

2018

# Strategies Small Business Owners Use to Decrease Voluntary Employee Turnover

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*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Rose Mary Carter

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Walden University  
2018

Abstract

Strategies Small Business Owners Use to Decrease Voluntary Employee Turnover

by

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MS, Troy State University, 2004

BS, Troy State University, 2003

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

October 2018

## Abstract

Decreasing employee turnover among small businesses is a problem because employee turnover is costly and adversely affects business owners' ability to gain and maintain a competitive advantage. The purpose of this multiple case study was to explore strategies that small business owners use to decrease voluntary employee turnover to remain competitive. The target population was composed of small business owners located in the southeastern region of the United States who used strategies to decrease voluntary employee turnover. The conceptual framework for the study was Herzberg's 2-factor theory. Data were collected from semistructured interviews with 4 small business owners and review of company documents. Yin's 5 phases of analysis were used to analyze data and information. Five themes emerged from data analysis: caring and clean work environment, pay, rewards and recognition, supervision, and training and advancement. The implications of this study for positive social change include the potential to help small business owners and leaders implement strategies to decrease employee turnover and increase revenue to remain competitive. Stable small businesses can lead to social change by creating jobs to strengthen communities and local economies.

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## Dedication

I would like to dedicate this doctoral study to God who ordered my steps to this doctoral journey and walked with me and sometimes carried me every step of the way. To my husband Perez who encouraged and supported me throughout my doctoral journey, thank you. To my children Ryan, Daryl, Kameron, and Danielle and my grandchildren Zariah, Jakyhia, Valencia, Daryian, Daryi, and Isaiah as you witnessed the challenges that I faced and overcame with the help of God; remember that you can do all things through Christ who strengthens you. I have set a standard that I pray you will one day exceed.

*When you get tired, fatigue, and feel like giving up, do not stop; you are building the muscles that are needed to give you the strength to reach your goal.*

Rose Carter

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The success of my doctoral study required prayer, supervision, hard work, and support. I want to thank God for being by my side every step of the way. To my husband Perez, thank you for being understanding and allowing me to spend countless hours writing my doctoral study. Your prayers, words of encouragement, and support helped me to stay focused to reach my goal; I love and appreciate you. My children and grandchildren were a driving force to help me to reach my goal, thank you. My determination to set an academic standard for you motivated me to endure until the end. I love you.

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Thanks to the participants in the study for taking time out of your busy schedules to allow me to gather data from your organizations. Without you, there would be no study. I pray that your businesses continue to flourish.

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## Section 1: Foundation of the Study

The purpose of this study was to find strategies that small business owners use to reduce voluntary employee turnover. Excessive employee turnover remains the number one workplace challenge that business leaders encounter in organizations (Manoela, Francielle, & William, 2016). Some successful leaders have implemented strategies to reduce turnover (Ampoamah & Cudjor, 2015). Researchers should find strategies that small business owners use to minimize voluntary employee turnover.

### **Background of the Problem**

Reducing employee turnover among small businesses remains a problem because employees are an organization's greatest asset (Ugoani, 2016). In December 2017, 3.3 million employee turnovers occurred in the United States (U.S. Department of Labor, 2017). Kessler (2014) reported that voluntary employee turnover adversely affects businesses because of the loss of the time and money spent on recruitment and training, the loss of organizational knowledge and skills, and a decrease in productivity, which negatively affects a businesses' profitability. Employee turnover is costly (Kessler, 2014); and adversely affects business owners' ability to gain and maintain a competitive advantage (Guha & Chakrabarti, 2015). Employee turnover can cost from 32% to 114% of the annual salary of an employee (Collins, McKinnis, Matthews, & Collins, 2015). Small business leaders struggle to reduce employee turnover, thus experience a lack of competitive advantage (Manoela et al., 2016).

Some researchers have found strategies to lessen employee turnover. Singh and Sharma (2015) researched strategies to reduce turnover from an employee's perspective

to enable business leaders to manage human capital efficiently to gain a competitive edge. The sample size consisted of 225 participants. Singh and Sharma found that organizations use long-term and short-term strategies to reduce turnover. The long-term strategies found were the growth of business for job security, extensive training, and mentoring and coaching programs. The short-term strategies identified were monetary benefits for performance and competitive salaries. Strategies used in 2015 may not suffice in a changing workforce; exploring current and new strategies to decrease turnover will be an ongoing subject for research. The objective of this study was to help small business owners to understand what strategies to use to decrease voluntary employee turnover to increase profitability for future sustainment.

### **Problem Statement**

Small business leaders struggle to control employee turnover, thus, experience a lack of competitive advantage (Manoela et al., 2016). Employee turnover can cost from 32% to 114% of the annual salary of an employee (Collins et al., 2015). The general business problem is excessive turnover effects profitability. The specific business problem is that some small business owners lack strategies to decrease voluntary employee turnover to remain competitive.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies that some small business owners use to decrease voluntary employee turnover to remain competitive. The target population comprised four small businesses owners in the southeastern region of the United States invited because they have successfully

implemented strategies to decrease voluntary employee turnover. Data from this study may contribute to social change by enabling small businesses to increase profits, provide jobs, and strengthen local communities' economies.

### **Nature of the Study**

Three methods considered for research were qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods. I used a qualitative research method for this study to explore turnover reduction strategies. The qualitative method is the preferred method for researchers to explore findings to comprehend experiences of participants (Allen, 2015; Grossoehme, 2014). A quantitative method is guided by a hypothesis (DeBlaere & Hesson-Mcinnis, 2015; Fassinger & Morrow, 2013). I did not test a hypothesis to explore and understand what strategies small business owners use to decrease voluntary employee turnover. Researchers use the quantitative and the mixed-methods approaches to test hypotheses and use statistical data for measurement to determine correlations or differences among variables (Groeneveld, Tummers, Bronkhorst, Ashikali, & Van Thiel, 2015; Park, & Park, 2016); therefore, the quantitative and the mixed-methods approach were not appropriate for this study.

Qualitative researchers select a design to help investigate a phenomenon and choose from, case studies, ethnographies, or phenomenological approaches. I used a multiple case study design to explore strategies that small business owners use to decrease voluntary employee turnover. According to Yin (2017), when conducting a multiple case study, the researcher focuses on two or more distinct case units. I collected data from various small business owners; therefore, a multiple case study was appropriate

for my research. Case studies are diverse in study design and tend to involve *what, how,* and *why* questions (Hyett, Kenny, & Dickson-Swiss, 2014). Using a phenomenological research design can also yield information from individuals' meanings of lived experiences; I decided not to use a phenomenological research design because it requires gathering information from many participants and can be a long process (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Employing ethnographic research requires researchers to focus on a group's culture within its associated environment over an extended period (Draper, 2015). The focus of my study was not on a group's culture; therefore, an ethnographic research design was not suitable.

### **Research Question**

The overarching research question used for this qualitative case study is the following: What strategies do some small business owners use to decrease voluntary employee turnover to remain competitive?

### **Interview Questions**

1. What strategies do you use to decrease voluntary employee turnover?
2. What hygiene factors such as supervision, interpersonal relations, working conditions, and salary do you use to decrease employee turnover in your business?
3. Which hygiene factors cause your employees increased or decreased job dissatisfaction?
4. What motivation factors such as recognition, responsibility, advancement, and growth do you use to reduce employee turnover in your business?

5. Which motivation factors cause your employees to be satisfied with their job?
6. What strategies to decrease voluntary employee turnover satisfy your employees the most?
7. What other information would you like to provide about successful strategies your organization used to decrease voluntary employee turnover?

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework that I used in this study is Herzberg's two-factor theory. Psychologist Herzberg developed the two-factor theory in 1959 (Herzberg, 1974; Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959). Herzberg identified different constructs that yield job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction. Hygiene and motivation were found to be the two types of leading constructs that affect job satisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). Examples of hygiene factors are (a) supervision, (b) interpersonal relations, (c) working conditions, and (d) salary (Herzberg, 1974). Motivation factors relate to (a) recognition, (b) work itself, (c) advancement, and (d) growth (Herzberg, 1974). The use of the two-factor theory provided a lens for understanding the successful strategies for reducing employee turnover by identifying and exploring the issues that the strategies address to increase employee motivation and minimize job dissatisfaction. Herzberg's two-factor theory has been influential in assisting researchers in finding factors that can motivate people to work, lessen job dissatisfaction, retain employees, and reduce employee turnover (Damij, Levnajic, Skrt, & Suklan, 2015; Msengeti, & Obwogi, 2015). Herzberg's two-factor theory aligned with my study's focus to explore strategies that

small business owners use to decrease voluntary employee turnover to remain competitive.

### **Operational Definitions**

*Employee engagement:* Employee engagement is an employees' intellectual and emotional commitment to a company (Unal & Turgut, 2015).

*Employee retention:* Employee retention refers to the company's ability to sustain employees (Sutanto & Kurniawan, 2016).

*Employee turnover:* Employee turnover is the separation of workers from employers and replacement with other staff (Ugoani, 2016).

*Hygiene factors:* Extrinsic rewards that derive from task properties related to performing a specific job (Hauff, Richter, & Tressin, 2015).

*Turnover intention:* A worker's desire to leave his or her current job is turnover intention (Liao, Widowati, Hu, & Tasman, 2017).

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

#### **Assumptions**

According to Nourian, Farahnaz, Kian, Rassouli, and Biglarrian (2016), assumptions are a researcher's way of viewing a phenomenon. The first assumption I made was that each participant would provide honest answers to my research question. Another assumption was the data collected would expose strategies to decrease voluntary employee turnover. I assumed the results of my research would provide useful information that can help small business owners retain employees, increase profits, and remain competitive.

**Limitations**

Limitations identify potential weaknesses in a study beyond the control of the researcher (Helmich, Boerebach, Arah, & Lingard, 2015). The first limitation was that I may have biases that I am unaware of which can affect the outcome of the investigation. According to Leichsenring et al. (2017), biases in research can affect the results of a study. The second limitation was the amount of time allotted to conduct this study. I was unable to carry out this research because of time constraints, in various geographical locations for generalization.

**Delimitations**

Delimitations are limitations that a researcher deliberately sets for the study (Snelson, 2016). The delimitations in this study were the sample size and the geographical location. The sample size comprised four small business owners and may not provide an accurate representation for all business owners. I conducted the study in the southeastern region of the United States. Researching in one geographical location may not yield a variety of strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover and can adversely affect the generalization of the study.

**Significance of the Study**

Employee turnover is a concern in organizations. Voluntary employee turnover negatively affects businesses' profitability (Kessler, 2014). Small business owners need to know strategies to decrease employee turnover. The findings from this study may be of value to small business owners by helping them identify and understand strategies to reduce employee turnover to remain competitive. The results of this study could create

social change by enabling small business owners to decrease employee turnover, increase profits, and provide quality products and services to the community.

### **Contribution to Business Practice**

Voluntary employee turnover adversely affects the profitability of an organization because of the cost of recruitment, selection, and training as well as the cost of lost organizational knowledge and skilled employees, which can reduce productivity levels (Kessler, 2014). According to Soundarapandiyan and Ganesh (2015), excessive employee turnover adversely affects the profitability of a company. Business owners with strategies to reduce employee turnover can apply them to retain their employees. The results of this study contribute to beneficial social change by helping small business owners gain an understanding of what strategies to use to decrease employee turnover. Knowing and implementing turnover reduction strategies in an organization can help reduce costs associated with employee turnover, which can contribute to increasing a company's profitability for remaining in business.

### **Implications for Social Change**

Employee turnover reduction strategies sought in this case study can provide a foundation for creating social change by making business managers aware of ways to decrease their turnover rates and increase profitability. Also, the strength of small businesses has been a significant contribution to the economy (Hayes, Chawla, & Kathawala, 2015). Decreasing voluntary employee turnover rates and increasing businesses' profitability can increase productivity, improve future organizational sustainment, provide jobs in local communities, and strengthen the economy.

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

My intent in this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies that small business owners use to decrease voluntary employee turnover. I conducted the literature review to draw on the knowledge created by scholars to understand the phenomenon of excessive employee turnover. The literature review includes a critical analysis and synthesis of various sources of literature about voluntary employee turnovers such as peer-reviewed journal articles and books. The organization of the literature review is as follows: I address Herzberg's two-factor theory which is the conceptual framework that was used as a lens to view the phenomenon of voluntary employee turnover followed by supporting and contrasting theories, the need for small business leaders to reduce employee turnover, and hygiene and motivation factors and employee turnover. Also, I discuss employee retention and employee turnover, turnover intention and employee turnover, employee engagement and employee turnover, strategies for reducing voluntary employee turnover, and employee turnover and profitability.

The literature search consisted of the use of numerous databases such as ProQuest Central, Thoreau, Google Scholar, Emerald Insight, SAGE Journals, and the EBSCO database. I entered the following phrases and keywords related to voluntary employee turnover into the search engines: *voluntary employee turnover, job satisfaction, job dissatisfaction, turnover intentions, employee engagement strategies, employee turnover reduction strategies, employee attrition rates*. Other keywords and phrases used were *Herzberg's two-factor theory, transformational leadership theory, Maslow's hierarchy of*

*needs, McClelland's human motivation theory, small businesses, employee turnover and business problem.* Next, I entered the date range between 2014 and 2018 and checked the peer-reviewed journal articles box in the search engine to ensure that the journal articles retrieved were peer reviewed and had a publication date within 5 years or less from the anticipated completion date. Finally, the results of my literature review search resulted in the use of 74 peer-reviewed articles and books. Ninety-seven percent of the articles are peer-reviewed and 3% are books. Eighty-eight percent of the total sources had a publication date within 5 years or less from my expected doctoral study completion date, October 2018.

### **Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory**

The underpinning theory for this study was Herzberg's two-factor theory. In the 1950s, Herzberg sought to understand what satisfies employees (Band, Shah, & Sriram, 2016). The theorist found that the factors that led to employee satisfaction differed from the factors that caused workers' dissatisfaction (Band et al., 2016; Herzberg, 1974). Later, in 1959 Herzberg and associates conducted a study to understand employee's attitudes and motivation better (Sankar, 2015). Herzberg et al. (1959) conducted a study to determine what factors in the workplace cause satisfaction and which factors cause dissatisfaction that resulted in the development of the motivation-hygiene theory also known as Herzberg's two-factor theory. Two hundred engineers and accountants in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania participated in the study (Sankar, 2015). Herzberg et al. asked the participants to share occurrences that made them feel negative or positive about their job. The results of the study revealed that job dissatisfaction relates to the working

environment, and job satisfaction and the content of the job are associated. Herzberg et al. (1959) reported that the primary needs of employees are hygienic needs and motivational needs, and the researchers ascertained that hygiene and motivation are the two leading factors that affect job satisfaction. The factors that affect job satisfaction differ from the factors that influence job dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1974).

Herzberg (1974) identified hygienic factors that could increase or decrease job dissatisfaction. Hygiene factors are extrinsic rewards that derive from task properties related to performing a specific job (Hauff et al., 2015). Examples of hygiene factors are (a) supervision, (b) interpersonal relations, (c) working conditions, and (d) salary (Kim, Kim, & Heo, 2016). Herzberg asserted that the absence of hygiene factors could lead to job dissatisfaction; when hygiene factors are present, they do not result in increased job satisfaction but reduces job dissatisfaction in workers (Alfayad & Arif, 2017; Vijayakumar & Saxena, 2015). The presence of hygiene factors can lead to a decrease in job dissatisfaction. A reduction in job dissatisfaction can help to reduce voluntary employee turnover; because job dissatisfaction can influence turnover intention (Chen, Brown, Bowers, & Chang, 2015).

Herzberg observed motivational factors that can lead to job satisfaction. Motivational factors are intrinsic rewards provided by a company to motivate employees (Hauff et al., 2015). According to Herzberg (1974), motivation factors are typically associated with (a) achievement, (b) recognition, (c) work itself, (d) responsibility, (e) advancement, and (f) growth. Herzberg argued that motivational factors relate to the content of the job and can contribute to job satisfaction; the lack of motivational factors

can lead to job dissatisfaction. Herzberg asserted that when motivators are appropriately present in a firm, positive attitudes and job satisfaction could occur (Herzberg et al., 1959). When employees are satisfied with their jobs employee retention is improved (Terera & Ngirande, 2014). Terera and Ngirande showed that Herzberg's two-factor theory is still prevalent among researchers investigating job satisfaction and employee turnover.

**Other research including Herzberg's two-factor theory.** Since the 1960s, other research included the two-factor theory. Myers and Weed (1967) conducted a motivation research project using the two-factor theory. The participants in the study consisted of scientists, line managers, engineers, technicians, and assemblers employed at Texas Instruments. Myers and Weed observed that the presence of the following maintenance needs could lessen job dissatisfaction: security, status, social needs, and economic and physical factors; the authors also noted the following factors that motivate an employee: recognition, growth, achievement, and responsibility (Myers & Weed, 1967). Myers and Weed confirmed Herzberg et al.'s (1959) theory reporting that a decrease in the job factors that caused dissatisfaction do not cause worker motivation; other factors have more potential to motivate employees. The factors that Myers and Weed observed that lessen employee dissatisfaction and enhance job satisfaction coincide with the satisfying and dissatisfying factors reported in the two-factor theory.

Employers should know what factors motivate employees to work to reduce employee turnover. Herzberg's two-factor theory has been influential in assisting researchers in finding factors that can drive people to work, lessen job dissatisfaction,

retain employees, and reduce employee turnover (Damij et al., 2015; Msengeti, & Obwogi, 2015). Herzberg (1974) noted that hygiene and motivation are the two main factors that lead to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Damij et al. (2015) used the two-factor theory to examine what factors motivate employees to work. The sample consisted of 273 participants in Slovenia. Damij et al. found that salary, prestige, good working conditions, positive employee relationships, and personal growth are factors that can motivate employees to work. When motivating factors are high, it can lead to high job satisfaction (Damij et al., 2015). High job satisfaction affects employee retention, thus reducing employee turnover (Rose & Raja, 2016). The results of Damij et al.'s study coincide with Herzberg's findings in the two-factor theory. Damij et al.'s study took place in one geographical location, and the results of the study may not be generalizable.

Pay and the work environment can affect employee turnover. Msengeti and Obwogi (2015) studied the effect of pay and work environment on employee retention in the hotel industry and reported results consistent with findings in Herzberg's two-factor theory. Msengeti and Obwogi observed that compensation slightly influenced employee retention and the work environment had the most significant influence on the retention of employees. Msengeti and Obwogi's findings coincide with Damij et al.'s (2015) observations that compensation and the work environment influence employee retention. According to Msengeti and Obwogi, when employee retention rates are high, it means that the employee turnover rate is low. Salary and the work environment can affect employee retention.

The application of Herzberg's theory was beneficial in assessing workers attitudes toward company incentives and job satisfaction. MsenOni-Ojo, Salau, Dirisu, and Waribo (2015) used the two-factor theory to evaluate the views of employees toward work incentives and job satisfaction. One hundred and twenty-one non managerial and managerial staff participated in MsenOni-Ojo et al.'s study. MsenOni-Ojo et al. discovered that financial incentives encourage employees externally, whereas other incentives can inspire workers internally by causing them to feel valued by the organization. Msengeti and Obwogi (2015) and MsenOni-Ojo et al.'s findings are consistent with Herzberg's conclusions. Herzberg et al. (1959) reported that there are motivation and hygiene factors that affect job satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

The two-factor theory continued to be used for research on employee turnover. Sankar (2015) and Sarmad, Ajmal, Shamim, Saleh, and Malik (2016) used Herzberg's two-factor theory to explore employee turnover. Sankar (2015) conducted a study implementing the two-factor theory to determine the effect of hygiene factors on job satisfaction and employee retention. Employees in the paper industry participated in Sankar's research, and data were collected using questionnaires, the Internet, and official documents. The factors that Sankar observed that drove job satisfaction were working conditions, salary, status, job security, technical supervision, company policy and administration, and interpersonal relations, which coincide with Herzberg's theory. Sankar triangulated data from three different sources that add to the validity and reliability of the study; however, Sankar's sample consisted of employees in the paper industry, and the results of the study may not be generalizable to other industries.

The use of Herzberg's theory was successful to determine what factors influence employee retention. Sarmad et al. (2016) sought to identify factors that influence employee retention and collected data from 112 workers of oil and gas sellers. Sarmad et al. reported results consistent with Sankar (2015); they found that enhancing employee motivational levels and fair compensation could result in employee retention. Wilson (2015) applied Herzberg's theory to study the facets of the health professional's jobs that contribute to job satisfaction and the intent to leave. Wilson administered questionnaires to health staff at hospitals in Australia. The participants were required to rate their satisfaction level with various job features. Wilson observed a correlation between several job satisfaction factors and the intent to leave. Wilson's findings concur with Herzberg's two-factor theory, extrinsic and intrinsic job factors correlate with the intention to leave among health staff. Wilson reported that the results of the study could help leaders implement strategies to improve the retention rates of health professionals and reduce employee turnover.

What causes workers to be satisfied or dissatisfied with their job remains a topic of exploration. Terera and Ngirande (2014) conducted a quantitative study of 180 nurses to determine the effect of rewards on employee satisfaction and employee retention among nurses. Terera and Ngirande found that employee rewards lead to employee retention; they do not lead to job satisfaction. Terera and Ngirande's findings support Herzberg's observations that rewards are a motivational factor that can lead to employee retention. In contrast, Terera and Ngirande stated that rewards do not lead to job satisfaction, which contradicts Herzberg's theory. Similarly, Vandhana and Sowmya

(2015) studied 162 employees of IT companies regarding the relationship between job satisfaction and employee turnover in the IT sector. The researchers found that a relationship exists between job satisfaction and turnover intention. Turnover intention affects employee turnover. The results of Vandhana and Sowmya's study are consistent with the two-factor theory.

In 2017, the use of Herzberg's two-factor theory was successful in exploring factors that affect job satisfaction. Rahman, Akhter, and Khan (2017) used Herzberg's two-factor theory to determine the factors that affect job satisfaction. Three hundred and eighteen sales associates from Islamic and Convention Insurance in Pakistan participated in the study. Rahman et al. ascertained that motivational and hygienic factors were indicators of job satisfaction noting that career growth and development, supervision, rewards, recognition, organizational policies, and working conditions affect employee job satisfaction. Rahman et al.'s findings are congruent with the factors identified in Herzberg's two-factor theory. Rahman et al.'s study took place in one geographical location; the conclusions of this study may not be generalizable.

### **Supporting and Contrasting Theories**

Other theories address employee needs, job attitudes, and behaviors that could support or contrast Herzberg's two-factor theory. Herzberg et al. (1959) addressed employees' needs and behaviors; and determined what factors cause employees to be satisfied or dissatisfied with their job. Maslow's hierarchy of needs and McClelland's theory of needs address employee needs, job behaviors, and attitudes (Dubrin, 2012; Liu & Wohlsdorf, 2016).

**Maslow's hierarchy of needs.** Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory supports Herzberg's two-factor theory. In 1943, Maslow developed the hierarchy of needs theory, which is a theory of human motivation (Groves, Kahalas, & Erickson, 1975). Maslow claimed that people are born with five sets of needs (Vignesh, 2016). According to Maslow, the five hierarchical needs are physiological needs, safety needs, the need for love, needs of esteem, and needs of self-actualization (Maslow, 1943; Upadhyaya, 2014). Maslow asserted that an individual does not fill the second need until the fulfillment of the first need (Upadhyaya, 2014). The meeting of the current need must take place before the higher need surfaces (Maslow, 1943). For example, safety needs, the second need in Maslow's hierarchy of needs cannot be filled until an employee's physiological needs which are the first need in the pyramid has been filled and so on (Upadhyaya, 2014).

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory and Herzberg's two-factor theory have similarities. The lower level needs such as physiological needs, safety needs, and social needs addressed in Maslow's theory relate to the hygiene factors reported by Herzberg in the two-factor-theory (Purohit, Maneskar, & Saxena, 2016). Also, the higher level of needs such as self-esteem and self-actualization in Maslow's theory is related to the motivational factors in Herzberg's theory (Purohit et al., 2016). Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory was suitable for the conceptual framework for my study. Maslow explored employee motivation and organizational behavior (Vignesh, 2016), and the theory has been accepted worldwide (Bouzenita & Boulanouar, 2016). Maslow's approach could be useful for small business owners who seek to satisfy their employees to decrease

voluntary employee turnover and provide a framework for business leaders to understand what motivates employees (Lee & Nichols, 2014). I used Herzberg's two-factor theory for the conceptual framework because of its simplicity, to ensure the reader gains an understanding of the phenomena of employee turnover.

**McClelland's human motivation theory.** McClelland's human motivation theory and the two-factor theory have some likenesses, yet they differ. Similar to Herzberg's two-factor theory and Maslow's hierarchy of needs, McClelland's theory of needs addresses the needs of workers, job behaviors, and attitudes (Gautam, 2016). However, McClelland's human motivation theory relates to management by the objective that focuses on the need for power, affiliation, and achievement (Gautam, 2016). Güss, Burger, and Dörner (2017) explored the reasons why employees seek work and found that the need for achievement, the need for affiliation, and the need for power are motivating factors. Herzberg et al. (1959) did not identify the need for power and affiliation as a motivational factor. McClelland defined the need for achievement as the determination to excel, the need for affiliation as the need for interpersonal relationships, and the need for power denotes getting employees to behave in a desired way (Liu & Wohlsdorf, 2016). Based on this theory, employees will seek a job that will satisfy their needs. For example, if employees need power, they will strive for a position to apply their leadership abilities (Liu & Wohlsdorf, 2016). Also, employees who need achievement will pursue a position that emphasizes personal performance; or if employees need affiliation, they will gravitate to an employer who is committed to its employees (Liu & Wohlsdorf, 2016). According to Gautam (2016), employees who need

power, affiliation, and achievement perform best when they know that they have a 50% chance of success because they do not like to gamble with high odds, and luck does not satisfy them.

Similar to Herzberg's two-factor theory; McClelland's theory provides a framework for leaders to understand what motivates employees and could be a lens to view the phenomena of voluntary employee turnover. However, Herzberg's two-factor theory is popular among scholars and offers insight on areas that business owners can focus on to increase employee satisfaction (Vijayakumar & Saxena, 2015). Increasing employee satisfaction levels can help decrease voluntary employee turnover.

### **Reducing Employee Turnover**

Small business leaders should seek methods to reduce turnover to strengthen the economy. The strength of small businesses has been a significant contribution to the economy through the decades (Hayes et al., 2015). According to the U.S Small Business Administration (2014), small business created 63% of jobs from 1993 to 2013. Hayes et al. (2015) reported that small businesses comprise 99.9 % of the total firms in the United States that causes the United States economy to depend on the success of small companies. Reducing employee turnover among small businesses is a concern because employees are an organization's greatest asset (Ugoani, 2016); and the success of small businesses is a significant support to the United States economy. In addition, Hyder and Lussier (2016) asserted that the success of small companies plays a role in economic development, resulting in public policymakers and some stakeholders to promote the creation of new small businesses. Hayes et al. and Hyder and Lussier stressed the

importance of small businesses and how the United States economy depends on the success of such companies; however, growing evidence supports the value of small firms. Unfortunately, insufficient research addresses how to protect small businesses most significant assets, human capital. Furthermore, some small business owners cannot retain their employees; voluntary employee turnover remains a concern in organizations (Manoela, et al., 2016). In December 2017, 3.3 million employee turnovers occurred (U.S. Department of Labor, 2017). Small business owners must learn employee retention strategies to prevent voluntary employee turnover, to remain in business and to have a positive effect on the economy.

Employee turnover remains a problem for some small business owners because it affects profitability. Ugoani (2016) ascertained that employee turnover has an adverse influence on productivity in small businesses. Similarly, Mishra, Mishra, and Grubb (2015) reported that employee turnover is expensive in any company; however, turnover is costly in small businesses where workers may have more job responsibilities. Voluntary employee turnover has an adverse effect on businesses because of the loss of the time and money spent on recruitment and training, the loss of organizational knowledge and skills, and a decrease in productivity, which negatively affects a businesses' profitability (Kessler, 2014). Mishra et al. and Kessler confirmed that employee turnover is a concern for small business owners because turnover is costly and it adversely affects profitability. Small business owners must know strategies to combat voluntary employee turnover to cut company cost for future sustainment.

Many factors influence voluntary employee turnover in small businesses. Gialuisi and Coetzer (2013) conducted a study of eight owners and seven employees of small businesses to determine what factors affect employee turnover in small businesses and how business owners retain top talent. The results indicated that unsolicited work roles and responsibility, relationship conflict, and limited career prospects were the main reasons for employee turnover. Also, business owners reported using pay increases, paid training, and maintaining pleasant group dynamics as strategies to retain their employees (Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013). Anvari, JianFu, and Chermahini (2013) noted that employees quit their job because of inadequate pay and the lack of rewards. Gialuisi and Coetzer and Anvari et al.'s findings are in congruence with the motivation and hygiene factors in Herzberg's two-factor theory.

### **Hygiene Factors and Employee Turnover**

Hygiene factors play an important role in employee turnover. Examples of hygiene factors are (a) supervision, (b) interpersonal relations, (c) working conditions, (d) salary, (e) company policy and administration practices, (f) status, and (g) security (Herzberg, 1974). The absence of hygiene factors could lead to job dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1974). When hygiene factors are present, it does not result in increased job satisfaction but reduces job dissatisfaction in workers (Alfayad & Arif, 2017; Vijayakumar & Saxena, 2015). The absence of hygiene factors results in no job satisfaction; retaining employees can be difficult when employees are dissatisfied with their job because some unhappy employees find new places to work (Sankar, 2015).

**Company policies and administration and employee turnover.** Company policies and administration can adversely affect employee turnover. Common issues in organizations are employee turnover and job dissatisfaction (Ali, Wilson, & Yazmin, 2015). Ali et al. conducted a symptom versus problem analysis on job dissatisfaction and managing employee turnover to discover the leading causes of high turnover rates, finding that weak policies related to performance management on career growth, the lack of training, unclear operating procedures, poor communication, and poor planning were contributing factors to job dissatisfaction. Conversely, Mest (2016) found that policies that provided employees time off to adjust to lifestyle changes can aid in the retention of employees; therefore, policies affect employee turnover. The findings of Ali et al. and Mest coincide with Herzberg's conclusions in the two-factor theory; company policies and administration are hygiene factors that can affect job dissatisfaction.

**Supervision and employee turnover.** Inadequate supervision can cause workers to become dissatisfied with their jobs and result in employee turnover. Mathieu, Fabi, Lacoursière, and Raymond (2016) conducted a study that included 763 participants from various types of organizations to measure job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee turnover intention. Mathieu et al. found that leadership behavior affects turnover intention. At the same time, Haar, de Fluiter, and Brougham (2016) conducted a study about abusive supervision and turnover intentions indicating that abusive supervisors relate to employee turnover intentions. Haar et al. and Mathieu et al.'s findings show that poor supervision can cause employees to become dissatisfied with their jobs, as Herzberg postulated, and increase employee turnover intentions. Although

abusive supervision has a negative effect on employee turnover; supervision and work-life balance can positively affect employee retention. Deery and Jago (2015) conducted a study to revisit talent management, work-life balance, and retention strategies. Deery and Jago found that work-life balance is a leading issue of employee retention and management. Work-life balance can fall in the category of supervision under the concept hygiene in the two-factor theory, depending on how the individual's supervisor relates to his or her employee's needs and can determine if an employee is satisfied or dissatisfied with his or her job.

The effect of abusive supervision on employee turnover remains to be a topic for research. Pradhan and Jena (2017) explored the effects of abusive supervision regarding employee turnover intention. Two hundred and twenty-seven software professionals in IT companies participated in the study. Pradhan and Jena observed that abusive supervision relates to an employee's intention to quit. Palanski, Avey, and Jiraporn (2014) and Vogel and Mitchell (2017) supported the findings in Herzberg's two-factor theory; supervision is a hygiene factor that can decrease or increase an employee's job dissatisfaction. Job dissatisfaction can lead to voluntary employee turnover. Abusive supervision adversely affects employee turnover because it can cause employees to search for a new job (Palanski et al., 2014). Vogel and Mitchell postulated that abusive supervision is associated with high turnover intentions.

**Interpersonal relations and employee turnover.** Researchers should examine the effect of interpersonal relations on employee turnover. According to Herzberg (1974), interpersonal relations are a hygiene factor that could increase or decrease job

dissatisfaction. Sharma (2016) conducted a study about turnover intentions among managers in automobile companies. Data was collected from 55 middle managers in Pune by using structured questionnaires. The factors that contribute to turnover intention among managers observed by Sharma are poor supervisory relationships and high stress. Sharma conducted the study in one geographical location; which causes me to question the generalizability of the study. Similarly, Gialuisi and Coetzer's (2013) addressed the question: What factors influence voluntary employee turnover in small businesses and how do owner-managers retain key employees? The reasons for employee turnover were limited career prospects, relationship conflict, and unsolicited work roles and responsibilities (Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013). Gialuisi and Coetzer and Sharma confirmed the conclusions of Herzberg's two-factor theory; interpersonal relations can cause job dissatisfaction.

Employers should build better interpersonal relations with and among employees to retain their employees. According to Tews, Michel, and Allen (2014), employers should focus on developing working relationships with employees to help to reduce turnover. Positive interpersonal relationships can result in a harmonious working environment and could be a determining factor of whether employees are dissatisfied with their job. Enhancing interpersonal relationships in the workplace can result in employee retention. According to Mishra et al. (2015), small business owners that build trust with employees through interpersonal relationships and transparent communication can reduce voluntary employee turnover. The failure to enhance or develop interpersonal relationships can result in interpersonal difficulties that can lead to emotional exhaustion

resulting in burnout (Geuens, Braspenning, Van Bogaert, & Franck, 2015). Interpersonal relationships can affect employee dissatisfaction and can be the determining factor of an employee leaving or staying with an organization.

**Salary and employee turnover.** Employees who are not satisfied with their salary may quit their job. According to Treuren and Frankish (2014), employees who receive poor pay are difficult to retain. A worker's pay is a predictor of an employee's intent to remain on his or her job (Spencer, Geverek, Chambers, & Bowden, 2016). Employers should consider offering workers fair pay to decrease job dissatisfaction to retain greatest assets.

Business owners should seek methods to compensate their employees properly. Herzberg (1974) ascertained that salary is a hygiene factor that can affect job dissatisfaction. According to Narisada and Schieman (2016), perceived underpayment relates to job dissatisfaction. Tam, Zeng, and Wong (2016) conducted a study about what affects voluntary employee turnover in building organizations, finding that some respondents prefer to work regular work hours and a decent salary noting that participants from different countries might put emphases on various factors that lead to turnover intention. Tam et al.'s findings may not be conducive for everyone. Haider et al. (2015) examined effective human resource activities that can increase retention and reduce turnover with a focus on the telecom sector of Pakistan and determined that training and development, compensation, and company culture are contributing factors to employee retention; also, a positive relationship exists between compensation and organizational culture, and employee retention. The results of Haider et al.'s study are less likely

generalizable because the study took place in one geographical location and the sample size was small. These researchers confirm that salary is a hygiene factor that can lead to job dissatisfaction.

An employee's salary can affect voluntary employee turnover. According to Mohamed, Mohamad, and Awad (2017) pay dissatisfaction can cause turnover intention, which can lead to employee turnover. Grissom and Mitani (2016) examined factors that influence superintendent turnovers such as salary and district performance by collecting data from administrative records in the state of Missouri. Grissom and Mitani observed that districts with lower test scores have higher turnover rates and superintendent salary is a strong predictor of turnover. Increased salary can be a strategy for retaining superintendents especially in smaller school districts with lower test scores (Grissom & Mitani, 2016) confirming the hygiene factor salary observed in Herzberg's two-factor theory. Business owners and leaders can benefit from Grissom and Mitani because their research can help them understand how salary can affect employee turnover and devise turnover reduction strategies.

**Security and employee turnover.** Security is a hygiene factor that requires examination to help reduce employee turnover. According to Herzberg (1974), security is a hygiene factor that can influence job dissatisfaction. Singh and Sharma (2015) researched strategies to reduce turnover from an employee's perspective to enable business leaders to manage human capital to gain a competitive edge in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The sample size consisted of 225 participants. Singh and Sharma found that organizations in the UAE use long-term and short-term strategies to reduce

turnover. The long-term strategies found were the growth of an organization for job security, extensive training, and mentoring and coaching programs. The short-term, strategies identified were monetary benefits for performance and competitive salaries. Shemdoe et al. (2016) conducted a study regarding the retention of healthcare workers in Tanzania and found that one reason that healthcare workers wanted to leave was their perceptions of their personal safety. Singh and Sharma and Shemdoe et al. confirmed that security is a hygiene factor that can lead to job dissatisfaction; proving that the hygiene factor security of Herzberg's two-factor theory can lead to job dissatisfaction and decreased employee turnover.

### **Motivation Factors and Employee Turnover**

Motivational factors can affect job satisfaction. Motivation factors are intrinsic rewards provided by a company to motivate employees (Hauff et al., 2015). Motivation factors consist of (a) achievement, (b) recognition, (c) work itself, (d) responsibility, (d) advancement, and (e) growth (Herzberg, 1974). Herzberg argued that such motivational factors relate to the content of the job and can contribute to job satisfaction. According to Terera and Ngirande (2014), when employees are satisfied with their jobs employee retention is improved. The lack of motivational factors can lead to job dissatisfaction.

**Responsibility and employee turnover.** Owners of firms ought to examine the responsibilities of their workers to find ways to reduce turnover. Responsibility is one motivational factor that Herzberg (1974) identified in the two-factor theory that can contribute to job satisfaction. Gialuisi and Coetzer (2013) conducted an exploratory investigation into voluntary employee turnover and retention in small businesses. The

leading causes of employee turnover intention that Gialuisi and Coetzer observed were unsolicited roles and responsibility. Gialuisi and Coetzer's findings coincide with Herzberg's two-factor theory; employers should ensure that the employees' job descriptions are clear and give their workers realistic expectations of what their job entails.

**Advancement and growth and employee turnover.** Employers should ensure employees have the opportunity for advancement and growth that can contribute to employees being satisfied with their jobs, which can lead to a decrease in employee turnover rates. Leuer, Donnelly, and Domm's (2007) study of experienced nurses revealed seven employee retention strategies; consultation and communication with nurses, recognition, adequate staffing levels, supportive management, flexible work schedules, support for new nurses, and professional development. Yang, Wan, and Fu (2012) reported three leading causes of turnover in management, 80% resigned to pursue career progression, 70% quit because of propositions from other hotels, and managers had unmet expectations such as training and development and career advancement. According to Chen et al. (2016), a positive relationship exists between career growth and job satisfaction and a negative correlation to turnover intention. Business owners need to seek ways to understand their workers' needs and desires in the area of advancement and growth to reduce turnover.

### **Employee Retention and Employee Turnover**

Employers who know how to retain employees can help to decrease their employee turnover rates. Employee retention refers to the ability to sustain employees

(Sutanto & Kurniawan, 2016). Renaud, Morin, Saulquin, and Abraham (2015) found the factors that had a positive effect on employee retention are satisfaction with the work environment, training and development, benefits and increased compensation. Renaud et al.'s findings can benefit business owners because they identify factors that have a positive effect on employee retention that can positively affect employee turnover rates. Cloutier, Felusiak, Hill, and Pemberton-Jones (2015) sought to determine the importance of developing strategies for employee retention and offer recommendations to help managers improve employee retention. Cloutier et al. observed the following four strategies; effective communication should be encouraged, hire a diverse workforce, hire appropriately skilled people, and offer training and development programs. Cloutier et al.'s findings can benefit business owners because it can help them know strategies to retain their employees that can help to reduce voluntary employee turnover rates. Offering training and development programs to employees was an effective strategy to keep employees (Cloutier et al., 2015; Renaud et al., 2015).

A manager's style of leadership can cause an employee to quit or remain with an organization. George (2015) conducted a study to determine why professional workers remain in their organizations. The sample consisted of 138 employees from a multinational marketing company in the United Kingdom. George observed characteristics such as leadership style, management support, an enjoyable place to work, flexibility, adequate resources, feeling part of the team, friendly and caring colleagues, the opportunity to develop new skills, and promotion prospects, are key factors of employee retention. Khalid, Pahi, and Ahmed (2016) conducted a study and observed

that a positive relationship exists between leadership style and employee retention. The findings from George and Khalid et al.'s research support the conclusions of Herzberg's two-factor theory.

The work environment can affect an employee's intent to quit his or her job. Herzberg (1974) ascertained that the work environment was a factor that could increase or decrease job dissatisfaction; the work environment could affect an employee's intent to leave an organization. Kundu and Van Zalk (2016) conducted a study to determine the effect of organizational engagement in relationship supportive work environment and employee retention. Kundu and Van Zalk discovered that a supportive work environment plays a role to predict employee retention. Also, organizational engagement partially mediates the relationship between supportive work environment and employee retention. Kundu and Van Zalk's research is useful to employers because the information can help leaders understand the relationship between organizational engagement, work environment, and employee retention. The work environment can affect employee retention. Mandhanya (2015) explored the relationship between working environment and employee retention collecting data from 300 middle and top-level employees in the automobile sector. Mandhanya designed the hypothesis to determine if a relationship existed between a working environment and employee retention using a descriptive research design to establish the relationship between two independent variables. Work environment had a positive relationship with employee retention and affected an employee's intent to stay with the organization (Mandhanya, 2015). Business leaders can benefit from Mandhanya's research by learning that enhancing the work environment can

contribute to the retention of employees, which can contribute to decreasing voluntary employee turnover rates.

### **Turnover Intention and Employee Turnover**

When studying voluntary employee turnover, one should examine what causes an employee to quit his or her job. Researchers such as Langove and Isha (2017) and Liao et al. (2017) added to the body of literature addressing turnover intentions and employee turnover. Turnover intentions allude to a worker's desire to leave his or her current job (Liao et al., 2017). The intent to leave can result in voluntary employee turnover.

Langove and Isha conducted a study to develop a conceptual framework that explains rewards and recognition on turnover intention, which the well-being of the employee intervenes as a mediator. Langove and Isha discovered that rewards and recognition are motivational tools that maximize psychological well-being and lessen the turnover intention among IT executives. The sample in Langove and Isha's study consisted of Malaysian IT executives that cause me to question the generalizability of their study; therefore, further research should continue. Langove and Isha's study can benefit by helping business owners identify factors to reduce turnover intention and understand employee's well-being to minimize turnover intention. Results of Langove and Isha's study support the motivational factors found in Herzberg's two-factor theory.

Turnover intention and employee turnover remain to be a topic of research. Lu, Lu, Gursoy, and Neale (2016) determined the influence that an employee's position has on work engagement, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. The sample consisted of supervisors and line-level employees from 29 hotels. Lu et al. found that supervisors

have higher work engagement and lower turnover intentions than the line-level employees; job satisfaction did not differ between positions. Lu et al.'s study was one of the first attempts to examine the differences between supervisor and line-level employees; therefore, this topic of the influence that an employee's position has on work engagement, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions requires more research. Lu et al.'s study can be useful to business owners because it helps identify factors that lead to job satisfaction and the reduction of turnover intentions, which can influence voluntary employee turnover. Mohamed et al. (2017) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between pay satisfaction and turnover intention. Two hundred and thirty-five managers participated in the study. Mohamad et al. observed that a relationship exists between pay satisfaction and turnover intention confirming the importance of employers ensuring employees are satisfied with their pay to prevent turnover intention.

Training satisfaction is negatively related to turnover intention. Memon, Salleh, and Baharom (2016) surveyed 409 oil and gas employees to examine the relationship between training satisfaction, work engagement, and turnover intention and the role of work engagement between training satisfaction and turnover intention. Training satisfaction is positively related to work engagement and is negatively related to turnover intention (Memon et al., 2016). Memon et al. also found that work engagement mediates the relationship between training satisfaction and turnover intention confirming the importance of training satisfaction as one method to enhance work engagement and reducing voluntary employee turnover. Similarly, Shuck, Twyford, Reio, and Shuck (2014) reported that training satisfaction is negatively related to turnover intention.

Business owners should ensure that employees receive training to minimize turnover intentions and decrease voluntary employee turnover.

Job stress can lead to turnover intention. Pahi, Hamid, and Khalid (2016) conducted a study mediating job satisfaction between job stress and turnover intention. The sample consisted of questionnaires from 254 banking employees. Job stress and turnover intention are positively related and job satisfaction mediating between job stress and turnover intention (Pahi et al., 2016). Similarly, Erat, Kitapci, and Comez, (2017) found that workload and responsibility load affect work stress and turnover intention. According to Dulgeroglu, and Basol (2017), a negative relationship exists between job stress and job satisfaction, a positive correlation between job stress and employee turnover intention, and a positive relationship between work life quality and job satisfaction. Work life quality can adversely affect an employee's job satisfaction and can lead to the turnover intention, which can cause an employee to quit his or her job; therefore, increasing the voluntary employee turnover rate. Business owners should find methods to alleviate work stress to lessen turnover intention and decrease voluntary employee turnover rates.

Poor working conditions can cause employees to become dissatisfied with their job to the point that they desire to quit. According to Arnoux-Nicolas, Sovet, Lhotellier, Fabio, and Bernaud (2016), turnover intention is positively associated with adverse working conditions. Arnoux-Nicolas et al.'s research supported the findings of the two-factor theory. Working conditions is one hygiene factor that Herzberg (1974) identified that affect job satisfaction. Employers should know factors that lower turnover intention

to reduce employee turnover. Factors such as training and communication relate to employee job commitment and lower turnover intention (Kim, Wehbi, DelliFraine, & Brannon, 2014). Kim et al. examined the correlation between organizational structure and human resource practices on direct care staff's job satisfaction and turnover intention. Employees from 58 residential facilities participated in the study. Kim et al. reported that a lesser amount of formalized organizational structures and high levels of job training and communication had a positive effect on job satisfaction and had a negative effect on the intent to leave. Leaders must understand factors that enhance employee job commitment and lower turnover intention. Lowering turnover intention can help to reduce voluntary employee turnover.

### **Employee Engagement and Employee Turnover**

Owners of organizations and leaders should strategize to keep employees engaged. Many researchers used different approaches to reduce voluntary employee turnover such as finding ways to keep employees engaged (Rana & Tkachenko, 2014; Unal & Turgut, 2015). Unal and Turgut (2015) defined employee engagement as an employees' intellectual and emotional commitment to a company. Unal and Turgut sought to determine if person-organizational fit contributed to employee engagement. Unal and Turgut observed that personal organizational fit contributed to both work engagement and organizational engagement. Business owners must take measures when hiring employees to ensure that they are a fit for the job, which, can help reduce voluntary employee turnover. Rana and Tkachenko (2014) postulated that job design and characteristics, coworker and supervisor relationships, human resource development

practices, and work environment are the primary precursors to employee engagement. Also, employee engagement is related to job performance, turnover intention, and organizational citizenship behavior (Rana & Tkachenko, 2014). Leaders should seek ways to keep employees engaged to reduce voluntary employee turnover rates.

Leadership style can affect employee engagement. Zhang, Avery, Bergsteiner, and More (2014) researched whether direct supervisor's leadership style affects employee engagement. Four hundred and thirty-nine retail sales associates in Australia participated in the study (Zhang et al., 2014). Zhang et al. observed that the visionary and organic paradigms are most likely to improve employee engagement; while classical and transactional leadership styles negatively affect employee engagement. Zhang et al.'s research can benefit business leaders because it reveals leadership styles that can cause employees to engage or disengage with their jobs. Conversely, Mozammel and Haan (2016) ascertained that applying a transformational leadership style does not guarantee employee engagement. Employee engagement plays a role in the retention of employees. Business owners can decrease voluntary employee turnover by finding ways to keep their employees engaged.

### **Strategies for Reducing Voluntary Employee Turnover**

Business owners should develop strategies to retain employees. Employee turnover remains a concern for businesses; therefore, business owners should devise strategies to eliminate voluntary employee turnover (Manoela et al., 2016). According to Anvari et al. (2013), employers should manage employee turnover to remain competitive. Anvari et al. sought to determine factors that can lead to voluntary employee turnover

reporting that employees choose to quit their jobs because of inadequate pay or dissatisfaction with their rewards. Employers must develop and implement plans to give employees adequate awards and compensation. Failure to provide employees with sufficient salary or bonuses can be detrimental to an organization.

Knowing turnover reduction strategies can help reduce voluntary employee turnover. Chowdhury and Nazmul (2017) explored what causes an employee to want to quit their job and suggested strategies to retain employees and decrease turnover. Chowdhury and Nazmul observed that offering training and development opportunities, fair pay, harmonious work environment, career counseling, and opportunities could positively influence an employee's intent to stay with an organization. Knowing strategies to reduce employee turnover can help business owners devise and implement turnover reduction strategies. Leaders can offer family-friendly programs as a strategy to reduce turnover. Caillier (2016) sought to determine if an employee's satisfaction with family-friendly programs decreased turnover in U.S. federal agencies. Caillier found that satisfaction with family-friendly programs had an adverse effect on employee turnover. Flexible work schedules, employee assistance programs, and childcare programs were factors that could reduce turnover (Caillier, 2016). Caillier's findings support Herzberg's two-factor theory, job satisfaction aids in the reduction of employee turnover. Business owners can benefit from Caillier's research because his conclusions identify satisfying factors to retain top talent. Business owners should focus on ensuring that their employees are satisfied with their job by offering adequate pay and rewards, flexible work schedules, and employee assistance programs. Childcare programs, training and

development opportunities, a harmonious work environment, and career counseling and opportunities are strategies that can positively affect an employee's intent to stay with an organization.

### **Employee Turnover and Profitability**

Employee turnover can affect a firm's profitability. According to Soundarapandiyan and Ganesh (2015) excessive employee turnover has an adverse effect on the profitability of a company. Additionally, Zylka and Fischbach (2017) reported that employee turnover hurts a firm, causing leaders to take time to recruit, select, and train new employees, which can affect the operational flow; therefore, employee turnover is costly and can adversely affect the profitability of an organization. Kessler (2014) reported that voluntary employee turnover has an adverse effect on businesses because of the loss of the time and money spent to recruit and train, the loss of organizational knowledge and skills, and a decrease in productivity, which negatively affects profitability. Employee turnover is costly (Kessler, 2014); business owners must devise strategies to reduce employee turnover and cut company costs. Conversely, employee turnover can have a positive effect on business. Lee (2017) discovered that moderate employee turnover could increase business performance. When employees who perform poorly resign, organizational productivity can improve (Lee, 2017).

### **Transition**

The objective of this qualitative multiple case study was to understand what strategies small business owners use to decrease voluntary employee turnover. In section 1, I addressed the background of the problem of voluntary employee turnover and

introduced the problem and the purpose statement. The nature of the study was discussed to identify, define, and justify the research method and design. Also, I listed the research and interview questions and addressed the conceptual framework, operational definitions, and assumptions, limitations, and delimitations along with the significance of the study. Finally, I presented an extensive literature review.

I include the following in Section 2: the purpose statement, the role of the researcher, the participants, the research method and design, the population and sampling, and ethical research and implementation. Also, I address the data collection instruments and techniques used along with organizational techniques. Finally, I conduct a data analysis, discuss the validity and reliability of the study, and conclude with the introduction of Section 3.

## Section 2: The Project

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies that some small business owners use to decrease voluntary employee turnover to remain competitive. The target population comprised four small businesses owners in the southeastern region of the United States invited because they have successfully implemented strategies to decrease voluntary employee turnover. Data from this study may contribute to social change by enabling small businesses to increase profits, provide jobs, and strengthen local communities' economies.

### **Role of the Researcher**

I was the data collection instrument for this study. In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary tool for gathering multiple forms of evidence (Chereni, 2014). I collected data by conducting semistructured interviews (see Appendix A) with small business owners and examining archived company documents, policies, and training brochures. The types of data collected in qualitative research are; semistructured interviews, focus groups, observations, documents, and audiovisual materials (Wilson, Onwuegbuzie, & Manning, 2016). The researcher's responsibility is to explore and interpret the experiences of the participants (Alase, 2017).

I did not have a relationship with the participants or the research area; I am familiar with turnover reduction strategies. Knowing strategies that can reduce voluntary employee turnover caused me to contain biases that may have affected the interpretation

of this study. A researcher can minimize biases by identifying them and keeping a reflexive approach throughout the research process (Birchall, 2014).

Researchers should conduct their study ethically. According to The Belmont Report, the scholar is obligated to protect the well-being and the rights of the participants, and practice the following ethical principles: respect of persons, beneficence, and justice (Belmont Report, 1979; Protecting Human Research Participants, 2011). Before the data collection process, I sought permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB grants the formal approval of a research plan (Yin, 2017). I ethically conducted my research to reflect The Belmont Report guidelines.

When conducting research, a researcher should strive to alleviate bias and avoid viewing data through a personal lens. Avoiding bias falls under research ethics and is a part of conducting a quality case study (Yin, 2017). To prevent the negative effect of my biases, I set aside preconceived ideas about the research, was open to contrary evidence, and ensured that the conclusion of my study reflected the findings. The researcher should attempt to mitigate bias during the data collection process by keeping an open mind and audio taping semistructured interviews, followed by member checking, and triangulation to increase the creditability of the data (Alase, 2017; Moshabela, Sips, & Barten, 2015). To avoid viewing data through a personal lens, I reviewed relevant literature that helped me to have a different outlook and could yield different answers to the problem I studied.

I followed an interview protocol (see Appendix B) to prepare for my interviews, to help me to communicate with the participants efficiently and to establish the trust to facilitate participants into sharing their experiences. Researchers use an interview

protocol as a guide to ensure that procedures and general rules concerning conducting research are followed (Yin, 2017). An interview protocol can enhance the quality of data obtained, the validity, and the reliability of the study (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Dikko, 2016). I used an interview protocol as a guide during the interview process.

### **Participants**

Participants should meet the eligibility criteria of a study. Participants provide a source of evidence in a case study and play a primary role in the credibility of the study (Asiamah, Mensah, & Oteng-Abayie, 2017). The four individuals invited to participate in this study were small business owners in the southeastern region of the United States, who have successfully implemented strategies to decrease voluntary employee turnover. Participants should have knowledge related to the research phenomenon (Baskarada, 2014). According to Cunliffe and Alcadipani (2016), experienced participants play a role in completing a quality study. The participants for this study comprised four small businesses owners in the southeastern region of the United States selected because they have successfully implemented strategies to decrease voluntary employee turnover. It was not possible to achieve data saturation with three participants thus the reason to continue to four. Failure to reach data saturation negatively affects the validity of a study (Fusch, & Ness, 2015). According to Kline (2017), a researcher achieves data saturation when there is no new information, the scholar has enough data to duplicate the study, and when additional coding is no longer possible.

Researchers should devise a strategy to gain access to participants. The process of obtaining access to participants can be complicated (Cunliffe & Alcadipani, 2016;

Opollo, Opollo, Gray, & Spies, 2014). The stages of obtaining access to participants are identifying participants, contacting participants, and gaining commitment (Maramwidze-Merrison, 2016). I visited businesses in the southeastern region of the United States until I found four consenting participants who are small business owners and have successfully implemented strategies to decrease voluntary employee turnover. It was not possible to achieve data saturation with three participants thus the reason to continue to four. According to Fusch and Ness (2015), failure to reach data saturation negatively affects the validity of a study. A researcher achieves data saturation when there is no new information, the scholar has enough data to duplicate the study, and when additional coding is no longer possible (Kline, 2017).

Each prospective participant received an invitation to participate, informing them of the purpose of the study. Upon consent, each participant signed and returned an informed consent form. I was available to each participant in person, by email, and phone to answer any questions or concerns. A researcher's accessibility to participants can result in clearer communication (Yin, 2017). Once I identified the participants for the research and gained access, I endeavored to develop rapport.

A researcher must strategize to establish a working relationship with participants. The researcher's rapport with his or her participants is essential to the success of a qualitative study (Robinson, 2014; White & Hind, 2015). When conducting qualitative research, a researcher must strategize to avoid inadvertently offending research participants (Hart-Johnson, 2017). Establishing trust by honestly communicating the purpose of the study to participants is a way to build rapport (Yin, 2017). To establish

trust and rapport with the participants, I obtained their verbal and written informed consent, communicated to them the nature of the study, and told them that their participation is voluntary and they can withdraw from the study at any time.

## **Research Method and Design**

### **Research Method**

I used a qualitative research method to explore what strategies some small business owners use to reduce voluntary employee turnover. When conducting research, a scholar must determine which research method to use to collect data. Three methods considered for research are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). According to Doody and Bailey (2016), the research question guides the choice of method. The qualitative approach is the preferred method for researchers to explore findings to comprehend participants' experiences (Allen, 2015; Grosseohme, 2014; & Yin, 2017). I conducted semistructured interviews using open-ended questions and reviewed company archived documents, policies, and training brochures. The types of data collected in qualitative research are; semistructured interviews focus groups, observations, documents, and audiovisual materials (Wilson et al., 2016). The focus of qualitative research is in words, images, and text, not on statistical data (Hesse-Biber, 2016); thus, a qualitative method was appropriate for this study.

A quantitative research method was not suitable for this study. A hypothesis guides a quantitative method (DeBlaere & Hesson-Mcinnis, 2015; Fassinger & Morrow, 2013). Researchers use a quantitative approach to answer research questions that

compare, relate, or describe (Doody & Bailey, 2016). Scholars use the quantitative method to test hypotheses and apply statistical data for measurement to determine correlations or differences among variables (Groeneveld et al., 2015; Park, & Park, 2016). My research question was not comparative, relational, or descriptive; thus, the quantitative method was not appropriate for this study.

The mixed-methods approach was not appropriate for this study. The mixed-methods approach entails using both quantitative and qualitative data in the same study (Halcomb, & Hickman, 2015; Hansen, O'Brien, Meckler, Chang, & Guise, 2016). The mixed methods approach is used to address complex issues (Halcomb & Hickman, 2015) when a quantitative and qualitative approach alone is not adequate (Molina-Arizona, 2016). Researchers use the mixed-methods approach to test hypotheses, to use statistical data for measurement to determine correlations or differences among variables (Groeneveld et al., 2015; Park & Park, 2016), and to gather verbal or non-numerical data (Hansen et al., 2016). I did not test hypothesis nor determine correlations or differences among variables; therefore, the mixed-methods approach was not conducive to my study.

### **Research Design**

I used a multiple case study design for this study. The designs that one can use when conducting a study are case study, phenomenological, and ethnographic. Scholars use research designs to link the research questions to the findings (Baskarada, 2014). Case studies are diverse in study design and tend to involve *what*, *how*, and *why* questions (Hyett et al., 2014). Using a multiple case study design was appropriate for answering my research question. According to Yin (2014), when conducting a multiple

case study, the researcher focuses on two or more distinct case units. I collected data from four small business owners; therefore, a multiple case study was suitable for my research. Using a case study design can help the researcher comprehend certain phenomena and is a typical design for empirical studies (Dresch, Lacerda, & Miguel, 2015).

The phenomenological research design is another design scholars can use to conduct research. The phenomenological research design yields information from individuals' meanings of lived experiences (Matua, 2015). According to Snelgrove (2014), researchers use the phenomenological research design to comprehend the lived experiences of a group of individuals who partook in a single phenomenon. Researchers from many academic fields use phenomenological research (Bliss, 2016). I decided not to use a phenomenological research design; according to Marshall and Rossman (2016), it requires gathering information from many participants and can be a long process.

Some researchers use the ethnographic research design when conducting a study. Using ethnographic research requires researchers to focus on the culture within a group's associated environment for an extended period (Draper, 2015). Ethnographic researchers engage themselves in the field to view life through the lens of a business or a social group (Brown, 2014). The primary sources of data collection in ethnographic research are detailed observations and interviews. According to Bamkin, Maynard, and Goulding (2016), ethnographic researchers collect data by observing people in their environment or by socializing with them to understand their world. The focus of my study was not about the culture of a group; therefore, ethnographic research design was not suitable.

I conducted a multiple case study and collected data by conducting semistructured interviews using open-ended questions and reviewed company archival documents to ensure data saturation. Doing a multiple case study enables the scholar to focus on various cases using diverse types of data collection (Waldeck, 2017). The types of data collected in a case study are; semistructured interviews, focus groups, observations, documents, and audiovisual materials (Wilson et al., 2016). Conducting interviews is a method that researchers have used to reach data saturation (Fusch, & Ness, 2015). Previous researchers reached data saturation by using a case study design to explore turnover reduction strategies (Stevens, 2015; Vafeas, 2015). An individual can replicate a research design that scholars have previously applied to reach data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Porte, 2013). A researcher achieves data saturation when there is no new information, the scholar has enough data to duplicate the study, and when additional coding is no longer possible (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Kline, 2017).

### **Population and Sampling**

The individuals who participated in this study comprised four small business owners in the southeastern region of the United States who could articulate their experiences, had knowledge related to the research phenomenon, and had employee reduction strategies. It was not possible to achieve data saturation with three participants thus the reason to continue to four. Failure to reach data saturation negatively affects the validity of a study (Fusch, & Ness, 2015). A researcher achieves data saturation when there is no new information, the scholar has enough data to duplicate the study, and when additional coding is no longer possible (Kline, 2017). A researcher can justify a sample

size as low as one (Boddy, 2016). Morse (2015) reported that qualitative samples are quite small. Baskarada (2014) ascertained that when conducting qualitative research the focus is on few participants who can articulate their experiences that address the research question.

I used the purposeful sampling method to recruit participants for this study. Purposeful sampling is a commonly used sampling method in qualitative research (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, & McKibbin, 2015). When conducting qualitative research, the scholar seeks to explore findings to comprehend participant's experiences (Allen, 2015; Grossoehme, 2014; & Yin, 2014). I selected participants who had experience related to employee turnover. According to Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim (2015), purposive sampling involves selecting participants who have the expertise relevant to the research topic; such an approach can be useful when a researcher's time and resources are limited. Pacho (2015) conducted a study and used purposeful sampling to select people that knew the topic under investigation. Seeking a random sample was not beneficial because the potential participants may not be knowledgeable about the business phenomena under study (Pacho, 2015). Arsel (2017) noted that researchers rarely use random sampling; they purposefully recruit specific participants based on the research topic. I used purposeful sampling for this study to select small business owners that know turnover reduction strategies to help collect rich data. Appiah-Adu and Amoako, (2016) stated that the use of the purposeful sampling method could result in the collection of robust and reliable data. Rich data can enhance the quality of a study (Rimando et al., 2015) and can result in data saturation.

I reached data saturation by conducting semistructured interviews using open-ended questions to obtain rich responses, followed by member checking, reviewing the company's archival documents, and categorizing and coding the data. I did member checking after the interviews. Member checking consists of allowing the participant to check the information gathered by the researcher to verify the accuracy of the data (Hadi & Closs, 2016). The objective of member checking is to ensure the credibility and dependability of a study (Hadi & Closs, 2016). Morse (2015) asserted that a researcher conducts and transcribes interviews followed by coding and classifying the information. I reached data saturation once the data were coded and categorized, and no new codes or categories emerged. According to Fusch and Ness (2015), a researcher reaches data saturation when he or she has enough data to duplicate the study, and additional coding is no longer possible. Kline (2017) postulated that a researcher achieves data saturation when there is no new information. Once I had enough information to duplicate the study, there was no need for additional coding, and there was no further information, I reached data saturation.

The interview location should be free from distractions and conducive to recording (Dikko, 2016). Interviews took place at the participant's business. Rimando et al. (2015) stated that the interview setting plays a role in the data collection process. A researcher should consider the participants needs when determining the interview site (Ecker, 2017).

### **Ethical Research**

The informed consent process for this study was as follows: I purposefully invited the participants for this study by recruiting small business owners in the southeastern region of the United States who had the expertise relevant to reducing employee turnover and ensured that they understood the purpose of the research and their role in the investigation. I gained each participant's verbal and written informed consent to participate in the data collection process before the commencement of the study. Alase (2017) reported that the researcher must obtain informed consent from the participant before the research can begin.

I informed the participants that their participation is voluntary, they were not obligated to participate in the study, and they were free to withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty. Participants should remove themselves from the study at any time or refuse to answer questions that are uncomfortable (Alase, 2017). Information collected from participants before their withdrawal from the study will be stored securely for 5 years on my computer that is password protected, and all documents are kept in a fireproof safe. After 5 years, I will permanently delete the information on my computer and burn the records stored in the fireproof safe. Also, the participants in the study did not receive incentives for their participation. According to Watson, Robinson, Harker, and Arriola (2016), incentives can aid in efficient recruitment of participants. I informed the participants that their participation in the study could contribute to positive social change by helping small business owners increase their businesses' profitability that can result in future organizational sustainment, and provide jobs in local communities.

To ensure that the ethical protection of participants was adequate, I followed the guidelines in the Belmont Report. I practiced the following moral principles: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice as outlined in the Belmont Report (1979). I used the Belmont Report protocol in the data collection process to help me ethically conduct research. An interview protocol is a set of guidelines and rules that scholars use to conduct interviews (Dikko, 2016). Researchers use an interview protocol as a guide to ensure that procedures and general rules concerning conducting research are followed (Yin, 2014). Also, I used an interview protocol (see Appendix B) to ensure that I did not deviate from protecting my participants in the data collection process.

Before gathering data, the researcher must obtain the approval of the Walden Universities Institutional Review Board (IRB) (Yin, 2014). To conduct this study ethically, I obtained the approval of Walden Universities IRB. Researchers must address ethical concerns when doing research (Pacho, 2015). The responsibility of the IRB is to protect and lessen the risks of human subjects (Musoba, Jacob, & Robinson, 2014). My Walden IRB approval number is 06-05-18-00662566 and it expires on June 4, 2019. Also, to assure confidentiality, I used a coding system. I referred to the participants as P1, P2, P3, and P4. According to Saunders, Kitzinger, and Kitzinger (2015), a researcher should protect their participants by disguising their identities.

I will store data securely for 5 years to protect the confidentiality of the participants. I secured the data on my computer that is password protected, and kept all documents in a fireproof safe. After 5 years, I will permanently delete the information on my computer and burn the records stored in the fireproof safe.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

I was the primary data collection instrument for this research to find strategies that small business owners use to reduce voluntary employee turnover. In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary tool for gathering multiple forms of evidence (Chereni, 2014; Kruth, 2014). According to Pacho (2015), researchers use various types of data in a study. The types of data collection instruments used in qualitative research are the examination of company documents, semistructured interviews, focus groups, observations, and audiovisual materials or artifacts (Colorafi & Evans, 2016; Wilson et al., 2016). I conducted semistructured interviews using an interview protocol (see Appendix B), reviewed company archival documents, , policies, and training brochures as the data collection instruments to find turnover reduction strategies.

I conducted semistructured interviews consisting of open-ended questions (see Appendix A) to encourage small business owners to share their experiences related to reducing employee turnover. Semistructured interviews include an interview guide with predetermined questions (Grossoehme, 2014). Mitchell (2015) found that conducting semistructured conversations could result in gathering information on a variety of subjects. Arsel (2017) ascertained that using open-ended questions in interviews allows follow up questions to explore findings to comprehend participants' experiences. Keefe, Buytaert, Mijie, Brozovic, and Sinha, (2016) noted that a researcher's carefully crafted interview questions can result in rich data. Finally, I triangulated the data collected from semistructured interviews and company documents.

After each interview, the participants agreed to gather company documents related to employee retention and had them ready at the follow-up member checking appointment. I reviewed company archival documents, policies, and training brochures as a technique to collect data to gather additional information related to employee turnover. According to Wilson et al. (2016), the types of data collected in a qualitative case study are: semistructured interviews, focus groups, observations, documents, and audiovisual materials. Pacho (2015) asserted that reviewing company documents is inexpensive and can provide additional information that the interviews may not reveal. Yin (2015) reported that company documents could contain the exact details, names, and reference to an event. I used company documents related to employee retention to find strategies to reduce employee turnover and ensured that the data collection process was reliable and valid after the collection of data.

I performed member checking and data triangulation to enhance the reliability and validity of the data collection process. Member checking involves the researcher asking the participants to check the interview notes for accuracy to ensure that the study is credible (Hadi & Closs, 2016; Taylor & Thomas-Gregory, 2015). Kruth (2014) noted that the researcher should verify the participant's experiences appropriately to set the tone for a valid study. Within 72 hours, I transcribed the interview notes and emailed them to each participant for verification to enhance the reliability and validity of the data collection process. I met with participants at their place of business for a member checking appointment. Once the participants verified that the information in the notes

was an accurate representation of their experiences, I triangulated the data from the interviews with the company documents.

Triangulation is a technique used to ensure that the results of a study are valid. Triangulating data entails exploring different angles of the same phenomenon and can be used to enhance the validity of the data collected (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Oleinik, 2015). Annansingh and Howell (2016) stated that when triangulating data, the researcher seeks to validate several sources of data through cross verification. I triangulated the data from the interviews conducted and the company documents.

### **Data Collection Technique**

The overarching question to guide this study was the following: What strategies do some small business owners use to decrease voluntary employee turnover to remain competitive? I used the following data collection techniques to find turnover reduction strategies: semistructured interviews, and reviewed company documents. I conducted semistructured interviews consisting of open-ended questions (see Appendix A) to encourage the participants to share their experiences. Mitchell (2015) asserted that researchers conduct interviews to gather data on a variety of situations. Keefe et al. (2016) stated that semistructured interviews comprise open-ended questions that can aid in the emergence of rich data. Dikko (2016) argued that using open questions enables the researcher to ask follow up questions based on the replies given by participants. Also, I reviewed company documents. Company documents can provide additional data that interviews do not yield (Pacho, 2015; Yin, 2015; Yin, 2014). Before the commencement of the data collection process, I obtained the approval of the IRB.

The data collection process consisted of the following steps. First, I visited businesses in the southeastern region of the United States until I found four consenting participants who were small business owners and had successfully implemented strategies to decrease voluntary employee turnover. Each prospective participant received an invitation to participate, informing them of the purpose of the study. Second, I gained the verbal and written informed consent of the participants before the interview and gave them a signed copy of the consent form. According to Alase (2017), a researcher must obtain informed consent from each participant before the research can begin. Third, I met with each qualified consenting participant at the time and location of his or her choice. A researcher should consider the participants needs when determining the interview site (Ecker, 2017). Fourth, I used an interview protocol (see Appendix B) as a guide to conduct each interview. An interview protocol consists of procedures and rules that researchers use to do interviews (Dikko, 2016; Yin, 2017). Arsel (2017) stated that an interview protocol is an outline of the conversation that should include a set of interview questions.

The interview process began with a brief introduction that consists of the following: thanking the participant for agreeing to participate in the study, explaining the purpose of the data collected for the study, giving an estimated time frame of the interview (see Appendix B), and no incentives would be given for their participation.. Also, each participant was made aware that their involvement was voluntary and they were free to remove themselves from the study at any time; I audiotaped the interview using a Sony digital voice recorder, and took handwritten notes. Within 72 hours of the

meeting, I emailed each interviewee a copy of my notes for their review. Once the participants agreed to the interview conditions, I proceeded with the interview consisting of seven open-ended questions. I used probing questions to help gather rich information; the interviews took approximately 45 minutes. Next, I requested company documents relevant to employee retention. Finally, I ended the interview by thanking the participant and scheduling a member checking appointment. The data collection techniques that I used for this study were advantageous because conducting semistructured interviews and reviewing company documents yielded rich data.

There are advantages and disadvantages to collecting data by conducting semistructured interviews and reviewing company documents. Conducting semistructured interviews can be advantageous to researchers because such conversations consist of using open-ended questions, which gives the participants the opportunity to share their views and can result in the collection of valuable data (Blandisi, Clow, & Ricciardelli, 2015). Pandey and Chawla (2016) stated that conducting semistructured interviews could be expensive and time-consuming. Collecting data by reviewing company documents can be advantageous to researchers because it can provide information that other forms of data collected did not reveal, on the other hand, the data could be outdated, inaccurate, and unavailable (Pacho, 2015). I gathered data for this study by conducting interviews and reviewing company documents to collect rich data and used member checking to strengthen the validity and reliability of the study.

Once the interviews were complete, I used member checking to create a strong study. According to Hadi and Closs (2016) and Taylor and Thomas-Gregory (2015),

member checking comprises the researcher asking the participants to check the interview notes for accuracy to confirm that the data is an accurate representation of their response to the interview questions. A researcher should confirm the participant's experiences to set the tone for a valid study (Kruth, 2014). I emailed each participant a copy of the interview notes within 72 hours for their review and met with them at the designated follow up interview time at their place of business. The follow up interviews took approximately 20 minutes. P2 and P4 made minor changes to their transcripts. Once the participants verified that the interview notes were accurate, I collected company documents, policies, and training brochures and I began to organize the data.

### **Data Organization Technique**

I kept track of the data collected from each participant by creating a database in Microsoft Word to store the information. According to Yin (2017), the primary function of a database is to store collected data in a manner that is easy to retrieve and analyze. The database consisted of coded electronic files that included each participant's transcribed interviews, documents, and other pertinent information collected from the field to access the data quickly. I alphanumerically labeled each folder P1 for the first participant, P2 for the second participant, P3 for the third participant, and P4 for the fourth participant. According to Saunders et al. (2015), a researcher should protect his or her participants by disguising their identities. Agnew, Shannon, Ryan, Storey, and McDonnell (2016) used pseudonyms such as P1-P5 to maximize the participants' confidentiality. Also, all hard copies of data collected from the study are kept in a fireproof safe. I will store data securely for 5 years to protect the confidentiality of the

participants. After 5 years, I will permanently delete the information on my computer and burn the records stored in the fireproof safe.

### **Data Analysis**

I used methodological triangulation to analyze the data for this qualitative multiple case study and collected data by conducting semistructured interviews and reviewing company documents. A multiple case study requires gathering data from two or more case units (Yin, 2017). Hussein (2015) defined triangulation as the comparison of two or more data sources, theoretical perspectives, and methodological approaches analyzed by the researcher to study the same phenomena. I collected data by conducting semistructured interviews and reviewing company documents, policies, and training brochures. I used methodological triangulation to analyze the data. Yin (2017) defined methodological triangulation as the triangulation of methods. Methodological triangulation is used in qualitative studies and can comprise interviews, observations, and document reviews (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, & Neville, 2014; Lodhi, 2016). Researchers use triangulation to establish dependability, credibility, and confirmability (Ang, Embi, & Yunus, 2016), methodological triangulation was appropriate for this qualitative case study.

I triangulated the data from semistructured interviews and company documents to find strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover. Yin (2017) noted the following five phases of analysis: compile the data, disassemble data, reassemble data, interpret data, and conclude. After the interviews, I transcribed and compiled all the data from the audiotaped interviews, notes, and company documents and saved them in a Microsoft

Word document on the computer. I performed member checking after the interviews. Member checking consists of allowing the participant to check the information gathered by the researcher to verify the accuracy of the data (Hadi & Closs, 2016). I emailed each participant a copy of the interview notes within 72 hours for their review and met with them at the designated follow up interview time at their place of business. The follow up interviews took approximately 20 minutes. P2 and P4 made minor changes to their transcripts. Once the participants confirmed that their responses were accurate, I proceeded with the data analysis process.

I used Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) to help organize the semistructured interviews and company documents. According to Ang et al. (2016), CAQDAS is a tool used to help organize and manage the data in the data analysis process. I used NVivo 12 to assist with analyzing the data. NVivo 12 is a software program designed to help sort, organize, and classify data to find answers to the research questions (Castleberry, 2014). First, I transported the information from the Microsoft Word document to NVivo 12 to disassemble the data by sorting, organizing, and classifying the data. Second, I reassembled the data by repeating the encoding process to alleviate errors. According to Oliveira, Bitencourt, dos Santos, and Teixeira (2015), a researcher can make errors when applying codes to the text, to alleviate errors the researcher should repeat the encoding process. Third, I drafted a detailed interpretation, analysis, and the conclusion of the multiple cases. According to Kruth (2014), the results of a case study entails a thorough description and analysis of single or multiple cases. Fourth, I correlated the main themes generated from the study to the recent studies and

the conceptual framework of Herzberg et al. (1959) to conclude with answering the research question. Retrieving new data and analysis continued until I reached data saturation. According to Kline (2017), a researcher attains data saturation when there is no further information. Fusch and Ness (2015) asserted that a researcher achieves data saturation when he or she has enough data to duplicate the study, and additional coding is no longer possible.

### **Reliability and Validity**

The reliability and the validity of the research instruments play a role to determine the strength of a study. Dikko (2016) ascertained that when conducting research, the data collection instruments used in a study must be valid and reliable to be suitable measures. Trustworthiness demonstrated in the data and findings are a reflection of research with high standards (English, 2015). Connelly (2016) noted that the criteria for a reliable and valid qualitative study are credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

#### **Reliability**

Following an interview protocol and conducting member checking enhanced the reliability and dependability of this study. I used an interview protocol as a guide to conduct each interview. An interview protocol consists of procedures and rules that researchers use to do interviews (Dikko, 2016; Yin, 2017). Yin reported that researchers use an interview protocol as a guide to ensure adherence to the procedures and general rules concerning conducting research. Castillo-Montoya (2016) noted that using an interview protocol can help improve the quality of data obtained in an interview, enhancing the study. Also, to strengthen the reliability of this study I ensured that each

participant conducted member checking of the notes interpreted to verify the accuracy of their interviews. Member checking is done to ensure the credibility and dependability of a study and entails allowing the participant to check the researcher's interpretations of the interview responses to verify its accuracy (Hadi & Closs, 2016; Taylor & Thomas-Gregory, 2015).

### **Validity**

The credibility of a study plays a role to ensure the validity of a study. I ensured that the results of this research were credible by conducting member checking and triangulating the data from the interviews and the company documents. Performing member checking is a method to ensure the credibility of participant responses to interview questions by asking the participants to check the interpretations of the researcher and data for accuracy (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). As stated in Baillie's (2015) article, member checking is a technique used to establish credibility in a study.

Triangulation is a technique used to ensure that the results of a study are valid. According to Ang et al. (2016), triangulation is a method that is popular among researchers used to establish credibility, dependability, and confirmability. Triangulating data entails exploring different angles of the same phenomenon and can be used to ensure the validity of the data collected (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Oleinik, 2015). Annansingh and Howell (2016) stated that when triangulating data, the researcher seeks to validate several sources of data through cross verification. Hussein (2015) defined triangulation as the comparison of two or more data sources, theoretical perspectives, and methodological

approaches analyzed by the researcher to study the same phenomena. I conducted member checking, triangulated the data collected from the interviews and the company documents, to ensure that the results of the study were credible and addressed the findings from the participant's perspectives.

The transferability of the results of the study is a reflection of the validity of the study (Kruth, 2014). I enabled others to determine the transferability of the findings in this study by using an interview protocol, adhering to the data collection and analysis techniques described in this study, and continued to interview until I reached data saturation. A researcher should provide a rich description of the participant's characteristics, data collection techniques, analysis techniques, and the process of the study to increase transferability of information (Jouhari, Haghani, & Changiz, 2015). Transferability denotes whether the results of a study are applicable to other studies or settings (Colorafi & Evans, 2016). According to Anney (2014), a researcher ensures transferability in a study by providing a rich description of the inquiry and purposively selecting the participants. Giving rich descriptions in a study can help other researchers to duplicate the study in other studies or settings (Anney, 2014).

Confirmability ensures that the participants produce the findings in a study free from the researcher's biases (Grieb, Eder, Smith, Calhoun, & Tandon, 2015). I addressed the confirmability of this study by providing a rich description of the member checking and triangulation process in this study. Member checking entails asking the participants to confirm that the researcher's interpretation of data is an accurate representation of their experiences (Taylor & Thomas-Gregory, 2015). I requested each participant review the

initial interpretation of the data to check for accuracy to help combat biases in the data interpretation process. P2 and P4 made minor changes to their transcripts. Also, I triangulated the data collected from the interviews and company documents to help enhance the confirmability of this study. According to Yin (2014), triangulation is the merging of data gathered from different methods to discover the consistency of a finding. Ang et al. (2016) stated that triangulation is a technique frequently used to establish confirmability, credibility, and dependability.

Reaching data saturation plays a role in the validity of a study. According to Fusch and Ness (2015), failure to achieve data saturation can have an adverse effect on the validity of a study. I ensured data saturation by continuing to collect data until I had no new information, I had enough information to duplicate the study, and no new codes arose. According to Kline (2017) and Porte (2013), a researcher achieves data saturation when there is no new information, the scholar has enough data to duplicate the study, and when additional coding is no longer possible.

### **Transition and Summary**

The intent of this qualitative multiple case study was to understand what strategies small business owners use to decrease voluntary employee turnover to remain competitive. I began Section 2 with a restatement of the purpose statement, followed by the role of the researcher, participants, the research method, and the research design. I addressed the population and sampling, ethical research, data collection instruments, and the data collection techniques. Finally, I discussed the data organization techniques, data analysis, and the reliability and validity of the study. In Section 3, I address the

following: the introduction, presentation of findings, application to professional practice, and implications for social change. Also, I discuss the recommendations for actions, recommendations for further research, reflections, and the conclusions. Section 3 ended with the appendixes.

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

#### **Introduction**

The objective of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies that some small business owners use to decrease voluntary employee turnover to remain competitive. I conducted semistructured interviews consisting of open-ended questions with four small business owners in the southeastern region of the United States, and collected company documents to explore findings to comprehend the experiences of participants. Methodological triangulation of the semistructured interviews and company documents resulted in the emergence of five themes: caring and clean work environment, pay, rewards and recognition, supervision, and training and advancement. The analysis of the data revealed strategies that coincide with Herzberg's two-factor theory and the findings in some previous literature. The results of the study indicate that having a caring, and clean work environment, fair pay, giving employees rewards and recognition, competent supervision, and providing training and advancement are strategies that some small business owners use to decrease employee turnover to remain competitive.

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

The overarching research question used for this qualitative case study was the following: What strategies do some small business owners use to decrease voluntary employee turnover to remain competitive? I conducted semistructured interviews and reviewed company documents to answer the central research question. I met with each participant for a follow-up member checking appointment to ensure that their responses were an accurate representation of their experiences. The following five themes emerged

from the data: caring and clean work environment, pay, rewards and recognition, supervision, and training and advancement. Cho and Han (2018) found that salary, career development, benefits, and rewards are related to turnover intention. Table 1 displays the themes that emerged from the data.

Table 1

*Themes*

Theme	Participants	References
Caring and clean work environment	4	17
Pay	3	6
Rewards and recognition	3	7
Supervision	3	4
Training and advancement	3	7

**Theme 1: Caring and Clean Work Environment**

The first theme that emerged from the data was a caring and clean work environment. Ensuring that the work environment is caring and clean is a turnover reduction strategy used by all of the participants. Three fourths of the participants stressed the importance of letting employees know that you care about them and their families. P1 stated, “I let them know that family is very important to me and their family is just as important also, so I give them days that they can take care of things that happen in their family.” P1’s statement coincides with Deery and Jago’s (2015) observation, work-life balance is a leading issue of employee retention and management; therefore, ensuring that employees have the time needed to care for their families is a strategy to reduce employee turnover.

Also, half of the participants noted that employees are more agreeable when they are allowed to have input. P1 reported, “Keeping an open door to allow employees to talk and express themselves and listening to employees and keeping information confidential helps to keep the workplace strong.” P1’s response concurs with Mishra et al.’s (2015) findings, that small business owners who build trust with employees through interpersonal relationships and transparent communication can reduce voluntary employee turnover.

P3 welcomed employees to share ideas of ways to make the job easier. According to P3, employees are more agreeable when they can contribute input. After reviewing P3’s company documents, I found that P3 was open for requests that make the building easier to maintain. One half of the participants responses align with the findings in Vandana’s (2017) study: employees who work in an environment where they are able to express themselves and have interpersonal support are more likely to stay with an organization. Showing care for employees can contribute to a harmonious work environment and can be used as a strategy to reduce employee turnover. A poor work environment could result in high turnover rates (Cho & Han, 2018).

When employees are cared for, they are less likely to leave the organization. One-half of the interviewees stated that employees are motivated when they know you care. One half of the participants responses confirmed the findings of former researchers that reported that supervisor support is high when employers show that they care about their workers; and can reduce turnover intention (Fazio, Gong, Sims, & Yurova, 2017). Also, business owners can show care and support for their employees by offering them

flexible work schedules. According to Caillier's (2016) observations, flexible work schedules, employee assistance programs, and childcare programs were factors that could reduce turnover. Having policies in place that provide employees time off to adjust to lifestyle changes can aid in the retention of employees (Mest, 2016). According to P4,

People who work for me have limited supervision, so they are able to make their own schedule. People who are able to manage their own time, it's always a benefit to them. Mothers who work for me are very interested in participating in their children's schooling. They get a benefit working with me because they control their own schedule.

Showing care for employees can motivate employees to stay in an organization. Mathieu et al. (2016) found that leadership behavior affects turnover intention. Similarly, Haar et al. (2016) conducted a study of abusive supervision and turnover intentions indicating that abusive supervisors relate to employee turnover intentions. P3 noted that,

When you have compassion for your workers and if something comes up like the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and it is one of the days that they are going to be working, we allow them to take the day off, and their pay does not change. So if they know that you care about them, they don't mind working, they don't mind coming; and if something comes up, we come together and talk about it to see what we can do to straighten that out. I think that when you come together with them sometimes when they are working; we bring little incentives, maybe donuts, coffee, or juice. Sometimes we bring them breakfast and so that seems to help them work better

together. And we are willing to; if something comes up, we jump on it real quick to get an understanding.

A clean work environment can contribute to job satisfaction. P1 stressed the importance of following company policies and state regulations to ensure that the work environment is clean. P1 stated, "I am real high on those rules as far as keeping things clean." According to P1's company policy, the hand washing policy is posted throughout the organization. Similarly, P2 recommended, "To make the work environment as best as possible . . . it is important to ensure that the place of business is clean and is an environment where people will want to come . . . people will be more likely to leave if the environment is not up to par." The work environment can affect employee retention. According to Msengeti and Obwogi (2015), the work environment has the most significant influence on the retention of employees.

The work environment can contribute to employee retention. Rahman et al. (2017) ascertained that motivational and hygienic factors were indicators of job satisfaction noting that working conditions affect employee job satisfaction. According to Jerome (2018), a positive work environment, good leadership, opportunities for career development can improve job satisfaction. Similarly, P2 stated,

Anything that can be a plus to get more people to stay is to make sure that it is the best environment so they can feel comfortable to want to work in. Because of the opportunity to always get to work at another place and do your own thing, you just try to make your environment to be the best it could possibly be so they will want to work with you and want to work in the environment.

Positive employee relations can enhance the work environment and help to reduce employee turnover. P1 stressed the importance of getting along with employees to have a good flow in the building. According to Tews et al. (2014), employers should focus on developing working relationships with employees to contribute to reducing turnover. P3 stated, "Making sure that they have everything to make their job easier, whatever they need in the working capacity that's going to make their job easier, I am going to make sure they have it in a timely manner." After reviewing P3's company archival documents, I found that the employer provides needed materials requested by employees to perform their job and to make their job easier. All of the interviewees' responses are consistent with findings in Herzberg's two-factor theory. According to Herzberg (1974), the working environment, working conditions, and interpersonal relations increase job satisfaction, which can result in the reduction of employee turnover. Herzberg noted that when working conditions are improved employee satisfaction is increased. Furthermore, all the participants in this study reported that a caring and clean work environment could reduce employee turnover.

### **Theme 2: Pay**

The second theme that emerged from the data is pay. Most of the participants noted that offering fair pay is a strategy that they use to decrease employee turnover. Three fourths of the participants' strategies concur with Sankar's (2015) postulation, that enhancing employee motivational levels and fair compensation could result in employee retention. Offering fair wages can be used as a turnover reduction strategy. P4 stated,

One thing I did not name is the lack of benefits, people who don't have . . . that's one of the challenges with my agency that we are working on, they don't have the kind of benefits that other companies have. So people who have health care benefits and vacation type benefits operate better, I think that might be a challenge for my agency trying to stay competitive and keep others from attracting my staff. To compensate, I think I pay higher. I think pay allows me the advantage to try to compensate for those things that they don't have.

According to P4's company retention policy, which is designed to attract, engage, and inspire employees, the business offers a competitive salary based on the degree obtained and experience. Offering a competitive salary can motivate employees to remain in the workplace. According to Sarmad et al. (2016) and Sankar (2015), fair compensation could result in employee retention. Similarly, P2 noted,

So many people are being caught up in the security of working in a company where they can get health care and depending on your age, and your health situation is a viable reason to work for a company or not work. Health insurance is expensive but with what you are not offering you have to be able to balance it to where you can try to keep people, but you have to understand where to draw the line. Salary- you want to make sure that you are fair and because of what you are bringing to the table you want to let the people know this is why I am paying you this because this is what I know and this is what you may not have, and there is always room for improvement to get to another level so that you are not at the bottom floor and wherever you are there is a possibility for you to move up. Just

like any job, what are you going to do for them, what are you going to bring to the table to validate that need to pay you for this or that?

Finally, P3 expressed,

Well one thing, we make sure that we are paying them according to the needs we are in. What they are being offered, they agree to accept that. They think that it's a good thing. We have people that are on a waiting list for the jobs that are open.

Salary is one of the key factors in employee turnover (Emiroglu, Akova, & Tanriverdi, 2015). According to Mabaso and Dlamini (2018), offering a fair wage can contribute to retaining and attracting employees. Offering fair pay can contribute to reducing employee turnover. Salary can motivate employees to work (Damij et al., 2015). The strategy to provide employees with fair pay to minimize employee turnover is in line with Herzberg's two-factor theory. According to Herzberg (1974), salary is a hygiene factor that can increase or decrease job dissatisfaction.

### **Theme 3: Rewards and Recognition**

The third theme that emerged from the data is rewards and recognition. Seventy five percent of the participants noted that rewards and recognition is a strategy that they use to decrease employee turnover. Most of the participants' strategies concur with MsenOni-Ojo et al.'s (2015) observation that financial incentives encourage employees externally, while other incentives can inspire workers internally by causing them to feel valued by the organization. P1 noted that employees are given raises, bonuses, and some days off with pay to let them know that they are appreciated. According to P1, it is important to encourage employees and to give employees verbal recognition for a job

well done. Also, it is vital to ensure that the employees do not feel like they are being overlooked. P1 stated, "I tell them just because I am the boss it doesn't mean that the building flows better, it's because they are here." P1's responses are aligned with Antony's (2018) findings. Antony ascertained that rewards could lead to employee engagement, employee engagement can cause employee motivation and can enhance job satisfaction. According to the two-factor theory, rewards and recognition are motivation factors that can increase job satisfaction and can result in the reduction of employee turnover (Herzberg, 1974).

Recognition has been found to cause job satisfaction. P2 reported that, "Recognition is what satisfies employees because everybody wants to be the best; in this line of work is like being an artist, so people want to know; so that's what they are looking for." P2's response concurs with the two-factor theory. According to the two-factor theory, job satisfaction can lead to employee retention (Herzberg, 1974).

Furthermore, P4 stated,

You have to know your people, the average person no matter who they are love to be acknowledged and recognized. I go overboard and give incentives around holidays like Christmas and birthdays. These are not things that are required, but it all falls under recognition. People who are made to feel needed, made to feel like they are an asset to your agency rather than a liability, they tend to work better. You can have the highest pay in the world but if the person do not feel comfortable or don't feel like they fit in, they will find somewhere else to go. I

have people that have been with me for ten years or more so there must be something about my agency that attracts good people.

Employee engagement can cause employee motivation and can enhance job satisfaction. Antony (2018) ascertained that rewards could lead to employee engagement. When employees are recognized for a job well done they develop a bond with the company and stay on the job (Babakus, Yavas, & Karatepe, 2017). According to Herzberg (1974), recognition is a motivating factor that causes job satisfaction and can lead to employee retention.

#### **Theme 4: Supervision**

The fourth theme is supervision. Three fourths of the interviewees' responses reflected that supervision is a strategy used to decrease voluntary employee turnover. According to Fan (2018), supervisor support is related to job satisfaction. Also, 75% of the participants' responses confirm the finding in Herzberg's (1974) two-factor theory that indicated supervision is as a hygiene factor that can cause job dissatisfaction. P4 reported that people in counseling need to have ongoing supervision so that they know that they are on the right track. Similarly, P3 noted that a supervisor is in place in case something comes up. P2 stated,

Most people don't leave the job because of money. Most of the time it is the environment, the supervision or the lack of. It's the competency or lack of the supervisor that you have over you. He's your supervisor but you feel like he or she really don't know what they are talking about and that makes it challenging to go. People will respect your supervision role and be more confident in your

supervisory role and follow you if they see that you know what you are talking about.

Inadequate supervision can cause workers to become dissatisfied with their jobs and result in employee turnover. Sharma (2016) ascertained that poor supervision and stress contributes to turnover intentions. The participants' findings coincide with Herzberg's two-factor theory. According to Herzberg (1974), supervision is a hygiene factor that can decrease or increase employee job dissatisfaction. Furthermore, it is essential for supervisors to be mindful of their employees' workload to ensure that their employees do not get burnout. P4 noted,

In counseling, particularly in home counseling, you have to work to decrease burnout. Burnout is when people are not given an opportunity to have a break, so they are constantly filled with a high caseload, so I have to monitor my staff to make sure that they are not overloaded with cases.

According to P4's policy, employees can have no more than 15 cases. P4 noted, When business gets overloaded you have to make sure you do not push people past that. So burnout and making sure people are paid are two things that . . . and supervised, people in counseling need to have ongoing supervision so that they can know that they are on the right track.

### **Theme 5: Training and Advancement**

The last theme is training and advancement. Three of four participants reported that training and advancement is a strategy that they use to decrease employee turnover. The strategy to provide employee training and advancement is in line with Kadiresan,

Selamat, Selladurai, Ramendran, and Mohamed's (2015) observation that training and development improve productivity and employee performance, which can result in a decrease in employee turnover. Three fourths of the interviewees' findings confirm Herzberg's two-factor theory; advancement is a motivating factor that can lead to job satisfaction. When employees are satisfied with their jobs employee retention is improved (Terera & Ngirande, 2014).

P2 noted that with advancement and growth there is always an opportunity to make more money. According to P2, employees are encouraged to attend hair shows, and barber shows to learn about products and sales techniques to become competent about the supplies that are used to help the client with conditions that they may have with their hair and scalp, so the client feels comfortable coming back. After reviewing P2's company training brochures, I found that opportunities are provided for employees to receive training on the products that are used and to evaluate and compare the latest hair equipment, treatments, and technology to gain a competitive edge. P2's response concurs with Emeagwal and Ogbonmwan's (2018) observation when an organization offers training and development opportunities, employees are more competent.

P3 noted, "They only had one employee that was dissatisfied and it was not because of the finances. They wanted to have a supervisory position that was not open, so they decided to leave." P3's statement coincides with Vandana's (2017) findings when employees work in a business where there is room for advancement, training, and mentoring programs it can motivate employees to stay in an organization. Therefore, the lack of room for advancement can result in employee turnover.

P4 reported that when people understand what they are doing, they feel better about the job in my experience when you bring people into your company, and they don't have a clue about what they are doing, they get frustrated. After reviewing P4's company policy, I found that new employees are required to attend an orientation to learn about their roles and responsibilities, and a mentorship opportunity is offered for each new hire to provide support and guidance. Singh and Sharma (2015) observed that the growth of an organization for job security, extensive training, and mentoring and coaching programs were long-term strategies that can reduce employee turnover. Also, after reviewing P4's company policy, I found that the organization offers quarterly training and monthly supervision; such training can help employees remain in the organization. According to Jang, Kim, and Yoo (2017), it is necessary for businesses to provide training for their employees to retain employees and remain competitive. Ali et al. (2015) noted that some of the leading causes of high turnover rates were the lack of training, unclear operating procedures, poor communication, and poor planning. P4 posited,

People who come to my agency who are on a career track want to reach licensure. They look for opportunities when they get to a certain point in their career to work under someone that they can get training and supervision under. I am a certified professional counselor supervisor. So one career track that keeps them with me is or at least an incentive is, you can work through my agency, and the benefit is you get free supervision towards licensure. If they were not working for my agency, they would have to pay \$70 an hour or \$80 an hour to somebody who

was giving them that and they would not get paid. So, they have a chance to work with me, and get paid, and be supervised and they save money.

P4 mentioned that the agency pays employees to get continuing education units; they are able to attend training that benefits themselves and the company. According to P4, training and advancement is a strategy used to retain employees. P4's strategy aligns with the findings of Renaud et al. (2015) that satisfaction with the work environment, training and development, benefits and increased compensation had a positive effect on employee retention. P4 stated,

For those who are on a career path of all of the things that I have listed being able to work towards licensure is the top. Their end goal is being licensed. For me, the strategy being able to draw people into my agency, never mind the pay, some of them the pay is good, but they know if they can get to licensure towards licensure is the top. People come to my agency who are committed to this field of work; they are going to make more money because a licensed person with me makes up to \$30 an hour or more.

Businesses that support employee advancement can attract and retain employees. Zhang, Meng, Yang, and Liu (2018) stated that the work environment, fair pay, and advancement opportunities should be accentuated to increase job satisfaction. Business owners need to seek ways to understand their workers' needs and desires in the area of advancement and growth to reduce turnover.

The findings from this study tie in with Herzberg's two-factor theory. Participants indicated that having a caring and clean work environment, offering fair pay,

giving employees rewards and recognition, competent supervision, and providing training and advancement are strategies that some small business owners use to decrease voluntary employee turnover to remain competitive. A clean, caring, and compassionate work environment, fair pay, giving employees rewards and recognition, competent supervision, and providing training and advancement align with Herzberg's two-factor theory which is the conceptual framework for this study.

The first strategy that small business owners used to reduce employee turnover was having a caring and clean work environment, which coincides with the two-factor theory. According to Herzberg (1974), working conditions and interpersonal relations are hygiene factors that affect the working environment and can increase or decrease employee job dissatisfaction. Herzberg (1974) noted that when working conditions are improved employee satisfaction is increased. All participants in this study reported that a caring and clean work environment could reduce employee turnover.

Offering employees fair pay is a strategy that the participants in this study identified to reduce employee turnover. Fair compensation is a strategy that aligns with the two-factor theory. According to Herzberg's two-factor theory, salary is a hygiene factor that can cause employees to be dissatisfied with their job, which affects the work environment (Herzberg et al., 1959). Failure to offer employees fair pay can result in a hostile work environment and can lead to employee turnover.

Rewarding employees and recognizing them for a job well done is a strategy that the participants identified to reduce employee turnover. Rahman et al. (2017) ascertained that motivational and hygienic factors were indicators of job satisfaction noting that

career growth and development, supervision, rewards, recognition, organizational policies, and working conditions affect employee job satisfaction. Rahman et al.'s findings and the participants recommended the strategy of rewards and recognition are congruent with the factors identified in Herzberg's two-factor theory. According to Herzberg (1974), rewards and recognition are motivational factors that can improve employee retention.

Supervision is another strategy that was identified by the participants in this study, which ties in with the conceptual framework, Herzberg's two-factor theory. The two-factor theory has been influential in assisting researchers in finding factors that can drive people to work, lessen job dissatisfaction, retain employees, and reduce employee turnover (Damij et al., 2015). Supervision is a hygiene factor that can cause increased or decreased job dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1974).

The strategy to provide employee training and advancement is in line with Kadiresan et al. (2015) observation that training and development improve productivity and employee performance, which can result in a decrease in employee turnover. Also, the strategy to provide training and advancement confirm the findings in Herzberg's two-factor theory. According to Herzberg (1974), advancement is a motivating factor that can lead to job satisfaction.

### **Applications to Professional Practice**

The objective of this study was to find strategies that small business owners use to decrease voluntary employee turnover to remain competitive. Employee turnover is costly (Kessler, 2014); and adversely affects business owners' ability to gain and

maintain a competitive advantage (Guha & Chakrabarti, 2015). Business owners and leaders can apply the findings from this study to gain insight into turnover reduction strategies such as; having a caring and clean work environment, offering fair pay, giving employees rewards and recognition, having competent supervision, and providing training and advancement to reduce employee turnover, increase profits, and promote job satisfaction. Employee turnover negatively affects companies' profitability (Kessler, 2014). Small business owners and leaders can benefit from this study because it identifies turnover reduction strategies that can be implemented in their place of business to reduce employee turnover, increase profits, and improve business practice.

Business owners who apply the strategy of having a caring and clean work environment can help to lessen employee dissatisfaction and can result in reducing employee turnover. According to Msengeti and Obwogi (2015), the work environment has the most significant influence on the retention of employees. When small business owners and leaders adopt the strategy of offering competitive pay, the pay could compensate for the benefits that the organization does not provide such as health insurance, which can help to retain key employees. According to Mabaso and Dlamini (2018), offering a fair wage can contribute to retaining and attracting employees. Adhering to the strategy of giving workers rewards and recognition may enhance employee engagement resulting in a decrease in employee turnover rates. Antony (2018) ascertained that rewards could lead to employee engagement. Employee engagement can cause employee motivation and can enhance job satisfaction. Also, the findings from this study add to the body of literature on strategies that small business owners use to

decrease voluntary employee turnover. Business leaders can apply the results of the study to help understand strategies to decrease voluntary employee turnover to remain competitive, which can lead to social change.

### **Implications for Social Change**

Employee turnover is a concern in organizations. In December 2017, 3.3 million employee turnovers occurred (U.S. Department of Labor, 2017). The results of this study could create social change by educating small business owners about ways to decrease employee turnover to remain competitive, which can result in the creation of new small businesses and job opportunities in the local community. Hyder and Lussier (2016) asserted that the success of small companies plays a role in economic development, resulting in public policymakers and some stakeholders to promote the creation of new small businesses.

The turnover reduction strategies found in this case could provide a foundation for creating social change by making business managers aware of ways to decrease their turnover rates and increase profits to remain in business. According to Kessler (2014), voluntary employee turnover negatively affects businesses' profitability. To combat a decrease in profits because of excessive employee turnover, business owners should implement turnover reduction strategies such as providing a caring and clean work environment, offering employees fair pay, giving employees rewards and recognition, ensuring supervisors are competent, and providing employees with training and advancement to decrease employee turnover. Reducing employee turnover rates and increasing businesses' profitability can lead to future organizational sustainment, provide

jobs in local communities, and build up the economy. Hayes et al. (2015) observed that the strength of small businesses has been a significant contribution to the economy.

### **Recommendations for Action**

The strategies found in this study to reduce employee turnover can result in business owners and leaders knowing how to retain their workers to remain competitive. I recommend that small business owners implement the following turnover reduction strategies. Business owners and leaders should ensure that they provide a caring and clean work environment to show their employees that they care. Fazio et al. (2017) reported that supervisor support is high when employers show they care about their workers; and can reduce turnover intention. Msengeti and Obwogi (2015) noted that the work environment has the most significant influence on the retention of employees. Also, organizations should offer their employees competitive pay to compensate for benefits that they do not offer which can result in motivating employees to remain on the job. Offering fair pay can contribute to reducing employee turnover (Damij et al., 2015). According to Mabaso and Dlamini (2018), offering a fair wage can contribute to retaining and attracting employees.

Owners of companies and leaders should focus on giving employees rewards and recognition to ensure that they feel valued and appreciated. Antony (2018) ascertained that rewards could lead to employee engagement. Employee engagement can cause employee motivation and can enhance job satisfaction. Also, when employees are recognized for a job well done they develop a bond with the company and stay on the job (Babakus et al., 2017). I recommend that leaders ensure that their supervisors are

supportive, competent, and knowledgeable about the job to help employees to be satisfied with their job. According to Fan (2018), supervisor support is related to job satisfaction.

Business owners should provide training and advancement for their workers to help them learn their job and to prepare them for future advancement opportunities to retain them. Also, business owners should conduct a training needs assessment to understand their workers' needs and desires in the area of training and advancement to reduce turnover. Kadiresan et al. (2015) observed that training and development improve productivity and employee performance, which can result in a decrease in employee turnover. Small business owners and leaders should pay attention to the results of this study and consider implementing the strategies to enable them to reduce employee turnover, increase profits, and remain competitive. I plan to disseminate the results of this study by providing each participant with a one to two page summary of the results, provide training to businesses in the local community on how to reduce employee turnover, and publish the study to add to the pool of literature on employee turnover.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

The objective of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies that some small business owners use to decrease voluntary employee turnover to remain competitive. The sample comprised four small businesses owners in the southeastern region of the United States. The limitations in this study were the small sample size and I was unable to carry out this research in various geographical locations because of time constraints. The sample size consisted of four small business owners. I recommend that further research is done on employee turnover with the inclusion of more participants

from various businesses, which could yield rich data resulting in a variety of strategies to improve practice in business and reduce employee turnover. Researching in one geographical location may not produce a variety of strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover and can adversely affect the generalization of the study. Therefore, to generalize the study, I recommend that further research is conducted in various geographical locations. Also, future scholars may consider researching the effectiveness of the following strategies found in this study: providing a caring and clean work environment, offering employees fair pay, giving employees rewards and recognition, ensuring supervisors are competent, and providing employees with training and advancement to decrease employee turnover.

### **Reflections**

The intent of this study was to find strategies that small business owners use to decrease employee turnover to remain competitive. My experiential background in Human Resource Management and as a former small business owner has caused me to know some turnover reduction strategies. Knowing strategies that can reduce voluntary employee turnover caused me to contain biases that could have affected the interpretation of this study. To minimize the negative effect of my biases, I set aside preconceived ideas about the research, was open to contrary evidence, and ensured that the conclusion of my study reflected the findings.

The responses of the participants were enlightening and motivating. I found that some small business owners used some strategies to reduce employee turnover that I was familiar with and new strategies emerged from the data. I am excited to share the results

of the study to help business owners and leaders reduce employee turnover to remain competitive. I hope that anyone seeking to reduce employee turnover will find the information in this study helpful and enlightening and apply the strategies to their business practice to create positive social change.

### **Conclusion**

Excessive voluntary employee turnover can be costly to businesses. Voluntary employee turnover adversely affects businesses because of the loss of the time and money spent on recruitment and training, the loss of organizational knowledge and skills, and a decrease in productivity, which negatively affects a businesses' profitability (Kessler, 2014). Small business owners should implement strategies to decrease employee turnover such as having a caring, and clean work environment, offer fair pay, giving employees rewards and recognition, competent supervision, and providing training and advancement to decrease employee turnover to remain competitive.

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## Appendix A: Interview Questions

The overarching research question used for this qualitative case study is the following: What strategies do some small business owners use to decrease voluntary employee turnover to remain competitive?

### **Interview Questions**

1. What strategies do you use to decrease voluntary employee turnover?
2. What hygiene factors such as supervision, interpersonal relations, working conditions, and salary do you use to decrease employee turnover in your business?
3. Which hygiene factors cause your employees increased or decreased job dissatisfaction?
4. What motivation factors such as recognition, responsibility, advancement, and growth do you use to reduce employee turnover in your business?
5. Which motivation factors cause your employees to be satisfied with their job?
6. What strategies to decrease voluntary employee turnover satisfy your employees the most?
7. What other information would you like to provide about successful strategies your organization used to decrease voluntary employee turnover?

## Appendix B: Interview Protocol

<b>Interview Protocol</b>	
<b>What to do</b>	<b>What to say - Script</b>
1. Introduction of the interview	<p>I would like to take time out to thank you for allowing me to interview you today. This interview and data collected is for an assignment called a doctoral study, which is a graduation requirement. I would like you to know that your participation in this education assignment is to try to find strategies to improve voluntary employee turnover, which will help businesses to increase profitability. I will interview you and no less than 2 other small business owners to gather information to find solutions to employee turnover.</p> <p>First, I would like to begin by letting you know that your participation is voluntary. If there is any question that I ask, that you do not feel comfortable with you do not have to answer it or if you want to stop the interview at any time feel free to</p>

	<p>do so. Also, as I told you before I am going to audiotape this interview and I am going to take notes as well, is that OK with you?</p> <p>When your interview is complete, within 72 hours I am going to email you a copy of my notes for your review. If I misrepresented you in any way and if there is any information that you would like to add or take away just let me know. To ensure confidentiality, your name and the name of your business will remain anonymous.</p> <p>I have set aside 45 minutes for the interview if you decide that you would like to go longer, that is fine.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2. Look for non-verbal cues</li><li>3. Paraphrase if necessary</li><li>4. Use probing questions to get rich information</li></ol>	<p>The overarching research question used for this qualitative case study is the following: What strategies do some small business owners use to decrease voluntary employee turnover to remain competitive?</p>

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**Interview Questions**

1. What strategies do you use to decrease voluntary employee turnover?
  2. What hygiene factors such as supervision, interpersonal relations, working conditions, and salary do you use to decrease employee turnover in your business?
  3. Which hygiene factors cause your employees increased or decreased job dissatisfaction?
  4. What motivation factors such as recognition, responsibility, advancement, and growth do you use to reduce employee turnover in your business?
  5. Which motivation factors cause your employees to be satisfied with their job?
  6. What strategies to decrease voluntary employee turnover satisfy
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	<p>your employees the most?</p> <p>7. What other information would you like to provide about successful strategies your organization used to decrease voluntary employee turnover?</p>
<p>5. Bring the interview to a close by thanking the participant</p>	<p>Again, I want to thank you for taking the time to allow me to interview you. This concludes the interview.</p>
<p>6. Schedule member checking appointment</p>	<p>I want to reiterate that I will email you a copy of my notes within 72 hours so that you can review them to ensure that I did not misrepresent you in any way. Also, to see if there is anything that you would like to add you can do so at that time. What would be a good time for you to meet for a follow up member checking interview next week? Looking forward to seeing you then.</p>

7. Introduction of follow up interview	I would like to take time out to thank you for your participation in this study and sharing your insight and documents related reducing employee turnover. Were you able to review my notes from the interview?
8. Share a copy of the brief synthesis for each individual question	I would like to go over your response to the interview questions to ensure that they are a true representation of the information that you shared in the interview.
<p>9. Ask probing questions that adhere to IRB</p> <p>10. Read the interpretation to each question, ask if you missed anything, is there anything that they would like to add or take away, and did I misrepresent you in any way? Again, thank you for taking the time out to participate in this study.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Interview Questions</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What strategies do you use to decrease voluntary employee turnover?</li> <li>2. What hygiene factors such as supervision, interpersonal relations, working conditions, and salary do you use to decrease employee turnover in your business?</li> <li>3. Which hygiene factors cause your</li> </ol>

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employees increased or decreased  
job dissatisfaction?

4. What motivation factors such as recognition, responsibility, advancement, and growth do you use to reduce employee turnover in your business?
  5. Which motivation factors cause your employees to be satisfied with their job?
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  7. What other information would you like to provide about successful strategies your organization used to decrease voluntary employee turnover?
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