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# Strategies Hospitality Leaders Use to Reduce Employee Turnover

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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Borislav Perev

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2018

Strategies Hospitality Leaders Use to Reduce Employee Turnover

by

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MBA, Strayer University, 2011

BA, University of Shumen Episkop Konstantin Preslavski, 2006

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

August 2018

## Abstract

Employee turnover is a global problem with adverse effects on financial performance and sustainability of organizations. In the hospitality industry, employee turnover levels increased to 58.8%, and the associated cost of turnover may be more than 100% of an employee's yearly wage, with a total loss of over \$25 billion a year. The purpose of this single case study was to explore strategies used by hospitality leaders in the southeastern United States to reduce employee turnover. The conceptual framework was the transformational leadership theory. Purposeful selection of participants included leaders with experience in developing and implementing strategies for reducing employee turnover. Data collection included face-to-face semistructured interviews with 8 organizational leaders and a review of declassified organizational documents. Data analysis included inductive coding and calculation of code frequency. Results indicated 3 themes: effective hiring process reduced employee turnover, supportive leadership decreased employee turnover, and continuous training and development reduced employee turnover. Reduced employee turnover may contribute to positive social change by saving organizations time, efforts, and resources, which organizational leaders may use to sustain growth and profitability and to improve the lives of their employees, their employees' families, and the communities in which they operate.

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## Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral study to my wife Anna, and my two children, Kali and Gabriela. I am grateful for the sacrifices you made to ensure a supportive environment for my studying process. You nourished my faith and confidence from the beginning of the DBA program to its very end. Thank you for your love and patience! To my children, I would like to serve as an example to you. Your capabilities are limited only by your dreams. If you dream big and follow your dreams with devotion and enthusiasm, you will turn those dreams into a reality and will enjoy an exciting and productive life. Take charge of your destiny by working and studying hard to achieve your goals and ensure a better future for you and those around you. This doctoral study is also dedicated to my mother, Kalia Pereva, who unfortunately did not live long enough to celebrate with us the graduation from this DBA program. Finally, I dedicate this study to my closest friends and colleagues who supported, encouraged and motivated me throughout the years of this challenging academic journey. I would not have been able to make it through without your trust in me!

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## Section 1: Foundation of the Study

In this study, I explored hospitality leaders' strategies to reduce employee turnover. Research on employee turnover indicated this phenomenon remains a critical challenge for scholars and practitioners (Babalola, Stouten, & Euwema, 2016; Waldman, Carter, & Hom, 2015). The phenomenon of employee turnover affects the financial performance of organizations; the cost of employee turnover soars over \$25 billion a year (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014; Wang, Wang, Xu, & Ji, 2014). Dusek, Ruppel, Yurova, and Clarke (2014) concluded that the turnover rates in the hospitality industry range from 31% to 58.8%, and Inabinett and Ballaro (2014) determined that the cost of turnover may reach 100% of an employee's yearly wage. The percentage statistics from Dusek et al. and Inabinett and Ballaro indicated that hospitality leaders lack strategies for reduction of employee turnover. Managers need to identify employee turnover risks and to find effective organizational responses that increase employees' satisfaction and reduce turnover (Friedman & Schnorr, 2016). In the first section of the study, I provide a background of the applied business problem, followed by the problem statement, purpose statement, nature of the study, research questions, interview questions, and conceptual framework. This first section of the study also includes a review of the academic literature. A better understanding of employee turnover is needed to plan employee replacements and to minimize operational challenges when people leave (Parker & Gerbasi, 2016).

## **Background of the Problem**

Employee turnover can negatively affect the operations of businesses, which makes this phenomenon a noteworthy subject for exploration (Al Mamun & Hasan, 2017). Business leaders have found that employee turnover creates challenges not only because of the costs associated with the employee replacement process but because of the negative impact that turnover has on the organization as a whole (Al Mamun & Hasan, 2017). Industry leaders face challenges associated with high employee turnover (Wang et al., 2014). Because the cost of hiring new employees surpasses the cost of employee retention, continuous turnover negatively affects organizational profitability (Kim, 2014). There is a need for hospitality leaders to identify employee retention strategies to reduce turnover, to support the sustainability of the business (Rohde, Shaw, Butryn, & Stice, 2015), and to retain organizational knowledge (Alshabri, Khalfan, & Maqsood, 2016). Reducing turnover can be beneficial for organizational performance (Baldwin & LaFrance, 2014) and may elicit positive social change for the communities in which an organization operates (Steiner & Atterton, 2014).

Industry leaders face employee turnover intentions on a daily basis (A. I. Ferreira, Martinez, Lamelas, & Rodrigues, 2017). Al Mamun and Hasan (2017) reported that employee turnover negatively influences businesses and the workforce. Hospitality leaders need effective retention strategies to avoid the cost of recruitment, training, and placement of new workers (Al Mamun & Hasan, 2017). Further research on employee turnover could improve understanding of how industry leaders can implement effective strategies for reducing turnover.

### **Problem Statement**

Employee turnover affects organizations' performance (Wang et al., 2014), and the cost of turnover may reach 100% of an employee's yearly wage (Inabinett & Ballaro, 2014). The turnover rates in the hospitality industry range from 31% to 58.8% (Dusek et al., 2014). The general business problem was that employee turnover has a negative effect on organizational profits. The specific business problem was some resort leaders lack the strategies for reducing employee turnover.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative, single case study was to explore the strategies that resort leaders use to reduce employee turnover. The targeted population comprised eight resort leaders from a company in the Southeastern United States who experienced employee turnover and implemented successful strategies to reduce it. The implications for positive social change included the potential to develop strategies and reduce employee turnover to promote worth, dignity, and development of individuals with derivative benefits to their communities. Successful businesses improve employee work conditions, open more jobs, improve infrastructures, and strengthen the communities in which they operate.

### **Nature of the Study**

I selected the qualitative method to explore the strategies that resort leaders use to reduce employee turnover. Scholars choose the qualitative method when they seek to understand participants' lives and experiences as they relate to a phenomenon (Spillman, 2014). The quantitative method was not appropriate for this study. The quantitative

approach is best suited for confirmatory studies in which the researchers quantify data and use the statistical procedures to examine relationships or differences among variables (Brockington, 2014). The mixed-methods research was not appropriate for this study because it includes the use of numerical data and statistical procedures (Spillman, 2014), which were not necessary to answer the research question.

I used a single, descriptive case study design for this study. Researchers use a case study design to explore contemporary events and change in an individual, a group, or situation over time (Yin, 2014). The phenomenological design is suitable when the researcher is interested in describing the lived experiences of the participants (Yin, 2014), which was not the goal of this study. Researchers use the ethnographic design to study a culture by collecting data and describing the cultural characteristics of the sample population (Yin, 2014), which was not the purpose of this study.

### **Research Question**

What strategies do resort leaders use to reduce employee turnover?

### **Interview Questions**

1. What is your role in reducing employee turnover?
2. What are some of the aspects of the job that contribute to employee turnover?
3. What strategies do you use in your organization to reduce employee turnover?
4. How did the employees respond to the strategies for reducing employee turnover?
5. What strategies are the most effective for reducing employee turnover?
6. Which strategies are the least effective for reducing employee turnover?

7. What are the key challenges that you experienced with the implementation of retention strategies for reducing employee turnover?
8. How did you address the key challenges that you experienced with the implementation of retention strategies for reducing employee turnover?
9. What other relevant information would you like to share that we have not discussed yet?

### **Conceptual Framework**

I used transformational leadership theory as a conceptual framework for this study. Burns (1978) created the idea of a transformational leader and later developed the transformational leadership theory. Bass (1985) expanded on Burns's work and identified four key dimensions of transformational leadership behavior: (a) inspirational motivation, (b) individualized consideration, (c) idealized influence, and (d) intellectual stimulation. Scholars use transformational leadership theory to explore and explain how leaders may inspire followers through a positive, value-based vision of the future (Brewer et al., 2016; Phaneuf, Boudrias, Rousseau, & Brunelle, 2016) that changes the followers' expectations, perceptions, and motivations for attaining common goals (Jyoti & Dev, 2015; Mathew & Gupta, 2015). Transformational leadership theory provides propositions that served as the lens through which I explored strategies for reducing employee turnover. Transformational leadership theory was appropriate for this study because transformational leaders' behavior can improve follower engagement by transforming work perceptions and skill sets necessary to attain organizations' objectives (Burch & Guarana, 2014).

## **Operational Definitions**

*Employee retention:* Employee retention is a management initiative for the identification of turnover risk and elaboration of organizational responses through company policies that create a high degree of employee satisfaction with the goal of retaining employees (Friedman & Schnorr, 2016).

*Employee turnover:* Employee turnover is the voluntary or involuntary movement of employees in and out of organizations' work environment (Pietersen, 2014).

*Transformational leadership:* Transformational leadership is a style of leadership in which the leader influences follower performance through inspiration, engagement, and empowerment (Burns, 1978).

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

### **Assumptions**

Assumptions are beliefs that researchers accept as valid for their research (Valentin, 2014). For this study, I made three assumptions. The first assumption was that the resort leaders used successful strategies for reducing employee turnover. The implementation of sound turnover reduction strategies could have a significant influence on the survival and sustainability of a business (McManus & Mosca, 2015; Parker & Gerbasi, 2016). The second assumption was that the participants would provide honest answers to the interview questions and that their responses would reflect their actual experiences. Establishing good rapport between the interviewee and interviewer contributes to accurate interview answers (Mojtahed, Nunes, Martins, & Peng, 2014). The third assumption was that the information from the interviews would be insightful



and enable me to answer the research question. I anticipated that participants would not mind sharing their experiences if I asked the right questions at the right time in the correct manner.

### **Limitations**

Limitations are potential study weaknesses that are beyond of the researcher's control (Paechter, 2013). Limitations acknowledgment allows the identification of direction for new studies (Rahi, 2015). Organizational structures and standards have limitations for access and communication of information to end-users (Vancauwenbergh, De Leenheer, & Van Grootel, 2016). The fact that not everyone has access to all types of organizational information created the first limitation of this study. For this reason, I interviewed only hospitality managers. Hourly employees did not participate in the data collection process. As a result, the study findings did not include the views and perspectives of hourly employees. The second limitation was the small sample of participants. Small sample sizes and insufficient data make analysis more difficult as researchers struggle to identify patterns (Morse, 2015b). The last limitation was that the study's relevance in time. Over time, the state of the U.S. economy might change, which could have direct and indirect financial consequences for the hospitality industry (R. R. Ferreira & Gustafson, 2014) that may affect employees' and employers' view of turnover.

### **Delimitations**

Delimitations are the boundaries of the study (Sampson et al., 2014), and the researcher has control over them. There were several delimitations in this study. The first

delimitation was the type of industry. Data were collected at a single company in the hospitality industry. The second delimitation was the geographical location of the company. I selected a company located in the Southeastern of the United States. Lastly, I excluded hourly employees and limited the pool of participants to only managers to ensure the collection of rich data.

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of the study stems from the identification of successful strategies for reducing employee turnover that may help organizations to improve retention policies that will ensure stable organizational performance and contribute to positive social change. High turnover rates are a challenge for industry leaders (Wang et al., 2014). Because the cost of hiring new employees surpasses the cost of retaining current employees, continuous turnover reduces profitability (Kim, 2014). The findings from this study may contribute to improved business practices that stimulate positive social change.

### **Contribution to Business Practice**

Leaders in the hospitality industry may find the results of the study to be of significance for reducing the harmful effects of employee turnover. The results of this study may contribute to improved business practices in reducing employee turnover in the hospitality industry, which could mitigate workforce shortages and reduce labor costs that impede sustainable development. Turnover negatively affects organizations financially through the increased cost of recruitment and training. Reducing turnover through the improvement of business practices is important (Kim, 2014). In addition to improving financial performance, organizations that reduce turnover have more

sustainable development (Rohde et al., 2015) and knowledge retention (Alshambri et al., 2016). Discovering successful strategies for reducing turnover may assist industry leaders in identifying and eliminating antecedents of resort employees' turnover intentions. Hospitality leadership may consider the findings from this study and develop interventions to improve organizations' performance, gain competitive advantage, and avoid unnecessary costs.

### **Implications for Social Change**

The findings from this study may be used to improve hospitality leaders' retention policies and provide opportunities to support community initiatives. Businesses with stable performance have the potential to enact positive social change for the communities in which they operate (Steiner & Atterton, 2014), which may subsequently increase productivity (Baldwin & LaFrance, 2014). Positive social change may result from the reduction in employee turnover and from engaged employees who experience positive emotions and enthusiasm by leading useful and fulfilling lives. Organizations that have low turnover rates can become agents for positive social change through jobs creation, philanthropic activities, and infrastructural improvements, which translate into increased prosperity for local families and communities.

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

Scholars conduct literature reviews to identify and explore the diverse perspectives and themes related to the study topic (Torraco, 2016). In a literature review, the authors identify gaps in the literature and establish the context of their study, which is essential for justifying, developing, and supporting findings (Callahan, 2014). Through

the literature review, qualitative investigators develop an understanding of the topic, related theories, methods, and approaches that previous authors used to explore gaps in the existing body of knowledge (Pickering & Byrne, 2014).

The purpose of this qualitative, single case study was to explore the strategies that resort leaders use to reduce employee turnover. The following literature review was a foundation for the exploration of the turnover phenomenon. The literature review consists of two parts. The first part contains a discussion and analysis of transformational leadership theory and includes supporting and contrasting theories and theoretical models, such as authentic leadership, ethical leadership, transactional leadership, and Herzberg's two-factor theory. The second part consists of a discussion of employee turnover. I segregated the two parts to present the information in a more systematized manner. The goal was to compare the conceptual framework with other theories and frameworks and to evaluate how the findings from this review could relate to the employee turnover.

In this review, I sought to identify relevant empirical studies, journal articles, seminal books, and websites on employee turnover. The databases for identifying suitable literature sources included of the following: Sage Premier, ScienceDirect, Emerald Management, ABI/INFORM Complete, Business Source Complete, and Hospitality & Tourism Complete. I also used the Google Scholar search engine. Using appropriate keywords in the search engines and the databases is essential for identifying appropriate literature. The key words for conducting the search included *leadership, transformational leadership, transactional leadership, turnover, retention, profitability, job satisfaction,*

*employee engagement, job performance, and employee motivation*. For a better organization of the selected literature, I sorted and stored the information in separate folders and labeled them by relevancy.

The literature review contains 233 sources. For compliance with the criteria for scholarly writing established for Walden University's DBA program, 209 of the literature sources, or 89.70%, were scholarly peer-reviewed articles published less than 5 years from the anticipated graduation date. The other 24 sources, or 10.30%, were published more than 5 years from the anticipated graduation date or were not from peer-reviewed journals.

### **Transformational Leadership Theory**

Within the contemporary perspectives of leadership theory, Hopkins and O'Neil (2015) reframed leadership as a dynamic and ethical process between individuals pursuing a common goal. Scholars can examine the relationship between leaders and followers to determine the effect of leadership on turnover. Transformational leadership theory was the lens through which I explored strategies for reducing employee turnover.

Organizational leaders may choose to lead their teams through a variety of leadership styles. However, over the last few decades, transformational leadership has become the preferred method of leadership (Bass, 2010; Mittal & Dhar, 2015). Researchers use transformational leadership to explore how leaders may inspire followers through a positive, value-based vision of the future (Rowold, 2014) that changes followers' expectations, perceptions, and motivations for attaining common goals (Mathew & Gupta, 2015).

In 1978, Burns conceived the notion of transformational leadership. Burns explained that transformational leadership occurs when the manner of interaction between leaders and followers produces a higher level of motivation and morality. Transformational leadership theory was developed in the mid-1980s (Rowold, 2014), and thereafter researchers used the theory to explore organizational phenomena such as employee turnover (Amankwaa & Anku-Tsedde, 2015; Caillier, 2016; Gyensare, Anku-Tsedde, Mohammed-Aminu, & Okpoti, 2016). In 1985, Bass extended Burns's work and defined four central tenets of transformational leadership behavior: (a) individualized consideration, (b) intellectual stimulation, (c) inspirational motivation, and (d) idealized influence. Transformational leaders use these tenets to empower followers to work autonomously and strengthen their commitment to the organization (Chan & Mak, 2014; Martin, 2017).

Burns (1978) used transformational leadership theory to explain how leaders inspire subordinates to exceed organizational objectives and achieve common goals. In his study on transformational and transactional leadership paradigm, Martin (2017) argued that leaders who practice transformational behavior seek a connection with others in deep and meaningful ways. Martin clarified that through nurtured relationships, transformational leaders seek to motivate followers to exceed expectations and become leaders themselves. In their study on the link between transformational leadership and employees' job satisfaction, commitment, motivation, and trust, Eliophotou-Menon and Ioannou (2016) had similar findings to Martin and stated that leaders provide support and motivation so that employees can exceed initial goals. Eliophotou-Menon and Ioannou

suggested that transformational leaders commit to the welfare of the organization and increase the motivation and morale of the followers by considering followers' individual needs and the differences that exist in the organization. Caillier (2016) and Martin agreed that transformational leaders actively encourage, support, and motivate their followers to exceed their individual objectives. What Eliophotou-Menon and Ioannou, Caillier, and Martin determined was consistent with the way Burns explained the transformational leadership theory.

Business leaders must accomplish service and sales goals (Overall, 2015), whereas the task of transformational leaders is to align the interests of the organization and its members (Bass, 2010). Transformational leaders transform their followers' creativity and motivation, which results in positive changes to their organizations (Bass, 1998). Burns (1978) posited that transformational leaders inspire their followers to increase conventional goals and help them improve their self-confidence at work. Bass (1985) noted that transformational leaders have a clear vision for their organization and have the skills to stimulate employees' thinking in a direction that inspires them to deliver outcomes beyond their expected levels. Gyensare et al. (2016) asserted that when employees surpass the ordinary level of outcomes, the bottom line improves and the organization benefits.

Khalili (2016) explored the connection between transformational leadership, creativity, innovation, and innovation-supportive climates. Khalili observed that leaders who demonstrate transformational behavior encourage their subordinates to take risks, and transformational leaders take responsibility for the results of the subordinates' action.

Liu, Jing, and Gao (2015) described the organizational benefits of transformational leaders who stimulate positive change and function as a catalyst for transformation and innovation. The findings of Khalili and Liu et al. were consistent with the propositions made by Bass (1985) who noted that transformational leaders are visionary and self-confident and have the inner strength to motivate employees' performance for the betterment of the organization. Jutras and Mathieu (2016) indicated that the work environment is a combination of intricate mechanisms and dynamics that affect employees' attitudes, behaviors, perceptions of the organization, job satisfaction, and turnover.

Within the transformational leadership framework, the leader stimulates awareness, promotes moral values, inspires visions, and encourages followers to go beyond their personal interest for the collective good (Bass, 1998; Bass & Riggio, 2006). In a study on cross-lagged relationships, Kinnunen, Feldt, and Mauno (2016) found that transformational leaders' character, as well as their personal example and dedication, manifest through compelling visions and inspirational appeals that are essential for how followers internalize the values of their leaders. In a study on leadership and organizational ambidexterity, Baškarada, Watson, and Cromarty (2016) determined that transformational leadership is more effective (a) in unstable and uncertain environments, (b) in addressing unsatisfactory organizational performance, and (c) during periods of organizational inception, decline, or renewal. Leaders who practice transformational behavior strive to recognize and highlight opportunities for change and stimulate employees' self-confidence to achieve beneficial change (Deichmann & Stam, 2015). In



the following section, I reviewed each of the four key constructs that underlie transformational leadership theory.

**Individualized consideration.** A transformational leader acts as a coach and a mentor by considering followers' individual needs and capabilities (Bass, 1985; Bass & Riggio, 2006). In research on personal relationships and professional results, Martin (2017) suggested that the personalized approach is a distinct trait of transformational leaders as it has an enduring and profound effect on employees who benefit from leaders' abilities to share a vision and lead the way. Moon (2017a) studied the personalized dimension of transformational leadership and noted that leaders' individualizing consideration creates in their employees the perception of personal empowerment and ownership of work processes. Teymournejad and Elghaei (2017) studied the effect of transformational leadership on the creativity of employees. Teymournejad and Elghaei asserted that transformational leaders use individualized consideration in their communication with followers to determine their differences and to stimulate them by assigning appropriate responsibilities for their development. In a study on employee development and voluntary turnover, Nelissen, Forrier, and Verbruggen (2017) discovered that investment in employee development leads to upward job transition that increases the perceived employee external employability, which contains a risk for increased turnover.

Transformational leadership behavior is essential in the communication of a purpose that transcends employees' short-term goals, self-interests, motivation, and encouragement to perform beyond expectations (Bass, 1985). Martin (2017) proposed

that to achieve organizational goals and objectives, transformational leaders focus their attention on setting individualized standards and outcomes for employees. In research on transformational leadership, empowerment, and job satisfaction, Choi, Goh, Adam, and Tan (2016) implied that transformational leaders provide coaching and advice to their followers and, through individualized consideration, support followers' development of skills and assist them in achieving desired outcomes. Martin affirmed that through individualized consideration, transformational leaders improve their relationships with followers, recognize their employees' goals and needs, and provide assistance that supports employees' career objectives.

Because the expectation is that leaders will enable individual and collective efforts to ensure effective organizational commitment of their followers, leaders should strive to integrate employees' goals with those of the organization (Gyensare et al., 2016). Martin (2017) suggested that when leaders apply individualized consideration, they increase the followers' confidence and catalyze extra effort for extraordinary achievement. Transformational leaders can induce followers to set ambitious goals for personal improvement and merge employees' interests with those of the organization, which increases employees' organizational commitment. Gyensare et al. (2016) confirmed that organizational commitment is a significant factor that mediates the dynamics of transformational leadership and employees' turnover intentions.

**Intellectual stimulation.** Transformational leaders use intellectual stimulation to encourage their followers to make autonomous decisions, both creative and innovative (Bass, 1985; Bass & Riggio, 2006). Choi et al. (2016) concluded that when leaders

stimulate their followers intellectually, they foster independent problem-solving for developing an environment in which employees can advance their intelligence and improve their rational thinking. Mittal and Dhar (2015) agreed that through intellectual stimulation, employees receive encouragement to observe and handle operational problems in novel ways and develop new overviews of their positions from a new and improved perspective.

Eliophotou-Menon and Ioannou (2016) argued that transformational leaders prompt change and improvement in their followers by evaluating followers' motives and needs and the level of satisfaction of those needs. Leaders who engage in intellectual stimulation encourage their followers to develop ideas and improve their ways of doing things (Moon, 2017a), and find innovative solutions for solving operational problems (Teymournejad & Elghaei, 2017). Choi et al. (2016) agreed that transformational leaders embrace intellectual stimulation by promoting a culture in which employees can expand their intelligence and improve their rational thinking. Despite the benefits of intellectual stimulation on increasing retention and reducing turnover, underutilization of employees' skills might lead to an increase in turnover intention (Nelissen et al., 2017).

Leaders engaged in behaviors associated with intellectual stimulation assure support for followers and generate a positive environment that stimulates followers to take initiatives to the resolution of organizational challenges (Burns, 1978). Through intellectual stimulation, transformational leaders encourage followers to seek new and creative solutions to problems, which could enable employees to find answers to the deepest and long-held assumptions of their organization (Anderson & Sun, 2015; Martin,

2017). Transformational leaders may foster innovation, stimulate learning and development, and challenge employees to improve their skills. Nonetheless, organizational leaders must use enhanced employees' skills because of potential negative effects on the employees' turnover intentions (Nelissen et al., 2017).

**Inspirational motivation.** Burns (1978) noted that in their efforts to convey expectations to followers, inspirational leaders communicate in a passionate manner that motivates subordinates and stimulates commitment to the organization's vision. Through inspirational motivation, leaders outline a clear vision and a path that leads to its realization (Bass, 1985; Bass & Riggio, 2006). Anderson and Sun (2015) determined that leaders encourage and assist their followers in unfolding their true potential through an appropriate learning environment that fosters growth and development. Transformational leaders engage with their followers in a way that generates elevated levels of commitment that transcends followers to a higher level of motivation and morality (Moon, 2017a; Pradhan & Pradhan, 2015). Teymournejad and Elghaei (2017) indicated that leaders, who apply inspirational motivation in their interactions, seek to raise followers' motivation through an appeal to their emotions. Because transformational leaders serve as a role model for their followers, by analyzing the inspirational motivation dimension, researchers explore the actual behavior of leaders characterized by the sense of purpose and the ability to stimulate followers' confidence into established vision and values (Eliophotou-Menon & Ioannou, 2016). Furthermore, Teymournejad and Elghaei suggested that transformational leaders use inspirational motivation to apply emphasis on emotions and inner motivations of followers rather than their daily interactions with

them. However, Wang (2014) concluded that employees' emotional attachment to their organization means strong organizational commitment, in which social, structural and financial bonds could negatively affect the employee turnover.

Researchers identified a positive link between inspirational motivation and employee commitment (Eliophotou-Menon & Ioannou, 2016; Raman, Mey, Don, Daud, & Khalid, 2015). To ensure a clear understanding of the assigned tasks, transformational leaders use effective communication techniques, such as simplified and transparent language, to convey expectations and encourage employees to focus their efforts on achieving goals (Choi et al., 2016). Martin's (2017) findings were consistent with Choi et al. (2016) and suggested that transformational leaders use inspirational motivation to share the organizational vision and to help followers understand corporate values, goals, and potential for a better future. Other researchers argued that motivation and confidence are at the center of the transformational leaders' engagement with their followers, which is an intention to stimulate change and innovation (Eliophotou-Menon & Ioannou, 2016). Anderson and Sun (2015) posited that to create an inspirational motivation, leaders add challenge to followers' work, which increases employee's feeling of being of significance. Transformational leaders apply inspirational motivation to embed employees into their job. Peltokorpi, Allen, and Froese (2015) suggested that embedded employees are more likely to have strong and close attachments associated with their work, which reduce employee turnover. By helping their followers envision and realize better futures, transformational leaders could inspire enthusiasm and optimism that uplifts team's spirit and reduces turnover.

**Idealized influence.** Idealized influence, or charisma, is evident when employees accept the leader as a role model based on the leader's power and influence (Burns, 1978). Bass (1985) and Bass and Riggio (2006) findings were consistent with Burns's conclusion and suggested that transformational leaders act as a role model and lead with charismatic behavior. Through their charisma, transformational leaders enhance followers' motivation and performance and elicit trust-building behavior that enables followers to identify with their leaders (Bass, 1985). Pradhan and Pradhan (2015) asserted that transformational leaders with idealized influence can create more committed and loyal employees because they are able to stimulate employees' organizational commitment and improve job satisfaction.

Based on more recent research, leaders apply idealized influence through their attitude and behaviors (Pradhan & Pradhan, 2015). Other researchers indicated that transformational leaders foster idealized influence by being consistent in their values, beliefs, and ethics, and are not hesitating to prioritize followers' needs before their own (Anderson & Sun, 2015). On these premises, transformational leaders gain admiration, trust, and respect from their followers, which enables them to influence job-related attitudes and behaviors for reducing turnover intentions.

In research on the effects of leadership on followers' commitment, Tyssen, Wald, and Heidenreich (2014) suggested that idealized influence is apparent when leaders demonstrate ethical behavior and follow higher morals. Choi et al. (2016) depicted transformational leaders as charismatic and argued that offering a clear vision and mission to their employees, instill pride and gain employees' respect and trust. Consistent

with Choi et al.'s conclusions, Moon (2017a) argued that leaders' idealized influence not only can provide followers with a clear vision, positive emotion, and increased trust in leaders but can also build and sustain high standards of honesty and integrity. Martin (2017) discovered that when using idealized influence, the values of transformational leaders, and those of the organization, guide the leaders' action, and employees identify with their leader and perceive transformational leadership in an idealized way.

Furthermore, Gyensare et al. (2016) implied that the leader, as a role model, earns followers' admiration and trust, which positively affect the employees' commitment, emotional attachment, and overall involvement with the organization. Leaders who exercise idealized influence promote subordinates' admiration of leaders and improve organizational commitment and job satisfaction, which lead to a decline in employee turnover (Gyensare et al., 2016; Haile, 2015). Consequently, improved trust, employee commitment, and job satisfaction mediates the relationship with transformational leaders and could reduce the employee turnover.

### **Transformational Leadership Theory Through the Eyes of the Critics**

Analogous to other leadership theories, there are critics of transformational leadership theory. Fischer (2016) concluded that the explanation of transformational leadership's attributes requires enhancement for conceptual clarity that solidifies the foundation for definition, theory development, and operational measure design. Martin (2017) argued that it is highly unlikely a leader to possess every skill, trait, and quality needed to be a truly transformational leader. Martin contemplated that transformational leadership emphasizes the personality of the leader, which might attract the wrong

individuals for the wrong reasons. Moreover, Martin suggested that transformational leaders could implement a change at a rapid rate that might create a burnout effect for employees. Martin stated that a leader could misguide while pursuing the vision, which results in navigating the organization in a direction that could prove to be harmful in the long term. On these premises, employees may lose some of their work engagement, and Caesens, Stinglhamber, and Marmier (2016) stated that engaged employees are more likely to stay than to leave. Consequently, transformational leadership has also the potential to affect employee turnover positively.

Scholars have compared transformational and transactional leadership (Afsar, Badir, Saeed, & Hafeez, 2017; Hamstra, Van Yperen, Wisse, & Sassenberg, 2014; Masa'deh, Obeidat, & Tarhini, 2016). Bass (1996) argued that transactional leadership is important in a sense that creates a foundation upon which transformational leadership builds their efforts. For Bass, transactional and transformational leadership are distinct strategies but are not mutually exclusive, and the best outcomes are evident when organizational leadership manages to combine followers' *lower level* and *higher level* needs. In such an instance, employees can receive the base level of fairness through transactional leadership' decision making, and at the same time, they receive inspiration and empowerment via transformational leadership (Oberfield, 2014). Within this context, Aga (2016) pointed out that transactional leadership is a necessary precondition for transformational leadership to be effective. Such a prerequisite indicates that transformational leaders thrive in coexistence with other leadership styles, which implies that a reduction in employee turnover could be a result of coexisting leadership styles.



Oberfield (2014) mentioned that despite their ideological differences, transformational leadership builds on the foundation of transactional leadership and furthers its concepts. Consistent with Oberfield's findings, Martin (2017) suggested that transformational leaders rely on transactional leaders to carry out daily performance, to develop and assess practices, and to support the achievement of the organizational strategic goals and objectives. Quintana, Park, and Cabrera (2015) asserted that transformational and transactional leadership are not two different leadership styles but coexist at the opposite ends of a single continuum. Respectively, an organization can have higher achievements when the transformational leaders function alongside leaders who practice different leadership styles, which confirms that employee turnover is a complex phenomenon that does not depend on a single leadership style.

Feng, Huang, and Zhang (2016) reported that there is an inconsistency between transformational leadership and innovative behavior. A probable reason for the inconsistent outcomes is that innovative approaches and behaviors depend on the level of knowledge and the acquisition of knowledge by the followers requires time; therefore, the impact of transformational leadership on innovative behavior can be a lengthy process (Feng et al., 2016). For increased effectiveness, transformational leaders need to aggregate other leadership skills and characteristics to ensure optimization of followers' performance (Fischer, 2016). In a study on followers networking, Anderson and Sun (2015) suggested that leaders are instrumental for networking behaviors of their followers; however, individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation constructs of transformational leadership have a negative interacting effect between leader

encouragement and follower networking. Anderson and Sun concluded that transformational leaders should be aware of the potentially harmful influence of their transformational behaviors, which prompts the needs for additional research on this previously unrecognized impact with potentially adverse effect.

### **Supporting and Contrasting Theories and Conceptual Frameworks**

Researchers assess leadership efficacy by observing the significances of influence on a single individual, a group, or an organization (Datta, 2015), and transformational leadership theory is not the only theory that researchers use to explore employee turnover. Scholars who studied leadership indicated that effective leaders might apply behavioral patterns associated with more than one leadership style (Dartey-Baah, 2015; Martin, 2015). The concept of leadership remains problematic, as the leadership style is a significant factor that has a considerable influence on the interest and the commitment of employees (Brahim, Ridić, & Jukić, 2015). The review of other leadership theories provides a better understanding of why leaders and employees behave in a particular fashion and what is the effect on the employee turnover.

**Transactional leadership.** When leaders use effective leadership behaviors, they can influence how employees feel about their jobs, which lower employee turnover rates (Bass, 2010). Leaders can positively stimulate the relationship with their employees and can make it work reasonably well by using rewards with the appropriate value for employees (Bass, 2010). Transactional leaders practice exchange relationship with their followers, and each party pursues interests based on an agreement in which employees' performance results in financial reward (Strom, Sears, & Kelly, 2014). However, when

the relationship between leaders and employees thrives on a set of tasks, rules, and reward, it is evident that leaders use a transactional approach.

In its conceptual core, transactional leadership differentiates from the transformational one because transactional leaders use incentive structures to inspire employees by appealing to their self-interests and incentivizing a particular effort or performance (Jensen et al., 2016). Transactional leaders have a proclivity to strict adherence to the job requirements but communicate and organize work assignments in a fashion that enable employees to meet the requirements (Bass, 1985). Crişan (2016) asserted that the transactional leaders make promises, negotiate resources, and construct mutually beneficial agreements. Employees support their employer when they believe that the objectives and the goals are achievable; otherwise, employees may disengage (Brahim et al., 2015). Nonetheless, transactional leaders do not maintain high levels of engagement with employees (Zhang, Avery, Bergsteiner, & More, 2014) and do not associate with followers' collective identity (Zdaniuk & Bobocel, 2015).

Aga (2016) indicated that transactional leaders build upon contingent rewards through motivational promises, rewards, and praises. Ahmad, Abdul-Rahman, and Soon (2015) reported that based on transactional leadership, organizations could overcome production challenges. The success of such nature could be due to transactional leaders' behavior; leaders with transactional behavior would not hesitate to apply corrective action to inferior performance and irregularities (Dartey-Baah & Ampofo, 2015). Smith (2015) reported that transactional leaders are not as effective as their transformational counterparts are in achieving positive organizational change. When employees'

motivation stems from rewards or compensation, leaders with transactional behavior could be effective at reducing employee turnover (Ahmad et al., 2015).

Bass (2010) reasoned that transactional leadership has three detentions: (a) contingent rewards, (b) management by exception (active), and (c) management by exception (passive). In his work on leadership, Bass (1998) explained that the first detention of transactional leadership, contingent reward, pertains to leaders' behavior with emphasis on clear articulation of job descriptions and requirements for successful completion of tasks. Bass explained that contingent rewards provide physical or psychological recompenses for the fulfillment of obligations through recognition, pay increases, and career advancement opportunities. Dey and Carvalho (2014) reported that once transactional leaders set the work requirements by fulfilling the extrinsic needs of subordinates, leaders might apply penalization if the actual results deviate from the established standards.

Management-by-exception can be active and passive (Geier, 2016). Dey and Carvalho found that passive management, or management by exception, is apparent when transactional leaders transfer responsibilities to subordinates and act only when followers deviate from the set norms and expectations. Transactional leaders, who practice active management by exception, supervise their subordinates intensively and take corrective action on deviations from the contractual agreement (Bass & Riggio, 2006). However, Dey and Carvalho (2014) argued that both approaches, active and passive, end up building mediocrity within the organization because subordinates realize that mistakes lead to punishment or corrective measures. Therefore, improved performance and fewer

errors and remain employees' priority, which classifies as employees' engagement. When employees experience work engagement, it is more likely to inhibit turnover intentions (Burch & Guarana, 2014).

A significant shortcoming of transactional leaders is that they lack a long-term vision (Crişan, 2016). Günzel-Jensen, Jain, and Kjeldsen (2016) explored the role of formal leadership styles and stated that transactional leaders do not expect or encourage followers to exceed defined goals nor to change the status quo. Although transactional leaders can inhibit creativity and invention in the organization, the typology of transactional leadership differentiates with its short-term effectiveness based on a set of clear and detailed tasks and objectives (Crişan, 2016). Başkarada et al. (2016) commented that transactional leadership is a better fit for a stable and predictable environment, steady organizational performance, and established organizations. Because of the limitation on what transactional leaders can do, Martin (2017) suggested that transactional leadership is not an appropriate alternative during times of a substantive organizational change and cannot serve well the organization.

Deichmann and Stam (2015) wrote that transactional leaders are effective in influencing, motivating, and mobilizing employees to commit their efforts to the goals and values of a particular target. However, because transactional relations involve an exchange process, transactional leadership only appeals to employees' lower-order needs, such as pay and security (Caillier 2016). Transactional leadership has a much smaller impact on desirable consequences like intrinsic motivators (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Despite the shortcomings mentioned above, Sayadi (2016) discovered that transactional

leadership has a positive effect on the leaders' effectiveness and subordinate's job satisfaction and organizational commitment, which helps reduce employee turnover.

**Herzberg's two-factor theory.** Herzberg's two-factor theory (a.k.a. motivation-hygiene theory) is a conceptual model that researchers prefer for exploring and understanding factors causing employees' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their jobs and the influence on turnover. Lo, Lin, and Hsu (2016) argued that based on the two-factor theory, motivation factors associate with satisfaction, whereas hygiene factors are indicative of employees' dissatisfaction. Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1959) determined that personal growth and self-achievement are the most powerful drivers of employees' motivation. Herzberg et al. asserted that working conditions, job security, pay, and work-related relationships were the most influential for employees' dissatisfaction. Although hygiene and motivation factors receive association with job dissatisfaction and job satisfaction, some scholars do not describe them as opposite ends of a single spectrum but as distinct elements of two spectra that represent two separate dimensions of job motivation (Akintola & Chikoko, 2016).

Herzberg et al. (1959) argued that pay and job security are hygiene factors that keep employees motivated and satisfied with their job. Other scholars asserted that hygiene factors refer to contextual features of organizations that support workers and include salary, company policy, work conditions, relationships with supervisors, security, and status (Fareed & Jan, 2016). The absence of these factors can cause employees to file grievances against organizations (Lo et al., 2016). Lacey, Kennett-Hensel, and Manoli, (2015) noted that although the hygiene factors are necessary, alone they are insufficient

to create satisfaction for employees. Lacey et al. were consistent with Akintola and Chikoko (2016) who reported that while the presence of hygiene factors can prevent mediocre performance, the very same factors may not improve productivity. Akintola and Chikoko specified that productivity could improve only when employees experience factors that create work-related motivation or satisfaction. Hygiene factors create dissatisfaction based on pay, awards, workload, company policies, and administrative burdens, and can be predictors of turnover intent (Kim & Kao, 2014; McFadden, Campbell, & Taylor, 2015; Sullivan, Kondrat, & Floyd, 2015).

Examiners apply Herzberg's two-factor theory to establish motivation factors of work content (Lo et al., 2016). Lacey et al. (2015) defined motivation factors, or *satisfiers*, as influences that may enhance motivation, and stated that absence of satisfiers does not necessarily generate dissatisfaction. Other researchers indicated that Herzberg's two-factor theory postulates that factors considered motivational for employees are intrinsic to the work itself and direct rewards that one can obtain for the performance of that work (Akintola & Chikoko, 2016). Examples of direct reward gained through satisfactory job performance include a sense of accomplishment and appreciation from supervisors or colleagues (Herzberg et al., 1959).

In a study on job satisfaction, Akintola and Chikoko (2016) associated motivational factors with employees' need for self-actualization, and self-realization in the workplace in which the *motivators* were an achievement, responsibility, advancement, recognition, autonomy, promotion, and the work itself. Akintola and Chikoko found that employees feel engaged and motivated when they have a challenging

job that spurs their interest in doing the job. Lu et al. (2016) noted that work engagement has a positive relationship with employees' job satisfaction that reduces employee turnover. Knowing the influences and using them appropriately might lead to an increase in job satisfaction, which increases organizational commitment, and diminishes employee turnover (Santa Cruz, López-Guzmán, & Cañizares, 2014). Because motivational factors include achievement, recognition, interesting work, autonomy, and the challenge of the job (Pugh, 2016), they are consistent with the constructs of the transformational leadership theory. Consequently, leaders who consider motivational factors in their operations may contribute to the reduction of employee turnover.

**Authentic leadership.** Authentic and transformational leaders are a subject of attention in the contemporary perspectives of leadership theory because they promote support and trust and have a negative effect on turnover (Azanza, Moriano, Molero, & Lévy Mangin, 2015; Caillier, 2016). Leaders with authentic behavior stimulate positive self-regulated relationships for themselves and their followers and discourage work conducts that are counterproductive (Laschinger & Fida, 2014). Authentic leaders employ four behaviors to engage their followers (a) balanced processing, (b) internalized moral perspective, (c) relational transparency, and (d) self-awareness (Kinnunen et al., 2016).

Behavior associated with balanced processing involves objectivity, which authentic leaders demonstrate in objective analyzation of all relevant data before making decisions (Yagil & Medler-Liraz, 2014; Zaabi, Ahmad, & Hossan, 2016). Balanced processing does not exclude processing information that is opposite of leader's personal viewpoint (Kinnunen et al., 2016). Gatling, Kang, and Kim (2016) mentioned that



authentic leaders' internalized moral perspective became evident through awareness of their internal moral standards and values, regardless of any pressure of external forces. Data (2015) assessed the effectiveness of authentic leadership and suggested that relational transparency refers to the way a leader introduces its authentic self to others as opposed to a fake or distorted self.

Kinnunen et al. (2016) stated that relational transparency is evident in conducts of interpersonal interaction, in which leaders share information openly, and expresses truthful thoughts and feelings. Yagil and Medler-Liraz (2014) described self-awareness as leaders' ability to self-assess and achieve insightful apprehension of their strengths and weaknesses, and motives. Beal (2016) researched the authentic way to retain employees and reported that self-awareness is gaining insight into self through exposures and experiences over time and becoming cognizant of one's impact on other people. On similar premises, Laschinger and Fida (2014) determined that authentic leaders and their four behaviors might stimulate positive personal and organizational well-being outcomes that reduce turnover.

The researchers' findings in a study on the effects of authentic leadership on turnover intention found that authentic leaders are a key element for retention of employees through the promotion of employees' work engagement. Kiersch and Byrne (2015) posited that authentic leaders follow sound moral perspectives and are consistent with their values while upholding high integrity and trust among followers even under pressure. Comparable to Kiersch and Byrne, Beal (2016) concurred that authentic leaders are aware of their views, strengths, and weaknesses, and strive to understand how their

leadership affects others. Azanza et al. (2015) concluded that authentic leadership affects employees' work engagement positively and could reduce turnover intentions.

In a recent study on the effects of authentic leadership and organizational commitment on turnover intention, Gatling et al. (2016) found that authentic leaders positively affect organizational commitment and can reduce turnover. Authentic leaders could motivate positive levels of engagement, performance, and well-being (i.e., lower levels of stress) in their employees (Kiersch & Byrne, 2015). In a study on enhancing of work engagement, Joo, Lim, and Kim (2016) discovered that employees with authentic leaders have a better chance for empowerment because leaders influence followers' value and behavior so that they are more transparent, ethical, and moral. Consequently, authentic leaders are supportive and have a negative effect on turnover through the promotion of identification with others in the workgroup and through escalated empowerment, increased work engagement, and improved job satisfaction (Fallatah, Laschinger, & Read, 2017).

Hopkings and O'Neil (2015) stated that authentic leaders promote self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-development; however, they do not develop followers into leaders. Within this context, Dionne et al. (2014) shared that although authentic leaders develop their followers, others do not define them as charismatic or inspirational (Dionne et al., 2014). Nevertheless, Kiersch and Byrne (2015) noted that leaders who practice authentic leadership style provide followers with support in attaining their work goals and give followers the autonomy to do so, which lower job demands that enable employees to reciprocate with higher performance levels. Current research on authentic leadership's

influence on employees' turnover intention confirmed that authentic leaders stimulate positive work engagement and can reduce employee turnover (Fallatah et al., 2017).

### **Employee Turnover**

Employee turnover can have a devastating effect on the operation of a variety of business organizations, which made it a significant topic for exploration (Al Mamun & Hasan, 2017). Kaliannan and Adjovu (2015) shared that employee turnover cause more than a 32% profits reduction, and up to an 11% decline in earnings per share for some organizations. Selden and Sowa (2015) found that voluntary employee turnover along with other factors, such as tenure and expertise, the cost for replacing an employee may range from 50% to 200% of employee's salary. Research on employee turnover continued for several decades, which is an indication that this phenomenon remains a challenge for scholars and practitioners (Babalola, Stouten, & Euwema, 2016; Waldman, Carter, & Hom, 2015).

Business leaders are aware of the challenges imposed by employee turnover not only because of the costly replacement process but also because of negative reverberation throughout the organization (Al Mamun & Hasan, 2017). Further research in the hospitality industry could contribute to the comprehension of turnover's nature and its broad range of triggering factors. Turnover is a result of action taken by the employer or the employee, which categorizes it into two main types, involuntary and voluntary. Below, I provided an examination of these two main types that reveal the nuances of employee turnover and could further the knowledge and the understanding of turnover's triggers.

The first type, involuntary turnover, takes place when the employee must leave unwillingly (Parker & Gerbasi, 2016). Some reasons for involuntary turnover include retirement, death, and dismissal (Al Mamun & Hasan, 2017). Manz, Fugate, Hom, and Millikin (2015) described involuntary turnover as a reduction of headcount prompted by economic pressure and consequential organizational restructuring and efforts to manage cost. Involuntary turnover is not only a negative experience for leaving employees but also causes negative emotions for management and remaining workers. Furthermore, Davis, Trevor, and Feng (2015) argued that behavioral changes after a layoff, namely loss of trust, could imply unfavorable for employers' changes in external talent pools that could result in lower-quality post-layoff employment. Manz et al. (2015) suggested that employers could take some measures to minimize the adverse effect and potential animosity from employees. Such measures may include investment in downsizing through the increase in workers' employability, integrity, as well as personal touch, openness, and transparency (Manz et al., 2015). Walker and Karau (2016) mentioned that employers who are open and honest about organizational decision to downsize and give an adequate advanced notice, as well as reasonable severance packages, would experience less negativism among their employees. Nevertheless, based on the need to reduce cost, organizations have no choice but to proceed with workforce reduction because otherwise, the entire business may fail and with that to close all jobs (Manz et al., 2015).

Parker and Gerbasi (2016) noted that proximate causes of involuntary turnover might also stem from issues associated with the employees, such as lack of professional

skills, or being the wrong fit for the job or the organization. Manz et al. (2015) elaborated on employees with professional issues who are the potential subject of involuntary turnover and categorized them as dysfunctional. The group of dysfunctional employees comprises of so-called *job sleepwalking*, which are employees lacking commitment to their job and are only staying for the paycheck. Within the same group of dysfunctional employees, there are employees with *job misfit*. Job misfit emerges when there is a misalignment between what is essential for the employees and what they receive from the job. *Job stagnancy* also belongs to the dysfunctional workers' group and means that employees do not care anymore about the job and become disinterested in personal development associated with that job. Another representative of the group is *job imprisonment*, which means that employees wish to leave for a different job or career, but they have no viable alternative. The last one in this group of factors leading to turnover is *wrong-job stress*, which transpires when employees can no longer perform the assigned job efficiently. Ellingson, Tews, and Dachner (2016) concluded that employees' job attitudes and human resource management practices that affect the employees' attachment to the organization and their relationships with other employees could have a considerable influence on employee turnover. Considering Manz et al.'s research, involuntary turnover is multifaceted and may depend on a variety of factors that stem from the employees themselves. Positive relationships with coworkers improve the work environment for service workers as they experience elevated levels of workgroup cohesion, which enhances their bond with the organization and creates a compelling reason to stay (Elingson et al., 2016).

The second type of turnover, the voluntary one, occurs when workers decide to terminate their employment relationship due to one or more aspects of the job (Hofhuis, Van der Zee, & Otten, 2014). Motives for voluntary turnover could be better job opportunities, job dissatisfaction, dislike in human resource management practices, or merely personal reasons (Breugh, 2014; Hofhuis et al., 2014; Parker & Gerbasi, 2016). Personal reasons that lead to voluntary turnover are age, job tenure (Hofhuis et al., 2014), or family responsibilities (He et al., 2014). In a study on predicting voluntary turnover, Breugh (2014) suggested that even a longer commute to work could make a job less attractive and for this reason to turn into a motivation to leave the current job.

Better job opportunities are a frequent reason for voluntary turnover; Amankwaa and Anku-Tsede (2015) described them as professionally attractive and attainable job offers. Al Mamun and Hasan (2017) shared that perceived alternative employment opportunities depend on external environmental factors including unemployment rate, job availability, and market conditions. Al Mamun and Hasan further specified that employees who have a better education and are more skillful at their job, are also more competitive in the job market, and for this reason, they are more likely to leave the job on a voluntary basis.

Voluntary turnover is a particularly challenging form of turnover because employees may decide to terminate their employment due to dissatisfaction with a variety of job aspects (Hofhuis et al., 2014). Low, Ong, and Tan (2017) specified that job satisfaction is a construct of interest in organizational behavior that employees associated with positive emotions based on an appraisal of their job. Employees satisfied with the

job are more likely to surpass formal requirements and to demonstrate increased intrinsic motivation and enhanced organizational commitment (Low et al., 2017). On similar premises, He, Zhang, and Zhang (2014) concluded that employees' organizational commitment and work satisfaction might affect the retention of employees positively.

A dislike of human resource practice, such as workplace civility, could stimulate voluntary turnover. Rahim and Cosby (2016) determined that when workplace incivility is evident, employees could reduce their work effort and job performance that leads to job burnout and respectively to turnover (Rahim & Cosby, 2016). Amankwaa and Anku-Tsede (2015) implied that management of people should elicit from employees' favorable behavioral responses that are beneficial for the organization's business objectives. Breugh (2014) suggested that an organization should use personal history information at the time of selecting job candidates. The resulting benefit could be significant as even the smallest turnover difference could mean a reduction of financial costs and an increase in efficiency (Breugh, 2014). Scholars and practitioners need to continue the research on voluntary turnover because it helps plan employee replacements and decrease operational disruptions when people leave (Parker & Gerbasi, 2016).

Statistical data revealed that only for 12 months, the total separations in the leisure and hospitality industry was 949K, which account for 6% of employed workers (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017). Ellingson et al. (2016) studied voluntary turnover of 439 low wage and low skills service workers and reported that the yearly voluntary turnover rates were as high as 44%. Al Mamun and Hasan (2017) opined that employee turnover affects the organization and the workforce, and for this reason, the depressing

nature of employee turnover remains in the focus of scholars, academics, and managers.

The organizational success is in the hands of the leaders, and their ability to supervise and reduce turnover is imperative to attain and sustain a profitable business (Al Mamun & Hasan, 2017; McManus & Mosca, 2015).

**Employee turnover in the hospitality industry.** Publication by U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016) stated that the voluntary employee turnover within the hospitality industry averages 50%, which is higher in comparison with other economic sectors. Academic literature covers a variety of research on employee turnover in the hospitality industry (Becker & Tews, 2016; Kang, Gatling, & Kim, 2015; Lu, Lu, Gursoy, & Neale, 2016); however, the amount of research dedicated to employee turnover in resorts remains low. Ferreira et al. (2017) revealed that employee turnover has become a significant problem that industry leaders face daily. Employee turnover remains a considerable obstacle to the realization of organizational profitability (Baldwin & Lafrance, 2014), and identification and understanding of turnover causal factors is an essential step to reduce employee turnover. Ellingson, Tews, and Dachner (2016) stated that service jobs in the hospitality industry have low wages and require basic skills level, meaning that one can get such a job without much of education. However, the path to remediation of high turnover rates among employees remains unclear, which necessitates a deeper understanding of what causes employee turnover (Ellingson et al., 2016). Some factors that lead to employee turnover are occupational stress (Hwang, Lee, Park, Chang, & Kim, 2014), organizational leadership (Ariyabuddhiphongs & Kahn, 2017; Gyensare et al., 2016), job dissatisfaction (Ferreira et al., 2017; Lu et al., 2016; Peltokorpi et al.,



2015), and organization and job fit (Afsar & Badir, 2016; Boon & Biron, 2016). A discussion of every known factor is beyond the scope of this study, and for this reason, I focused the discussion below on only some of the major factors, which previous researchers have defined.

***Occupational stress.*** Hospitality workers have a positive association with occupational stress and turnover (Jung & Yoon, 2014; Hwang et al., 2014, Vong & Tang, 2017). Salem (2015) wrote that a person could experience psychological and physical stress at work when there are inadequate resources to deal with demands and pressures of given circumstances. Salem found that stress is deleterious to an employee's productivity and job performance and could trigger costly employee turnover. Although stress could have a negative and a positive effect on the employee performance, a healthy dose of stress is difficult to estimate and would depend on individuals' capacity to handle stress (Hwang et al., 2014). Work-related stressors include insufficient leadership support, unfair treatment, inadequacy between task and pay, given extra responsibilities, demand for capacity, work overtime, and challenging duties (Hwang et al., 2014; Lee, Kim, Kim, & Kim, 2015). Vong and Tang (2017) posited that among the variety of motives that could stimulate employee turnover, stressful work conditions remain the most common factors that discourage employees to stay with an organization.

Jung and Yoon (2014) established that a sizable portion of employees' stress stems from the emotional labor they conduct on a daily basis. Jung and Yoon stated that performing emotional labor could hurt employee's attitudes or behavior regardless of whether the emotions are positive or negative. Salem (2015) suggested that although

working with guests may impose stress on employees, in some cases, arguments and tensions with fellow workers could create even more stress. Datt and Washington (2015) wrote that stressed employees could become demotivated, leading to a reduction in employees' productivity and organizational profits and to increased turnover. Similarly, Salem determined that stressed workers could experience weakened overall health, low motivation, decreased productivity, and neglect work safety, which stimulate turnover and affect the organizational success in the marketplace.

*Leadership.* Kang, Gatling, and Kim (2015) stated that when employees leave the job, they tend to leave it because of supervisors, not the organization. Managerial practices could affect the employee-employer psychological contract and to influence the employee performance and intent to leave (Jung, Chan, & Hsieh, 2017; Wu & Chen, 2015). Effective leaders foster team cohesiveness and teamwork, which stimulates employees' job performance (Wang, Tsai, & Tsai, 2014), whereas ineffective management could become the reason for increased employee turnover (Al Mamun & Hasan, 2017).

Schmid, Verdorfer, and Peus (2017) hypothesized that some leaders with high self-interest are likely to act more egoistically and exploitative. Schmid et al. explained that leaders with such qualities would not hesitate to delegate additional tasks to subordinates even when they appear preoccupied or to hinder followers' career advancement by keeping an employee that the leader finds for useful closer to them. Egoistic and exploitative leaders tend to prioritize their goals, neglect those of others and could take credit not due to them when someone else contributes the majority of work

(Schmid et al., 2017). Such leaders can diminish employees' job satisfaction, lower organizational commitment, increase work-related stress, create a risk of workplace deviance, and employee burnout, resulting in weakened employee' performance and increased turnover (Mackey et al., 2015; Schmid et al., 2017; Zhang & Bednall, 2015).

Multiple researchers identified the deleterious consequences that abusive leadership has on turnover and organizational performance (Barnes et al., 2015; Courtright et al., 2016; Peng et al., 2014). Thirteen-point six percent of the workers in U.S. experience supervisors with abusive behavior, which causes corporations to lose approximately \$23.8 billion annually due to low productivity, handling grievance procedures, health care expenditures, absenteeism, and turnover (Tepper, 2007; Tepper, Moss, & Duffy, 2011). Abusive supervision is costly to organizations as such behavior harms employee creativity and leads to mediocre performance that hinders employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Gabler, Nagy, & Hill, 2014; Peng, Schaubroeck, & Li, 2014). Avey, Wu, and Holley (2015) concluded that employees with abusive supervisors were at higher risk of getting frustrated with their jobs and engage in more deviance behaviors that could stimulate turnover.

***Job dissatisfaction.*** Employee's job dissatisfaction can stimulate turnover and become detrimental to organizational performance. Tüzün, Çetin, and Basim (2014) reported that even insignificant employee job dissatisfaction index of .9 % could upsurge voluntary turnover intentions by 39%. Ferreira et al. (2017) indicated employees' job satisfaction is one of the factors that mediate the relationship between different tasks and employee turnover. Lu et al. (2016) were confident that positions and work

responsibilities could significantly affect the link between absorption and job satisfaction, which moderates the connection between embeddedness and turnover intentions.

Peltokorpi et al. (2015) recognized that the level of employees' job satisfaction could predict turnover intentions as well as actual turnover. Peltokorpi et al. suggested that a higher level of employee job satisfaction could increase the retention of employees and save on various expenses related to voluntary turnover. Some reasons for employees' job dissatisfaction and voluntary turnover are a lack of (a) training and advancement opportunities, (b) pay, (c) working conditions, and (d) work-life balance (Anvari, JianFu, & Chermahini, 2014; Vong & Tang, 2017).

*Training.* Insufficient job-specific training for employees could have a devastating effect on business' vitality (Thomas, Brown, & Thomas, 2017). Continual training programs are essential for moderating the employee dissatisfaction. Madsen and Bingham (2014) explained that enhanced knowledge and skills are the results of human capital investments such as training. Without professional training, the employees cannot enhancement their skills and may end up poorly prepared for future responsibilities (Hanaysha & Tahir, 2015). Hanayasha and Tahir clarified that employees often deliver a low level of performance because they lack essential knowledge related to their work tasks. Enrichment of employees' professional knowledge and skills stimulates their motivation and job satisfaction and amplifies organizational performance and profitability because employees consider their higher-order of needs for security and advancement satisfied (Nagaraju & Mrema, 2016). Bogenschutz, Nord, and Hewitt

(2015) determined that organizations with inadequate training and advancement opportunities are more likely to undergo an increase in voluntary employee turnover.

*Advancement.* Opportunity for job advancement keeps the employees motivated and is the most influential factor affecting the rate of employee turnover (Oladapo, 2014). Briggs, Jaramillo, and Weeks (2012) found that obstructions to job advancement could cause a significant negative impact on employees' organizational commitment. McPhail, Patiar, Herington, Creed, and Davidson (2015) pointed to career advancement as crucial for employee job satisfaction, which influences the overall organizational performance. Employees interested in career advancement are more job-embedded and have a higher sense of belonging to their organization (Wen & Liu, 2015). When organizational leaders value the human capital, employees could advance in their career path (Harris, Pattie, & McMahan, 2015).

However, contrary to McPhail et al., de Beer, Rothmann, and Pienaar (2016) mentioned that some employees do not exhibit interest in career advancement. de Beer et al. found that in the absence of career opportunities, employees are more likely to develop turnover intentions. Briggs et al. indicated that the employees have a psychological contract with their organization in which career advancement is a crucial aspect. Employee's expectation, particularly the hard-working employees, is that there will be advancement opportunities made available to them, and when in spite of their work exertions employees ascertain a barrier for their advancement, they perceive such psychological contract as disruptive (Briggs et al. 2012). Although the psychological contracts are unwritten, and breaches are generally perceptual, employee with no

perspectives of job advancement demonstrate significantly lower job satisfaction and job embeddedness (McPhail et al., 2015; Wen & Liu, 2015), and are more likely to develop turnover intentions (de Beer et al., 2016).

*Pay.* Often organizational leaders state that the most valuable asset of the organization is their employees; however, it is not known if employees pay is consistent with such a statement (Gupta & Shaw, 2014). Employees' attitudes and behaviors to their job and their turnover intents may vary significantly depending on the attractiveness of pay for their labor (Gupta & Shaw, 2014). Schlechter, Hung, and Bussin (2014) found pay to be one of the most significant influencers on how employee measure job attractiveness and their intention to leave the job. Arntz (2010) studied highly skilled employees' behavior to compensation policies and wages and determined that workers tend to quit their jobs motivated by differences in income in the country's different regions. Workers had no hesitation to move on to areas and companies in which income was a better fit for their skills level. Sturman, Shao, and Katz (2012) determined that when pay is not proportionate to the level of an employees' contribution, the probability of leaving the job increases exponentially. Fair pay stimulates employee performance and leads to job satisfaction that reduces significantly the likelihood of employee turnover (Nyberg & Sewell, 2014, Schlechter et al., 2014). Competitive compensation is effective tool organizations use to differentiate and to achieve a competitive advantage, and leading companies continuously strive to offer generous and competitive wages to retain their employees (Nyberg & Sewell, 2014).

Gupta and Shaw (2014) determined that workers find their labor compensation to be an important piece of job attractiveness that matters to them when deciding to stay or leave a job. Despite the positive influence, a fair pay may have on the employees, Gupta and Shaw argued that when money influences employee behaviors, the employees could evince functional and dysfunctional behaviors when striving to obtain their financial target. Gupta and Shaw stated that although pay systems are effective and stimulate employees' performance, some employees could try to cheat the system. To substantiate their argument, Gupta and Shaw pointed the cheating scandal in Atlanta's school system, in which desired incentives made teachers, principals, and district superintendent' efforts to improve students' performance scores but not their actual performance. Gupta and Shaw suggested that organizations must consider all synergies and clashes that a pay compensation system has to offer.

*Work environment.* When employers fail to assure acceptable working conditions, employee's job dissatisfaction and voluntary turnover increase and hurts the organizational performance (AlBattat & Som, 2014; Kainkan, 2015). In a study involving the workplace as a factor of job satisfaction and productivity, Fassoulis and Alexopoulos (2015) confirmed that dissatisfaction with the workplace has an adverse effect on employee's performance and productivity. Razak, Ma'amor, and Hassan, (2016) linked unsatisfactory work environment to potential job burnout, stress, and disbalance of work and family, which lowers the level of employee's motivation and productivity as well as the organizational performance. Hanaysha (2016) described a good working environment as one with adequate facilities for the work tasks that provide adequate comfort and

safety. Khuong and Le Vu (2014) suggested that employees who feel comfortable with their working environment are more effective and satisfied compared to employees who find discomfort in the work environment.

Due to the profound influence on labor productivity, Fassoulis and Alexopoulos (2015) concluded that the physical workplace is an important organizational factor with a positive effect on employees' efficient performance. For similar reasons, Hanaysha (2016) and Keating and Heslin (2015) stated that work environment is an essential criterion for employee satisfaction, engagement, career development, organizational commitment, and sense of belonging to the organization. Based on research involving employee engagement, work environment, and organizational learning on organizational commitment, Hanaysha (2016) determined that when employees measure the work environment, they consider any factor that affects their behavior in the organization.

Strömberg, Aboagye, Hagberg, Bergström, and Lohela-Karlsson (2017) argued that different work environment-related problems could have a different effect on employees. Physical characteristics of facilities and work environment are not the only norm that influences employee attitudes as there are other intangible factors that include working atmosphere, job characteristics, and engagement. Khuong and Le Vu (2014) suggested that various aspects of the job could affect employee attitudes in the workplace including the nature of the performed job, colleagues, supervisors, subordinates, or salary. Scholars found that when the quality and the work meaningfulness are low, an employee might experience workplace boredom, which evokes dissatisfaction, disinterest, demotivation (Velasco, 2017), and counter productiveness that could trigger



crises of meaning at work (Mael & Jex, 2015). Winograd and Hais (2014) pointed out that 64% of millennials agreed to work something they love and are engaged by for 40k a year versus 100k a year for doing a job that is boring. Strömberg et al. (2017) agreed that work environment-related problems combined with employee job characteristics could lead to health-related issues and productivity loss. Strömberg et al. indicated that the cost organizations accrue from work environment-related problems could surpass the employee's wage.

*Work-life balance.* For the last decade, work-life balance became a topic of considerable attention in mainstream management and hospitality research, as employees' work-life balance might affect job dissatisfaction and discourage employee to remain on the job (Deery & Lago, 2015; Vong & Tang, 2017). Tews, Stafford, and Michel (2014) stated that life happens, and people matter, but employees' professional and personal life is difficult to predict, and various events could contribute to employee turnover. Deery and Jago (2015) discovered that some characteristics attributed to hospitality industry are an amalgamation of unfavorable for social life long work hours, contingent labor, low compensation rates, and low socially recognized status. Lee, Back, and Chan (2015) had similar findings and confirmed that often employees sacrifice their social or family life due to the job's characteristics. Current and prospective employees perceive positive work-life balance as a family friendly, which create a competitive edge that organizations need to attract and retain valuable employees (Vong & Tang, 2017).

Deery and Jago (2015) indicated that work-life balance is an effective method to reduce employee turnover; however, change in work-life balance could have considerable

influence on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job stress. Deery and Jago argued that when management is willing to help employees handle work-life balance, employees' intention to stay and contribute to the organization's performance improves significantly. Deery and Jago pointed out that conflicts with work-life balance are among the reasons why employees leave their jobs.

*Organizational fit and job fit.* Scholars recognize organizational and job fit as crucial determinants of employee behavior (Afsar, Badir, & Khan, 2015; Ardiç, Oymak, Özsoy, Uslu, & Özsoy, 2016; Boon, & Biron, 2016), which ranks them among the most researched fit types. Jutras and Mathieu (2016) noted that the mechanics of work environment comprise an array of sophisticated mechanisms that affect employee's attitudes, behaviors, and their intent to leave. Without a fit into their organization and job, employees cannot achieve complete balance with their environment and a fruitful functioning and could result in an increased turnover (Afsar & Badir, 2016; Chen, Yen, & Tsai, 2014; Lee, Kim, Kim, & Kim, 2017). Person-organization fit intertwines with person-job fit in the workplace and influences employees' overall job satisfaction and intention to leave (Jutras & Mathieu, 2016). Employees with organizational and job fit have a greater organizational attachment, which increases positive work-related outcomes and decreased turnover (Afsar & Badir, 2016). Lee et al. (2017) concluded that the effect from achieved person-organization fit and person-job fit have a positive consequence on employees' attitudes and behaviors, reduces turnover intentions, and without doubt maximizes the organizational profitability.

*Person-organization fit.* Person-organization misfit could lead to increased employees' job dissatisfaction and turnover. Person-organization fit (PO-fit) is a congruence between the organization's culture and values and the values espoused by the workers (Ibrahim & Yusra, 2016), which affects employee behavioral attitude and has a consequent effect on job satisfaction and turnover intent (Hudson, Bryson, & Michelotti, 2017). When applied to the professional environment, according to the theory of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957), if employees perceive an incongruity between theirs and company's norms and values, the resulting dissonance could be negative work and diminished organizational results. A poor PO-fit is evident when employee values and goals differentiate from those of the organization, whereas a better degree of PO-fit has a negative relationship with employee turnover intention (Hudson et al., 2017). However, when the overall P-O fit is high, it has the potential to create job satisfaction, organizational commitment, as well as retaining valuable employee (Chen, Sparrow, & Cooper, 2014).

Hudson et al. (2017) found that PO-fit could affect job satisfaction and employee turnover intentions and that employees feeling of fit with the organization improve when they perceive the company to be acting responsibly. In some contexts, the level of P-O fit is an indication of employee perception of incongruity in ethicality between the workers and the company. For instance, such mismatch could have a positive relationship with employees' sense of discomfort, interpersonal role conflict (Sims & Keon, 2000), and turnover (Chen et al., 2014). Ibrahim and Yusra (2016) concluded that work-family conflict could also be a factor affecting the relationship between the PO-fit and turnover.

Ibrahim and Yusra had similar conclusions to those of Hudson et al. (2017) and suggested that a work-family conflict could have a significant effect on the PO-fit and so does PO-fit to job satisfaction.

Chen et al. (2014) reported that job stress plays a mediating role in PO-fit and job satisfaction. Based on empirical evidence, Chen et al. suggested that there is a relationship between P-O fit and job stress, and that job stress can affect the level of job satisfaction. Additionally, Chen et al. suggested that supportive supervisors could moderate the relationship between PO-fit, job stress, and job satisfaction. However, Chen et al. argued that job stress is not necessarily mediating between P-O fit and job satisfaction.

*Person-job fit.* Many scholars and practitioners examined the fit between employee and job due to its importance as a predictor for a range of noteworthy worker outcomes (Ellis, Skidmore, & Combs, 2017; Kooij, van Woerkom, Wilkenloh, Dorenbosch, & Denissen, 2017; Therasa & Vijayabanu, 2016). Memon et al. (2014) reported that employees in the wrong job fit could only maximize the likelihood of future employee turnover. Employees with lower person-job fit could experience an increased number of predicaments at work, and undesirable reactions including stress and fear (Hecht & Allen, 2005), job dissatisfaction, and turnover intends (Deniz, Noyan, & Ertosun, 2015). A lower fit, or absence of fit, between employee and the job, is apparent when an employee is incapable of executing the assigned work duties and becomes professionally unfavorable to self or surrounding employees (Brkich, Jeffs & Carless, 2002). A closer fit between employee and job requires less adjustment and the

performance problems are very unlikely to occur (Farooqui & Nagendra, 2014).

However, if there is a mismatched fit, the result is a reduced work commitment, low job satisfaction, insignificant job involvement, and increased risk of turnover (Therasa & Vijayabanu, 2016).

Deniz et al. (2015) stated that the level of employees' fit with their job may influence person-organization fit as well as the degree of work stress experienced by employees. Deniz et al. specified that there is a relationship between person-job fit and job stress that maximizes desired outcomes, such as job performance and adaptation to change, and decreases undesired outcomes, such as job dissatisfaction, organizational inefficiency, and turnover. Person-job fit is a considerable factor for decreasing job stress, and employees' adaptation to an organization could alleviate and eliminate stress (Deniz et al., 2015). Similarly, Thompson, Sikora, Perrewé, and Ferris (2015) indicated that the person-job fit could decrease work-related stress, increase job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and reduce turnover intentions.

Thompson et al. (2015) posited that the person-job fit is an essential step in selecting personnel. Ellis et al. (2017) explained that poor hiring process does not provide job candidates with an accurate preview of the job before accepting it, which results in low level of satisfaction, mental withdrawal, and reduced levels of efforts. In a typical hiring process, the employer evaluates a job candidate, however, when job candidates can get an accurate job preview the job satisfaction tend to be higher (Ellis et al., 2017).

Deniz et al. (2015) projected that when HR departments' recruitment decisions include person-job fit, employees job performance increase, and dissatisfaction and turnover

levels remain low. However, although adequate hiring decisions promote a higher initial level of person-job fit, as employees' motives change, and their skills evolve over time, the person-job fit may diminish (Kooij et al., 2017).

### **Approaches for Reducing Employee Turnover**

Employee turnover receives ample amount of attention in the academic literature, and although it exists in a variety of industries, employee turnover is particularly prevalent in hospitality and tourism industry (Thomas, Brown, & Thomas, 2017). The human capital is an intangible value that could affect tourists' demands and experiences (González, Sánchez, & López-Guzmán, 2016). The hospitality industry is comprehensively labor dependent, and employees' performance could significantly affect not only the way of how an organization functions but also the organization's bottom-line (Zopiatis, Constanti, & Theocharous, 2014). Organizations' human capital is their most precious asset (Gupta & Shaw, 2014; Fulmer & Ployhart, 2014; Elnaga & Imran, 2014), in which the dynamics between the organization and its employees determines the levels of employees' job satisfaction and turnover (Jutras et al., 2016). Negative work experiences, such as pay, relationships, and working conditions can be a reason for low job satisfaction and turnover, and conversely, positive work experiences contribute to increased overall job satisfaction and reduced turnover (Acikgoz, Sumer, & Sumer, 2016). Continual employee turnover poses a tough challenge on managers through repetitive recruit and training of new employees (Ellingson, Tews, & Dachner, 2016), and it is evident that employee job satisfaction is essential for achieving low levels of turnover and increased profitability.

**Job satisfaction.** A conceivable way to achieve reduced turnover is to ensure that employees feel satisfied with their job and remain committed to their organization (González et al., 2016). Transformational leadership is popular for its positive influence on the employee job satisfaction (Yang, 2016), which intensify when leaders with a vision of the company's mission receive support from followers who feel trust, admiration, loyalty, and respect for the leader (Gyensare et al., 2016, Haile, 2015). Considering that the working environment in the hospitality industry is dynamic and highly interactive, an elevated level of employee satisfaction results in increased customer satisfaction and improved employee retention (Robinson, Kralj, Solnet, Goh, & Callan, 2014). When employees feel satisfied, they are more likely to demonstrate a higher level of commitment to their organization and to remain on the job (Ali, Said, Yunus, Kader, Latif, & Munap, 2014). Organizational profitability might significantly improve with satisfied and productive employees (Nichols, Swanberg, & Bright, 2016). Zopiatis, Constanti, and Theocharous (2014) informed that deliberately planned and implemented strategies targeting to improve employees' job satisfaction and commitment to their organization will result in a reduced turnover. Although a specific approach to reducing employee may vary depending on the type of company or particular needs of employees, the following discussion incorporates a few of the most frequently mentioned in the academic literature approaches that organizational leaders use to ensure job satisfaction and to reduce employee turnover.

**Supportive leadership.** Employees' positive perception of supportive leadership rests on the idea that investing resources in employees will produce increased results for

the organization (Ma & Chiselli, 2016). Jehanzeb et al. (2015) found that when supervisory support drops even by a small index of 1.2, the result could cause an escalation of employee voluntary turnover intentions by 37%. Effective management practices can induce employees to remain with companies as they perceive it as a supportive work environment and opportunities to grow and develop (Ma & Ghiselli, 2016). Shukla and Rai (2015) established that supportive leadership is a viable strategy to decrease employee turnover intentions. Employee turnover triggers excessive cost of replacement and training, as well as loss of productivity and efficiency that weakens profitability (Singhapakdi, Lee, Sirgy, & Senasu, 2015).

Al Mamun and Hasan (2017) stated that retaining employees may come less expensive than the cost of new recruitment, training, and placement of new workers. Collings (2014) had similar findings to those of Al Mamun and Hasan and stated that effective retention strategies could improve the bottom line of the business. The following approaches are some of the most prominent examples of supportive leadership.

***Employee development.*** Savvy managers who recognize that with supportive behavior they can uplift employees' motivation, improve job performances, and reduce turnover investment, devote their time and resources to employees' development (Karatepe & Vatankhah, 2014). Karetepe and Vatankhah (2014) and Ma and Ghiselli (2016) indicated that supportive leaders invest in their employees' development. Harris (2016) proposed that when organizational leadership does not create effective processes that result in employees' realization of professional goals, they may not be able to attract and retain the best talent. However, to develop employees' skills and knowledge,



managers must invest in continual learning and to make them available to their employees; Jehanzeb, Hamid, and Rasheed (2015) informed that developments programs could increase employees' job satisfaction and to reduce turnover intentions. Kamalzaman, Zulkeflee, Hamid, Sahari, and Halim (2015) confirmed that organizations with an effective development plan promote organizational commitment are more likely to retain their best performers. Manuti, Pastore, Scardigno, Giancaspro, and Morciano (2015) acknowledged that a lack of systematic career-development opportunities might increase employees' intention to leave. Continual development is an investment in stronger employee relations that reduce turnover (Karatepe & Vatankhah, 2014). Scholars reasoned that the leadership style of immediate managers influences employees' level of job performance (Ariyabuddhiphongs & Kahn, 2017). Wei, Cordery, and Gamble (2016) concluded that when employees feel supervisory support for development, they tend to deliver higher levels of performance and reduced turnover intention (Wei, Cordery, & Gamble, 2016).

***Work engagement.*** In today's competitive business world, employee engagement is imperative for attaining organizational excellence. Anand (2017) wrote that for improved employees' engagement with their job, and the company at large, the management should influence employees' sentiments, emotions, and inspiration. When leaders do not moderate employees' intent to leave through active enhancement and promotion of employees' work engagement, it could be difficult to retain valuable employees in the organization (Azanza et al., 2015). Anand reasoned that good corporate governance and being customer and stakeholders centric could be a tool for employee

engagement. Anand's suggestion rested on the philosophy that, in general, the society and the customers prefer involvements with ethical organizations that act on the market as customer-centric organizations. Sakuraya et al. (2017) found that providing sufficient job resources and challenging job demands contributes to higher work engagement as well as to lower psychological distress. Byrne, Hayes, and Holcombe (2017) hypothesized that positive leadership contributes to favorable psychological conditions, which result in employee engagement and low turnover intentions.

Implementation of family-friendly practices, such as family-friendly supervisory behaviors and a family-friendly culture, are suitable approaches to boost up employees' engagement and performance (Rofcanin, Las Heras, & Bakker, 2017). Sonnentag and Kühnel (2016) suggested that for a better work engagement, the employees need a proper reattachment to their job after being off. Reattachment process could receive support from the management by creating an active stimulation through asking questions or by granting work-adjustment time after employees' arrival at the workplace. Byrne, Peters, and Weston (2016) concluded that work engagement is a positive motivational state, which helps employees derive meaningfulness from work. Engaged employees exhibit affect, attention, and physical energy that triggers behavioral and attitudinal outcomes, such as increased job performance and organizational commitment. Improved work engagement results in decreased turnover intentions, which created the managerial perception that a higher work engagement means higher employee retention (Caesens, Stinglhamber, & Marmier, 2016). Employee engagement is a rigorous source of

competitive advantage, which links to productivity and profitability, and significantly influences employee turnover (Collini, Guidroz, & Perez, 2015; Zelles, 2015).

***Fair treatment.*** When employees do not receive fair treatment, turnover is on the rise (Hwang et al., 2014), and management should explore numerous ways of fostering a climate of just throughout the organization (Moon, 2017b). Unbiased treatment makes employees feel appreciated and valued, which intensify their sense of self-esteem and worth (Hwang et al., 2014). Hwang et al. pointed the need for fair standards when employees go through an assessment for rewards. In a research on fair treatment of hotel personnel, Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara, Suárez-Acosta, and Guerra-Báez (2017) postulated that when management practice appropriate treatment of employees, the guests could sense it in their interactions with the staff and could enjoy more satisfactory service experiences. Zoghbi-Manrique et al. researched the relationship between customers, hotel staff, and fair treatment, and suggested that managers should find a way to communicate to guests that equitable treatment of employees could provide them with even more satisfactory experience. Ajala (2016) pointed out that nowadays employees are more conscious regarding their rights and value, and fairness in the workplace could reduce turnover and counterproductive behaviors.

In research on fairness at the organizational level, Moon (2017b) substantiated that fair treatment should not be only at the individual level, but also practiced at the corporate level that creates an organizational justice climate. According to Moon, fair treatment, and justice concern individuals with four factors (a) incorporating distribution of rewards (distributive justice), (b) set of rules and policies regulating outcomes

(procedural justice), (c) available and truthful information about decision making (informational justice), and (d) using respect and dignity during interpersonal interactions (interpersonal justice). Managers play a vital role in creating a supportive work environment, and a polite and honest treatment of employees could lead to reducing turnover and improved organizational performance (Chen & Jin, 2014). Karatepe and Shahriari (2014) concluded that fair treatment in the workplace created a sense of respect for the employees and reduced employee turnover. Moon's conclusion indicated that organizational justice has negative relations to turnover levels, but affects employee goal achievement positively as fairly treated employees are more likely to keep the job and perform better.

***Trust.*** Nair and Salleh (2017) described trust as the most critical component of any human interaction or relationship. Trust is particularly useful for reducing turnover as it mediates the relationship between leadership and employees' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and psychological well-being (Ariyabuddhiphongs & Kahn, 2017). Similar to Ariyabuddhiphongs and Kahn, Yang (2016) found an additional positive effect that mediates employees' job performance. Asfar et al. (2015) explained that trust stimulates employees to develop more innovative ideas. Trust between coworkers and managers make employees develop a higher propensity to take risks by introducing and implementing novel ideas, which increased job satisfaction. Purba, Oostrom, Born, and van der Molen (2016) determined that the positive effect from job satisfaction and increased job performance based on high trust level between supervisor and employees, makes employees experience a professional fit that lowers turnover

intentions. Nienaber, Romeike, Searle, and Schewe (2015) demonstrated that managerial attributes such as benevolence, ability, competence, and integrity are indicative of the degree of trust employees could develop in them. Nienaber et al. specified another benefit from the trust by stating that trust is not only crucial for the well-being of the workers but also for the organizations' long-term stability. Developing and maintaining trustworthy relationships between managers and employees is imperative for sustaining individual and organizational effectiveness because interpersonal trust is a significant antecedent of turnover (Ozturk, Hancer, & Wang, 2014).

It is not surprising that the absence of trust in management evokes employees' adverse job-related behaviors. According to Jiang and Probst (2015), the level of organizational *trust climate* influences the relationships between individual-level trust and job-related outcome, including employee turnover intentions. Trust climate could affect the stability in an organization, the work attitudes of its employees, such as job satisfaction, affective commitment, motivation, and engagement, and to increase the possibility of job burnout and turnover intentions (Nair & Salleh, 2017; Jiang & Probst, 2015). Employees whose immediate leaders are transformational, experience a higher level of trust in leadership, and reduced turnover intentions. (Ariyabuddhiphongs & Kahn, 2017).

***Performance management coaching.*** Employees' need for receiving coaching, often remain unaddressed by leaders who use traditional performance appraisal processes (Jones, 2016). The managers, as organizational agents, have a responsibility to evaluate and direct employees' performance (Walsh, Yang, Dose, & Hille, 2015), and coaching is

an effective managerial approach to manage employees' performance (Huang & Nsieh, 2015). The benefit from a successful coaching depends on whether the coached person can recognize and realize the opportunities of today and aim to optimize future performance (Toterhi & Recardo, 2016). Managing employees' performance should not be a boring paper-based task revisited every 12 months, but a continuous coaching and feedback that motivates employees to deliver high performance throughout the year (Jones, 2016).

Pousa, Mathieu, and Trépanier (2017) found that consistent managerial coaching of employee leads to a positive change in employee's behavior and performance. The positive effect from coaching multiplies when managers devote their coaching efforts equally and continuously contribute to performance improvement of all employees, regardless tenure, experience, or career stage (Pousa et al., 2017). Toterhi and Recardo (2016) indicated that during coaching sessions the management benefits too and could identify if their performance deviates from the organization's objectives. Such benefit is particularly important as misaligned coach could trigger employee disengagement, missed deadlines, and turnover (Toterhi & Recardo, 2016).

In the past, management meant supervision and control; however, nowadays managers have more emphasis on coaching because the goal is to develop employees and improve their performance and to retain them (Huang & Hsieh, 2015; Kalman, 2016). Özduran and Tanova (2017) suggested that avoiding erroneous conclusions or generic recommendations during coaching is requiring managerial consideration of specific conditions that caused the need for the coaching. Toterhi and Recardo (2016) argued that

coaching is unique and could be beneficial if the coach tailors it to the unique needs of the individual. The ability to identify and address employee' unique needs efficiently is essential for obtaining results for the employee and improved financial performance for the organization (Toterhi & Recardo, 2016). According to Jones, continuous performance management helps employees become more courageous and helps them shifts the attention from what does not work to what does and will work. When executed correctly, performance management coaching can significantly affect the organizational performance by ensuring employees' improved productivity, accelerated professional development, and reduced turnover (Kalman, 2016).

***Reward and recognition.*** The lack of employee reward and recognition is a major area of concern when it comes to employee satisfaction (Milman & Dickson, 2014) and a viable approach to retain valuable employees is through reward and recognition programs (Ghosh, Rai, Chauhan, Baranwal, & Srivastava, 2016). Variety of rewards and recognition programs increase employee engagement and commitment and contribute to reduced employee turnover (Ferreira & Almeida, 2015; Ghosh et al., 2016). Bhatnagar (2014) reported that a pay satisfaction in the absence of recognition could be an unsuccessful effort to decrease voluntary turnover among employees. Greene (2014) researched the role of employee ownership as a reward approach to attracting, retaining, and motivating the employees. Greene found that a well-designed reward system could create an economic or psychological form of ownership that serve the interests of employees and organizations. Benefits from *psychological ownership* are apparent when (a) employees understand the organization objectives, (b) employees' performance

support and ensure the organizational success, and (c) employees realize that the organizational success will be beneficial for them too. The benefits from the *economic ownership*, such as stock purchase options, would depend on the specifics of each organization and customized cost-benefit analysis that indicates whether the benefits or tangible results outweigh the costs of making employees owners. Another positive outcome associated with rewards and recognition is that they are a motivational tool for organizational leaders who aim to increase the psychological well-being of their employees and retain them within the organization (Langove & Isha, 2017).

On the future of reward management, Brown (2014) specified that organizations need to move the rewards management from the generic, long-winded, and inflexible low-investment, to flexible benefits plans that he calls smart rewards. White (2015) informed that when employees do not feel appreciated, there is an increase in organizational costs. Conversely, recognizing and rewarding excellent employees' performance leads to increased organizational performance and reduced turnover (Ferreira & Almeida, 2015). Equitable prioritization of rewards allocation that reflects the employee's output and contributions could be beneficial for businesses with high turnover and low organizational performance (Moon, 2017b). Bhatnagar (2014) established that employee recognition and rewards heighten performance levels; however, in times of economic recession, public recognition, rewards, and supportive supervision have a better effect. Although monetary benefits are a useful motivational tool, verbal compliments or small tangible rewards could build a feeling of organizational and collegial consideration



and support that result in desirable by the organization behaviors (White, 2015) and reduced employee turnover (Ferreira & Almeida, 2015).

Employee compensation is an essential part of the organization's approach to rewarding employees, and as such, it is a strategic tool that agencies can benefit by using it to increase employee retention. Schlechter et al. (2014) stated that employees look at what they receive for their labor and then distinguish the job' attractiveness. Schlechter et al. reported that salary preceded benefits by significance as a predictor of job attractiveness. However, Hammermann and Mohnen (2014) found that different employees perceive benefits and money differently, which elicit a variety of behaviors. Comparable to Schlechter et al. (2014) and Bhatnagar (2014), Nyberg and Sewell (2014) reported on the benefits from objective compensation practices that increase the employee satisfaction, and employee retention. Kwon (2014) concluded that a positive outcome from compensation packages that target an enhancement of employee output result in reduced voluntary employee turnover. Although compensation practices could be a complex and frustrating part of the employee management system, a well-designed and implemented employee compensation is an effective way to reduce turnover and create a competitive advantage for the business (Pohler & Schmidt, 2016). Adequate compensation creates increased job attractiveness, which benefits agencies as it lessens employees' turnover intentions (Schlechter et al., 2014), and employees' voluntary turnover while increases the levels of organizational performance (Bhatnagar, 2014).

Ma and Ghiselli (2016) determined that one of the advantages of higher wages is the reduction of high turnover rates as Ma and Ghiselli noticed that turnover rates decline

when employees receive an increase in compensation. The apparent benefit is that increased compensations reduce turnover intentions, and retention of workers for more extended periods will result in a skilled and committed workforce, which helps organizations better manage the inadequate or unsatisfactory service that is frequently the consequence from high turnover (Ma & Ghiselli, 2016). Brown (2014) argued that organizations' might benefit not only from individually tailored awards, such as salary and development planning but also from other awards and provision that are comparable to all employees, such as benefits programs.

Organizations may see a specific benefit in the difference in values and motivations of an employee from younger generations who increasingly value the non-monetary approach to employees' rewards (Bussin & van Rooy, 2014). Bussin and van Rooy found that although most participants in their research received traditional rewards such as a salary and bonus, employees from older generations demonstrated a higher percentage of shared ownership, whereas employees from younger generations enjoyed and appreciated such as gym facilities, flexible hours, and work environment. Lalitha and Singh (2014) and Schlechter et al. (2014) also found a connection between employee compensation and turnover intentions and highlighted that the beneficial effect from higher employee compensation is higher productivity and job satisfaction, which helps organizations retain their employees.

Reducing turnover and retaining key talent is vital for sustaining organizational performance and gaining competitive advantage, and how well managers handle these tasks might determine whether a business will survive (Tlaiss, Martin, & Hofaidhllaoui,

2017). Preventing employees from leaving must receive top priority by the management as nurtured talent ensures sustainability, increases profitability and delivers on stakeholders' expectations (Hausknecht & Holwerda, 2013; Martin, 2015). Turnover rates in the hospitality industry are soaring (Dusek et al., 2014), and organizations' cost associated with handling the phenomenon are escalating on alarming rates (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). Further research on reduction of employee turnover could benefit hospitality leaders when forging new strategies for employee retention as the survivability and sustainability of a business could depend on the organizational ability to implement sound turnover reduction strategies (McManus & Mosca, 2015; Parker & Gerbasi, 2016). Lowering employee turnover has a beneficial effect on the organizational performance and could elicit positive social change for the communities in which the organization operates (Baldwin & Lafrance, 2014; Steiner & Atterton, 2014).

### **Transition**

Section 1 provided the foundation of the study. The purpose of the inquiry was to explore the successful strategies that resorts' leaders use to reduce employee turnover. Based on this objective, I introduced the problem statement, purpose statement, nature of the study, interview questions, and the conceptual framework. Section 1 included a brief explanation of the significance of the research in which the emphasis was on the contribution to the business practice and implications for social change. The literature review included an examination, critical analysis, and synthesis of selected works related to the proposed framework and studied phenomena.

Section 2 included information about the research method and design for this study. The rest of the components in Section 2 comprised information about the author's role as data collection instrument as well as a comprehensive discussion on the data collection, data organization, and data analysis process. Section 2 summarized an elucidation of the systematic process I followed to meet the criteria for conducting ethical research and the fundamental ethical principles applied when researching human subjects and handling research data.

Section 3 included details on the importance of reliability and validity in qualitative research as well as a presentation of the findings and how they can affect professional practice and social change. Section 3 also encompassed reflections, recommendations for action and further research. The final part of Section 3 included the overall conclusions from the study's findings.

## Section 2: The Project

Section 2 encompasses essential aspects of this study, such as the sampling method, and contains a description of the role of the researcher, the data collection and analysis processes, and the research method and design. The section also includes the processes for ensuring the study would conform to the guidelines for ethical research. Section 2 also provides an explanation of the instruments for data collection, together with organization and analysis of the data. Section 2 concludes with descriptions of the processes for ensuring the reliability and validity of the study's findings.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies that resort leaders use to reduce employee turnover. The sample comprised 12 resort leaders from a company in the Southeastern United States who experienced employee turnover and implemented successful strategies to reduce it. The implications for positive social change included the potential to develop and implement turnover strategies that promote worth, dignity, and development of individuals and communities. Successful businesses improve employee work conditions, create jobs, improve infrastructures, and strengthen the communities in which they operate.

### **Role of the Researcher**

In a qualitative inquiry, researchers are the primary instrument for collecting and analyzing data (Schoenherr, Ellram, & Tate, 2015). My role as the researcher in this study was to (a) identify and recruit participants, (b) safeguard participants' rights, (c) collect and protect data, and (c) report objective and unbiased findings. The qualitative

study is a unique process in which the researcher is the principal means of collecting data and ensuring the overall quality of the research (Collins & Cooper, 2014; Wang & Zhu, 2015).

I am a hospitality industry operative with an intimate knowledge of the industry, which was an asset when recruiting and building relationships with participants. The researcher-participant relationship is necessary for facilitating data collection, but, such relationships may become a challenge if they become either too close or too distant (Haahr, Horlyk, & Hall, 2013). To facilitate objective communication with the participants, I was transparent, open, and honest. Trust is essential when conducting scientific inquiry, and its absence or insufficiency may create ethical mishaps with a damaging effect on the participants (Gomes, Saha, Datta, & Gomes, 2013). To gain the trust of the participants, I disclosed my association with the industry. Without imposing my professional opinion or observations, I conducted the face-to-face interviews.

Researchers must follow the principles of beneficence and respect for autonomy throughout the research process (Haahr et al., 2013) and adherence to the guidelines established in the Belmont Report. Researchers have to demonstrate respect for people, to provide participants with informed consent, and to respect participants' privacy and confidentiality (Judkins-Cohn, Kielwasser-Withrow, Owen, & Ward, 2014). In this study, a reliable tool for maintaining the ethical standards defined in the Belmont Report was the interview protocol. The protocol is appropriate because the investigator can use it to restate the interview's purpose, to describe the use and storage of collected information, and to address the interviewee's confidentiality concerns (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2014). I

used the interview protocol to create consistent ethical research interactions with every participant, to protect the participants from potential harm, and to comply with the ethical principles established in the Belmont Report.

Personal bias is detrimental to the researcher's objectivity; being objective and neutral during the data collection and analysis is essential for ensuring research quality (Collins & Cooper, 2014). Researchers must avoid bias to ensure appropriate data collection and reporting standards through valid methods (Gibson & Fedorenko, 2013). Humans make decisions at each stage of information processing, and when pursuing a goal, cognitive processes support actions (Rajic, Wilson, & Pratt, 2015). Bias may influence the results. For this reason, scholars should be aware of potential bias throughout the research process and develop strategies for avoiding bias (Malone, Nicholl, & Tracey, 2014). Because I have an affiliation with the hospitality industry, I adopted an outsider's perspective and disregarded my professional and personal opinions to prevent bias during the interviews and data analysis. Strict adherence to the interview protocol and members checking during the data collection and analysis phase were strategies that reduced bias.

In an interview protocol, a researcher outlines the procedures and guidelines for the interview (Benson & Powell, 2015). Interview protocols contain a summary of the study's objectives, research questions, information about data handling, and a discussion of human subject protections (Yin, 2014). Using an interview protocol guides the researcher during the interview and increases the effectiveness, efficiency, and consistency of the interview (Alby & Fatigante, 2014; Jamshed, 2014, Peters & Halcomb,

2015). I used the interview protocol (Appendix B) to ensure that the participants received adequate information about the interview process, to avoid bias through a consistent interview process, and to use time more efficiently.

### **Participants**

The target population from which I selected participants was the management team of a resort in the Southeastern United States. The eligible participants from the target population were hospitality professionals who had developed and implemented successful strategies for reducing employee turnover. Selecting appropriate participants is crucial to a study because poor recruitment could affect the quality of data and the study results (Stein et al., 2015).

By using explicit criteria to determine the eligibility of participants, scholars increase the validity and credibility of collected data (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Researchers should use caution during the recruitment process because a too rigorous selection process might affect the quality of findings (Bromley, Mikesell, Jones, & Khodyakov, 2015). In this study, the participants were (a) over the age of 21, (b) professionals who occupy a management position, and (c) individuals who had demonstrated success with reducing employee turnover. I selected a diverse sample based on participants' tenure and assigned duties.

When gaining access to participants, a researcher should follow a neutral, nonproblematic approach coordinated with gatekeepers (Peticca-Harris, deGama, & Elias, 2016). To gain access to participants, I sent a request for collection of research data to the legal department of the study organization. As a gatekeeper of the organization, the



legal department grants or denies access to participants (Namageyo-Funa et al., 2014) by helping the researcher identify the most suitable recruits (Peticca-Harris et al., 2016). To gain access, I contacted the organizational gatekeeper to determine the guidelines and requirements for conducting research within the organization.

Based on the requirements, the gatekeeper received the prerequisite information (e.g., nature of the study, business implications, implications for social change, data handling, etc.), and signed a letter of cooperation (Appendix A). The identification and recruitment of participants began after the Walden University institutional review board (IRB) and the study organization granted permission to conduct the study. After receiving permission from the gatekeeper, I sent prospective participants an invitation to participate in an interview, including relevant information on the study, the signed letter of cooperation (Appendix A), and the consent form. The participants received the information via e-mail, and I informed them that could ask any clarifying questions.

Qualitative researchers who conduct interviews seek to foreground connections, to create an interview context, and to use appropriate facilitative techniques to create a working relationship with the participants that predisposes them for substantive contributions (Burr, King, & Butt, 2014; Hampshire, Iqbal, Blell, & Simpson, 2014). I am a hospitality professional, which was favorable for establishing a working relationship with participants and facilitating the data collection process. Insider status and its ensuing benefits can increase the level of trust and rapport achieved through a mutual identity (Roberts, 2014).

To promote a working relationship with the participants, I scheduled meetings and interviews that had the potential for minimum disruption to the participants' workflow, I reaffirmed the confidentiality of data, and I presented each interviewee with a summary report of the interview. During the meetings with participants, I focused on forming professional relationships only. Personal relationships can compromise a study's objectivity and raise ethical concerns about crossing a boundary (Hampshire et al., 2014).

## **Research Method and Design**

### **Research Method**

The chosen research methodology is the principal process, the rational flow, and the theoretical basis that scholars use to conduct a study (Long, 2014). Qualitative research studies have gained popularity and progressed beyond the level of adjunct or opportunist form of study (Snowdon, 2015). Using the qualitative method enables the researcher to conduct a study of intricate processes and phenomena in natural environments and to observe any idiosyncrasies (Bentahar & Cameron, 2015). The qualitative approach is subjective and does not focus on the measurement of variables or testing hypotheses about variables (Sarma, 2015). A qualitative method is appropriate for studies in which researchers seek to understand participants' lives and experiences as they relate to a particular phenomenon (Spillman, 2014). I selected the qualitative method to explore the successful strategies resort leaders use to reduce employee turnover.

Qualitative and quantitative research methods have fundamental differences. Bentahar and Cameron (2015) determined that the differences between both approaches stem from the unsuitability thesis of complex patterns combined with the specifics of

each method. The process of testing hypotheses is central to the quantitative method (Morgan, 2015). In quantitative studies, researchers collect data using objective measurements and conduct statistical testing of hypotheses (Sarma, 2015). The quantitative approach is best suited for confirmatory studies in which researchers use data to examine relationships or differences among variables (Brockington, 2014), which was not the purpose of this study.

The mixed-methods approach involves a complimentary combination of methods, in which the researcher uses both qualitative and quantitative data during the analysis and interpretation stages of the research process (Snelson, 2016). Researchers conducting a mixed-methods study raise questions about the process of designing, implementing, and integrating qualitative and quantitative data (Bentahar & Cameron, 2015). The mixed-methods research was not appropriate for this study because researchers employing mixed-methods incorporate quantitative data (Spillman, 2014), which was not necessary to answer my research question.

### **Research Design**

I used a descriptive single case study design to answer the research question. Researchers use the single case study design to describe the desired characteristics of the sample under study and to streamline findings (Omair, 2015). The qualitative case study design is appropriate for researchers who wish to explore contemporary events and changes of an individual, group, or situation over time (Yin, 2014). Although scientists have concerns about the effectiveness of single case studies, focusing on a specific aspect may provide a significant contribution to the understanding of a problem (Mariotto, Pinto

Zanni, & De Moraes, 2014). The single case study design was appropriate to explore the strategies for reducing turnover of employees in a single organization.

With a phenomenological design, the primary goal is to use qualitative data collection techniques to obtain a greater understanding of the meanings of participants' everyday experiences (Mayoh & Onwuegbuzie, 2015). In a phenomenological study, the researcher explores the interpretations that participants have of their personal and social worlds (Wagstaff & Williams, 2014). The phenomenological design is suitable for an inquiry in which the researcher is interested in describing the meanings of the lived experiences of participants (Yin, 2014), which was not the goal of this study.

Ethnography is a systematized study of people and relates to anthropological studies of cultures (Awasthy, 2015). Scholars use an ethnographic design to convey their experience and immersion in a group of individuals through identification and interpretation of the traits of the group under study (Jarzabkowski, Bednarek, & Lê, 2014). Researchers use ethnographic designs to explore the culture and describe the cultural characteristics of the subject population (Yin, 2014); this design was not appropriate for answering my research question.

Saturation is the process of gathering rich data throughout the process of inquiry (Morse, 2015a). Properly data collection is a precursor to credible analysis and reporting (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013). Data saturation is achievable with fewer interviews only with the careful selection of the participants (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2015). I conducted interviews with purposefully selected professionals who had sufficient tenure in the resort and who had relevant experience in reducing employee

turnover. Data saturation is apparent when informational redundancy is evident, and when any further data gathering contributes little or nothing new to the study (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, & McKibbin, 2015). I continued the data collection process until data started repeating, which was an indication for the attainment of data saturation.

### **Population and Sampling**

The population in this study was hospitality managers who can elaborate on successful strategies for reducing employee turnover. To ensure high-quality results, I used the purposeful sampling method. Using the purposeful sampling technique in qualitative research means selecting participants who can provide the richness of data needed to address the research question(s) (Gentles et al., 2015; Roy, Zvonkovic, Goldberg, Sharp, & LaRossa, 2015). Purposeful sampling is particularly useful for identifying candidates who have the characteristics that are of crucial importance to the purpose of the research (Bungay, Oliffe, & Atchison, 2015; Patton, 2015). Purposeful sampling is a deliberate selection of information-rich cases that can achieve the objective of a study (Benoot, Hannes, & Bilsen, 2016). Purposeful selection of participants was appropriate for this study because I was able to collect richer data in considerably less amount of time, whereas interviews with randomly selected participants require more time and resources without a guarantee for the better quality of data.

Obtaining an appropriate sample size is essential for optimizing the use of human and economic resources (Karmisholt, Laurberg, & Andersen, 2014). The sample size for this study consisted of 8 leaders from the resorts' leadership team who had experience in developing and implementing strategies for reducing employee turnover. Small samples

are typical of qualitative research in which the goal is to obtain rich data beneficial for understanding the complexity, depth, variation, or context surrounding a phenomenon, rather than analyze populations' characteristics as in quantitative research (Gentles et al., 2015). Some researchers believe that small sample size might not yield enough data for quality analysis (Roy et al., 2015). However, small samples are appropriate when the researcher is cognitively astute and can conduct a successful interview dialogue and elicits new knowledge for addressing the research question(s) (Malterud et al., 2015). Defining the most appropriate number of participants involves finding a balance between achieving the research goals, meeting the requirements of the methodological research procedures, and handling limitations set by practical and human circumstances (Barkhuizen, 2014). With a small but suitable sample, I expected to be able to collect enough data to achieve data saturation.

Data saturation signifies the rigor of an inquiry and assures the validity and integrity of the study (Morse, 2015a; Roy et al., 2015). Data saturation does not depend on a definite sample size; instead, it is important to have a high quality of data collected from each interview (Malterud et al., 2015; Marshall et al., 2013). I used a sample size of 8 leaders, but data collection from leaders in the same resort continued until no new data emerged.

The interview site has its importance in the interview process (Gagnon, Jacob, & McCabe, 2015). Interviews must take place in an environment free of distractions environment (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013), which predisposes participants to relax and to share their experiences in depth. The employment of

appropriate facilitative techniques enables the participants to contribute their views substantially (Burr et al., 2014). To that end, I allowed the participants to choose the place and time of the interview.

### **Ethical Research**

Informed consent enables prospective participants to decide on whether to participate in research and protect themselves from harm or unethical practices and enables the researcher to assure respect of the participants and promotes participants' autonomy (Tam et al., 2015). Researchers use an informed consent form to outline benefits and risks for the participants and to build credibility in studies (Erlich & Narayanan, 2014). Before the research process begins, all participants need to understand what the informed consent involves, including the nature and the purpose of the study (Tam et al., 2015). The interviewer should emphasize the voluntary nature of participation (Dekking, van der Graaf, & van Delden, 2014). Signing an informed consent form was a prerequisite for participation in this study. Before signing the consent form, every participant had the opportunity to ask clarifying questions related to the study, such as the purpose of the study, and processes for data collection, data handling, or withdrawing from the study.

Through the informed consent form, participants understand the voluntary nature of their participation and that they are free to withdraw at any point in time during the research (Tam et al., 2015). Participants were free to withdraw from this study at any time, and I would not make an attempt to persuade anyone to do the opposite of their will. The participants were free to discontinue participation and sever association with the

research without substantiation of their decision. Choosing to withdraw from the study would not affect their well-being, professional standing, or social status.

In some studies, incentives are an additional encouragement that researchers use to induce participation (Bernstein & Feldman, 2015). However, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2005), monetary and nonmonetary incentives might create undue influence on a prospective participant's decision on whether to participate or not in research. The participating managers did not receive a payment, gifts as a token of appreciation, or reimbursement for their participation in this study. Unlike some studies, involvement in this qualitative investigation entailed no direct or individual benefits. The conclusions of this research meant to be beneficial for leaders in the hospitality industry and the community at large. Closing an interview with an appreciation for participation is a customary practice (McGimsey & Whelan, 2015). I expressed my gratitude for contributions made by the participants and upon completion of the study, they received a copy of the study's results.

To assure adequate ethical protection of participants, the recruitment of participants began after Walden University IRB granted its approval and after I received approval from the case organization. To ensure further ethical protection, I followed the ethical principles encoded in *The Belmont Report*. The principles of The Belmont Report define respect for respect to the persons, and center on the well-being of the participants, whereas the IRB assesses whether the researcher ensured adequate protection for the participants (Bromley et al., 2015). The three basic ethical principles of The Belmont Report are (a) respect for the person- acknowledge people's autonomy and protect



individuals with weakened autonomy, (b) beneficence- a maximization of benefits and minimization of potential harms, and (c) justice- fair distribution of benefits and burdens of the research (Bromley et al., 2014).

To avoid ethical challenges and to reinforce the principles of The Belmont Report and the case organization, the participants received information about the research and answers to any questions before initiation of data collection (Appendix B). For additional dissipation of ethical concerns, I completed the web-based training for protection of human research participants and received a certificate of completion from the National Institute of Health (No. 1761108 dated 05/17/2015). The conduct of this study followed ethical practices, and every participant received adequate respect and treatment as an autonomous individual.

Integrating proper precautions that restrict the chance of privacy violations not only diminish the potential harm to participants but also convince the participants that personal data are under controlled conditions (Adriana van der Aa et al., 2015). Any collected personal data, such as names, titles, tenure, or responsibilities, was merely for the purpose of this study and not for sharing with third parties. Any confidential information provided by the participants, including company' documents, remained locked for 5 years in a private personal vault. Electronic files remained in a password protected electronic format for 5 years. At the end of the fifth year, I will destroy all related to the study documentation and electronic files.

Assuring organizational anonymity and individual confidentiality reassure participants that there should be no internal or external repercussions (Taylor & Land,

2014). Discussing confidentiality with the participants before data collection and valuing individuality and autonomy are essential for attaining informed consent and building trust (Petrova, Dewing, & Camilleri, 2014). When researchers safeguard confidentiality, they may significantly reduce participants' vulnerability against the possibility of negative reactions by others (Petrova et al., 2014). Participants must know that their participation is confidential and that every participant has assigned a code name (Thrope, 2014). In this study, each participant received a unique code to eliminate any need for using personal or organizational names. The steps I took to protect the names of individuals or organizations and to keep them confidential were (a) substitute participant names with pseudonyms, (b) assign codes to individual participant's data, and (c) assign corresponding codes between participants and research results.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

Researchers' observations, interviews, and written documentation are the essential sources of evidence in a case study (Dabić & Stojanov, 2014; Yin, 2014), and the researcher is the primary data collection instrument for a quantitative study (Powers, Judge, & Makela, 2016). As the researcher in this study, I was the primary data collection instrument and the interviewer. The researcher must be able to establish detailed and rich contact with the participants, to observe behavior, and to interview people face-to-face (Yilmaz, 2013). To be an efficient data collection instrument, the interviewer must be a versatile individual who possesses persuasive social skills (Randall, Coast, Compaure, & Antoine, 2013). The secondary instruments were semistructured face-to-face interviews and written documents.

A semistructured interview is a common data collection instrument, which qualitative researchers used extensively in a qualitative inquiry (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). Researchers use interviews to generate information and knowledge (Wang & Zhu, 2015). However, the quality and quantity of data from interviews depend on the dynamics between the interviewer and the respondents (Randall et al., 2013). Qualitative researchers, who conduct interviews, use appropriate facilitative techniques that predispose the participants to answer the questions exhaustively (Burr et al., 2014). The semistructured interview is essential in the data collection process, and researchers use it to elicit subjective responses from the interviewees that reflect on a particular situation or phenomenon (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). The interviews took place at a place and time chosen by the participants. During the interviews, to ensure consistency, I followed an interview protocol (Appendix B).

Researchers use documents to support findings to facilitate a deeper exploration of the topic under study (Dabić & Stojanov, 2014; Sutton & Austin, 2015). Documents are appropriate data collection method that increases meaningfulness of the researcher's conclusions in qualitative research. Through documents and document analysis, researchers can gain a better understanding of the subject under study (Owen, 2014). Documents are particularly useful with detailed information related to the case study, such as correct names or specifics of events (Yin, 2014). In this study, documents were the secondary data source and included available organizational records, memorandums, and official publications relevant to strategies for reducing the employee turnover. By reviewing organizational documents, I expected to collect confirming evidence about

utilization of successful strategies for reducing turnover that should increase the reliability and validity of collected data.

Qualitative researchers can enhance reliability and validity by applying member checking for reexamining findings with the interviewees (Caretta, 2015). Member checking, or participant validation, is an examination of the preliminary findings and technique for exploring the credibility of results by checking for accuracy and resonance with the participants' actual experiences (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016; Caretta, 2015). When researchers provide the participants with a transcription of their interview, they assure trustworthiness through a verification of the accuracy of records and interpretation (Bodaghi, Cheong, Zainab, & Riahikia, 2016). Member checking technique increases the credibility of the study because participants self-consciously confirm the authenticity of data, and owning the transcript empowers them to add or correct language or meaning of the data (Petrova et al., 2014).

Using member checking enables researchers to determine if the convergence of data was due to selection or bias (Tate, Hodkinson, & Sussman, 2016). When conducting a member check, the researcher encourages participants' spontaneous contributions to reduce bias (Caretta, 2015). To increase rigor, reliability, and validity of collected data, I incorporated information about the member checking in the interview protocol (Appendix B) and the informed consent form. The member checking took place approximately 1 week after the interview to avoid a more extended time gap that could result in memory loss related to the interview.

### **Data Collection Technique**

Gathering information from qualitative sources encompasses a variety of collection techniques, in which the most appropriate one can save the researcher precious time and improve the quality of research findings (Dabić & Stojanov, 2014; Hassaji, 2015). Based on the nature of this study, the most appropriate data collection techniques were semistructured face-to-face interviews and from reviewing related documentation. Qualitative researchers attempt to access participants' thoughts and feelings by utilizing an array of data collection techniques among which interviews remain the most preferred (Sutton & Austin, 2015). Obtaining and reviewing related written documents are appropriate data collection technique to increase the validity of the researcher's conclusions in qualitative research (Dabić & Stojanov, 2014).

The interview in qualitative research is interactional communications between two parties, interviewer, and interviewee, in which the researcher's purpose is to gain insights into the participants' feelings and thoughts. Interviews are a necessary methodological base for comprehension of pertinent to the study issues from the researchers' and the study participants' perspectives (Nielsen & Lyhne, 2016). Through semistructured interviews, researchers obtain insights on dimensions of actions' outcomes, as well as people's ideas, experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings, and knowledge (Dabić & Stojanov, 2014). The participants received a recruitment letter, and when they agreed to participate, they were able to choose the date, the hour, and the location of the interview. The participants signed an informed consent form prior to the interview signifying that their participation was voluntary (Bromley et al., 2015).

Each interview's length was between 20 to 40 minutes depending on how exhaustive participants were in answering the interview questions. I used an audio-recording device for recording the interview. Once an interview took place, the next steps were to transcribe the interview and to conduct member checking.

Like other data collection techniques, interviewing has advantages and disadvantages. An advantage of the semistructured interview is that it is in person, and researchers have an opportunity to elicit clearer and more elaborate responses through an optimization of the communication based on participants' observations and timely clarifications (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). Another advantage is that during an interview, the interviewer is not the only one who may ask questions, and there is a possibility for role-playing, which enables the interviewer to generate more useful information and knowledge (Wang & Zhu, 2015). McIntosh and Morse (2015) deemed the face-to-face interview to be a more ethical data collection instrument as a physically present interviewer could discern any anxiety or uneasiness on the part of the respondent and could suggest a break or emotional support. An additional advantage is that interviews are of utmost value to researchers in data collection process (Dabić & Stojanov, 2014) because the participants are free to answer the open-ended questions using as much time as they need (McIntosh & Morse, 2015).

One of the disadvantages of semistructured interviews is that data transcription is an arduous process during which researchers convert collected responses into a written text to facilitate analysis (Sutton & Austin, 2015). Another disadvantage is that although researcher's primary responsibility is to protect participants and their data, the interview

is not anonymous, which may create certain discomfort and affect the quality of yielded information (Sutton & Austin, 2015; Wang & Zhu, 2015). An additional disadvantage is when the culture of the interviewer and the interviewee are different, which could result in misunderstandings (Caretta, 2015). Researchers do not accomplish the interview simultaneously; transcribing and coding, and the time gap between these actions can result in memory issues that affect the interpretation of data (Sutton & Austin, 2015). Besides the actual interview, researchers should conduct follow-up interviews and participants checking (Nassaji, 2015), which require more efforts, time, and resources. A researcher must elaborate thoughtful questions, develop a subject sensitivity and experience, develop and demonstrate knowledge of relevant theory and the literature, and appropriately interpret the scope and complexity of the qualitative data (Morse, 2015a).

Documents have some advantages and disadvantages as well. An advantage of using documents is that they are appropriate data collection instrument that increases meaningfulness of the researcher's conclusions (Dabić & Stojanov, 2014). Documents are particularly useful with detailed information concerning the case study; for example, correct names or specifics of events (Yin, 2014). The use of only interviews or only document analysis alone may not yield sufficient depth in a data set (Owen, 2014). For this reason, another advantage of documents is that they are a critical component for conducting methodological triangulation with other data, and researchers use to determine and validate themes and identify areas for future research (Yin, 2014). Interviews eventually become documents after the researcher converts them into written form (Owen, 2014).

A different advantage of using documents is that when scientists use documents and document analysis, they can gain a rich understanding of the studied matter (Owen, 2014). I asked the participants and researched the case organization's website, for relevant to the study documents and publications. I aimed to collect and store all relevant documentation and then used it in conjunction to augment and validate the data analysis process.

The disadvantage of documentation is that gathering data through documents is a cumbersome endeavor, as the researchers must expend additional efforts determining which documents are more important and relevant than others (Owen, 2014). An additional disadvantage is that an organization may use bias in documents, which does not provide balanced information, effectiveness, or credibility (Owen, 2014). Documents have various dimensions of relevance, which means increased complexity in the information environment (Bruza & Chang, 2014). The disadvantage with various dimensions is that the researcher must use judgment to determine how such dimensions interact, which requires additional intricacy. Seeking to understand and promote the best use of documents is requiring a high degree of effort and finding evidence of relevance during the assessment of a document may be adding complexity, such as a significant amount of time for considering every document (Bawden, 2015). For this reason, collecting information from interviews was prevalent over the review of documents. The use of documents took place only when the documentation had no evidence of bias and ambiguity and relates directly to the purpose of the case study.



Pilot studies are an invaluable information source for implementing larger inquiries (Morin, 2013). Researchers employ a pilot study to gather preliminary data to ensure the cogency of their interview protocol (Malone et al., 2014; McIntosh & Morse, 2015). Interview pilots are rehearsals for interview performance, during which researchers observe participants' responsiveness, the effectiveness of questions, and have an opportunity to apply amendments prior the actual data collection (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). However, in a way, every single interview plays the role of a pilot for the next one. For this reason, I did not conduct pilot studies. Sutton and Austin (2015) suggested that an interview with one participant informs how to improve the next interviews. Considering the pros and cons of pilot studies, after IRB granted its approval (IRB# 02-23-18-0483169), I commenced data collection without conducting preliminary pilot studies.

Member checking, or participant validation, is a technique to solidify the trustworthiness of results (Birt et al., 2016). I used the member checking to receive feedback from each participant and to check collected data for accuracy and resonance with participants' experiences. Using member checking can increase the dependability of the study because examiners can verify the primary findings and to refine the format and language for the study (Caretta, 2016). Member checking should strengthen the data analysis and reduce chances to overlook or misinterpret the data (Petrova et al., 2014).

### **Data Organization Technique**

Qualitative researchers use data organization techniques for sorting collected information methodically for analysis (Khan, 2014). Researchers need to keep the case

study database orderly because the database' purpose is to maintain the collected data in a retrievable form that facilitates data analysis (Yin, 2014). To keep track of data and to achieve a better data organization, I created a portfolio of files and labeled these files appropriately to indicate their content. A customary practice is to create a folder with handwritten field notes to comment upon impressions, environmental contexts, behaviors, and nonverbal cues that could remain undetected in an audio recording (Sutton & Austin, 2015). During data collection, I took field notes to remind myself of situational factors that could be relevant during the data analysis.

The examiner is responsible for safeguarding the participants and their data (Sutton & Austin, 2015). Adequate data storage and protection methods are essential for securing personal and confidential data (Grossoehme, 2014). Hardcopies contain sensitive information and are relevant to the research too, which implies that researchers should maintain and secure documents appropriately (Sutton & Austin, 2015). Participants' information, sensitive data, interview records, transcripts, and field notes remained safely stored during the study. Upon completion of this study, the complete set of collected data will continue to stay secured for 5 years. Electronic records have a password protection, and the hard copies will remain stored in a locked private save for the entire period of 5 years as per the university's IRB requirement. Sharing personal passwords with others could reveal participants' personal or confidential data (Malviya, Gupta, & Sharma, 2015). I kept my passwords secured and did not share them with other individuals. Upon the end of the fifth year, all related to this study electronic files and hard copies are due to either deleting or shredding.

## **Data Analysis**

The process of data analysis incorporates the collection, analysis, and interpretation of the collected case study evidence (Cleary, Horsfall, & Hayter, 2014; Yin, 2014). Qualitative researchers work with collected data systematically for discovering key ideas, concepts, and themes to address the research question (Whiffin, Bailey, Ellis-Hill, & Jarrett, 2014). Qualitative data analysis is a labor-intensive and deliberate process (Neal, Neal, BanDyke, & Kornbluh, 2015), which comprised data collection, data reduction, data coding, and identifying themes.

During the data collection process, I used face to face semi structured interviews and company's documents. Interviewing is a predominant method for data collection in a qualitative inquiry (Pierre & Jackson, 2014). Semi structured interviews were instrumental in collecting data in this study. Researchers who use a semistructured interview use interview guidelines with a limited amount of open questions (Reischner, 2015). Interviews are important interactions between interviewer and the respondents, used to understand relevant issues from different perspectives and to capture the complex dynamics in individual experiences (Nielsen & Lyhne, 2016; Woo & Heo, 2013).

Documents are appropriate data collection method in qualitative research. Researchers who collect data from documents can improve their understanding of the subject under study (Owen, 2014) because documents contain detailed information, such as correct names or specifics of events (Yin, 2014). Data collection from available documents included organizational records, memorandums, and official publications relevant to strategies for reducing the employee turnover. I asked every interviewee if

there are any available declassified documents that they would like use. Additionally, I researched the company's website to identify posted documents related to the research subject.

Content analysis is a flexible type of data analysis, which researchers use to analyze qualitative research findings (Elo et al., 2014; Finfgeld-Connett, 2014). Researchers find the content analysis to be a valuable research technique to define and quantify the phenomenon under study (Woo & Heo, 2013). A part of the content analysis is the abstraction process, during which themes emerge (Elo et al., 2014), and benefits the data analysis process.

The use of multiple information types and sources is a typical characteristic of case studies, in which researchers commonly apply triangulation within the data analysis process (Yin, 2014). The purpose of using triangulation is reaching a comprehensive understanding of the subject under study, including the contradictions and contrasts in the findings (Flick, 2016). Triangulation as a part of the data analysis refers to employing multiple data types and sources for ensuring richer data, confirming the results, and for increasing the validity of inference in research (Kern, 2016; Wilson, 2014). There are four distinct types of triangulation, which are (a) data, (b) theory, (c) investigator, and (d) methodological (Yin, 2014). Researchers apply methodological triangulation when they use several types of data sources such as interviews, observation, or field notes, or documentation (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, & Neville, 2014). Based on the nature of this study, the appropriate triangulation analysis process was methodological triangulation.

Data reduction was the next step in the process of data analysis. Sarlin (2015) suggested that data reduction delivers overview by compacting information. Data reduction without losing information is an integral part of data analysis, and the resolution for data overload is to delete nonessential data without affecting the character of the original data (Danubianu & Pentiu, 2013). Adequate reduction of the original data down to a moderate data size of essential information is a valuable tool in an analysis (Bi & Qu, 2015). Once the data collection process and the member checking are complete, I reviewed and reduce the data to the essential information that aligns with the subject under study.

One of the essential characteristics of qualitative inquiry is the coding of data to facilitate identifying themes (Castleberry, 2014). During the coding process, researchers break apart and contextualize the collected data (Pierre & Jackson, 2014). I followed the same process with the collected documents. After the data collection and reduction of data take place, I determined the number and complexity of codes necessary for the identification of themes. Deriving meaning from the collected data is an intricate process, in which the researcher's reasoning abilities are essential for identifying properties of categories, relate them to one another, and distinguish patterns (Danubianu & Pentiu, 2013; Pierre & Jackson, 2014). Researchers can perform the coding using a word processing package that identifies and transfers relevant portions of transcripts into appropriate strata or *buckets* (Campbell, Quincy, Osseman, & Pedersen, 2013). Recent advancement in text-analysis software programs is a tremendous support for more rapid

organizing and tracking of qualitative coding (Firmin, Bonfils, Luther, Minor, & Salyers, 2016).

The systematic coding and review of qualitative data result in identifying themes (Fowler, Lloyd, Cosenza, & Wilson, 2016). Researchers perform data coding to sort the raw data into categories and potential themes, in which themes are the units of analysis (Pierre & Jackson, 2014). After data collection, data reduction, and data coding took place, I identified and defined the final number of themes. Qualitative researchers gather substantial amounts of textual data that need systematic and rigorous analysis (Zamawe, 2015). Qualitative data analysis software (QDAS) programs can support multiple phases of research and are common researchers' tools for management and analysis of data collected through interviews and documents (Woods, Paulus, Atkins, & Macklin, 2015). Some of the available QDAS are ATLAS.ti, MAXqda, NVivo, and N6 (Zamawe, 2016).

Based on my familiarity with Microsoft Office, I used NVivo software when conducting the data analysis in this study for several reasons. Although NVivo is sophisticated software, it is qualified as user-friendly because the workspace resembles and overlaps with Microsoft Office' interface (Castleberry, 2014). When using NVivo, researchers can use features such as character-based coding, rich text capabilities, and multimedia functions, which are essential for managing and analyzing qualitative data (Zamawe, 2015). Scholars who use NVivo can manage the empirical material in one place, meaning that they can add, alter, link, and cross-reference multiple data (Castleberry, 2014). The traditional copy-cut-paste manual coding processes are extensive and time-consuming, whereas with NVivo researchers can spend more time on

finding underlying themes, interpretations, and theory (Zamawe, 2015). The creators of NVivo ensured sufficient options and functionality, which made it my preferred QDAS for data management and analysis.

Upon the conclusion of data collection, I used NVivo to analyze both the interview transcription and documentation and to facilitate identifying emerging themes. NVivo is more compatible with thematic analysis approaches due to the presence of nodes, a simplified method for creating codes and discovering themes (Zamawe, 2015). Next, I used mind maps to verify the potential relationships among the key themes and compare the themes to the reviewed literature and my chosen conceptual framework. Mind maps are a simple tool to improve researchers' engagement in the present moment by using text, color, and imagery as an alternative to words, which is convenient for signifying the association between topics, ideas, or other information (Dutt, 2015). The researcher's rationalization and conclusions depend on the researcher's capacity to associate themes that emerge from data with theory and reviewed literature (Chan, Fung, & Chien, 2013). For this reason, after the identification of themes, I explored and determined my findings' and themes' alignment with those expected from study's conceptual framework and with the reviewed literature.

### **Reliability and Validity**

Dependability, credibility, confirmability, and transferability are the four criteria that form the framework determining the rigor of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Researchers should address all four to ensure reliability and validity of qualitative research (Morse, 2015). Scholars establish and utilize reliability and validity procedures

to ascertain that research conclusions have scientific soundness and are predictable, replicable, adequate, and accurate (Pfefferbaum et al., 2013; van Middendorp, Patel, Schuetz, & Joaquim, 2013). Reliability and validity assure the trustworthiness or quality of studies' data and derivative conclusions (Pfefferbaum et al., 2013). As the reliability and validity are separate components for assessing studies' trustworthiness, next is a discussion on how I addressed each of them.

### **Reliability**

Reliability of studies differs from studies' validity (Joslin & Müller, 2016); reliability indicates the consistency of the study's results over time (Noble & Smith, 2015). Harvey (2015) suggested that scholars assure the reliability of a qualitative study by assuring study's dependability. Morse (2015a) and Fusch and Ness (2015) suggested that through the process of member checking, scholars can address dependability concerns and consequently to increase the reliability of a qualitative study. To ensure the reliability and dependability of this study, I validated the outcomes of collected information through member checking of data interpretation. Member checking, or participant validation, is a method for examining the trustworthiness of results, in which the dependability of outcomes is the foundation of high-quality qualitative research (Birt et al., 2016).

Researchers assure the reliability of studies by asking the right interview questions and keeping detailed explanations and records trails of the key research processes during the research process for future researchers to review (Grossoehme, 2014). Member checking was an opportunity for the participants to review the



researcher's records of the interview and to confirm for exactitude and resonance with their experiences, and to provide feedback. Conducting member checking can increase the dependability because member checking serves to verify preliminary findings and is beneficial for refining the format and language used in the study (Caretta, 2016). Member checking reduces the chance to overlook or misinterpret the data and thereby strengthens the assurance that the findings from the data analysis are valid (Petrova et al., 2014).

### **Validity**

The validity of qualitative inquiry is the appropriateness of the researchers' tools, processes, collected data, and conclusions for addressing the overarching research question (Leung, 2015). Credibility, transferability, and confirmability are the determinants of validity in a qualitative study and are essential criteria that form the rigor of a research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility is the confidence in the truth of the findings (Sutton & Austin, 2015). Additionally, credibility provides assurance that the collected data represent the subject phenomenon and the researcher's subsequent interpretation of the data (Prion & Adamson, 2014). To be factually sound and to ensure credibility, I collected data from semistructured interviews and documentation and then conducted member checking and methodological triangulation.

Interviews can be a credible source of qualitative data when appropriately used to access the thoughts and feelings of the participants (Sutton & Austin, 2015). The examiner may conduct follow-up interviews to check, confirm, and clarify the information and emerging themes, which solidifies data's credibility and validity (Nassaji, 2015). Conducting member checking can buttress credibility, as member

checking is useful for verifying the preliminary findings and improving the format and language of the study (Caretta, 2016). When participants validate the transcripts, the check strengthens the validity of the data analysis and significantly diminishes possibilities to overlook or misinterpret collected information (Petrova et al., 2014). To increase the credibility of data, I reviewed company's documentation that includes records, memorandums, and official publications, as the information collected from documents enables a better understanding and interpretation of the subject under study (Owen, 2014). To assure my study's findings credibility, I conducted both, member checking and methodological triangulation to identify alternative perspectives, and gained a more sufficient and holistic understanding of the research problem. Multiple data collection types (e.g., interviews and documentation) are appropriate for qualitative inquiry and enable methodological triangulation that can assure the validity of the interpretations (Birt et al., 2016). Using methodological triangulation can assure the validity of inference in research by employing various information sources that ensure richer data and confirmation of the results (Kern, 2016; Wilson, 2014).

Transferability is a term that represents the trustworthiness of qualitative content analysis and refers to the potential of extrapolation to other research domains (Elo et al., 2014). Transferability of the study's findings depends on the researcher's ability to provide a thorough description of the research context and processes (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). When the reader can determine whether the study results are transferable, it means that the researcher has provided a thorough description of the research methodology and design (Prion & Adamson, 2014). Although the research

findings may be most beneficial for readers and examiners interested of the same field, the outcomes from this study could also be transferable to other contexts and groups whose interests are close to those of the hospitality professionals (e.g., retail, hospitals, administrative offices, etc.). Transferability relies on the enabling other researchers to determine if findings are generalizable or transferable to different contexts, settings, or population (Elo et al., 2014; Prion & Adamson, 2014). To ensure transferability, I strived to deliver a detailed report of the design processes and decisions made during the inquiry.

Confirmability of a study is apparent when researchers deliver easy to understand data and results (Kihn & Ihantola, 2015). The confirmability of a study depends on the degree to which researchers can corroborate and endorse the results of the research (Christ, 2014; Peake-Andrasik, 2014). Researchers can attain confirmability through the elimination of bias and by providing detailed reporting of key design processes concerning the data collection and analysis (Elo et al., 2014; Prion & Adamson, 2014). The rigor of the study signifies the trustworthiness of data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Prion & Adamson, 2014), and can be a standard for attaining confirmability. Qualitative researchers typically produce a significant amount of documented data in the form of transcripts, and Qualitative Data Analysis Software (QDAS) can be invaluable for data management and rigor enhancement (Zamawe, 2015).

QDAS is appropriate for use in a variety of research designs, including analysis of qualitative data, and its utilization increased exponentially in the recent years (Woods et al., 2015). The increasing acceptance is an indication that QDAS will be a useful tool for addressing confirmability. For increased rigor, I strived to establish conformability by

avoiding bias. Eliminating bias is particularly important because problems with researchers' subjectivity and contextual ramifications can result in incessant controversies regarding measures for quality and trustworthiness of the studies' findings, conclusions, and recommendations (Leung, 2015). Review of the qualitative data analysis results and the interpretation through member checking can attenuate subjectivity and bias (Prion & Adamson, 2014). Deriving data from multiple sources and conducting methodological triangulation provide various perspectives, which is useful for overcoming intrinsic biases (Joslin & Müller, 2016). The use of different processes and tools for ensuring rigor, corroboration, and conformability, enabled me to assure confirmability.

For achieving data saturation, I conducted semistructured face-to-face interviews and searched for written documents. Researchers take into consideration the scope and complexity of the studied case and assure data saturation through continual adjustment of the sample size (Morse, 2015a). To ensure relevant data for the research, I selected professionals with sufficient experience and tenure, who are more likely to offer pertinent information for answering my research question. When interviewees provide quality information, the researcher may reach saturation with fewer participants (Malterud et al., 2015). Similarly, using documents support findings that facilitate deeper exploration of the studied subject (Dabić & Stojanov, 2014; Sutton & Austin, 2015), which support data saturation. Examiners need data saturation to improve theoretical development and the integrity of qualitative methods (Roy et al., 2015). Data saturation is evident when the level of information reaches redundancy, and any further data gathering contributes little

or nothing new to the study (Gentles et al., 2015). The data collection process continued until there was no further benefit of collecting more information.

### **Transition and Summary**

Section 2 started with the purpose of this study and elaborated on the role of the researcher, and the process for identifying and qualifying research participants. Section 2 contained information regarding different research methods and designs as well as a substantiation on why a qualitative single case study design was appropriate for this research. Additionally, Section 2 contained discussions on study's population, sampling, ethical research, and the processes associated with data collection and analysis. Finally, Section 2 incorporated discussion about the processes for assuring the reliability and validity of the study. Section 3 was a presentation of the findings, the effect on professional practice and social change, and included reflections, recommendations for action and further research. The final part of Section 3 contained the study's conclusions.

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

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative, single case study was to explore the strategies resort leaders use to reduce frontline employee turnover. I used transformational leadership theory to explore strategies that resort leaders in the Southeastern United States use to reduce employee turnover. Section 3 includes the study's purpose, presentation of findings, application to professional practice, and implications for social change. Also, Section 3 contains a discussion of recommended actions, recommendations for further research on employee turnover, reflections, and conclusions.

The participating leaders reported several factors that contributed to reducing employee turnover, which included hiring process, job fit, personalized attention, continuous training and development, feedback and coaching, and compensation. To ensure validity and reliability of the study, I compared interview transcriptions with the documents from the study site organization as they related to employee turnover. Based on the data analysis, I concluded that the leaders in the study site organization were successfully reducing employee turnover by improving hiring processes, practicing a supportive leadership style, and ensuring continual training and development of their employees.

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

The overarching research question in this study was the following: What strategies do resort leaders use to reduce employee turnover? The data collection process included one-on-one semistructured interviews with open-ended questions and a review

of documents, which I used to identify strategies resort leaders used to reduce employee turnover. Every participant signed an informed consent form and received a copy of it before the interview. All interviews were conducted in accordance with participants' preferences for place and time and did not exceed 30 minutes in length. The information collected through semistructured interviews and review of documentation was sufficient to affirm data triangulation and derive conclusions.

I used a labeling system to protect participants' identities. Each participant received a label from P1 to P8. P1 referred to the first participant, P2 referred to the second participant, and so on for the rest of the participants. Upon reaching data saturation, I transcribed the interviews and conducted member checking to validate my interpretations. The use of NVivo led to the theme identification. I identified three themes that were the most relevant to the research question and the conceptual framework. The themes were (a) hiring process reduced employee turnover, (b) supportive leadership reduced employee turnover, and (c) continuous training and development decreased employee turnover.

### **Theme 1: Effective Hiring Process Reduced Employee Turnover**

The first theme that emerged from the data analysis was effective hiring process reduced employee turnover. Effective hiring process was essential for the resort leaders because the resort, as a part of a larger organization, relied on a remote centralized office for talent acquisition. The resort leaders were not part of the hiring office, which served the staffing needs of the entire organization. The effectiveness of hiring new employees depended solely on the hiring managers in the absence of the resort leaders. P7 shared

“we just don't have control on the hiring, we do not even do the interviews, so hiring is done, and then we are sent the candidates that they feel are a good fit.” Additionally, P7 stated the following:

For us as a company, the biggest challenge is that everything is done on a global level and impact us here locally and we do not have a say in that. So, it is right fit talent, people being hired for their role that they did not realize or did not think they sign up for and getting to us here and realizing that it was not the job they thought they were signing up for at the global level is a big challenge for us.

Every resort within the organization was different by size, category, theme, and operational specifics. Some resort leaders found using the hiring office's generalized job descriptions affected the efficacy of hiring for their resort by creating person-job misfit, which weakened the resort competitiveness (P4, P6, P8). In this regard P6 asserted, “to be effective, the hiring process should not be a cookie cutter.” To ensure the effectiveness of the hiring process, the resort leaders needed more in-depth consideration of different resorts' operational specifics and job candidates' characteristics that was conducive to the reduction of employee turnover. Resort leaders' responses on the importance of effective hiring and its effect on the business reinforced the assertion made by Sahay (2015) that the hiring process creates a sustainable competitive advantage for the business, whereas hiring the wrong people can harm the company. The three main aspects of the hiring process the resort leaders identified as essential in reducing employee turnover were practicality of having a remote hiring office, communication during the hiring process, and acting to improve the effectiveness of the hiring process.



The remote hiring office was a practical approach to hiring employees and a significant part of the employee turnover reduction process (P4, P6, P7). According to some participants (P1, P3, P4, P5, P6), hiring employees is more than posting a job offer; it was a combination of cumbersome and complicated processes that require time, efforts, resources, an innovative mindset, technical skills, and comprehensive knowledge of the labor market. Based on the complexity of employee hiring, P6, P7, and P8 shared that because of the resort's high-volume operations, having a dedicated hiring office alleviated resort leaders' busy schedule. P5 specified the hiring office performed vital functions and was convenient for the resort leaders because employees' hiring entailed an extensive process of identification, communication, screening, interviews, selection, placement, and exit interviews to identify the causal factors for employee turnover. This component of the theme related to the findings of Al-Kassem (2017), who reported that hiring employees is a challenging and complex process that involves planning, structures, tools, procedures, and services. Additionally, participants' responses regarding the practicality of a hiring office related to Papay and Kraft's (2016) findings that going through the stages of the human capital pipeline is an opportunity to strengthen the quality of an organization's workforce and reduce turnover. Taking away the responsibilities associated with the hiring process allowed resort leaders to focus their attention on the operation and their teams' job satisfaction, which contributed to reducing of the employee turnover.

P1, P3, P4, P6, P7, and P8 noted that to improve the effectiveness of the hiring, they needed to improve the communication during the hiring process. P8 reported that “a

lack of clear communication during the hiring process increased the team's performance gap instead of closing it," which hurt the business and stimulated employee turnover. Ineffective communication with job candidates resulted in hiring employees who were not a match for the job, and job-person mismatch resulted in unsatisfactory performance, job dissatisfaction and premature separation from the company (P1, P2, P4, P7). Furthermore, P1, P3, P4, P6, and P8 shared that the employee hiring process did not include resort leaders, which added to the lack of communication and was an additional contributor to the person-job misfit. P3 noted "I think, within our company, there are many layers before an employee actually gets to a work location. I think part of the employee turnover is maybe that the job they were hired for is not what the reality is when they actually get to the resort." In their responses to interview questions, P4 and P8 indicated that excluding resort leaders from the hiring process contributed to hiring employees with insufficient professional qualifications, which perpetuated employee turnover. Jacob and Bădina (2017) stated that communication is vital to a given process and that no activity or a process could be successful without effective communication. Xu, Martinez, and Lv (2017) stated that communication plays a vital role in the service context because it may compensate for the less competitive characteristics of employment such as antisocial working hours or attritional working conditions.

To handle the communication issue and reduce employee turnover through an effective hiring process, P1, P2, P3, P4, P6, and P7 focused their attention on proactive interactions with employees and the hiring office. P1 shared:

When the employees come into the operation, I ensure that there is an understanding of the job and the expectations, to ensure that they are able to articulate the job back to me. So that there is a known agreement between us that they will be able to perform the job.

Through proactive interactions with employees, some participants endeavored to find out about new hires' opinions and experiences and supported internal transfers and promotions as a strategy to retain the talent within the organization (P3, P6, P8).

Narayanan, Polli, Gertner-Samet, and Cohen (2016) noted that through the facilitation of employees' internal mobility with the organizational jobs marketplace, the leaders could significantly decrease the knowledge and cultural loss. P5 mentioned:

I think that if a leader truly leads their employee, not manage but lead the employees, like people, get to know them, to support them, I think that is a huge strategy that makes people happy, to make people want to stay here and counter turnover.

P1 and P5 stressed the importance of communicating with the hiring office to improve interactions with job candidates. I found congruence between the resort leaders' action and the findings of Lu et al. (2016), who found that proactive leaders increase job satisfaction, which has a positive association with employees' engagement and is a major factor in reducing employee turnover. P6 and P8 highlighted the importance of a strategic partnership with the hiring office. P6 and P8 also mentioned that hiring professionals' planned visits to the resort ensured a better understanding of the dynamics behind the staffing needs, such as knowledge of jobs they were hiring for and information on work

environment and tools' improvements or upgrade, to build a closer professional relationship with the resort leaders.

Review of company documents, such as hiring policy, employee policy manual, and job postings, revealed that the dedicated team for hiring employees used an impressive hiring process that created positive first impressions of the company for job candidates. With their first steps in the organization, the new hires received abundant information about human rights, personal life resources, prohibition of harassment, health and safety and accident prevention, and flexible work arrangements. The organizational human rights policy statement revealed that the "company is committed to conducting business in an ethical and responsible manner," and a document on global ethics and compliance revealed that the company has a "commitment to core principles of integrity, honesty, trust, respect, teamwork, and playing by the rules." According to the employee policy manual, the company provided equal employment opportunity for all employees and job candidates, regardless of "race, religion, color, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, military or veteran status, medical condition, genetic information or disability (mental or physical)." Additionally, the flexible workplace arrangements guide revealed that "as part of a broader strategy to promote a positive, effective, and productive work environment, the company supports flexible work arrangements that are feasible and make good business sense." The organization shared the information with job candidates and made it was available to new and existing employees, which indicated that the hiring process and

employment process were aligned with federal and local laws, acts, and policies, to promote a safe and productive workplace with low employee turnover rates.

Job postings for different resorts indicated similarities, and resort leaders' estimation that the hiring office may mislead job candidates and contribute to employee turnover was correct. P6, P7, and P8 shared that strategic partnership with the hiring office related only to external talent. Proper utilization of hired talent within the organization served the organization's internal careers marketplace and reduced turnover. I observed internal job postings of job openings, which unhappy employees could use to find a better fit without the need to quit the organization. The results of the documents analysis were consistent with the assertions made by Pató (2017) who emphasized the importance of job description clarity in creating an initial impression of the company and the job. Participants' responses also related to Rohr's (2016) findings, which indicated that the job description is a roadmap that leaders can use not only to hire employees, but also to plan, lead, organize, and control the operation. Resort leaders' collaboration with the hiring office was useful, and through collective efforts, they improved the hiring process and reduced employee turnover in the resort.

Theme 1 was consistent with Burns' (1978) transformational leadership theory on multiple points. Burns asserted that transformational leaders communicate in a passionate manner, and in this way, they motivate subordinates and stimulates commitment to the organization. Bass (1985), who extended Burns' theory, suggested that transformational leaders help followers build motivation and increase performance, which elicits trust-building behavior. According to Burns' transformational leadership theory, personalized

consideration and inspirational motivation are transformational leaders' qualities. The hiring professionals and resort leaders demonstrated transformational behavior by applying personalized consideration depending on new hires' individual characteristics and helped employees understand that keeping the job is a positive career step. The hiring office and resort leaders' transformational behavior related to the study of Liborius (2017) who stated that transformational leaders create a sense of purpose in followers and articulate high expectations regarding the purpose of the organization.

To address the communication issue and avoid an increase in employee turnover, participants reported that they took sweeping actions to improve communications with the hiring office. P1, P2, P3, P4, and P8 shared that they used transparent communication, personalized attention, intellectual stimulation, and motivational professional orientation, to engage with the new hires, to help them get acclimated to the new work environment, to develop their talent, to build attachment, and to reduce turnover. Resort leaders provided new employees with personalized attention, which was a transformational leadership trait and was in line with the findings of Campbell (2018) who stated that transformational behavior is a value-based leadership strategy that improves the connection between individual contribution and organizational performance and outcomes. By practicing transformational leadership behavior, the resort leaders served as a catalyst for the hiring office and the new employees. Effective communication with the new hires and collaboration with central hiring office enabled the resort managers to transform the hiring process, improve employee performance, encourage organizational commitment, and reduce employee turnover.

**Theme 2: Supportive Leadership Decreased Employee Turnover**

Supportive leadership decreased employee turnover was the second theme that emerged during the data analysis. P1 shared “The biggest thing that I always see in turnover is that people leave leaders, they do not leave jobs, and when you do not have leaders that are invested or care about their people, that is when people leave.” Each participant shared that a part of their role in reducing employee turnover was to provide the employees with personalized attention and support from the moment they arrive at the resort. The findings related to this theme reflect on the resort leaders’ efforts to make the employees feel satisfied with the job and to inspire them to stay on the job and reach further in their careers. The resort leaders practiced supportive leadership behavior and targeted reduction of employee turnover in a variety of ways, such as coaching and feedback, job satisfaction, and pay’ improvement.

Consistent coaching and feedback was an essential part of resort leaders’ supportive behavior and a strategy to reduce employee turnover. P1 commented, “The thing that keeps the employee on the job and in the organization in the long term is the coaching...the interaction and the connection between a manager and the direct report.” Through coaching and feedback, resort leaders provided employees with personalized advice regarding their performance as well as direction on how to overcome challenges. P4 shared the typical 90 days’ coaching and feedback was useful for employees who experienced performance challenges and typically for the new hires. However, to provide better support and increase employee retention levels, resort leaders created additional feedback on the 30<sup>th</sup> and the 60<sup>th</sup> day that allowed both, elimination of performance gaps

in earlier stages and abolishment of turnover intentions (P4 and P5). I found an analogy between the resort leaders' approach and the findings of Stewart and Harrison (2016) who stated that coaching and feedback is a mentoring process that has proven effectiveness as a cost-effective developmental tool used to encourage employee engagement, amplify productivity, and improve retention rates. My findings indicated that resort leaders used coaching and feedback to reduce turnover intentions by improving not only employees' performance but also creating more effective leaders because the increased interaction between leaders and employees created mutual trust and respect. Increased and proactive interaction with the employees requiring their feedback echoed with the findings of Harrison and Dossinger (2017) who suggested that seeking opportunities for additional interactions allows attainment of more affluent feedback and better improvements.

Resort leaders used supportive leadership behavior to improve subordinates' job satisfaction. Review of email-invitation indicated leadership efforts to demonstrate trust and value to the employees through so-called *roundtable meetings*, during which the employees had the opportunity to share positive and negative experiences and to make comments or suggestions. Roundtable meetings were a significant indicator that resort leaders were supportive, which influenced employees' job satisfaction positively, reduced turnover rates, and improved organizational performance. According to P6 "The employees would not feel satisfaction from their job and would not stay in the organization if they did not feel valued and trusted." Resort leaders' action resonated with



findings of Afsar and Masood (2018) who argued that employees are far more proactive and perform better when they feel valued, and leaders empower their confidence with trust. Resort leaders' efforts to reduce turnover also coincided with the findings of Zeffane and Bani Melhem (2017) who asserted that a lack of trust can aggravate employee turnover and deteriorates organizational performance.

The analysis of data indicated that inclusion was a significant part of resort leaders' supportive behavior and a factor in reducing employee turnover. Including employees in the decision-making process was a tool that resort leaders used to demonstrate inclusion. P6 shared employees' involvement and ownership of the operation helped increase the retention rates. P1 and P6 shared that resort leaders encouraged the employees to demonstrate skills and share opinions. Employees with the most practical ideas saw their suggestions materialized in the resort's operation, which made them feel pride and ownership (P3, P6, P8). Besides, resort leaders empowered the employees to make decisions by taking a reasonable risk in situations that required immediate resolutions (P1, P3, P6, P8). P2 shared:

The employees really enjoy being involved in a lot of decisions in the location. Also, I am not afraid of letting them do some of the work that has been overseen by me. They do the work every day and know better how to be done, and when they do it, they are creating the better approach. In this way, it is easier for me to keep them accountable because everyone has agreed to do it in this particular way.

Inclusion in the decision-making process resulted in overall job satisfaction and improved employees' organizational commitment, overall productivity, and profitability (P2, P6). Resort leaders' support and stance on inclusion matched the findings of Fires and Sharperson (2018) who reported that inclusion was a core value without which a business becomes less profitable and obsolete. Similarly, resort leaders' efforts for inclusiveness harmonized with the findings of Mitchell, Boyle, Parker, Giles, Chiang, and Joyce (2015) who informed that leaders' inclusiveness enhances employees' performance through increased team identity and a decrease in employees' perception of status differences. Respectively, some of the benefits from employees' inclusion included improved work climate, increased level of trust and values within the team, higher employee commitment and productivity, overall job satisfaction, and reduction in employee turnover intends.

Based on comprehensive analysis of data from interviews, it became apparent that competitive employees' pay was an effective strategy to increase retention rates. Although employees' pay was another subject out of leaders' control, resort leaders found creative ways to demonstrate support in this aspect. P8 stated "I do not have control on setting those wages...our company does not pay as high as many different places, and wage competitiveness is a concern." P1, P2, P5, P6, and P8 shared that they sought alternative avenues to ensure support with the pay and in this way to keep the employees on the job. The strategy used by P1 for non-tipped employees was to work with the employees on the refinement of their talent, which led to professional advancement and, subsequently, pay increase. Similarly, P6's strategy was to enhance

employees work experiences and to move the best and the brightest forward to the next professional level, which would ensure pay increase as well as increased employee retention. P6 commented, “we are very fortunate that we have actually had numerous employees get promoted to a salaried role from our location.” P8 mentioned that providing mentorship and professional orientation helped employees envision a brighter professional future that kept employees’ motivation elevated, improved job performance, and led to better earnings and reduction of turnover intends.

P2’s strategy for pay support to tip eligible employees stemmed from guests’ service enhancements paired with an appropriate pricing strategy that increased the perceived value of offers for the resort guests. The strategies included a reevaluation of work processes to improve efficiency, improvement of work’s tools, enhancement of offers content, and emotional connection between employees and resort guests. The result was not only increased revenue but also improvement of the overall guests’ satisfaction, increased number of return guests, and strengthening the customer loyalty to the resort. Through improvements in business approach, the resort leaders ensured steady guest flow and increased guests’ satisfaction. Consequently, satisfied guests tipped better the tip eligible employees, which the employees perceived as a pay increase. Increased earnings were the influential factor for tip eligible employees to stay on the job. Resort leaders’ realization of pay importance and their efforts to support the employees in making better earnings echoed with Wang, Zhao, and Thornhil’s (2015) findings, who stated that inadequate pay could exacerbate voluntary employee turnover and impede the organizational outcomes. Participants P1, P2, and P8 shared that pay is an important job

criterion for the employees and commented that maintaining competitive pay rates was essential for retention of the best employees within the organization and for the attraction of new talent.

Review of documents regarding employee performance indicated the resort leaders assisted the employees with making more educated choices about career opportunities, which drove up the overall job satisfaction. *Team talk* document and posters were indicative of the approach used by resort leaders to influence larger groups of employees with the dissemination of valuable information on collateral job opportunities, transfers, or promotions. Review of documents used for *one-on-one* sessions and *yearly job performance review* revealed that resort leaders strived to discover more about their subordinates on an individual level. Resort leaders followed up with one-on-one sessions to steer employees' professional growth, increase employee engagement, and job satisfaction that retained more employees. Resort leaders' approach was comparable to the finding of some scholars, who argued that steering employee talent remains a priority for organizations, since it is the main ingredient in the formula for sustainable competitive advantage in the contemporary highly dynamic and often uncertain business environment (Cascio & Boudreau, 2016; Meyers & van Woerkom, 2014). Additionally, resort leaders' supportive behavior aligned with Tschopp, Grote, and Gerber (2014), who found that employees' career orientation is interrelated to job satisfaction, and the balance between both can lead to reduced turnover. Based on the review of documents, I concluded that steering employees' talent was a strategy that

increased employee job satisfaction and productivity, contributed to achieving the resort's business objectives, and helped decrease turnover.

Theme 2 correlates to Burns' (1978) transformational leadership theory. Burns, and later Bass (1985), suggested that transformational leaders coach and provide followers with advice and use individualized consideration to support followers' development and achievement of desired goals. Moreover, Burns suggested that transformational leaders practice intellectual stimulation to assure support for the followers and generate a positive work environment. In their interactions with the employees, resort leaders sought connection in deep and meaningful ways to create inspiration, to enhance individual contributions, to exceed organizational objectives, and to achieve common goals.

Resort leaders' behavior correlates with Burns (1978) transformational leadership theory as they nurtured relationships and provided support and motivation to new employees so that the employees can exceed initial goals. Resort leaders' behavioral traits correlated with publication in the academic literature. Afsar and Masood (2018) shared that transformational leaders inspire and motivate their employees to resolve current challenges by thinking innovatively, and handle challenging, ill-defined, or ill-organized objectives, and elevate employees' competence to a higher level. Resort's leaders demonstrated transformational behavior by focusing their attention on employees, collecting performance information, and offering coordinated support based on employee's individual characteristics. Resort leaders' action anchored in the work of Sun and Henderson (2016) who reported that transformational leadership affects followers'

performance by using the mediating effects of purposeful performance information. The results from resort leaders' supportive behavioral overlapped with findings on transformational leadership described by Alatawi (2017), who stated the supportive nature of transformational leadership not only had a negative correlation with employee turnover but also helped organizations stay competitive, enhanced productivity, improved performance, and reduced expenses associated with employee turnover.

### **Theme 3: Continuous Training and Development Improved Employee Retention**

Continuous training and development improved employee retention was the third theme that emerged from the data analysis. All participants found training and development assignments to be a necessary challenge that enhances and refines employees' competitiveness, sustains valuable knowledge, stimulate career advancement, and increase employees' overall satisfaction with their employment. P4 and P8 shared that for increased learning satisfaction, the employees were able to customize the learning process to sustain or increase one's professional acumen, to improve skills set, or to prepare for career advancement. Resort leaders accent on training and development correlated with Huang and Su (2016), who proposed that organizations used continual training to uphold employee motivation and attain desirable attitudinal and behavioral outcomes that are beneficial to the employees and the organization. Additionally, Memon, Salleh, and Baharom (2016) suggested that employees' training programs must be appropriate and based on genuine needs, which creates training satisfaction, work engagement, and leads to reduced employees' turnover. All participants noted that

training and development assignments were a significant share of the employees' engagement that kept the employees satisfied, engaged, and on the job.

All participants shared that employee development was the key to success in reducing employee turnover. P1 explained that lack of professional advancement could demotivate and demoralize the employees and increase turnover. P1 stated "Employees want to know what is at the end of the path and how to get there. If you take this away from the employee, they are most likely to leave you for some other opportunity." Similarly, P3 shared "I intervene and start having one on one with the employees and start developing them so that the employees feel the personal and professional growth just not to lose them." Understanding the employees' needs and goals and steering employees' development was invaluable for the employee professional growth, which increased employees' loyalty and kept them on the job (P3, P4). A deliberate personalization of professional experiences, temporary assignments, training coursework, and mentoring sessions were distinctive traits of employees' development process. Shuck, Twyford, Reio, and Shuck (2014) discovered an association between continuous employees' development and job satisfaction, commitment, low employee turnover, and positive organizational outcomes. Similarly, Cherono (2017) found a significant correlation between employees' development and the organizational performance. Respectively, employee development and the employee turnover moderate the organizational performance. Some participants mentioned that the employees perceived professional development as necessary job feature, without which the employees' turnover intents could intensify (P3, P4, P6, P8). Further analysis of interview data

indicated that development assignments were relevant to employees' current job and line of business and the organization characterized them as regulatory and nonregulatory ones.

Regulatory training was pertinent to the reduction of employee turnover because it was necessary for the employees to perform their work tasks, to keep them engaged, and to keep them up to date with the trends in the industry. Some participants (P1, P5, and P4) specified that resort leaders use the regulatory training to warrant not only compliance with federal, state, and union criteria, but also ensure consistency of employees' preparedness for the work tasks, made employees feel useful and productive, and created a feeling of accomplishment that reduced turnover intents. Review of regulatory training schedule indicated that the purpose of such training was to ensure proper execution of work-related tasks and prevented employees from violating vital for the business laws and policies that otherwise could result in hefty fines or penalties on an individual or organizational level. Reinforcement of laws and policies by the employees created a sense of ownership and engagement, which contributed to job satisfaction and reduction of turnover (P4). Resort leaders looked at the regulatory training as a valuable tool to maintain and improve employees' skillset and to engage employees in continual learning (P2, P4, and P5).

Non-regulatory training was essential for keeping the employees engaged, which helped reduce employee turnover. Review of non-regulatory training schedule revealed that non-regulatory training promoted safety and health awareness, as well as benefited the employees with the enhancement of their skills and knowledge in a variety of fields,



such as leadership, communication, marketing, project management or other desirable areas that employees deemed engaging. P8 shared that non-regulatory training was part of leader's role to reduce turnover because stimulating employees' talent and professional needs through additional learning opportunities held employees on the job and developed their appetite for better performance and advancement. Other resort leaders did not want to rely only on employees initial training and assisted with the identification and assignment of additional non-regulatory training that ensured reliability and high performance of the employees (P5 and P7). Resort leaders deemed additional non-regulatory training a reinvestment in employees' talent that created the feeling of increased value and kept them on the job (P7 and P5). P4 pointed out additional non-regulatory training to be an important success factor for reduction of turnover intentions as the acquisition of further knowledge gave the employees a sensation of worth, fulfillment, and self-realization.

Review of communication documents, such as training schedule printouts and emails, confirmed that training and development programs correlated to employee turnover. According to the documentation, the regulatory training was a requirement for sustaining employees' eligibility for some jobs, such as professional certifications, sanitation awareness, or responsible vendor program. However, according to communication posters and emails, the employees had an additional option to customize their training and development assignments that matched employees' individual talent, developmental needs, or a desirable field of professional realization. Such options were essential to employees' satisfaction and correlated to a study by Kevy and Perumal

(2014), who found that the value and practicality of training are essential, and learning must be useful and applicable to employees' jobs or other responsibilities as adults. A written appeal to the employees revealed that the resort leaders encouraged their employees never to stop improving themselves by stating "enhance your cross-company knowledge, spark your curiosity, and enhance your learning experience. You can explore and learn on your own or use this opportunity to inspire discussion and development within your team." Another *team talk* document revealed resort leaders' attitude about continuous training and communicated by stating that "continuous learning and development is essential for our success." According to the reviewed documentation, employee training and development were an important part of the resort culture, and resort leaders provided the employees with new challenges that offer professional enrichment, reduce employee turnover, and drive good business results.

The correlation between Theme 3 and Burns' (1978) transformational leadership theory was apparent. Burns suggested that transformational leaders use individualized consideration to encourage followers' development of skills and support them in achieving desired outcomes. Additionally, according to Burns (1978) and Bass (1985), transformational leaders apply intellectual stimulation by providing an appropriate learning environment so that their followers can unfold their talent, develop, and grow professionally.

Resort leaders dedicated ample amount of time on individual consideration and intellectual stimulation of their employees and worked diligently on employees' training and development, which indicated that they demonstrated transformational leadership

behavior. Employees perceive leaders with transformational leadership behavior as satisfying and effective leaders (Keevy & Perumal, 2014) and transformational leaders focus on employee development, which stimulates employees' psychological attachment to the organization and leads to reduced employee turnover (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Sahu, Pathardikar, & Kumar, 2018). Spending time with the employees and understanding the specifics of their talent and following up with the appropriate training for employee development, categorized the resort leaders as transformational leaders.

### **Applications to Professional Practice**

Strong empirical evidence indicates that the high rate of employee turnover has a detrimental effect on organizations' performance by creating significant additional cost (Chen & Wu, 2017; Memon et al. 2016; Sun & Wang, 2017). Researchers found that the high employee turnover rate in the hospitality industry can deteriorate the service quality and, in this way, to damage the financial performance of the organization (Kim, Im, & Hwang, 2015). When hospitality workers leave their job, organization's financial loss is considerable, because it includes the time and the efforts for hiring and training new employees (Chen & Wu, 2017). Employee turnover is a significant barrier affecting organizational profitability and sustainability, and despite the extensive research on the subject, it is apparent that organizational leaders do not have effective strategies to reduce it. Industry leaders use effective strategies for reduction of employee turnover to ensure steady organizational growth and increase the chances for overall organizational success (Gonzalez, 2016; Ugoami, 2016).

Employee turnover is a global phenomenon, which industry leaders must take seriously and direct efforts toward recognizing, classifying, and rectifying its antecedents and causal factors. According to Memon et al. (2016), employee turnover is among the top challenges facing businesses today and considering the ranges of employee turnover in the hospitality industry, there is no leader left unaware of its damaging effect on the business. Industry leaders could find beneficial other leaders' experience and strategies used to reduce employee turnover. Although the effectiveness of strategies for reducing employee turnover might differentiate depending on the physical and psychological characteristics of individual businesses, the participants in this study shared that effective hiring practices, practicing supportive leadership behavior, and continual training and development were effective strategies to reduce employee turnover in the context of resort operation as a part of a larger organization. Comparison of approaches to employee turnover and analysis of collected observations could assist industry leaders to understand how to benefits from a variety of strategies that save efforts, resources, and time. The findings from this study offer industry leaders and business operators to compare their strategies to other strategies used in the hospitality industry and in this way to enhance their business acumen, gain additional knowledge, and benefit from the implementation of the improved strategies for reduction of employee turnover.

With this single case study, my goal was to identify strategies hospitality leaders use to reduce employee turnover. The findings from this study provide hospitality leaders with evidence of how effective strategies can reduce employee turnover and achieve organizational sustainability and profitability. Leaders from a variety of industries could

compare the strategies shared by the participants in this study to the conditions in which they operate and, when applicable, to use them as an inexpensive and convenient way to increase employee satisfaction, commitment, productivity, and to improve the overall organizational performance. Considering the soaring levels of employee turnover (Chen & Wu, 2017; Memon et al. 2016; Sun & Wang, 2017), I strongly recommend hospitality leaders to evaluate and consider the feasibility of strategies and approaches shared by the participants in this study, and to proceed with the implementation of new or adjusted strategies for reduction of employee turnover. The findings from this study might provide leaders from the hospitality industry and other economic sectors with additional insights that spark innovative ideas for improved and effective strategies to reduce employee turnover.

### **Implications for Social Change**

This qualitative descriptive single case study on employee turnover has the potential to foster social change because it reveals specific strategies hospitality leaders use to diminish employee turnover, which affects not only their operation but also the community in which they operate. The primary objective of this study was to explore strategies hospitality leaders used to reduce employee turnover. Since employee turnover is a global phenomenon, the information and strategies shared by the participants in this study could have broad applicability in multiple economic sectors and to affect the well-being of their communities. Employee turnover has a damaging effect on the financial performance of the business, influences the employees' morale negatively, and diminishes the organizational capacity to sustain employment (Jang & Kandampully,

2018; Malhotra et al., 2017). Positive psychological climate at the workplace equates happy employees and emotional attachment to the organization, which moderate the relationship between employees' commitment and turnover (Gyensare et al., 2017), which, in turn, results not only in improved organizational performance but also in better life for the employees, their families, and the community.

Researchers found the organizations with contained employee turnover could enable positive social change in a variety of ways that included new jobs, contributions to non-profit organizations, and other philanthropic functions (Steiner & Atterton, 2014). Low employee turnover saves organizational leaders resources and means that otherwise would be spent on separations, hiring, training, and retention. Financially stable businesses have opportunities to affect positively the lives of their employees and the community at large. Depending on the organizational strategy for social responsibility, some prospects for improvements include enhanced development programs, update work tools, employees' educational reimbursement, create wellbeing centers, improve infrastructure, or to better the employees' compensation packages. The list could go on, but the key point is that the significant financial expenditures saved from reduced employee turnover could improve the organizational image for its internal and external stakeholders. With the successful reduction of employee turnover, organizations are better able to sustain organizational growth and profitability, which enable business leaders to become catalysts of positive social change for their workers and families, and the communities in which they operate.

### **Recommendations for Action**

The objective of this study was to explore the strategies hospitality leaders use to reduce employee turnover. The rate of employee turnover depends on a variety of factors. The findings of this study revealed that using effective hiring practices, practicing supportive leadership behavior, and offering continuous employee training and development could reduce employee turnover. The implementation of effective strategies for decreasing employee turnover could help organizational leaders retain valuable talent, prevent loss of knowledge, and maintain high morale among their workforce.

Industry leaders must work purposefully to improve the effectiveness of the hiring process. The communication between resort leaders and hiring managers, and resort leaders and employees affected the interaction between the hiring managers and job candidates, the new hires' start of employment, and the possibility of consequential employee turnover. Industry professionals and business operators should improve their communication with both new hires and existing employees, to find out about employees' experiences. Recommendations based on leaders' interactions with the new hires could help the hiring managers identify, hire, and place new talent that is a closer fit for the job and the organization. To achieve effective hiring practices, organizational leaders should collaborate with hiring managers and bring on board new talent with the appropriate person-job fit, ensure a smoother integration of the newly hired employees within the organizational structures, and communicate back with the hiring managers suggestions for improvements and employee retention.

Industry professional and business operatives should be supportive of their employees as employees recognize and appreciate the supportive leadership behavior and maintain their employment. To provide adequate support to their employees, organizational leaders must maintain continuous and proactive interactions with the subordinates by being visible and available. Supportive leaders could improve the level of trust within their teams and find out more about critical employees' turnover drivers, such as employee job satisfaction or dissatisfaction, and address them before they exacerbate and trigger employee turnover. Expression of leaders' support may come through consistent employee coaching and feedback as it leads to improved employee performance and solidifies mutual trust and respect. Including employees in the decision-making process was another important leadership' supportive function, which promoted employees' sense of ownership, improved work climate, increased the levels of trust and values within the team, and led to reduced employee turnover. Leaders expressed their support by maintaining competitive employee compensation because adequate pay rates improve employee commitment, productivity, and overall job satisfaction. Additionally, competitive compensation helped leaders retain the best employees within the organization and attraction of new talent. Leaders must find out what is important on an individual and collective level and navigate their supportive action accordingly so that they achieve employee satisfaction, lower turnover rates, and to attain organizational' objectives.

Industry leaders should strive to provide regular training and professional development to their employees. Providing continual training and development translates



into a positive workplace in which employees are seeing opportunities for gaining new knowledge, improving skill levels, and achieving professional advancement. Continual training and development could also affect positively the employee morale, team spirit, organizational culture, and overall job's satisfaction, which increase employee retention. Industry leaders should frequently interact with their subordinates and continuously evaluate their performance to attain a more holistic understanding of employees' training and development needs, on personal and collective levels, and then to assign the appropriate activities so that the employees feel engaged, find a higher purpose in their employment, and remain on the job.

The distribution of this study's findings will occur through various methods. The dissemination will start with the participants in this study, who will receive a two-page summary of the findings to share with peers from the resort and other leaders within the partner organization. Additionally, this study will be available to other researchers or organizations through the ProQuest/UMI dissertation database so that everyone can use it as a reference for their works. Finally, since I am hospitality professional, I will share the findings of this study throughout my career by using a variety of platforms, such as business consultations, forums, training, as well as leadership meetings or conferences.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

The purpose of this qualitative, single case study was to explore the strategies that resort leaders use to reduce frontline employee turnover. Through this study, my goal was to contribute to the existing body of knowledge surrounding the phenomenon of employee turnover. However, the antecedents of turnover intents and the factors driving

the actual turnover could vary in a broad specter of physical and psychological motives. Because employee turnover is a complex global problem with a detrimental effect on the vitality of businesses, scholars and practitioners must continue the study on its causal factors and remedies. Future researchers should center their efforts on the identification of individual and collective factors that drive employee satisfaction at work. In this context, it is important to continue the research on why people leave their work as well as why they stay. Although leaving work and staying might depend on a range of factors under different economic, physical, or psychological conditions, typically, finding why employees quit the job could help business leaders understand the areas of opportunities for operational improvements, whereas the reasons why employees stay could illuminate the areas of proper practices. Both areas must receive an equal amount of attention from the researchers as they both are equally important for what action business leader should take and to capitalize on what reduces employee turnover.

For future research, the qualitative and quantitative researchers could explore a wider range of participants. Limiting the research to only managerial staff could also limit the findings and miss on important aspects of the applied business problem. When researchers study and analyze larger groups of participants, the quantitative or mixed-methods offer a better evaluation through data quantification (Brockington, 2014; Spillman, 2014), which helps identify precise patterns in the findings, suggestions for future research, and conclusions. Additionally, employee turnover has multiple variables, which researchers express better through quantitative or mixed-methods. Some researchers using quantitative or mixed-methods could find it more conducive to evaluate

numerical data instead of analyzing behavioral patterns or trying to understand participants' lives and experiences as they relate to a phenomenon under study (Spillman, 2014). In this context, quantitative research method could be more appropriate to study employee turnover because researchers could present findings in a confirmatory manner by quantifying and computing data based on a numerical or calculated statistical procedure that examine relationships or differences among variables (Brockington, 2014). Similarly, the mixed-method could be appropriate for future research of employee turnover because of the use of numerical data and statistical procedures in addition to the descriptive qualitative approach (Spillman, 2014).

Finally, scholars and practitioners could study the phenomenon of employee turnover by using different than case study design. Other study designs could include phenomenological design, which is suitable for an inquiry that a researcher uses to describe lived experiences of participants (Yin, 2014). Applying the ethnographic design could provide a different view of the applied business problem because by using the ethnographic design the researchers study a culture through collecting data and describing the cultural characteristics of the sample population. Regardless of which research method or study design a researcher chose, the aim is to provide industry professionals and business owners with further understanding on how to reduce employee turnover, which promotes increased organizational performance and sustainability. The exploration of employee turnover through a variety of designs could advance the existing body of knowledge about effective strategies used by hospitality leaders and other business operators on how to reduce employee turnover.

## Reflections

The Doctor of Business Admiration program was an academic journey that in a way resembled an emotional rollercoaster, full of ups and downs, and yet it was challenging but fulfilling. I am a hospitality industry professional, which turned me into an insider-researcher with a genuine interest of the success factors of a business operation, in which the strategies leaders use to reduce employee turnover, in the context of resort operation, took prevalence and became the topic of this study. Being insider-researcher creates some conveniences, such as establishing a better working relationship with participants, understanding participants' jargon, and creating seamless interview process. However, an insider-researcher must navigate through some disadvantages as well, such as potential personal biases or preconceived ideas and values.

Preestablishing interview protocol and adhering to the ethical requirements established by the Walden University IRB, and the partner organization, helped surmount the disadvantages. I did not impose my opinion, views, or values on the participants at any given point in time and kept the relationships with participants strictly professional. The atmosphere of mutual correctness and respect had a positive effect on the participants as it was apparent that they felt comfortable and remained open and honest during the data collection process.

The completion of this study made me feel enriched and more oriented person; I determined that my perception and thinking concerning employee turnover changed. Industry professionals and business operators who seek an effective reduction of employee turnover must continuously examine their working environment, proactively

interact with their employees, and work with internal and external partners in different lines of business to find the most appropriate and relevant remedy of the problem on individual and collective bases. Most of the employees require individual attention; however, the leader should be able to identify employees' behavioral patterns and act accordingly. Industry leaders must remain supportive of their employees and build the culture and working environment that better the quality of their workforce, the organization, and the community in which they operate.

### **Conclusion**

Previous researchers examined the relationship between employee turnover and transformational leadership (Ariyabuddhiphongs, & Kahn, 2017; Ennis, Gong, & Okpozo, 2018; Sun & Wang, 2017). However, the findings from this single case study revealed a correlation between effective employee hiring practices, supportive leadership behavior, and employees' continuous training and advancement, which influenced employee turnover. On the basis of a qualitative single case study, my findings extend the knowledge of the strategies hospitality leaders use to reduce employee turnover. Based on data collected from interviews with hospitality leaders, and review of documents, I discovered that the participants engaged in coordinated action and demonstrated specific leadership behavior to reduce employee turnover.

The participants shared specific experiences regarding an explicit stage of employees' career, the hiring stage. Hiring practices are vital for the survivability and success of the organization (Jackson, 2015). The participants indicated that the hiring stage was significant for reducing employee turnover in which the cooperation between

resort leaders and hiring managers was of critical importance. Furthermore, the supportive leadership fostered organizational commitment, reduced turnover intentions, and overall work-life satisfaction (Rathi & Lee, 2017), which influenced employees' job satisfaction and employee leaders relationship with the potential to maintain a low employee turnover rates and improved organizational performance. Employees perceive continual training as an organizational gesture, which they positively reciprocate by yielding the higher efforts and commitment, whereas employees' development enhances labor flexibility, improve performance, and contributes to sustained competitive advantage (Kampkötter & Marggraf, 2015; Nelissen et al., 2017). The usefulness of continual training was particularly protuberant in times of change when many employees experienced challenges with the comprehension of modern technology and organizational change. Professional development gave the employees hope that career advancement was achievable, which prevented job quitting and increased employees' commitment and performance levels that led to the achievement of the business objectives. Considering that the findings of this study are easily accessible, business leaders could protect their organizations from loss of talent and valuable knowledge by integrating them into the set of strategies for reducing employee turnover.

Elevated employee productivity and organizational profitability are the beneficial results of reduced employee turnover that industry leaders and business owners should venture to implement if they want to protect their business in today's competitive economic environment. Uncontrolled employee turnover could jeopardize the survivability of the business by losing precious talent, knowledge, and revenue. I

recommend that hospitality leaders and future researchers use the findings of this study to enrich their business acumen regarding effective strategies for reduction of employee turnover and improve the financial health of their organizations through improved business practices.

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## Appendix A: Recruitment Letter

[Date]

Re: Invitation for Participation in Academic Study

Dear [Name]:

My name is Borislav Perev and I am a graduate student at Walden University where I pursue a doctoral degree in business administration (DBA). As a program's capstone project, I am conducting a study named "Strategies Hospitality Leaders Use in Resorts to Reduce Employee Turnover". For this reason, I am looking to interview leaders who meet the following criteria:

- older than 21 years of age
- occupy management position
- have experience elaborating and implementing strategies for reducing employee turnover

Based on your experience, I would like to invite you to participate in a face-to-face interview at a place and time with minimum disruption of personal or work schedule.

Through the interview questions, I will seek fair answers regarding strategies in relation to employee turnover. Collected information will remain confidential. To prevent compromise of your confidentiality, in the study, the name of your organization and your name will remain coded. Additionally, all collected data will remain locked in a private vault or in a password protected electronic format for 5 years and after that, I will delete all electronically preserved information and any hard copies will be shredded and destroyed.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and there will be no monetary compensation for your involvement. Besides, although there are no risks associated with participating in an interview, you still may choose not to participate. Lastly, if you agree to participate, you have the right to withdraw at any time, even after the interview took place, in which case I will delete the provided by you information.

Upon the completion of the research, if you wish to receive a copy of the study, please specify if you would like to receive an electronic copy or a hard copy, and I will deliver it to you. The results and findings from this study will also be available for other hospitality professionals, and the research community.

Should you have any questions, you can contact me at [borislav.perev@waldenu.edu](mailto:borislav.perev@waldenu.edu)

If you are interested in participation, please reply to this email with "I consent."

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Borislav Perev  
DBA Candidate at Walden University

## Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Date:  
Interviewer:

Location:  
Interviewee:

Unique Participant Identification Number/Code:

Interview: Research on Strategies Hospitality Leaders Use to Reduce Employee Turnover

1. The interview starts with salutations, personal introductions, and a brief discussion of the research topic.
2. I express my appreciation for the voluntary participation in the study and allow time for any questions.
3. Conduct a check of the audio equipment. Ask for permission to turn on the audio equipment. Record the date, time, location, and the code name of the participant, such as Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3, etc.
4. Participants receive the consent form. Let the participant read the consent form and ask if there are any clarifying questions prior to signing the consent form.
5. After the participant signs the consent form, the participant receives a copy for their personal records.
6. If the participant signs the consent form, document it on the audio recorder and indicate that the signing took place prior to the beginning of the interview.
7. If the participant rejects signing the consent form, the interview concludes without any additional questions.
8. Plan approximately 30-40 minutes for participants to respond to the nine interview questions, including the follow-up questions.
9. Upon the completion of the interview, check once again contact information and discuss the member checking process with the participants.
10. Thank the participant for taking the time to participate in the study.