work. P5 posited that, good leaders need to have a vision and energize employees in the company. P5 explained that when employees are passionate about their job performance, they could be far more efficient and effective. P5 commented that leaders should want to make employees passionate about their jobs.

P5 indicated that while leaders cannot force people into becoming passionate employees, leaders could create a suitable environment in which employees become

passionate about their job duties and performance. In addition, P5 suggested that leaders should provide immediate feedback related to examples of good and bad behaviors to the employee and demonstrate how to perform tasks appropriately. P6 reported that while incentives are beneficial, an open and honest communication needs to come from low-level employees as well as senior management and not depend on workplace gimmicks.

P6 noted that organizational leaders should hold quarterly meetings transmitted via satellite from headquarters to subsidiary companies across the country. P6 commented that employees are paid to attend and hear the company's leaders answer questions from employees and discuss the past quarter's performance and new plans and ideas. P6 claimed that leaders should share the manner in which leaders follow the company's vision and mission to maintain an inclusive atmosphere in which the employees feel embraced and appreciated for being an important component of the organization. P6 noted that, in most companies, there are sensitive topics that high officers avoid discussing with employees. In addition, P6 explained that leaders holding organizational quarterly meetings help employee feel more informed on decisions and create a better leader-employee relationship within the organization.

Raina and Roebuck (2016) commented that when leaders give precise and clear job instructions as well as appropriate performance feedback to subordinates, the subordinates understand the leader's expectations and find it easier to achieve goals. Employees should be able to express their ideas without fear of retribution (Alagaraja & Shuck, 2015). Allen and Rogelberg (2013) stated that leaders who implement communication measurement tools to determine employee engagement allow employees

to express their ideas, which has a positive effect on job performance. Organizational business leaders may need to examine the causes of the lack of employee motivation as a first step to engaging employees in their work and to devise a plan that best fits employees' organizational needs (Cattermole, Johnson, & Jackson, 2014).

**Organizational commitment.** P1 posited that when a new manager begins working in an organization, some leaders and employees might not be open to exploring the new manager's new methods of motivation, commitment, and retention, negatively affecting work performance and economic growth. As P1 explained, while some employees informally share ideas with colleagues about how to enhance organizational performance or tasks, these employees do not share these ideas with their leaders. P1 suggested that implementing an anonymous suggestion box system could allow employees to express their honest opinions without repercussions. In addition, P1 claimed that encouraging employees to feel more connected with the organization might enhance organizational commitment and employee retention.

P2 noted that encouraging employees to use self-assessments and goal setting could improve commitment and satisfaction and empower employees. In addition, P2 explained that leaders should retain a committed workforce and create a suitable working environment to enhance performance. P3 stated that leaders should develop the habit of coaching team members through communication, charisma, competence, energy, and vision. P3 witnessed that, over time, this coaching approach may become

quite annoying for some of team members and they may activity resent being told exactly what to do. . . . Also, in my experience, leaders are relying on

authoritative intervention; perhaps they should use perspective or informative approaches most of the time.

P3 indicated that if employees perceive organizational climate as positive, leaders could improve retention and performance. I reviewed archival documents in P3's organization and found written policy in place to ensure a positive organizational climate to increase retention and performance. P4 explained that leaders should implement an engagement survey and an efficient reward system. Mandhanya (2015) found that a reward program is an essential component of the retention strategy for an effective organization.

P4 also remarked that effective training could improve employee morale, commitment, and empowerment. Competent leadership consists of recognizing the competencies of members of all areas of the organization, which establishes the foundation for recruitment, selection, training and development, and rewards (Mau, 2015). P5 recommended keeping employees informed to become aware of how changes will affect the operations of the business as a whole and each employee individually. Leading from the center of information, managing the flow of information, holding frequent team meetings, and maintaining an open-door policy are all ways that participants remain connected to the organization using the circle of influence (see Figure 1).



*Figure 1.* The circle of influence in business organizations.

P5 commented that communication is a key factor for credibility, support to build stronger relationship between leaders and employees, and organizational commitment. In addition, P5 suggested that a suitable work environment influences employees' organizational commitment. Tourigny, Baba, Han, and Wang (2013) found factors, such as authentic leadership, integrity, job stressors, emotional exhaustion, job satisfaction, health, security, work conditions, and development of human capabilities, which are drivers of organizational commitment. P6 indicated that feedback is an essential component of the learning cycle that allows leaders to improve communication between leaders and employees.

According to P6, feedback is important in the performance management process. P6 explained that feedback from the performance management process serves as a tool leaders can use to predict commitment. P6 stated that leaders use long-term perspectives to create commitment and loyalty among employees. In addition, as P6 explained, when

the organization's leaders invest in their employees through training and development programs, employees demonstrate improved performance, knowledge, and techniques related to works tasks. P6 explained that leaders should switch to a facilitative approach, such as catalytic or supportive intervention. P6 stated that

This means he or she [the leader] would focus on making a team member grow and learn on his or her own by providing help in a way that allows the individual to discover ideas and solutions on his or her own.

Rose, Shuck, Twyford, and Bergman (2015) found that in a career system, it is important for leaders to focus their individual attention on the strategic issues facing an organization over the long term. In contrast to a career system, objectives and reward systems tied to the short-term lead to dysfunctional behavior, lack of productivity, goal displacement, and employee turnover. Leaders communicating effectively with employees increase employee outcomes, resulting in increased productivity, organizational commitment, and reduced employee turnover (Mikkelsen, York, & Arritola, 2015). Eggerth (2015) and Omar and Ahmad (2014) commented that job satisfaction and organizational commitment are strong predictors of employee turnover intention, at least among auditors. The reason for the strong predictive nature of employee turnover intention is that job satisfaction and organizational commitment have an adverse effect on auditors' turnover intentions. This effect is somewhat paradoxical in that, for an employer to be satisfied with an employee's job performance, the employee must be satisfied with the employer.

**Correlation to the literature.** The findings reported in Theme 2 align with Keeble-Ramsay and Armitage's (2016) engagement theory on job satisfaction, communication, and organizational commitment through recognizing job accomplishments, communicating appropriate information, and providing support. In organizations, low profitability and increased competitive pressure tend to have a negative effect on job satisfaction (Keeble-Ramsay & Armitage, 2016). Keeble-Ramsay and Armitage noted the four motivational components of meaning, impact, competence, and self-determination. These four motivational components are precursors of employees' job satisfaction and are positively affected by an increase in communication among leaders and employees, leading to organizational commitment (Keeble-Ramsay & Armitage, 2016).

Other researchers (Anitha, 2014; Eggerth, 2015; Ferreira & de Oliveira, 2014; Giancola, 2014; Gonzalez, 2016; McLaughlin, 2013; Merry, 2014; Ugoami, 2016) suggested that there is a need for additional research into the matter of voluntary employee turnover. In particular, these researchers pushed for longitudinal studies to improve the validity and reliability of findings and to understand the impact of high voluntary employee turnover through seven shared characteristics for improving job satisfaction, communication, and commitment. These shared characteristics include (a) work environment, (b) leadership, (c) workplace well-being, (d) team and coworker relationships, (e) training and career development, (f) compensation, and (g) organizational policies.



Keeble-Ramsay and Armitage (2016) asserted that intrinsic rewards contribute to organizational commitment, motivation, communication, and job satisfaction. These types of rewards are inexpensive and powerful motivators for employees (Keeble-Ramsay & Armitage, 2016). In addition, Keeble-Ramsay and Armitage claimed that the leaders could use the relationship between intrinsic work value and rewards as an opportunity for the leaders to increase performance expectations to separate the organization from other organizations.

**Correlation to the conceptual framework.** Theme 2 relates to Mobley's (1977) framework for employee turnover because the 10 stages of employee turnover to Keeble-Ramsay and Armitage's (2016) engagement theory on job satisfaction, communication, and organizational commitment through recognizing job accomplishments, communicating appropriate information, and providing support. In the context of this study, organizational leaders must understand the 10 stages of voluntary employee turnover to develop strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover, increase employee morale, and implement strategies that can assist employees in valuing employees' jobs. Keeble-Ramsay and Armitage developed two paths to explain the manner in which leaders achieving employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment support the landscape of the manager-employee relationship through communication, decreasing employees' dissatisfaction with their jobs.

Keeble-Ramsay and Armitage's (2016) used Mobley's model as an inspiration to develop engagement theory. In Path 1, when job satisfaction is high, motivation and performance increase, while attendance problems and turnover decrease. In Path 2,

employees believing that they are not part of the company or appreciated for their hard work and job performance tend to have less organizational commitment and are more likely to leave the organization. By identifying the 10 stages that an employee experiences in the turnover process, leaders may be able to develop strategies to decrease voluntary employee turnover and increase employee retention.

As employees begin to feel disconnected from an organization, employees' motivation tends to decrease (Keeble-Ramsay & Armitage, 2016). In contrast, promoting employee involvement in organizational processes and decision-making leads to an increase in motivation, job satisfaction, and commitment to the organization (Keeble-Ramsay and Armitage, 2016). Leadership style and organizational commitment consist of several factors, such as job satisfaction, compensation, workplace diversity, and training in the organization, all of which contribute to reducing employee turnover and increasing employee retention (Keeble-Ramsay & Armitage, 2016).

### **Theme 3: Employee Commitment and Performance Management Reduced Voluntary Employee Turnover**

The third theme that emerged from analysis of the data was employee commitment and performance management reduced voluntary employee turnover. From analyses of data collected from semistructured interviews and from company archival documents, I identified three subthemes associated with turnover that include performance management, relationship management, and training and development.

**Performance management.** P1 explained that building a culture of growth depends on the leader's ability to grow strong teams that work well together. P1 stated

that implementing better organizational protocols and procedures is a useful performance management technique that leaders could use to help employees better understand expectations about their job, company policy, and the culture of the organization. P1 commented that not all job opportunities fit all employees, even if an employee has relevant job experience or the appropriate educational background. Matching the appropriate job and employee will increase the employee's job performance and organizational commitment and improve employee retention. P1 believed that good leaders need to have a

vision and energize the people around them. . . . I notice that when people are passionate about their job duties, they can be far more efficient and effective. . . .

As a leader, I have created a suitable environment where employees become passionate.

I reviewed archival documents in P1's organization and found the importance the organizational leaders place on building a culture of growth based on creating strong teams that work well together. P1 noted that when leaders implement traditional strategies, such as communicating a shared mission and vision, leaders allow employees to contribute to the decision-making processes. P3 asserted that implementing ways to acknowledge and cope with workplace conflicts and job dissatisfaction are essential to increase job performance, organizational commitment, and to increase employee retention. P2 claimed that performance evaluations through digital employee management systems should connect to supervisor and executive team meetings and discussions.

P2 commented that when leaders and subordinates work together, both parties are more invested to succeed, which may increase job performance, organizational commitment, and employee retention. P2 stated that financial incentives appeared to have a positive effect on performance management, which increases employee retention. In addition, P2 noted that a continuous focus on leadership-generated development goals that leaders follow up throughout the year is an important performance management technique used by leaders to create honesty and candor between leaders and employees.

P3 explained that conducting meetings each day during the workweek might encourage both company leaders and employees to discuss various strategies for effective performance management. P3 stated that leaders should assign a supervisor from each division to serve as a peer coach for each employee to help supervisors understand each employee's perceptions of work issues. P3 recommended that employees should rotate in and out of the role of peer coach every month and that leaders should feature in the monthly newsletters employee's achievements to give employees a feeling of accomplishment and inclusion in the organization. P3 posited that leaders must show the

relationship between passion and the mission of the company. . . . I speak directly to a small number of employees within the team until they understand what I am asking of them. . . . I monitor new employees or team members for cultural fit.

P4 explained that besides reconciling the reward-effort nexus, employees are interested in asserting ownership of their actions. Instead of merely following orders, employees desire to become partners in the decision-making process. In addition, P4

stated that when leaders consult and involve employees in decision-making processes, employees feel valued in the organization. P5 explained three successful strategies,

I use quarterly performance meetings with staff, including setting of professional and personal goals, annual staff retreat, and reclassification of positions when unaligned with actual duties of job, which increased job performance and employee morale and reduced voluntary employee turnover.

P5 commented that leaders benefit from obtaining accurate and often insightful information to make decisions. Including employees in the problem definition and solving process, allows employees to develop a better understanding of what the leaders is asking the employee to implement. Employees are more likely to accept the legitimacy of a problem definition and its importance to the organization when leaders allow employees to play a part in the process. P6 noted that the management team participates in job analysis to monitor performance and reduce voluntary employee turnover. P6 explained that job analysis is the foundation upon which other personnel activities are built. P6 posited that leaders engaging in job analysis results in the development of a job description or job specification, describing the most important aspects or duties employees perform in that specific job.

P6 stated that job analysis is a guide for orienting new employees. Leaders use job analysis as the benchmark for determining training needs and for establishing performance appraisal standards. Serrano and Reichard (2011) stated that leaders could increase employee performance by providing meaningful and motivating work, encouraging and mentoring employees, increasing personal resources, and facilitating

team building by fostering coworker relationships. Performance management includes metrics, such as client retention, business development, or customer satisfaction. These metrics should have a compensation structure that aligns with the expectations of the role of the employee and should include rewards and incentives that motivate employees to meet these objectives (Flaxington, 2013).

**Relationship management.** P1 explained that formal and informal feedback is important in relationship management because employees enjoy working with leaders listening and willing to offer development and provide training to enable employees to improve their performance and quality for promotions. P1 commented that, “I felt scared to receive feedback about my leadership skills, but I found that feedback is necessary for personal and professional growth as a leader.” P1 noted that a suggestion box is an important fixture in any organization in which leaders reward employees for contributing outstanding ideas and boosting performance, morale, job satisfaction, and company policy and culture. P1 reported believing that a passionate employee can easily become, dependable since the employee aspires to become independent and responsible. . . . I have observed that if employees do not have any type of incentives, they may not be interested in being responsible and avoid tasks and duties and may eventually quit.

P1 underscored the importance of having a training and development system in place to ensure that employees are always learning and growing, which has helped to retain and grow talented employees. In addition, P1 noted that a key to relationship management is developing the criteria to measure progress, providing employees with a

clear understanding of work expectations. P2 noted that engaged employees are more successful in the workplace. P2 explained that engagement is the foundation of relationship management, as successful leaders engage their employees, encouraging employees to self-generate development goals and create common goals between leaders and employees.

P2 explained that consistent leader-employee communication is key to relationship management because, without a strong leader-employee communication, employee job dissatisfaction increases and employee retention decreases. P2 noted that individual operational responsibilities could become an obstacle to creating a culture of organizational accountability and self-generated employee development. P2 commented that leaders must invest deeply in the employees themselves because employees are the most valuable resource of any organization.

P3 commented that an efficient strategy to implement is the healthcare appointment pay, which allows employees four hours to attend a doctor's appointment during workday hours without losing hourly wages or salary. Employees must complete a healthcare appointment pay document a week in advance and must submit a doctor's statement within three days of the doctor's appointment. P3 posited that leaders using the healthcare appointment pay initiative might help employees live a healthier lifestyle and increase job satisfaction and employee retention. I reviewed a healthcare appointment pay document in P3's organization and found the language used was consistent with P3's statement about the organizational leaders allowing employee to attend doctor's

appointments with pay. The healthcare appointment pay document represents a strategy to support employees, resulting in increased employee satisfaction and retention.

Most employees do not blame the company for choosing to resign; instead, employees blame their departure on poor relationship management between leaders and employees that made employees feel lost and without any guidance or clear expectations. P4 believed that conducting an analysis of employee strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) is a good start,

to document what I have in mind in terms of risks and to compare different advantages and disadvantages to improve not only the leader-employee relationship, but the workplace environment. . . . I also probe deeper into problems and find balanced solutions.

P4 stated that leaders should show the relationship between their passion and the mission of the company by communicating directly with small teams of employees called *seed groups*, ensuring employees have a comprehensive understanding of the expectations about their jobs. P4 explained that the next step is leaders spreading their passion via the *seed group* and monitoring new employees or team members to ensure that employees fit well into the organizational culture.

P4 commented that organizational leaders could reduce their voluntary employee turnover through delivering efficient training and development session and keeping the organization operating at a steady pace. In addition, P4 suggested that top leaders must remain at the forefront of the battle against divisiveness by making expectations clear and informing managers and employees about their responsibilities, reminding them that



corrective actions could be necessary. P4 reported the belief that a leader follows the rules and sets the example for others to follow,

I believe if a leader solves problems by confrontation, the employees may easily follow the leader's example, resulting in employees resolving internal issues through confrontation. . . . I encourage cooperation and teamwork when dealing with external issues as part of leadership.

P5 noted that employee job satisfaction, loyalty, and empowerment are important ways to enhance employee retention, which improves organizational effectiveness through employee morale, performance, support, and employee recognition as a valuable part of the organization. P5 explained that empowering employees contributes to the vision and goals of the organization. P5 commented that leaders should know their employees and how to approach each employee to ensure job satisfaction and organizational commitment. P5 stated that, "the way I implement workplace relationship management is through weekly management-employee meetings, monthly team-building exercises, and feedback."

P5 commented that leaders use employee empowerment to develop a positive and supportive workplace environment in which employees increase their performance, job satisfaction, and organizational social change. In addition, P5 explained that leaders should assess the culture of the organization, perhaps through surveying employees, and determine needed changes. P5 stated that leaders should assess whether the personnel policy of the organization includes language related to respect for, and value of, diversity. P6 stated that leaders use efficient relationship management to promote communication

and feedback from the leaders and employees. P6 explained the importance of having empowered leaders and employees, influencing employees' self-efficacy and adaptability.

P6 posited that when employees have self-efficacy, confidence, and adaptability, they are able to handle difficulties on the job, thereby enhancing employee retention and corporate profitability. P6 commented that leaders should understand diversity as an efficient strategy for relationship management that allows leaders to clearly communicate to employees the importance of respecting cultural differences and the ways in which diversity improves the work environment. In addition, P6 noted that diversity creates more effective communication among staff, with customers, and between leaders and employees, and that it improves performance, enhances employee retention, and promotes a suitable workplace environment.

Relationship management strategies may help managers and stakeholders negotiate conflicts, and should lead to organizational change toward and mutual benefit (El-Nahas, Abd-El-Salam, & Shawky, 2013). Relationship management is a two-step process in which organizations identify constituencies with which to build a relationship and communicate organizational activities that build relationships (Chai-Uthai, 2013). Jose and Mampilly (2014) noted that psychological empowerment is an important strategy as a predictor of employee engagement, performance, satisfaction, and commitment in the workplace. Employees that help managers create a culture of respect are empowered by lending their voice to the decision-making process and are more likely to contribute to growth and change in the organization (Brewer & Kennedy, 2013).

Giancola (2014) noted that motivation and manager-employee engagement in the workplace are two qualities that employees need to be successful in organizations. Employee success is necessary for organizational success, whereas motivation is specific to completing job duties. Intrinsic rewards contribute to employee engagement, motivation, and job satisfaction (Giancola, 2014; Parboteeah, Cullen, & Paik, 2013). The relationship between intrinsic work value and rewards are opportunities for employers to raise the bar, distinguish themselves from their competitors, and create a less stressful work environment for employees. Merry (2013) and Anitha (2014) noted that engagement of managers and employees is most effective in organizations when several factors are present: (a) work environment, (b) leadership, (c) workplace well-being, (d) team and coworker relationships, (e) training and career development, (f) compensation, and (g) organizational policies.

**Training and development.** P1 commented that training and development are tools of empowerment for employees that create a sense of importance and relevance to the organization, thus increasing employees' dedication and commitment to the organization. P1 also posited that training and development programs promote the perception of worth to employees, management, and the organization. P2 noted that strong, consistent communication and organizational commitment are important to the process of implementing training and development. As P2 explained,

I believe that training and development is the key [*sic*] to a successful organization and I use the coaching in my organization to prevent problems from

increasing risks, keeps employee engaged, and justifies more serious measures when employee do not improve workplace performance.

In addition, P2 commented that coaching an employee through a recent event or issue that is still fresh in both the leader's and employee's minds is a much easier task than conjuring up memories of a past event or issue. Albattat and Som (2013) used Mobley's (1977) development levels model to aid in interpreting the development levels for motivating employees. Development levels are a combination of competence and commitment. The development levels include the following four possible combinations of high and low levels of competence and commitment:

- Development level 1 – Low competence and high commitment
- Development level 2 – Low competence and low commitment
- Development level 3 – High competence and low/variable commitment
- Development level 4 – High competence and high commitment

As P2 explained, by spending more time on the task and the support of leadership, the individual gradually gains experience. . . . However, I witnessed the employees' commitment drop because the task can be more complicated or involved than the individual has originally believed. . . . At this point, the employees' development level is D1 (low competence and high commitment).

P3 explained that a leader should recognize that quality of training and development is vital to workforce performance; quality plays a critical role in the growth and advancement of new and current employees. P3 also posited that leaders should direct training and development programs to educate employees through improving job-

related skills, introducing new technology, engaging in team building, and promoting employee growth and development. P3 noted that effective training and development is a transformative method for improving job performance through motivational words or actions to assure employees of their value to the organization.

In addition, P3 noted that training and development methods are more effective when there is follow-up coaching, which can enhance performance. Such follow-up allows leaders to provide employees with constructive feedback and encourage employees' efforts. P4 stated that on-the-job training programs offer direct and realistic training in the specific methods actually required for the position. These training programs include immediate performance feedback and provide motivation through active involvement of the leader, resulting in a strong leader-employee relationship.

P4 explained that on-the-job training programs are a form of instruction that employees can use to improve their classroom learning skills; absence or shortages of these skills can be a barrier to performance and employment/promotions. P4 commented that barriers are not always germane to the actual requirements of the job. In addition, P4 posited that employers might offer on-the-job training programs as a form of compensation to employees in lieu of traditional classroom training.

P5 stated that the most efficient training and development method is job rotation, which is based on experiential learning with the assistance of workplace peers and direct feedback. Job rotation generally involves the employees' superiors in the training process. P5 commented that rotating committee assignments are analogous in purpose and function to creating learning opportunities. P5 suggested that through doing tasks,

employees gain competence in new areas, self-confidence increases, and useful networks of cooperating employees are built up through formal and informal association. P2 explained that an individual's director guides leaders by showing employees how to overcome fears and master the skill. P2 noted,

I have observed employees' competence variations and the employees' commitment and how the individual's confidence grows as the individual becomes more experienced and knowledgeable. . . . At this point, the employee's development level is D3 (high competence and low/variable commitment).

P5 explained that another training and development method is an information presentation. P5 stated that although the lecture format remains the most popular information presentation method, this mode also includes use of small group discussions, case methods, audiovisual techniques, and computer-assisted instruction. P5 also commented that visual presentations are best when the information presented is simple, and the slides are not complex or overcrowded with visual imagery. P6 claimed that clean, simple slides allow managers and employees to engage in analysis and discussion, which can become instant feedback, leading to either self-evaluation or greater training insight into the group process.

P6 explained that organizational leaders should use action-based methods for role-play and simulation exercises; these activities are concepts of behavioral modeling. P6 stated that role-playing help employees to step out of their comfort zone and address real-life work environment situations. P6 also described an empathy-creating technique to

improve feedback and empathized insights into many situations through the leaders and employees' eyes.

P6 commented that organization development (OD) as a training and development method is a process consists with leadership styles, organizational climate, interpersonal communication and role clarification, goal setting. By contrast, P6 noted that OD as a training and development method does not focus on structural change (power relationships, benefit flows, accountability). P6 noted that team ideology of OD-type training involves harmony between leaders and employees through teamwork apart from structure, which improves employee satisfaction, morale, and job performance, with the potential to reduce voluntary employee turnover.

Khattak et al. (2014) noted that the role of the human resources department is instrumental in organizational structure, especially in the service sector. Employee development is a major responsibility of the human resources department. Knowledgeable and skilled employees improve organizational effectiveness (Khattak et al., 2014; Scheers & Botha, 2014). Secara (2014) explained that effective management is needed throughout all components of the employee training cycle, including training needs assessments, developing an effective training program, evaluating training effectiveness, and making proper records of training programs.

Skills, knowledge, and abilities gained from a training program also depend on techniques, methods, tools, and the delivery process, which involves a proper training cycle to enhance the effectiveness (Shin, Koh, & Shim, 2015). Liao and Teng (2010) and Smith and Macko (2014) noted that employees attending training and development

programs within their organization are more satisfied with their job than untrained employees. When managers do not provide adequate training or invest in improving their employees' skills and knowledge, voluntary employee turnover increases (Al-Emadi et al, 2015; Liao & Teng, 2010).

Srivastava and Tang (2015) commented that training and development is based on feedback. Training opportunities can help employees develop in their positions and enhance the employees' employability and career opportunities. Reed et al. (2016) explained that investing in employees' specific skills could enhance employee retention. Ethics training is related to employee satisfaction, morale, performance, and voluntary employee turnover, which is directly related to the profitability of an organization (Steele & Plenty, 2015).

Trude and Inger (2013) posited that skills development by managers and employees is essential during periods of change. Skills development can help mitigate uncertainty and should align with the culture, goals, mission, and strategies of the organization (Pomirleanu & John-Mariadoss, 2015). Ameer-ul-Ameer and Furqan Hanif (2013) explained that training and development programs assist managers and employees in promoting a responsible, safe, and effective working environment, as well as strong commitment to the organization.

Holstad et al. (2014) commented that transformational leadership is an informal training and development strategy that inspires employees to improve their job performance. Behaviors associated with transformational leadership include communicating information about the vision, goals, and culture of the organization,



which stimulates powerful emotions in employees (Yirik & Oren, 2014). Srivastava and Tang (2015) explained that transformational leadership enhances moral values.

Transformational leaders lead subordinates through inspiration, exemplary behaviors, and selfless conduct (Aggarwal & Krishnan, 2013).

Steele, Fisman, and Davidson (2013) stated that the main function of leadership is the development of the people in the organization. Leadership is particularly important in organizations in which leaders have been promoted from a non-managerial position (Steele et al., 2013). Strom, Sears, and Kelly (2014) commented that new managers must remember that they are now the coaches; others now have the responsibility of carrying out duties in the workplace. To have the greatest impact, the leader/coach must assure the employee/player is fully prepared for action (Strom et al., 2014).

Steele and Plenty (2015) noted that training and development is one of the most neglected components of some organizations. Individuals hired for specific jobs are assumed to already possess all the skills needed for the job. Although training and development are important strategies for reducing voluntary employee turnover, leaders neglect training and development in some organizations (Holstad et al., 2014).

Milhem, Abushamsieh, and Pérez Aróstegui (2014) explained that through team development, employees are trained to problem-solve more effectively in groups. Leaders teach observation and feedback through group training. Other examples of training include cross-training, coordination training, leadership training, self-correction, and distributed team training (Milhem et al., 2014). Popescu, Popescu, and Iancu (2010) commented that hiring the most qualified individuals and developing the best work

environment are not enough to sustain success, leaders must make certain that the organizational culture encourages these individuals to work together towards common objectives. Furthermore, leaders must be aware of roadblocks that get in the way of optimal team performance, including poor communication and lack of autonomy, which can both result in a team underperforming while affecting the quality of products and/or services (Nekoranec, 2013).

**Correlation to the literature.** The findings reported in support of Theme 3 align with those of Carlström and Ekman (2012), who examined the connection between organizational culture and employee performance. Carlström and Ekman (2012) commented that through the process of diffusion of innovation, a change or innovation is communicated over time in a social network involving various channels. The culture of an organization represents a defining characteristic in promoting positive employee performance (Carlström & Ekman, 2012). Carlström and Ekman stated that motivating staff and determining possibilities for retaining employees includes (a) individual growth and achievement, (b) reward and recognition, (c) workplace associations, and (d) a supportive work environment.

Other researchers (e.g., Elsayah et al., 2015; Erturk, 2014; Haider et al., 2015; Kandampully et al., 2014; Khalid, Pahi, & Ahmed, 2016; Lavine, 2014; Lu, Guo, Luo, & Chen, 2015; Pawar & Chakravarthy, 2014; Supanti, Butcher, & Fredline, 2015) suggested there is a need for additional research to understand better how relationship management and training and development are linked to rewards as a motivational tool to improve employee performance and organizational commitment. In addition, other researchers

believe that leaders should create an environment for ongoing training and development opportunities, support performance, and empowerment of employees (Carlström & Ekman, 2012). Carlström and Ekman (2012) posited that organizations with a positive culture created via effective leadership, and in which collaboration, teamwork, and a healthy life balance is the norm, gain a competitive advantage in recruiting and retaining qualified employees. Furthermore, collaboration and teamwork within a flexible working structure that allows employees autonomy in decision-making and that challenges them to seek innovative solutions creates a culture with increased levels of organizational commitment (Carlström & Ekman, 2012).

**Correlation to the conceptual framework.** Theme 3 relates to Mobley's (1977) framework for employee turnover because the 10 stages of employee turnover are related to Carlström and Ekman's (2012) theory of connection between organizational culture and employee performance. In the context of this study, organizational leaders must understand the 10 stages of voluntary employee turnover that, if followed, can help them develop a more efficient organizational culture and leader-employee relationship to improve employee performance. Carlström and Ekman explained that when employees do not understand the culture of an organization, their performance and retention could be adversely affected. In addition, an effective organizational culture and employee engagement are essential for an organization to achieve success (Carlström & Ekman, 2012).

Carlström and Ekman (2012) noted that a work environment that promotes individual learning provides the basis for effective employee performance and

relationships between leaders and employees. Identifying efficient strategies to reduce employee turnover and improving employee retention is the foundation of a successful business (Carlström & Ekman, 2012). Carlström and Ekman explained that efficient strategies can influence motivation, performance, and commitments of members of the organization, which can help managers develop solutions to evaluate and recognize employee retention (Carlström & Ekman, 2012).

Carlström and Ekman (2012) explained that employees value developmental opportunities that will help them to advance in an organization. Organizational leaders that invest time and money in new employees prepare them through training and skills enhancement to be retained as valued and skilled employees (Carlström & Ekman, 2012). Carlström and Ekman commented that relationship management evolves with the core competencies, views about the purpose, people, and performance in leadership styles that motivate, focus, and support.

### **Applications to Professional Practice**

The applications of this study to professional practice include providing business leaders with strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover. Understanding the factors that contribute to voluntary employee turnover is critical to business success. Reducing voluntary employee turnover is crucial because a stable workforce is fundamental to operating a business efficiently and effectively. An increase in voluntary employee turnover affects more than just productivity and profitability; voluntary employee turnover weakens the overall survivability strategy of the organization through the loss of knowledge and poor performance of remaining employees (Ahammad, Tarba, Liu, &

Glaister, 2016). Gonzalez (2016) explained that leaders of business organizations must take an active role in managing employee turnover because failure to retain key employees leads to organizational collapse.

According to Ugoami (2016), business leaders use effective strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover to retain knowledge by preserving talented employees often difficult to replace. Even though most leaders are aware that voluntary employee turnover has a negative effect on the organization, leaders could benefit from gaining an improved understanding of the causes of voluntary employee turnover to implement these strategies at their workplaces. Participants in this study stated that allowing room for career growth, adding benefits that are not costly, and offering compensation comparable to what other companies offer for similar positions, are effective strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover.

Understanding the benefits associated with using effective strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover can save organizations money and time. Leaders may use the findings of this study to gain new knowledge about the implementation of professional practices of business organizations to reduce voluntary employee turnover. One finding applicable to the professional practice of business organizations is reducing costs associated with voluntary employee turnover. Leaders could increase organizational sustainability by providing training and mentoring, investing in developing employee skills, and empowering employees to support the organization through effective company policies and practices. Business leaders should find, analyze, and monitor the main reasons employees leave a business through exit interviews (Houlfort et al., 2015).

The strategies study participants provided offer inexpensive ways for leaders to increase productivity, sustainability, and profitability, which can promote social change in their local communities. Voluntary employee turnover is higher in marketing and consulting organizations than in other business sectors (Ahammad et al., 2016; Gonzalez, 2016; Ugoami, 2016), which is another reason I recommend leaders in these areas consider the feasibility of implementing innovative strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover.

### **Implications for Social Change**

The key implication for positive social change is the potential to provide leaders with a better understanding of factors that relate to voluntary employee turnover. Reducing unemployment is critical because unemployed individuals have elevated rates of mental and physical health problems, higher mortality rates, and experience detrimental changes in family relationships (Toleikyte, Kranzl, & Müller, 2018).

This study is important because participants are leaders in marketing and consulting firms that were successful in creating strategies that reduced voluntary employee turnover. These findings are not generalizable to all settings, industries, or populations. Conducting a case study allowed me to ask how questions with little control over participants' responses. According to Yin (2014), the case study method is appropriate when the research is a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life setting.

The strategies identified by business leaders in this study may reduce voluntary employee turnover in the work environment and increase job satisfaction, job performance, organizational commitment, and involvement within the local community.

Harhara, Kumar, and Hussain (2015) explained that recognizing the impact of leadership on employees' intentions to leave organizations is critical for management and leadership teams. Implementing efficient strategies could affect positive social change by (a) promoting economic stability within the community; (b) influencing employees to maintain employment, thus increasing retention; (c) inducing greater job satisfaction for employees; (d) influencing business leaders to build a valuable workforce; and (e) promoting company profitability (Ployhart, Nyberg, Reilly, & Maltarich, 2014).

Organizational commitment relates to creating the image of an organization as a good employer or great place to work (Saini et al., 2015). According to Berger-Remy and Michel (2015), the more employees can convey organizational commitment in their individual way of working, the more important the organizational commitment becomes as a motivational tool. The higher the employees' organizational commitment, the more likely employees will contribute to the development of (a) positive employer brand, (b) reduced turnover, (c) service quality, (d) customer satisfaction, (e) productivity, (f) sales, and (g) profitability (Carasco-Saul et al., 2014).

When a business is successful, the organization, employees, and customers engage in community-based activities that lead to social changes by improving living standards and continuous employment opportunities (Eniola & Ektebang, 2014). The development of strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover can (a) improve policies and practices, (b) improve leader-employee interaction/relationship, (c) motivate employees, and (d) promote loyalty and organizational commitment. To understand the importance of implementing effective strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover,

leaders must be able to identify which strategies are most effective for their type of organization (Hom et al., 2012).

In this study, I identified viable options for reducing voluntary employee turnover through an inclusive vision of demonstrating and cultivating respect. Reducing voluntary employee turnover enhance employee morale and job satisfaction. The findings of from study contribute to the understanding of the causes of voluntary employee turnover and how addressing those causes can improve employee performance and commitment throughout the organization. By reducing voluntary employee turnover, organizational leaders maintain sustainability and strengthen the U.S. economy (Harhara, Kumar & Hussain, 2015). Social implications include effective strategies to reduce employee turnover that can promote a positive image with current and new employees in the organization, as well as in the community where the organization contributes to the economy.

### **Recommendations for Action**

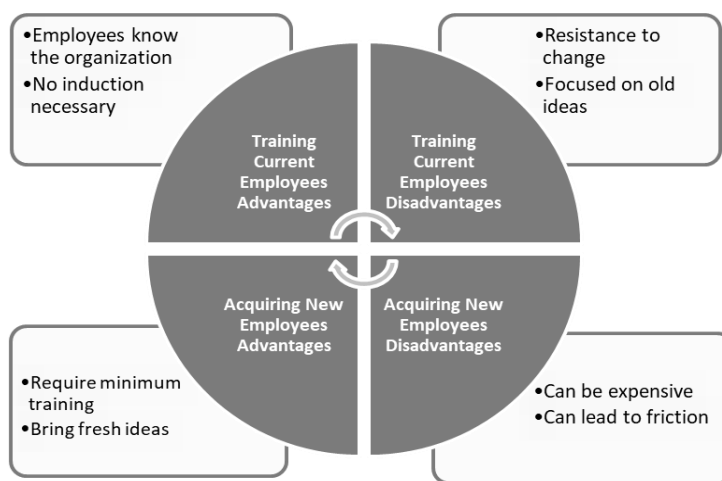
Armache (2013) commented that commitment and job satisfaction are two main predictors of an employee's intention to leave the organization. Organizational leaders should pay attention to the results from this study and consider assessing the strategies and methods used to improve organizational commitment, performance management, relationship management, training and development, and reduce employee turnover. The following recommendations for action for this study may extend past common situations that leaders face and lead to a more productive subordinate-employer working environment:



1. *Rewards, compensation and benefits* – This recommendation for action means that employees are duly compensated for their skills, experience, and effort. Appropriate compensation and benefits also mean that leaders value their employees, which is an important prerequisite for loyalty and commitment.
2. *Sense of belonging to the work team and organization* - This recommendation for action means that employees believing that they belong to their work teams and overall organization are more likely to fulfill their duties and produce high-quality products or services.
3. *Opportunities to change, learn, and have new experiences at work* – This recommendation for action means that employees have a need to develop both personally and professionally. A workplace in which leaders allow employees to learn and develop new skills results in enhanced productivity and reduced staff turnover. In addition, such an organization can be more competitive in today's market with highly trained employees.
4. *Meet the team's potential in fulfilling organizational objectives* – This recommendation for action means that employees strive to meet their team's goals in fulfilling organizational objectives. Meeting a team's potential is an important need for individual team members.

The more satisfied employees are in their work environments, the more likely they are to remain (Brett, Bransetter, & Wagner, 2014). In addition, business leaders in marketing and consulting firms and in other business organizations should (a) develop quality groups that include supervisors and employees meeting regularly and receiving

training to identify, analyze, and solve work related problems; (b) retrain managers and supervisors experiencing high employee turnover to improve goals, performance, and retention; (c) avoid constant reorganizations; (d) pay more to reduce voluntary employee turnover; (e) identify and improve skill gaps in current employees through training and development; and (f) recruit more experienced people from outside of the organization. However, some strategies have both advantages and disadvantages on retaining and hiring employees (see Figure 2).



*Figure 2.* Advantages and disadvantages of training employees.

Tourigny, Baba, Han, and Wang (2013) explained that leaders understanding the factors that contribute to employee turnover contribute to the success of the organization through communication, support, and a stable workplace environment. Another strategy business leaders could use to reduce employee turnover is conducting employee exit interviews because some outgoing employees are more willing than others to be candid during exit interviews. Feedback gained from these exit interviews could help leaders develop a better understanding of effective strategies to reduce voluntary employment

turnover. In addition, by implementing effective strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover, business leaders may retain key employees difficult to replace because of their extensive experience and knowledge. I strongly recommend business leaders review the findings of this study and implement these strategies in their business organizations.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

The purpose of this qualitative multicase case study was to explore strategies leaders of marketing and consulting firms in southeastern United States use to reduce voluntary employee turnover. Although the findings of this study expand the knowledge base of existing research on voluntary employee turnover, employees' reasons for leaving their jobs vary. Because this study was delimited to marketing and consulting firms, future qualitative researchers should explore strategies employees consider effective in reducing voluntary employee turnover in other types of organizations. Human resource personnel must meet the needs of the employees and the organization to implement the most effective strategies that fit the needs of the organization and address employees' concerns.

Recommendations for future studies include addressing some of the limitations of this study, specifically, using only a small sample size of leaders from three marketing and consulting firms to participate in the interview process. Limitations in this study included having a sample of only six leaders of marketing and consulting firms located in southeastern United States and not having explored other demographics outside of this location. Future researchers should consider engaging leaders from different organizations and expanding the geographical footprint of the study. Future researchers

should consider studying larger marketing and consulting firms that have decreased profitability and increased voluntary employee turnover within the past 3 years through the use of quantitative or mixed-methods research methodologies to better understand the reasons for voluntary employee turnover within the organization.

Future quantitative or mixed-methods researchers should also consider examining the relationship between voluntary employee turnover and other variables, such as salary/hourly wage, benefits, leadership style, communication, conversion techniques, job satisfaction, employee commitment, organizational culture, performance management, relationship management, expectations, recognition, and training and development. Future researchers conducting research studies in these areas may provide leaders with new insights that could help reduce employee turnover.

### **Reflections**

The doctoral study experience and the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) process were extremely complex but highly rewarding at Walden University. Strong professional and personal relationships developed during this process have shaped my experiences and ideas. I have a strong work ethic; however, I was struck by the immensity of the research process. This study challenged my personal perspective and helped me to accept constructive criticism from fellow students and faculty. The DBA process of this case study involved exploring strategies leaders of marketing and consulting firms use to reduce voluntary employee turnover. The study participants were six marketing and consulting managers with successful experience in the use of strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover in their organizations.

The participants did not have a problem answering the questions. The participants had great attitudes and were eager to participate in the study, both openly and honestly. During the course of the interviews, I realized the importance of reducing voluntary employee turnover strategies. Many participants were concerned about employee compensation, communication, working environment, and unfair treatment. Other areas that participants thought can be improved were employee management relationships, compensation, training and development, and communication. Several participants felt that making improvements in these areas may reduce employee turnover even further.

### **Summary and Study Conclusions**

Managing employee turnover is an important aspect of operating a business because losing trained workers affects profitability and sustainability; therefore, controlling and predicting employee turnover is an essential business practice in most business sectors (Hongvichit, 2015). Employee turnover creates a devastating impact on any organization by reducing efficiency and creative capacity, thereby losing their competitive edge and increasing vulnerability (Alshanbri et al., 2015). Guveli et al. (2015) indicated that employee burnout led to an increase of employee turnover intentions. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies leaders use to reduce voluntary employee turnover. The target population consisted of leaders of marketing and consulting firms located in southeastern United States with successful experience in the use of strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover.

I utilized NVivo 11 software to analyze data collected and to discover the themes that emerged. The following themes emerged: (a) leaders' comprehension of reducing

voluntary employee turnover, (b) essential strategies for leaders to reduce voluntary employee turnover, and (c) employee commitment and performance management to reduce voluntary employee turnover. The study findings coincided with existing literature and knowledge regarding strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover. Application to professional practice and recommendations for action detailed (a) rewards, compensation and benefits; (b) sense of belonging to the work team and organization; (c) opportunities to change, learn, and have new experiences at work; and (d) meet the team's potential in fulfilling organizational objectives. These strategies may be helpful for all leaders in organizations to successfully reduce employee turnover.

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## Appendix A: Interview Protocol

1. Introduce self to participant(s).
2. Present consent form, go over contents, and answer questions and concerns of participant as presented.
3. Give participant(s) a copy of the consent form.
4. Turn on recording device.
5. Follow procedure to introduce participant(s) with pseudonym/coded identification; note the date, time, and location.
6. Begin interview with question #1; follow through to interview question #9.
7. If needed, follow up with additional questions.
8. End interview sequence; discuss member-checking with participant(s).
9. Thank the participant(s) for their part in the study. Reiterate contact numbers for follow up questions and concerns from participants.

## Appendix B: Interview Questions

The target of each interview question is to obtain information leading to the answer of the research question. The interview questions are as follows:

1. What strategies have you used that have proven successful in the reduction of voluntary employee turnover?
2. How do you measure the success of the strategies you have used to reduce voluntary employee turnover in your organization?
3. How do you promote policies and values that align with initiatives to reduce voluntary employee turnover in your organization?
4. How are strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover effectively communicated throughout the organizational ranks and among stakeholders?
5. What role does leadership play in the reduction of voluntary employee turnover in your organization?
6. What are some of the consequences of not having strategies for the reduction of voluntary employee turnover in your organization?
7. What more can you add to this study regarding strategies needed to reduce voluntary employee turnover?

## Appendix C: Recruitment Letter for Study Participants

Dear [Name]:

My name is Kevin L. Bernard and I am currently a graduate student at Walden University pursuing a doctoral degree in business administration (DBA). I am conducting research on how strategies leaders use to reduce voluntary employee turnover entitled: “Strategies to Reduce Voluntary Employee Turnover in Business Organizations.” I am interested in conducting a study to explore strategies leaders of marketing and consulting firms use to reduce voluntary employee turnover. I am seeking to interview leaders’ of marketing and consulting firm who fit the following criteria:

- Be a leader who has used strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover,
- Be in a leadership position at a marketing and consulting firm for at least 2 years

I believe leaders’ who fit the criteria for this study could bring a unique perspective and understanding to this research. During the course of this study, I will conduct a face to-face interview with the participant and review archival documents. At the end of this study, I will share results and findings with the participant, other scholars, and the business organization with a 1-2 page summary. The individual, who met the above criteria and is interested in participating in this study, please contact me at [Kevin.bernard@waldenu.edu](mailto:Kevin.bernard@waldenu.edu). Participation in this study is voluntary. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kevin L. Bernard

## Appendix D: Reminder E-mail for Recruitment of Study Participant

[Date]

Re: Reminder E-mail for Research Study Participation

Dear [Name]:

My name is Kevin L. Bernard and I am currently a graduate student at Walden University pursuing a doctoral degree in business administration (DBA). I am conducting research on how strategies leaders use to reduce voluntary employee turnover entitled: "Strategies to Reduce Voluntary Employee Turnover in Business Organizations." I previously sent you a request to participate in a research study I am conducting about strategies leaders use to reduce voluntary employee turnover in marketing and consulting firms. If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact me at [Kevin.bernard@waldenu.edu](mailto:Kevin.bernard@waldenu.edu) as soon as possible.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kevin L. Bernard

## Appendix E: Request to Schedule an Interview

[Date]

Re: Request to Schedule an Interview

Dear [Name]:

The purpose of this letter is to schedule an interview with you. I previously sent you a request to participate in the research study I am conducting about strategies leaders use to reduce voluntary employee turnover in marketing and consulting firms. You have expressed your interest in participating, so I would like to take this opportunity to schedule a time and place for the interview.

Interviews can be conducted in your place of business at your convenience. The interview will take 60 minutes. The interviews will be recorded and you will be provided with a 1-2 page summary of the results and findings. As per Walden University guidelines, all interviewees retain the right to withdraw from this study at any time. Once you review your schedule and determine your availability, please contact me [Kevin.bernard@waldenu.edu](mailto:Kevin.bernard@waldenu.edu) to schedule the interview.

Thank you.

Kevin L. Bernard

Walden University DBA Student

## Appendix F: Example of Study Research Log

**The Impact of High Employee Turnover on Business Organizations****RESEARCH LOGBOOK**

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

This thesis logbook will record the progress of the student, from the commencement of research until completion of the thesis. The supervisor and student are required to retain logbooks and record each meeting regarding the progress of research. The logbook is an official record of contacts between the student and the supervisor(s). It must be produced at Annual Assessment presentations and must be available for review at any stage during the year as appropriate (4th edition, Regulations for Postgraduate Study by Research).

**Postgraduate research programme on which student is registered:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Research commencement date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Research completion date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student contact number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student e-mail address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisor(s) contact number(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisor(s) e-mail address (es):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Advisory supervisor contact number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Advisory supervisor e-mail address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Strategies to Reduce Voluntary Employee Turnover in Business Organizations**

**Title (1):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title (2):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title (3):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Final Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix G: Example of Research Study Meeting Notes

Date:
Progress Since Last Meeting:
Material Submitted:
Agreed Tasks/Objectives For Next Meeting:
Comments:
Date Of Next Meeting: