


2018

# Strategies for Reducing Employee Turnover in Retail Outlets

Dewayne Wilson  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Dewayne Wilson

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the review committee have been made.

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Walden University  
2018

Abstract

Strategies for Reducing Employee Turnover in Retail Outlets

by

Dewayne Wilson

MBA, Strayer University, 2013

BS, Strayer University, 2010

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

October 2018

## Abstract

Employee turnover in the retail industry is costly, difficult, and problematic, affecting organizational wages, benefits, and schedules in relation to serving clients, customers, and stakeholders. The purpose of this multiple case study was to explore effective strategies used by retail store owners in the southeastern region of the United States to reduce employee turnover. The target population was 6 successful business owners of 6 small retail businesses in the southeastern United States who had effectively reduced employee turnover. The conceptual framework for this study was the Herzberg 2-factor theory related to workplace job satisfaction. Data were collected through face-to-face, semistructured interviews and review of archival company documents related to employee turnover. Data were coded, analyzed into themes using Yin's 5-step method, triangulated, and validated by member checking to strengthen the credibility of the analyses. Three themes emerged: effective communication, supportive leadership, and competitive compensation reduced employee turnover. The implications for positive social change include the potential to provide leaders with effective strategies to reduce employee turnover, leading to reductions in unemployment, stabilization of communities, and improvements to the human and social conditions outside the workplace.

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## Dedication

Notably, I dedicate this doctoral study to God Almighty and Jesus Christ; without them, this study would not be possible. I would like to personally thank my family and friends because without them I would not be the person I am today. I also want to thank my classmates for supporting me during my doctoral studies. I dedicate this doctoral study to my past and present teachers, instructors, mentors, coaches, trainers, professors, and educators. I hope my achievement will inspire others. I am poised that I am setting an example of personal growth for future generations. You all have been extremely valuable to my life. I thank you, thank you, and thank you with all my heart.

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## Section 1: Foundation of the Study

### **Background of the Problem**

Hom, Shaw, and Hausknecht (2017) stated that employee turnover has attracted the attention of scholars and practitioners for over a century. Employee decisions to leave an organization are various. Employee turnover can lead to losses in efficiency and can negatively affect financial performance (Gupta, Kumar, & Singh, 2014). Employee turnover is vital to any organization and can affect the bottom line. Employee turnover is a permanent exit from an organization, following other withdrawal behaviors, such as lateness, absenteeism, low morale, and stress (Avanzi, Fraccaroli, Sarchielli, Ullrich, & van Dick, 2014). Employee turnover has a major impact on costs, performance, and job satisfaction. The U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015) reported that there was a monthly escalation of over 600,000 employee turnovers from 2013 to 2015. Retail leaders must manage employee turnover efficiently to reduce the adverse effects on organizations and the economy.

Key workers promote business sustainability, which results in profitability and the achievement of stakeholders' expectations (Martin, 2016). Many factors contribute to employee turnover; some of these factors are wages, benefits, workload, and schedules. Replacing employees can affect clients, customers, and stakeholders. There are several opportunities for researchers to build on the present and past research studies (Cho, Rutherford, Friend, Hamwi, & Park, 2017). Additional research on employee turnover is necessary to provide organizations with new strategies to increase employee retention.

### **Problem Statement**

High employee turnover is costly in the retail industry due to poor job performance, low morale, and low productivity (McManus & Mosca, 2015). The United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015) acknowledged the annual employee retail turnover rate increased from 26.8% in 2011 to 33.5% in 2014. The general business problem is small business retail leaders are losing critical knowledge from seasoned employees because of employee turnover resulting in increased costs and revenue loss. The specific business problem is some small retail business leaders lack effective strategies to reduce employee turnover.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies small retail business leaders use to reduce employee turnover. The target population comprised of six successful business owners of six small retail businesses in the southeastern region of the United States, who had effectively reduced employee turnover. The results of this study may contribute to positive social change if leaders apply effective strategies to reduce employee turnover rates, leading to reductions in unemployment, stabilization of communities, and improvements to the human and social conditions outside the workplace.

### **Nature of the Study**

I selected the qualitative method for this research study. Qualitative research entails multiple interactive and humanistic methods to explore a particular topic (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Qualitative research is based on context and is evolving

(Marshall & Rossman, 2016). In contrast, a quantitative method involves an experimental or survey design to examine and test hypotheses about relationships or differences among variables. The mixed method involves both quantitative and qualitative research methods to gain new understandings of a phenomenon of importance (Venkatesh, Brown, & Bala, 2013). A quantitative or mixed method study was not appropriate for this study because I did not intend to examine variables' statistical relationships or differences.

In a case study design, researchers use multiple types of data. These include open-ended questions in a semistructured interview to elicit information on an event or situation and to identify and explain a phenomenon (Yin, 2014). Case studies are suitable for answering *what*, *how*, or *why* something happened or came about (Yin, 2014). A case study was the proper design for this research study because my intent was to explore in-depth strategies employed by retail store owners to reduce employee turnover.

Immersive data collection over a protracted period is the focus of ethnographic studies, while researchers using phenomenological designs explore the meanings of participants' lived experiences without regard for time or boundaries (Gill, 2014). Narrative researchers explore the personal biographical experiences of participants without regard for time or boundaries (Gill, 2014). Ethnography, phenomenology, and narrative design were not appropriate for this study

### **Research Question**

What strategies do small retail business leaders use to reduce employee turnover?

### **Interview Questions**

1. Based on your experiences, how does employee turnover affect your organization?
2. What strategies have you used to reduce employee turnover?
3. What methods did you find worked best to reduce employee turnover?
4. How did your employees respond to your techniques to reduce employee turnover?
5. How does your organization track employee turnover?
6. How does your organization assess the effectiveness of your organization's strategies for reducing employee turnover?
7. What other experiences, not covered in this interview, would you like to share about the strategies your organization has used to reduce employee turnover?

### **Conceptual Framework**

The theory I selected as the conceptual framework for this study is centered on the Herzberg two factor theory. The Herzberg two factor theory, developed in 1959 by Frederick Herzberg, is constructed on the factors in the workplace that cause satisfaction for the job and a separate set of factors that contribute to employee dissatisfaction (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959). I chose the Herzberg two factor theory to explore the issues in the workplace that cause low morale, poor job performance, and low productivity to contribute to employee turnover. Herzberg (1959) indicated motivation and job satisfaction influenced an employee's decision to leave a job. Herzberg (1959) examined strategies that small business owners use to reduce employee turnover in their



organizations. Acikgoz, Sumer, and Sumer (2016) asserted that poor job performance, low morale, and low productivity are the major concerns related to employee turnover. Additionally, Acikgoz, Sumer, and Sumer (2016) stated both intrinsic and extrinsic motives influence employee retention and consideration was given to his theory when examining employee turnover. The conceptual framework was appropriate for examining the strategies retail outlets use to address intrinsic and extrinsic remedies for reducing employee turnover.

### **Operational Definitions**

*Employee engagement:* An increase in the emotional and intellectual commitment an employee expresses toward their job, manager, or organization, that frequently results in the employee exerting additional effort (Kumar & Pansari, 2016).

*Employee motivation:* The desire of a person to achieve an objective. Employees often achieve goals when they are motivated; when they are not motivated, goals are typically not met (Herzberg et al., 1959).

*Employee turnover:* A reduction in the number of employees who plan to leave their jobs (Katsikea, Theodosiou, & Morgan, 2015).

*Job satisfaction:* A combination of attitude and emotions influenced by internal and external factors that individuals feel about the job they are performing (Guan, et al., 2013).

*Productivity:* The amount of work an employee performs on the job to increase the organization's profits (Cording, Harrison, Hoskisson, & Jonsen, 2014).

*Retention:* An effort by a business to maintain a working environment which supports current staff in remaining with the company (Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013).

*Work environment:* Existing circumstances affecting labor in the workplace, including job hours, physical aspects, legal rights and responsibility, organizational climate, and workload (Ali, Ali, & Adan, 2013).

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

Nedevska, Ognjenović, and Gusakova, (2016) stated that assumptions are those things researchers take for granted in the study, limitations are those elements the researcher has no control over, and delimitations are those things the researcher can control.

#### **Assumptions**

Scholars must report unverified facts as assumptions (Aastrup & Halldorsson, 2013). Researchers' assumptions influence how they interpret and analyze data (Kirkwood & Price, 2013). I had three assumptions in this study. The first assumption was that retail store leaders are involved in the implementation of employee retention strategies. The second assumption was that participants would be honest, truthful, and unbiased when answering interview questions. The third assumption was that interviewees would respond to interview questions with truthful information.

#### **Limitations**

Maskara (2014) stated participants' honesty and their ability to provide dependable information affect the accuracy of the findings. I had four limitations in this study. The first limitation was that participants might not relay all the details related to

the strategies they utilize to reduce employee turnover. The second limitation was that bias could potentially influence my approach and analysis of data. An individual's memory serves critical functions in everyday life but is also susceptible to biases, errors, and illusions that affect a person's ability to accurately remember past experiences (You, 2015). The third limitation was that the value of collected data hinges on the truthfulness and experience of the participants. The fourth limitation was time and accessibility of archival documents.

### **Delimitations**

Delimitations are boundaries or restrictions researchers impose on a project to limit its scope (Childers, 2014). I had three delimitations in this study. The first delimitation was that only small retail business leaders in Memphis, Tennessee, were the participants in this study. The second delimitation was that only retail store leaders who had experience implementing effective employee turnover strategies participated in the study. The third delimitation was that only retention strategies in the retail industry are studied.

### **Significance of the Study**

#### **Contribution to Business Practice**

Wilson (2014) stated that the purpose of business research is to provide information for business leaders to make suitable decisions for the advancement of their businesses. Understanding strategies business leaders may implement to reduce employee turnover is significant for improving profitability and business (Mitchell, Obeidats, & Bray, 2013). Reducing the problem of unexpected staffing changes may

improve organizational effectiveness, as suggested by Delmar, McKelvie, and Wennberg (2013). When business leaders employ effective strategies with employees, service and quality increase, which influences customer satisfaction, employee retention, and productivity while improving financial performance in the retail industry (Frey, Bayón, & Totzek, 2013). As small business owners develop effective strategies to reduce employee turnover, the owners may contribute to social change with better business practices. The results of this study may lead to the development of strategic options that generate financial savings for organizations and help retail leaders reduce employee turnover to

### **Implications for Social Change**

Successful businesses create opportunities that bring positive social change to the communities they serve (Steiner & Atterton, 2014). Additionally, Saha (2014) proposed social change begins with community leaders, small business owners, pastors, friends, families, and people who live in the area who share their success stories, inspiring others to learn, and change together for a better future. The results of this study may contribute to positive social change by modifying the employer's view of employees and that may increase the quality of the employees work life to stabilize the community and improve the human and social conditions outside the workplace.

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

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies small retail business leaders use to reduce employee turnover. The target population was six business owners of six small retail businesses in the southeastern region of the United States who effectively reduced employee turnover. The results of this study may

contribute to positive social change if leaders apply effective strategies to reduce employee turnover rates, leading to reductions in unemployment, stabilization of communities, and improvements to the human and social conditions outside the workplace.

This literature review is evidence regarding what leads to employee turnover and potential retention strategies in retail outlets, including concepts that help researchers understand human motivators created by Frederick Herzberg. The review of literature for this study starts with the background of leadership as the foundation for understanding the importance of small businesses as they contribute to business practice.

The vast research on leadership theories started as early as the 1930s using traits to define different styles (Northouse, 2013). The literature review includes the following themes: leadership theories; implementation strategies through effective leadership; employee turnover; turnover intentions and employee retention in small business; cost and profitability; employee morale, performance, and productivity; references relating to the conceptual framework; alternate theories; and employee turnover reduction strategies.

The literature review contains an assessment of the content of the literature that involves a critical analysis and synthesis of various sources. The objective of this research study was to determine strategies retail outlets employ to address employee turnover. I used the following keywords during my search: *employee retention, small business turnover, employee turnover, human resources and turnover, small business owners, job satisfaction, turnover, business profits, small business revenue, leadership theories, salary and turnover, small business growth, employee morale, and turnover*

*reduction strategies.* In this literature review I highlight previous peer-reviewed research regarding employee turnover.

Table 1

*Literature Review Reference Content*

Reference type	Total	< 5 Years	> 5 Years	% < 5 Years
Peer-reviewed journals	219	204	15	93%
Books	14	12	2	86%
Government websites	4	3	1	75%
Non-peer-reviewed journals	0	0	0	0.00%
Total	237	219	18	87%

The review of literature contains a summary of previous research comparing and contrasting research study methods and findings. The review of the professional and academic literature was helpful in (a) providing evidence of research study, (b) evaluating sources, (c) locating reliable information on research study, (d) identifying literature that contributes to the research study, and (e) defining background information like definitions and history. A literature review provides a new understanding for researchers and scholars on how a study corresponds to existing research while adding significant contributions to existing literature (Shepard, 2013). This literature review is a

discussion of theories and factors that affect employee turnover and strategies business leaders may utilize to reduce employee turnover.

### **Herzberg Two-factor Theory**

Herzberg's two-factor theory was the conceptual framework for this research study. The Herzberg two-factor theory, developed in 1959, concerns factors in the workplace that cause satisfaction for the job and a separate set of factors that contribute to employee dissatisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). I chose the Herzberg two-factor theory to examine the issues that may affect employee turnover to gain a deeper understanding of employee satisfaction and dissatisfaction factors of a job. Herzberg (1974) indicated that motivation and job satisfaction influenced an employee's decision to leave a job (Herzberg et al., 1959). I used the Herzberg's two-factor theory in this study to explore strategies small business owners use to reduce employee turnover in their organization. Communication between employees and owners reflecting a caring and supportive work environment and relationship may lead to a decrease in employee turnover (Allen & Shanock, 2013). The incorporation of Herzberg's two-factor theory into the conceptual framework of the study aided in the identification and investigation of small business owners' strategies for reducing employee turnover.

Herzberg (2003) identified several motivators associated with employees maintaining high job satisfaction, which is collectively described using Herzberg's motivation theory. The identified hygiene factors include working conditions, salaries, benefits, job security, quality of supervision, great interpersonal relationships, company policy and administration, and work-life balance (Herzberg, 2003). Herzberg also

identified a set of motivating factors: a sense of personal achievement, status, recognition, promotion, growth, an opportunity for advancement, responsibility, and challenging work. Herzberg (2003) indicated that when in place, these factors can result in high motivation, high satisfaction, and a strong commitment among employees. Furthermore, Herzberg (2003) recognized that the approaches reviewed explained the logic associated with reasons for employee turnover and what may encourage employees to remain in their positions.

Bell, Sutanto, Baldwin, and Holloway (2014) asserted the motivator-hygiene theory has specific extrinsic motivators, such as salary, rank, and job security and may be associated with lower levels of job dissatisfaction. Lower levels of job dissatisfaction can yield increased job satisfaction, which can lead to employee retention (Bell et al., 2014). Ryan and Ebbert (2013) proposed that Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory is repeatedly applied in employee turnover research. Furthermore, Ryan and Ebbert stated that employees are not content with low pay. Gerhart and Fang (2014) explored and referenced factors that affected employee turnover by using the two-factor theory. Herzberg found that once these factors were properly implemented, job satisfaction is high, and dissatisfaction becomes avoidable.

According to Milyavskaya, Philippe, and Koestner (2013), employees working in low paying jobs tend to have few or limited benefits and would resign if, within the same industry, other employers offered higher pay rates. Herzberg (1959) asserted that leaders could promote high employee retention, increase job satisfaction, lower the turnover rate, reduce job dissatisfaction, and increase productivity if employers meet the needs of the



employees. The hygiene factors noted by Herzberg (1959) influenced employees' motivation to leave their job but not their motivation to continue to work with the organization. Herzberg (1959) described five intrinsic motivating factors that could cause satisfaction and five extrinsic hygiene factors that are related to dissatisfaction. The motivating factors are recognition, achievement, the work itself, the opportunity for advancement, and responsibility. The hygiene factors are salary, relationships with supervisors, supervision quality, company policies and administrative practices, and relationships with peers.

### **Leadership Theories - Eight Major Leadership Theories**

Leadership is summarized as the pattern of actions used by an influential individual to affect the behavior of others (Gonos & Gallo, 2013; McDermott, Conway, Rousseau, & Flood, 2013). As documented by Smit (2013), responsible leaders are necessary to face the challenges of business operations. Leadership is the ability to influence others. There is a need of leadership in every organization. The quality of leadership is imperative in the success or failure of an organization. Northouse (2015) defined leadership as a process in which a person has an influence on a group of people to accomplish a general objective. Some theories attempt to identify the behaviors that people can embrace to improve their own leadership abilities in different situations. The importance of leadership theories is observed easily within the organizational sciences and particularly within the leadership field, which has witnessed a proliferation of theories over the last decade (Northouse, 2015). In fact, a recent review of the leadership literature identified 66 separate theories in the published work since 2000

(Dinh et al., 2014). Leadership theories try to determine *how* and *why* certain people become leaders.

### **Great Man Theory**

The great man theory is a 19th-century idea according to which history can be largely explained by the impact of great men, or heroes, highly influential individuals who, because of their personal charisma, intelligence, wisdom, or political skill used their power in a way that had a decisive historical impact (Ball, 2012). Thomas Carlyle (1841), a social philosopher, asserted that great men were sent by God to be heroes and these heroes became leaders through the righteous process of hero worship. The great man theory of leadership states that some people are born with the necessary attributes that set them apart from others and that these traits are responsible for their assuming positions of power and authority. William James (1897) defended this brand of hero worship as an effective way to combat the growing trend toward nomothetic research in psychology and sociology. Ball (2012) proclaimed a leader is a hero who accomplishes goals against all odds for his followers. Furthermore, Ball (2012) indicated that those in power deserve to be there because of their distinctive talent under the great man theory.

Carlyle (1841) suggested that all great leaders share these characteristics regardless of when and where they lived or the precise role in history that they fulfilled. Some of the original research on leadership observed people who were already successful leaders. Sociologist Herbert Spencer (1896) suggested that leaders were products of the society in which they lived.

One of the key problems with the great man theory of leadership is that not all people who possess the so-called natural leadership qualities become great leaders (Spencer, 1896). Research has instead found that leadership is a surprisingly complex subject and that numerous factors influence how much success a leader will have. These individuals often included aristocratic rulers who achieved their positions through birthright.

### **Trait Theories**

Gordon Allport (1937) is often identified as the father of trait theory (and is one of the original founders of humanist psychology). He hypothesized that each person's personality is composed of several different trait subsystems. Allport (1937) later changed the word *trait* to the phrase *personal disposition* in an attempt to clarify what he was measuring: the unique characteristics of a person. Allport's (1937) trait theory created the foundation for research conducted by other researchers, such as Maslow and Cattell. Thompson (2017) stated that trait theories often identify a particular personality or behavioral characteristics shared by leaders. Psychologists such as Watson and Skinner (1931) disagreed with the psychoanalytic and trait researchers. Furthermore, Watson and Skinner strongly believed one did not need to contrast with the mental processes and structures to create a good theory of personality. Skinner (1931) stated the environment shapes, molds, and defines one's personality. Numerous studies have analyzed the traits among existing leaders in the optimism of revealing those responsible for one's leadership abilities.

## **Contingency Theories**

Suh (2014) suggested that there is no one leadership style or the nature of those being led. Furthermore, Suh (2014) suggested that contingency theories of leadership are focused on certain variables related to the environment that might determine which particular style of leadership is best suited for the situation. The leader's ability to lead is provisional upon various situational factors, including the leader's preferred style, the competencies and behaviors of followers, and other situational factors. The contingency theory of leadership was proposed by the Austrian psychologist Fred Edward Fiedler in his landmark 1964 article, "A Contingency Model of Leadership Effectiveness." Fiedler (1967) and his associates studied leaders in a variety of contexts but mostly in a military context and their model is based on their research findings. Fiedler (1967) confirmed that Contingency theory has historically sought to develop generalizations about the formal structures that would fit the use of different technologies.

Theorists such as Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) recognized that companies who operate in less stable environments functioned more effectively if the organizational structure was less formalized, more decentralized, and more reliant on mutual adjustment between various departments in the company. Companies operating in more stable and certain environments functioned more effectively if the organization was more formalized, centralized in the decision making, and less reliant on mutual adjustment between departments (Williams, Ashill, & Naumann, 2017). Similarly, these companies probably do not need a high degree of differentiation of subtasks and integration between units. Burns and Stalker (1994) discovered similar results in their research, in which they

explained that organizations operating in more stable environments tend to exhibit a more mechanistic organizational structure whereby companies operating in more dynamic and uncertain environments tend to show a more organic organizational structure. Business leaders should look at the contingencies of the environment; assess whether the organization is capable of handling the uncertainties of the environment, and whether the organization is able to process the required amount of information (Fiedler, 1967). Contingency theory is similar to situational theory in that there is an assumption of no simple one right way.

The main difference is that situational theory tends to focus more on the behaviors that the leader should adopt, given situational factors, whereas contingency theory takes a broader view that includes contingent factors about leader capability and other variables within the situation (Fiedler, 1967). An effect of this is that leaders who are effective at one place and time may become unsuccessful either when transplanted to another situation or when the factors around them change. Although current contingency theories are heavily dependent on systems concepts, they have failed to fully integrate a total systems perspective (Qiu, Haobin, Hung, & York, 2015). Additionally, Qiu et al. (2015) claimed a thorough analysis of the internal behavior of the organization cannot be obtained. The contingency theory contains details of the importance of both the leader's personality and the situation in which that leader operates.

### **Situational Theories**

Shine Pintor and Hety (2016) stated situational theories propose that leaders choose the best course of action based upon situational variables. Additionally, Shine

Pintor and Hety (2016) indicated it all depends on the situation and which type of leadership and strategies are best suited to the task. Conferring to this theory, the most effective leaders are those that are able to adapt their style to the situation and recognize signs, such as the type of task, the nature of the group, and other factors that might contribute to goal accomplishment. Nevarez, Wood, and Penrose (2013) indicated the situation approach to leadership avoids the pitfalls of the single-style approach. Leaders must be able to assess a situation and the maturity levels of subordinates in order to determine what approach will be the most effective at any given moment (Shine Pintor & Hety, 2016). Moreover, Shine Pintor and Hety (2016) recognized there are many different ways of dealing with a problem. Hersey and Blanchard (1982) proclaimed situational theories provide greater consideration to the complexity of dynamic social situations and the many individuals acting in different roles who will ultimately contribute to the outcome. The situational leadership II (or SLII model) was developed by Kenneth Blanchard and builds on Blanchard and Hersey's original theory (Shine Pintor and Hety, 2016). According to the revised version of the theory, effective leaders must base their behavior on the developmental level of group members for specific tasks. The developmental level is determined by each individual's level of competence and commitment. Hersey and Blanchard (1982) focused on four different leadership behaviors based on the levels of directive and supportive behavior:

- Telling is where the leader demonstrates high directive behavior and low supportive behavior.

- Selling is where the leader demonstrates high directive behavior and high supportive behavior.
- Participating is where the leader demonstrates low directive behavior and high supportive behavior.
- Delegating is where the leader demonstrates low directive behavior and low supportive behavior.

This style limits the creative potential of any individual who has been doing a task for an extended period of time. A leader should move on from this style after some experience and credibility are earned by the individual. Instead of telling them exactly what to do, the leader sells them the idea and gives them some level of independence and autonomy to perform the task. The success of this style will be dependent on how much the subordinates are persuaded. Zigarmi and Roberts (2017) asserted when there is no salary or wages, the followers a leader has is a very good reflection of how well he has sold to his team.

### **Behavioral Theories**

Fishman (2016) specified behaviorism, also known as behavioral psychology, is a theory of learning based on the idea that all behaviors are acquired through conditioning. Conditioning occurs through interaction with the environment. Furthermore, McLeod, Hine, Please, and Driver (2015) stated behaviorists believe that our responses to environmental stimuli shape our actions. Agreeing with this school of thought, behavior can be studied in a systematic and observable manner regardless of internal mental states. Behaviorism was formally established with the 1913 publication of Watson's classic

paper, *Psychology as the Behaviorist Views It*. From the 1920s through the mid-1950s, behaviorism grew to become the prevailing school of thought in psychology. Some researchers suggested the acceptance of behavioral psychology grew out of the aspiration to establish psychology as an objective and measurable science.

Behavioral experiments have demonstrated that people do cooperate in common dilemmas (Janssen & Jacopo, 2017). Behavioral theories of leadership do not seek inborn traits or capabilities. Rationally, they look at what leaders actually *do*. The Behavioral theory assumes that leadership capability is learned rather than being inherent. Behavioral theories of leadership are based on the belief that great leaders are made, not born (Janssen, Anderies, Pérez, & Yu, 2015). Strict behaviorists believed that any person can potentially be trained to perform any task, regardless of genetic background, personality traits, and internal thoughts. The situation only requires the right conditioning.

### **Participative Theories**

Participative leadership theories suggest that the ideal leadership style is one that takes the input of others into account (Ingram, Caruana, & McCabe, 2017). These leaders encourage participation and contributions from group members and help group members feel more relevant and committed to the decision-making process. Participatory leadership is used today by a significant number of companies and organizations. Understanding how it works will allow individuals, either as a manager or employee, to better function in an organization that uses it. Ingram et al. (2017) asserted Participatory leadership is a style of management where decisions are made with the most feasible



amount of participation from those who are affected by the decisions. A form of participatory leadership is representative participation whereby a group of employees is involved in organizational decision making. This type of participatory leadership is more dominant in Europe where employees may serve on councils or even on the board of directors. Another form, more common in the United States, is participatory management, in which subordinates share a degree of joint decision making with their immediate supervisor (Suh, 2014). One basis of support for this theory is that participation satisfies an employee's higher-level needs. The influence of psychologist Abraham Maslow (1943) and his hierarchy of needs on participatory leadership has been one of the most extensively referenced publications in the past 46 years. Two of his concepts are important for our purposes: deficiency motivation and growth motivation. If people are deficiency-motivated, they act to try to alleviate the need for something, such as money or shelter. If people are growth-motivated, they seek psychological growth and the development and fulfillment of your potential.

Employees that are deficiency motivated may function well under a bureaucratic and hierarchical management structure but those motivated by growth may not, which they may find dehumanizing (Bouzenita & Boulanouar, 2016). In participative leadership, the leader defers to the team for input, ideas, and observations instead of making all decisions on his or her own. Participative leadership involves the entire team. Participative leadership lends a multitude of solutions and ideas to problems and other questions that arise in a company or organization. Bouzenita and Boulanouar (2016) contended participative leadership should not be confused with laissez-fair leadership. In

laissez-faire leadership, the leader gives the power of decision making to the group along with the materials needed to make that decision. While this type of leadership style may work in certain situations, such as when a decision must be made about something the leader is not familiar with, in many instances participative leadership works better.

### **Management Theories**

Management theories, also known as transactional theories, focus on the role of supervision, organization, and group performance (Bosse & Phillips, 2016). These theories base leadership on a system of rewards and punishments. Managerial theories are often used in business; when employees are successful, they are rewarded; when they fail, they are reprimanded or punished. Frederic Taylor (2013) was first to analyze human behavior scientifically with his machine model by making individuals into the equivalent of machine parts. He broke down the tasks to its smallest units to decide the best approach. After careful analysis of the job, workers were trained to do only those motions essential to the task. Taylor (2013) attempted to make a science for each element of work, restrict behavioral alternatives facing workers, looked at the interaction of human characteristics, social environment, task, physical environment, capacity, speed, durability, and cost. Taylor's machine model was a success and did increase production and profitability because rational rules replaced trial and error and management became more formalized, which led to increased efficiency. However, Taylor's treatment of human beings like machines faced resistance from managers and workers who considered this method of working as *the dehumanization of work*. One of the other features of Taylor's work was stop-watch timing as the basis of observations

and breaking the timings down into elements. This method also faced stiff group resistance because no one likes to be so closely monitored for each part of the work he or she does. Despite its criticisms, Taylor's methods had a great impact on work because he invented a new, efficient, and more productive way to work that changed the complete nature of the industry. Efficiency and productivity are the desired results.

Scientific management seeks to improve the business process starting with factory *shop* management. Management theories are implemented to help increase organizational productivity and service quality (Cameron & Green, 2015). Many managers do not use a particular theory or concept when implementing strategies in the workplace. Management theory addresses how managers and supervisors relate to their organizations in the knowledge of its goals, the implementation of effective means to get the goals accomplished, and how to motivate employees to perform to the highest standard (Bosse & Phillips, 2016). They use a combination or a number of theories, depending on the workplace, purpose, and workforce.

### **Relationship Theories**

Relationship leadership theory describes leaders who are primarily motivated by and concerned with their interactions with people (Braun, Peus, Weisweiler, & Frey, 2013). Relationship leaders often act as mentors to their subordinates. Relationship theories, also known as transformational theories, focus upon the connections formed between leaders and followers. Transformational leaders motivate and inspire people by helping group members realize the importance and higher good of the task. These leaders are focused on the performance of group members but also want each person to

fulfill his or her potential. Leaders with this style often have high ethical and moral standards.

Burns (1978) was the first to introduce transformational leadership theory. A vast number of leadership theories have been established in the organizational literature (Yukl, 2013). Additionally, Bass (1985) advanced the theory by defining transformational leadership as the ability of leaders to inspire others to achieve performance beyond expectations by transforming people's attitudes, beliefs, and values. Transformational leadership (TL) is a style of leader behavior by which the leader helps followers to exceed their initial performance expectation by promoting changes to their values, norms, and personal interests from simply pursuing stable employment or job promotions, to going further by sharing their expertise and knowledge on a voluntary basis to improve organizational effectiveness (Aryee, Walumbwa, Zhou, & Hartnell, 2012). Transformational leadership has been one of the most researched topics in the area of leadership.

Previous researchers indicated TL style is the most vital determinant of team effectiveness and organizational performance (Beato, 2017). Different types of leadership styles exist in work environments. Advantages and disadvantages exist within each leadership style. Some companies offer several leadership styles within the organization, dependent upon the necessary tasks to complete and departmental needs. Suk Bong, Kihwan, and Seung-wan (2016) declared transformational leadership endorses innovative behavior among employees, which improves organizational performance. TL

refers to the capability of an appealing leader to convert followers and the business by motivating and influencing based on personal values.

Transformational leaders share personal morality and organizational ethics with their employees and, accordingly, the employees' intrinsic motivation becomes stronger and their organizational commitment increases (Tu & Lu, 2013). Intrinsic motivation highlights the long-term vision that unites team members (Chen, Farh, Campbell-Bush, Wu, & Wu, 2013) by promoting innovative problem solving and better team performance. Team members with intrinsic motivation consider themselves as a single body, share with each other their understanding of work tasks, and decide how best to complete them, articulating many innovative ideas at every step of team-level work and, thus, increasing team effectiveness (Aryee et al., 2012). TL helps team members to think outside the box, enabling them to visualize a much bigger picture, and ensuring their commitment toward the effective accomplishment of this vision (To, Tse, & Ashkanasy, 2015). TL encourages team members to be innovative in line with the team goals, consequently contributing to team effectiveness (Barnes, Humphreys, Oyler, Pane Haden, & Novicevic, 2013; To et al., 2015). Transformational leaders act as role models among team members by sharing creative ideas and knowledge to facilitate working cooperatively and efficiently (Aryee et al., 2012). Employees who consider their leader as their role model will seek to innovate and be proactive in sharing their ideas with the team, ultimately increasing team effectiveness (Carrington, 2016). The transformational leader establishes trust and loyalty with employees and subordinates.

### **Implementation Strategies through Effective Leadership**

Barnes et al. (2013) claimed leadership power and influence can manipulate employee turnover within an organization. Organizations are led by leaders who want to retain the power of influence over their employees (Barnes et al., 2013). Additionally, Barnes et al. (2013) argued the importance of employee trust, leadership trust, and empathy. Additionally, leaders must identify practices and procedures to build trust and support an effective work relationship, which minimizes a negative work environment (Barnes et al., 2013). According to Barnes et al. (2013), an effective leader must be authentic and transformational to enhance levels of trust. Most importantly, leaders must also provide social support and a strong voice to gain the trust of their employee (Barnes et al., 2013). Barnes et al. (2013) believed using combinations of authentic, transformational leadership and hierarchical leadership create the employee's voice and build trust through emotional stimulations. When leaders are placed in hierarchical positions of authority and all the elements of leadership characteristics are in place, a positive environment emerges (Barnes et al., 2013). Barnes et al. argued some leaders maintain too much power of influence over their employees. According to Barnes et al. (2013), removing some hierarchical powers from a leader down to the group level creates the trust the employees must feel from their leader. Barnes et al. (2013) emphasized trust should be centered on the leader. Barnes believed becoming transformational leaders inspire others and build trust.

The leaders should be allowed to present levels of trust to the employees by way of authentic, transformational, and hierarchical behaviors (Barnes et al., 2013).

Additionally, Barnes et al. (2013) proposed the idea that authentic and transformational leaders can create the work environment needed for the purpose of social support and transparency. Barnes'et al. (2013) study discussed the key concepts of the organization's success and lessons learned from practicing the strategic principles. Barnes suggested effective leadership can be shared leadership. Barnes further stated strategic improvisation techniques were leadership practices that should be implemented in companies everywhere. When employee turnover occurs, leaders in organizations must implement strategies to remain profitable and successful (Barnes et al., 2013). Depending on the crisis, leaders must be willing to work on engaging with their employees (Davila & Pina-Ramirez, 2014). An employee must be knowledgeable in the specific areas for good organizational performances. Alternatively, using effective and transformational leadership during employee turnover can be instrumental in the behavior of the employee. In today's environment, companies are regarded as replicas of their leaders' behavior (Bottomley, Burgess, & Fox, 2014). However, effective leaders must demonstrate they can inspire and influence their followers not only when times are good but also during challenging times. Such actions allow the organizations to build trust collectively that can result in positive outcomes (Barnes et al., 2013). There are different types of leadership styles used during organizational changes including authentic leadership.

Braun et al. (2013) regarded authentic leader as a positive and enthusiastic leader. Braun et al. stated optimistic personalities are very infectious to their followers and throughout the organization. Braun et al. posited authentic leaders have a way of making

others feel good about themselves regardless of the environmental circumstances. This type of leadership is especially important when layoffs occur, and a positive moral perspective is needed to stabilize the workforce (Braun et al., 2013). Conversely, Braun et al. (2013) discussed transformational leaders' management styles, arguing that transformational leaders are also effective leaders, and are considered the most influential of all leaders. Literature reviews over the years on transformational leadership have shown positive results with employee satisfaction and positive job performances (Cavazotte, Moreno, & Bernardo, 2013). Researchers over the past several years have focused on understanding the behavior of transformational leaders. According to Bottomley et al. (2014), four categories for these leaders exist: (a) visionary, (b) standard-bearer, (c) integrator, and (d) developer. Cavazotte et al. (2013) emphasized transformational leaders have the ability to influence their employees to achieve their goals. Within the changing pace of organizational developments, leaders have to be more responsive and flexible than in other circumstances (Bottomley et al., 2014). According to (Bottomley et al., 2014) transformational leaders are needed to keep the organization operating during employee turnover by maintaining a sustainable workforce.

Leaders are required to develop effective ways of communicating the organization's overall performance (Meng & Berger, 2013). In reviewing all of the researcher viewpoints, some clear conclusions stand out, including the relationship between corporate leaders and employees. Trust and distrust within relationships affect the core of a complex relationship when coping with the internal and external factors of a crisis. Leaders should be more cognizant when making decisions on change models and



in implementing the development of relationships to better control any disruptive effects of a crisis (Meng & Berger, 2013). Organizational development (OG) is an integral part of how the organizations encompass change. Organization development as a practice involves an ongoing, systematic process of implementing effective organizational change (Lewin, 1946). Kurt Lewin played an instrumental role in the evolution of organization development as it is known today.

Changes are imperative for any organization. Banjo Ally, Kehinde Agbolade, and Hassant (2016) piloted a research study on employees' perception of change management in Nigerian universities by investigating the relationship between change management and employee commitment on one hand, success and failure of change initiatives and employees' readiness and resistance to change initiatives on the other hand respectively. The researchers mailed 210 questionnaires to students of three universities. One hundred and eighty-seven questionnaires were returned. The results of the findings revealed a strong and direct relationship between change management and employee commitment. Success and failure of change programs have a positive and significant relationship with employee readiness and resistance to change respectively in Nigerian universities.

Cagney (2015) recognized for change to work, a leader must articulate what changes are necessary for his own behavior. Embracing change is an integral part of any organization. Staren and Eckes (2013) discussed the following factors: resistance to change, change management models, and rewards relative to change initiatives. The literature expounds on well-known author John Kotter (1996) of Harvard Business School. Kotter (1996) is well-known for his publication of *Leading Change*. In the

article, several the authors used Kotter's 8-step change management model for Electronic Health Record (EHR) implementation. The researchers encountered several key elements throughout the process. Some of the most critical factors were how a change will impact the organization, benefits of change, risks, and reward incentives. The article enlightens readers on a variety of obstacles one may encounter involving change management. The literature concludes with the necessity of additional research on this topic.

In a challenging, high-paced, and forever changing business environment, organizations must implement new ways of incorporating change. Anderson and Ackerman-Anderson (2010) stated change management is a concept seen everywhere. The Anderson's book *Beyond Change Management* is well-known for writing several books, articles, and journals on change management. The Andersons are instrumental in helping organizations embrace change. Mr. and Mrs. Anderson created Being First, which is a full-service change education, consulting, and change leadership development firm, assisting organizations to capitalize on their business results from the change, transform their people and culture, and build internal change capability. Skogland and Hansen (2017) conducted a research study to explore the use of, and challenges associated with, spatial change management strategies. Furthermore, Skogland and Hansen (2017) used a case study-based literature review, drawing on literature from the fields of environmental psychology, organizational branding, corporate real estate and facility management, as well as organizational change management. The findings suggested management strategies may be unsuccessful because of the lack of

understanding of how organizational events and other characteristics connect with the physical change initiative. Skogland and Hansen (2017) acknowledged for the strategy to be successful, it must be developed, evaluated and possibly changed in a real-life context.

Strategic change is critical when it comes to the success of any given organization. However, strategic change execution in most organizations usually results in failure because of various reasons. Change management is a widely used concept used by organizations around the world. Change management creates a structured environment for change within a workplace. Kotter (1996) explained why the hierarchical structure and organizational processes leaders have used for decades to run and improve their enterprises are no longer effective at winning in this fast-moving world. Change is significant for organizations to continue to grow and stay competitive in the business environment. Companies use change management to remain competitive, improve processes, growth opportunities, address customer needs/concerns, and strengthen an economy relationship. Organizations are facing a vast number of new challenges.

Rezaie, Mirabedini, and Abtahi's (2017) wrote an article on the concept of strategy implementation in detail. Furthermore, Rezaie et al. (2017) outlined some of the major factors that affect the ability to implement strategy within a service firm in an effective way. Rezaie et al. (2017) indicated organizational culture, leadership, structure, and poor planning can play a critical role in determining whether strategy implementation in the organization will be a success or failure. The researcher touches on the issue of employee engagement during the process of implementing strategic change in a firm.

Rezaie et al. (2017) emphasized employee engagement is instrumental in ensuring they are a part of the process. Additionally, Cameron and Green (2015) book is about the concept of change management in a firm in a deeper way. Furthermore, the researchers outline some of the critical, tools, models and techniques that can be used by a firm in making the change implementation process a success. For example, the researchers indicated that considering organizational culture during execution of change is vital in making the entire process a success. Additionally, this source is valuable when it comes to facing some of the major factors while implementing strategic change within an organization.

### **Employee Turnover**

Employee turnover can negatively influence employee morale and organizational effectiveness, which affects profitability (Dong, Mitchell, Lee, Holtom, & Hinkin, 2012; Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013). Scholars from the 20th century, including Douglas (1918) and Lescohier (1919), conducted early studies on employee turnover. Douglas (1918) revealed organizations suffered great economic losses from high turnover rates. Lescohier (1919) found costs associated with employee turnover stemmed from reduced productivity. High employee turnover is costly in the retail industry because of poor job performance, low morale, and low productivity (McManus & Mosca, 2015). Employee turnover is a common phenomenon, which many organizations face.

People leave the organization because of various reasons. The experience of job-related stress (job stress), the range factors that lead to job-related stress (stressors), lack of commitment in the organization; and job dissatisfaction make employees leave a job

(Herzberg, 2003). Personal dissatisfaction is a major reason for an employee to leave the firm. This dissatisfaction can ascend from various factors, such as compensation, job security, job autonomy, relationship with the supervisor, and other colleagues. Employee turnover often results in a burden on management's time and creates pressures in workforce planning. Intangible costs include negative impact on culture or employee morale, adverse effect on social capital, and attrition of organizational memory (Park & Shaw, 2013). In the small business retail industry, the turnover rate is higher and is a challenge faced by small business owners (Pryce, 2016). High employee turnover negatively affects a company's bottom line. Experts estimate it costs upwards of twice an employee's salary to find and train a replacement. Some turnover is beneficial to eliminate non-performers (Park & Shaw, 2013); however, turnover is mostly viewed as undesirable because it ties significant business resources, including advertising the position, training, and the unproductive time of those involved in the hiring process (Park & Shaw, 2013). Employee turnover is high in small retail businesses, which compels business leaders to implement strategies that successfully reduce employee turnover.

Turnover affects business profits due to costs associated with time, money, and productivity (Harrison & Gordon, 2014). According to Cho, Rutherford, and Park (2013), the U.S. Census (2010) reported the U.S. retail industry was experiencing above-average turnover rates. There is extensive research on turnover of retail employees (Bande, Fernandez-Ferrin, Varela, & Jaramillo, 2014) with the main concern being the loss of knowledge and productivity when a trained employee leaves (Park & Shaw, 2013). In the past half-century, different ideologies on turnover have evolved (Baghurst,

Chapman, & Holmes, 2013). In a study of employee turnover, Park and Shaw (2013) found organizational performance had a strong negative relationship to turnover rates and was even more detrimental in retail full-time employees. Susomrith, Brown, Scott, and Sitlington (2013) researched the turnover intentions of mining employees in Australia. Susomrith et al. used a self-administered Likert-type survey of 46 questions designed to identify the individuals' feelings towards their positions, job satisfaction, and intentions to leave. They demonstrated a significant difference between baby boomers' and Generation Y's intention to leave, showing Generation Y miners are more likely to leave their job when their needs are not met.

According to McDermott et al. (2013) scholars have demonstrated line managers have a direct influence on employees' perception of the company, which affects the beliefs and behaviors of employees. As the result of turnover, the disruption of productive, informal networks and critical collaborations, especially when the employees are well-connected, is more damaging to an organization than the financial loss (McDermott et al., 2013). Highly skilled employees who left the organization on good terms or for personal reasons beyond their control can be a less expensive hiring option (Levoy, 2014). When high performers return to a previous organization, they can exhibit increased company loyalty (Levoy, 2014). Employee retention is a major goal of employers because the cost of employee turnover, particularly talented employees, can be significant.

### **Consequences of Employee Turnover**

Employee turnover continues to disrupt retail organizations; increased employee turnover has a significant effect on retail store managers' ability to implement sustainable strategies (McManus & Mosca, 2015). Since the total cost of hiring a new employee ranges from 90% to 200% of the employee's annual salary, the implementation of effective strategies to reduce employee turnover is essential to the survivability of an organization (Hom, et al., 2017). Managers must implement effective strategies to reduce employee turnover to improve the survivability and sustainability of their businesses (Butali, Wesang'ula, & Mamuli, 2014). Conversely, Butali et al. (2014); McManus & Mosca (2015) provided an overview of some of the consequences associated with increased employee turnover including: (a) increased employees' job dissatisfaction, (b) reduced customers' satisfaction, (c) declined financial performance, (d) decreased sustainability, (e) reduced productivity and profitability, (f) lower knowledge retention, (g) decreased management of resources, (h) reduced proficiency, (i) lower positional distribution, (j) increased difficulty in time dispersion, and (k) decreased employees' engagement. Employee turnover increases other workers' job dissatisfaction, has a negative effect on customers' satisfaction, and affects sustainable business practices. When an employee quits his or her job, other workers assume additional duties until company leaders can hire another employee; the additional responsibilities upset some workers (Butali et al., 2014). Adding additional duties to other workers' increases job dissatisfaction, which leads to increased turnover intentions among the remaining

employees (McManus & Mosca, 2015)? When leaders do not implement effective strategies to reduce employee turnover, employee turnover can lead to additional workers quitting their jobs.

Butali et al. (2014), and; McManus and Mosca, (2015) recognized increased employee turnover reduces the financial performance of organizations because employee turnover leads to increased job dissatisfaction among other workers, decreases customers' satisfaction, and reduces sustainability. Failure to retain key employees leads to loss of productivity (Leon, Bellairs, & Halbesleben 2015). Organizations with a high employee turnover rate are less productive than institutions with a high retention rate (Prasannakumar, 2015). Lower productivity also has a negative effect on customers' satisfaction, which, in turn, affects revenue and sustainability (Duda & Zurkova, 2013). When organizational leaders do not have adequate staff to provide customers with satisfactory services, institutions lose customers because of inadequate customer service and support, which results in unsustainable practices.

Losing talented workers is detrimental to the survivability of businesses because of reduced productivity and leaders' difficulty managing an organization's resources (Duda & Zurkova, 2013). In the first 30 days, some new workers are 75% less productive than experienced workers (Duda & Zurkova, 2013). New employees need up to 90 days of experience to achieve a 75-100% proficiency level (Wang, 2015). The findings of Wang (2015) and Duda and Zurkova (2013) indicated losing experienced workers have a negative effect on productivity, sustainability, and survivability, as the result of lost experience. When a well-trained employee leaves an organization,



organizational leaders must hire a new worker who requires training to learn how the new institution operates (Eckardt, Skaggs, & Youndt, 2014). Additionally, Eckardt et al. (2014) revealed employee turnover had a negative impact on an organization's sustainability because losing essential workers resulted in the loss of revenue and the loss of knowledge. Eckardt et al. (2014) suggested ineffective retention strategies hinder leaders' ability to create long-term values for stakeholders.

Hausknecht and Holwerda (2013) conducted a study to examine the consequences of employee turnover on groups, departments, and organizational performance to get a thorough understanding of factors that would help managers understand how an employee's departure affected a business's performance. Hausknecht and Holwerda (2013) indicated the following consequences of employee turnover: (a) decreased proficiency, (b) lower positional distribution, (c) increased the difficulty in time dispersion, and (d) reduced performance and productivity. Managers experiencing increased employee turnover rates have a difficult time implementing an effective training program as the result of the unpredictable nature of employee turnover (Ahmed, Phulpoto, Umrani, & Abbas, 2015). In addition, organizations with a higher employee turnover rate also have decreased employees' engagement (Ahmed et al., 2015; McManus & Mosca, 2015). Key workers promote business sustainability, resulting in increased profitability and the achievement of stakeholders' expectations (Hausknecht & Holwerda, 2013). Retail industry leaders continue to struggle predicting and managing employee turnover (The U.S. Department of Labor Statistics, 2015). Another challenge retail store managers are facing is that employee turnover continues to become more

difficult to predict (The U.S. Department of Labor Statistics, 2015). In 2013, employee turnover increased to 200,000 per month (Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013). More recently, the U.S. Department of Labor Statistics (2015) reported a monthly employee turnover increase of 600,000 turnovers per month from 2013 to 2015. Implementing effective strategies to reduce employee turnover increases business' survivability and sustainability in today's competitive retail industry (McManus & Mosca, 2015). Additional research on employee turnover is necessary to provide retail store managers with new strategies other leaders considered effective in reducing employee turnover.

### **Employee Morale, Productivity, and Performance**

Affected by employee turnover is employee morale (Beato, 2017). Employee morale is defined as the job satisfaction, outlook, and feelings of well-being an employee has within a workplace setting (Pryce, 2016). Employees react to both external and internal turnover. The morale of an employee assists in an individual developing perceptions and attitudes which lead to turnover intentions (Campbell & Goritz, 2014; Christian & Ellis, 2014; Dusterhoff, Cunningham & MacGregor, 2014; Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013). An employee's job dissatisfaction can produce turnover intentions (Dong et al., 2012). Employee turnover has a negative effect on the organization's need to meet its demand for service. Organizational leaders should continue to encourage knowledge workers to excel by expanding their knowledge base, ensuring their work is meaningful, and providing sufficient resources to complete work (Carrington, 2016). Moreover, Liao and Teng (2010) asserted trained employees are more satisfied with their job than untrained employees are. Continuous training lead to improving job satisfaction

and gave managers a better understanding of their employees' needs (Liao & Teng, 2010). Additionally, Liao and Teng explored the relationship between ethics training and employee satisfaction and indicated ethics training relates to employee satisfaction. Employee involvement decreases employee turnover and increases employee morale.

Dong et al. (2012) found employee job satisfaction was a significant factor in employees' intention to stay with an organization. Motivating employees to be efficient and involved in the organization increases motivation, job satisfaction, and productivity and decreases employee turnover (Dong et al., 2012). Recognizing employee accomplishments and keeping employees involved decreased employee turnover (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Employee morale depends upon various external and internal organizational components that include salary, working conditions, organizational climate, and leadership (Barnes, 2013). Employee morale and leadership behaviors contribute to employees' feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the organization (Nobou, 2014). Conversely, Nobou (2014) argued the importance of employee engagement in regard to employee morale and employee's productivity. An employee's feelings about a job can cause an individual to question their career choice and develop turnover intentions.

Retaining top employees is critical to the survival of an organization (Hom et al., 2017). In 2014, organizations lost over \$11 billion in tangible and intangible assets because of employee turnover (McManus & Mosca, 2015). James and Mathew (2012) noted that a high employee turnover rate had an adverse effect on productivity and sustainability. Other scholars concurred with James and Mathew (2012) by reporting that

employee turnover continues to threaten organizations' profitability and sustainability (Baldwin & LaFrance, 2014). The success of a business depends on leaders' ability to implement sustainable business practices, profitability, and employee retention (McManus & Mosca, 2015). Losing talented workers has a negative effect on productivity and resource management (James & Mathew, 2012). Retail leaders are concerned about employee turnover because of the effect that a high employee turnover rate has on an organization's productivity and competitiveness (Wang, 2015). Although new workers can quickly gain experience and become more productive, new employees can take more than 90 days to achieve a 75-100% proficiency level of an experienced worker (Duda & Zurkova, 2013). Wang (2015) and Duda and Zurkova (2013) indicated losing experienced workers has a negative effect on productivity as the result of lost experience. Numerous scholars recognized employee turnover has an adverse effect on productivity (Wang, 2015).

The main cause of organization failure is businesses' inability to generate a profit as the result of decreased productivity (Duda & Zurkova, 2013). Additionally, organizational leaders who implement effective strategies to reduce employee turnover are more effective than leaders that do not have an effective retention program (Alshanbri et al., 2015). Furthermore, Duda and Zurkova (2013), and Wang (2015) indicated implementing effective strategies to reduce employee turnover is essential to the success of an organization because employee retention increases productivity. Business leaders who understand the nature and consequences of employee turnover have a better chance at implementing effective employee turnover strategies to reduce the effects associated

with loss of productivity (Leon et al. 2015; Prasannakumar, 2015; Savaneviciene, Vaitkevicius, Ciutiene, & Meiliene, 2015). Managers who are knowledgeable of the effects of employee turnover can develop policies and procedures to minimize the consequences of reduced productivity resulting from employee turnover (Prasannakumar, 2015). Some researchers reported that managing employee turnover was critical to the survival of an organization because employee retention led to sustainable productivity and profitability, which are essential components of organizational success (Akkas et al., 2015). Managers are expected to motivate their employees and nurture a winning environment as they handle performance work to achieve goals (Brown, 2014). When managers do not have enough employees to provide customers with adequate services, customers become unhappy because of unsatisfactory service and might decide to shop elsewhere, which results in unsustainable practices.

### **Reasons for Turnover and Turnover Intention**

Many reasons validate why employees leave their organizations. Compensation, a healthy work-life balance, and relationships with management are just a few. Employees have varying backgrounds that uniquely qualify them for job opportunities. The experiences employees have prior to joining organizations can determine employees' suitability for the position and their likely success within a particular role. Wallace and Gaylor (2012) asserted the fundamental premise for employee turnover functionality begins with recognizing different employees represent different values to the organization. Strojilova and Rafferty (2013) indicated how employee performance remains a critical determinant of employee turnover for both high and low performers.

Strojilova and Rafferty (2013) revealed 83% of employees who quit were considered high performers, as measured by their performance organizations. According to the U.S. Department of Labor (2015), 30% of new hires quit within the first three months of starting their jobs. Former employees shared that the lack of leadership and professional growth opportunities were reasons that caused them to leave their jobs (Strojilova & Rafferty, 2013). Increasingly, study conclusions reveal that researchers are beginning to examine turnover as a collective approach.

Nyberg and Ployhart (2013) posited collective turnover considers aggregate levels of employee departures that occur within groups, work units, or organizations. Companies invested in retention programs preserve staffing levels of individuals with skills and experiences, rather than reinvesting in the recruitment of new employees (Kovner, Brewer, Fatehi, & Jun, 2014). Furthermore, Kovner et al. (2014) found reduced investment in recruitment strategies was a cost-saving strategy for the companies. Kovner et al. recognized replacing employees increased the costs of recruitment, advertising, and training; the annual costs of replacing new employees ranged from \$10,098 to \$88,000 for the retail industry. The costs related to turnover included decreased productivity and profitability (Kovner et al., 2014). Reduced investment in recruiting provided an opportunity for the company leaders to reinvest in employees rather than continue investing in the hiring and training.

Heavey, Holwerda, and Hausknecht (2013) analyzed the causes and consequences of employee turnover. Heavey et al. identified 40 antecedents of collective turnover. Turnover also hinders performance because of the disruption of established patterns of

interaction, diverting attention to nonproduction activities (Heavey et al., 2013). Consequently, turnover damages performance because it incurs replacement costs that deplete financial gains. When employees perform well individually, productivity within the organization should increase, hopefully increasing company profits. Leaders in most organizations realize that, to some degree, turnover is healthy because it prevents organizations from becoming stagnant (Ahmed & Kolachi, 2013). New employees can serve as a source of innovation and creativity, which can generate fresh business ideas and improve processes (Ahmed & Kolachi, 2013). Well trained employees are especially critical to the organization's sustainability (Ahmed & Kolachi, 2013). Employees want to know they are fairly compensated for their work and they are valued for what they contribute to the organization.

### **Retention Strategies**

Employee retention has been a concern for organizational leaders for numerous years (Yamamoto, 2013). Many factors pertain to a low retention rate of retail industries employees (Grissom, Viano, & Selin, 2015; Xu, Zhong, & Wang, 2013). Mertil and Brill (2015) conducted a case study about leaders in a healthcare organization. Mertil and Brill noted retaining employees remain an ongoing challenge within any organization. Using Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory model, these authors found training programs within the workplace support employees, result in decreases in employee turnover, and increase retention of employees. Tian-Foreman, (2009) conducted a study on employee retention in a leading Chinese retail organization. Self- completion questionnaire surveys, involving 172 employees were mailed. One hundred sixty-four returned

questionnaires were used for the research study. An analysis of the company's performance data was also reviewed for this study. The sample was restricted to one retail organization in China. The results provided insight into the positive relationship between employee retention and job satisfaction.

Rathi and Lee (2015) conducted a study on the impact of perceived external prestige on turnover intentions among retail employees in India. The study's purpose was to examine the mediating effect of affective commitment on the relationship between perceived external prestige and turnover intentions. The data for the study were collected from 186 employees working in various retail stores. Established scales were used to measure the research constructs. The research study has certain implications that may be helpful for practicing managers, especially the HR managers from organizations in the retail sector. The results of the study indicate a negative relationship between perceived external prestige and turnover intentions.

Neerpal and Kidong's (2015) research study investigated the impact of perceived external prestige of turnover intentions among retail employees in India. Furthermore, Neerpal and Kidong's (2015) collected data from 186 employees working in various retail stores. Researchers provide valuable insights into understanding the significance of perceived external prestige in retaining employees working in the retail sector. Neerpal and Kidong's (2015) results indicated a negative relationship between perceived external prestige and turnover intentions. Rodriguez (2016) piloted a research study on reducing employee turnover in retail. The participants in this research study were selected from a Fortune 500 retailer. The use of questionnaires and surveys were used for collecting data.



Rodriguez (2016) suggested Human Resource Management (HRMs) could hire or train for different leadership skills that may be more applicable to lead a retail sales force. Additionally, Rodriguez (2016) recommended further research study is necessary on employee turnover in retail. The implications for positive social change may result in retail customer service employees' retention leading to economic stability and career growth.

Brannan (2015) completed a research study based on high levels of employee turnover that were managed within a United Kingdom (UK) base call center through the use of culturally bound employment practices. In addition, Brannan (2015) conducted a study based on theoretical resources employed by Pierre Bourdieu. Data was collected through the use of questionnaires and surveys. The results led to the conclusion business strategies have an adverse effect on employee retention. Brannan (2015) argued managerial strategies and practices relative to skills and knowledge. Furthermore, Brannan (2015) encouraged further research studies are essential on this topic. Rose and Raja (2016) conducted a study on Human Resource (HR) practices, job satisfaction and organizational commitment in managing employee retention. Additionally, Rose and Raja (2016) study examined 180 employees in Bangalore, India. Rose and Raja (2016) recommended HR practices and job satisfaction significantly influence organizational commitment and, in turn, organization commitment significantly influence employee retention. Moreover, Rose and Raja (2016) detailed the need for further analogy and research on this topic. Sarmad, Ajmal, Shamim, Saleh, and Malik (2016) led an empirical study on the impact of compensation and motivation on employee retention in

the Public Sector Oil and Gas Selling Organizations. Data was collected through questionnaires from 112 employees of public sector oil and gas sellers. The data was analyzed using the statistical technique of multiple regressions. Sarmad et al. (2016) presented applicable development in motivation level and practical handling of compensation may yield a similar improvement in employee retention. Furthermore, Sarmad et al. (2016) research study revealed strategies and implications that can help the leaders of organizations in shaping policies and practices to enhance retention strategies. Sarmad et al. (2016) recommend further study on this topic is needed.

Bakare (2014) conducted a research study on the assessment of college graduates' employment practices in retail organizations. The targeted population for this study was the current and previous retail employees including graduates, recruiters, managers, and educators in Oakland, California. Bakare (2014) collected data through semistructured interviews. Bakare (2014) indicated because of low wages, communication, and work schedules, employee retention suffers. Beato (2017) conducted a qualitative study on effective strategies employed by retail store leaders to reduce employee turnover. Beato (2017) used face-to-face semistructured interviews and documents on employee turnover as the two sources of data collection for this study. Furthermore, Beato (2017) piloted a research study on a retail business in El Paso, Texas. The data were coded using NVivo. The findings suggest competitive compensation, better work schedules, and better working relationships support employee retention. Beato (2017) research study recommended additional examination on this topic is needed. Small retail businesses represent viable means of creating employment, stimulating economic growth, and

accelerating development. It is imperative to explore the strategies used by small business leaders to sustain their business enterprises to improve their value added to the nation's economic development. Employee turnover is high in small retail businesses, compelling business leaders to implement strategies that successfully reduce employee turnover. Furthermore, Beato (2017) research study has value to the practice of business because results may benefit industry growth by increasing retail leaders' knowledge levels about employee retention. The results of this research study may affect positive social change as leaders apply strategies useful for employee retention that may reduce unemployment, stabilize communities, and improve the human and social conditions outside the workplace. Islam, Sai fur, Ungku Norulkamar, and Ahmed (2013) emphasized the importance of organizational commitment in a knowledge-based economy. Although there is an extensive body of literature on employee turnover, I conclude there is a gap in the literature on strategies for reducing employee turnover in retail outlets.

Islam et al. (2013) asserted companies that embrace a learning culture become skilled at creating, acquiring and transferring knowledge throughout the organization. Consequently, businesses that have a learning culture attract highly skilled talent, encourage innovation and reduce employees' intentions to quit (Islam et al., 2013). Leadership, when applied consistently, may lead to employee retention. El-Nahas, Abd-El-Salam, and Shawky (2013) specified leadership is the process of influencing the activities of an organized group toward goal achievement. The concept includes the two components of initiating structure and consideration (El-Nahas et al., 2013). When a

leader fulfills the consideration element of leadership, he exhibits friendly, supportive, concerned, open, and consultative behavior to his employees (El-Nahas et al., 2013). Furthermore, Nwagbara, Oruh, Ogorji, and Ennsra (2013) cited the importance of communication and described effective communication as communication that has a shared meaning and makes sense for all parties involved in the communication process. Creating structure includes establishing boundaries and expectations for employee roles while communicating the rewards and punishments associated with their performance.

Nwagbara et al. (2013) emphasized effective communication creates an atmosphere of communication satisfaction that can foster low turnover intention. El-Nahas et al. (2013) examined how the two components of initiating structure and consideration affected job satisfaction, role ambiguity, task autonomy, and job scope (El-Nahas et al., 2013). The proposed four leader behaviors from the research included supportive leadership, directive leadership, achievement-oriented leadership, and participative leadership (El-Nahas et al., 2013). Supportive leadership and participative leadership were categorized under the consideration component of leadership while directive leadership and achievement-oriented leadership were categorized under the initiating structure component of leadership (El-Nahas et al., 2013). El-Nahas et al. (2013) cited the value of organizational culture when considering leadership behaviors. El-Nahas et al. (2013) concluded a positive relationship between leadership behavior and job satisfaction existed (El-Nahas et al., 2013). Leadership is considered as an essential element of directing process. To get the things done by others, managers are required to guide and lead different activities.

### **Cost and Profitability**

Turnover costs include productivity losses during training, recruiting, and lost work while a position is vacant (Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013; Hennes, Leone, & Miller, 2014). When an employee leaves a job, the costs of hiring and training a new employee, combined with the slower productivity until the replacement employee gets up to speed in the new job is costly for companies (Kwon & Rupp, 2013). Accordingly, Palanski, Avey, and Jiraporn (2014) affirmed the organization's size and productivity determine how an organizational leader responds to employee turnover. James and Mathew (2012) suggested an increase in employee turnover negatively affects productivity and sustainability of the organization. Employee turnover affects business operations (Palanski et al., 2014). Recruiting and training employees is costly (Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013; Palanski et al., 2014). Organizational leaders invest in their employees by providing training and resources to perform their job (Christian & Ellis, 2014). When employees leave their job, organizational leaders experience business challenges, loss of knowledge, and investment. Employee turnover often has negative implication, yet turnover isn't always a negative event.

Turnover interrupts organizational performance as well as cause financial challenges (Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013; Palanski et al., 2014). Likewise, Therasa and Vijayabanu (2016) examined the relationship between employee internal and external work environment in Information Technology Enabled Services and Business Process Outsourcing (ITES/BPO) organizations and employee turnover. The cost of turnover is an important economic issue because workers who leave their job, are terminated, or

otherwise let go affects company profitability (Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013; Palanski et al., 2014). Implementing effective strategies to reduce employee turnover increases business' survivability and sustainability in today's competitive retail industry (McManus & Mosca, 2015). Employees leave jobs for a number of reasons.

### **Transition**

Sections 1 of this final study encompass components of the foundation and background of this single qualitative single case study. In the literature review, I included information pertaining to leadership characteristics to prepare the next generation family owned business (FOB) leaders for their future executive responsibilities. The literature review includes theories that shaped the conceptual framework to explore succession planning strategies that third-generation FOB leaders apply for the transition of leadership to the fourth-generation family owned business.

Section 2 includes the processes and procedures involved in this multiple case study. The role of the researcher, the population, sampling method, the participants, the research method, and the research design as well as the significance of conducting ethical research is explained in detail to show the data collection and analysis techniques and how the study findings will ensure reliability and validity.

Section 3 includes the findings along with how the study findings of this research study along with how the study findings apply to business practice and implications for potential social change. Section 3 concludes with recommendations for future research as well as researcher reflections of the findings in this research study.

## Section 2: The Project

In Section 2, I outline the research method and design of my doctoral study, including the role I assumed as the researcher in the overall study process. Within this section, I describe the purpose for this study, my role as researcher, participants, research method and design, population and sampling, ethical research, and data collection of this research study. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to examine effective strategies that retail store managers use to reduce or eliminate employee turnover. The target population was retail store managers and owners from businesses in the southeastern region of the United States.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies small retail business leaders use to reduce employee turnover. The target population was six successful business owners of three small retail businesses in the southeastern region of the United States who have effectively reduced employee turnover. The results of this study may contribute to positive social change if leaders apply effective strategies to reduce employee turnover rates, leading to reductions in unemployment, stabilization of communities, and improvements to the human and social conditions outside the workplace.

### **Role of the Researcher**

The role of a qualitative researcher requires the ability to step outside one's cultural environment (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Therefore, the researcher becomes the commentator for the individual's viewpoint and beliefs by sharing the participants'

values and experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2013). My previous management experiences sparked my interest in what it would be like to manage and retain employees within the retail industry. My role as the researcher in this study was to facilitate semistructured interviews, conduct data analysis and member checking, and synthesize the data to answer my research question. Marshall and Rossman (2016) indicated I could use an interview protocol to educate study participants on what to expect during the interview process. I disclosed all relevant information about the research study to all participants and ensured they understood the intent of the study as well as their role as participants in the study. Marshall and Rossman (2016) stated that the role of the researcher is to minimize or eliminate any opportunities for bias within the study. I included retail owners who I have a professional relationship with as well as retail owners that I do not know personally to minimize bias within the study.

In this study, I collected data from the participants, analyzed the data, and interpreted the data to establish the findings. However, verbal exchange is critical between the researcher and the participant to establish a good relationship during the study (Hazel & Clark, 2013). Consequently, I focused on building a relationship and establishing trust with the participants to maintain worthy responses. Researchers should position themselves with power and knowledge, which subsequently adds more credibility to the study and influences the participant's decision to be a part of the study (Hazel & Clark, 2013). Effective research requires specific criteria (Hazel & Clark, 2013). The objective was to listen, document the narratives, and tell the participants'



stories as they lived them (Braun & Clarke, 2013). My intent was to actively listen and pay close attention to each participant.

As the data collection instrument, I collected and analyzed data, protected participants' rights, safeguarded identifiable information, and ensured the conclusions of this study were drawn from the perspectives of the participants. Scholars must eliminate personal biases that may affect the reliability of the study during the data collection and data analysis process (Cairney & St. Denny, 2015). To mitigate potential biases, Moustakas (1994) recommended that researchers engage in epoché when conducting qualitative research. To minimize biases, I used a journal to keep track of all activities related to the data collection and analysis process and asked each interviewee the one research question (RQ) and seven interview questions approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). In addition, using open-ended questions during the interviews enabled participants to openly share their experiences, allowing me to collect information on employee turnover from the perspective of the interviewees.

The role of a researcher includes gathering and examining data (Schoenherr, Ellram, & Tate, 2015), protecting the rights of human participants (Mitchell & Wellings, 2013), and safeguarding any identifiable information from organizations and participants involved in the study (Gajewski, 2013). When conducting research, scholars must report all data and detach their personal perceptions, values, morals, and beliefs from the study (Cairney & St. Denny, 2015). The Belmont Report (1979) summarized the ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of humans, which was originally written by The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and

Behavioral Research Subjects of Research. The Belmont Report includes a distinction between research and practice, the three basic ethical principles, and the application of these principles. I followed the three basic ethics of research involving human subjects in my study. These are: (a) the principles of respect of persons, (b) beneficence, and (c) justice (Belmont Report, 1979). I ensured all research processes met the Walden University standards for research quality and reported the findings without bias. This study was submitted to the university's IRB for approval before data collection began (07-12-18-0630400).

### **Participants**

Owners who have employed successful strategies to reduce employee turnover were the participants for this study. Successful owners know what employees need to work effectively, stay productive, and contribute to an enthusiastic customer experience and a harmonious workplace (Farrell, Goh, Kahle, Shackell, & White, 2017). All participants met the following criteria: (a) they were at least 18 years of age, (b) had over 3 years of experience in the retail industry, (c) worked as a retail store owner in the southeastern region of the United States, (d) had experience implementing effective strategies to reduce employee turnover, and (e) had 7.5 % or less in employee turnover. Six business owners participated in the interview and document review process to share their experiences and contribute to the study. I contacted owners of retail outlets in the southeastern region of the United States, by email and in person to request permission to collect data at the site.

Researchers must ensure participants have adequate experience to provide information about the phenomenon under study (Hoyland, Hollund, & Olsen, 2015). The study participants included six owners from six different retail outlets in the southeastern region of the United States. The quality of the research depends on researchers' ability to recruit participants who have extensive knowledge of the research problem (Ibrahim & Sidani, 2014; Moscovitch et al., 2015). Failure to select suitable participants affects the reliability and validity of the findings (Barry, Chaney, Piazza-Gardner, & Chavarria, 2014). According to Hoyland et al. (2015), participant selection is one of the most important quality assurance measures in research. My intent was to choose participants who fit the characteristics of the research study. I started the initial participant recruitment process after approval of this study and IRB approval (07-12-18-0630400) to ensure that I had enough time to evaluate potential participants and build professional relationships prior to their respective interviews (Nedevska et al., 2014). I contacted owners of retail outlets in the southeastern region of the United States in person and through email and requested permission to collect data at the site. Before I conducted data collection, I discussed employee retention with participants to ensure they had knowledge of the topic prior to the interview (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I spoke with each participant and verified his or her knowledge of the topic to confirm that their knowledge aligns with my overarching research question. Mitchelmore and Rowley (2013) recommended scholars visit the businesses in person, call the organization and talk to leaders, or email the human resource department to get permission to collect data from the institution. Gajewski (2013) found contacting organizations in person or by

phone were effective ways scholars can use to ask for permission to collect data from an organization.

### **Research Method and Design**

For this study, I used the qualitative research methodology. According to Alase (2017), qualitative methodology allows researchers to advance and apply their interpersonal and subjectivity skills to their exploratory research processes. This final research study involved a multiple case study design. Giesbers, Schouteten, Poutsma, Van der Heijden, and Van Achterberg (2016) indicated that a case study is an in-depth study of a particular situation rather than a sweeping statistical survey. I selected a case study design to narrow down a very broad field of research into one definitely researchable topic.

### **Research Method**

Qualitative research entails multiple interactive and humanistic methods to explore a particular topic (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Qualitative methodology is one of the best methods to use when researchers want to learn the meaning of the participants' issues (Braun & Clarke, 2013). A qualitative study allows the researcher to interact with the individuals during the study (Braun & Clarke, 2013). I selected a qualitative methodology for this study because most implications and issues can only be examined through methods such as interviews and observations (Garcia & Gluesing, 2013). The results of this study may be an effective tool for executives, employees, and communities to understand and identify what steps can be taken to mitigate the emotional stress associated with employee turnover.

Qualitative researchers seek to understand the reality of these issues and personal experiences from the individual's perspective (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The qualitative research approach implements a positivist-empiricist concept using the language of revealing, discovering, and uncovering data (Braun & Clare, 2013). Additionally, Braun and Clarke (2013) suggested that if one has the right tools and searches hard enough, one can uncover the reality of the situation. For example, the topic chosen, the types of questions selected, and the data examined are reflections of the researcher. The participants bring their own experiences and values to the research. These elements, such as individual experiences, reflections, values, and beliefs create the uniqueness of the qualitative study (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The participants in this study discussed their perceptions on employee turnover and the emotional and physical effects of their experiences.

Neither quantitative nor mixed-method methodology was appropriate for this research study. A quantitative approach would require scientific experiments and instruments, hypotheses, objectivity, and statistical significance (Braun & Clarke, 2013). In addition, in quantitative studies, researchers test preconceived hypotheses (Bishop & Lexchin, 2013; Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). Quantitative research is also an excellent way for scholars to prove, disprove, or test preconceived hypotheses (Bishop & Lexchin, 2013; Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). I was not testing any perceived hypotheses, so quantitative methodology was not appropriate for this research study.

Mixed-method involves both quantitative and qualitative research methods to gain new understandings of a phenomenon of importance (Venkatesh et al., 2013). A quantitative or mixed method study was not appropriate for this study because I did not intend to examine variables' statistical relationships or differences. Mixed-method research involves collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and integrating both quantitative and qualitative data (Shield et al., 2013). Scholars choose a mixed-method research to gain a deeper understanding of a particular problem (Venkatesh et al., 2013). A mixed-method design was not appropriate for this study because I did not intend to integrate quantitative and qualitative data.

### **Research Design**

I used a qualitative multiple case study design this study. Fusch and Ness (2015) indicated that a researcher should choose the design that enables obtaining the best answer for the research question. Choosing an appropriate research method and design are vital when conducting research because the design affects what type of conclusions researchers can make about a phenomenon (Alase, 2017). A qualitative multiple case study design is a strategy for qualitative empirical research that allows an in-depth investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, generating managerially relevant knowledge (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014). In addition, the types of questions the researcher will use are considered a factor for research design determination (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Specifically, the study design allowed me to perform a thorough analysis of participants' behavioral patterns and expressions when asked about their concerns.

Yin (2015) indicated a qualitative method provides researchers with direct insight into a situation; scholars can also use qualitative research to understand the underlying reasons for a problem. The five main designs researchers use to conduct qualitative research are a case study, grounded theory, ethnography, phenomenology, narrative design (Yin, 2015).

### **Ethnography**

Compton-Lilly et al. (2015) described ethnography as a set of complex methods that are often misunderstood. Furthermore, ethnography is the systematic study of a cultural group or phenomenon. Compton-Lilly et al. (2015) clearly differentiated ethnographic research from other qualitative methodologies by highlighting ethnography as an ‘elaborate venture into thick description’ that requires both an insider perspective and an outsider perspective. Ethnographers not only describe the phenomena encountered within a particular space, but they also disclose what an insider needs to understand in order to successfully operate within that culture. Ethnography describes characteristics of culture. Consequently, the ethnography design was not applicable for this research study.

### **Phenomenography**

Tight (2016) stated phenomenography methodology purpose is identifying and interrogating the range of different ways in which people perceive or experience specific phenomena (in this case, typically learning, teaching or aspects thereof).

Phenomenographers operate with the underlying assumption that, for any given phenomenon of interest, there are only a limited number of ways of perceiving,

understanding, or experiencing it (Tight, 2016). Phenomenography is a research method for mapping the qualitatively different ways in which people experience, conceptualize, perceive and understand various aspects of, and phenomena in, the world around them. Consequently, phenomenography was not appropriate for this research study.

*Data saturation* is the point at which researchers have gained an adequate level of depth and breadth of information (O'Reilly & Parker, 2015). Additionally, Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, and Fontenot (2013) claimed the typical number of interviews in qualitative studies is 11 to 16. Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) noted qualitative researchers could reach data saturation with six participants. I interviewed six participants for this study to reach data saturation, which align with Yin (2014) argued researchers must determine the appropriate sample size for data saturation. Data saturation will occur once the study participants do not offer new patterns or themes (Ragab & Arisha, 2013). I knew I reached data saturation when I did not discover any new evidence or information that related to my research question (Suri, 2013). I achieved data saturation by asking retail owners eight specific, open-ended interview questions and comparing their responses until the responses presented no new information or themes.

## **Population and Sampling**

### **Population**

The population is a large collection of individuals or objects from where a scholar draws a research sample for a study (Emmel, 2015). The population for this study was owners from six small businesses in the retail industry in the southeastern region of the United States, who successfully developed strategies to reduce the problem of employee



turnover. Scholars must ensure the target population is accessible; selecting an inaccessible population might affect the researcher's ability to collect data (Shahid & Azhar, 2013). The small business owners are members of the Greater Memphis Chamber of Commerce with publicly available contact information. Yin (2014) asserted a population is a collection of individuals with similar characteristics. For this case study design, small businesses are those with 90 or fewer employees.

Koch, Niesz, and McCarthy (2013) specified participants are selected for their personal experiences, not for representation of a larger population. The participants comprised of different genders, races, backgrounds, and experiences. Since small businesses constitute a majority of Tennessee's economy, a small population can be used and provide enough information to answer the research question. The city of Memphis is located in the southwestern corner of Tennessee. This region of the United States shares borders with Arkansas and Mississippi states. A qualitative researcher can conduct a case study using a single unit or multiple units of analysis within the same or different settings (Yin, 2014). The population of retail leaders from multiple businesses in the retail industry in the southeastern region of the United States was appropriate for the selection of cases in a multiple case study. To qualify for this study, participants met the following criteria participate: (a) be at least 18 years of age, (b) had over three years' experience in the retail industry (c) worked as a retail store owner in the southeastern region of the United States, (d) had experience implementing effective strategies to reduce employee turnover, and (e) had 7.5 % or less in employee turnover.

## **Sampling**

The retail owners in small businesses with 90 or fewer employees in the southeastern region of the United States, represented the sampling for this case study. The sample size includes six owners of retail outlets in the southeastern region of the United States, who successfully implemented strategies to reduce employee turnover in their locations. Elo et al. (2014) stated sampling strategies must align with the purpose of the study. The sampling method for the study was purposeful criterion-based sampling, based on self-report and publicly available contact and company information. Using purposeful criterion-based sampling method is helpful for screening participants who have information critical to the intended discoveries of the study (Conte, 2014; Frasca et al., 2014). I used purposeful criterion-based sampling to ensure participants met the criteria for succeeding in developing strategies to reduce the problem of employee turnover. This purposeful sampling strategy is appropriate for researchers who are unable to include every member of the population in the research and who depend on information-rich participants who can provide in-depth data that can lead to answers to the research question (Palanski et al., 2014). The logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth.

Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term purposeful sampling. Studying information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalizations (Benoot, Hannes, & Bilsen, 2016). The sample size for this study was six small retail businesses because it would provide enough data to

answer the research questions. My intent was to interview six retail owners of six retail outlets who demonstrated implementing successful strategies to reduce employee turnover. Qualitative researchers use small sample sizes compared to quantitative researchers who usually use larger sample sizes for statistical purposes (Blew, Lee, Farr, Schiferl, & Going, 2014). The interviews and archival document reviews were conducted in the southeastern region of the United States at various locations. An experienced research interviewer, with a concise research topic, and a small number of interviewees (with the experience of the phenomenon) can provide relevant information for the study (Clearly, Horsfall, & Hayter, 2014). The interviews were semistructured with the participants. The sample size refers to participants researchers collect data from during the data collection process (Fugard & Potts, 2015). Large-scale qualitative projects require hundreds of individuals in their sample.

Numerous researchers use comprehensive samples in purpose sampling strategy, which are broken into smaller sub-studies and then analyzed on their terms before being aggregated together (Robinson, 2014). According to Morse (2015), scholars can improve the reliability and validity of qualitative studies by achieving data saturation. I used purposeful sampling until data saturation. Shahid and Azhar (2013) disputed purposeful sampling is finding new references are impossible. Researchers must choose an interview setting that enables participants to share information without concern for privacy (Robinson, 2014). Case study scholars can use a small sample size when conducting a case study if researchers can collect data from at least two independent sources (Morse, 2015). The goals of qualitative scholars during the sample size planning

is not how large the sample size is but collecting reliable data to gain a thorough understanding of the research problem (Button et al., 2013). I used a small sample size for this research study.

### **Ethical Research**

Practicing full disclosure with research participants is an essential part of the research process (Yin, 2014). During the informed consent process, scholars must ensure prospective participants can ask questions and sign a voluntary agreement to participate (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The final doctoral manuscript includes the Walden IRB approval number (07-12-18-0630400). Participation in the study was voluntary. Informed consent is more than a form; it is a mechanism to protect research participants (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014). The data collection process did not start until I received a letter of cooperation from the owner of the organization. After receiving a letter of cooperation from the owner of the organizations, prospective participants who met the criteria for this study received an email, telephone call, or notification in writing inviting them to participate in the study. Participants also received information of their rights to withdraw from the study.

Research subjects had the right to withdraw from a study at any time (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2014). When a participant asks to withdraw from a study, researchers must discontinue all interactions or communications with the research subject and destroy any data collected from the participant (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2014). Research participants could withdraw from the study by notifying me by email or telephone call. Before starting the interviews, participants

received information about the withdrawal process and the importance of requesting to withdraw before the data analysis phase began. Appropriate methods of withdrawing from the study include a written, typed, or an emailed statement of withdrawal from the participant. Researchers can offer incentives, such as cash vouchers, gift cards, cash, or items of monetary value; scholars must ensure that the value of the incentives will not affect the quality or reliability of the data participants provide (Bouter, 2015). Offering participants incentives can help researchers recruit subjects to improve the reliability and validity of the findings (Mduluzza, Midzi, Duruza, & Ndebele, 2013). I did not offer any incentives to participants to participate in this research study.

Researchers use the ethical rules of the Belmont Report to protect the well-being of the participants in a study (Mikesell, Bromley, & Khodyakov, 2013). According to (Mikesell et al., 2013), the rules included the following:

- Treating the participants anonymously and not revealing their identity in the study
- Treating the participants fairly and not taking risks
- Providing information to the participants so they can decide if they want to be a part of the study
- Requiring the researcher to reveal the risks and benefits related to the study across society

Ethics involves the responsibility of assisting researchers in establishing right from wrong and, when incorporated throughout the research activities, shields the reputation of the study (Vanclay, Baines, & Taylor, 2013). Researchers must take every precaution to avoid exposing participants to harmful situations. The role of the researcher is to

maintain the participant's privacy and assure they are not harmed in any way physically and emotionally (Vanclay et al., 2013). Abernethy et al. (2014) proposed a researcher must comply with ethical guidelines relating to human participants set forth by the IRB. Castleberry (2014) stated when conducting a case study involving human participants, the researcher should keep data and information pertaining to the participants private and confidential. I understand the ethical considerations about the protection of human research participants. A certificate issued by the National Institutes of Health Office of Extramural Research (NIH) validates this competency.

Check, Wolf, Dame, and Beskow (2014) recommended researchers maintain all collected data in a locked cabinet for five years after the study completion. All data collected will be stored in a locked file cabinet for five years to protect the confidentiality of participants and the integrity of the study. I am the only person with access to the data and will adhere to all Walden IRB requirements as provided in the approval process. Davis (2014) protected the identity of participants by assigning participant numbers to maintain confidentiality within the research process. I assigned participant numbers (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, and P6) to safeguard participants' identity throughout the entire research process, including during file storage. In the final study, reports about participants include only their distinctive pseudonym codes (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, and P6). I upheld the standards of conduct for ethical research in this study set forth by the university's IRB and the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2014). I adhered to the university's IRB recommendations to maintain the protection of participants.

Researchers should demonstrate that they will provide true evidence; evidence must be credible, trustworthy and honest, and the data accumulated must be valid (Wang et al., 2014). According to Yin (2015), shredding documents is a reliable way to destroy research documents and media. After five years, I will shred all paper documents and delete the backup stored on my computer and flash drive. Researchers must make every effort to mitigate any potential harm to participants by ensuring confidentiality and protecting the participants' rights to privacy (Wall & Pentz, 2015). The participant's rights will be protected and safeguarded.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

I was the primary data collection instrument for this study. Since researchers are the data collection instrument in semistructured qualitative interviews, some characteristics, such as biases and experiences, can influence the collection of empirical materials (Porter, 2015). I used semistructured interviews to conduct face-to-face interviews and document reviews of employee turnover. A copy of the interview protocol is located in the (Appendix A) and listed in the table of contents. I used meeting rooms located at the retail a site, so the participants would not become distracted with telephone calls, cellular phone notifications, or fellow employees with inquires. I interviewed each participant individually and digitally recorded the interviews with an electronic audio recording device. Wiewiora, Murphy, Trigunarsyah, and Brown, (2014) stated semistructured interviews are useful for in-depth investigations or explorations. I ensured all participants consented to an audio recording before I scheduled their interview sessions.

Yin (2015) indicated qualitative researchers using a case study design must collect data from at least two sources. I interviewed retail store owners and reviewed employee turnover documents until the achievement of data saturation; documents on employee turnover helped validate the data from the interviews. The data collection did not start until obtaining IRB approval (07-12-18-0630400). The first step of the data collection process began with an email or in-person visit to the prospective businesses in the southeastern region of the United States, to request permission to participate in the research study.

After receiving the letter of participation from the owners, participants received an email invitation requesting participation in the study. Sutherland, Amar, and Laughon (2013) noted inviting participants through email reduces the time it takes to receive replies, is inexpensive, and allows scholars to keep electronic proof of acceptance. After prospective subjects agreed to be part of the research, I contacted the participants to schedule the interviews. Face-to-face semi-structured interviews and document review on employee turnover was the two primary sources of data collection for this study. Researchers can use several types of interviews to collect qualitative data, but face-to-face interviewing is the most used data collection method for qualitative research (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). The face-to-face interview is the preferred data collection method for case study research because interviewers have better control over the interview (Ziebland & Hunt, 2014). In addition, when using semistructured face-to-face interviews, researchers can be more personal with the participants and ask follow-up questions. I used face-to-face interviews and review of archival documents on employee turnover as



my data collection sources for this study, as recommended by Yin (2015). The reason for choosing semistructured interviews with open-ended questions was because open-ended questions provide participants with more flexibility when sharing information.

Reviewing documents on employee turnover provided new insight into the effectiveness of current employee turnover strategies shared by managers during the interviews.

Ziebland and Hunt (2014) declared open-ended questions do not restrict participants' answers; instead, interviewees have an opportunity to provide a complete description of their personal experiences. Face-to-face semistructured interviews were the primary source of data collection in this study.

According to Bowden and Galindo-Gonzalez (2015), semistructured face-to-face interviews are more effective when researchers use open-ended questions (Bowden & Galindo-Gonzalez, 2015). Other researchers concurred with Ziebland and Hunt (2014) and stated that face-to-face interviews are critical to data collection in qualitative research (Knepp, 2014). To promote efficiency and effectiveness during the interview process, I used an interview protocol located in (Appendix A). In addition, I asked follow-up questions to ensure participants were providing information pertinent to the research problem. Qualitative researchers can review documents to collect data for a study (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Reviewing documents is one of the methods of data collection recommended by Yin (2015) for a case study design. Moreover, Amankwaa and AnkuTsede (2015) reviewed documents from their partner organizations to gather data on employee turnover. By collecting data from interviews and documents on employee turnover, I followed Yin's (2015) recommendation of gathering data from two

independent sources when conducting a case study. Document review was the secondary data collection source for this study. Using interviews and reviewing documents on employee turnover provided insight on effective strategies retail owners use to reduce employee turnover and help authenticate the collected data.

Scholars can use member checking to improve reliability and validity in qualitative research (Harvey, 2015). Member checking is a quality control process qualitative scholar use to improve the reliability and validity of data obtained from interviews (Harvey, 2015). When using member checking, researchers provide participants with a summary of the interview data from the interviews to verify its accuracy (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013). According to Morse (2015), the three steps to conduct member checking are: (a) conduct the initial interview, (b) interpret what the participant shared, and (c) share the interpretation with the participants for validation. The member checking process took place in an office at the business site. To conduct member checking, I analyzed the data, wrote a 2-page summary for each interview session, and gave it to the study participants for their review (Allen & Shamrock, 2013). At that time, I gave participants their opportunity to offer comments or clarification on my interpretations. I corrected all interpretations errors and conducted member checking, again, with the respective participants until all errors were accurate. Participants received a copy of the interpretations of the interviews to validate for inaccuracies.

Qualitative researchers can also improve reliability and validity by using methodological triangulation (Yin, 2015). Methodological triangulation, as described by

Andraski, Chandler, Powell, Humes, and Wakefield (2014), stems from multiple sources of data. Fusch and Ness (2015) stated methodological triangulation adds depth to the data collection. I triangulated the semi structured interview data from multiple participants and document review data from several participants to develop the findings of the study. Harvey (2015) noted methodological triangulation in case study research enhances findings from enriched data analysis. Conducting member checking and triangulating the data collected from semistructured interviews and review of documents heighten the trustworthiness of the findings of the study. I analyzed the data from semistructured interviews and document review to obtain different evidence that complements one another and enhances the research study findings.

### **Data Collection Technique**

To collect adequate data to answer the research question, the data collection strategy included semistructured face-to-face interviews using open-ended questions and reviewing documents on employee turnover from the retail outlets. When collecting qualitative data, Ziebland and Hunt (2014) suggested face-to-face interviews because researchers can ask follow-up questions and observe for verbal and nonverbal expressions. There are four different types of interviews including: (a) face-to-face, (b) focus group, (c) email, and (d) telephone interview (Clearly et al., 2014). Although scholars can use any of the four interview approaches to collect data, the face-to-face interview is the preferred method for collecting qualitative data because researchers have better control over what information the participants provide (Ziebland & Hunt, 2014). Interviews are also an effective data collection technique for a case study design (Yin,

2015). I used semistructured face-to-face interviews as the primary data collection technique. Some of the advantages of the face-to-face interview are: (a) enhanced screening, (b) increased opportunity for capturing verbal and nonverbal cues, (c) improved control of the interview, and (d) optimized for observing emotions and behaviors (Krall, Wamboldt, & Lohse, 2014). There are also some disadvantages of the face-to-face interviews including (a) time consumption, (b) participants' experiences, and (c) sample size limitations (Krall et al., 2014). Some of the benefits of reviewing documents are: (a) collection process is inexpensive, (b) access to detailed data from official documents, and (c) data collection does not rely on participants' willingness to provide information (Yin, 2015). My objective was to read documents on employee turnover and combine the data obtained from the documents with the data collected from interviews.

There are also disadvantages associated with reviewing documents, such as: (a) can be subjective, (b) can be time-consuming, and (c) can deter leaders from participating in the study for fear of sharing official documents with researchers from outside the organization (Zhang, Ni, & Xu, 2014). I requested permission to review documents on employee turnover from the owner of the organizations by email and in person. The interviews took place in a room or office at the business site. The interview sessions began with salutations, personal introductions, and an overview of the research topic. I recorded all interviews using an audio/video digital recorder. Interviews took approximately 30 minutes to complete. At the end of the interview, participants received verbal acknowledgments for their participation. After completing the interviews, leaders

from the organizations were asked to make available copies of documents on employee turnover for the last three years. The purpose of reviewing documents was to use a secondary data source to validate data from the interviews. When conducting a qualitative case study, researchers must use two independent sources of data collection such as interview and document review; using multiple data collection sources promote credibility and enable scholars to reach data saturation (Yin, 2015). Reading documents on employee turnover provided valuable insight to help answer the central research question.

Researchers can use member checking to increase reliability and validity of qualitative research (Andraski, et al., 2014; Wang, 2015). Using member checking to verify data collected from interviews helps researchers ensure accuracy and promote credibility (Andraski, et al., 2014; Check et al. 2014). Morse (2015) recommended a 3-step process to conduct member checking: (a) conducting the initial interview, (b) interpreting what the participant shared, and (c) sharing the interpretation with the participants for validation. Some researchers recommend using member checking to increase reliability and validity (Andraski, et al., 2014; Check et al., 2014; and Morse, 2015). After interpreting the interviews, I visited the retail site and conducted member checking with participants to validate the interpretations for accuracy. The member checking processes ended after each participant validated the transcriptions of the interviews were accurate.

### **Data Organization Technique**

Data organization is critical when conducting research; creating an effective data organization strategy helps researchers locate needed information in an efficient manner (Gajewski, 2013). During the data collection process, researchers can use reflective journaling to stimulate higher-order thinking skills, which are vital when conducting research (Cengiz & Karatas, 2015). Reflective journaling is a tool used by researchers to record or take notes pertinent to activities or situations the investigator encounters during the data collection process (Cengiz, Karatas & Yedigargolu, 2014). Taking time to reflect on previous events help researchers grow personally and professionally and can lead to a better understanding of the research problem (Cengiz et al., 2014). When using an effective data organization technique, scholars can retrieve data more efficiently (Gajewski, 2013). Having a data organization plan is important; researchers who use an effective data organization technique can manage their data more effectively (Check et al., 2014). NVivo 11 is a tool researcher use to organize research data (Zamawe, 2015). I used NVivo 11 for this research study. Using NVivo 11 enables researchers to employ proper data management and storage techniques, which improve the accessibility of the data. Another important element of research is implementing an effective data storage strategy (Cengiz et al., 2014). I used reflective journaling, a personal log, NVivo 11, and a labeling system to create a proficient data organization strategy.

Saunders, Kitzinger, and Kitzinger (2014) suggested the importance of using a naming convention in qualitative research and the usefulness of digital files. To track the data, I used pseudonyms for study participants and data tracking. I referred to

participants as P1, P2, P3, etc., which protects their confidentiality and ensure privacy. None of the participants knew their study identifier. In this study, I stored the narrative data in word processing software with the data assigned and labeled with distinctive pseudonyms, rather than participants' names, to facilitate confidential digital file storage. I transcribed the recorded interview data into word processing software. NVivo software can help the researcher identify themes from the grouping of data (Woods, Paulus, Atkins, & Macklin, 2015). Other software choices for qualitative data analysis as noted by Kaefer, Roper, and Sinha (2015) include MaxQDA, Atlas.ti, and dedoose, among others. Each option shares the advantage of simplifying analysis of voluminous textual data, but there are also disadvantages (Rogerson, Soltani, & Copeland, 2016). Disadvantages include the costs of use and the process of learning and becoming proficient with the different software options (Davidson, Paulus, & Jackson, 2016; Kaefer et al., 2015). Other considerations pertain to the support of the institution for use of the software and potential costs of license fees (Kaefer et al., 2015). After looking at the costs, the learning required to use the software, and the prevalence of use in and support by doctorate-level research institutions, I selected NVivo 11 software to use for this research study. I organized the data by grouping codes from identified phrases, words, or statements that frequently appear within the data, using NVivo 11.

The data groupings included the responses from each research question and journal notes. I contacted the participants and provided each with the same brief summary, consisting of no more than one to two pages of the interpreted data for review. I allowed each participant to comment on the interpretations of the summaries. In this

study, I recorded all data collection and analysis steps with notations in a research journal, as recommended by Yin (2014). In this study, I secured all digital data on my password-protected computer and backed it up on a password-protected hard drive; I am the only person with access to the stored information. Digitally recorded interviews, journal notes, and the transcripts from NVivo 11 database is also on a password protected external flash drive and will remain locked in a safe for five years at my home. After the 5-year period, according to the recommendations of Walden University concerning data storage, I will complete the deletion, shredding, and destruction of all data.

### **Data Analysis**

A researcher uses multiple sources to collect data for the case study analysis (Greene & Seung, 2014). Furthermore, Greene and Seung (2014) suggested, in multiple case studies, a researcher carries out two stages of analysis, called within-case and cross-case analysis. Implementing an effective data analysis technique results in better data interpretations and improves the quality of the findings (Stuckey, 2015). The applicable data analysis method for this multiple case study research design was methodological triangulation. I used methodological triangulation following a review of interview transcripts and archival documents. According to Yin (2014), methodological triangulation can benefit researchers and improve the validity of the study since a researcher can use more than one method for data collection. I analyzed the data by organizing the participants' responses of the interviewing questions and reviewing the company archival documents related to the study phenomenon of employee turnover. After arranging the data information, I used a qualitative software tool NVivo 11 for



coding, identifying themes, and to demonstrate the relationships between each classification.

### **Yin's Five-Step Process**

The data analysis process was performed in sequential order as recommended by Yin (2015). When conducting qualitative data analysis, Yin (2015) recommended a five-step process that includes compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding. A vital element of ensuring data integrity is the accurate and appropriate analysis of research findings. Inadequate analyses misrepresent scientific findings, mislead readers, and may negatively affect the results of the research study.

**Compiling the data** process begins when researchers start compiling the notes, transcriptions, and other research data (Yin, 2015). I analyzed data from the participants' responses to the eight semistructured interview questions. I listened to the audio and view video recordings and transcribed the data into Microsoft Word to capture the participants' responses from the interviews. I obtained public information from publicly available databases. I read and reviewed archival company documents as another source of data collection to classify them into groups.

**Disassembling the data** into more manageable fragments is the second stage (Edwards-Jones, 2014). I divided the data into groups, using keywords to identify the themes. The researcher identifies keywords before and during data analysis (Yin, 2014).

**Reassembling the data** in phase three includes creating codes and clusters (Yin 2015). Once researchers complete organizing the data and creating relevant themes, the

data interpretations begin (Yin, 2015). During the reassembling of the data step, I regrouped the data and categorized the labels into themes.

**Interpreting the data** during this phase, I created a narrative of the responses to explain the data for the participants to apprehend. The narrative data came from the open-ended questions, interviews, and documentation reviews. The narrative of the data was a form of reporting, in which the researcher is preparing for the conclusion from the data results (Harvey, 2015).

**Concluding the data** was the final step. The final step of the data analysis process requires that researchers make conclusions from the interpretations from stage four (Yin, 2015). To complete the data analysis process, I compiled all the collected data, organized the data into more manageable compilations, and arranged into groups and identified themes. I conducted in-depth analyses of the interviews and reviews of employee turnover documents and made conclusions from the interpretations.

### **Methodological Triangulation**

Methodological triangulation is a data analysis tool that requires using two or more sources to validate research data (Yin, 2015). Morse (2015) and Wilson (2014) recommended case study researchers use methodological triangulation during the data analysis process to triangulate research data. The conceptual framework connects with the methodology and the literature (Yazan, 2015; Yin, 2014). The conceptual framework that forms the basis for this study is the Herzberg two-factor theory. I deliberated the results of data analysis in view of Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory. The analyzed data provide awareness regarding the reasons employees leave their positions and how

leaders intend to retain employees in the future. I compared the key themes with the literature (including recently published studies). Researchers use methodological triangulation to validate data during the data analysis process; methodological triangulation requires the use of multiples sources (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I used methodological triangulation to validate data during the data analysis process. To triangulate the study, I used multiple data collection strategies including notes taking, transcripts, and analysis of company documents to support the findings from my interviews. The analyses of data included data procurement, removal, assembling, grouping data into themes, analyzing, interpreting, and concluding. I used methodical triangulation to validate data during the data analysis process.

### **Qualitative Software Analysis Method**

The art of coding was very informative to help in correlating data within the interviewing questions (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I assigned pseudonyms to identify participants for each question and for each response. For example, P1 was for owner one to P6, IQ1 was for interview question one to IQ7 and RQ1 was used in response to the research question. In addition, I assigned an alpha letter and a number for each document that is pertinent to this research. For example, I referred to document 1 as D1. The inductive approach was suitable when the researcher has prior knowledge regarding the phenomenon for a process (Davis, 2014). NVivo 11 software was the choice to use for coding and identify the themes. NVivo 11 software include (a) importing and analyzing text-based data, (b) organizing information using themes and coding, (c) review coding and highlighting, (d) word frequency, and (e) exporting data analysis and findings

(Zamawe, 2015). One of the many benefits of using NVivo was the word frequency feature of the program; this search feature enabled me to find out how often participants share certain words during the interviews. I exported the data from NVivo 11 using Microsoft Excel. In the spreadsheet, it includes a list of codes and themes, the frequency, and the in-text codes. Once I identified the categories, I reviewed the number of times certain themes appeared and revealed their relationships between the categories. One of the simplest approaches to identify a theme was through repetition.

Subsequently, I exported the data from Microsoft Word into Microsoft Excel and displayed the information in the form of a table for easy viewing of the findings. I aligned the data collection and data analysis with the conceptual framework. When researchers use multiple sources to gain insight into a research problem, scholars can enhance the data analysis process by improving the interpretations of the collected data. An effective data analysis results in themes researchers use to present the perspectives of the participants (Wang, 2015). Utilizing NVivo and following the five steps process (compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding) recommended by Yin (2015) permitted me to manage the collected data effectively during the data analysis. After presenting the themes in accordance to Yin's recursive five-phase cycle, I reported how the findings relate to or differ from the findings in the prior literature review Halebic and Nivin's (2012) study and the theoretical framework. I plan to share the results with each participant, the president of the Tennessee Retailer Association, and retail industries at large by email.

I compared key themes with the academic and professional literature, which included recently published studies. My objective was to compare the significant themes to the literature and explain how the themes support, refute, or clarify peer-reviewed literature (Pryce, 2016). I compared key themes with the literature (including newly published studies). Researchers' responsibility during the research process is staying current on their research topic (Yin, 2015). Researchers can sign up for search alerts to stay up-to-date on future publications related to their research topic (Gajewski, 2013). Search alert is a tool researcher use to receive automatic alerts via email or RSS feed when new articles matching a search criterion are available (Pocock, 2015). To stay informed on articles published after writing the proposal, I signed up for search alerts with the Walden Library to receive continuous updates of publications on my research topic and conceptual framework.

### **Reliability and Validity**

#### **Reliability**

Reliability is the level of consistency of the results of a qualitative research over time (Noble & Smith, 2015). Subsequently, Grosseohme (2014) defined reliability as the ability to use the same methods and procedures as the original researcher to obtain comparable outcomes. Reliability is essential in qualitative research; researchers seek reliability to ensure their data were accurate (Harvey, 2015). According to Harvey (2015), researchers can use member checking to improve dependability, which increases the reliability of the findings. Member checking is a quality control process qualitative scholars use to validate interview data (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Scholars can also increase

reliability by achieving data saturation (Morse, 2015). To accomplish member checking, Morse (2015) recommend the following 3-step process: (a) conduct the initial interview, (b) interpret what the participant shared, and (c) share the interpretations with the participants for validation. Zohrabi (2013) used member checking to validate interview interpretations to improve the reliability of his findings. To address the issue of reliability, I ensured dependability by using member checking and collecting data until achieving data saturation. I accomplished data saturation by asking six owners eight specific, open-ended interview questions and comparing their responses until the owners present no additional information or themes. Data saturation occurs once the study participants do not offer new patterns or themes (Pocock, 2015). I knew I reached data saturation when I did not discover any new evidence or information that relates to my research question (Taylor, 2013). I determined data saturation was reached when data became repetitive and no new information resulted from ongoing interview attempts.

Dependability is a strategy researchers use to ensure reliability in qualitative research (Harvey, 2015). Fusch and Ness (2015) recommended qualitative scholars use member checking to increase the dependability of the findings. Morse (2015) stated member checking is the preferred data validation method for qualitative interviews. Yin (2015) suggested qualitative scholars select member checking over transcript review whenever possible. To address the issue of dependability, I used member checking as suggested by Fusch and Ness (2015) and Yin (2015). I compared transcriptions and notes to the audio tapes to ensure the accuracy of the transcribed data. After completing my interpretations of the interviews, participants took part in the member checking

process to validate the interpretations of the interviews for accuracy. To perform member checking, I went to the business site and met with participants; each participant had the opportunity to correct and approve my interpretations of the responses provided during the interview to ensure accuracy. Frels and Onwuegbuzie (2013) stated researchers could strengthen the trustworthiness of their studies by combining appropriate methods and instruments that apply to qualitative case studies. All participants validated the interpretations of the interviews during the meetings.

### **Validity**

In qualitative research, validity refers to the suitability of the chosen methodology, design, sample size, data collection techniques and analysis, and the results of the study in relation to the central research question (Leung, 2015). By ensuring validity, researchers can improve the quality of qualitative research (Dwork et al., 2015). Promoting credibility, transferability, and confirmability helps scholars ensure validity. To ensure validity, I used member checking and methodological triangulation to validate the data from the interviews and stimulate credibility, transferability, and confirmability. In qualitative research, scholars must establish credibility to assert the validity of the findings (Nyhan, 2015). I validated the data by collecting data from independent sources and providing each participant with a copy of his or her interview interpretation to validate for accuracy.

**Credibility** refers to the level of trust readers and other researchers have in the findings of a study (Nyhan, 2015). By recording the interviews and maintaining a copy of the recordings, scholars can increase the credibility of their studies (Yin, 2015).

Another way investigators can promote credibility is by using member checking to validate the accuracy of the interview interpretations (Morse, 2015). To ensure credibility, I recorded each interview and used member checking to confirm the interpretations are free of discrepancies. Throughout the member checking process, I validated the data from the interviews for accuracy by asking the participants to confirm my interpretations of the interview responses. By conducting member checking and recording the interviews, I was able to endorse credibility and improve the validity of this study.

**Confirmability** is the degree to which the findings of a qualitative study are verifiable by other researchers (Houghton et al., 2013). Scholars must confirm research results to enable other investigators to contribute to the study (Burchett, Mayhew, Lavis, & Dobrow, 2013). When the results of a study are unverifiable, the research community questions the validity of the findings (Childers, 2014). Researchers can improve confirmability in qualitative research by providing readers with a full copy of the data from where the original scholar(s) made the interpretations, such as interview transcriptions, tables, and charts (Childers, 2014). One of the strategies qualitative scholars use to promote confirmability is member checking (Fusch & Ness 2015). To ensure confirmability, I used member checking to substantiate the interview data for precision. I used an office at the business site to conduct member checking; each interviewee had the opportunity to validate my interpretations of the interview responses for accuracy. Researchers can achieve data saturation by interviewing participants until no new data emerges (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Reaching data saturation is important in



qualitative research because achieving data saturation enables scholars to improve the validity of the findings (Yin, 2015). The results of a recent research study indicated by achieving data saturation, case study researchers can improve the reliability of the findings (Morse, 2015). To confirm data saturation, I continued interviewing retail store owners until no new data emerge and no further coding was practical.

**Transferability** refers to the degree to which the findings of a research can apply or transfer beyond the boundaries of the study (Boffa, Moules, Mayan, & Cowie, 2013). To confirm transferability, researchers must provide a detailed description of the research context (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Providing a rich description of the research context helps readers determine whether the findings of a particular study are transferable to another research (Yazan, 2015). Some of the factors that can influence the transferability of the results of a research include population, geographical location, and sample size (Burchett et al., 2013). Since my intent was to explore effective strategies used by retail store managers to reduce employee turnover in the southeastern region of the United States, the confines of this study might affect the transferability of the findings to other regions and geographical locations. To improve transferability, I am providing a meticulous description of the data analysis process, participants, and research perspective.

### **Transition and Summary**

In Section 2, I reemphasized the purpose of this study, explained my role as the researcher, and the criteria for selecting research participants. Also, in section 2, I explained the research method and design, including the purpose of selecting a qualitative

case study design for this study. I provided an explanation of the population and sampling, the process for ensuring ethical research, data collection, data organization, data analysis procedures, and the process to ensure reliability and validity in this study. Section 3, contains the presentation of findings, the application to professional practice, and the implications for social change. In Section 3, I discuss recommendations for actions and recommendations for further research on employee turnover. I conclude Section 3 with my personal conclusions and recommendations.

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

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies retail leaders used to reduce employee turnover. Numerous scholars indicated that the retail industry experiences a higher turnover rate than other sectors (McManus & Mosca, 2015). I explored effective strategies by interviewing six owners of six retail outlets in the southeastern region of the United States who had over 3 years of experience in the retail industry, worked as a retail store owner in the southeastern region of the United States, had experience implementing effective strategies to reduce employee turnover, and had 7.5 % or less in employee turnover. During the data analysis, I compared transcriptions, interview notes, and business records on employee turnover to promote validity and reliability. My data analysis indicated that at these owners were able to reduce employee turnover by embracing effective communication, supportive leadership, and competitive compensation. The retail owners that agreed to participate in the study offered their best approaches and knowledge concerning strategies retail outlets could use to retain employees. Section 3 includes the presentation of my findings, applications to professional practice, recommendations for action, recommendations for further research, and implications for social change. I conclude Section 3 with my personal reflections and research study conclusions.

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

The central research question in this study was the following: What strategies do small retail business leaders use to reduce employee turnover? I conducted

semistructured interviews with open-ended questions to allow participants to answer interview questions on strategies they used to reduce employee turnover. I interviewed six retail owners of six retail outlets in the southeastern region of the United States. In the small business retail industry, the turnover rate is higher and is a challenge faced by small business owners (Pryce, 2016). High employee turnover negatively affects a company's bottom line. Experts estimate it costs approximately twice an employee's salary to find and train a new employee. I reviewed archival company documents on employee turnover including transcripts, notes, and public records. Interviews took place in the participants' workplace. All interviews lasted about 30 minutes. I continued interviews until data saturation (which occurs at the point that no new themes emerge from interview questions). To protect the participant's rights, I assigned pseudonyms P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, and P6. After completing all transcriptions, interviewees participated in member checking. Member checking lasted between 30 minutes and 1 hour. I finished member checking by giving each owner a summary of my interview transcription to validate the accuracy of my interpretation. Once participants confirmed the transcriptions, I coded all data using NVivo 11. By using NVivo 11, I was able to familiarize myself with the research data more effectively and efficiently. The primary purpose of NVivo 11 was to perform word frequency searches. The data from these searches led to the identification of repetitive themes participants shared during the interviews. Throughout the data analysis, I focused on themes that were significant to the central research question and the conceptual framework. With the use of purposive sample, I retained an in-depth explanation of the central research topic from the

participants. Conducting member checking and triangulating the data collected from semistructured interviews and review of documents reinforces the credibility of the conclusions of the study (Yin, 2015). Some of the findings confirmed results from the literature while others extended the body of knowledge under review or created questions for further study. The data analysis disclosed the following themes: (a) effective communication, (b) supportive leadership, and (c) competitive compensation reduced employee turnover.

Table 2

*Emerging Themes and Frequencies*

Emerging Themes	Frequency	Percentages
Effective Communication	81	39.32%
Supportive Leadership	64	31.07%
Competitive Compensation	61	29.61%
Total	206	100%

**Theme 1: Effective Communication**

Nwagbara et al. (2013) emphasized that effective communication creates an atmosphere of communication satisfaction that can foster low turnover intention. Effective communication reduced employee turnover was the first theme to emerge. P2, P4, and P5 indicated that an owner's use of effective communication substantially impacts an organization's success. The method of communication permits people to act

and work together. Effective communication involves exchange of information (Beato, 2017). P1 submitted that effective communication is vital in every business. P3 stated that effective communication helps build a solid foundation for growth and success. P1 and P6 indicated that effective communication is about understanding the needs of employees. Communication between employees and owners reflecting a caring and supportive work environment and relationship may lead to a decrease in employee turnover (Allen & Shanock, 2013). All of the small business owners indicated that effective communication can have a positive effect on morale, productivity, and costs. P6 suggested that small business owners should be thoughtful, showing concern for employees, nevertheless professionally treat all employees with respect and dignity. P4 stated that by establishing more effective communication, leaders can help foster teamwork, increase cohesiveness and increase productivity among employees. The participants indicated their business strategy for effective communications is a primary concern for the organization. P3 and P4 agreed effective communication requires building a culture of transparency and accountability within the workplace.

P3 stated,

my main strategy to keep my employees is having good communication with all my employees. I try to work with them. I understand they have a life too. We use several forms of communication tools. We have an online site, email, meetings, telephone, and texting. The use of communication is very important for the business. I have to make sure everything works smoothly. I can't always be here, so I have to communicate through different channels to my employees. I stress

the importance of proper communication with everyone. I try to make the work atmosphere as comfortable as possible for my employees. This is some of the strategies I use to retain my employees.

P6 stated,

of the strategies I use to keep my employees is effective communication.

Communication is a two-way process, so improving communication involves both how we conduct and accept communications. When communicating with employees, try not to be negative, instead remain positive and provide guidance as necessary. Try to put yourself in their shoes. Be impartial and treat employees equally. A good leader will be able to work with their employees. Make sure employees know they are a priority. These are some of the things I do to keep my employees.

### **Archival company documents review**

During the review of archival company documents (transcripts), P2, P3, P5, and P6, disclosed monthly, semiannual, and annual company meetings with employees to address communication, productivity, profits, loss, and employee issues. P1 and P4 had policies and procedures for leaders to communicate company objectives. P3, P4, and P5 disclosed during document review, they have not lost any employees in over three years. P2, P3, P4 and P6 showed an increase in profits over the last 3 years. The review of archival company documents reaffirmed responses from the semistructured interviews. Six of the six participants indicated that effective communication is a very effective strategy for small businesses to utilize to reduce employee turnover. The findings of

Beato (2017) and Boyd (2017) reaffirmed effective communication can contribute to employee turnover and retention. Conversely, Davis (2016), Xu, Loi, and Ngo (2016) research study emphasized the importance of promoting effective communication between leaders and employees to increase job satisfaction and reduce employee turnover.

### **Correlation to the literature**

When effective communication is a primary business practice for organizational leaders all other practices are evitable (Mburu, 2017). Because the total cost of hiring a new employee ranges from 90% to 200% of the employee's annual salary, the implementation of effective strategies to reduce employee turnover is essential to the survivability of an organization (Hom, et al., 2017). Previous researchers supported communication skills as the essential skill to lowering turnover and increasing retention. When leaders provide qualified and experience employees with open communication in the workplace, it promotes a sense of appreciation and consideration of their expertise. Moustakas (1994) noted that when employees bring their expertise to an organization they are more likely to stay because they feel valued and needed in the workplace. Employee turnover increases other workers' job dissatisfaction, has a negative effect on customers' satisfaction, and affects sustainable business practices. By implementing effective communication truthful leaders can motivate, encourage, and innovate their followers (Giddens, 2017). Owners must implement effective strategies to reduce employee turnover to improve the survivability and sustainability of their businesses (Butali, Wesang'ula, & Mamuli, 2014).



### **Correlation to the conceptual framework**

Herzberg (1959) asserted that leaders could promote high employee retention, increase job satisfaction, lower the turnover rate, reduce job dissatisfaction, and increase productivity if employers meet the needs of the employees. The study's theme effective communication supports the Herzberg two factor theory. According to Milyavskaya et al. (2013), employees working in low paying jobs tend to have few or limited benefits and would resign if, within the same industry, other employers offered higher pay rates. Employees who consider their leader as their role model will seek to innovate and be proactive in sharing their ideas with the team, ultimately increasing team effectiveness (Carrington, 2016).

### **Theme 2: Supportive Leadership**

Leadership is summarized as the pattern of actions used by an influential individual to affect the behavior of others (Gonos & Gallo, 2013; McDermott et al., 2013). Leadership is the ability to influence others. Northouse (2015) defined leadership as a process in which a person has an influence on a group of people to accomplish a general objective. As documented by Smit (2013), responsible leaders are necessary to face the challenges of business operations. Every organization requires respectable leadership. Organizational leaders should continue to encourage knowledge workers to excel by expanding their knowledge base, ensuring their work is meaningful, and providing sufficient resources to complete work (Carrington, 2016). Most importantly, leaders must also provide social support and a strong voice to gain the trust of their

employee (Barnes et al., 2013). The quality of leadership is an imperative role in the success or failure of an organization.

P3, P5, and P6 indicated that being a positive, supportive, and professional leader, employees are likely to remain on the job. P1, P2, and P4 stated that a supportive leader works with the employees to ensure they know they are needed. Supportive leaders are honest with employees, empower their employees, and listens to their wants and needs described P3 and P4. P2, P3, and P6 asserted supportive leaders are extremely important for employee retention and organizational growth. P1, P3, and P6 indicated supportive leadership promotes mentorship, joint problem-solving and communications. P4 and P5 emphasized the attitude of the small business owner sets the tone for the rest of the organization.

P3 stated,

Another strategy that I use is being supportive leader. Delegating is a vital part of supportive leadership, owners should not just assign duties and then wait on the results. They should work through the jobs together to improve the relationships, skills, and abilities. Working alongside employees is a very useful tool. I have been able to learn about some of my employees' personal lives. I try to have a personal and professional relationship with my employees. As a small business, we try work together like a family. Personally, I tell them all the time that we are her together more than with our families, so we might as well get alone. We must treat each other like we want to be treated. That's why I think being a supportive leader is extremely beneficial for a company.

P6 stated,

being a supportive leader is something I have encouraged with my entire staff.

I use this strategy to help my employees stay here and be happy. We are a very small business, so it's important that we support each other. I do not tolerate us not getting along with each other. On a regular basis I try to ask my employees how they are doing and if they need anything. I have told my employees that if they have any issues to come and talk to me. They know I have I have an open-door policy. I try to support my entire staff. It is important for us to understand and respect each other. If a leader doesn't support their employees, the employees will probably leave. I have not had an employee quit or leave in over five years. I try to show my appreciation regularly with paying for their lunch, giving them an extra break, or a gift card. My employees are the most valuable asset for my business.

### **Archival company documents review**

P4 and P6 company documents (files) indicated the success of the owner and supervisors. The businesses continue to experience increase sales and profits. P1, P2, and P5 have regular training initiatives in place for employees. P4 documents (schedules) revealed how the business has flexible work schedules for employees. P3 and P6 work schedules indicate several revisions made to accommodate employee appointments. P5 showed notes employees submitted for time off. On the day of the interview with the owner (P2), I noticed two children. The owner informed me that she allows the

employee to bring her children to work with her sometimes. The review of archival company documents reaffirmed responses from the semistructured interviews.

All 6 participants indicated supportive leadership was an effective strategy to reduce employee turnover. The findings that supported leaders reduced employee turnovers were consistent with Beato (2017) and Davis (2016) the researchers established supportive leadership led to a decrease in employee turnover. Furthermore, Frear, Donsbach, Theilgard, & Shanock (2017) asserted supportive leaders increased employee productivity and commitment within the organization; which led to a reduction of employee turnover.

### **Correlation to the literature**

Leadership is summarized as the pattern of actions used by an influential individual to affect the behavior of others (Gonos & Gallo, 2013; McDermott, Conway, Rousseau, and Flood, 2013). As documented by Smit (2013), responsible leaders are necessary to face the challenges of business operations. Barnes et al. (2013) and Boyd (2017) argued some leaders maintain too much power of influence over their employees. Leaders are expected to motivate their employees and nurture a winning environment as they handle performance work to achieve goals (Brown, 2014). When leaders do not have enough employees to provide customers with adequate services, customers become unhappy because of unsatisfactory service and might decide to shop elsewhere, which results in unsustainable practices.

According to Barnes et al. (2013), removing some hierarchical powers from a leader down to the group level creates the trust the employees must feel from their leader.

Barnes et al. (2013) emphasized trust should be centered on the leader. Within the changing pace of organizational developments, leaders have to be more responsive and flexible than in other circumstances (Bottomley et al., 2014). There is extensive research on turnover of retail employees (Bande et al., 2014) with the main concern being the loss of knowledge and productivity when a trained employee leaves (Park & Shaw, 2013). Wang (2015) and Duda and Zurkova (2013) indicated losing experienced workers has a negative effect on productivity as the result of lost experience. Numerous scholars recognized employee turnover has an adverse effect on productivity (Wang, 2015). By offering competitive compensation, retail store' leaders can reduce employee turnover.

### **Correlation to the conceptual framework**

Herzberg (1959) asserted leaders could promote high employee retention, increase job satisfaction, lower the turnover rate, reduce job dissatisfaction, and increase productivity if employers meet the needs of the employees. Theme two supportive leadership supports the conceptual framework. The hygiene factors, noted by Herzberg (1959), influenced employees' motivation to leave their job but not their motivation to continue to work with the organization. The relationship of the employee with their peers, leaders, and subordinates should be appropriate and acceptable. Furthermore, Herzberg (2003) indicated employees will gain their job satisfaction when their expectations and values are met on their job. Creating structure includes establishing boundaries and expectations for employee roles while communicating the rewards and punishments associated with their performance. Additionally, Herzberg (2003) indicated a significant positive correlation between job satisfaction and co-worker relationship.

Edwards and Rothbard (1999) provided their statements in supporting strong social relations found within the work environment will enhance employees' job satisfaction and productivity.

### **Theme 3: Competitive Compensation**

According to Milyavskaya et al. (2013), employees working in low paying jobs tend to have few or limited benefits and would resign if, within the same industry, other employers offered higher pay rates. By offering competitive compensation, retail store' leaders can reduce employee turnover. Compensation and benefits has been one factors to retaining employees for over decades (Hoyland et al., 2015). Employees want to know they are fairly compensated for their work and they are valued for what they contribute to the organization.

All of the small business owners acknowledged the importance of competitive and reasonable compensation. P1, P2, and P6 indicated that during the interview process potential employees are questioned about compensation. P3 and P4 discussed the importance of compensation and how it helps retain employees. P1, P2, and P4 insisted employees not happy with compensation are likely to leave the company. P5 indicated she reviews pay with employees six months after hiring and then annually. P2 and P6 indicated they give their employee their first raise after 90 days of hiring.

P2 stated employees pay is a key strategy for me and my business. I try to give

employees raise when warranted. I understand that they have families. My employees work and go to school, so I know how important pay is to them. My employees want to know they are fairly compensated for their work. They want

to know they are appreciated. I try to give raises annually. We have a close relationship with our employees, so the issue of pay is not problem. My business has been doing extremely well, so the issue with pay has not been a concern. All of my employees are paid above minimum wage.

P5 employee compensation is another important strategy to keep my employees. I give out raises annually. Sometimes I will give an employee a raise when I see they are working above and beyond what they suppose too. I think all of my employees are happy with their pay. We are a small company, so I can only do so much. As the company grows, I will try to increase their benefits. I want to be able to provide insurance and maybe some other type of employee incentive.

#### **Archival company documents review**

P2, P5, and P6 budget reports indicated most employees were paid above the minimum hourly wage of \$7.25 per hour. P1 and P4 provided payroll documents to show they have only part-time employees and are paid \$7.25 per hour. P5 hiring and orientation policy indicate employees pay are reviewed annually for pay increases. All participants established the importance of offering competitive compensation benefits to new and existing employees. Sri, Krishna, and Farmanulla (2016) revealed the same strategies in a similar research study pertaining to competitive compensation in regard to employee retention. The participants cited compensation as one of three top reasons for employee turnover in their businesses. Additionally, Davis (2016) study findings revealed that offering a competitive compensation package, to include medical benefits, vacation time, sick time, and bereavement time, was equally important to retaining

employees. The review of archival company documents reaffirmed responses from the semistructured interviews.

### **Correlation to the literature**

Pierce (2018) research findings discovered compensation is directly related to turnover and Berman (2017) further validated that turnover is associated with compensation. Furthermore, Lewis (2015) research noted an average compensation plan combined with health benefits, retirement, and vacation leave is a motivator for employees to want to remain with current employer. Beato (2017) asserted compensation and benefits being a motivator are integral in retaining employees. Nevertheless, literature continued to show a direct relationship between compensation and turnover. There are several opportunities for researchers to build on the present and past research studies (Cho et al., 2017). The need for additional research on employee turnover is necessary to provide organizations with new strategies to increase employee retention.

### **Correlation to the conceptual framework**

Herzberg (1959) asserted leaders could promote high employee retention, increase job satisfaction, lower the turnover rate, reduce job dissatisfaction, and increase productivity if employers meet the needs of the employees. Theme three competitive compensation connects with the conceptual framework. The hygiene factors, noted by Herzberg (1959), influenced employees' motivation to leave their job but not their motivation to continue to work with the organization. Additionally, Herzberg (2003) explained that hygiene needs to entail compensation, reward systems, and interpersonal relationships, which may lead to increased employees' satisfaction. Two factor theory



proposed by Herzberg et al. (1959) is an important theory that explains what satisfies or dissatisfies employees and hence, serves as an important framework for employee retention. Furthermore Herzberg et al. (2003) specified pay structure should be appropriate and reasonable. Conversely, Herzberg (2003) advocated employee pay must be equal and competitive to those in the same industry in the same domain.

### **Applications to Professional Practice**

My research conclusions are applicable to professional business practices in the retail industry by proposing an understanding of retail owners' knowledge, best strategies, and experience as they relate to the retention of retail employees. Gonzalez (2016) elucidated that leaders of business organizations must take an active role in managing employee turnover because failure to retain key employees leads to organizational demise. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies for reducing employee turnover in retail outlets in the southeastern region of the United States. The population for this study was six owners from six small businesses in the retail industry in the southeastern region of the United States, who successfully developed strategies to reduce the problem of employee turnover. Participants provided information on how to reduce employee turnover in the retail industry. Organizations with leaders who promote a supportive leadership have a lower rate of employee turnover (Davis, 2013). The conclusions of this study also revealed that supportive leadership led to reduced employee turnover.

By offering employees competitive compensation and effective communication that promote workers' job satisfaction are effective strategies leaders can use to reduce

employee turnover. My purpose was to provide evidence to educational leaders, business owners, and stakeholders on the importance of using effective strategies to reduce employee turnover. Additionally, leaders might benefit from the information enclosed in this study and use this new knowledge to create a supportive work environment that leads to increased employees' job satisfaction, which in turn might reduce employee turnover. Satisfied employees are more likely to remain in the workplace than unsatisfied workers (Brett, Bransetter, & Wagner, 2014). By using supportive leadership and competitive compensation, leaders might increase job satisfaction, which in turn reduces employee turnover and increases profitability. Retention strategies are an important part of a productive organization (Balakrishnan, 2014). By focusing on the importance supportive leadership where employees and leaders support each other, retail leaders can promote teamwork and job satisfaction, which leads to increased retention. Increasing retention can lead to increased productivity, morale, and cohesiveness, which are instrumental to retail organizations.

### **Implications for Social Change**

The primary objective of this research was to explore effective strategies used by retail leaders to reduce employee turnover. This qualitative multiple case study on employee turnover is significant to social change because by offering employees competitive compensation, effective communication, and supportive leadership, retail leaders might reduce employee turnover. When organizations are profitable, leaders can develop expansion strategies, which lead to new employment opportunities and economic growth. High levels of turnover have an adverse effect on the organization (Smith &

Macko, 2014). Leaders are responsible for accomplishing their organization's goals and bringing positive social change to the communities they serve (Brett et al., 2014).

Organizations expect managers to be more cohesive with employees resulting in a more competitive business (Carrington, 2016). The findings of this study indicate that leaders who are effective at reducing employee turnover are capable of creating economic growth and can even reduce unemployment as the result of increased profitability and organizational expansion. The understanding of what leaders need to do regarding fast-paced business trends and global demands may impact individuals, communities, and society. Reducing employee turnover enable organizations' leaders to generate opportunities that bring positive social change to their communities (Steiner & Atterton, 2014). By implementing effective employee turnover reduction strategies, leaders can lower the costs associated with hiring and training new employees, which can lead to increased profits and organizational growth.

### **Recommendations for Action**

The evidence revealed by participants during the interviews might provide new insight retail leaders can use to reduce employee turnover within their organizations. Encouraging effective communication, supportive leadership, and offering competitive compensation are inexpensive strategies most organizations' leaders can implement and requires limited resources. By reducing employee turnover, retail leaders can promote organizational growth and profitability. Additionally, implementing effective strategies to reduce employee turnover may assist in retaining skilled employees who are difficult to replace because of years of knowledge and their immense experience. To promote

circulation of the findings of this study, dissemination of this research will occur through several methods. Leaders from the organization and all participants will receive a two-page summary of the conclusions. This study will also be available through the Walden University ProQuest/UMI dissertation database for future scholars and other organizations. I will also pursue opportunities to share the findings of this study with business related mediums, organizational training, and leadership symposiums. I will use the results in my future leadership and team development programs. I will pursue opportunities to publish in academic/professional journals and present at any conferences.

Business owners and managers from other service industries (food service, transportation, sales, production, customer service, etc.) can also profit from this study because employee turnover is challenging for all industries. As the study participants discussed, high employee turnover is connected to low organizational performance (Eaton & Kilby, 2015). I recommend that retail leaders reduce employee turnover by engaging in effective communication, supportive leadership, and by offering competitive compensation. I recommend business leaders review the findings of this study and implement these strategies in their business organizations.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

The purpose of this study was to explore strategies retail leaders use to reduce employee turnover in the southeastern region of the United States. The results of this study encompass existing research on employee turnover; employees' motives for leaving their jobs are not always the same. Employee turnover is a multifaceted business problem, future qualitative researchers should explore additional strategies retail leaders

use to reduce employee turnover. Recommendations for further qualitative research also include exploring effective strategies in different geographical locations and different industries such as food service, transportation, sales, production, customer service, etc. By exploring additional geographical locations and different industry organizations, scholars might contribute to a better understanding of employee turnover. Future quantitative researchers should consider examining the relationship between employee turnover and other variables such as employees' education, advancement opportunity, training, organization's ethics, employees' sex, and organizations' developmental programs. Imminent research in such areas might provide leaders with new knowledge to reduce employee turnover, which in turn might promote profitability and effectiveness. Furthermore, impending research could add to the limited scholarly knowledge and understanding of effective strategies used by leaders to reduce employee turnover. Future researchers should consider research on larger markets that have decreased profitability and increased employee turnover within the past 5 years through the use of quantitative or mixed-methods research methodologies to better understand the reasons for employee turnover within their organization.

### **Reflections**

The Doctoral of Business Administration doctoral dissertation process was a personal goal. The process was very difficult, inspiring, and rewarding. The interviews with the participants were extremely helpful. During the interview process, I became anxious and nervous. I felt overwhelmed with the process. It became very difficult for me to remain unbiased. Several times throughout the doctoral process, I wanted to quit.

After consulting with my chair and fellow classmates, I was able to complete this process by relaxing and taking extended breaks after each interview. While conducting this research, I was able to reduce mistakes and researchers' bias. The participants worked with me and scheduled an appointment with me within 2 to 3 days. I was able to perform member checking with participants within 1 to 2 days after their interview. The participants demonstrated professionalism to the utmost. The accomplishment of the DBA process is prodigious. After completing the study, my level of knowledge and understanding increased on my subject as my research expanded. The findings from this study exposed me to additional strategies that I can use in my current profession as a manager to communicate to management, supervisors, business owners, and human resources. In addition, I have only been employed in government employment, the empathy, devotion, and concern the participants displayed toward their employees have opened my eyes to pursue all employment opportunities. Without the entire support of my professors, classmates, family, and friends this accomplishment would not be possible.

### **Conclusion**

The findings from this multiple case study revealed that retail leaders can reduce employee turnover by improving the communication between leaders and employees, promote supportive leadership, and offer competitive compensation. Based on the participants' experiences, retail leaders should implement the aforementioned strategies into the overall organization's employee turnover reduction strategy. Employee turnover creates a devastating impact on any organization by reducing efficiency and creative

capacity, thereby losing their competitive edge and increasing vulnerability (Alshanbri et al., 2015). The findings of this study also indicated that by applying the strategies that emerged from the participants' responses, organizational leaders can improve profitability and organizational commitment. Subsequently, implementing these strategies is inexpensive; leaders should integrate these recommendations into the overall organizational retention strategy. The implementation of effective employee turnover reduction strategies is critical to the survival of retail organizations because of the effects associated with higher employee turnover rates such as decreased job satisfaction and reduced productivity.

Organizations with a high employee turnover rates are at risk because employee turnover can lead to reduced profits, loss of productivity, and loss of knowledge. I recommend that retail leaders, scholars, and practitioners use the findings and recommendations of this study to gain new awareness of effective employee turnover reduction strategies and to improve business practices. By implementing effective employee turnover strategies, retail leaders might promote organizational growth, which can lead to positive social change in the community they serve. Retail leaders cannot manage all retail employees in the same approach. Employees are from varied generations, geographic locations, professional backgrounds, and ethnicities and perceive fair treatment differently.

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## Appendix A: Interview Protocol

### Interview Protocol

**Interview:** Strategies for Reducing Employee Turnover in Retail Outlets

- A. The interview session will begin with salutations, personal introductions, and an overview of the research topic.
- B. I will thank participants for volunteering to participate in the study
- C. Participants will have the opportunity to read the consent form and ask any questions before signing the consent form.
- D. I will give participants a copy of the consent form for their personal records.
- E. I will ensure the primary and alternate audio recorders are turned on, and annotate the date, time, and location of the interview.
- F. I will code participant's identifiable information; I will use "P 1 through P 6" in chronological order of the interviews.
- G. I will document on the audio recorder that the participants signed a copy of the consent form before the interview begin.
- H. Interviews will last approximately 30 minutes for responses to the eight interview questions, including any additional follow-up questions.
- I. When interviews end, I will remind participants that I will meet them at a later date to verify the interpretations for inaccuracies.
- J. At the end of the interview, I will thank the research participants for taking the time to participate in the study.

## Appendix B: Interview Questions

### **Research Question**

What strategies do small retail business leaders use to reduce employee turnover?

### **Interview Questions**

1. Based upon your experiences, how does employee turnover effect your organization?
2. What strategies have you used to reduce employee turnover?
3. What methods did you find worked best to reduce employee turnover?
4. How did your employees respond to your techniques to reduce employee turnover?
5. How does your organization track employee turnover?
6. How does your organization assess the effectiveness of your organization's strategies for reducing employee turnover?
7. What other experiences, not covered in this interview, would you like to share about the strategies your organization has used to reduce employee turnover?