2018

Hotel Manager Strategies to Reduce Voluntary Employee Turnover

Christl Arwen Kroeten
Walden University

Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Christl A. Kroeten

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Review Committee
Dr. Mary Weber, Committee Chairperson, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Jamiel Vadell, Committee Member, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Peter Anthony, University Reviewer, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
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Abstract

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Christl A. Kroeten

MS, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 2011

BA, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 2005

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

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July 2018

Abstract

The voluntary turnover rate in the United States hotel industry is among the highest of all industries, resulting in lost revenue. The purpose of this multiple case study was to explore strategies hotel managers use to reduce voluntary employee turnover. The targeted population consisted of 6 managers from hotel businesses operating in the MidAtlantic region of the United States who successfully used strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover. Job embeddedness theory, this study's theoretical framework, was used to describe reasons employees remained in organizations. Data were gathered via semistructured interviews, observational notes, and public business records regarding turnover or retention programs. Yin's 5-step analysis model was used to compile, deconstruct, reassemble, interpret, and draw conclusions from the data. Four themes emerged from data analysis: organizational support with property-level flexibility, feeling valued for individual contributions to the team, opportunities for training or advancement, and relationships with managers and peers. The results of this study may contribute to positive social change by providing strategies to reduce employee turnover in a historically low-wage industry, which may result in raising the quality of life for hotel employees, their families, and communities.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this study to my family. To my parents for paving the way and setting the doctoral standard. To my husband, Robert Carey for his untiring support and creative motivation. Further, to my children Hunter and Morgan for keeping me grounded in real-life when I could have gotten lost in literature and business analysis. I cannot thank you enough. You continue to allow me to be the professional I truly want to be.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my Chair, Dr. Mary Weber, for keeping me focused on the clear, concise, precise goal of a completed scholarly work, for slowing me down when I wanted to run, and for encouraging me to run when all I wanted was a nap. I also want to thank Dr. Jamiel Vadell and Dr. Peter Anthony for their timely reviews and staying on my committee through this arduous process. Special thanks also go to Rod Faulk and Arthur Leak for affording me the opportunity to apply my learning in their organizations, mostly for the better. Thanks to Todd Heuser and Kristopher King for cheering me through to the end. And thanks to Stephanie Kazmierczak for her unwavering support and flexibility over many months and many miles.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Globally, employee turnover costs businesses billions of dollars each year

(Guilding, Lamminmaki, & McManus, 2014; McManus & Mosca, 2015). The cost of

replacing an employee can be more than double the position salary (Dusek, Rupel,

Yurova, & Clarke, 2014; Omar & Ahmad, 2014). The costs of employee turnover are not

limited to replacement. Lost productivity, lower morale, and burnout for remaining

employees can be significant detriments for businesses (Lu & Gursoy, 2016; Moradi,

Maghaminejad, & Azizi-Fini, 2014).

The global hospitality industry has suffered from high turnover rates. Specifically,

in the United States, turnover rates in hospitality businesses are double all other industries

(Dusek et al., 2014). Despite the alarming rates of turnover in the hospitality industry,

there is limited scholarly evidence of business leader application of academic

recommendations to reduce voluntary turnover (Deery & Jago, 2015). Exploring the

current business strategies used to reduce employee turnover within different sectors of

the hospitality industry may provide ideas for improving business practice.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2017) refers to the hospitality industry as a

super-sector that includes different service-oriented industries, specifically the

accommodation and food services industry, and the arts, entertainment, and recreation

industry. Researchers who study the larger hospitality industry have included restaurants,

lodging facilities, amusement parks, travel agencies and booking services, as well as

airline services (Bakir, Wickens, Boluk, & Avgeli, 2017; Park, Kim, & Lee, 2017).

Approaches to reducing turnover in any of these sub-sectors may be specific to the

employee demographic, geographic region, or position-specific requirements. By exploring aspects of the larger hospitality industry by looking at specific sub-sectors, I sought to provide insight regarding specific ways business managers are working to reduce turnover.

Background of the Problem

Business managers are concerned about high voluntary employee turnover because of the high costs of replacing employees and the loss of revenue from being understaffed (Duffield, Roche, Homer, Buchan, & Dimitrelis, 2014; Guilding et al., 2014; Wallis & Kennedy, 2013). While employee turnover causes issues for all businesses, voluntary turnover in the hospitality industry is a significant concern. Hiring and retaining individuals who are top performers can be difficult in any industry, but is particularly difficult for hotels where compensation is often minimum wage and weekly pay is among the lowest of all industries (Awang, Amir, Osman, & Mara, 2013; U.S. Census Bureau, 2016).

The ability to retain top employees is essential for hotels that rely on consistently excellent customer service to maintain competitive advantage (Oladapo, 2014). Several factors may influence voluntary turnover for talented employees including job satisfaction, embeddedness, social and family relationships, and engagement. Of particular importance for hotel managers are the factors related to reasons employees choose to leave such as development opportunities, compensation, and benefits packages (Saeed, Waseem, Sikander, & Rizwan, 2014). In this study, I explored the current business practices hotel managers use to reduce voluntary employee turnover to gather

data that other industry leaders may use to reduce the costs of turnover and help hotels improve profitability.

Problem Statement

The voluntary turnover rate in the U.S. hotel industry is among the highest of all industries, resulting in lost revenue (Karatepe, 2014; Lu, Lu, Gursoy, & Neale, 2016; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017). Employee turnover in hotels accounts for 60-80% of human resource budgets and up to $3000 per lost employee (Guilding et al., 2014). The general business problem is hotels lose substantial profits from the direct and indirect costs of voluntary employee turnover. The specific business problem is some hotel managers lack strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies hotel managers use to reduce voluntary employee turnover. The targeted population consisted of six managers from hotel businesses operating in the MidAtlantic region of the United States who have successfully used strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover. The results of this study may contribute to positive social change by providing strategies to reduce employee turnover in a historically low-wage industry, which may result in raising the quality of life for hotel employees, their families, and communities.

Nature of the Study

I selected the qualitative method for this study. Researchers use the qualitative method to record and explore human experience and leadership strategies using interviews and observations to present findings (Opsal et al., 2015; Uluyol & Akci, 2014;

Venkatesh, Brown, & Sullivan, 2016). The qualitative method was the most appropriate for this exploration of the strategies hotel managers used to reduce voluntary employee turnover. In contrast, researchers use the quantitative method for counting, comparing, and examining relationships, which was inappropriate for this study (Kose, Argan, & Cimen, 2015). The mixed method is appropriate for problem-solving only when both qualitative and quantitative data are available, therefore a mixed method was not appropriate for this study (Venkatesh et al., 2016).

I selected a case study design for the study. A case study is an in-depth empirical exploration of a current phenomenon within a real-world context bounded by a unit of analysis, generally time (Yin, 2014). Types of case study approaches include single or multiple, with three types of reporting structures: exploratory, explanatory, or descriptive (Yin, 2014). Researchers using multiple case studies describe the *how* and *why* of the phenomenon through multiple perspectives from two or more cases or businesses, resulting in themes with industry-wide generalizability (Tsang, 2013; Yin, 2014). Researchers use single case study design to provide depth of insight into a phenomenon occurring within a single firm, sometimes resulting in observations with limited generalizability to the larger industry (Singh, 2014; Yin, 2014). Therefore, a qualitative, multiple case study was most appropriate to address the research question. The phenomenological design is a thick, rich description of a single phenomenon based on participant reflection resulting in descriptions of lived experiences (Buser, Pitchko, & Buser, 2014; Moustakas, 1994). Because I specifically explored a social or business phenomenon, the results of phenomenology would not adequately address the research

question. Researchers who use narrative studies focus on a specific event or human experience and provide rich, detailed descriptions of the phenomenon (Letourneau, 2015; Smit, 2017). The narrative design was inappropriate for this study because this the current business practices I explored include multiple strategies rather than a single event or experience. Researchers use an ethnographic design to look at shared cultures and behavior patterns of an individual cultural subset, which was not the focus of this study (Templeton, 2016). In this study, I explored current actions across a population with multiple business perspectives, indicating a qualitative, multiple case study as the most appropriate method and design. Business researchers exploring current business practices tend not to use grounded theory research because grounded theory is used to develop new theories or conceptual models, which was not the intent of this research (Johnson, 2015; Khan, 2014; Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Research Question

The main research question for this study was: What strategies do hotel managers use to reduce voluntary employee turnover?

Interview Questions

I used the following interview questions in semistructured interviews with participant hotel managers.

1. What strategies have you used to reduce voluntary employee turnover?

2. What strategies have been the most effective strategies to reduce employee turnover?

3. What strategies have been the least effective strategies to reduce employee turnover?

4. In what ways have you modified strategies to reduce employee turnover to improve the strategy's effectiveness?

5. What additional information can you share regarding your strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover?

Conceptual Framework

I used job embeddedness theory as the conceptual framework for this study. Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablynski, and Erez (2001) introduced this theory to describe reasons employees remained in organizations. The premise of job embeddedness theory is that employees become embedded in their environments and tend to remain in organizations for complex reasons with multiple interrelated factors both in and outside their workplace (Mitchell et al., 2001). The three key tenets of job embeddedness theory are links, fit, and sacrifice (Mitchell et al., 2001). Mitchell et al. (2001) described links as the interconnected web of social, financial, and interpersonal interactions within a person's physical environment and community. Links refer to both formal and informal connections among employees and with the organization, such as formal supervisor-employee relationships or informal peer relationships (Allen, Peltokorpi, & Rubenstein, 2016; Mitchell et al., 2001). Fit refers to the compatibility or comfort level the employee perceives in the organization with relation to the alignment of personal values, goals, and plans (Mitchell et al., 2001). Sacrifice refers to the employee's perception of the benefits lost by leaving an organization (Mitchell et al., 2001). I chose job embeddedness theory

to serve as a foundation to understand hotel managers' strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover because previous researchers have found that job embeddedness theory provides a clearer, more consistent explanation of the reasons hotel employees choose to remain or leave organizations than other frameworks (Allen, Peltokorpi, & Rubenstein, 2016; Borah & Malakar, 2015; Karatepe, 2014; Karatepe, 2016).

Operational Definitions

Employee engagement: The extent employees feel excitement or passion about their position, display extra effort in their work products, and exhibit organizational commitment (Saks & Gruman, 2014).

Hospitality industry: A super-sector consisting of the arts, entertainment, and recreation industry, and the accommodation and food services industry (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017).

Job embeddedness: The degree of employee ties to an organization or position with varying strengths of links to other personnel, perception of compatibility or fit within the organization, and a weight of the perceived cost of leaving the job (Mitchell et al., 2001)

Organizational commitment: The varying levels of psychological attachment or alignment of employees to the organization's goals and values (Ahluwalia & Preet, 2017).

Turnover intent: Thoughts or plans of the employee to leave the current employer or organization regardless of whether the employee acts upon the intent (Nelissen, Forrier, & Verbruggen, 2017).

Voluntary employee turnover: The employee's act of leaving his or her current employment by choice (Nelissen et al., 2017).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are concepts or conditions a researcher considers true despite a lack of empirical evidence supporting the belief (Pasztor, 2014). Careful examination of assumptions and their effect on analysis and decision-making enables mitigation of potential biases and provides insight into the structure of studies (Grant, 2014). My first assumption was that hotel managers in the MidAtlantic region of the United States have a way of recognizing voluntary turnover as distinct from other types of turnover. The second assumption was that hotel managers involve themselves in the process of selecting and implementing strategies to reduce turnover. The third assumption was that participants were truthful in their responses to interview questions. My final assumption was that decreases in voluntary turnover may result in improved organizational performance for hotels.

Limitations

Limitations are factors outside the researcher's control that affect the scope or applicability of a study (Simon & Goes, 2013). This study's sample may not fully represent the strategies used across all hotels in the United States. The hotel industry, as with the larger hospitality industry, varies regionally for both employee and customer characteristics. By using a multiple case study approach and interviewing hotel managers

across the MidAtlantic region of the United States, I worked to partially mitigate the generalizability concern (see Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Delimitations

Delimitations are decisions made by the researcher to maintain a feasible scope of research (Simon & Goes, 2013). To comply with ethical considerations, I required participants to be over age 18 and legal residents of the United States. The first delimitation was the number of participants. I chose six participants because data saturation should be reached with a sample of fewer than ten participants and potentially as few as two (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013; Robinson, 2014). To ensure that I, as a single researcher, could complete the study in a feasible timeframe, the number of participants had to be a delimitation. The second delimitation was the number of hotels. I did not set a minimum number of hotels from which to sample participants because quality of responses may come from managers from only a few hotels. The third delimtiation was the time in business for both the hotel and the manager. I did not set a minimum time in business to ensure I captured emergent strategies from personnel who might not be fully entrenched in industry-accepted standard behaviors. New ideas from new managers might provide insight into ways the industry can benefit. The fourth delimitation was that I chose to focus only on independent and chain hotels with under 399 rooms that cater to business travelers and airports. The fifth delimitation was the scope and geographic boundary of hotels operating in the MidAtlantic region of the United States, to which I am in physical proximity. Home to an international airport and a

hub of tourism for the region with hundreds of hotels, I reached data saturation within the geographic limitation.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

This study contributes to business practice by presenting successful strategies used by hotel managers to reduce employee voluntary turnover. Hotel managers may use the results of this study to find ways to reduce voluntary turnover, resulting in improved productivity and higher customer satisfaction (Afsar & Badir, 2016; Burton, 2015). The results presented through job embeddedness theory may provide insight into strategies to increase employee job embeddedness, which may increase job satisfaction, improve service quality, and maintain revenue through employee retention (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017; Inabinett & Ballaro, 2014). Over time, business managers and human resource professionals may use the results of this study to find ways to leverage job embeddedness to improve or maintain retention by implementing (a) employee support programs to increase links within the organization, or (b) training and development programs aimed at improving levels of perceived fit for employees.

Implications for Social Change

The results of this study may support social change through recognition and development of the social relationships hotel employees' value. Relationships, both in and outside of the workplace, are extremely important to hotel employees and significantly influence voluntary turnover (Allen et al., 2016; Ellingson, Tews, & Dachner, 2016; Karatepe, 2016). Strategies focusing on relationship building may extend

beyond the workplace, improving social relationships between employees and their families, friends, and communities. Implementation of strategies to reduce voluntary turnover may also improve working conditions, resulting in more stable economic conditions for employees and their families.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

I organized this literature review into three major areas: job embeddedness, turnover, and management application. The study reflects my exploration of the ways hotel managers reduce voluntary turnover through the lens of job embeddedness theory. The job embeddedness section provides an in-depth review of job embeddedness theory and constructs, embeddedness and turnover, and contrasting theoretical perspectives. The turnover section includes a discussion of types of turnover and the impact of voluntary turnover and turnover in the hotel and larger hospitality industry. The management application section includes recommendations for action from the literature as potential themes.

When gathering review materials, I searched for keywords and phrases in multiple search engines and academic databases to ensure an exhaustive search for studies related to concepts explored in this study. Initial searches including keywords and phrases such as *turnover*, *voluntary turnover*, *job embeddedness*, *employee engagement*, *hotels*, and *hospitality industry* provided rich descriptions from phenomenological and narrative studies of the experiences of hospitality managers, generalized best practices for reducing turnover across industries, embeddedness, and human resources concerns. Specifically, I focused on studies exploring current business practices published in educational,

business, and medical journals. The multidisciplinary searches revealed methodologies most appropriate for capturing current business practices, key analysis considerations, and presentation options. Furthermore, the literature review brought to light multiple conceptual or theoretical frameworks researchers used in previous studies. Despite the volumes of research exploring job satisfaction and employee engagement, job embeddedness theory was among the most recent theories developed and provided not only an objective approach, but also a comprehensive approach to the topic that enabled me to focus on business implementation (see Oyler, 2014).

The literature I have presented focused on the possible effects of hotel management strategies on voluntary employee turnover. I assembled this archive to find common themes and indications of a specific practice, business culture, or communication method that evidenced lower voluntary turnover. I also sought common strategies leaders used across industries to reduce turnover to show wider application trends. Additional focus was on finding peer-reviewed sources to maintain scholarly credibility. Concentrating on current practices and concerns, I limited the search to scholarly articles published within five years of the anticipated completion date of this study. The following literature review was composed of 79 journal article or government report references, of which 74 were peer-reviewed (93.7%) and 68 of which published within the last five years (86.1%). I did not reference any non-peer reviewed journal articles or dissertations (see Table 1).

Table 1

Literature Review Reference Breakout

Reference source	> 5 years	< 5 years	% Total references	% <5 years
Peer-reviewed journal articles	8	66	93.7%	83.5%
Books	3	0	3.8%	0%
Government reports	0	2	2.6%	100%
Totals	11	68	100%	86.1%

Job Embeddedness

The conceptual framework for this study was job embeddedness theory. Mitchell et al. (2001) introduced the theory as a means to describe the complex interactions involving turnover, turnover intent, and intent to stay. Previous studies of other constructs, such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction, or leadership styles, did not adequately capture the depth of reasons why employees remain in or leave positions (Karatepe, 2014). Theories focusing only on job satisfaction in relation to turnover fail to explain why employees who are dissatisfied with their jobs choose to remain in organizations, while employees who are very satisfied with their jobs will choose to leave (Oyler, 2014). Other researchers used organizational commitment or transformational leadership as a base for studying turnover in industry. Elements of organizational commitment include affective commitment, or the employee's attachment to the organization, but the scope of organizational commitment is still limited to interactions within the organization (Peachey, Burton, & Wells, 2014). Although job embeddedness is

a relatively new theory, several researchers have shown it to be a better predictor of attendance, retention, and performance than previous constructs such as job satisfaction or organizational commitment (Charlier, Guay, & Zimmerman, 2016). Exploring turnover through the lens of a theory that focuses on the competing factors influencing employee decisions provided a broader scope of potential themes applicable to current business practices.

The main concept of job embeddedness theory is that employees weigh multiple interconnected reasons when deciding whether to leave or stay with their current employer. Job embeddedness theory uses three primary factors: links, fit, and sacrifice (Mitchell et al., 2001). Each of these factors associates with both the community and the employing organization, resulting in six potential relational considerations (Reitz & Anderson, 2011). The interplay of interpersonal relationships among families, supervisors, and peers heavily influence job embeddedness and subsequently intent to stay with the organization (Karatepe, 2016; Mitchell et al., 2001). The employee's perspective forms the base of job embeddedness, subsequently including not only the factors in the work environment, but also social and family influences (Charlier et al., 2016). While external factors may affect job embeddedness, it is essentially an internal function of the employee.

Links. In job embeddedness theory, links refer to the formal and informal ties employees have to the organization and the larger community (Allen et al., 2016). The more links an employee has within the business and community, the higher the level of job embeddedness (Allen et al., 2016; Karatepe, 2016; Mitchell et al., 2001). Employees

who are a part of several teams or groups in their organizations or have family members who live and are active in the community have higher levels of both organizational and social links (Burton, 2015).

Links among personnel have varying strengths and importance in both business and social environments. Employees may find the relational link with their supervisors to be of higher importance, which consequently may have a greater influence on intent to stay than lower-strength links with other coworkers (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2017). If peer links form a stronger social network than the relationship with the supervisor or management team, employees may still develop high levels of job embeddedness from a desire to remain in the social community (Allen et al., 2016; Burton, 2015). Social and family links directly relate to the work environment. Specifically, coworker and family support directly influence the job embeddedness of hotel employees (Karatepe, 2016). Job-related stressors impact the desire for excellent performance in both work and personal relationships, resulting in overall poor-quality service and relationship links (McPhail, Patair, Herington, Creed, & Davidson, 2015). High-quality exchanges both in and outside of the workplace are the greatest contributors to the links portion of job embeddedness (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2017). In relation to this study, the ways managers recognize the balance between social and work links and the managerial actions based on that recognition may provide insight into ways to reduce voluntary turnover.

Links, as an aspect of job embeddedness, are of particular importance in the hotel industry. Personal support relationships are highly significant for hotel employees and influence retention despite low wages, unstable living conditions, and high personal and

family stress (Ellingson et al., 2016; U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). Relationships both in

and outside of work directly affect intent to remain in hotel jobs (Allen et al., 2016;

Ellingson et al., 2016). Relationships may be important to hotel employees because of

their general age demographics. Peer relationships both in and outside of work are very

important to younger employees (Ellingson et al., 2016; Karatepe, 2016). Qazi, Khalid,

and Shafique (2015) found relationships with coworkers were highly influential for

predicting turnover, but also found over 70% of their sample were under age 30. For my

study, the population age demographic shows 60% of hotel employees in the geographic

population area are under the age of 35 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). While these figures

may indicate limited generalizability across different industries, their applicability in the

global hospitality industry and in the more specified hotel industry is evident.

Fit. Employee fit is the compatibility or comfort level the employee has regarding

the alignment of organizational goals and personal values (Mitchell et al., 2001).

Employees want to work in organizations where leaders encourage employees to grow

and learn new skills, increasing both job embeddedness and positive fit in the

organization (Wallis & Kennedy, 2013). When employees perceive that the employer

values their interests and the goals of the organization align with their beliefs, positive

attitudes about the organization, job satisfaction, and job embeddedness increase

(Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017). In essence, employees tend to remain in organizations where

they feel they are a meaningful and valued member of a team.

Fit is influenced by perception of support and alignment as much as, if not more

than, managerial actions. Kalidass and Bahron (2015) found significant relationships

between perception of supervisor support and perceived organizational support with both

commitment and turnover intention. Akgunduz and Sanli (2017) found that when

employees perceived organizational support (indicating increased levels of job-fit),

turnover intent decreased. While the perception of organizational support may increase

job embeddedness, management advocacy actions in support of employee interests did

not have a significant effect on turnover intent (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017). The feeling of

support or alignment with organizational goals and vision may be more influential than

actions showing support.

In aligning hotel employees with appropriate positions, managers who look for

ways to leverage organizational fit can find ways to maximize assignments. Inabinett and

Ballaro (2014) explored the ways aligning organizational goals with employee values

affected both employees and customers. They found that managers who fit individual

employees to job duties based on employee values and talents benefited from increased

employee job satisfaction, lower turnover, and reduced human resources costs (Inabinett

& Ballaro, 2014). Likewise, Santhanam, Kamalanabhan, Dyaram, and Ziegler (2015)

found that identification with the organization and alignment of goals with employee

values resulted in higher performance, lower turnover, and higher job embeddedness.

Understanding the ways employees align with organizational goals can provide

businesses with competitive advantage.

Sacrifice. In job embeddedness, sacrifice is the loss employees expect to

experience by leaving their current organization. Examples of sacrifice include

organizational status, pay, or benefits. In determining whether to leave or stay, employees

weigh the potential sacrifice departing the current organization might bring (Mitchell et al., 2001). The employee's decision to leave or stay is greatly dependent on their perception of other opportunities, how easy it would be to obtain the new position, and what benefits would be sacrificed to move to the new job (Long, Ajafbe, & Kowang, 2014). Many hotel employees stay with their employers because of concerns about the costs of finding alternate employment (Dusek et al., 2014). What the employee may gain in pay or varied working hours may not outweigh current positional advantages or work relationships with the current employer.

In the hotel industry, weighing the costs against potential benefits of alternate employment are of great importance. Individual factors influencing degree of sacrifice include wages, limited prospects for internal advancement, and respect from supervisors and other employees (Awang et al., 2013). Depending upon the local or regional market, there may not be many options for low-skilled workers.

Several factors influence employees' perceptions of sacrifice, both in and outside of the business. In many cases, leadership plays a key role in determining levels of sacrifice (Awang et al., 2013; Erkutlu & Chafra, 2017; Long et al., 2014). Erkutlu and Chafra (2017) found employees in organizations with authentic leadership develop increased levels of psychological ownership and greater levels of job embeddedness. The idea of employee psychological ownership of part of the organization indicates that feelings of loss will be greater for embedded employees if they choose to leave the organization (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2017). These findings further show employee perception

of leadership behaviors influence the way employees determine degrees of sacrifice in job embeddedness.

Job embeddedness and turnover. Many researchers have explored the relationship between the elements of job embeddedness and turnover. Job embeddedness and turnover have a significant negative relationship (Akgunuz & Sanli, 2017; Borah & Malakar, 2015; Burton, 2015). Employees with high levels of job embeddedness are more likely to stay in organizations (Karatepe, 2014). Embedded employees have many links and relationships, find alignment with organizational goals, and do not perceive a potential sacrifice of leaving to be worth turnover (Allen et al., 2016). Because the elements of job embeddedness theory include both organizational and outside social influences, this lens is particularly relevant to reasons hotel employees choose to stay or quit their jobs (Mitchell et al., 2001). Allen et al. (2016) and Karatepe (2016) found job embeddedness, specifically for hotel employees, explains the importance of social linkages from coworker and family support and, despite toxic leadership environments, job embeddedness moderated voluntary turnover. Managers may explore strategies to increase job embeddedness as a means to reduce turnover and improve productivity in their businesses.

Job embeddedness has specific benefits for both employees and managers. Employees with high job embeddedness also have higher performance and have greater job satisfaction (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017). Employee job embeddedness results in significant benefits for employers including job satisfaction, customer satisfaction, decreased turnover and higher productivity (Afsar & Badir, 2016; Burton, 2015).

Inabinett and Ballaro (2014) found employee job satisfaction directly affected customer care and quality of service. The positive effects of highly embedded employees may provide competitive advantage for businesses.

In addition to the positive effects of job embeddedness as it relates to turnover, there are some drawbacks. Burton (2015) explored the relationship between job embeddedness and workplace bullying. When an employee determines the sacrifice of leaving the job is too detrimental for financial reasons, or if the employee fears the consequences of reporting bullying, an employee may choose to remain in a toxic environment (Burton, 2015). Allen et al. (2016) found employees would remain in an organization if their links to coworkers and social networks support the job, even if they have a very negative relationship with their supervisor. With strong links and the perception of high levels of sacrifice with leaving, employees may perceive being stuck in their jobs.

High levels of job embeddedness may lead employees to feel trapped in their positions resulting in negative behaviors. Marasi, Cox and Bennett (2016) found job embeddedness significantly moderates the relationship between organizational trust and deviant workplace behavior. Employees with low levels of organizational trust, but high levels of job embeddedness were more likely to engage in workplace deviance than employees with low embeddedness (Marasi et al., 2016). This situation could be due in part to feelings of being stuck or unable to leave the organization for multiple reasons (Allen et al., 2016; Marasi et al., 2016). Organizations face both direct and indirect costs as a result of negative actions of highly embedded employees.

High levels of job embeddedness may also lead to employee burnout. Highly embedded employees feel greater ties to the organization and may choose to work more or longer hours owing to a sense of dedication (Tziner, Rabenu, Radomski, & Belkin, 2015). Moradi et al. (2014) found as employees experienced burnout, work proficiency, safety concerns and quality of service decreased resulting in customer complaints and loss of revenue. Gabel, Shenueli, Dolan, Suarez Ceretti and Nunez del Prado (2015) found some aspects of job embeddedness mediated effects of burnout and eventual turnover. Despite the many benefits of job embeddedness, managers must monitor their employees to ensure healthy expressions of embeddedness.

Contrasting theories. Job embeddedness theory focuses on the employee's intent to remain with the organization, suggesting alternate conceptual frameworks might be more appropriate for an exploration of turnover within organizations (Reitz & Anderson, 2011). The purpose of this study was to explore strategies hotel managers use to reduce voluntary turnover, making an exploration of the reasons employees choose to leave or remain more informative than a general exploration of turnover itself. In this way, job embeddedness as a conceptual framework was inclusive of more constructs and more appropriate for this study. Previous researchers have explored voluntary turnover, turnover as a general construct, and the hotel industry through varied conceptual lenses.

Herzberg two-factor theory. Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation and hygiene describes employee motivation to work based on positive and negative attitudes associated with job satisfaction and job performance (Herzberg, 1974; Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959). Employee attitudes are influenced by intrinsic or internal

focused factors (motivation) and extrinsic or external factors (hygiene) which subsequently affect job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). Motivators, such as achievement, recognition, and progression, result in job satisfaction while hygiene factors, such as pay, interpersonal relationships and work conditions, cause levels of dissatisfaction (Asegid, Belachew, & Yimam, 2014). Of note, job satisfaction is not the opposite of job dissatisfaction; these constructs are discrete and can occur at the same time and directly affect turnover (Soodmand Afshar & Doosti, 2016).

Similar to job embeddedness, business managers have the ability to influence or manipulate hygiene factors by affecting change in the organizational environment. According to Herzberg (1974), employers should manage hygiene factors by ensuring employees receive adequate pay, have safe work environments and the opportunity to form positive interpersonal relationships with supervisors and peers. Ensuring the sufficiency of hygiene factors should reduce employee dissatisfaction and result in lower turnover (Derby-Davis, 2014). Encouraging reward programs and providing opportunities for employee achievement can enhance employee motivation factors, again potentially resulting in lower turnover (Barrick, Thurgood, Smith, & Courtright, 2015). Swaying the balance of motivation and hygiene factors to result in higher job satisfaction and lower job dissatisfaction may result in employees preferring to remain in their positions. Employers may not always have the resources to support programs, and leadership support may not extend to all low-skill, low-wage employees (Karatepe, 2014; Winkler, Busch, Clasen & owinkel, 2015).

In relation to turnover, Herzberg's theories are highly appropriate when considering the reasons employees choose to leave organizations. Exploring turnover using motivation and hygiene focuses only on the work environment and fails to address competing factors from family or community, which may also influence job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Additionally, Dusek et al. (2014) and Lu et al. (2016) found job satisfaction or dissatisfaction alone did not explain turnover intent in the hotel industry. Using job embeddedness as a conceptual lens includes the factors of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction while also taking into consideration influences outside of the workplace.

*Transformational leadership theory***.** Supporting job embeddedness theory and providing an alternative framework, transformational leadership is a perspective of leaders motivating followers toward a goal through inspirational behaviors. Developed in 1978 by James McGregor Burns, extended in 1985 by Bass and expounded by several other researchers, transformational leadership theory is among the prevailing foundational leadership theories in academia (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Caillier, 2014; Paladan, 2015). The premise of transformational leadership is the ability of leaders to inspire followers to change motivations, expectations, and behaviors toward a common goal by leveraging four constructs: individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation and idealized influence. Additionally, several researchers found transformational leadership to be highly applicable to studying organizational phenomena, such as turnover and change (Gyensare, Anku-Tsede, Sanda, & Okpoti, 2016). Because of international acceptance and broad applicability, transformational

leadership is among the most common theoretical lenses for studying organizational

change (Caillier, 2014; Holten & Brenner, 2015).

Researchers could use transformational leadership theory to explore ways

managers reduce voluntary turnover. Some researchers described ways in which

transformational leadership brings positive organizational change (Holten & Brenner,

2015; Shin, Seo, Shapiro, & Taylor, 2015). Waldman, Carter, and Hom (2015) examined

96 work groups in China and found the managerial use of transformational leadership

behaviors directly and significantly assisted in reducing employee turnover. The

inspirational nature of transformational leadership interactions results in changes in

employee motivations, a more positive organizational environment, and subsequently

reduced turnover. Transformational leadership behaviors have a positive effect on both

productivity and employee organizational commitment with links to reduced turnover

(Breevaart et al., 2014, Lu et al., 2016).

Transformational leadership in business application explores the aspects of the

leader or manager. While some researchers report the effects of transformational

leadership as important in mitigating turnover intent, the leadership theory itself does not

explore mediating or moderating factors influencing turnover (Peachey et al., 2014). To

understand voluntary turnover as a decision and action on the part of the employee,

which manager actions cannot always sway, transformational leadership falls short as a

single theoretical framework. Transformational leaders inspire and support followers and

help find opportunities to develop or utilize strengths (Liu, Jing, & Gao, 2015; Shin et al.,

2015), but remains focused on manager or supervisor actions rather than employee

responses. Job embeddedness theory focuses on the followership aspects and actions of voluntary turnover while including the potential effects of transformational leadership behaviors through links and fit. The relationship between transformational leadership behaviors and organizational aspects, such as job satisfaction and commitment, supports job embeddedness as a framework for exploring voluntary turnover.

Eight forces framework of attachment theory. Theoretical frameworks specifically developed to examine voluntary turnover might seem a more appropriate conceptual framework for a study of the strategies used to reduce voluntary turnover. For example, Maertz and Griffeth (2004) proposed the eight forces framework of attachment and voluntary turnover to explain why managers face difficulty in managing voluntary turnover. The researchers developed a framework to capture theoretical deficiencies in understanding turnover addressing three main areas: lack of comprehensive predictive models, overlap of turnover predictors with other concepts, and insufficient frameworks for leadership application in influencing turnover (Maertz et al., 2012). Incorporating multiple variables and perspectives both internal and external to work, Maertz and Griffeth's (2004) framework includes the tenets of job embeddedness theory while expanding to include motivational processes. Despite the development of the separate framework, Maertz and Griffeth (2004) identified potential gaps in turnover research with unexplained behaviors and results and subsequently called for a more comprehensive theoretical approach to include related variables. Maertz et al. (2012) revised their motivational forces to nine categorical reasons why employees choose to stay or leave employment.

Despite the depth of explanative elements in the forces framework, I chose to use job embeddedness theory because of the emphasis on current practices within business. The forces framework would be appropriate to explore the retention motivations of current or recent employees. Motivational forces internal to employees would not necessarily shed light into the leadership behaviors managers use to affect employee motivations (Maertz et al., 2012). For example, Peachey et al. (2014) found their hypothesized relationship between organizational commitment and turnover was not supported, possibly because of the influence of commitment relationships outside of work. Results of studies using the forces framework and the subsequent recommendations for application in business return to common themes found in job embeddedness studies, providing very little additional insight (Kim, 2015; Maertz, Griffeth, Campbell, & Allen, 2007; Valero, Hirschi, & Strauss, 2015). Maertz and Griffeth's (2004) framework provides support for the use of job embeddedness theory as a conceptual lens for studying voluntary turnover.

Turnover

The U.S. Census Bureau (2016) and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2017) interactive tools and reports reveal specific differences in turnover rates among the hospitality sectors. As shown in Table 2, both the total and voluntary employee turnover rate for lodging and accommodation services for July 2017 was more than double the average rate for all other industries. (U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017; U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). When compared to the hospitality sister industry, arts, entertainment, and recreation, the difference in percentage of the workforce and disparate turnover rates

becomes clear. Additionally, the turnover rates in accommodation and food service are clearly disproportionate when compared to industries with the next highest turnover rates shown in Table 2. Additional research into the dynamics of the sectors and specific types of businesses within the larger hospitality industry is required to understand strategies to reduce voluntary turnover.

Table 2

Turnover Rates by Industry July 2017

	U.S. total	U.S. voluntary	Population geographic area	% of population geographic area employment
Accommodation and food service	5.9%	4.4%	16.3%	8%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	7.8%	2.3%	11.5%	1%
Retail trade	4.4%	2.9%	10.6%	15.5%
Professional and business services	5.3%	2.9%	7.6%	8%
Average for all industries	3.5%	2.1%	7.9%	100%

Turnover is a highly studied topic in business, with different types of turnover and separate internal actions of interest to business managers. Turnover, as an overarching term, refers to an employee departing the employ of a business (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). Turnover intent refers to the intention of an employee to leave the organization, which may or may not result in actual turnover (Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, 2017). Not all employee turnover is detrimental to businesses. Involuntary turnover is controlled by the company and includes termination and forced resignation (Awang et al., 2013). Other turnover such as retirements, injuries or illnesses which make employees unable to

continue working are factors business managers must take into consideration for human resource planning.

Voluntary turnover. Voluntary turnover is the employee's decision to leave the organization or to quit (Awang, et al., 2013; U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). Voluntary turnover does not refer to those employees forced to leave the business for non-performance, negative behaviors, or other disciplinary actions. Voluntary turnover refers to those employees who choose to quit. Often turnover intent precedes voluntary turnover and is when an employee thinks about quitting, makes an initial decision to quit and starts actively seeking new employment (Tastan, 2014). When employees choose to leave businesses, the organization suffers significant financial and intangible costs.

While not all employee turnover is negative, voluntary turnover specifically refers to those employees who would not otherwise leave the current business. Retaining quality, trained employees is vital to all organizations to maintain economic competitiveness (Oladapo, 2014). Maintaining employees and the tacit knowledge they have regarding best practices and efficiencies can directly benefit businesses (Islam, Hasan & Rahman, 2015). Managers looking to maximize employee capabilities may look for ways to reduce reasons employees choose to leave organizations.

Employees voluntarily depart businesses for many reasons. Some reasons why employees voluntarily leave include professional development opportunities, better compensation options and benefits (Saeed et al., 2014). Additional reasons for turnover include job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. A satisfied employee demonstrates greater commitment and leads to lower turnover (Selvarani & Chandra, 2015). Unclear

organizational goals or instructions decrease employee work motivations and increase job dissatisfaction while increasing turnover intent (Jung, 2014). Job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction are not opposite, they are discrete and can occur simultaneously and directly affect turnover intention (Soodmand Afshar & Doosti, 2016). Employees do not always choose to leave employment because of a lack of satisfaction with their jobs.

Other reasons for leaving include perceptions of work-life imbalance. An employee's work-wellbeing depends upon work stress and both the social and organizational setting (Chen, Brown, Bowers, & Chang, 2015). Negative work stressors, low job satisfaction, and out of balance work-wellbeing lead to voluntary turnover (Adriaenssens, De Gucht, & Maes, 2015; Tziner et al., 2015). Stressors from outside of the work environment include family, friends and community interactions and can influence an employee's intention to remain employed.

Impact of turnover. The different types of turnover affect businesses differently, but all come with a certain level of cost to the business. Employees voluntarily leaving employment negatively impacts organizations (Saeed et al., 2014; Stamp & Thoren, 2016). Employee turnover costs businesses billions of dollars each year (Guilding, et al., 2014; McManus & Mosca, 2015). Replacing employees can cost organizations double the position's annual salary (Dusek et al., 2014; Omar & Ahmad, 2014). Even though the cost to replace employees can exceed the anticipated annual salary, the greatest financial loss is the combination of intangible costs (Stamp & Thoren, 2016).

Staff turnover costs are not limited to human resource budgets. Turnover negatively affects remaining organizational resources through workload redistribution

(Duffield et al., 2014; Stamp & Thoren, 2016). The high cost of turnover is not just financial from training and replacement, but also the loss of knowledge, efficiency and employee morale (Dawson, Stasa, Roche, Homer, & Duffield, 2014; Stamp & Thoren, 2016). Examining multiple predictive factors and their relationship to turnover can be industry or company-specific (Gouviea, Milfont, & Guerra, 2014). Managers must take a holistic approach to examining turnover to mitigate potential voluntary turnover.

The loss to business from turnover can be readily visible to the customer base. Productivity decreases in organizations when top employees leave taking with them a wealth of tacit knowledge (Awang et al., 2013; Stamp & Thoren, 2016). Knowledge sharing and transfer are essential for business growth and maintaining excellent customer service (Bhatti & Zaheer, 2014). Customers benefit from effective knowledge sharing through improved practices and organizational efficiency (Islam et al., 2015). Turnover and lost knowledge reduce efficiency and overall organizational performance resulting in a loss of competitive edge (Alshanbri et al., 2015; Islam et al., 2015). Customers who notice reduced service or quality they receive from a business may choose to bring their business to competitors.

Turnover in hospitality. Hospitality is a general term used to describe a series of sectors or specific service industries focused on customer service. There are several descriptions of the sector industries included in the overarching hospitality industry including transportation, hotels, and other recreation (Bakir et al., 2017; Park et al., 2017). The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2017) defines the hospitality industry as a super-sector consisting of the arts, entertainment, and recreation industry and the

accommodation and food service industry. Focusing on the breakout of county level data,

Table 3 presents the labor statistics for the hospitality sector in the population geographic

area (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017; U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). Of note,

accommodations comprised mainly of hotels or lodging facilities, only comprises about

12% of the overarching hospitality industry by number of employees, but the turnover

rate is disproportionately high when compared to the other sectors. This disproportionate

level of turnover along with the costs associated with voluntary turnover was the main

impetus for this study.

Table 3

MidAtlantic region of the United States Employment and Turnover by Industry

Industry	Total Employees	% of Hospitality	2017 Turnover Rate
Accommodation	2,292	12.19%	12.3%
Food Service & Drinking Places	14,390	76.49%	15.7%
Art, Recreation & Entertainment	2132	11.32%	11.5%

Turnover in hotels. Turnover rates in the hotel industry are among the highest of

all industries (Dusek et al., 2014). Hotel managers struggle to retain talented staff who

provide excellent customer service due in part to the factors of the overarching hospitality

industry (Karatepe, 2016). Despite large numbers of employees and high demand, most

jobs in hotels are low-wage and require long or irregular hours (Ellingson et al., 2016;

U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). Lu et al. (2016) also found in the larger hospitality industry,

older employees are more likely to leave the organization than younger employees are,

departing from standard notions of turnover by age. Hotel employees also show turnover

intent differences with varying levels of education. Increased education levels result in

higher intent to leave the organization, but not necessarily the hospitality industry (Dusek et al., 2014). With several industry specific considerations, maintaining competitive advantage and retaining positive customer relations requires multiple strategies and techniques for controlling turnover (Dusek et al., 2014).

Zhao and Ghiselli (2016) studied specific characteristics unique to hotel jobs and the impact on work-family conflict and job stress. The businesses examined suffered very high turnover rates attributable to negative cultural perceptions of hospitality jobs, long working hours, irregular schedules, split shifts and low pay. Turnover in hotel staff not only reduced the morale of the employees but also reduced the customer confidence in the hotel itself (Zhao & Ghiselli, 2016). Dusek et al. (2014) found turnover negatively affected the consistency of service provided to returning customers, who come to expect a high level of service. Loss of customer confidence in service quality is disastrous for hotels who rely on reviews and word-of-mouth recommendations from customers for growth (Bhatti & Zaheer, 2014; Holtom & Burch, 2016).

Qazi et al. (2015) also explored ways turnover negatively affected customer service and the perception of hotels. The researchers found not only was turnover intent impacted by the organizational environment, but also by the interaction with individual employee characteristics (Qazi et al., 2015). Dusek et al. (2014) found managers may attempt to mitigate turnover through changes in the organizational environment, but must also consider hiring practices to bring in employees appropriate to the positions. To mitigate concerns with potential future turnover, hiring employees with the appropriate

talents and personality, effectiveness and potential for embeddedness may significantly reduce turnover (Qazi et al., 2015).

In the hotel industry, the perception of internal organizational politics and workplace policy implementation can feed perceptions of organizational injustice, which leads to job insecurity and reduced both job embeddedness and effectiveness (Qazi et al., 2015). Screening new hires for higher levels of service orientation and individual values which align with organizational goals may help reduce the potential for future voluntary turnover (Dusek et al., 2014). Employee perceptions of possible unfair human resource activities may undermine the current organizational culture. Reducing business politics or the perception of disparity of organizational support between management and employees may also help reduce voluntary turnover.

Lu et al. (2016) explored turnover intention in hotels as it relates across positions with work engagement and job satisfaction. Lu et al. (2016) found even though supervisors have higher levels of work engagement and lower turnover than line-level employees do, the levels of job satisfaction were comparable. These findings indicate job satisfaction levels are not always predictors of turnover, but are part of a larger predictor construct.

Management Applications

Exploring the suggested management strategies from the business literature provides a framework for determining potential themes. Incorporating the specific industry factors when looking at general turnover reduction recommendations provides guidance for researching hotel managers. Understanding the causes of employee turnover

and potential ways to retain embedded employees helps business managers reduce costs and improve customer service (Holtom & Burch, 2016; Wallis & Kennedy, 2013). Deery and Jago (2015) found little evidence in business literature or hotel manager practices of the implementation of recommended practices or improvements published in the academic literature to reduce turnover.

Recommendations for reducing voluntary turnover must take into consideration factors peculiar to the hotel industry. Lu and Gursoy (2016) found generational differences in the responses of hotel employees to managerial attempts to reduce burnout and turnover. Qazi et al. (2015) found over 70% of their sample were under age 30, suggesting limited generalizability of findings across multiple industries. With 60% of hotel employees in the population geographic area under the age of 35, the results may be highly representative within the industry and across regional boundaries (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). Types of hotel employees include full-time, part-time, seasonal and casual (McPhail et al., 2015). Managerial strategies must also take into consideration regional and local needs or values and cultural variations across different locations (Deery & Jago, 2015). Hotel managers must understand how the demographics of their employees affect strategies to reduce voluntary turnover.

Organizational support. Support from the business, through both leadership and human resource practices, affects how employees view the organization. Perceived organizational support has a significant positive effect on job embeddedness and a significant negative effect on turnover intent (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017). When employee interests are protected, information is shared freely, and employees see managers trying

to increase employee job satisfaction, job embeddedness increases (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017). Employee perceptions of human resource practices also affect turnover intent (Santhanam et al., 2015). Employees who perceive fairness across human resource practices tend to remain in the organization for longer periods of time (Santhanam et al., 2015). Human resource personnel and managers should seek out ways to make policies flexible to accommodate broader ranges of employee situations while remaining equitable and responsible (Kalidass & Bahron, 2015).

Employee involvement in supervision and human resource decisions, including potential changes or new offerings, is essential to maintain buy-in. To counter concerns about respect, low pay and irregular hours, Long et al. (2014) suggest business managers should offer benefits packages and implement workplace policies emphasizing professional interpersonal interactions. Encouraging knowledge sharing and providing incentives results in higher employee motivation and directly affects turnover (Alshanbri et al., 2015). Workplace policies endorsed by the employees show higher compliance and negatively influence voluntary turnover (Deery & Jago, 2015). Managers may benefit by including employee input into human resource practices or proposed benefits packages.

Organizational support includes work-life balance programs and benefits packages. Work-life balance programs are essential for high paced or high-stress positions to reduce turnover (Moradi et al., 2014). McPhail et al. (2015) recommended managers implement family-friendly work policies and consider childcare constraints when scheduling work shifts. Zhao and Ghiselli (2016) recommended arranging work schedules to avoid family interference, expanding social support through outreach and

community programs, and supporting flexible scheduling to reduce concerns of work-family conflict as a predictor of voluntary turnover. In addition to reducing turnover, Moradi et al. (2014) found significant cost savings in employee health and reduced absenteeism because of quality of life programs. Programs to improve work-life balance positively affect not just the employees, but also the business as a whole including the outcomes and service quality (Friedman & Westring, 2015).

Feeling valued. Employees in any business want to feel as though their opinion and contributions are valued. Akgunduz and Sanli (2017) recommended hotel managers ensure the organizational climate supports employee expression of their opinions and concerns. Employees also need to feel their contributions and personal interests are valued by the business through recognition programs (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017; Lu et al., 2016). Perceptions of supervisor support for employee concerns mitigates turnover (McPhail et al., 2015). Friedman and Westring (2013) found managers and leaders who empower their employees significantly improved employee satisfaction and affected intent to remain in the organization. Empowered hotel employees provide better quality service on a consistent basis, which is essential for competitive advantage (McPhail et al., 2015).

Work environments in which employees feel valued provides a feeling of at least a little control in a generally fast-paced business. When managers do not appear to want to listen or address employee concerns, employees can feel frustrated and undervalued, diminishing job embeddedness and increasing turnover intent (Wallis & Kennedy, 2013). Including employee input into the work environment results in higher employee job

embeddedness and lower turnover (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2017). When employees feel as though their opinion matters and they have some amount of control over their environment, they are more likely to remain in the organization.

Communication is an important aspect of helping employees feel valued and reducing voluntary turnover. Effective communication relates to leader visibility and approachability reducing turnover intent (Wallis & Kennedy, 2013). Communicating with employees in person and fostering effective communication among staff make employees feel valued and are among ways managers can reduce turnover intent (Xu, Martinez, & Qin, 2017). Clear communication of expectations and job requirements are essential to reducing potential voluntary turnover (Santhanam et al., 2015).

Opportunities. In hotels, as in most industries, employees may not stay if there are not opportunities for advancement or promotion. Along with this, providing opportunities for challenges may result in elevated embeddedness and longevity with the organization. Several studies describing reasons for turnover included lack of advancement opportunities (Awang et al., 2013; Lu et al., 2016; Saeed et al., 2014; Santhanam et al., 2015). With the face-to-face nature of the hotel industry, managers should place those employees with the skills and embeddedness which align with the goals of the organization in positions to maximize potential customer interactions and further organizational goals (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017). Employees in positions with a level of challenge, creativeness, pride and a sense of importance have lower turnover (Lu et al., 2016). Employees with high job embeddedness, tend to have higher performance levels and contribute to higher customer satisfaction (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017). Creating

opportunities for employees to broaden career options within the organization increases job embeddedness and reduces turnover intent (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017).

Relationships. Relationships and relationship building are essential in any customer service focused industry. In particular, supervisors and hotel managers need to focus on the relationships within the realm of their influence. The relationship between managers and employees is very influential in the hotel industry. Akgunduz and Sanli (2017) recommended managers should foster positive relations with their employees by acting in a just and fair manner, including employee input in decisions, creating comfortable work environments, and addressing both complaints and suggestions for improvement. Making the employee feel valued within the organization and building positive interpersonal relations boosts job embeddedness and reduces employee turnover intent (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017).

Improving relationships with supervisors may also sway employees toward retention. Hofaidhllaoui and Chhinzer (2014) found even if the employee perceives alignment with the organization's goals and direction, dissatisfaction with the supervisor can lead to voluntary turnover. To reduce turnover intent, Kalidass and Bahron (2015) suggested supervisors paying more attention to employees through positive interactions. Supervisor support mitigates feelings of pressure on work-life balance and reduces turnover (McPhail et al., 2015). Strengthening the internal organizational relationships shows care for employees and supports job embeddedness through alignment with organizational goals.

Transition

Studying turnover in any industry can be daunting with many factors and industry specific characteristics in play. Exploring the strategies hotel managers use to reduce voluntary turnover can provide insight into ways businesses may be able to curb the high costs of turnover. While there is no single answer to the turnover concern in hotels (Dusek et al., 2014), presenting multiple strategies from the literature provides a framework for exploring current strategies used by hotel managers.

The multiple case study design ensures the study samples multiple businesses and will provide strategies common within the hotel industry. The research question explores the current strategies used in businesses today and focus on successful strategies. The exploration focuses through the lens of job embeddedness theory with emphasis on consideration of the links, fit and sacrifice perceived by employees and managers within the organization and social networks. Assumptions, limitations, and delimitations bounded the study. The literature review presented applications to the business problem by reviewing turnover, the conceptual framework and both supporting and challenging theories. An in-depth discussion of the potential themes as the recommendations for management application from business literature.

In section two, the specifics of the study are presented. The purpose statement is restated and the researcher roles are described. The participants are described in detail along with the research method and design. The population and sample choices are explained and supported with a description of the ethical considerations. Data collection, analysis, and reliability is reviewed and completes the section.

Section 2: The Project

Section 2 includes an overview of the study methodology. In it, I again offer the purpose statement to provide focus and context. I then discuss my role as researcher and describe the study participants to give perspective regarding my approach to the study. Next, I discuss how the research method and design supported the research question, and how my sampling procedures supported ethical research. I close by discussing data collection instruments, techniques, organization, and analysis in support of reliability and validity.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies hotel managers use to reduce voluntary employee turnover. The targeted population consisted of six managers from hotel businesses operating in the MidAtlantic region of the United States who have successfully used strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover. The results of this study may contribute to positive social change by providing strategies to reduce employee turnover in a historically low-wage industry, which may result in raising the quality of life for hotel employees, their families, and communities.

Role of the Researcher

My role in the research process was as the primary data collection and analysis instrument. Upon approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB), I commenced data collection by conducting semistructured interviews, recording observational notes, evaluating the responses objectively, and conducting data analysis (see Morse, Lowery, & Steury, 2014). In qualitative studies, the researcher collects

information accurately, reports all data, and presents the common experiences of the

phenomenon (Yates & Leggett, 2016). As the only interviewer, I used a digital audio

recorder to assist in collecting interview responses and ensured accuracy through member

checking and incorporating observations and notes (see Awad, 2014; Harvey, 2015).

I had no prior relationship with any of the participants or their businesses, which

mitigated observer biases and validity concerns (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy,

2013; Kooskora, 2013). Kooskora (2013) suggested prior knowledge of the studied

industry or organization is essential to the research process. My goal in this research was

to explore current business practices, making prior knowledge of the industry or

participant organizations less important than understanding business processes and

activities in a general sense. While I had no in-depth understanding of the particulars of

hotel business processes, I had studied process improvement, business case analysis, and

organizational assessment.

Because my role with the participants and organizations was purely research

based, I had limited access to employee information or specific data, which could

negatively affect any of the participant businesses. I took into consideration each

guideline from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare's Belmont Report

(1979) as I designed and implemented this study. In all interactions with participants,

consideration of respect for persons, beneficence, justice and equality was the guide

(Department of Health, Education, & Welfare, 1979). Informed consent, interview

protocols stressing confidentiality, and a lack of incentives for participation mitigated

potential ethical risks (Cylus, Glymour, & Avendano, 2015; Nunan & Di Domenico,

2013; Cho & Shin, 2014). At no time did I provide any information regarding the particular organizations or individual employees or owners which would compromise the guidelines of the Belmont Report (Department of Health, Education, & Welfare, 1979).

To avoid potential personal biases, I used an interview protocol, ensuring the same interview process and questions for each interview (see Yin, 2014). The interview protocol is a document outlining a seven-step collection process mitigating researcher biases. The steps include: (a) introduction and opening remarks; (b) semistructured interview questions; (c) probing questions; (d) conclusion and thanking statements; (e) participant verification of emergent themes; (f) corrections to themes based on participant responses; and (g) incorporation of reflective notes (Hudson et al., 2014; See Appendix A). I avoided possible confusion or assumptions regarding common terms and concepts by asking clarifying questions and capturing the participant perspectives and their experiences in their words. Interview questions were open-ended, allowing the participants to share their experiences with rich, detailed responses (see Groth, Bergner, & Burgess, 2016; Ilyushin & Azbel, 2017).

Participants

To be eligible for inclusion in the study, participants needed to be hotel managers, over the age of 18, who are employed by a hotel operating in the MidAtlantic region of the United States, and who have successfully used strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover. In this study, a hotel manager was a location manager or senior supervisor whose responsibilities include supervision or staff oversight, participation in hiring, and separation actions (Karatepe, 2014). To capture emergent ideas from new

managers and to explore themes across different businesses, participation was not limited to a minimum number of years in management or to business size. Hotel managers were appropriate participants for this study because they set the tone for organizational culture at the local level and are the front-line for implementation of business strategies (Yap & Webber, 2015).

To gain access to the participants, I approached them through personal communication via phone and email, and by visiting business locations (Hazel & Clark, 2013; Yin, 2014). I selected participant hotels from the Labor Market Information list of accommodation and food service firms operating in the population geographic area. Using the Labor Market Information list enabled sampling of all potential firms legally registered as accommodation or lodging businesses rather than limiting to association lists, which may exclude some businesses. I sent a letter of invitation by email to each of the participants with the informed consent form describing the intent of the study and providing the criteria screening questions and sample interview questions. In the introductory email, I also requested scheduling of interviews with proposed times and appointments lasting not longer than 45 minutes.

Establishing a trusting working relationship is essential to qualitative research (Haahr, Norlyk, & Hall, 2014). I developed a working relationship with the participants by providing detailed explanations of all procedures, promptly answering process questions, and providing my contact information for follow up questions (see Campbell, Loving, & Lebel, 2014; Haahr et al., 2014; Hazel & Clark, 2013). Maintaining a professional but casual tone in the conversations maintains rapport and facilitates honest

and open communication (Yin, 2014). I maintained connection with the participants through knowledge sharing to glean rich descriptions from their contextual perspectives (see Ballaro & Oneil, 2013).

Research Method

I chose the qualitative method because my intent was to explore strategies hotel managers use to reduce voluntary employee turnover (see Bruce et al., 2014; Raque-Bogdan et al., 2015; Šalkovska & Ogsta, 2014). The qualitative method is exploratory research used to gain a thorough understanding of a phenomenon, underlying reasons, and insight from different perspectives (Hayward, Bungay, Wolff, & MacDonald, 2016). The qualitative research method was appropriate for the research question because of the focus on intangible or non-numerical assets, evolving perspectives within varied contexts, and the exploration of the human experience (Kose et al., 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Karatepe (2016) used the qualitative method specifically to explore voluntary turnover, job embeddedness, and hotel employees. To understand the current business practices of hotel managers, I used the qualitative method to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon from various perspectives (see Kose et al., 2015; Smit, 2017).

The quantitative method was not appropriate for this study. The quantitative method involves an analysis of potential relationships among variables, which was not my intent (Šalkovska & Ogsta, 2014; Venkatesh et al., 2016). Researchers use quantitative analysis to test hypotheses, examine causal relationships, or summarize results across samples or studies through meta-analysis (Pindek, Kessler, & Spector,

2017; Šalkovska & Ogsta, 2014). Use of the quantitative method might have provided insight into the financial cost of employees coming in and out of the company, or whether an implemented strategy had a statistically significant impact on turnover numbers, but would not have captured the strategies managers use to reduce turnover (Kose et al., 2015; Šalkovska & Ogsta, 2014). Using the mixed method approach would allow cross-referencing and validation of findings, but quantitative data from the participants was not available during the timeframe of the study, ruling out mixed method as a potential method for this study (Cylus et al., 2015; Kose et al., 2015; Venkatesh et al., 2016). Therefore, the qualitative method was most appropriate.

Research Design

I used the multiple case study design for this study. A case study is a deep exploration of an existing or ongoing phenomenon from an everyday context bounded by time (Yin, 2014). Case study research generally involves several sources of evidence to explore variables which dynamically relate to the phenomenon within the bounds of the study (Singh, 2014; Yin, 2014). Depending on the research question, the subject or focus of a case study can be single or multiple cases, resulting in varying levels of generalizability (Awan & Asghar, 2014). Case studies are exploratory, explanatory, or descriptive based on the reporting structures for the inquiry results (Yin, 2014). Exploratory case studies are generally small in scope and provide insight into the appropriateness of interview questions and types of analysis (Wu, 2017; Yin, 2014). Explanatory case studies are presentations of reasons how or why a phenomenon came to be and can be presented with mixed methods to support a causal argument (Gunbatar &

Guyer, 2017; Yin, 2014). Descriptive case studies are introductory or illustrative

presentations of a phenomenon, providing an in-depth description to develop a common

language for use in describing a phenomenon (Hvalič-Touzery et al., 2017; Yin, 2014).

Researchers use case studies to address research questions that involve an understanding

of organizational or social practices (Cronin, 2014). Yin (2014) suggested that

researchers using evidence from multiple sources and organizations gain a thorough

understanding of the experience of the phenomenon in an everyday context. Specific

examples of case study design include exploring decision processes, gleaning best

practices, and examining human resource management procedures (Awan & Asghar,

2014; Sherman et al., 2014; Tsang, 2013). Therefore, the descriptive multiple case study

design was the most appropriate for studying current business practices across multiple

firms with emphasis on employee management aspects, such as voluntary turnover.

Other qualitative research designs include narrative, phenomenology, grounded

theory, and ethnography, each with a specific approach and intended outputs (Yin, 2014).

Researchers conducting narrative studies collect data in the form of verbal and written

stories, producing narrowly focused, detailed descriptions of a phenomenon. However,

they do not explore how or why the phenomenon occurs within contexts, making a

narrative approach inappropriate for this study (see Santos, 2015; Smit, 2017; Vadera &

Aguilera, 2015; Yin, 2014). Researchers use the phenomenological approach to describe

participants' lived experiences of a phenomenon through presentation of beliefs and

feelings (Bengtsson & Hertting, 2014; Bradbury-Jones, Taylor, & Herber, 2014;

Robertson & Thompson, 2014). The phenomenological approach was not appropriate

because the a rich description of lived experience would not answer the central research question. Researchers use grounded theory design to generate hypotheses and theoretical models (Johnson, 2015; Khan, 2014; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The grounded theory design was not appropriate for this study because generating a theory would not address the research question. Ethnographic design yields a rich overview of a phenomenon with a particular focus on demographic characteristics common to the group over time (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Reich, 2015; Templeton, 2016). Using an ethnographic design was not appropriate because the central research question did not involve exploring a group in a cultural-sharing setting.

To ensure data saturation, I conducted semistructured interviews until no new information emerged, and I used member checking to verify information and themes (see Webber, Goussak, & Ser, 2013; Yin, 2014). When information from interviews and data analysis becomes repetitive and member checks reveal no new information, the researcher has reached data saturation (Elo et al., 2014; Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016; Marshall et al., 2013). Data saturation in qualitative case studies occurs between five and ten participants, but can occur with as few as two participants (Anyan, 2013; Hazel & Clark, 2013; Malterud et al., 2016; Yin, 2014). Using a purposeful sample of six participants met the recommendations for number of participants and ensured discussion of perspectives on the studied phenomenon (Robinson, 2014). By conducting interviews until no new data emerged and using member checks to validate emergent themes aligned with participant responses, I reached data saturation with the sample (see Awad, 2014; Morse, 2015; Peake Andrasik et al., 2014).

Population and Sampling

The population for the study included six hotel managers in the MidAtlantic region of the United States who have successfully used strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover. I focused on independent and chain hotels with 399 rooms or less catering to business guests or located near airports. I used a purposeful sampling method to select participants from the Labor Market Information list of accommodation firms (independent and chain hotels) operating in the population geographic area. Purposeful sampling is selecting participants from the population based on criteria such as geographic proximity, availability, or accessibility (Benoot, Hannes, & Bilsen, 2016). A purposeful sampling method is appropriate when the researcher selects locations and participants designed to maximize the probability they will be able to glean the depth of information and description of the phenomena from the parameters set (Crawford, 2013; Robinson, 2014). Because I needed to interview participants who have experiences and content knowledge relevant to the research questions, purposeful sampling was appropriate (Cleary, Horsfall, & Hayter, 2014; Crawford, 2013; Robinson, 2014).

Data saturation occurs when no new information emerges from additional interviews or research (Robinson, 2014; Yin, 2014). When no new information arises from probing questions, and when no new information emerges from conducting additional interviews, data saturation is reached (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Spillane, Larkin, Corcoran, Matvienko-Sikar, & Arensman, 2017). Data saturation in qualitative case study research often occurs with a sample size of ten or fewer participants depending upon the quality of interviews and researcher experience (Marshall et al., 2013; Robinson, 2014).

By using an initial sample of six participants, data saturation occurred within the sample. To ensure data saturation, I used an interview protocol and member checking ensuring each participant responded to the same focused questions and had the opportunity to verify emergent themes or provide clarification (Spillane et al., 2017; Yin, 2014). Yin (2014) suggested researchers achieve data saturation in multiple case studies between five and ten participants. Setting the minimum sample to the lower number provided flexibility to add participants ensuring an accurate, rich description of the methods hotel managers use to reduce voluntary employee turnover (Marshall et al., 2013).

Using purposeful sampling, I screened participants first by examining the Labor Market Information list of accommodation firms operating in the population geographic area (Crawford, 2013; Marshall et al, 2013; Yin, 2014). I then contacted participants via phone, email, or in-person visit to request participation. If the manager agreed to an interview, I further researched the public business records to see what information was publically available regarding turnover or retention programs. The business might have had fluctuations in turnover rates because of factors outside the influence of the managers, necessitating further inquiry of the managers. In the introductory correspondence (Appendix C), I asked the manager if they actively participate or support initiatives to reduce voluntary employee turnover. By previously screening the population to those managers actively participating in initiatives to reduce voluntary employee turnover, the participants already have some experience with the phenomena and preferred practices (Crawford, 2013; Suen et al., 2014).

From the list of possible businesses, I contacted participants via email, in person visit, or phone to set up times and locations for interviews based on their availability (Crawford, 2013; Yin, 2014). Whenever possible, I conducted face-to-face interviews. Telephone interviews or video teleconference capabilities, such as Skype were more convenient for several participants. In all of these formats, the setting of the interview was as free from other distractions as possible with the ability to accurately record the conversation using a digital voice recorder (Awad, 2014; Cho & Shin, 2014; Šalkovska & Ogsta, 2014).

Ethical Research

Upon approval from the Walden University IRB, I obtained consent from participants using the informed consent form (Cho & Shin, 2014; Hartnett, 2014; Rothstein, 2013). This form includes a brief overview of the study: the rights and responsibilities of both the researcher and participants, and contact information for the researcher and academic institution for questions, concerns, or withdrawal from the study. Included in the form is the IRB approval number, 01-08-18-0412395, indicating the academic IRB has reviewed the document and it complies with institutional ethical standards for the protection of participants and organizations. If at any time a participant felt they would like to withdraw from the study, I advised them to contact me via phone or email stating their desire to withdraw. I assured them there were no consequences to them or their business for the decision to withdraw from the study (Nunan & Di Domenico, 2013; Cho & Shin, 2014; Rothstein, 2013). I offered no incentives for participation in the study. Both the participants and the researcher signed the consent

forms, which I will maintain for five years (Cho & Shin, 2014; Hartnett, 2014; Rothstein, 2013). I will keep scanned copies of the signed consent forms on an external data drive during the research process and a backup electronic data disc in my safe deposit box for a minimum of five years. After five years, I will destroy all data discs in a cross-shredder.

In any approach to research, the importance of self-reflection as a mark of academic maturity and the identification and application of personal values, shape how researchers approach ethical practices (Kim, Hayes, Avant, & Reid, 2014; Valentine, Nam, Hollingworth, & Hall, 2014). In line with my personal, academic, and professional values, I approached this study from a no-harm perspective with the safety, privacy, and consideration of the participants' roles and responsibilities to the community and stakeholders of primary import. I made every effort to secure as much confidentiality as possible for participants by not presenting any identifying organizational information or any personally identifiable information (Hartnett, 2014; Nunan & Di Domenico, 2013; Valentine et al., 2014). In this way, not only will the participants, their businesses and employees remain protected, but any customers or business partners as well.

Data Collection Instruments

For this qualitative, multiple case study, I was the primary data collection instrument. To collect qualitative data, I used semistructured interviews with an interview protocol and observational notes (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Chetty, Partanen, Rasmussen, & Servais, 2014; Martinus & Hedgcock, 2015). After participants consented to the research, I scheduled an interview at a neutral, quiet and comfortable location conducive to an in-depth discussion (Campbell et al., 2014; Martinus & Hedgcock, 2015; Yin,

2014). I provided a printed copy of the informed consent form, with a detailed overview of the study, potential risks, benefits, and the right to withdraw from the study to each participant for their signature.

Semistructured interviews with an interview protocol of open-ended questions enabled participants to respond in their words with emphasis on personal views (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Chetty et al., 2014; Martinus & Hedgcock, 2015). Appendix A lists the interview protocol. With participant consent, I recorded the interview using a digital audio recorder. During the interview processes, I maintained a reflective journal capturing observational notes (Ponterotto, 2014). In qualitative research, the role of researcher includes continual analysis through all phases of the study inevitably facilitating a transference of the researcher's values, interests, and emotions (Morse et al., 2014; Yates & Leggett, 2016; Yin, 2014). I combined the observational notes with the emergent themes to develop codes for data analysis.

Once the interviews were complete, I transcribed each into a Microsoft Word document. As I transcribed and continued to conduct interviews, I made notes of both theory-generated codes derived from themes identified in the literature as well as codes emerging directly from the collected data (Yin, 2014). After transcribing interviews, I sent the transcripts with theme notes to the participants for transcript verification and member checking (Awad, 2014; Morse, 2015; Peake Andrasik et al., 2014). Through member checking, the participant validated the themes and understanding captured by the researcher.

Data Collection Technique

The primary data collection technique is face to face, semistructured interviews. Upon IRB approval, I contacted participants via phone, in person visits, or email to schedule interviews using the template correspondence in Appendix C. Prior to the interview, I sent each participant a reminder email with a review of the purpose of the study, a copy of the informed consent form and sample questions. The scheduled location of the interview was convenient to the participant and quiet for audio recording. Neutral, quiet and comfortable locations at times convenient to the participants are most appropriate for conducting semistructured interviews (Cho & Shin, 2014; Martinus & Hedgcock, 2015; Yin, 2014). Examples of potential locations included private rooms at public libraries, participant's offices or over the phone. All interviews adhered to the interview protocol presented in Appendix A, ensuring each participant experienced the same data collection technique (Yin, 2014). Prior to the start of the interview, each participant signed the informed consent form outlining their rights, confidentiality and contact information for the researcher. In the event a phone or digital conferencing interview was more convenient for the participant, I provided the consent form via email and obtained a digital signature prior to the start of the interview (Hartnett, 2014).

After signing the consent form, the participant responded to the interview questions, providing their personal views and perspectives (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Chetty et al., 2014). Per the consent form, the interviews were audio recorded for accuracy and analysis (Awad, 2014; Harvey, 2015). Additionally, researcher observations of non-verbal cues and discussion notes added depth and context to the responses

(Ponterotto, 2014; Seitz, 2016). The focus of the data collection process was balancing collection of the perspectives of participants accurately while ensuring depth and gleaning a common understanding of the phenomenon.

Interviews with additional participants continued until no additional information or emergent themes arose during the interview or member check process, thus indicating data saturation (Elo et al., 2014; Malterud et al., 2016; Marshall et al., 2013). Once data saturation was reached, an overview of emergent themes was presented to all participants for additional feedback and potential clarification (Awad, 2014; Morse, 2015; Peake Andrasik et al., 2014). No participants determined additional information or clarification was necessary.

For this study, I determined semistructured, individual interviews with hotel managers best addressed the research question. Options for data collection in qualitative studies included several techniques, including reviewing documents and records, artifacts, observations and interviews (Yin, 2014). The main advantage of using semistructured interviews with a standard protocol was participants are free to describe the phenomenon in their own words with rich descriptions and examples (Groth et al., 2016; Hudson, et al., 2014; Ilyushin & Azbel, 2017). In this study, semistructured individual interviews, rather than focus groups or simple observations provided the opportunity for each hotel manager to provide their insight in a private environment. In a group setting, the potential for competition and negative comparison might have compromised the participant and limited responses (Webber et al., 2013). A disadvantage to the individual interview process was the potential for different interpretation of

questions and divergent responses (Martinus & Hedgcock, 2015; Yin, 2014). Presenting open-ended questions allows participants the opportunity to offer wandering responses (Webber et al., 2013). The interviewer must keep the participant focused on the question through probes and follow-up questions (Martinus & Hedgcock, 2015; Webber et al., 2013; Yin, 2014).

To ensure appropriate analysis, participants validated response analysis through member checking. Member checking the data ensures accuracy of both the interview transcription and the understanding of the participant responses (Awad, 2014; Harvey, 2015). Matching the interview transcription and observational notes, I provided the participants an integrated copy for their review and feedback (Webber et al., 2013). Using member checking, participants validated the transcription of their responses ensuring the recording captured all responses and transcription was accurate (Yin, 2014). Participants also had the opportunity to validate or clarify the emergent themes from their individual interviews.

Data Organization Technique

To track the data, both scheduled and received, I used a digital case study database as a key to organization and quick-referencing digital file structures (Yin, 2014). With the consent of the participants, I recorded all interviews with a digital voice recorder, generating digital audio files. After completing interviews, I downloaded the recorded audio file to my personal laptop and scanned all paper notes to searchable Adobe .pdf files. I transcribed paper notes to digital text documents for electronic storage. After transcribing and scanning, I destroyed paper files in a cross shredder. After

downloading the audio file from the digital voice recorder, I deleted the original file on the recorder. Standard naming conventions and layered organization techniques maintained the integrity of the collected data (Anyan, 2013). The standard naming convention included participant number, date of the interview and the data type (i.e. PartA_20160614_obsvnotes.pdf; PartA_20160614_audio.mp3; PartA_20160614_transcription.docx). Once I compiled the audio file, transcribed research notes, and the scanned hand notes, I maintained the files a folder using a chronological naming convention for each interview.

After compiling the digital documents, I transcribed the audio interview into a Microsoft Word document. The transcription used the same naming convention in the appropriate interview folder. Once the transcription was complete, I sent the document via email to the participants for a transcript verification and member check (Harvey, 2015; Peake Andrasik et al., 2014). If the participants had any recommended changes or input to potential identified themes, I updated the notes and integrated into the analysis. Upon verification of the transcription, I saved the interview transcription and any additional digital notes to the participant interview file. I burned the file to a data compact disc (CD) for storage in a personal fire-safe lock box for access during the analysis process (Anyan, 2013).

As the interviews begin, so does the analysis of the data (Morse & Coulehan, 2015). I used a digital research log to ensure application of emergent themes or observations to previously transcribed and analyzed interviews. With this research log, I tracked requests for clarification or additional information from previous participants. An

external storage drive dedicated only for the research data stored the continuing analysis notes. After all interviews and analysis were complete, I burned all digital files to a data digital video device (DVD) and stored in a safe deposit box. After the consolidation of data files to the DVD, I destroyed all supporting CDs and paper notes in a cross shredder. I then deleted all temporary digital files and cleared the computer memory cache.

In a safe deposit box, I will maintain the consolidated DVD for a minimum of five years. After five years the DVD will be destroyed in a cross shredder. During the five-year storage, the data will be available to verified sources with a minimum of two-day notification request to the researcher.

Data Analysis

Qualitative analysis consists of deconstructing the organized data into common themes and patterns and synthesizing into outcomes (Yates & Leggett, 2016). Analysis of the data occurs during the collection process resulting in a fluid understanding of emergent themes (Morse & Coulehan, 2015). Based on the emergent themes from the data, I used pattern matching and data triangulation to analyze the data (Yin, 2014). This study used responses from semistructured interviews, member checks of themes and cross-reference with observational notes for triangulation.

I used Yin's (2014) five-step analysis model to (a) compile the data, (b) deconstruct the data, (c) reassemble the data, (d) interpret the data and (e) draw conclusions from the data. To ensure the data collected maintained focus on the current business practices for analysis, I used an interview protocol ensuring each participant received the same questions, in the same order, with the same probes and clarification

questions (Spillane et al., 2017). To compile the data, I assembled the transcribed

interviews and notes into emergent groupings. For step two, deconstructing the data

included pairing the transcribed interviews with observational notes. I then narrowed the

number of groups by identifying outlier themes and consolidating themes with common

bases. In reassembling the data, I combined the identified groups into comprehensive

themes to result in no more than five to seven main themes. For step four, I checked the

common descriptions of the main themes against the interview transcripts and developed

an overarching depiction of the theme. I incorporated the coding of themes and comments

from my observational notes into the development of themes. Finally, in step five I drew

conclusions from the data and determined the key elements hospitality managers use to

reduce voluntary employee turnover based on the emergent patterns and themes

(Bedwell, McGowan, Lavender, 2015; Zheng, Guo, Dong, & Owens, 2015).

 The core categories of analysis emerged from the data collection. The identified

main themes derived from the conceptual framework including links, fit and sacrifice

guided initial analysis and coding (Mitchell, et al., 2001; Yin, 2014). I validated emergent

themes which seemed to cross theme categories through continued review of the

literature. Additionally, I incorporated findings from new studies published which

provide insight into potential themes for hospitality management practices or reducing

voluntary employee turnover into the analysis process.

 Despite the availability of computer-aided software, I transcribed, reviewed, and

coded all interviews. Reviewing the interview process by personally transcribing the

digital audio-recorded interviews allowed additional insight into the coding and analysis

process. To provide rich and in-depth descriptions of the phenomenon, reporting of

results included direct quotes from participants (Thomas, 2017).

The intent of data analysis was to describe the current practices of hotel managers

to reduce voluntary employee turnover through the fair and impartial representation of

the participants' experiences. I used the job embeddedness theory to frame my analysis of

the data (Mitchell et al., 2001; Yin, 2014). Examining the emergent themes through the

lens of links, fit and sacrifice provided parameters for developing codes and themes.

Reliability and Validity

Dependability

Dependability in qualitative research relates to consistency of the responses

regarding the phenomenon (Elo et al., 2014). Using data triangulation and multiple data

sources creates additional checks for researcher data interpretation, providing dependable

results (Harvey, 2015; Yin, 2014). For this study, I based the reliability on the use of

multiple cases with a standard interview protocol, observational notes and member

checking. Using an interview protocol and member checking the interview transcript and

interpretation supports the reliability of the study procedures (Awad, 2014; Yin, 2014).

Observer notes during the interviews provided an additional source of information to aid

analysis based on observations of body language, language emphasis and additional

reference documents (Gibbons, 2015). Using a standardized interview process, member

checking and maintaining observational notes, both the researcher and participants have

multiple opportunities to validate the dependability of the findings.

Creditability

Strengthening creditability decreases the potential for researcher bias to skew findings (Singh, 2014). As the researcher, I have no prior relationship with the participant businesses and may not have a full understanding of industry jargon or cultural norms. Probing and clarification questions during the interview, plus member checking for themes mitigated creditability concerns. The results of the study must be creditable or believable from the perspective of the participants, suggesting member checking as an appropriate method to support creditability (Morse, 2015). After participant interviews are transcribed and initially coded, member checking allowed participants an additional review of the responses and emergent themes (Harvey, 2015). Participants had the opportunity to review statements, provide clarification, and validate potential themes identified by the researcher ensuring the credibility of the study.

Transferability

Transferability is the ability of future researchers to replicate the methods and findings of a study (Houghton et al., 2013). For this study, I presented all planning and analysis steps as well as interview questions, probes and clarifications in this document, allowing future researchers to replicate this study with other populations or samples. Yin (2014) suggested using consistent processes and thorough documentation to strengthen reliability resulting in accuracy in presentation of findings. Consistency within a contextualized depiction of the phenomenon builds the transferability of the research (Houghton et al., 2013; Yin, 2014). Using a standardized process allows future researchers to replicate the results of this study with alternate samples.

Confirmability

In qualitative research, confirmability supports the validity of the results as objective measures. Validity is the assurance the approach to research is accurate and measures the research question appropriately (Singh, 2014). Remaining objective and using a systematic approach to case study analysis keeps analysis results free from personal bias (Moon, Brewer, Hanuchowski-Hartley, Adams, & Blackman, 2016). Combining the interview data with observations, conducting member checks, and aligning with a thoroughly documented process which is the same for all interviews supports confirmability (Harvey, 2015). These steps ensured the study results reflect the participant perspectives presented through an objective research process.

Data Saturation

To ensure data saturation, a purposeful sample of six participants ensured an in-depth discussion of strategies hotel managers use to reduce voluntary turnover (Hazel & Clark, 2013; Malterud et al., 2016; Robinson, 2014). Data saturation occurs when additional interviews or data collection reveal no new information (Marshall et al., 2013; Elo et al., 2014; Fusch & Ness, 2015). In case study research, data saturation can occur with a sample size of less than ten, and as few as only two participants (Elo et al., 2014; Fusch & Ness, 2015). By using an initial sample of six participants, data saturation occurred within the sample. I conducted interviews until no new information emerged (Yin, 2014). Conducting member checks ensured I captured all emergent themes for describing the current practices hotel managers use to reduce voluntary employee turnover (Awad, 2014; Morse, 2015; Peake Andrasik et al., 2014).

Transition and Summary

In Section 2, I restated the purpose statement and explored the roles and relationships of the researcher with particular emphasis on the collection process and ethics. I also presented and justified the participants, population and sample. I presented a rich, detailed description of the research method and design. Detailed descriptions of data collection instruments, techniques, organization and analysis steps provided a thorough explanation of the research process. I also described the four aspects of reliability and validity as they apply to qualitative research.

In Section 3, I present findings with a detailed description of the analysis process and responses with emergent themes. Section 3 also includes discussion of the results and application to professional practice and positive social change. Key findings, recommendations for future research, summary and conclusion complete the section.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of the qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies hotel managers use to reduce voluntary employee turnover. The data for the study included an extensive literature review, recorded and transcribed interviews from six participants from six different hotels, and public records documenting historical turnover data. Member checking and review of company documents prior to interviews provided depth and triangulation for emergent themes. I searched public records for each participant's business and the Labor Market Information site for historical trends in benefits, management techniques, and turnover rates. The search of financial and labor documents provided little detail, but confirmed each participant's business had reported reduced voluntary turnover from the previous year. While no new information or themes emerged after the first interview, continuing interviews to the proposed six provided additional depth and examples. Four main themes emerged from semistructured interviews (see Table 4). The results indicated that hotel managers are cognizant of the intricacies of voluntary employee turnover and that successful strategies must be adaptable combinations of management actions and team relationships. Participants also believed their strategies are applicable to all managers and not unique to hospitality management.

Table 4

Major Themes and Frequency of Subthemes

Major theme/subtheme	Number of participants
Theme 1: Organizational Support	
Formal hiring process	6
Flexibility	6
Recognition programs	6
Theme 2: Feeling Valued	
Open communication	6
Individual interactions	6
Theme 3: Opportunities	
Advancement	6
Training	6
Clear expectations	6
Theme 4: Relationships	
Manager relationships	6
Peer relationships	6

Presentation of the Findings

All six participants recognized a base level of voluntary turnover generally unaffected by management strategies. P2 described three main employee group tendencies for turnover: (a) career-long hospitality employees, (b) short-term employees, and (c) employees who were undecided about whether to remain in the hospitality industry. The consensus among all participants was that employees who chose to make hospitality a career generally stay regardless of the management strategies or changes. However, poor management could cause career-inclined employees to reconsider staying with the current hotel or property. Short-term employees include students who need jobs

while taking classes, or those employees looking for an easy job who soon discover that

hospitality is far from easy and turnover relatively quickly. These short-term employees

may be partially amenable to management strategies to keep them, but often will choose

to leave. P5 mentioned that some hospitality employees who trained and found jobs in

other industries, returned to hospitality due to the positive work-environment in the hotel.

Employees who were undecided about whether to build a career in hospitality were the

employee base most susceptible to management strategies to reduce voluntary employee

turnover. All six managers stressed employing strategies across the board for all

employees rather than singling out specific groups or demographics. If managers take an

action or implement a strategy, it must be supportive of all employees.

Theme 1: Organizational Support

All six participants stressed the importance of having an organizational structure

that supported manager decisions and strategies. Perceptions of organizational support for

managers significantly affects job embeddedness (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017; Santhanam

et al., 2015). Hotel policies and procedures for standardization across multiple hotels

generally include the ability to freely manage teams at the property level. Specific

elements of organizational support include a formal hiring process, flexibility, and public

recognition.

Formal hiring process. All six participants emphasized the need to screen

prospective employees to ensure they would be a good fit for the organization.

Integrating expectations and turnover reduction strategies in the interview process sets

expectations from the outset and results in higher compliance and reduced turnover

(Deery & Jago, 2015). P1 described high levels of turnover and unrest in the team when managers failed to follow the formal interview and training process. This manager noted, "You have to make sure you're vetting the correct candidates...that are a correct fit for you." Likewise, P2 remarked, "Hospitality isn't for everyone." Participants also reported managers need to hire people who will be accountable to both managers and peers for the quality of their work. According to several participants, using a formal interview process allows managers to find like-minded employees who want the position but are also interested in customer service and hospitality as a potential career option. P5 stated, "We look at the job history. Obviously we don't want people who are jumping around every three months." Even though the interview process occurs prior to employment, all six managers stressed the importance of this process in reducing potential turnover after hiring an employee.

Flexibility. All six managers referenced the flexibility of schedules and positions on the team as ways to reduce voluntary turnover. Kalidass and Bahron (2015) suggested managers seek out ways to leverage flexibility to increase job embeddness. Several participants reported that finding ways to ensure employees had time to address family requirements, school schedules, and holidays helped ensure employees could continue to work at the property. However, flexibility is limited by the team and availability. As P2 noted, "I do my best . . . but I can't give everyone the schedule that they want . . . no manager can do that."

Flexibility with positions enables employees to find jobs that are a good fit for them that enhance not just the property-level team, but the corporate team. Speaking

about flexibility, P1 remarked, "If you don't want to just be in your position, you don't have to be in your position . . . we get (employees) to learn a role that they would prefer to fill." According to both P3 and P4, hotels are easy to flex to better fit employees due to the myriad of available schedules and positions.

Employee recognition. Each participant manager provided examples of the importance of recognition as part of the organizational culture. Recognizing accomplishments in the workplace and in family or social lives reduces concerns associated with work-life conflicts and potential voluntary turnover (Moradi et al., 2014; Zhao & Ghiselli, 2016). Employee recognition included incentives, holiday and milestone celebrations, and bonuses. According to P5, celebrating successes, especially small victories, strengthens the team bonds and makes employees feel valued. Holiday parties and events including families help reinforce the family-centric management approach. P3 claimed, "We try and give everybody New Years Day off. Just so they can have that time with their families."

All managers agreed that offering money was not an effective means of reducing voluntary employee turnover. P1 described a monetary bonus incentive program, but mentioned the success of the program was less due to the money and more to do with the public recognition of success. P3, P5, and P6 all stated financial incentives or raises were counterproductive in reducing voluntary employee turnover. As P5 remarked, "If they want money . . . they'll just keep looking for money." Likewise, P4 noted, "It's a slippery slope. If you give money once, they'll expect it again later." In hotels, the wages may be

lower than in other industries, but participants (P2, P5, P6) reported that the working environment more than makes up for the pay.

Within the conceptual framework, organizational support ties to increasing job embeddedness through the employee perception of fit within the team and the hotel. Perception of organizational support for management practices promotes positive fit with the organization, increasing job embeddedness and reducing voluntary turnover (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017, Kalidass & Bahron, 2015). Specifically, flexibility with scheduling and recognition programs improve employee perception of the organization as a workplace, increasing job embeddedness and reducing potential turnover (Kalidass & Bahron, 2015; Santhanam et al., 2015).

Theme 2: Feeling Valued

All six managers indicated the importance of hotel employees feeling they are valued members of the team. Enhanced feelings of value strengthens the links element of job embeddedness and reduces potential voluntary employee turnover (McPhail et al., 2015; Mitchell et al., 2001). Hotel managers use open communication and individual-level interactions to highlight the value each employee brings to the organization. The key to this theme is the employee as an individual with intrinsic value and unique abilities that enhance the team, as opposed to the strong relationship bonds open communication and individual interactions help build.

Open communication. All six participants used open communication to ensure their employees feel like they are valued individuals as part of a collective team and not simply a number on a roster. The ability to openly express ideas and opinions reduces the

potential for voluntary turnover (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017; Lu et al., 2016). "Employee happiness at work is a priority," P1 noted, while P5 reported that if employees feel "like they're not being taken seriously or they don't have an important role to play" they tend to leave. Managers claimed they need to keep open communication channels to make sure employees know they can bring up ideas or concerns. P2 and P6 reported using periodic team meetings and town-hall style forums for discussing current practices or policies and upcoming changes. P2 also reported conducting "one-on-ones because I wanted to know...what are some things we do right and what are some things we don't do right. Once you start talking to people, they'll start telling you everything . . . like why people started leaving." When employees know their managers will take the time to listen to ideas, whether they are good or bad, employees feel they are valued.

Individual level interactions. All six managers described individually focused interaction with employees as a means to reduce voluntary turnover. Managers who take time to interact at the individual level with employees experience improved job embeddedness and reduced voluntary turnover (Ekrutlu & Chafra, 2017; Wallis & Kennedy, 2013). According to the participants, taking time to get to know employees, how they are motivated, and their personal and professional goals makes employees feel that managers care about them as individuals. For instance, P1 reported, "[I] thank all of my employees on a regular basis. No matter what they're doing . . . please and thank-you are always something that I try to make sure I use." Knowing how each individual is motivated to excellence is vital to understanding how interactions will influence potential turnover. "Everyone doesn't learn the same," P2 remarked, "Everyone doesn't want to go

about things the same way." Finding individual-level solutions within a larger group context makes employees feel they are valued members of the team.

Feeling valued ties to the links element of job embeddedness theory to open communication and individual-level manager interactions (Mitchell et al., 2001). Employees develop strong interpersonal links and loyalty to managers who take time to listen to employees and make them feel their input is valued (Wallis & Kennedy, 2013; Xu et al., 2017). With strong links and reduced voluntary employee turnover, hotel managers may experience improved quality and service essential for maintaining competitive advantage (McPhail et al., 2015).

Theme 3: Opportunities

Of importance to all six managers was the number and different types of opportunities they make available to their employees. As P6 noted, from housekeeping to the front desk to maintenance, there are many opportunities for advancement and cross-training. Previous studies described lack of advancement opportunities as driving reasons for voluntary employee turnover (Awang et al., 2017; Lu et al., 2016; Saeed et al., 2014). As part of the opportunity is the requirement for clear communication of expectations of current and future roles and responsibilities.

Advancement. Hotel managers encourage both internal and external advancement and promotion of their employees. Employees looking for advancement as team leaders or supervisors often have the opportunity within their hotels. Several participants noted that managers can use individual meetings to build professional development plans with their employees. Mapping employee long-term goals and short-

term wins helps the employee with career enhancement and provides a sense of pride and significance which reduces voluntary turnover (Lu et al., 2016). P2 asks employees "…What do you want to do? How can we start preparing you for that?" According to many participants, if the employee was hired for a position and they determined it isn't a good fit, open communication with managers helps keep employees from feeling stuck and frustrated. P1 and P2 suggested clearly communicating advancement opportunities raised employee engagement and morale.

If an opportunity outside the property is available, hotel managers recognize leaving the hotel may be in the best interests of both the employee and the business. When advancement opportunities become available, some employees may feel anxiety about leaving their current team. Assessing the potential benefits and drawbacks of taking a new position is part of the sacrifice element of job embeddedness (Mitchell et al., 2001). Managers are key in quelling worries and helping employees determine actions. "We're not going to hold them back," P3 stated. P1, P4 and P6 noted providing additional coaching and training to prepare employees for promotion may mean good employees are lost to the hotel, but the hospitality industry is better for it. If an employee is not happy with the team or hasn't found a good fit in the hotel, managers help employees find other opportunities. P2 and P3 both emphasized support for employees beyond the current position "…even if it isn't here, how can we help you be successful somewhere else?" Ensuring employees feel supported when they transition out of the hotel spreads positive publicity for the hotel as an employer. P4 and P6 described how negative talk about a position or lack of support for opportunities can poison an otherwise cohesive team. P5

reiterated "when people...buy into what we're trying to do, they give their 100%."
Reputations for positive work environments may draw like-minded individuals to the hotel.

Training. All six participants emphasized the need to provide a base training for new employees, but consider additional training, retraining, and advancement training as part of an individual assessment. P3 and P5 stated that detailed training and ensuring employees have the tools they need to be successful with their work is key to reducing frustration and ultimately voluntary turnover. According to P5, "frustration has been the biggest reason people leave." P1 and P5 described times when employees have difficulty managing the workload and need to revisit some training or learn new techniques for efficiency. According to both P1 and P6, if an employee is interested in a different position, cross training or extra responsibilities may be a way to build the experience base to make employees competitive for other positions. P2 and P4 emphasized knowing each member of the team, their strengths and weaknesses, helps managers tailor training to best meet team needs.

Clear expectations. A key aspect of reducing voluntary employee turnover is clear communication of expectations, roles, and responsibilities. Sometimes, the position is not be what the employee expects. According to P2, new employees "… think either it's an easy job or it's something quick they can do." P3 stated the position requirements are often more difficult than new employees expect. Open communication and manager accessibility enables employees looking for guidance (Santhanam et al., 2015; Wallis & Kennedy). P1 and P5 recommended communicating the duties and responsibilities during

the interview and screening process to mitigate unrealistic expectations. According to P5, if the responsibilities change, or if there are new standards, managers who clearly communicate the change are more likely to have employee buy-in and successful implementation of the change. Several participants mentioned that helping employees bridge the gap between a preconceived notion and the realities of responsibilities can be difficult, but is important for reducing voluntary employee turnover.

The sacrifice element of job embeddedness theory encompasses the challenges with opportunities as a way to reduce voluntary employee turnover (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017; Mitchell et al., 2001). By promoting opportunities for advancement or promotion, managers may risk losing their best employees to other hotels. By presenting opportunities for advancement and promotion, providing training to enhance employee success in their current and future positions, and clearly communicating expectations, managers increase job embeddedness and can reduce a degree of voluntary employee turnover.

Theme 4: Relationships

All six managers discussed the vital role relationships play in reducing voluntary employee turnover. Negative link relationships with supervisors can outweigh other strong embeddedness factors and lead to increased voluntary turnover (Hofaidhllaoui & Chhinzer, 2014). Relationships with managers and peers frame the close-knit team environment in each of the participant hotels. While still rooted in feeling valued and the organizational climate, the focus of this theme is the team environment.

Manager relationships. Employee relationships with managers can make or break the team structure. As P2 noted, "People leave jobs because of management...and not necessarily the job itself." P1 echoed, "When you work for a good boss or a good company, then that can really offset...other areas." Several participants stressed that hotel managers must know their team and the external factors that may affect team members. When employees know their manager will work with them to resolve issues from influences outside the hotel, they become more embedded in their positions (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017). P1 mentioned, "Every person has to have a life outside of work." P3 reiterated, "Regardless of what's going on in their personal life, this is their safe haven." According to P1, P3 and P4, to build cohesive teams in a hotel, employees need to know management is there for them for support and guidance. Talking through issues with employees and leveraging other supervisors, helps strengthen team bonds across the organization as well as within smaller teams. P5 emphasized building trust, communicating reasoning, and obtaining buy-in is key to effective hotel teams.

P1 and P6 warned that keeping clear relationship boundaries between managers and employees minimizes concerns about favoritism, targeting, or inappropriate behavior. Just and fair management practices enhance both interpersonal links and perception of fit, leading to increased job embeddedness (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017). All six participants expressed while employees know they can come to managers with ideas and concerns, the manager-employee relationship is still present. P3 stated, "We hold people accountable for their actions, but we don't hold them to a higher standard." "No favoritism...No one is more important than the next...whether it's the general manager to

the trash person," echoed P1. Hotel managers face the daunting task of balancing business and employee interests while setting the tone for all interactions in the hotel.

Peer relationships. For hotel employees, relationships with management is important, but the daily interaction with peers and teammates is of equal concern. Management sets the tone for interactions, but some relationships are outside the control of managers. P2 and P3 stressed the need employees have to "feel that somebody is on their side." P6 described, "I have two people on my team who just despise each other...but, when they are here, you wouldn't be able to tell." P5 explained, "People can get more interested in what others are doing than what they're supposed to be doing or their role, and they get distracted." Several participants described how setting the tone and helping employees feel like they fit in, is something managers can do to improve peer relationships.

According to P3, with a positive tone and open communication as part of the organizational culture, employees and managers work in "a relaxed environment...a family-centric environment." P5 suggested managers can get feedback on team and individual performance from peers, but must take into consideration the team dynamics. P1 and P5 warned that when employees are fearful of peer perceptions or what others think of their input, they tend to not ask questions or provide pertinent input resulting in poor performance and potential turnover.

The links and fit aspects of job embeddedness theory tie directly to employee interpersonal relationships with managers. P3 stated that employees want to feel they fit in with the rest of the team and can build positive links with team members. Employees

who feel a sense of linkage and fit with their teams feel less pressure on work-life balance

resulting in reduced voluntary employee turnover (McPhail et al., 2015). Supportive

management strategies and clear boundaries enhance links to management and fit with

the organization while positive peer relationships improve links and fit at the team level.

Applications to Professional Practice

The findings of this study are relevant to improved business practice because the

strategies hotel managers use to reduce voluntary employee turnover are very similar not

only in hotels, but applicable to other industries. The four main strategy themes are

relevant within the hotel subsector of hospitality and may inform managers in other

hospitality subsectors. The participant hotel managers each had individual emphasis at

the property level, but believed their tactics were not unique to hospitality management.

All six participants suggested their strategies were basic management tactics. According

to P5, "It's just people. If they like what they're doing then they're going to stay." P3

echoed, "Treat people like you want to be treated and they will be loyal to you and they'll

stay around." The participant managers described their employee base as small, focused

teams with heavy customer service requirements, but noted small teams in other

industries may use similar strategies effectively. The vivid descriptions of the strategies

and management behaviors in this type of team environment suggest these tactics may be

applicable to other types of businesses with similar structures.

The findings improve business practice by presenting current strategies hotel

managers use to reduce voluntary employee turnover. Hotel managers can use variations

of the four themes from this study to develop strategies to reduce voluntary employee

turnover in other populations. Managers can foster the perception of organizational support through flexibility at the property-level with creative recognition programs to enhance feelings of fit with the organization and links with the property team. Using individualized, open communication and showing interest in employee input builds links with management and helps employees feel like they fit in with the team. Similarly, managers show interest in employees' continual improvement by pointing out opportunities for advancement and cross training, which bolsters feelings of pride and benefits the property when employees consider the potential sacrifice of leaving. Strong, positive relationships with peers and managers may take effort to build, but cultivates a positive work environment, which can pay dividends in reducing voluntary employee turnover.

No single strategy worked for all employees and the same strategy may not work every time. Managers must recognize changes in the work environment and continually reassess the job embeddedness of their employees. Employees change and grow and their career intentions shift to accommodate new goals. By maintaining a balance of strategies and understanding each team member's perspectives, hotel managers can be effective in reducing voluntary employee turnover.

Implications for Social Change

The results of this study may help hotel managers create positive social change by implementing strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover at the property and organizational level. The high costs associated with voluntary employee turnover encourage managers to find ways to mitigate potential losses (Lu & Gursoy, 2016;

Moradi et al., 2014). Each participant mentioned a low level of turnover that managers

could not change. Participants also highlighted ways to focus limited resources through

prioritization of management strategies for maximum effectiveness for all employees. As

P2, P3, and P6 mentioned, when managers implement strategies to reduce voluntary

employee turnover, properties may see lower costs due to human resource requirements,

improved customer service, and stronger employee teams. Improvements to business

practices positively affect the work environment for employees, encourages positive

employee interactions and word-of-mouth support for the business, and subsequently

enhances positive social change through employee interactions.

Reduced voluntary employee turnover may not include directly improved pay or

financial benefit for employees. Low wages may be a hospitality industry hurdle, but

hotel managers also observed ineffectiveness of raises or financial bargaining to reduce

voluntary turnover. Of greater importance to social change is the personal and family

stability resulting from longevity, which strengthens the support for continued

employment. While not directly improving the financial status of employees and their

families, a positive and sustained employment environment enhances the mental and

social well-being of employees. The benefits to the employees, their family, and their

communities is indirect, but still linked to a positive working environment.

Recommendations for Action

Hotel managers may use the results of this study to tailor strategies to reduce

voluntary employee turnover. Hotel business leaders and human resource professionals

should promote organizational structures in which hotel managers can maintain

scheduling flexibility, recognition programs, and formal hiring and on-boarding processes. Even if the hotel is associated with a larger corporate headquarters, property-level management strategies can positively affect employee embeddedness. Through personal interactions strengthening links within the team and fit with the organizational structure, hotel managers can facilitate environments where employees feel valued for their contributions and ideas through personal interactions. Managers should also promote advancement and provide opportunities for cross training emphasizing the employee links to the management and tipping the employee perception of sacrifice in favor of remaining with the hotel. Hotel managers should also look to build and maintain a positive working relationship with their employees with clear boundaries and openly communicated expectations and responsibilities.

I provided an executive summary of the results of this study to each participant for their review and potential action. Upon request, I will present the findings in leadership conferences, professional forums, or training workshops. For academic reference and dissemination, the full study is available through ProQuest/UMI dissertation database searches.

Recommendations for Further Research

The findings of this study are limited by several factors other researchers could adjust in future studies to provide depth or additional insight into strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover. Both the population and sample were limited to hotels operating in the MidAtlantic region of the United States. Future studies may consider extending geographic boundaries to glean a more generalizable result. Hotel managers

are only one subset of leadership in the hotel sector just as hotels are only one subset of the larger hospitality industry. Future researchers may consider the perspectives of line supervisors, peer leaders, or senior level strategies to address voluntary employee turnover. Management perspectives are only part of the story of any leadership strategy used in business. A further perspective may include the employee perceptions of the effectiveness of the strategies their managers use to reduce voluntary employee turnover. The hospitality industry and the intricacies of both leadership and management strategies offer many possible avenues for future research.

The conceptual framework for this study was job embeddedness theory. Despite several studies of hotel employees, management strategies, and turnover through job embeddedness as the conceptual lens, there remain relatively few researchers using job embeddedness theory to explore turnover with populations outside of hospitality. As voluntary employee turnover is a concern for many industries, future researchers may consider job embeddedness theory as a framework for exploring management strategies in industries other than hospitality.

The population for this study was hotel managers in independent and chain hotels with under 399 rooms who cater to business travelers and airports. Future researchers may find different strategies used by managers in resorts, casinos, or other large hotel properties. Future research of the management strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover used in other subsectors of hospitality, such as restaurants, bar and beverage, or entertainment may provide additional insight.

The time in hotels, in management, and in the hospitality industry varied widely for the participants in this study. To glean varied perspectives on strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover from both new and established managers, participation required no minimum or maximum time in the position. Future research may explore differences in strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover from perspectives of new managers, established managers, and managers who have managed multiple properties over the course of their careers. Future researchers may also glean insight by exploring comparative perspectives on reducing voluntary employee turnover from managers who previously managed in other industries who now manage hotel properties.

Reflections

My experience in the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) was extremely challenging while being exceptionally rewarding. The greatest challenge was the amount of time required while my professional and family life continued. I enrolled in the DBA program without having prior scholarly work in business administration. While it took some time to learn how to be clear, concise, and precise, the practice in business writing and presentation style enhanced my professional communication.

I gained a deeper insight into voluntary employee turnover, which is very important in my professional career. This study helped me explore ways other industry managers reduce voluntary employee turnover which might help my organization. I had some preconceptions about strategies hotel managers might use to reduce voluntary employee turnover. I thought wages and benefits would have a stronger impact on retention than the participants indicated. I had often stayed in hotels, and had a general

idea of the workload, types of work, and management practices. I knew the average wage for hotel employees was very low. Before starting this line of research, I did not understand how a friendly atmosphere and positive working conditions could outweigh the financial aspect of a job.

Completing the DBA program enhanced my critical and creative thinking, helped me develop a holistic problem-solving approach to challenges, and taught me the true meaning of perseverance. I now have a keen understanding of how different research methods support and inform each other, the essential elements of research design with appropriate measures of performance and effectiveness, and how to package findings and results with an emphasis on feasibility and time for business practice.

Conclusion

The global annual cost to businesses of employee turnover and the associated decreased productivity, morale, and burnout ranges in the billions of dollars (McManus & Mosca, 2015; Lu & Gursoy, 2016). In the hotel subsector, hiring and retaining high performing employees to provide consistent customer service is vital for continued success (Oladapo, 2014). The focus of this study was to discover strategies hotel managers use to reduce voluntary employee turnover using job embeddedness theory as a conceptual lens. Six hotel managers participated in semistructured interviews and review of public corporate documents provided insight into effective strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover.

Four strategy themes emerged from data analysis: (a) organizational support , (b) feeling valued, (c) opportunities, and (d) relationships. The findings indicate hotel

managers implemented effective strategies such as flexible schedules, recognition programs, making employees feel valued members of a team, providing opportunities for advancement, and maintained positive relationships with and among employees. The conceptual framework provided insight into both the internal organizational factors influencing employee decisions to stay at a job, as well as the external influences which affect employee decisions. The findings also suggest the strategies used by hotel managers are not unique to the subsector, but could be applicable to the broader hospitality industry or to other industries.

As in many businesses, each participant manager recognized the unavoidability of performance based involuntary turnover and a low level of voluntary turnover due to misconceptions about the job. Each manager stressed the importance of setting clear expectations from the start, communicating changes, and formalizing processes would minimize the inevitable turnover levels. However, manager strategies including relationship building, individualized interactions, and flexible tailorable options for training and recognition gleaned the highest return on investment for employee retention. Celebrating small victories and accomplishments as well as encouraging advancement and helping employees achieve goals enhances job embeddedness and reduces voluntary employee turnover.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Interview: Hotel Manager Strategies to Reduce Voluntary Employee Turnover

A. In the initial communication with potential participants, I will include the following screening criteria questions:

    1. Are you over the age of 18 and a legal resident of the United States?

    2. Are you fluent in English?

    3. Are you currently employed by a hotel operating in (the population geographic area)?

    4. Have you successfully implemented strategies to reduce voluntary turnover in your current or previous organizations?

B. At the beginning of the face-to-face interview, I will thank the participant for their assistance, introduce myself, and introduce the interview topic.

C. I will present the informed consent form. I will point out the requirement to audio record the interview for transcription and analysis, with emphasis on the member check and approval process. I will also highlight the confidentiality portion and the contact information for questions, concerns, or potential for withdraw from the study. I will bring two consent forms, so the participant has the option to take a hard copy with them at the end of the interview.

D. Following the signing of the consent form, I will ask if the participant is ready to begin.

E. Once the participant indicates they are ready to begin the interview, I will start the audio recorder, state the date and participant identification code, and initiate the interview questions.

F. The interview will last between 30 and 45 minutes for the main interview questions, follow-up and clarification questions. The interview and clarification questions are included in Appendix B.

G. During the interview, I will observe and record non-verbal cues, ask probing questions, and clarify as necessary. At the end of the scripted interview questions, I will ask if the participant has anything they would like to add, or if there were points I did not address.

H. At the conclusion of the interview, I will again thank the participant for their time and responses. I will end the audio recording, and explain to the participant I will have the interview transcription and observational notes returned to them via email within five days for their review and approval. Sample conclusion includes:

   Thank you for participating in this study. My next step will be to transcribe the audio recording of this interview, incorporate my notes and write the interview summary. Once complete, may I send the combined transcript to you to check and validate I have captured both your words and meaning within your intended context?

I. After all the interviews are complete, transcribed, and analyzed; I will provide a brief overview of the emergent themes to the participants for member-checking.

J. At the conclusion of the study, I will provide the participant a summary of the study findings for their review and records.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

I will use the following questions and probes for semistructured interviews with participants to collect data.

Interview Questions:

1. What strategies do you use to reduce voluntary employee turnover?

2. What strategies have you used in the past to reduce voluntary employee turnover?

    a. What strategies have worked well in your organization?

    b. What strategies have not worked as well as you would have liked?

3. What are the most effective strategies to reduce employee turnover?

    a. What do you think made these strategies more effective than others?

4. What are the least effective strategies to reduce employee turnover?

    a. What do you think made these strategies less effective than others?

5. In what ways have you modified strategies to reduce employee turnover to improve effectiveness?

6. What additional information can you share regarding your strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover?

Appendix C: Sample Correspondence

Sample Phone Script:

1. Standard questions to route to a manager/supervisory staff personnel

        script Good Morning/Afternoon! My name is Christl Kroeten and I am a
doctoral student at Walden University. I am studying the strategies hotel managers in the
MidAtlantic region of the United States use to reduce voluntary turnover in their
organizations. I am currently scheduling face-to-face interviews with hospitality
managers and supervisory staff to explore current business practices. If you choose to
participate, interviews will take approximately 30-45 minutes. I cannot provide any
financial incentives for participation. Your participation may provide valuable insight for
other managers seeking to reduce voluntary turnover.

        Would you be willing to participate in this study?

2. If positive response, continue with screening questions. If negative response, thank
them for their time and end call)

        script First, I will need to ask some screening criteria questions to determine
your eligibility to participate in this study.

        Are you a legal resident of the United States over the age of 18?

        Are you fluent in English?

        Are you a hotel manager or senior supervisor employed by a hotel operating in the
MidAtlantic region of the United States ?

        Have you successfully implemented strategies to reduce voluntary turnover in
either your current or previous businesses?

3. If the prospective participant provides a negative response to one or more questions, I will politely end the conversation and thank the person for their time. If the prospective participant provides positive responses, I will continue to schedule an interview.

script When would be a good time for us to meet for an interview?

4. Await response, answer questions, schedule time, and obtain valid email and phone.

script I will send you a confirmation email shortly with the agreed upon date and time of the interview. Thank you so very much for your time and assistance! I look forward to meeting with you soon!

Confirmation email:

Date: [Insert Date]

Re: Request to Participate in a Research Study

Dear [Recipient Name]:

My name is Christl Kroeten and I am a student at Walden University pursuing a Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA) degree. Per our phone discussion, I am conducting a research study exploring the strategies hospitality managers use to reduce voluntary turnover. I am conducting individual face-to-face interviews with managers in the MidAtlantic region of the United States to gain an understanding of the methods currently used in business practice to address voluntary turnover. I would like to help hospitality managers understand the means they use to recognize, address, and mitigate turnover within their businesses.

Upon completion of the interview, I will transcribe the interview, add my notes and potential themes, and provide to you via email for member checking. This process ensures I transcribed the interview accurately and I have captured the meaning and context of our discussion. At any time, if you wish to cease or withdraw your participation in this study, please contact me directly via phone or email below.

Thank you very much for your consideration and I look forward to meeting with you at [agreed upon location] [agreed upon time]. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

Christl A. Kroeten

DBA Student, Walden University