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Social Security Administration Employee Lived Experiences of Job Satisfaction and Employee Turnover

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This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

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MPA, Strayer University, 2006

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Management: Leadership and Organizational Change

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Abstract

Employee turnover continues to be an issue in federal organizations, including the Social Security Administration (SSA). While issues such as retiring baby boomers and budget constraints are beyond the control of any agency, retaining employees is critical to maintain essential services. The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to explore SSA employee's lived experiences of job satisfaction and employee turnover to uncover motivators and satisfaction strategies. The conceptual framework for the study was based on Maslow's human needs and Herzberg's two-factor theory. Data were collected from 20 SSA frontline employees using 6 open-ended interview questions. The data were analyzed using a modification of van Kaam's method of analysis of phenomenological data and NVivo 11 Pro. Study results revealed that time, stress, pay and benefits, public service, and interoffice relationships were the prime intrinsic and extrinsic factors participants perceived as directly related to their job satisfaction. They highly valued job enrichment programs, cohesive teams, and pay and benefits, which override daily stressors inherent to the public demands strategies for the agency. Conducting the study in depressed socioeconomic areas might also provide significant insights, particularly since stress and workload were essential dissatisfiers. SSA provides critical services to many vulnerable groups. Strategies that employees perceive as motivating enhance the quality of services and benefits to eligible American citizens, many of whom rely on these services for quality of life, thereby reducing the burden of local communities to support these individuals if SSA services fail.

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Dedication

First, I want to dedicate my dissertation to God. I would not have been able to complete my dissertation without the strength I receive from Him. Two of my favorite scriptures are "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13) and "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). Lord, I just want to thank you for all of my blessings!

I also dedicate my dissertation to my son and daughter, Darren and Eryn. I want to thank both of you for giving me the opportunity to set an example for you and to raise you in the way that you should go. Darren, you are a bright little man who continues to make me smile and who teaches me new things all the time. Eryn, I cannot wait to see who you will become, I know that you are going to make me so proud. Darren and Eryn, continue to trust God in everything that you do. I love both of you!

To my mom, Laurette Turner; my dad, Reginald Cain, Sr.; and my sisters and brother, words cannot express my gratitude for the love and support that you have given me. Throughout the years, you have motivated and encouraged me to reach my highest potential. You have always been available during the times I did not feel like writing and during the times I just complained about the entire dissertation process. I love you all! Thank you all for everything!

Last but not least, I would like to dedicate my dissertation to Eron. You have been with me through the hardest times of this dissertation. I love you, I appreciate you, and thank you for being there for me until the end.

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Last but not least, I am very grateful to those I did not mention but who contributed in some way to the successful completion of this dissertation. May God continue to bless all of you!

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Job satisfaction has been shown to be important in different fields such as psychology, sociology, economics, and management (Maheswari, 2014; Taylor & Westover, 2011; Yang, Brown, & Moon, 2011). People who are happier with their jobs are more successful in their positions (Choi, 2009; Maheswari, 2014). Additionally, a more satisfied employee leads to reduced employee turnover (Wang, Yang, & Wang, 2012). There is also a significant level of research interest in job satisfaction because more satisfied employees produce higher quality work, which makes organizations more competitive (Vales, 2014; Yang et al., 2011). Job satisfaction is also one factor that determines employee turnover intention and absenteeism (Ahmad & Rainyee, 2014). Ishaq and Khalid (2014) stated that job satisfaction is pertinent in organizations, and its absence can lead to reduced employee commitment.

Employee turnover costs organizations approximately $11 billion annually (Rehman & Waheed, 2011). Turnover costs also involve funds spent to recruit and fill vacant positions, funds spent to train employees, and lost human resources (Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty, & Keiser, 2012; Whitford & Lee, 2015). Dissatisfaction in employees can lead to a high level of interest in other employment opportunities (Rehman & Waheed, 2011; Van Scheers & Botha, 2014). Many organizations need strategies to keep employees happier and more satisfied with their jobs (Taylor & Westover, 2011; Van Scheers & Botha, 2014).

Rehman and Waheed (2011) and Van Scheers and Botha (2014) noted that turnover is the main reason for declining employee morale in public and private agencies. Working professionals spend significant time at work, between one fourth and one third of their lifetime at work, which shows the significance of the workplace in an individual's well-being (Nath, 2011). Employee well-being is important to companies because it relates to performance (Malik, Wan, Ahmad, Naseem, & Rehman, 2015; Nath, 2011; Rehman & Waheed, 2011). An employee's positive well-being influences their job satisfaction, engagement, and performance, and a negative well-being can create issues such as burnout, depression, and employee turnover (Malik et al., 2015; Nath, 2011).

In this study, I focused on the lived experiences of Social Security Administration employee job satisfaction and employee turnover in the eastern United States. The phenomena of this research study were the lived experiences of Social Security employees. I conducted a transcendental, phenomenological research study by interviewing Social Security employees to explore their lived experiences. Chapter 1 will include a discussion on the background of the research study problem, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, the research questions, the conceptual framework for the study, the nature of the study, definitions, assumptions, the scope, the limitations, significance of the study, and a summary of the chapter.

Background of the Study

Job satisfaction is important because of its influence on the workplace. Kim (2005) stated there is a relationship between job satisfaction and worker motivation, employee participation, personal life satisfaction, mental stability, dedication to the organization, and organizational citizenship behavior. There is also a relationship between job satisfaction and absenteeism, turnover, and perceived stress (Kim, 2005). Akhtar, Prasant, and Nadir (2016) stated that pay, growth opportunities, and employment security affect an employee's level of job satisfaction. The higher the employee job satisfaction, the less absenteeism, turnover, and employee stress an organization may experience (Akhtar et al., 2016; Kim, 2005). Kim identified four factors that align with organizational performance: employee job satisfaction, an individual's commitment to the organization, the level of public service motivation, and organizational citizenship behavior. Kim indicated that public employees who display a high degree of these factors are more motivated to carry out the goals and objectives of the agency.

Meier and Hicklin (2008) stated that employee turnover is a deserted topic in public administration. The decreased level of attention is unusual because employee turnover requires organizations to use resources to hire more personnel and train them, and high employee turnover indicates an issue within the organization (Meier & Hicklin, 2008; Rehman & Waheed, 2011). Turnover creates problems for human-service agencies because they are public service organizations, built to serve people (Ertas, 2015). Ertas (2015) stated that due to retirements in federal service, retaining and motivating employees has caused concern amongst federal human resource professionals.

Choi (2009) focused on how diversity, such as ethnicity, gender, and age, in the federal government affects employee performance, employee job satisfaction, and staff turnover. Hasnain, Khan, Awan, Tufail, and Ullah (2011) named six elements of job satisfaction that impact an employee's level of job satisfaction: wages, employee recognition, job security, employee promotion, employee benefits, and work schedules. Hasnain et al. also found that job security plays a role in the level of public employee job satisfaction. Taylor and Westover (2011) noted there are several factors that impact government employees and that it is pertinent to explore the elements that influence employee job satisfaction.

In regards to federal employee turnover, the retirement rates of federal employees remained around 4% from 2004 to 2007 (Goldenkoff, 2014). During the 2009 recession, the retirements rates dropped to almost 3%, then the rates went back up in 2011 and 2012 (Goldenkoff, 2014). As of September 2012, almost 270,000 federal employees (almost 14% of 2 million employees) could retire from employment, and as of September 2017, approximately 600,000 (about 31% of total employees) of federal employees could retire (Goldenkoff, 2014). The large number of retirement-eligible employees is a cause for concern because it could lead to gaps in skills that are much needed in federal agencies (Goldenkoff, 2014).

Social Security employee job satisfaction has decreased to 6th out of 19 federal government agencies that were included in a 2012 survey (Daugherty, 2013). The decrease in employee satisfaction was due to the employee's perception of management personnel (Daugherty, 2013). Career advancement led to a decline in employee satisfaction because of employment hiring freezes, decreases in management positions, and declines in opportunities to network (Daugherty, 2013). As of July 2010, there were hiring freezes within the Social Security Administration and employees began to leave the agency at a high rate, which caused a loss in talent retention (Daugherty, 2013). The cost of talented employee loss is high (Daugherty, 2013). Social Security Administration employees rated overall satisfaction and commitment at 66.4 out of 100 and higher-level executives rated overall satisfaction and commitment at 80.8 out of 100, which showed that the higher-level executives may not be in touch with lower-level Social Security employees to improve satisfaction (Daugherty, 2013).

With this transcendental, phenomenological study, I contributed to the body of knowledge because I focused on exploring the lived experiences of Social Security Administration employees while focusing on job satisfaction and employee turnover. The Social Security Administration is dealing with budget restraints and decreases in staffing, and the public is becoming more aggressive due to long wait times (Colvin, 2013). The results of this study are significant because the outcomes revealed strategies Social Security Administration managers could use to improve job satisfaction and decrease employee turnover.

Problem Statement

Employee turnover continues to be an issue in federal service (Ertas, 2015; Pitts, Marvel, & Fernandez, 2011; Sadri & Bowen, 2011; Udechukwu, 2009). Researchers have noted employee turnover is a costly issue in federal service with an adverse effect on production in an organization (Ertas, 2015; Udechukwu, 2009). High turnover rates suggest that employees may not be satisfied with their jobs (Ertas, 2015).

The general problem was that employees not satisfied with their job may leave the organization (see Ahmad & Rainyee, 2014; Liu, Mitchell, Holtom, & Hinkin, 2012). The organization may not be able to replace employees, and the organization is then left with fewer employees to do more work. Employee turnover can predict job satisfaction regarding workplace pressure, an employee having a work schedule that is conducive to their needs, a safe work environment, feedback provided by management, and having an overall valuable workplace environment (Ahmad & Rainyee, 2014). High employee turnover has a negative impact on office morale, especially if the work depends on a team to complete the work (Ertas, 2015). Employees with little job satisfaction have low motivation to perform their best, and the low-level of motivation can lead to more employee turnover (Ertas, 2015). Employee turnover also creates significant problems for management officials because it causes service delivery issues and effects the hiring, screening, and training of new employees to replace previous ones (Pitts et al., 2011). Traditionally, federal government employee turnover has been a problem for the last two decades (Pitts et al., 2011; Wynen & Op de Beek, 2015).

The specific problem was that Social Security Administration managers may be out of touch with employees to improve job satisfaction and employee turnover (see Daugherty, 2013). In this study, I explored the lived experiences of Social Security Administration employee job satisfaction and employee turnover. The potential outcomes of this study included strategies to improve job satisfaction amongst Social Security Administration employees and decrease employee turnover. There are gaps in the literature regarding the lived experiences of Social Security Administration employees. Literature exists on employee turnover in federal public-sector agencies, but not on the lived experiences of Social Security Administration employees specifically. More employee turnover research exists for private-sector organizations (Wynen & Op de Beek, 2014).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this transcendental. phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of Social Security Administration employee job satisfaction and employee turnover. Social Security management personnel may benefit from this study by being able to use the findings to create better programs and services to assist Social Security employees with their job performance. The focus on job satisfaction and employee turnover are of interest because employees not satisfied with their jobs may leave an agency (Kamala, 2014; Udechukwu, 2009). In the results of this study, I identified ways of improving employee job satisfaction that may decrease employee turnover.

Research Questions

I developed the research questions for this study to address the outcome of a reflection of the *lifeworld of the participants* that situates the phenomenon in context with this research (see Vagle, 2014). The following research question and subquestions guided the research study and provided insight into the lived experiences of Social Security Administration employee job satisfaction and employee turnover:

RQ: What are the lived experiences of Social Security Administration employees on job satisfaction and employee turnover?

SQ1: How do employees perceive their work environment?

SQ2: What factors motivate Social Security employees to remain in their jobs?

SQ3: What management strategies may help increase job satisfaction and decrease employee turnover?

The phenomenon of this research study was the lived experiences of Social Security employee job satisfaction and employee turnover. Individual experiences and feelings lead people to behave in certain ways in various environments (Curio, 2017). The research questions assisted me in identifying the lived experiences of the participants and determining strategies that can improve their job satisfaction and decrease employee turnover.

Conceptual Framework for the Study

In this study, I predicated job satisfaction on multiple concepts that are simultaneously inherent and unique to an organization in their application across organizations and the perceptions of managers and leaders that apply them. Central to job satisfaction is Maslow's hierarchy (Maslow, 1971; Norwood, 1996) of needs as it relates to the self-actualization by creating work environments that align employee goals with organizational goals (Kamala, 2014; Maslow, 1971; Sadri & Bowen, 2011; Udechukwu, 2009). When combined with Herzberg's theory of job satisfaction in terms intrinsic and extrinsic factors (Herzberg, 1965; Taylor & Westover, 2011), the complexity of job satisfaction is revealed. Herzberg's theory places the concept of job satisfaction squarely in the realm of the leadership to again create working environments that are motivating through job enrichment that can help with employee self-actualization as well as hygiene factors, such as pay or job security (Herzberg, 1965; Taylor & Westover, 2011). Herzberg believed that both factors contributed to employee job satisfaction (Taylor & Westover, 2011).

Given that researchers, such as Kim (2005) and Westover (2013), have found that public sector employees place more emphasis on an internal sense of accomplishment than private sector employees, these concepts become critically important to understanding job satisfaction within this sector. Both Kim and Westover found a correlation between public service motivation and a government employee's productivity level, job satisfaction level, the intention of the worker to remain employed with the government, and an employee's support for federal government reform. Taylor and Westover (2011) noted that benefits provided by the employer, for example, leave and retirement pensions, may also have a significant role in government work security. Kim pointed out that public employees place great value on helping others and making a meaningful contribution to society. Consequently, I used the concepts presented by Maslow and Herzberg to ground this research study.

Nature of the Study

A qualitative methodology is an inductive approach that focuses on people and words (Maxwell, 2005). Qualitative research helps the researcher understand the meaning of experiences, the context in which participants act, and identifies unknown influences that may generate new theories (Maxwell, 2005). The transcendental phenomenological approach was the most appropriate method for this study because I wanted to explore and describe the lived experiences of Social Security Administration employee job satisfaction and employee turnover. My goal with this study was to elicit possible strategies from employees' suggestions to improve job satisfaction and decrease employee turnover.

McCusker and Gunaydin (2015) indicated that quantitative researchers test scientific theories by looking at the relationship between variables. Quantitative approaches are framed in numbers rather than words, like qualitative methods (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). A quantitative approach would not have provided me with insight into employee beliefs, emotions, and perceptions, so I chose the qualitative phenomenological approach to focus on the lived experiences of Social Security Administration employees.

Phenomenological research explores a person's lived experience (Bombata, 2014). Bombata (2014) stated that the phenomenological design is the best approach to knowing the facts about people. Using this design, the researcher captures the lived experiences of several individuals and normally involves conducting interviews to gather data (Bombata, 2014). Transcendental phenomenology was appropriate for this study because I explored and described the lived experiences of Social Security Administration employees while focusing on job satisfaction and employee turnover. Transcendental phenomenology or descriptive phenomenology is used to allow people to describe their experiences and make meaning of what they have experienced (Giorgi, 1992, 2012).

The purpose of phenomenology is to give the participants a chance to relink with the experience and recall the meaning of the event that took place (Van Manen, 1990). Individuals then have an opportunity to tell their stories as they have lived them (Van

Manen, 1990). Social Security employee reflections on their lived experiences allowed me to gather information on concepts that could increase job satisfaction and decrease employee turnover. Their reflections provided an understanding of Social Security employee thought processes, including emotions, perceptions, and their interpretations of job satisfaction and employee turnover.

Definitions

In this section, I will provide definitions for terms used throughout the document. These definitions will help clarify terms not commonly known to people who are not Social Security Administration employees. The terms and their meanings follow.

Claims specialist: Employees who assist the public with determining their entitlement status to Social Security benefits. Claims specialists conduct face-to-face and telephone interviews with the public and gather the documentation needed to determine eligibility and process or deny claims for payment (Social Security Administration, n.d.b).

Job satisfaction: A positive emotional state that results from different aspects of an individual's job (Kim, 2005).

Organizational citizenship behavior: Employee behavior that is discretionary and promotes the operations of an organization. Someone who goes beyond his or her basic job duties for the overall well-being of an organization demonstrates organizational citizenship behavior (Kim, 2005).

Organizational commitment: The level at which an individual identifies with and is involved with a particular agency. Organizational commitment requires a loyal relationship with the organization (Kim, 2005).

Organizational performance: How well the agency carries out the operational functions in alignment with the mission or vision of the agency (Kim, 2005).

Public service motivation: An individual's desire to be grounded in working toward the common good of the public (Kim, 2005).

Rehired annuitant: Retired employees who return to the agency in the same position he or she vacated at the time of employment. Rehired annuitants usually return to the organization for a temporary period (Social Security Administration, n.d.b).

Assumptions

Simon (2011) stated that assumptions are things that the researcher has no control over. It is important for the researcher to make the assumptions known to the reader because the research problem would not exist without the assumptions (Simon, 2011). One assumption I held in this study was that Social Security employees would be open and honest regarding their suggestions for improving job satisfaction and decreasing employee turnover. I also assumed that extrinsic and intrinsic factors may increase job satisfaction and reduce employee turnover (see Fernandez & Pitts, 2011). Another assumption was that employees that are encouraged by their supervisors to participate in decision-making or innovation are more satisfied with their jobs (see Fernandez & Pitts, 2011).

Scope, Limitations, and Delimitations

Scope

The research scope refers to the parameters of the study (Simon & Goes, 2013). In this study, I examined the lived experiences of 20 non-management Social Security employees located in the eastern United States area to gain insight into their experiences on the job to understand what contributes to employee job satisfaction or dissatisfaction and identify potential strategies for reducing employee turnover. I recruited participants until data saturation occurred. The outcomes of the study revealed strategies that Social Security Administration managers could use to improve job satisfaction and decrease employee turnover.

Limitations

The limitations of a research study demonstrate how far the study can go (Simon & Goes, 2013). Every research study has limitations (Simon & Goes, 2013). There were several limitations that existed in this phenomenological study. One significant limitation of the research study was that it involved three local Social Security field offices. There are 1,500 Social Security offices in the United States, and this study involved 20 employees from three offices in an area in the eastern United States.

The main weakness of this study was that it involved subjectivity. The was qualitative in nature, and I was the instrument who collected and interpreted the data. I addressed the issue of subjectivity by allowing the study participants to verify their interview transcripts for accuracy. One way of addressing biases is to recognize that they exist (Simundic, 2013). I acknowledged my biases in this study to derive accurate research results. To make sure that the research results were accurate and reliable, I treated the participants with respect and did not pressure them into providing favorable answers. By understanding that researcher biases could skew the results, I was determined to put aside my thoughts and feelings and solely focus on those of the participants.

Delimitations

The delimitations of a study define the boundaries of a research study and can be controlled by the researcher (Simon & Goes, 2013). Boundaries are necessary for the organization of the study. The first delimitation was that the study involved an area in the eastern United States. Social Security employees outside of this area did not participate in the study. The second delimitation was that managers and supervisors were not included in the study because it is their strategies and management skills that directly affect participant's job satisfaction or lack of. Lastly, the information that the employees provided was based on interview questions focused on job satisfaction and employee turnover and their perceptions of what contributes to job satisfaction and employee turnover.

Significance of the Study

This research study was unique because of the perceptions of the participants I collected, with richer detail than provided in previous studies that were primarily quantitative. The federal viewpoint survey (FEVS) gathers information on job satisfaction for individual federal government agencies, but limited research has been conducted on the real-life experiences of Social Security Administration employees. The results of this study provided much needed insights into what keeps federal government employees satisfied with their jobs. Management personnel could benefit from this study because they can use their creativity and the results of this study to develop programs that can assist with keeping federal government workers satisfied in their positions. The employees may be able to provide better service to the public and are more productive if they are satisfied with their jobs.

Significance to Practice

Government managers must have a better understanding of the issues that affect employee job satisfaction in an intense work environment (Ertas, 2015). Erta (2015) stated that federal government agencies might have better outcomes if the management officials value their employees and see people as valuable assets to the agency. In this research study, I emphasized a more people-centered culture. People-centered management focuses more on the employees and involves including them in decision-making practices and making them feel as though management of the organization highly values them (Erta, 2015). People-focused practices may increase job satisfaction and commitment, and in return, people may work harder and improve organizational performance (Erta, 2015; Kim, 2005).

Employee work attitudes and job satisfaction can enlighten managers who deal with employee turnover analysis (Pitts et al., 2011). Job satisfaction has heavily influenced employee turnover research (Pitts et al., 2011). Quantitative researchers have examined the relationship between employee turnover and various workplace factors that influence public employee turnover (Choi, 2009; Hasnain et al., 2011; Meier & Hicklin, 2008; Pitts et al., 2011). However, little qualitative research has been completed to see what Social Security Administration employees experience that is related to job satisfaction and employee turnover. I contributed to this body of knowledge by conducting a qualitative study with Social Security Administration employees.

Significance to Theory

Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Herzberg's theory of job satisfaction formed the foundation of this research study. The results of this study contributed to the management discipline because I indicated how management officials could keep their employees satisfied. It is the role of the manager or supervisor to provide a work environment that will enhance employee motivation (Doboga, 2013; Skemp & Toupence, 2007). Their leadership capabilities affect the overall environment of the office (Doboga, 2013; Skemp & Toupence, 2007).

The findings of this research study also helped advance knowledge in the management field. Management officials can identify an employee's intrinsic and extrinsic needs which demonstrates Herzberg's theory (Pirani, 2013; Skemp-Arit & Toupence, 2007). Through the identification of intrinsic and extrinsic needs, the employee's level of motivation may increase and lead to a more satisfied group of employees. Herzberg's two-factor theory explains motivator factors and hygiene or maintenance factors known as job dissatisfiers (Pirani, 2013; Skemp-Arit & Toupence, 2007). The motivators, or intrinsic needs, are personal achievement, recognition, and advancement, while the hygiene factors, or extrinsic needs, are working environment, coworkers, agency policy, and superiors. Pirani and Skemp-Arit and Toupence noted that the intrinsic factor motivators increase work performance and job satisfaction. The results of this study can be used to help management officials find ways of increasing the intrinsic factors so employees will be more satisfied.

Significance to Social Change

The results of this study influence positive social change because Social Security Administration management officials were provided with better ways of motivating their staff, improving job satisfaction, and decreasing employee turnover. The American public depends on the Social Security Administration for livelihood, so it is pertinent that the employees are satisfied and motivated within their jobs. Satisfied and motivated employees will carry out their job duties to the fullest and will serve the American public efficiently. The Social Security Administration is known as the *can-do* agency, and if the employees are not motivated and satisfied within their positions, the employees cannot carry out the mission of the agency (Colvin, 2013). The American public may feel the effects of employee job satisfaction because the employees may serve them better.

Summary and Transition

Employee turnover continues to be an issue in federal government agencies (Ertas, 2015). Increased turnover rates indicate that employees are not happy with their jobs. Job satisfaction has become an important research topic in several disciplines, especially management (Taylor & Westover, 2011; Yang et al., 2011). People who are more satisfied with their jobs perform better (Choi, 2009). The purpose of this transcendental, phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of Social

Security Administration employee job satisfaction and employee turnover. I conducted this study with in an area in the eastern United States.

Chapter 2 will include a review of the literature on employee turnover and job satisfaction in public agencies. It will provide a discussion on job satisfaction and employee turnover research that has been conducted by other reserachers. I will discuss themes regarding job satisfaction, employee motivation, employee turnover, leadership styles, supervisor-employee relationships, intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, and the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey results found in the literature reviewed.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

In this study, I explored the lived experiences of Social Security Administration employee job satisfaction and employee turnover. The general problem was that employees not satisfied with their job may leave their company (see Ahmad & Rainyee, 2014; Liu et al., 2012). The specific problem was that Social Security Administration managers may be out of touch with employees to improve job satisfaction and decrease employee turnover (see Daugherty, 2013).

I conducted the research study with Social Security employees in an area in the eastern United States. The purpose of this transcendental, phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of Social Security Administration employee job satisfaction and employee turnover. Employee turnover in public organizations can have costly effects (Jernigan & Beggs, 2015; Udechukwu, 2009). Rahwan and Waheed (2011) calculated that employee turnover costs approximately $11 billion annually.

One of the biggest challenges in public organizations is the continuance of providing quality services to the public in the midst of limited resources like human resources (Ibrahim, Ghani, & Salleh, 2013). Employee turnover creates problems for management personnel because they must find replacement employees or may not be able to replace the employees at all (Ibrahim et al., 2013). Employee turnover places a strain on the remaining employees because they are left to do more work.

The purpose of the transcendental phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of Social Security Administration employee job satisfaction and employee turnover. The results of this study led to ways of improving job satisfaction and decreasing employee turnover among Social Security Administration employees. In this chapter, I will review the extant literature on employee job satisfaction and employee turnover. Major sections of this chapter will include the Literature Search Strategy, Conceptual Foundation, Literature Review, and Summary and Conclusions. My goal with this chapter was to show what other researchers have found about job satisfaction and employer turnover and apply it to the federal government to increase job satisfaction through job enrichment.

Literature Search Strategy

To search for literature on the topic under study, I used search engines, search key terms, and search structures. Developing this literature search strategy was an iterative process. The search engines, search key terms, and the combination of search terms I used were:

- Google Scholar: *Job satisfaction, employee turnover, Frederick Herzberg, federal employee satisfaction,* and *Office of Personnel Management (OPM).*
- Thoreau Search: *Public employee satisfaction, public service job satisfaction, federal government employee satisfaction, Social Security Administration employee job satisfaction, public employee turnover, Herzberg's theory,* and *Herzberg's two-factor theory.*

The first step I took in the search process was to compose questions that would assist me with finding the important search terms such as population, intervention, comparison, and outcome (PICO; see Methley, Campbell, Chew-Graham, McNally, &

Cheraghi-Sohi, 2014). PICO is a method of analyzing the components of a study useful for structuring literature research (Methley et al., 2014). My preference was to look for terms I could easily turn into search terms.

Next, I searched using words similar in meaning, in abbreviated forms, and varied in spelling from different authors in online journal articles. Research that is similar is often designed using altered research terms. I used various words and synonyms to make sure that I retrieved several journal articles on each topic. For example, while searching the Walden University Online Library for studies about job satisfaction in Social Security Administration, I used the free text term, the federal government, as well as public service. I searched documents for indexing terminology and scanned the thesaurus for relevant terms. The iterative search process also involved the use of different search engines to see if the same journal articles came up after the search. I used various terminology in the search engines to ensure there were no limitations on the volume material.

There were strengths and weaknesses in relying on the accuracy of information from books, journal articles, conference proceedings, and the Internet. Different sources provided useful information. Scholarly resources provided substantive research, literature review data, and opinions of individuals who have conducted comprehensive research on the topic. Scholarly books were not always the best sources for a current topic because they all did not include current research information about job satisfaction and employee turnover. Journal articles often provided this current information, but some journal articles did not always include updated news and event information. I used websites as well because they provided current information regarding the job satisfaction of federal employees, but I had to be careful because sometimes the information was inaccurate, biased, or outdated.

Conceptual Framework

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

Herzberg studied job satisfaction in the 1950s and 1960s (Waltman, Bergom, Hollenshead, Miller, & August, 2012). The first study focused on 200 predominantly White male engineers and accountants (Waltman et al., 2012). However, Herzberg replicated this study with more diverse participants later on. The studies centered on the idea of a critical incidence where participants had to remember a time when they had good feelings or bad feelings about their job (Waltman et al., 2012). From these studies, Herzberg hypothesized that there are motivators (work assignments or personal achievement) that contribute to an individual's level of job satisfaction (Waltman et al., 2012). Herzberg also developed the ideas of policies or working conditions (i.e., hygiene factors) that contribute to an individual's decreased level of job satisfaction (Waltman et al., 2012). The motivators (i.e., job satisfiers) and hygiene factors (i.e., job dissatisfiers) made up Herzberg's two-factor theory (Waltman et al., 2012).

Employee job satisfaction or dissatisfaction determines an organization's success or failure (Bordia, Lloyd, Restubog, Jimmieson, & Irmer, 2011). I used Herzberg's two-factor theory as part of the conceptual foundation for this qualitative study of Social Security Administration employee job satisfaction. This theory is important because a public service manager's main responsibility is to increase employee productivity while keeping employees happy (Pirani, 2013). Meeting the challenge of high productivity is possible if management can properly motivate employees.

Herzberg's two-factor theory is the most popular job satisfaction approach (Sell & Cleal, 2011). The theory addresses the notion of job satisfaction regarding satisfaction (i.e., motivators) and dissatisfaction (i.e., hygiene; Sell & Cleal, 2011). Motivators and hygiene factors determine whether a job is suitable for an individual and can assist management with making improvements to increase the worker's level of motivation (Sell & Cleal, 2011).

Herzberg's job satisfaction two-factor theory has been a topic of debate over recent years (King, 1970; Waltman et al., 2012). The reason for the debate lies in the fact that no one has proven the theory. Herzberg and other behavioral scientists have conducted research studies on the theory aiming to prove or contest it (King, 1970; Waltman et al., 2012). Even though the theory has received noteworthy acceptance, some researchers still do not agree with research study results (King, 1970).

Employment fulfillment and discontent are not considered to exist on isolated ends of the range in Herzberg's two-factor theory (King, 1970, Waltman et al., 2012). Job satisfaction and dissatisfaction were concepts used in the critical incident theory (CIT) that Herzberg used to record occurrences (King, 1970). There was documentation to show that CIT does not consider individual differences as they relate to satisfaction and dissatisfaction; instead, CIT focuses on typical individual behavior (King, 1970; Waltman et al., 2012).

Herzberg's two-factor theory related to my study of job satisfaction in Social Security Administration because in it Herzberg explained that employees become dissatisfied when certain conditions are not present in the workplace. These conditions are called dissatisfiers (Pirani, 2013; Sims & Quatro, 2005). Employee pay, workplace conditions, organization policies, and relationships with management and coworkers are examples of extrinsic conditions (Pirani, 2013; Sims & Quatro, 2005).

I used Herzberg's motivation and hygiene factors to allow for participants to individually analyze and self-reflect on particular experiences in their workplace. Herzberg's theory allowed me to create a project-specific scale to base my analysis and conclusions on while maintaining focus on my research study goals. The lens of Herzberg's theories in a qualitative study afforded both individual and group reflection. To further explain the theory, employee attitudes toward the workplace helped express and summarize how job satisfaction and dissatisfaction sentiments help or hinder workflow and how management maintains morale. Employees' self-proclaimed factors about the workplace, such as dealing with company and manager expectations, working with the public, recognition within the office or the lack thereof, and workplace conditions, help order how employers can plan and organize their workspace (Vincent, 1960).

If a workspace has high employee motivation, there will be little to no complaints (Value Based Management, 2014). High hygiene and low motivation indicate a job where workers complete tasks without high motivation (Value Based Management, 2014). Low hygiene and high motivation jobs are when employees have the motivation to complete tasks, but they frequently complain (Value Based Management, 2014). The last combination is low hygiene and motivation where employees complain without motivation (Value Based Management, 2014). These four combinations explain most work situations and depending on what an organization expects from workers and the company resources allotted for employee investment, help people in an organization to understand the main goal of a company, whether it is the product, investing in employee satisfaction, or a mixture of the two.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow, known as the father of humanistic psychology, heavily influenced thinking in the field around the topics of motivation and learning (Wilson & Madsen, 2008). Maslow's goal was to help people become their best and this goal stemmed from a belief that individuals are good, possess free will, can learn new things, and can progress to their fullest potential (Wilson & Madsen, 2008). Maslow's theory of self-actualization has influenced the field of management, especially because of its focus on motivation, humanism, and learning (Wilson & Madsen, 2008). Maslow's theory and the contribution to human development has led to several implications for management practice.

The hierarchy of needs is well-known in psychology. Maslow (2000) believed that people aim to achieve the ultimate level of personal satisfaction, which is self-actualization. Maslow arranged human needs in a hierarchy that displays the need for survival, food, and shelter at the bottom. When an individual progresses towards the top of the hierarchy, he or she goes to the security and social interaction levels (Maslow, 2000). Maslow described the needs as physiological, safety, love, esteem, and the highest need of self-actualization.

An individual who has reached self-actualization is self-aware and self-conscious of the components in his or her life (Maslow, 2000). This person is also satisfied with where they are in life (Maslow, 2000). When a person has reached self-actualization, he or she has satisfied the need to learn, grow, and reach their fullest potential (Maslow, 2000). If an individual does not meet lower level needs, learning, self-esteem, and other higher-level factors are not important; therefore, a person must meet the needs at the base of the hierarchy before moving on to the next level (Maslow, 2000).

In the workplace, people tend to be satisfied when they are happy with the pay and the level of job security (Maslow, 2000). Satisfied people spend no significant amount of time talking about their pay unless some factors make them do so. When management handles discipline effectively, happy people do not let the risk of failure worry them (Maslow, 2000). In most businesses, performance appraisals and incentives keep people from focusing their attention on learning and growth. If managers spend time learning and understanding the hierarchy of needs, it will assist them in creating a thriving work environment and creating self-actualizing people (Maslow, 2000).

The theory of transformational leadership is related to Maslow's self-actualization theory in some ways. Transformational leaders seek to build high-performing teams through effective management (Arnold & Loughlin, 2013). These leaders possess an interest in the needs of the followers. They are highly concerned about developing followers. The relationship between transformational leaders and followers is that of respect, courtesy, and faith in one another (Arnold & Loughlin, 2013). One significant characteristic of a transformational leader is that he or she inspires and encourages followers to achieve their highest potential. They create a work environment in which followers can thrive and become self-actualized (Arnold & Loughlin, 2013). The environment is a learning environment in which people support one another. Maslow (2000) believed that to attain a motivated workforce, the workplace must continuously change, to ensure that management meets employee needs while they are working towards organizational goals. Transformational leaders motivate everyone who comes into his or her presence, and they give meaning to their jobs (Arnold & Loughlin, 2013).

Transformational leaders are self-actualized people (Arnold & Loughlin, 2013). They are content with their place in society, and they seek to help others get to where they want to be. They will carry out the functions of an organization and motivating people to go beyond their comfort zone (Arnold & Loughlin, 2013). Transformational leadership is related to self-actualization because both theories seek to increase an individual's qualities. Each theory supports a creative learning work environment, makes people whole, fulfills human needs and concerns, and encourages a positive attitude.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs has been utilized by researchers to explain correlations between human need and satisfaction (Sadri & Bowen, 2011). Various studies have used Herzberg's and Maslow's studies to evaluate human satisfaction. Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Herzberg's two-factor theory provide insight into employee job satisfaction and what managers can do to improve it.

Literature Review

I reviewed the literature about transcendental phenomenology, job satisfaction, and employee turnover. The topic of this study is the lived experiences of Social Security employees with a focus on job satisfaction and employee turnover. The agency has had a significant increase in employee turnover and cannot replace the employees due to a hiring freeze. Due to attrition in fiscal year 2013, sequestration resulted in a loss of over 3,400 employees. The agency has lost more than 10,000 employees in the last few years. Staffing losses resulted in decreased effectiveness concerning customer service (Colvin, 2013).

Transcendental Phenomenology

Transcendental phenomenology is another facet of qualitative research that studies human experiences (Sheehan, 2014). Transcendental phenomenology, also known as descriptive phenomenology, focuses on consciousness (Giorgi, 2012). Giorgi (1992) explained descriptive phenomenology in terms of Husserlian transcendental phenomenology. Giorgi (2012) refers to description as using language to convey matters of an experience. According to Giorgi (2012), humans understand the world by consciousness. When an individual is describing an experience, he or she communicates events or things presented with meanings (Giorgi, 1992; 2012). Through the individual's descriptions, the researcher can make meaning of the individual's world (Giorgi, 2012).

Transcendental phenomenology is also about looking at the phenomenon in its purest form, without clouded lenses, allowing the phenomena to come forward (Sheehan, 2014). All biased ideas are set aside to ensure that the accurate description of the phenomena emerges (Sheehan, 2014). Sheehan (2014) and Moustakas (1994) discussed the notions of noesis, noema, and noetic-noematic as they are essential to understanding transcendental phenomenology.

Noesis describes an individual's inner point of view (Moustakas, 1994; Sheehan, 2014). Noesis refers to the way a person thinks, feels, judges, or perceives; an individual's noesis explains the noema (Moustakas, 1994; Sheehan, 2014). Noema is not the real item, but the phenomenon. Moustakas (1994) gave an example of noema in which he said, noema is "not the tree but the appearance of the tree" (p. 29). The appearance of the tree is based on the individual's perception (Moustakas, 1994). Individual perceptions are different, and that person's experiences, thoughts, and feelings affect how he or she sees the phenomenon. Noema and Noesis do not exist by themselves because one is needed in for the other to occur.

Noetic-Noematic is derived from noesis and noema. The noetic model creates the gist of the noematic principle, which explains how an individual's inner perceptions influence the meaning of phenomena (Sheehan, 2014). These are biases that must be set aside to ensure that a research study is valid (Sheehan, 2014).

Phenomenological reduction is also associated with transcendental phenomenology. Giorgi (2012) describes phenomenological reduction as the researcher abstaining from the item that exists to him or her. In phenomenological reduction, the researcher focuses on the phenomenon based on the information given (Giorgi, 2012). As the researcher in this study, my job was to refrain from my lived experiences of job satisfaction and employee turnover, but rather focus on the participants' lived experience and allow them to tell their stories and give their descriptions.

This transcendental phenomenological study focused on the lived experiences of Social Security Administration employees in regards to job satisfaction and employee turnover. I explored their descriptions and experiences as they relate to job satisfaction and employee turnover. I was able to gain a deeper insight into how they describe, experience, and understand job satisfaction and employee turnover.

Federal Employee Satisfaction

The National Partnership for Reinventing Government and OPM conducted a survey and found that federal employee job satisfaction is decreasing (Mafini & Dlodlo, 2014; Sims & Quatro, 2005). In 1998, more than 60% of federal employee answers favored the question about how happy federal employees were with their jobs. In 1999, the federal employee response rate was 60% (Sims & Quatro, 2005). Federal managers have to find ways of increasing job satisfaction to compensate employees for the wage disadvantage (Sims & Quatro, 2005).

In 2010, 71% of federal employees were eligible for early or regular retirement while 40% of those employees were expected to retire (Sims & Quatro, 2005). Some long tenure federal workers are known to be dissatisfied with their jobs. Young federal employees feel the same. Additionally, they have seen what private industry offers: better wages, accommodating work schedules, benefit plans that are conducive to individual needs, contemporary workplace, fitness centers, dependent child care, and laid-back work environments (Sims & Quatro, 2005). Younger employees were raised to believe the government is bloated and wasteful. There are attributes of the federal government that tend to make federal employment less favorable that include decreased employee recognition, territory disputes, Congressional job benefits threats, lack of funding, extended employee job commutes, and an inhibiting entrepreneurial essence (Mafini & Dlodlo, 2014; Sims & Quatro, 2005).

The federal government is having a hard time in retaining dedicated federal employees due to lack of job satisfaction (Mafini & Dlodlo, 2014; Sims & Quatro, 2005). Federal employees are forced to take on heavier workloads due to lack of funding to hire additional staff. Federal workers have seen the benefits that the private sector offers (Mafini & Dlodlo, 2014; Sims & Quatro, 2005). These are motivating factors for federal employees to pursue job opportunities in private industry.

FEVS is a tool that the OPM uses to allow federal employees to give feedback on their job satisfaction, supervisors, work environment, workloads, personal development, employee programs, and leadership (Archuleta, 2013). In 2013, 376,577 federal government employees responded to the survey to contribute to change in their organizations. The 2013 results revealed that federal government employees continued to be resilient during challenges. It showed a decline in job satisfaction. It is an area of concern because federal government employees serve the American public and they may not serve the public efficiently if they are not satisfied with their jobs. The government agencies use the responses to pinpoint areas that need attention. This survey is a tool for management to gather feedback and take action to increase employee satisfaction (Archuleta, 2013).

FEVS assists federal agencies with identifying trends and helps them find ways of making their organizations better. This research study focused specifically on Social Security Administration employees and how they experience job satisfaction in their offices. I gathered opinions and experiences regarding job satisfaction in an intense work environment. Decreased resources have resulted in longer customer wait times and more frustrated customers. Since fiscal year 2011, threats against the organization have increased by 20 percent. In 2012, Social Security offices received and processed about 4,000 threats and incidences of violence, which involved employees alone (Colvin, 2013).

A wage freeze, sequestration decreases, and reduced employees affected the federal workforce (Archuleta, 2013). FEVS results warned OPM about the effects of sequestration and budget uncertainty on federal employees. FEVS results assist management with increasing job satisfaction (Archuleta, 2013). An increase in job satisfaction amongst federal public servants may help the federal government provide quality services to the American public in the most efficient way.

Federal government employees are experiencing a decline in job satisfaction because of economic challenges overall (Colvin, 2013). The Social Security Administration is one of many federal government agencies that has felt the effects of these problems. As Social Security Administration employees face challenges, uncertainties, and changes, increasing job satisfaction serves as the focus for the agency (Colvin, 2013).

The Social Security Administration has been known as the *can-do* agency (Colvin, 2013). This agency influences the livelihoods of almost all Americans usually during hardship, uncertainty, and change. About 80,000 Federal and State employees service the public through 1,500 field offices in the United States (Astrue, 2012). The state employees consist of the people who work for the Disability Determination Service (DDS). DDS is a state agency that makes the medical decision on disability claims that individuals file with Social Security. When an individual files a disability claim with Social Security, Social Security forwards the medical information to DDS for a decision. The medical information consists of the person's medications, doctors, hospitals, clinics, and medical tests he/she has had because of the disability. DDS uses the medical information to decide on the claim (Social Security Administration, n.d.a).

A former Social Security commissioner noted there are approximately 180,000 customers who visit the field office every day and more than 430,000 individuals call the office for various reasons such as scheduling appointments for claims and asking different questions (Astrue, 2012). Congress wants employees to ensure that the needs of the American public are met (Astrue, 2012). The United States Congress also wants Social Security employees to provide a high-quality product to the American public (Astrue, 2012). The agency stresses timely and effective completion of work because of the number of Social Security beneficiaries. There are approximately $60 billion paid to beneficiaries each month to about 60 million people (Astrue, 2012).

The federal government has discussed various initiatives for downsizing federal workers and decreasing their wages, which may have affected employee turnover in the past (Pitts et al., 2011). The federal government is a focus for these proposals. This research study filled the gap by focusing on what 20 Social Security Administration employees in a local field office suggest to improve job satisfaction and decrease employee turnover.

As employee job satisfaction continues to decline at most federal agencies, substantial evidence suggests managers can make a difference in creating more positive and productive work environments (Fox, 2014). The 2014 Best Places to Work in the Federal Government stated that 63% of employees with Social Security Administration are satisfied with their jobs (Fox, 2014). There are agency employees who appreciate a balanced work life even though salaries are low and lack of opportunity for career advancement. The criteria used in measuring job satisfaction were: leadership, training, pay, rewards, advancement and teamwork (Fox, 2014). The agency solicits feedback from employees by allowing employees to submit their ideas and offer comments on the agency's intranet website (Fox, 2014). Federal agencies must continue to create a culture that welcomes employees' feedback to boost engagement and job satisfaction.

Pitts et al. (2011) noted there had been issues with federal government employee turnover for several years. Even though employee turnover has been an issue, employees may stay in a job he or she dislikes for the pay and benefits. Government employees satisfied with their pay and other opportunities recognize that the cost of leaving his or her agency may be greater (Ting, 1997; Vales, 2014). Therefore, they may take a more positive approach to their government jobs (Ting, 1997; Vales, 2014).

Ting (1997) noted that job characteristics, organizational characteristics, and individual characteristics determine federal government employee job satisfaction. Job characteristics describe different aspects of one’s job. Organizational characteristics define the agency in which employees perform jobs. Individual characteristics describe the person performing the job (Ting, 1997). Maslow and Herzberg believed that individual characteristics determined job satisfaction, which includes intrinsic and extrinsic needs. Examples of intrinsic and extrinsic needs are paid satisfaction, career growth, job duty clarification, and the utilization of skills (Ting, 1997). Ting stated that pay satisfaction and career growth are the two most important determinants of job satisfaction. Yang et al. (2011) said that well-paid employees might be more satisfied with their job as opposed to people who are not well-paid. Yang et al. noted promotion opportunities as a factor in job satisfaction but did not state it was one of the most important factors.

Balk (1974) reported there are productivity problems within government agencies and there are no actions to correct the issues. The major need in an economic deficit is to increase employee productivity; the needs of the public are affected by a decreased level of productivity (Balk, 1974). The low level of employee motivation has led to a frustrated public, more workloads, and less productivity (Balk, 1974; Jernigan & Beggs, 2015).

Fernandez and Pitts (2011) emphasized innovation in government agencies to perform more effectively and efficiently. Innovation is a process or product used for the first time even though another agency may have used the process or product (Fernandez & Pitts, 2011). There have been United States administrative reforms since the 1980s, including Reinventing Government and the President's Management Agenda which motivated government employees to find new ways of delivering services (Fernandez & Pitts, 2011).

The Barack Obama Administration committed to finding ways of improving government employee performance (Fernandez & Pitts, 2011). An example of President Obama's commitment to improving government employee performance includes the Securing Americans' Value and Efficiency Award and the report A Strategy for American Innovation (Fernandez & Pitts, 2011). There were also other programs geared towards innovation such as the Alliance for Innovation and the Innovations in American Government Awards Program that emphasized finding new ways of delivering government programs and services (Fernandez & Pitts, 2011). There have also been ways in which the American private sector has contributed to government performance. Programs such as Partnership for Public Service, Harvard University's Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation, and Alliance for Innovation have centered on building an environment where innovation can progress (Fernandez & Pitts, 2011).

Frontline employees in governmental agencies play a significant role in organizational functions and innovation (Fernandez & Pitts, 2011). Fernandez and Pitts (2011) conducted a research study to recognize factors that encourage and motivate frontline employees in the United States federal government to participate in organizational innovation. The data came from the United States federal government, such as employee behaviors and attitudes towards innovation (Fernandez & Pitts, 2011). The researchers examined rewards, employee job preparation and growth, employee confidence-building, employee participation in agency policy, and relationships with management that play a role in an employee's decision to participate in innovation (Fernandez & Pitts, 2011).

Fernandez and Pitts (2011) found that federal employees who felt strongly that management who welcome creativity and innovation in organizations, were more likely to come up with different ways of doing things. They also found that employee empowerment and participation in decision-making processed lead to more employee motivation to innovate (Fernandez & Pitts, 2011). The employee-supervisor relationship was also found to play a vital role in innovation. Employees who highly trust their management team, are more motivated to come up with new ideas (Fernandez & Pitts, 2011).

Fernandez and Pitts (2011) mentioned the gardening model as a mode of increasing innovation in federal organizations. The gardening model indicates that it is the upper management's responsibility to create a workplace that encourages employee innovation behavior (Fernandez & Pitts, 2011). It is important for frontline employees to feel comfortable in an environment that is conducive to employees' motivation to innovate (Fernandez & Pitts, 2011). The research study demonstrated that frontline employees are essential in coming up with innovative ideas. Frontline employee ideas are most important because they serve the public directly and they are in a better position to know what needs to be done to improve processes (Fernandez & Pitts, 2011).

Job Satisfaction and Employee Turnover

Employees who show interest in their jobs and who are in work environments that are conducive to their well-being are excited about their jobs, and the happiness turns into creativity. There is a positive correlation between job satisfaction and improving organizational processes (Fernandez & Pitts, 2011). The more satisfied employees are, the more committed they are to their organizations (Fernandez & Pitts, 2011). Employees who report an increased level of job satisfaction will be more encouraged to be creative and engage in agency innovation (Fernandez & Pitts, 2011).

The cognitive evaluation theory emphasizes there are factors that contain information and domineering roles that impact someone's feelings and willpower (Coelho, Augusto, & Lages, 2011). When people sense that management is controlling or pressuring employees, this is the controlling contextual factor. If people see that information from management is supportive and promoting competence, it is an informational contextual factor. When the informational contextual factor takes precedence, the individual will have less pressure and complete tasks, which will increase employee motivation (Coelho et al., 2011).

Job duty clarification or task clarity refers to how clear management communicates rules and job expectations (Ting, 1997). If an employee knows what management expects, there is a reduction in employee uncertainty level, and it leads to a more positive attitude. Skills utilization is concerned with the level to which an individual can utilize his skills (Ting, 1997). Ting (1997) emphasized that duty job clarification is a major predictor of employee satisfaction. Using competencies also plays a role in one's attitude towards his job and level of motivation. Another job characteristic that Ting emphasized was task significance. Task significance refers to an individual's perception of their contribution to the organization's mission (Ting, 1997). Task significance plays a role in an employee's job satisfaction because if he or she believes that his or her contribution to the agency is vital, there may be a positive impact on job satisfaction.

Sell and Cleal (2011) noted that job satisfaction plays a role in employee resignations in the workplace. If people are not satisfied with their jobs, they may not want to retain employment with that agency. Sell and Cleal stated several research studies note that a decreased level of job satisfaction can contribute to employee turnover. Some other studies have pointed out that it is hard to observe job satisfaction because it may be hard to see someone's intention to leave the workplace (Sell & Cleal, 2011). The work environment has been found to affect labor market outcomes like an early retirement, an employee's long-term absence from work, and productivity (Sell & Cleal, 2011).

Sell and Cleal (2011) discussed the theory of compensating wages differentials. This theory suggests that total compensation equality depends on employee mobility and working condition information. New employees can only learn about working conditions through their experiences after employment begins. In this case, hostile working conditions can influence an employee's job satisfaction even if the employee earns higher pay.

Sell and Cleal (2011) completed a study to see if employees experience job satisfaction differently when presented with harmful work conditions and higher compensations or when presented with non-hazardous work conditions and no compensation. Herzberg found that some work factors can cause an employee to be unsatisfied or experience brief motivation whereas other work factors can cause job satisfaction that lasts forever (Sell & Cleal, 2011). Another topic discussed by Sell and Cleal is the theory that the public sector thrives on employee recognition they get from striving for the agency's mission. Some studies have indicated that public employees are motivated by higher pay, but the intrinsic rewards they receive motivate them as opposed to their public-sector counterparts. Sell and Cleal noted that public employees would work for lower pay because they receive a high level of job satisfaction from contributing to social well-being. Sell and Cleal conducted a research study with Danish employees that indicated how information from management and including input from the employees in decision making has a significant influence on job satisfaction. They also found that people who feel secure in their jobs are typically more satisfied with their jobs.

Shah, SalihMemon, and Phulpoto (2012) examined employee job satisfaction and its effect on organizational commitment. They conducted a study with several Pakistan university public university faculty members (Shah et al., 2012). A job satisfaction survey and organizational commitment were used in the research study (Shah et al., 2012). The researchers used the Pearson Correlations to research the correlation between job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Shah et al., 2012). Their research study highlighted the significance of job satisfaction and its heavy impact on organizational commitment (Shah et al., 2012). The results of the Pearson Correlations indicated that job satisfaction and organizational commitment are positively correlated (Shah et al., 2012).

Management officials must enhance employee job satisfaction if they want to keep employees and increase organizational commitment (Shah et al., 2012).

Hickey and Bennett (2012) conducted a study using the 2005 Public Service Employee Survey to find out which factors have the most influence on job satisfaction in Canadian public service. The factors that are pertinent to job satisfaction could assist with enhancements in employee performance, retention, recruitment, and ultimately change the way employees serve the public. The researchers developed six hypotheses based on the articles they used for the study's literature review. The literature suggested that public servants know of the fact that the public does not view public service in a positive manner (Hickey & Bennett, 2012). They also said that public employees accept how the public sees them. Hickey and Bennett also noted that people happy in their jobs were more committed to the organization. The research focused on public servant insights and the drivers behind their perceptions. There were 106,456 public employee responses to the survey.

The researchers analyzed the data using multiple linear regressions (Hickey & Bennett, 2012). The research study findings suggested that the factors that influence employee satisfaction are promotion opportunities, fair classifications, loyalty to clients, life stability, management recognition, colleague relationships, how well the organization shares information, and faith in senior management officials to take heed to feedback (Hickey & Bennett, 2012). The researchers stated that more research is needed because public service reform is an ongoing process (Hickey & Bennett, 2012). One solution may not solve all public service issues. Initiatives aimed at increasing employee recognition, communication, and collaboration will promote employee satisfaction (Hickey & Bennett, 2012).

Xiaohua (2008) conducted a study using the public service motivation (PSM) model. PSM is an individual's response towards an organization's or agency's motives (Xiaohua, 2008). She looked at how PSM and a federal employee's performance relate to one another (Xiaohua, 2008). The researcher collected data from employees who worked for Chinese government agencies. The research study implied that various PSM levels and worker satisfaction were effective forecasters of employee performance (Xiaohua, 2008). The author stated that the way a federal employee performs is pertinent to the government's image and government management (Battaglio & French, 2016; Xiaohua, 2008). If management can motivate government employees, successfully, employee performance will improve (Battalio & French, 2016; Xiaohua, 2008).

Little research exists on PSM and Chinese public administration (Xiaohua, 2008). The lack of research prompted the author to conduct the research study (Xiaohua, 2008). PSM, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and government employee performance were the highlights of the study. The higher the level of a public employee's PSM, the more satisfied one is with his or her job (Battaglio & French, 2016: Xiaohua, 2008). Xiaohua (2008) administered a survey to Master of Public Administration students from Wuhan University, Zhongshan University, and Beihang University in China. The majority of the participants in the research study were tenured government employees. Research participants completed three hundred and nineteen surveys. The researcher used correlational analysis to analyze the survey results (Xiaohua, 2008). The results of the research study indicated that to improve an employee's performance is to increase PSM and then job satisfaction (Xiaohua, 2008).

According to Battaglio and French (2016) and Xiaohua (2008), PSM could predict performance; the higher the PSM, the higher an employee's performance. Xiaohua stressed the importance of PSM concerning a government employee's performance. A greater level of PSM amongst government employees demonstrates a higher level of job satisfaction, more commitment to the organization, and higher performance level (Xiaohua, 2008). There were limitations in the study. One limitation is that the researcher could not directly observe the variables (Xiaohua, 2008). Another limitation of the study is that the researcher studied only three variables (Xiaohua, 2008). Future research should explore more variables concerning PSM (Xiaohua, 2008).

Kumar and Savita (2014) conducted a research study in which they looked at the differences in job satisfaction amongst bank employees in the public and private sector. The participants were public and private sector bank employees from Ferozepur, Moga, and Ludhiana of the State Punjab (Kumar & Savita, 2014). The sample size consisted of 80 employees; 40 public sector employees and 40 private sector employees (Kumar & Savita, 2014). The population of employees completed questionnaires for the research study (Kumar & Savita, 2014). The researchers aimed to recognize the factors that influence public and private sector bank employees' job satisfaction, compare differences in job satisfaction according to the 18 elements of job satisfaction, and do a comparative analysis regarding public and private sector bank employee job satisfaction (Kumar & Savita, 2014). There were no differences in how public and private bank employees experience job satisfaction except that company image and job content are important factors to private employees whereas job security was a highly important factor for public employees (Kumar & Savita, 2014).

Based on this study, the researchers recommended that public and private sector banks keep the attributes of job satisfaction in mind while looking at ways of increasing employee productivity. The researchers identified characteristics of job satisfactions: employee benefits and compensation, employee recognition and rewards, the work environment, employee participation, supervisor appraisals, employee development, employee advancement, and the employee's organizational responsibility (Kumar & Savita, 2014).

Employee motivation is pertinent to the success of an organization. Sandhya and Kumar (2011) stated that employee motivation could assist with increasing employee performance and organizational performance. In management, motivation is the process that involves getting people to do what one wants (Cinar, Bektas, & Aslan, 2011). Motivation means arousing people to take action and achieve the desired goal (Cinar et al., 2011). Management must find ways of maximizing employee skills to ensure that an organization is performing successfully. If management understands the things that get people to produce, then they can achieve business results through them (Cinar et al., 2011).

Gawali (2009) hypothesized that decreased employee motivation led to increased employee turnover in the workplace. If there is no employee motivation in the workplace, management officials will have a hard time getting employees to produce (Gawali, 2009).

Gawali studied cross-training because it was determined to be a tool to motivate employees, and it was related to other motivational tools discussed in the article. Cross-training was training employees to perform job duties outside of the job one was hired to do (Gawali, 2009). There were 100 participants (87 males and 13 females) in the study from approximately 20 organizations (Gawali, 2009). The participants were surveyed in the research study to see if cross-training was an effective method of motivation (Gawali, 2009). The research study results revealed that cross-training is a valuable way of motivating employees to do their jobs and decreases employee turnover (Gawali, 2009).

Employee productivity is pertinent to the success of an agency (Goncharuk & Monat, 2009). Productivity is not the only way for an organization to succeed, but it reveals how hard employees are working to accomplish goals (Goncharuk & Monat, 2009). Goncharuk and Monat (2009) created a model to improve employee productivity in the workplace. They created a management/employee performance model in the research study. The researchers used internal and external benchmarking and an employee performance model to develop the model. Goncharuk and Monat studied conventional marking by reviewing the literature and various research studies. They found it may be difficult to achieve benchmarking because employees may resist change in the workplace (Goncharuk & Monat, 2009).

Employees may be motivated to perform their job duties by several elements: progression in the workplace, satisfaction with job duties, performance recognition, management style, a personal sense of accomplishment, and personal growth (Kamery, 2004; Mafini & Dlodlo, 2014). Motivation can come from an individual's place of employment or inside the employee (Kamery, 2004; Mafini & Dlodlo, 2014). The relationship between an employee and management plays a role in motivation (Kamery, 2004; Mafini & Dlodlo, 2014). It is a management official's job to create a work environment where employees can succeed and provide employee advancement opportunities (Kamery, 2004; Mafini & Dlodlo, 2014). Kamery (2004) noted that when management is concerned with employee well-being, employee motivation intensifies. When employees are involved in management decision-making, it gives them a sense of belonging and creates a positive place of employment (Jernigan & Beggs, 2015; Kamery, 2004). Excessive management control can cause employee motivation to decline, but employee participation makes for a better place to work (Kamery, 2004; Mafini & Dlodlo, 2014).

When management appreciates employees, and treat them with respect, there is fairness in the office and they will have a more positive attitude (Jernigan & Beggs, 2015, Kamery 2004). Employees must take an interest in their job duties for them to passionate about meeting organizational goals (Jernigan & Beggs, 2015; Kamery, 2004). According to Jernigan and Beggs (2015) and Kamery (2004), workplace activities can increase an employee's interest in their jobs. Workplace activities include employee developmental programs, gratitude messages from management, employee participation in office committees, informational newsletters, and ongoing employee training (Jernigan & Beggs, 2015; Kamery, 2004).

Various factors motivate employees and management must find creative ways of determining what motivates an employee to perform (Kovach, 1995). Kovach (1995) made a comparison of three surveys in the research study. The first survey showed a breakdown of how employees and management ranked ten motivation items (Kovach, 1995). The second survey displayed personal differences between employees and management (Kovach, 1995). The third survey revealed employee reward systems as a method of employee motivation (Kovach, 1995). Kovach found it is pertinent to an organization's success to address employee motivation. Kovach's findings also revealed that several agencies neglect to address employee motivation.

Ongoing employee engagement in the workplace relates to increased performance (Trahant, 2009). Watson Wyatt's 2008/2009 Work USA survey revealed that highly engaged employees work for organizations with higher financial revenues and returns (Trahant, 2009). The data showed that the higher employee engagement, the better an employee would perform. A strong connection exists between intense employee work engagement and productivity and intense organizational performance (Trahant, 2009). An employee who is more engaged in the workplace has a higher level of productivity (Trahant, 2009).

Trahant's (2009) data is related to federal government employee management. Federal government management officials must create strategies that will increase employee engagement (Trahant, 2009). Employees engaged in the workplace go above and beyond their expectations (Trahant, 2009). Employees with an increased level of engagement miss less time from work and are more flexible with change within the organization (Trahant, 2009). Management officials who focus their efforts on the important role that employees play in an organization can create happy and more engaged employees (Trahant, 2009).

Trahant (2009) pointed out opportunities for management officials to increase employee engagement which include employee recognition, organizational social activities, employee development programs, employee training, and clear-cut management/employee communication. Management officials will continue to face the challenge of motivating federal employees (Trahant, 2009). How management leads affect employee motivation (Trahant, 2009). Employee engagement is critical to individual performance and organizational performance (Trahant, 2009).

Organizational success can occur from ongoing employee learning in organizations (Wilson & Madsen, 2008). To be in line with a changing work environment, management officials and employees must learn new information (Wilson & Madsen, 2008). Some employees may not be open to learning new information which makes learning hard to accomplish (Wilson & Madsen, 2008). Employees become comfortable with the way they are processing workloads which may cause them to oppose change (Wilson & Madsen, 2008). However, management must motivate their employees to be open to change to ensure that the organization succeeds (Wilson & Madsen, 2008).

Maslow contributed to the field of humanistic psychology (Wilson & Madsen, 2008). Maslow studied the things that motivated people to learn new knowledge (Wilson & Madsen, 2008). Maslow's work has had affected the notion of organizational success (Wilson & Madsen, 2008). His work was presented in Wilson and Madsen's (2008) article to demonstrate his contribution to organizational success. Maslow believed that when people gain new knowledge and progress to their fullest potential, they are happier in their individual lives and work environment (Wilson & Madsen, 2008).

Bordia et al. (2011) noted that research on change management had not considered the influence of organizational change management history on the feelings and actions of employees. Bordia et al. looked at how poor change management history (PCMH) affects employee feelings and employee turnover. The researchers also studied how PCMH could lead to decreased trust, employee work satisfaction, increased distrust, and employee turnover (Bordia et al., 2011). The researchers aimed to understand employee responses to change within the organization and develop important knowledge on how to implement change (Bordia et al., 2011). Change management history and the change-related experiences of people in organizations can influence the creation of eternal employee change-related attitudes (Bordia et al., 2011).

Bordia et al. (2011) presented two phases in the research study. The first phase was conducted in the Philippines at a property development business. They developed residential and commercial properties (Bordia et al., 2011). Change management history information was collected from two human resource agents (Bordia et al., 2011). The second phase was conducted at an average-sized educational establishment in the Philippines (Bordia et al., 2011). The researchers collected the data at two-time points (Bordia et al., 2011). During Time 1, a survey was given a few months post the initial period of the change process (Bordia et al., 2011). During Time 2, research data were attained through records from the organization for the Time 1 participants (Bordia et al., 2011).

Organizational behavior research has neglected theoretical and methodological importance in employee work attitudes and employee outcomes (Bordia et al., 2011). Even though some research studies included data from various sources and longitudinal examination of actual employee turnover, a cross-sectional design explored attitudinal elements (Bordia et al., 2011). The researchers used the socio-cognitive approach to gather information on change management history (Bordia et al., 2011). Change management history research influenced employee attitudes, behavior, and employee turnover intentions. Bordia et al. (2011) noted that future research on PCMH could focus on interval-based division of the individual report gauges to intensify casual relationships.

Kim (2012) drew on his research as an expert on human resource management and explained the influence of human resource management on turnover intentions of state government information technology employees. He outlined the study by surveying information technology employees to show that employee promotion opportunities, management communications, employee growth, development, employee wage satisfaction, and relative-friendly rules are factors that influenced employee turnover (Kim, 2012). Kim used data from a 2003 employee survey of information technology employees from almost 40 state governments to conduct his research. The results suggested senior management, information technology management, and human resource management needs to focus on the elements when taking action on issues related to employee turnover (Kim, 2012). However, the researcher left out other significant factors. For example, work security and service enticements negatively correlate with the change in information technology and the employee's turnover objectives (Kim, 2012).

Kim (2012) mentioned work exhaustion has inferences for human resource management traditions as they related to increased job turnover. Kim could make the study stronger by conducting a comparative analysis of retention factors affecting noninformation technology professionals in state and local governments. However, the author proposed the study could be the subject of research of federal and local government information technology employees. The study demonstrated the foundation of future research projects focusing on the association between state unemployment, job characteristics, and related studies of information technology employees in the private sector.

Malinovsky and Barry (1965) conducted a research study as part of a thesis in partial fulfillment for a graduate degree and explain the motivator-hygiene theory of work attitudes assuming two independent variables relevant to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. They outlined the study by examining a different set of variables that affect job satisfaction: task responsibility, achievement, advancement, recognition, and the nature of the work. The study used data from a 40-item work attitude survey among blue-collar workers. The results implied the assumption that motivator and hygiene items represent separate, independent dimensions of work attitude variables.

One limitation of the study was that the results only partially supported Herzberg's two-factor theory of job satisfaction. The study mentioned there were two general classes of variables relevant to employee work attitudes. They were variables in the work process that facilitated the personal growth and development of the individual and environmental variables which included physical and monetary rewards. The study offered the framework for a detailed analysis of the hypothesis that motivator variables were significant to job satisfaction while hygiene factors were important to job dissatisfaction.

Nyberg (2010) did a research study as a professor of business management and explained the correlation between performance and voluntary turnover in retaining employees who performed at a high level. He defined the study by evaluating the behavior and attitudes of insurance employees and how their beliefs influenced the performance-voluntarily turnover relationship (Nyberg, 2010). The primary data for the study came from employees at a major, United States insurance company (Nyberg, 2010). Also, employees hired before January 1, 2001, were not used in the study because termination data was incomplete (Nyberg, 2010). The results revealed that an increase in pay and job loss rate interaction, with how an employee performs, persuaded the performance-voluntary turnover connection (Nyberg, 2010). Also, the results suggested they work independently of employee job satisfaction. There were limitations in the study. One limitation of the study was the difficulty in distinguishing the different types of turnover (Nyberg, 2010). One type of turnover is when agencies view quitting as leaving willingly even though the employee is forced to leave the agency (Nyberg, 2010). The study set the groundwork to test a theoretical model in understanding how contextual factors can play a role in higher performer turnover over middle and lower performer voluntarily turnover (Nyberg, 2010).

Wang et al. (2012) studied the job satisfaction and turnover intentions of employees in the private and public sector in Taiwan. The study was organized breaking it up into three debates that impact productivity in the Taiwanese public sector. The debates were that public employees’ lack job satisfaction because public sector jobs lack the motivation to perform the job duties. Public employees have an increased need for job security which causes low work productivity. The need for public employee job satisfaction affects organizational performance through inducing job satisfaction-turnover association. The data for the study included employees of various public and private organizations in Taiwan (Wang et al., 2012). There are four public service organizations in Taiwan: executive, sanitation and medicinal services, community schools, and public companies (Wang et al., 2012). The results demonstrated that public-sector managers in Taiwan must increase employee extrinsic job satisfaction and assist unhappy employees with locating employment opportunities that may interest them (Wang et al., 2012). Wang et al. mentioned that the decreased public employee extrinsic satisfaction related to what other researchers have presented in the literature.

Wang et al. (2012) could make the study more valuable by explaining in further detail where the dissatisfaction stems from various causes like low salaries, inflexibility of work procedures, and decreased work independence. However, he advised that management could increase employee drive by focusing on the extrinsic features of their positions (Wang et al., 2012). Wang et al. offered the perspective that a low rate of employee turnover could increase public employee work productivity.

Wernimont (1972) explained the debate over the one-dimensional versus double-factor affirmations about employee job satisfaction. He felt employee job satisfaction is more appropriate for a rational solution than a practical solution in dropping employee job turnover. The author outlined the study by discussing how intrinsic factors influence extrinsic factors in employee job satisfaction. There was no data used in the study. However, Wernimont depended on articles for an in-depth analysis. The results suggested extrinsic factors cause dissatisfaction but do not contribute to employee satisfaction while intrinsic factors cause satisfaction if an employee feels his or her extrinsic factors are satisfactory (Wernimont, 1972). Also, the results suggested that the researcher did not mention feelings of unfairness in connection with extrinsic factors. For example, fairness-unfairness entails an external referent while feelings of achievement and responsibility do not necessarily need any such tangible variable. Wernimont could make the study stronger by discussing how opinion survey questions could be formed to provide management with maximum flexibility in remedial action against employee job dissatisfaction. The study offered how additional studies on job satisfaction are required when researchers view the entire system.

Schreurs, Guenter, Schumacher, Emmerik, and Notelaers (2013) conducted a research study in which they looked at the employee-involvement climate regarding the correlation between wage level satisfaction and employee productivity. The researchers based the study on the distributive justice theory, equity theory, and social exchange theory. The distributive justice theory says that employees determine if they have been fairly compensated by looking at wage-level and employee work inputs, such as work effort, experience, and performance (Schreurs et al., 2013).

Adam Locke coined the equity theory (Schreurs et al., 2013). The equity theory said wage level satisfaction related to someone's goal but could also relate to the wage-level of other employees. The researchers noted that the social exchange theory is a negotiated exchange between two parties (Schreurs et al., 2013). They collected data from approximately 23,000 Belgian employees. They represented 134 organizations. The researchers argued that one way to satisfy employees is to make sure they are happy with their wage level. There were two hypotheses in the research study. The hypotheses were based on an information-sharing work environment and a decision-making work environment (Schreurs et al., 2013). They focused on the relationships between an information-sharing environment, a decision-making environment, pay level satisfaction, affective commitment, and employee turnover intentions (Schreurs et al., 2013).

The researchers' various level data analyses indicated that an environment conducive to employee decision- making mediated the negativity of an employee's decreased wages and that a workplace that was conducive to sharing information mediated the negative effects of a low wage level (Schreurs et al., 2013). One implication of the research study was that if an employee is dissatisfied with his or her pay level, at least a decision-making environment can compensate for the low pay (Schreurs et al., 2013). Some companies may not have the resources to increase pay, but they have an environment where the employees can participate in decision-making (Schreurs et al., 2013). Also, management employees may want to create a work environment where employees are on semi-autonomous teams where they are in control of their job with minimal supervision (Schreurs et al., 2013). A limitation of the study was that the researchers collected data via participant self-reports, which leaves room for biases (Schreurs et al., 2013). Last, the study included Belgian employees only so the research study results are not widespread to other countries and cultures (Schreurs et al., 2013).

Secara (2014) discussed factors of why people work, besides what someone can find in the workplace, a sense of accomplishment, self-esteem or for some, just a paycheck. Secara's article explained the factors and expectations within a work environment besides how employers and management can create an atmosphere that facilitates trust. Communication within an organization is vital to understand company expectations and the realities of daily work progress and production. Motivating employees should go beyond the mere motivation of a paycheck. Herzberg's theory implies that employees must have personal goals besides company goals. If an employee has personal motivation, he or she will complete more work, typically of a higher caliber. Secara referenced Manolescu's (2003) realization that human resources have become company's best assets; employees are the company. Secara's article highlights the socio-economic realities faced by employees in addition to proposing various methods to motivate staff members.

Markos and Sridevi (2010) stated that the definition of employee engagement is an employee's optimistic attitude regarding the organization. Employees engaged in their jobs are the ones who work to improve the organization (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). They engage their coworkers in increasing performance to ensure that the organization progresses (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). It is the employer's responsibility to create and continue employee engagement (Markos & Sridevi, 2010).

Some indicators of employee engagement are client satisfaction, progression, high employee productivity, and revenue (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). Employers are attempting to increase employee performance (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). Management officials agree that efficacy and production are pertinent to organizational success (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). Total quality management and business process reengineering assisted with organizational performance growth (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). Managers may not effectively lead an organization using controlling leadership styles because controlling leadership styles may not be conducive to a productive employer-employee relationship (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). People assume that their jobs will give them job satisfaction, personal autonomy, and status (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). Management officials have found creative and innovative ways of designing a work environment where employees are happy and meet organizational goals (Markos & Sridevi, 2010).

Employee job satisfaction can be derived from employee interest in corporate social responsibility or CSR (Vlachos, Panagopoulos, & Rapp, 2013). Vlachos et al. (2013) looked at the impact of CSR on employee happiness. CSR involves an organization's involvement in improving economic, societal, and environmental well-being (Vlachos et al., 2013). The authors predicted that a management official's charismatic leadership affected employees' interpretations of the motives that underlined their organization's involvement in CSR activities, which influenced employee job satisfaction. Charismatic leadership is when a leader sacrifices self for the long-term good of the organization and the community (Vlachos et al., 2013). Vlachos et al. stated that more companies are engaging in CSR activities because CSR is a competitive necessity.

Summary and Conclusions

There were several themes in the literature review. Decreased job satisfaction can lead to employee turnover in the workplace, which is why management personnel must find creative and innovative ways of keeping employees satisfied with their jobs. Factors that affect job satisfaction include pay, job security, job duty clarification, promotion opportunities, and work/life balance (Yang et al., 2011). Employee job satisfaction or dissatisfaction can determine an organization’s success or failure (Bordia et al., 2011). There are gaps in the literature regarding the general problem of employee turnover in federal public agencies. Employee turnover has been centered more on private-sector agencies like financial institutions and small businesses rather than public-sector agencies (Wynen & Op de Beek, 2014). More employee turnover research exists for private-sector agencies (Wynen & Op de Beek, 2014). Herzberg’s two-factor theory is the conceptual framework for this research study. The two-factor theory is mostly recognized for its relevance to employee job satisfaction (Sell & Cleal, 2011). The theory is relevant for this research study because a public service manager’s main responsibility is to increase employee productivity while keeping them happy (Pirani, 2013). I reviewed research studies, and there is little evidence of qualitative studies conducted regarding the lived experiences of Social Security Administration employees. I conducted a transcendental phenomenological research study with Social Security Administration employees and will describe the research procedures that I used for the study in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of the qualitative, phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of Social Security employee job satisfaction and employee turnover. The general problem was that employees not satisfied with their job may leave their organization (see Ahmad & Rainyee, 2014; Liu et al., 2012). The specific problem was that Social Security Administration managers may be out of touch with employees to improve job satisfaction and decrease employee turnover (see Daugherty, 2013). Based on Bombata's (2014) explanation of phenomenological theories, blending philosophy and psychological experiences, a transcendental, phenomenological methodology served my purpose for this study by allowing me to incorporate the individual lived experiences of the 20 participants.

In this chapter, I will discuss the research study procedures. The study procedures include the research design and rationale, the role of the researcher, and the study methodology. The methodology will include participant selection logic, project instrumentation, the project design plan, study procedures, data analysis plan, and ethical procedures.

Research Design and Rationale

I developed the research questions for this study to address the outcome of a reflection of the lifeworld of the participants that situated the phenomenon in context with this research (see Vagle, 2014). If there were nothing to inquire about there would be no research study. The following research question and subquestions guided this study and yielded insight into the lived experiences of Social Security Administration employee job satisfaction and employee turnover:

RQ: What are the lived experiences of Social Security Administration employees on job satisfaction and employee turnover?

SQ1: How do employees perceive their work environment?

SQ2: What factors motivate Social Security employees to remain in their jobs?

SQ3: What management strategies may help decrease employee turnover?

The phenomenon under study was the lived experiences of Social Security employees. My focus of the research study was job satisfaction and employee turnover. The research question and subquestions allowed me to identify the lived experiences and assisted me in determining strategies that could improve job satisfaction and decrease employee turnover.

When deciding how to conduct this study, I chose a transcendental, phenomenological approach because it would best allow participants a forum to freely discuss their individual experiences in depth (see Bombata, 2014). Phenomenology helps researchers understand what people experience and how they interpret phenomena around them (Bombata, 2014). Moustakas (1994) stated that phenomenological researchers do not make false beliefs about phenomena but aim to develop a question that provides the basis for research studies and the foundation for more research to ensure the researcher captures the real meaning. Phenomenological research gives the researcher an opportunity to reflect on the phenomenon, and this reflection helps them to know themself better in the realm of the lived experience (Moustakas, 1994). Implementing a phenomenological study ensured that the study focus remained on the Social Security Administration employees' lived experiences of job satisfaction and employee turnover.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher in qualitative research is more of an observer-participant (Barbesino & Salvaggio, 1997). Barbesino and Salvaggio (1997) explained that the role of the observer is still a participant in the social network. In this study, I had previous knowledge of and relationships with the participants, and this may have been a cause for biases. I acknowledged my biases by making a note of them and took a naïve approach to the research study. I did not conduct this research study with thoughts of passing judgment on the participants. Moustakas (1994) discussed the notion of epoché, which means not making judgment and looking at things differently with the absence of personal views. In the consent form provided to each participant, I explained there was no incentive for them to respond in a particular way.

By creating and using six open-ended, interview questions, I engaged with the participants to ensure that I facilitated conversation while maintaining professional standards. The interview questions ensured that I answered the research questions thoroughly. Participants engaged with the questions and answered them as they saw fit, discussing their lived experiences while focusing on job satisfaction and employee turnover, which helped me better understand what federal employees need so managers could facilitate a more productive workplace.

Each interview had the same format. As I asked the participants a question, I took notations and audio recorded their responses, which allowed for multiple records of the data. The interviewees could review their responses until a set date agreed upon by the interviewee and me.

Before the interviews, I provided consent forms that explicitly stated that the interviewee's identity would be protected. As the interview results were locked away in a cabinet, participants did not need to be overly concerned. No one other than me had access to the files for evaluation.

Methodology

Population

There are approximately 60,000 employees in the Social Security Administration (Social Security Administration, n.d.b). The participants in this study were 20 non-management employees from three Social Security Administration offices from an area in the eastern United States. There is another office in this area. However, that office was not included in the research study. There were approximately 101 Social Security Administration employees in this eastern United States area. They account for less than 1% of the total Social Security Administration employee population.

One office in the area is considered a Level 1 field office, and the other two offices in area are Level 2 offices. Level 1 offices normally have a high volume of customer traffic, and Level 2 offices do not have as many visitors as a Level 1 office. Level 1 offices see approximately 300 customers per day, while Level 2 offices see 100 or fewer customers each day. One Level 2 office has approximately 15 employees, the other Level 2 office has approximately 20 employees, and the Level 1 office has approximately 26 employees. Each office has at least two management officials, rehired annuitants, customer service representatives, and claims specialists. The customer service specialists and the claims specialists conduct face-to-face and telephone interviews with Social Security clientele.

The employees from the offices come from diverse backgrounds. Understanding that individual employees have personal motivations for working, whether it is to provide for a family, to fulfill a personal dedication to helping others, or simply to afford their next purchase, Social Security Administration management must be able to accommodate all employees while maintaining company expectations and goals. Management that understands the employee’s motivations can better fulfill these expectations while working on areas of dissatisfaction.

By asking employees what motivated them, I arrived at a consensus of what a diverse group of employees, ranging in age, gender, and race, need to better fulfill the Social Security Administration’s goals and that of their employees. I aimed to understand how employees experience and describe job satisfaction, motivation, and employee turnover. This information can help current and future Social Security Administration managers figure out what is needed to have happy and productive employees.

The project sample size of 20 employees was representative of those in the Social Security Administration. The conclusions I drew of how employees experience and describe job satisfaction and employee turnover may be indicative of others within the agency. Englander (2012) stated that qualitative inquiry has no set standards and there is no correct sample size with qualitative research (Englander, 2012). Sample size depends upon the inquiry, the time and resources that are available, what the researcher is studying, and the purpose of the research study (Englander, 2012). Qualitative research is not concerned with *how many* when it comes to sampling size but rather is concerned with the individual's in-depth lived experience (Englander, 2012). Whether the qualitative researcher interviewed three or 20 participants, the idea would be to generalize the lived experience to others who may have shared the same experience (Englander, 2012). Twenty out of 61 employees were equal to 33% of the employees in the area and yielded adequate results for this study. My goal was to have participants of various races, gender, economic classes, and different years of service with the Social Security Administration. Understanding personal differences exist, I wanted each participant to discuss their own needs and how job satisfaction and employee turnover may play a role in their position.

I conducted the study with rehired annuitants, customer service representatives, and claims specialists. This population of Social Security Administration employees represented the American public because the employees were diverse. The variations in employee responses helped explain how the majority of the employees' experience and describe job satisfaction and employee turnover and what managers could do to improve them.

Having a range of participants assisted me with listing variations in the responses while looking for specific recurring themes (see Englander, 2012). The recurring themes about job satisfaction and employee turnover helped me answer the research questions.

By collecting and organizing participant responses, I compiled a list of employee needs that I could apply to a diverse employee community.

Instrumentation

While I used an interview format in this study, many other researchers of employee satisfaction and employee turnover used surveys to gain employee input in their studies. Smerek and Peterson (2007) analyzed employee perceptions of job characteristics, work environment, and overall job satisfaction using a survey. Similar to this study, Smerek and Peterson considered factors such as gender and race using Herzberg's model and used an interview protocol.

This study paralleled previous studies because I sought to explain employee job satisfaction by using Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Herzberg's two-factor theory. Gauging employee responses by these theories provides clear guidelines for the researcher. Organizing questions in an open-ended format allowed participants to respond in a manner where I could evaluate them based on Herzberg's theory (see Waltman et al., 2012).

For this phenomenological study, I deemed interviewing Social Security employees more appropriate because interviewing allowed for more thorough responses that provide a more realistic interpretation of life in a high-intensity job setting. If the study was limited to a survey, I may not have learned the specific information that would help employers best serve their employees, thereby undermining the overall purpose of the study. The primary instrument for phenomenological studies is the researcher. I ensured that the interview questions answered the research study questions. Moustakas

(1994) discussed the long interview in phenomenological research studies. The long interview is how the inquirer collects data on the phenomena of study (Moustakas, 1994). The long interview includes probing questions that allow researchers to receive rich, thick descriptions of the phenomena from the participants (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenological interviews entail open-ended questions to ensure that the full experience of the participant is captured (Moustakas, 1994). These questions best aligned with the study's phenomena of employee job satisfaction and employee turnover because they allowed the participants an opportunity discuss their experiences in great detail.

The primary data collection instrumentation was a researcher-created interview. The number of interviews ensured that the research study questions were answered and provided a range of interview responses. Phenomenological interviewing entails capturing the lived experiences and descriptions of the phenomenon (Englander, 2012). The interview questions captured the lived experiences and descriptions of job satisfaction and employee turnover.

When I created the instrumentation, Maslow's theory and Herzberg's two-factor theory provided the basis for the research questions. I knew that I wanted to focus on employee job satisfaction and employee turnover. Utilizing these two theories provided a platform based on familiar theories, allowing for this study to be comparable to previous studies addressing employee job satisfaction and employee turnover.

This study was unique because it focused on the lived experiences of Social Security employees in the eastern United States area. Having a research study area helped to control the study sample size. A research study area also increased the probability that employees would have similar responses based on the workplace conditions in the different offices.

Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

I used purposive sampling via LinkedIn and Facebook to recruit participants from the eastern United States area offices only for the research study. Participation in the research study was voluntary. Purposive sampling allowed me to invite participants who are knowledgeable and have experience with the phenomenon of interest (Palinkos et al., 2015). This sampling method is commonly used in qualitative research (Palinkos et al., 2015). I was only looking for claims specialists, customer service representatives, and rehired annuitants because they have direct contact with the American public. I did not recruit participants outside of the eastern United States offices because I was unable to travel beyond that area for the in-person interviews. The participants for this study were able to communicate and reflect on their lived experiences of job satisfaction and employee turnover which assisted me with answering the research questions.

The purposive sampling method and snowball sampling were used for participant recruitment. Snowball sampling, also referred to as chain referral sampling, is a type of purposive sampling in which the primary data sources refer other potential primary data sources to the researcher (Research Methodology, 2017). Snowball sampling can be used to identify groups of people who are not easily accessible by the researcher (Research Methodology, 2017).

The researcher can use social or professional networks to recruit people who may be beneficial to the study (Qualitative Research Methods, n.d.). Participants for this research study were recruited via LinkedIn and Facebook (Appendix B). LinkedIn is a social networking website for professionals (LinkedIn, 2017). Over 10,000 Social Security employees are affiliated with LinkedIn (LinkedIn, 2017). Facebook, like LinkedIn, is a social networking website (WhatIs.com, n.d.). The Social Security Administration has 180,000 followers on Facebook (Facebook, n.d.). LinkedIn and Facebook allowed access to Social Security employees. The recruitment letter included the purpose of the study, eligibility requirements, and my contact information (name, e-mail, and telephone number), to ensure alignment with U.S. regulations (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2005).

Research study participants completed the informed consent form. The informed consent form explained the interview process thoroughly and what participants could expect from the experience. Next, I completed the participant demographic sheet for each interviewee. The sheet explained who the interviewee was along with how long he or she has been at the organization. Having this sheet allowed me a quick summary of each participant. No one had access to this information other than me.

I hand recorded the information from the participants along with an audio recording of the session. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. Upon the end of the interview process, I asked the participants if he or she had any other comments about job satisfaction and employee turnover. The interview then concluded. I provided the interview transcript for the participants to review after data transcription occurred. Transcript verification allowed the participants to review their responses to ensure accuracy, correct errors, and clarify information that may not be clear (Hagens, Dobrow,

& Chafe, 2009). My goal was to make sure I captured the participant's responses accurately.

Once I gathered the information from the interviews, there were no requirements to return for follow-up interviews. Participants could exit the interview at any time. I did not hold the participants liable for anything if they chose to leave the interview.

I did not conduct a pilot study for this research study. A pilot study is a preliminary research study conducted by the researcher before conducting the full research study (Kannon & Gowri, 2015). Even though a pilot study may have helped to improve interview questions or find minor mistakes before the actual research study, its use does not guarantee a successful research study. Also, a pilot study cannot guarantee success because researchers conduct pilot studies with smaller participant numbers.

Although a pilot study was not conducted, I conducted a field test of the interview questions with three individuals before the actual interviews. The researcher can select a few people to provide feedback on the interview questions (University of Phoenix, 2015). The field test of the interview questions allowed me to ensure that the interview question wording was understood and appropriate for the participants and may have resulted in more fined tuned interview questions that were not vague (University of Phoenix, 2015).

Data Analysis Plan

Each interview question does not guide the interviewee; rather it allows for each participant to give specifics on his or her experience. The lived experiences of job satisfaction and employee turnover were the phenomena of the research study. I wanted participants to discuss how he or she experiences and understands the phenomena.

Understanding that each Social Security office services high client numbers daily, employees who receive high rates of job satisfaction are more likely to engage with clients actively. The frontline positions require significant customer interaction; employees with low levels of job satisfaction and motivation can be a detriment to the agency. Disregard for clients because an employee is disgruntled means that the client may view the agency in a negative manner. Management personnel could better organize workplaces so that it could increase work production by providing employees the necessary elements to aid in work production.

The interview method allows participants to provide well thought out and thorough responses. The research participants were able to respond freely because of the open-ended interview protocol. After the 20 interviews were completed, I transcribed each interview and then allowed the participants to review the transcripts for accuracy.

The method of phenomenological data analysis is pertinent to the research study because accurate measures must be taken to make sure the data is captured correctly and preserved (McNamara, 2007). After transcription, I analyzed the interview data using a modification of van Kaam's method of analysis of phenomenological data (Moustakas, 1994). There are seven steps in van Kaam's analysis method which are presented below in Table 1.

Table 1

The Seven Steps in van Kaam's Data Analysis Method

Steps	Description
Step 1	Recording and Categorizing Important Participant Statements
Step 2	Lessening and Purging to Determine Invariant Constituents
Step 3	Grouping of Invariant Constituents
Step 4	Application – Validation
Step 5	Individual Textural Description
Step 6	Individual Structural Description
Step 7	Textural-Structural Description

The meaningful statements are the statements that possibly relate to the phenomena (McNamara, 2007). For instance, job satisfaction and employee turnover lived experiences were the phenomena of interest in this research study. Any statement that the interviewee provided that related to the phenomena was a meaningful statement.

The invariant constituents are specific, lived experiences and descriptions that demonstrate moments of the phenomena (McNamara, 2007; Moustakas, 1994). An example of an invariant constituent would be a participant recalling a specific example of how he or she experienced job satisfaction (i.e., being extremely happy after receiving a performance award) (Moustakas, 1994). Each experience that the participant provides is necessary for understanding the phenomena of study (McNamara, 2007). After I analyzed the data for invariant constituents, I grouped them into themes to further organize the information (Moustakas, 1994). Organizing the invariant constituents into themes demonstrated the third step of van Kaam's data analysis plan, which is clustering (Moustakas, 1994).

The textural descriptions come from clustering the data into themes (Moustakas, 1994). Individual textural descriptions are specific thoughts and feelings relating to the phenomena (Moustakas, 1994). Textural descriptions are the what of phenomena under research study (McNamara, 2007). In this research study, textural descriptions included direct quotes from the participants that described how they felt about job satisfaction and employee turnover. Structural descriptions were the how and why of the study phenomena (McNamara, 2007). Structural descriptions show how the phenomena surface and demonstrate the thoughts and feelings that induce the phenomena (Moustakas, 1994). In this study, structural descriptions included the thoughts and feelings that caused them to be satisfied with their jobs. Another example of a structural description was a participant stating the specific structures that influenced him or her to stay employed with the Social Security Administration.

Van Kaam's data analysis plan tries to create a combined, textural-structural depiction of the phenomena to ensure that the researcher captures the real meanings and principles (Moustakas, 1994). The participants' textural and structural descriptions were synthesized to capture how they experience and describe job satisfaction and turnover in the Social Security Administration. I used NVivo Pro 11 software for the data analysis process.

The lived experiences of job satisfaction and employee turnover were the main phenomena in the research study. Participants described and explained their lived experiences. There was no set definition of why a person is satisfied with their job; a phenomenological research study such as this explained how employees experience and describe job satisfaction and employee turnover.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility involves ensuring that the research study results are convincing from the participant's perspective (Trochim, 2006). Therefore, cohesion will support credibility in participant responses. Previous interactions with participants would have increased credence based on positive, productive work and personal interactions. However, I interviewed individuals who I had no prior work relationship with. I maintained contact with interviewees.

Clarity and transparency within the interview process added credibility as well to the project. Because interviewees knew what to expect, he or she was not surprised during the interview by off-base questions. If an interviewee was uncomfortable with a question, he or she might have declined to answer that question. I acted professionally, explained the project goals and process, and provided participants with a full disclaimer and information about the purpose and provided them with a document summarizing the results of the study.

Transferability

Transferability is how well the qualitative research results can transfer to other research settings (Trochim, 2006). The researcher or inquirer transfers the research results to another study (Trochim, 2006). The researcher can help transferability by explaining the research setting and conventions that are integral to the study (Trochim, 2006). The research study results for this study may be transferrable to research studies regarding public agency managers and job satisfaction. Even though there is no one size fits all for public managers, they all aim to do work with the resources they have, in the best way they know how, while keeping their employees satisfied.

Dependability

Dependability is concerned with ensuring the research processes are stable or consistent (Williams, 2011). In qualitative studies, dependability is about making sure there are no mistakes in data collection, data analysis, and research study results processes (Williams, 2011). If the researcher is consistent in the study process, the study may be a dependable study (Williams, 2011). The researcher should maintain an audit trail to make sure the dependability of the study is not weakened (Williams, 2011).

I interviewed the research study participants and hand record information. I also audio recorded the interviews as another way to ensure that I had the correct information from the participants. After I interviewed the participants, I transcribed the data and allowed the participants to review the transcriptions for accuracy. I analyzed the data using van Kaam’s data analysis procedure as noted in the Data Analysis Plan section. The research study results came from a synthesis of textural and structural descriptions.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the researcher confirming the results of the study (Trochim, 2006). I decided to use reflexivity to increase study confirmability. Reflexivity is when the researcher knows of his or her effect on the research (Thorpe & Holt, 2008). In qualitative research, it is impossible for the researcher to be objective; the researcher's presence will affect the research study (Katrivesis & Tsekeris, 2008; Thorpe & Holt, 2008).

Data saturation is another way to ensure the quality and confirmability of a research study (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The researcher will know when data saturation has taken place because there will be a wealth of information to replicate the study. When the researcher can no longer get more information and when the researcher cannot further the code the information, data saturation has taken place (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The interview is one way to address data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Fusch and Ness (2015) addressed the notion of how many interviews a researcher would need to ensure that he or she reaches data saturation. Even though there is no particular number of interviews a researcher needs for data saturation, Fusch and Ness stated that researchers get what they can when it comes to the number of interviews. The interview questions should be questions that several research participants address (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I had a dual recording system, an audio recorder, and a notepad, that helped facilitate interview reflection and contributed to ensuring that the responses represented interviewee sentiments. I was engaged in the interview by both listening and recording notes for later analysis.

I omitted individual names from the research study which allowed interviewees the ability to trust that their responses remained within the study space. There was no threat of job loss or job impact from being an interviewee because their names were not included in the study. During the reflexive process, I repeated the interviewee's response. The researcher can both clarify and ask questions to expand interviewee responses to questions while expanding upon any themes that come across within the interview time. I used the van Kaam data analysis plan to synthesize the textural and structural descriptions derived from the participants. Also, I wanted to find out how the employee experienced and described job satisfaction and employee turnover and determine ways of improving them.

Ethical Procedures

Ethics is important in research studies because the researcher must ensure that that the participants are protected and are not at risk of harm (Trochim, 2006). The Institutional Review Board (IRB) has to make sure that research methods are in line with United States regulations (Walden University, n.d.). The IRB approval number for this study is 03-07-18-0238128 and expires March 6, 2019.

I invited Social Security Administration employees to participate in the research study. I interviewed the participants via face-to-face contact. There were no concerns regarding recruitment. I did not pressure any employees to participate in the study.

Each participant completed an informed consent form and a demographic form (Appendix C). The informed consent form highlighted the research study background, the purpose of the study, the potential risks associated with the study, and the benefits of the study. It is important to provide this information to the participant to ensure that the participant is aware of the research details before participating. The demographic form provided me with information about participant including name, position, years of Social Security experience, and relevant notes about the participant. One of the ethical concerns with this study addressed employee confidentiality. The study participants are still Social Security Administration employees. For the study to succeed, one had to trust me and not worry about a breach of confidentiality. Participant responses remained confidential to make sure that participants could be honest in their responses without having to worry about consequences.

If a participant withdrew from the study, I was going to aim to replace that person to maintain 20 interviewees by reaching out on Facebook and LinkedIn again for a participant. However, I did not have any participants who withdrew from the study. If the participant decided to leave the study, their information would have been discarded and destroyed via shredder. I followed the agreed upon terms in the consent form.

The written data and audio recordings were in a locked file cabinet. No one had access to the data except for me. I will keep all data for 5 years and destroy it via shredder after 5 years. I maintained participant confidentiality throughout the analysis and summary portion of the study.

Summary

Utilizing the lens of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, I sought to explore employee job experience and how employers retain loyalties to the company while fulfilling employee personal and company goals.

Employees who derive a sense of personal satisfaction from their work accomplishments are more likely to be dedicated to the organization and committed to ensuring excellence in the workplace, increasing the likelihood that workers will stay in their positions. With the Social Security Administration, employees interact daily with a diverse public with various needs and expectations.

In this chapter, I discussed exploring the strategies that managers can use to improve job satisfaction and decrease employee turnover. The interview questions assisted with answering the research questions. My role as the researcher was to facilitate the interview process while protecting participant confidentiality. I also discussed issues of trustworthiness that include credibility, transferability, and confirmability in this chapter. I used the van Kaam data analysis plan to analyze the information I received from the interviews, and the results will be in Chapter 4. The research study results came from a synthesis of textural and structural descriptions from the participants.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this transcendental, phenomenological research study was to explore the lived experiences of Social Security Administration employee job satisfaction and employee turnover. Social Security Administration management personnel may benefit from this study because they may be able to use the results to find creative and innovative ways of increasing job satisfaction and decreasing employee turnover. Increasing job satisfaction and decreasing employee turnover may help improve workplace morale and employee job performance overall. Job satisfaction and employee turnover are significant factors in the workplace because employees who are not happy in their jobs may look for other employment (Kamala, 2014; Udechukwu, 2009). The study results revealed Social Security employees' lived experiences of job satisfaction and employee turnover and revealed ways of improving them.

The research question and subquestions assisted me in gathering the participants' expressions of the phenomenon of interest in this study. The phenomenon of the study are the lived experiences of Social Security Administration employee job satisfaction and employee turnover. The following questions guided the study:

RQ: What are the lived experiences of Social Security Administration employees on job satisfaction and employee turnover?

SQ1: How do employees perceive their work environment?

SQ2: What factors motivate Social Security employees to remain in their jobs?

SQ3: What management strategies may help increase job satisfaction and decrease employee turnover?

Participant experiences and feelings led to information that management may use to improve job satisfaction, decrease employee turnover, and help employees work more efficiently and effectively. Being that frontline employees directly process the work, they are in a good position to provide information that may assist management develop effective strategies for increasing job satisfaction and decreasing employee turnover. In this chapter, I will describe the research setting, participant demographics, the data collection process, the data analysis process, the evidence of trustworthiness, the research study results, and a chapter summary.

Research Setting

I scheduled and conducted 20 face-to-face interviews with frontline Social Security employees. I did not encounter any scheduling issues with the interviews during the recruitment process. The interview questions that I asked of each participant are located in Appendix A. I reserved rooms at the library to ensure that we had privacy during each of the interviews. The private library rooms consisted of a rectangle table and no more than four chairs.

Before each interview session began, the participant completed a demographic form and an informed consent form. I let each participant know that I would be audio recording the interview while taking notes. Each participant agreed to the audio recording of the interviews and my note-taking during the interviews. I reiterated to the participants that the information that they provided would be kept confidential and that no one would have access to the data other than me. I compared the notes that I took during the interviews to the audio files during the data transcription process.

Data Collection

I face-to-face interviewed 20 frontline Social Security employees from three offices in an area in the eastern United States in this qualitative, phenomenological study. I recruited the participants using purposive sampling and snowball sampling using Facebook and LinkedIn. The interviews were scheduled and conducted in March and April 2018. I collected the data from the participants via audio recording and written notes. I transcribed the interview data into Microsoft Word documents.

The participants answered six open-ended, interview questions regarding their lived experiences of job satisfaction and employee turnover. An individual's phenomenological perspective provides an understanding of how the individual experiences phenomenon in his or her social world (Henriques, 2014). The interviews gave the participants an opportunity to express themselves and their experiences of job satisfaction and employee turnover. I took handwritten notes and audio recorded the interviews with a Samson Zoom H4n Recorder. This device ensured that I transcribed the data accurately.

Qualitative research allows participants to express themselves and provide their own viewpoints (Roy, 2015). The use of open-ended questions during the interviews and probing allows the participants to use their own words to respond to the questions (Roy, 2015). During qualitative research, the researcher engages with the participants to ensure that he or she understands what the participant says (Roy, 2015). In qualitative research, the researcher has the ability to probe and have the participants expand on their answers as well as the capability to be flexible (Roy, 2015).

Face-to-face interviews were the dominant method of qualitative interviewing in the past (Opdenakker, 2011). However, with advances in technology, other methods of interviewing have become more common. Researchers can interview via telephone, e-mail, text messaging, and instant messaging in addition to face-to-face interviewing (Opdenakker, 2011).

I chose to conduct face-to-face interviews because I wanted to fully engage with the participants. Face-to-face interviews are a synchronized form of communication that occur in a certain place at a certain time (Opdenakker, 2011). I wanted to see body language, make eye contact with the participants, and gauge intonation. Social cues can add information to a participant's answer to an interview question (Opdenakker, 2011). When I interviewed each participant, I made note of their social cues so that I could add information to the interview and reference them later. Another advantage of face-to-face interviews is that the participant can provide answers to the interview questions right away, without having to type out a response to the question, as is the case with email or instant messaging interviews (Opdenakker, 2006).

Understanding that it can be time-consuming to conduct face-to-face interviews, I still wanted to interact directly with the participant because I wanted to get to know them and thought this would better accomplished through the face-to-face interview process. I also wanted the participant to feel comfortable with answering the questions with a real person rather than typing responses over the Internet or conversing over the telephone. I found the face-to-face interview process refreshing as I handled the interview as more of a conversation rather than a question and answer session. There were no challenges or issues during data collection. I carried out the study plan in the manner that I outlined in Chapter 3. The implementation of the plan will be discussed later in this chapter.

Data Analysis

Twenty frontline Social Security employees participated in face-to-face interview sessions that took up to 1 hour each. I audio-recorded and transcribed each of the interviews. Each participant responded to the questions I asked them based on their lived experiences of job satisfaction and employee turnover.

As a federal government management official, I had to ensure that I recognized any biases that I might present during the interviews. Acknowledging biases may ensure accurate research study results (Sheehan, 2014). The notion of epoché is about not passing judgment and viewing things in a different way (Moustakas, 1994). The participants shared their lived experiences of job satisfaction and employee turnover as they saw it. The application of epoché in the interviews allowed me to step back and look at the participants' personal perceptions and lived experiences of job satisfaction and employee turnover in the absence of my personal views.

I analyzed the resulting interview data using a modified van Kaam's method. I used NVivo 11 Pro for Windows to assist with the analysis. To isolate themes, I searched the text for recurrent wording and highlighted codes and patterns. I identified the invariant constituents after reviewing each interview transcript and looking for the participant's countenance of the experience that related to the purpose of the study. The participants expressed the specific structures that encouraged them to be satisfied with their jobs and the things that encouraged them to stay employed with Social Security. After I analyzed the data for the invariant constituents, I grouped them into themes to organize the information. Five themes emerged from the interviews.

Study Analysis

Each Social Security employee stated that job satisfaction and employee turnover are of interest to them in their positions. In the interviews, the participants made statements that demonstrated how job satisfaction and employee turnover have affected their current careers. At the end of the interviews, I reviewed my notes and transcribed the audio recorded information into Microsoft Word documents.

When I finished transcribing the data, each document was reviewed in conjunction with my handwritten notes. I contacted each participant via e-mail for them to verify the accuracy of the transcript. If there was information that I annotated incorrectly, they replied to me with the correction. I corrected the information and sent the document back to the participant for confirmation. After each participant reviewed and confirmed the information on their interview transcription, I analyzed the data using van Kaam's method of analysis that I described in Chapter 3. Van Kaam's analysis method was repeated several times.

I used NVivo 11 to analyze the information on the interview transcripts and identify relevant codes. This software was used in conjunction with van Kaam's method of analysis. NVivo provided recurrent words, phrases, codes, and word frequencies that were present in the documents. I was able to import my data transcripts into NVivo and it quickly organized the information into relevant themes, patterns, and phrases. NVivo generated codes that included stress, time, the public, work, benefits, pay, and relationships based on the transcripts (see Table 2). I was able to go through the information that NVivo collected and create themes, categories, and codes. Six primary codes emerged from the data.

Table 2

NVivo Codes

Code	Participant comment
Stress	"I get stressed out sometimes. I feel as though working with the public is stressful" (P1, P16).
Time	"There is not enough time to process my assigned workloads. I wish we had more time during the day to clear work" (P3, P10).
The Public	"The public is very demanding. Any work with the public can be tough. Working with the public is rewarding" (P6, P7, P12).
Work	"There is not enough time to process the work. The work has to get done because we have to ensure that we meet the needs of the public" (P19, P20).
Benefits	"The benefits and pay are good. They allow me to support my family" (P8, P11).
Relationships	"Relationships with coworkers and management are important to me. It is nice to be employed in a place where there are effective relationships" (P17, P18).

There were six themes that emerged from the data analysis process. The themes were developmental opportunities, pay and benefits, make a difference in the public's lives, stress from work overload, and relationships with colleagues. I will discuss the themes in the following section.

Themes

Theme 1: Developmental Opportunities

Table 3

Developmental Opportunities

Theme Number	Theme/Textural Description	Participants
1	Developmental opportunities	1, 5, 8, 9, 16, 19, 20

Textural description. "I think that the agency provides many training opportunities to strengthen our skills. We continuously have training to ensure that our skills align with the changes in policy. The agency ensures that we have the necessary skills to do our jobs. I will probably remain with the agency because I do have opportunities that will help me grow. I am satisfied with my career at SSA because of the developmental opportunities" (P1).

Textural description. "The agency provides temporary developmental opportunities are important and to help us build on our knowledge. The developmental opportunities give us an opportunity to experiences another position. I have worked in many places and this is the first one that provides several of those" (P5).

Participants expressed that developmental opportunities were important. The agency offers 3 to 4-month temporary job enrichment opportunities for employees to experience a particular position of interest. These opportunities allow the employee to experience another position temporarily. If the position becomes permanent in the future, the employee will be familiar with the position duties and can decide if they want to apply for it based on the prior developmental opportunity.

Theme 2: Pay and Benefits

Table 4

Pay and Benefits

Theme Number	Theme/Textural Description	Participants
2	Pay and benefits	2, 3, 10, 12, 16, 17, 18
***Textural description*. "I earn a good living where I am able to take care of my family and live my life the way that I want to. I can support my family on a decent income. I am thankful that I have good health insurance, dental, and vision insurance. I also have a good retirement savings plan" (P2).		
***Textural description*. "It is hard to find a job that has adequate pay and benefits. I need good pay and benefits to meet my family's needs. This is another reason why I am staying employed with SSA. The job does get stressful at times, but I think about all of the wonderful aspects of the job when I get stressed" (P3).		

Pay and benefits were an important factor to all of the Social Security employees. The employees reported that they remain employed with Social Security because of the pay, health insurance, retirement plan, and life insurance in addition to other factors. Some of the employees reported that even though the job may get stressful, they have the means to support their favored lifestyles. The employees reported that they are thankful for their jobs and are happy that they work and earn a decent living.

Theme 3: Make a Difference in the Public's Lives

Table 5

Make a Difference in the Public's Lives

Theme Number	Theme/Textural Description	Participants
3	Make a difference in the public's lives	4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 19, 20

Textural description. "It makes me happy when the customer is happy after I interview them. I try to ensure that I do all that I can to serve the customer. I make sure that the customer is receiving all funds that he or she is due" (P4).

Textural description. "I know that sometimes we have to give unfavorable information to the public regarding their benefits, but when I have put a smile on someone's face, it reminds me of the fact that I have an important job. I really want to do a good job and serve the public efficiently and effectively. I know that I have done a good job when the customer leaves happy" (P6).

Textural description. "I feel as though I am making a difference in the lives of the public and this keeps me coming to work every day. Being able to be in a position where the public depends on me for assistance relating to their livelihood is an important job and makes me want to stay even though the public is very demanding" (P7).

The majority of the employees felt as though they are making a difference in the lives of the public. They felt as though it is their job to help people and make sure they are being paid the maximum amount of benefits due to them through Social Security. These employees stated that this is one of the things that keep them with Social Security and gives them a sense of pride to know that the public appreciates them. These employees not only make sure that the beneficiaries are paid the maximum benefit amount, they refer them to outside agencies if the customer has an emergency or needs assistance with something else.

Theme 4: Stress from Work Overload

Table 6

Stress from Work Overload

Theme Number	Theme/Textural Description	Participants
4	Stress from work overload	1-20
Textural description. "There is a lack of staff members in my office. We do not have adequate staff to do the work. I need SSA to hire some people so that there is not so much work. More staff would definitely increase my level of motivation and increase my level of job satisfaction" (P1).		
Textural description. "We are having to do more work with less staff. This is so stressful. Sometimes I go home with a headache and have to lie down because of the number of customers I served on some days, the number of phone calls I have answered, the number of action emails I have received" (P4).		
Textural description. "All I can do is pray. Prayer keeps my stress level under control. I have to call on God for strength several times a day. My faith is what keeps me sane" (P7).		
Textural description. "My level of job satisfaction has gone down some because we do not have enough time in a day to do the work because we are interviewing all day, answering phones all day, have people coming to us for questions all day, and have management sending us emails" (P10).		

All of the employees reported that they get stressed much of the time because of the workload. The employees are constantly interviewing, on the telephone, take appointments, and have management action emails to respond to. They try to get the work on their desk done on overtime. Overtime is offered almost every weekend, on Saturdays and Sundays for a maximum of 8 hours each day. Working overtime is voluntary. Employees may work overtime if he or she wishes with the approval of management. Some of them felt as though they have to work overtime to get their work done and get the public paid. Working overtime on the weekends takes away family time and other time that may need to be devoted to other obligations.

Theme 5: Relationships with Colleagues

Table 7

Relationships with Colleagues

Theme Number	Theme/Textural Description	Participants
5	Relationships with colleagues	1-20

Textural description. "Whenever I cannot find an answer to my question in policy, I can rely on my coworker or supervisor to help me find what I need. I love the fact that we are a big extended family" (P5).

Textural description. "We have a good work atmosphere. The morale in the office is good and management is helpful and supportive of the decisions I make with my cases. My supervisor really cares about my well-being and always tells me and my fellow coworkers she is willing to help with whatever when I need her to. You cannot work a lot of places and have a cohesive atmosphere like we have. This is one of the reasons I love my job" (P18).

Textural description. "The fact my coworkers and I learn from each other is awesome. Whenever one person comes across information that may be beneficial to the rest of the staff, he or she emails the staff to ensure that they are aware of the information. One thing about SSA is that policy changes constantly and we have to ensure that we stay abreast of all of the policy changes" (P20).

Relationships with management and coworkers was significant to all of the participants. They felt as though their supervisor fostered a good work environment in which everyone could learn from each other and help each other in times of need. The work atmosphere emerged as another important factor within the realm of relationships with colleagues. They experience job satisfaction when they feel as though they can come to work and interact with people who care and who do not mind lending a helping hand.

According to the participants, it can be hard to keep up with Social Security policy changes, which is why it is helpful to have coworkers and management who do not mind assisting.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is the process by which researchers ensure the value or worth of their research study (Amankwaa, 2016). Trustworthiness strengthens value, applicability, and consistency of research studies (Amankwaa, 2016). Amankwaa (2016) discussed four terms that establish trustworthiness in research studies: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

Credibility involves ensuring that the research study results are reflective of the participant's perspective (Amankwaa, 2016; Trochim, 2006). Transcription verification was employed to verify accuracy of the transcripts. Transparency is another facet of credibility and involves the researcher staying focused on the participant perspectives and putting aside his or her own regarding the phenomenon of interest. I remained transparent throughout the data collection process and put aside my own biases by solely focusing on the participant's responses. I let each participant know that if he or she was uncomfortable with a question, he or she may decline to answer that question.

Transferability

Transferability in research studies demonstrate how well study results transfer to other settings (Amankwaa, 2016; Trochim, 2006). It is the researcher's responsibility to decide if study results can be applicable to other studies (Amankwaa, 2016). One way to warrant transferability is to include thick descriptions of the phenomenon (Amankwaa, 2016). Thick descriptions entail descriptions of the research setting, participant attitudes, climate, atmosphere, reactions, and feelings of the researcher (Amankwaa, 2016).

Thick descriptions were used in the structural and textural participant descriptions which were the foundation of the themes. I also hand recorded notes to capture the essence of the lived experiences. Transferability was also present in the study by recruiting individuals from various Social Security offices.

Dependability

Dependability is about maintaining consistency in the research process (Williams, 2011). If the researcher is consistent in the study process, the study may be a dependable study (Williams, 2011). The researcher should maintain multiple sources of data to make sure the dependability of the study is not weakened (Williams, 2011).

I interviewed the research study participants and hand record information. I also audio record the interviews as another way to ensure that I captured the correct information from the participants. After I interviewed the participants, I transcribed the data and allowed the participants to review the transcriptions for accuracy via e-mail. I analyzed the data using van Kaam’s data analysis procedure. The research study results came from a synthesis of textural and structural descriptions.

Confirmability

Confirmability is described as the researcher ensuring that the research study results are valid and accurate (Trochim, 2006). I used reflexivity to increase reflexivity in the research study. Reflexivity is when the researcher is aware of his or her effect on the research study (Thorpe & Holt, 2008). During the reflexive process, I repeated the participant's response. I clarified and asked questions to expand interviewee responses to questions while expanding upon any themes that came across within the interview time. The researcher is subjective in qualitative research; the researcher's presence will affect the research study (Katrivesis & Tsekeris, 2008; Thorpe & Holt, 2008).

Data saturation is another way to confirm research study results (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Data saturation has taken place when there will be a wealth of information to replicate the study. The interview is one way to address data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). During each of the 20 interviews, I hand recorded notes and audio recorded the interviews. I took notes of my views, thoughts, beliefs, interactions with the participants, feelings, and any concerns I had. The note taking process facilitated interview reflection and contributed to ensuring that the responses represented accurate interviewee information.

I omitted individual names from the research study, which allowed interviewees the ability to trust that their responses remained confidential. There was no threat of job loss or job impact from being an interviewee because their names were not included in the study. I used the van Kaam data analysis plan to synthesize the textural and structural descriptions derived from the participant responses to find out how the employee experiences and describes job satisfaction and employee turnover from their perspectives. At the end of the research study, the participants received a summary of the research study results.

Summary

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological research study was to explore the lived experiences of Social Security employee job satisfaction and employee turnover. The chapter began with the research questions that guided the study. I recruited 20 Social Security employees via purposive and snowball sampling. A description of the research setting was presented in which I interviewed participants at a location of their choice. I provided the demographical information pertaining to the participants. After the interviews were completed, I transcribed the data and analyzed it using van Kaam's method of data analysis. The transcripts were reviewed by the participants and then imported into NVivo Pro 11 for further analysis. NVivo produced codes and five themes emerged. The evidence of trustworthiness was discussed in Chapter 4 and a study analysis was presented. Interpretation of findings, limitations of the study, recommendations, implications, and research study conclusions will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this transcendental, phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of Social Security Administration employee job satisfaction and employee turnover and demonstrate how Social Security management personnel may benefit from the results of this study by being able to create better programs and services to assist Social Security employees with their job performance and increasing their level of job satisfaction. Qualitative research assists the researcher in understanding the meaning of experiences, the context in which participants act, and identifies unknown influences that may generate new theories from the unknown (Maxwell, 2005). The transcendental, phenomenological approach was the most appropriate method for this study because my goal was to explore and describe the lived experiences of Social Security Administration employee job satisfaction and employee turnover in this study.

Phenomenological research explores a person's lived experience (Bombata, 2014). Bombata (2014) stated that the phenomenological approach is the best approach to knowing the facts about people. The purpose of phenomenology is to give people a change to relink with the experience and recall the meaning of the event that took place (Van Manen, 1990). Individuals have an opportunity to tell their stories as they have lived them (Van Manen, 1990). Social Security employees' reflections on their lived experiences allowed me to gather information on concepts that could increase job satisfaction and decrease employee turnover. Their reflections provided an understanding of Social Security employees' thought processes, including emotions, perceptions, and their interpretations of job satisfaction and employee turnover. The outcomes of the study resulted in the lived experiences and strategies that employees suggested to improve job satisfaction and decrease employee turnover.

The findings of this study indicated that there are factors that contributed to a Social Security employee's level of job satisfaction and employee turnover such as pay and benefits, relationships with colleagues, developmental opportunities, work atmosphere, and making a difference in the lives of the public. The findings supported both the theories of Herzberg and Maslow which described that employees become dissatisfied when certain conditions are not present in the workplace (Maslow, 2000; Pirani, 2013; Sims & Quatro, 2005). Personal growth, achievement, recognition, employee pay and benefits, workplace conditions, organization policies, and relationships with management and coworkers are examples of intrinsic and extrinsic conditions (Pirani, 2013; Sims & Quatro, 2005).

Interpretation of Findings

The conceptual framework for this transcendental, phenomenological study was a combination of Herzberg's two-factor theory and Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The theories provided the the foundation of how job satisfaction and turnover intentions affected the lived experiences of 20 Social Security employees. Job satisfaction and employee turnover are founded on several concepts that are significant to agencies.

The participants in the research study shared their views, perspectives, and lived experiences of how pay, benefits, relationships, work atmospheres, recognition, workloads, and personal growth influence their level of job satisfaction. My analysis of the data revealed that these factors are solid characteristics of job satisfaction and turnover intentions. The participants also provided strategies for improving job satisfaction. Overall, the SSA employees that participated were satisfied with their positions, although there were some differences in their levels of job satisfaction with various aspects of their jobs. Even though making a difference in the lives of the public made them happy, the stress and workload volume affected their level of job satisfaction. Sometimes they go home with headaches or work overtime to get the work done but feel as though they make a good living to support their families. All of them reported that the relationships that they have with their coworkers play a major role in their level of job satisfaction. They are in environments where management is supportive of them and help them when they need it. In addition, their colleagues help them when necessary. There is a feeling of *a happy family* in each of the offices.

Even though the literature has shown that the federal government is having a hard time retaining employees due to a lack of job satisfaction (Mafini & Dlodlo, 2014; Sims & Quatro, 2005), this was not the case with the participants interviewed for my study. Even though employee turnover has been an issue, participants stayed in a job they disliked for the pay and benefits. The participants in the study did not indicate that they do not like their jobs; they just did not like the stress and workload volume that results from having a demanding public. Government employees satisfied with their pay and other opportunities recognize that the cost of leaving the agency may not be worth it (Ting, 1997; Vales, 2014). The golden handcuff concept may explain why government employees remain in their positions. The golden handcuff concept refers to higher paying jobs, widespread benefits, and the disposition of power in high-level positions (Greenwood, 2016). Therefore, government employees may take a more positive attitude toward their government jobs due to the pay and benefits that they receive (Ting, 1997; Vales, 2014).

Gawali (2009) stated that cross-training was a way to increase motivation. The participants in this research study discussed developmental opportunities, and cross-training relates to developmental opportunities that were discussed in this document previously. Social Security provides developmental positions that help employees progress and build their knowledge. Employees could enhance their knowledge, may enjoy being trained on job duties independent of their own, and could gain skills that may be useful to them in their current position. The findings confirmed factors that influence an employee’s level of job satisfaction and employee turnover. The factors of job satisfaction that were presented in the literature supported the experiences and descriptions of job satisfaction that the Social Security employees provided in the interviews.

Throughout the interviews, employees identified the following actions that managers could take to improve job satisfaction:

- Ask employees about the things that motivate them.
- Reduce stress by taking pressure off employees to meet goals.
- Maintain a learning, supportive, and positive work environment.
- Continue to provide employee developmental opportunities.

- Get workload assistance from an office in the area if feasible, due to increased workloads.
- Do not offer overtime as often.
- Do not micromanage employees.
- Communicate with employees often regarding office changes.

Many of these actions on the list are well-known recommendations that have been identified throughout the literature on job satisfaction. These issues exist almost universally across industries and professional disciplines. One area where the management of Social Security appears to have a significant impact in improving job satisfaction is the job enrichment program. These programs benefit both the employee and the organization because employees are offered the opportunity to grow professionally while the organization benefits from the enhanced skills of the employees.

Limitations of the Study

This research study had two limitations. One limitation was that the research study involved 20 employees from three offices out of the 1,500 Social Security offices in the United States. This study included only .03% of the entire Social Security employee population, which is a small percentage of employees. Another limitation of the study was the degree of subjectivity. In qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument who collects and interprets the data, leading to researcher bias. I acknowledged my biases by making note of them and engaged in epoché where I put aside my experiences and perceptions and focused on the participant's point of view.

After the I transcribed the data, I allowed the participants to review the transcripts. By allowing the participants to review the transcripts, I ensured that the information was accurate.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study involved less than 1% of the entire SSA employee population in one geographical location. There may be differences in employee attitudes toward job satisfaction across different regions. Geographical location may play a role in an employee's level of job satisfaction because employees who live in a rural area may have fewer resources than employees who live in urban areas, which may affect their job satisfaction level (Faubion, Palmer, & Andrew, 2001). In addition, employees in rural areas may have lower educational levels, which could influence the level of job satisfaction (Faubion et al., 2001). A quantitative survey comparing job satisfaction based off the dynamics identified in this study could determine if the regional differences play a significant role.

Each Social Security office has different internal dynamics to include staffing. Some offices are staffed with 15 employees and some offices are staffed with 60 employees. The offices that have a small number of employees normally exist in rural areas, whereas the offices with a higher number of employees normally exist near larger cities. A future study could do a comparison between different offices to see how the lived experiences of job satisfaction differ between rural and urban office. A comparison would further contribute to the body of knowledge in the management field. Another recommendation for further research would be to explore how the level of job satisfaction is influenced by the socioeconomic environment surrounding different Social Security offices. Future job satisfaction studies that included differences between employees in affluent areas versus employees who live in economically depressed areas may also add to the management body of knowledge.

I created this research study on the basis of positive social change. Employee satisfaction and reduced turnover issues exist in all industries and disciplines even though the literature demonstrates that satisfied employees provide better customer service (Choi, 2009). Social Security offices are federally funded with the goal of providing superior service to the American public (Astrue, 2012). The findings of this study demonstrate that serving the public is a very powerful internal motivator associated with job satisfaction. Exploration of the dynamic relationship between service and job satisfaction in other industries could reveal how to capture the dynamic in the private sector as well.

Implications

Social Security employees who participated in this research study are satisfied overall with their positions. There are some aspects of their positions that they do not like, but they still want to work for Social Security. The participants are happy about their work environments, pay, benefits, developmental opportunities, relationships with management and coworkers, and making a difference in the lives of Americans who depend on Social Security for their livelihood. While public demands and increased workloads precipitate stress, this fact seems to be overridden by their desire to serve the public. They believe themselves to be fortunate to be engaged in meaningful work while they are able to make a good living for themselves and their families.

The participants identified several strategies that they believed would enhance employee retention. Their perceptions provided rich detail in regards to their lived experiences. Research studies pertaining to job satisfaction for individual federal government agencies existed, but limited research discusses the real-life experiences of Social Security Administration employees.

This research study has implications for management practice. Government management officials should have an improved understanding of the factors that influence job satisfaction in an intense work environment (Ertas, 2015). When management values their employees and place importance on the work aspects that keep people motivated and happy, the employees will commit to improving the organization. Employees want to be valued within their agencies and want to see that management supports them. If people see that management make a conscious effort to ensure their happiness, they may work harder and improve the performance of the organization.

The research study provided theoretical implications. Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Herzberg's theory of job satisfaction formed the basis of this research study. This study contributed to the management discipline because it revealed Social Security employee lived experiences and provided strategies that managers can use to keep employees satisfied. It is the manager's or supervisor's role to provide a work environment that is conducive to improving employee motivation. Their leadership capabilities affect the overall environment of the office.

Management officials can create ways of addressing an employee's intrinsic and extrinsic needs, which demonstrate Herzberg's theory (Pirani, 2013; Skemp-Arit & Toupence, 2007). Herzberg's two-factor theory describes motivator factors and hygiene or maintenance factors that influence an employee's job satisfaction (Pirani, 2013; Skemp-Arit & Toupence, 2007). The motivators or intrinsic needs are the internal needs such as personal achievement, recognition, and advancement. The hygiene factors or extrinsic needs are the external needs such as working atmosphere, colleagues, office policy, and relationships with management.

Capturing the dynamic between serving others identified in the public sector, such as the Social Security Administration, and creating opportunities that would transfer into the private sector could create significant positive social change on many levels. Not only could this improve the quality of customer service, but also create jobs where people can readily find avenues for self-actualization (Maslow, 2000). This could create a ripple effect into the very fabric of society, as customer service extends beyond the customer to how citizens treat each other.

Conclusion

The results of the study revealed that the employees are satisfied overall, but there are some aspects of the job that they do not like. The employees stated that developmental opportunities, pay and benefits, relationships with colleagues, and making a difference in the public's lives were reasons for them remaining employed with Social Security. They voiced that the stress from the demanding workloads and the volume of the work were things that they did not favor but are happy to be in a place where the environment is conducive to their development.

I was given an opportunity to explore the lived experiences of 20 Social Security employees in regards to job satisfaction and employee turnover. I hope that management personnel will take heed to the participant perspectives and create strategies that will increase staff retention activities. As Social Security maintains more qualified and satisfied employees, the agency can gain quality work, customer satisfaction, and increase organizational commitment.

Social Security was founded on deep values and principles. Social Security is a community-based and customer-driven agency. In many communities, the agency is the front door to the federal government, through which people walk when they are in need. The person to person interaction and conversation is the core of service delivery. The agency delivers critical benefits to the American public and supports them at points of transition and loss in their lives. Social Security is one of the largest government programs in the world, paying out approximately $60 billion dollars each year (Astrue, 2012).

The world is changing and the agency has to change to continue serving the public in a distinct manner. The way the agency serves and operates must keep up with the times. There are various challenges that the agency faces in the future: increased disability and retirement waves, an aging employee base, increased employee turnover rates, technology advancements, budget constraints, and increased customer expectations. This research study contributed to positive social change because the lived experiences revealed strategies that management can use to increase job satisfaction and decrease employee turnover, which may result in a happier American public.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. What is your outlook on your office culture?
2. How can the manager enhance your workplace atmosphere?
3. What are some items that will keep you motivated to remain employed with SSA long term?
4. What can SSA change to improve employee motivation and job satisfaction?
5. How has management played a role in your level of job satisfaction?
6. What are some actions managers can take to strengthen the employee-manager relationship?

Appendix B: LinkedIn and Facebook Participant Invitation

Dear Potential Participant:

I am a Ph.D. candidate in the Management program at Walden University. I am studying the lived experiences of Social Security employees with a focus on job satisfaction and employee turnover. By understanding the lived experiences, I may be able to determine some strategies to assist management with increasing job satisfaction and decreasing employee turnover. I would like to conduct interviews with people who are Social Security Administration employees to understand the lived experiences.

I would like participants from the eastern United States area offices office (claims specialists, customer service representatives, and rehired annuitants). The interview will take no more than 60 minutes in a location of your preference. After the interview, I will transcribe the interview and you will be able to review your responses for accuracy. Your participation in this study is voluntary and strictly confidential. The records of this study will be kept private and no one will have access to these records but me. Please respond by email (XXXXXXX.XXXX@waldenu.edu) or by calling me (XXX-XXX-XXXX) if you would like to participate in this study or would like to learn more about the study. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Lafaun Cain

Appendix C: Participant Demographic Form

NAME: ____

POSITION: ____

YEARS OF SSA EXPERIENCE: ____________________________

NOTES: ____