

2018

# The Relationship Between Leadership Style, Job Satisfaction, and Turnover Intentions Among Junior Executives

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*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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David A. Schmith

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2019

Abstract

The Relationship Between Leadership Style, Job Satisfaction, and  
Turnover Intentions Among Junior Executives

by

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MBA, American Intercontinental University, 2003

BBA, Iowa State University, 1985

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

April 2019

## Abstract

Businesses that can retain junior executives as part of a succession plan are likely to outperform companies that struggle to fill senior executive positions. The purpose of this correlational study was to create a focus for organizations facing competition for candidates to fill critical vacancies as a generation of senior executives retire. The study population consisted of junior executives working in the United States energy industry. This study was grounded in Burns's transformational leadership theory, which holds that leaders can increase the motivation, morale, and performance of followers to enhance their leadership to work toward organizational goals. The study research question examined the relationship between junior executives' perceptions of senior executives' transformational leadership styles, junior executives' job satisfaction, and junior executives' turnover intentions. Data were collected using an online survey ( $N = 492$ ) and analyzed using correlational analysis. Multiple linear regression results showed a statistically significant negative correlation between junior executives' perceptions of senior executives' transformational leadership styles, junior executives' job satisfaction, and junior executives' turnover intentions. Business leaders might benefit from considering the concepts identified to implement strategies designed to retain skilled and experienced junior executives to maintain continuity and momentum of strategic efforts. Application of the findings of this study may lead to increased stability for employees and reduced turnover costs for businesses resulting in positive social change for individuals, organizations, and communities.

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## Dedication

I dedicate this study to my wife and daughter, Linda and Madison. Without their support and encouragement, I would not have been able to achieve this goal. Their willingness to take on additional workload and to postpone family outings and playtime allowed me time to devote to my research and study. My deepest gratitude goes to both of them for their patience and the sacrifices they have made during the past few years.

Finally, I dedicate this doctoral study to my father, Dale Schmith, for instilling in me a curiosity for the world around me. He believed in the value and importance of learning, for of all the riches in this world, education is the one that can never be lost.

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## Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Demands of the marketplace and business environment require that companies have skilled, effective, and innovative leaders in place at all levels of the organization (Conger & Benjamin, 1999). Retaining critical leadership is essential due to the direct and indirect costs of employee turnover. When an employee leaves a position, the company incurs the direct costs of recruiting and hiring a replacement as well as the indirect costs of a loss of organizational knowledge and experience (Tlaiss, Martin, & Hofaidhllaoui, 2017). Companies that retain junior executives as part of a succession plan have been able to outperform those that have difficulty filling senior executive positions (Berns & Klarner, 2017). Research has indicated that factors that increase employee retention include intrinsic factors such as challenging work, recognition of employees and their effort, and identification with organizational values (Tlaiss et al., 2017). These factors correspond with the characteristics of the transformational leadership style, which along with employee job satisfaction, I examined for their relationship with employee turnover intentions.

### **Background of the Problem**

Shifts in demographic and psychological contract trends in the workforce are creating difficulty in retaining employees (Dries, 2013). Levine (2015) surveyed company leaders at 81 global companies and found that 86% of human resource executives identified leadership as their most significant challenge, with 50% reporting leadership shortfalls. The loss of key executives to retirement can cause disruption of business operations and creates a major challenge to business continuity due to the

scarcity of quality executive candidates with the necessary skills and leadership abilities (Pandiyan, & Jayalashmi, 2016). Demand is high for top level executives, requiring businesses to offer substantial incentives and benefits to recruit qualified candidates and retain their top employees (George, 2015).

Competition for the best executive candidates compels businesses to implement effective retention and talent management strategies enabling the business to improve organizational performance and maintain a competitive market advantage (Anwar, Nisar, Khan, & Sana, 2014). Several researchers have found that leadership styles and job satisfaction influence employees' decisions to remain or leave their current organizations (Brewer et al., 2016; Lawrence, Celis, Kim, Lipson, & Tong, 2014; Osuji, Uzoka, Aladi, & El-Hussein, 2014).

### **Problem Statement**

Ever-increasing baby boomer retirements from the workforce is one of the driving factors that has left many business leaders unprepared for leadership shortages within their senior executive ranks (Boveda & Metz, 2016). Approximately 10,000 baby boomers have retired daily since 2011, necessitating the replacement of over 65 million senior level executives by 2029 (McCollum & Na'Desh, 2015). The general business problem is executive-level attrition rates from the retiring baby boomer generation will require business leaders to emphasize and enhance leadership strategies to retain highly qualified junior executives. The specific business problem is that some senior executives in the energy industry do not understand the relationship between junior executives'

perceptions of senior executives' transformational leadership styles, junior executives' job satisfaction, and junior executives' turnover intentions.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to examine the relationship between junior executives' perceptions of senior executives' transformational leadership styles, junior executives' job satisfaction, and junior executives' turnover intentions. The independent variables were junior executives' perceptions of senior executives' transformational leadership styles and junior executives' job satisfaction. The dependent variable was junior executives' turnover intentions. The target population for this study consisted of junior executives employed in the United States energy industry. A better understanding of the relationship between these variables may assist businesses in developing strategies to improve retention of junior executives. Improving retention and reducing turnover costs could provide an economic benefit of reduced costs for products and services, creating the opportunity for businesses to reinvest into the community or charitable organizations. Improved retention and stability in the workforce can reduce employee stress, potentially fostering innovation in sustainability efforts that benefit the environment (Derecskei, 2016).

### **Nature of the Study**

I employed a quantitative correlational research design to determine relationships between variables that will allow generalization of results to larger groups. In a similar study, Shurbagi (2014) employed a quantitative approach to examine the relationships between leadership style and job satisfaction. A qualitative approach to research follows

an inductive process to develop theory (Barczak, 2015). My intent for this study was to test relationships between variables, therefore a qualitative approach was not appropriate. Researchers employ mixed-methods research when they desire to combine elements of qualitative data and quantitative data in a single study to gain the benefits of both methods (Zhang & Watanabe-Galloway, 2014). I did not include any qualitative components in this study, consequently a mixed-methods approach was not appropriate. Therefore, the quantitative method was best suited to examine the relationship between junior executives' perceptions of senior executives' transformational leadership styles, junior executives' job satisfaction, and junior executives' turnover intentions.

Researchers can employ experimental, quasi-experimental, or non-experimental design when conducting quantitative studies (Orcher, 2014). In an experimental design, the researcher attempts to determine causal relationship by examining the impact of an independent variable (or variables) on one or multiple dependent variables (Orcher, 2014). I did not intend to determine a causal relationship between the three variables, but rather sought to determine the relationship between the identified variables without introducing new variables. A quasi-experimental study is similar to an experimental approach, as both employ a control variable to isolate a causal effect. However, the quasi-experimental approach differs from the experimental in that the introduction of the control variable is not randomized (Waddington et al., 2017). A non-experimental correlational analysis explores relationships between variables and subsequently identifies the magnitude and direction of the linear relationships between the variables (Prematunga, 2012), making it an appropriate approach for this research.



### **Research Question**

What is the relationship between junior executives' perceptions of senior executives' transformational leadership styles, junior executives' job satisfaction, and junior executives' turnover intentions?

### **Hypotheses**

Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): A statistically significant relationship does not exist between junior executives' perceptions of senior executives' transformational leadership styles, junior executives' job satisfaction, and junior executives' turnover intentions.

Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_a$ ): A statistically significant relationship exists between junior executives' perceptions of senior executives' leadership styles, junior executives' job satisfaction, and junior executives' turnover intentions.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Burns's (1978) transformational leadership theory served as the theoretical framework for this study. This theory describes the characteristics, attributes, and methods employed by transformational leaders in their relationships with subordinates. Transformational leaders have the ability to create a connection with followers and inspire them to change expectations, perceptions, and motivations to work toward common goals (Northouse, 2013). Bass (1985) further developed the theory and identified key constructs underlying transformational leadership as (a) idealized attributes, (b) idealized behaviors, (c) intellectual stimulation, (d) inspirational motivation, and (e) individualized consideration (Northouse, 2013). As applied to this study, the transformational leadership theory holds that I would expect the independent

variable junior executives' perceptions of senior executives' leadership styles, measured by the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), to predict employee turnover intentions since previous research has indicated transformational leadership has a negative correlation with turnover intentions (Alatawi, 2017; Ariyabuddhiphongs & Kahn, 2017; Wells & Peachey, 2011).

### **Operational Definitions**

*Junior executive:* The title given to an individual receiving training and mentorship from a senior executive (Pang & Yeo, 2012).

*Turnover intention:* The attitudes or behaviors towards leaving an organization (Lu, Lu, Gursoy, & Neale, 2016).

*Job satisfaction:* An employee's evaluation of the elements in the work environment that results in a positive emotional state (Kong, Wang, & Fu, 2015).

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

#### **Assumptions**

Assumptions are critical elements of scholarly research and must be supportable to avoid alteration of the study results (Yin, 2014). In this study, I assumed that participants would provide answers that accurately reflected their attitudes, behaviors, and experiences. Another assumption was that the use of an online survey would mitigate any personal bias by eliminating direct contact with the participants. I assumed that a sufficient population would respond to the survey to allow the results to be generalizable to a larger population of junior executives in the energy industry. Further, I assumed that

the use of proven preexisting survey instruments would provide more accurate responses and provide a clearer indication of the relationships between the variables.

### **Limitations**

Limitations refer to potential areas of weaknesses in the study that, depending on the research design, may be out of the direct control of the researcher (Yin, 2014). A limitation of this study would be a change in the job market allowing greater freedom of movement of junior executives between organizations. The use of a self-reporting survey may have contributed to social desirability bias on the part of the participants (see Bennett & Blake, 2016).

Organizations experience internal and external influences that may shape the organizational culture and leadership styles of its leaders, which the design of this study could not identify. The degree to which factors such as the type of industry, nature of the business, and societal influences exist may have affected my ability to identify the existence of causal relationships between variables (Rauf, 2014). Potential outlying responses resulting from unfavorable perceptions subsequent to problems in job performance may have affect some responses, and when identified were excluded for analysis. Only junior executives were included in the participant pool for this study.

### **Delimitations**

Delimitations refer to the parameters set for the study through the establishment of the objectives, theoretical framework, research questions, and selection of the study population (Alzaied & Alshammari, 2016). A delimitation was the use of homogenous sampling, which focused on the junior executive level of employees. Thus, results may

not be indicative of other levels of employees or management. Another delimitation was that the participants for this study were selected from energy companies, thus eliminating junior executives working in other industries that may have different structures or organizational cultures.

### **Significance of the Study**

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

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between junior executives' perceptions of senior executives' transformational leadership styles, junior executives' job satisfaction, and junior executives' turnover intentions. Employees tend to respond well to leadership that recognizes their needs for training and development, and provides support and motivation towards meeting those needs (Yao, Fan, Guo, & Li, 2014). Many junior executives have obtained substantial training and leadership skills in the marketplace, which places them high in demand. Market demand for transition of these junior executives into senior executive positions is likely to increase, as some estimates indicate 3.5 million baby boomers are expected to retire annually until 2029 (Yu & Cable, 2014).

The loss of an individual who has gained critical skills and experience within the organization may prove difficult to replace. Junior executives must master challenging leadership skills to guide their organizations through the complexities of the current business environment as they move into senior executive positions (Biemann, Kearney, & Marggraf, 2015). Retaining qualified employees can save businesses not only in the cost of replacing and training new employees, but also through preserving continuity and

momentum of strategic efforts. Business leaders could use the results from this study to improve the training, mentoring, and managing of both senior and junior executives.

### **Implications for Social Change**

The implications for positive social change include the potential for a better understanding of the significance of the senior/junior executive relationship and possible benefits to businesses, the economy, employees, and society. Replacing trained and qualified employees incur costs to the organization, which must either be absorbed by the organization or passed on to its customers. When businesses are not successful in retaining junior executives with knowledge and experience in the organization, the turnover costs associated with personnel at that level can exceed 100% of the executive's salary (Rani & Reddy, 2015).

The reduction of turnover costs such as training and benefits could result in reduced costs for products and services, providing a benefit to the economy. Retaining employees produces stability in the workforce, which can reduce employee stress and increase the creativity of employees, which can foster greater innovation (Derecskei, 2016). Advancements could take the form of new products, efficient production methods, improved processes, and enhanced leadership and mentoring programs. The ability to plan and carry out a succession plan within the organization can result in improved business performance and profitability (Patidar, Gupta, Azbik, Weech-Maldonado, & Finan, 2016).

The results of this study may provide organizations with information to strengthen retention strategies and reduce turnover among junior executives. Improved leadership

continuity and workforce stability may promote innovation that could enhance sustainability, providing a benefit to communities and the environment. Fostering improved relationships between leaders and employees may increase job satisfaction, leading to improved retention and stability, and thereby allowing them to positively contribute to their communities and families (Cook, 2015).

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

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to examine the relationships between junior executives' perceptions of senior executives' transformational leadership styles, junior executives' job satisfaction, and junior executives' turnover intentions. Researchers have investigated relationships between leadership style and turnover intention (Ariyabuddhiphongs & Kahn, 2017; Khalid, Pali, & Ahmed, 2016; Waldman, Carter, & Hom, 2015), and job satisfaction and turnover intention (Cohen, Blake, & Goodman, 2016; Jagadale & Chinchpure, 2016; Kong et al., 2015). In this literature review I have analyzed current literature related to the study theory and variables.

Retention of quality employees can provide a stabilizing force in an organization, which can drive productivity and innovation. Employee turnover incurs significant costs to an organization that include recruiting and hiring costs, training costs, and potential losses in individual and organizational productivity. Dissatisfaction or discomfort with factors such as poor relationships with leadership, limited or uncertain potential for career growth or personal development, stressful organizational environment, or job satisfaction can drive turnover intentions (Shila & Sevilla, 2015). Determining the relationships

between leadership style, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions and developing strategies to reduce turnover intentions can provide positive outcomes for organizational success.

I obtained the professional and academic literature used in this review from peer-reviewed journals and articles sourced from electronic databases including ProQuest, EBSCOHost, Thoreau Multi-Database, Academic Search Complete, Emerald Insight, SAGE Journals, Dissertations & Theses @ Walden University, and Google Scholar. I conducted database searches using terms and keywords that included the following: *leadership style, intent to stay, transformational leadership, leadership theory, job satisfaction, talent management, retention, leadership development, and succession planning*. The search produced the 78 references included in this literature review. The sources used in this review consisted of 76 journal articles and 2 seminal books. Of the 78 references, 74 (95%) were peer-reviewed and 67 (86%) were published within the last 5 years.

This literature review provides a critical analysis and synthesis of the current literature and theory, thus providing a context for this study of the relationship between leadership style, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. The topics discussed in this review include seven major sections covering the two theories employed, the three variables included in the study, and an overview of current research regarding relationships between the variables. The topics within the leadership section include (a) a description of the concept of leadership, (b) an examination of leadership styles, and (c) a review of the impact of leadership in business performance. The section on job

satisfaction includes subsections on (a) drivers of job satisfaction, and (b) the impact of employee job satisfaction on business operations. The third section on turnover intentions includes (a) a review of research examining leadership style and turnover intentions, (b) a review of research examining job satisfaction and turnover intention, and (c) factors that previous research has identified as influencing turnover intentions.

### **Burns' Transformational Leadership Theory**

The concept of transformational leadership was introduced by Burns (1978) as a new foundation for understanding leadership practices. Burns built the theory on an examination of political leadership and the interplay of conflict and power between leaders and followers. Burns compared the actions of transactional leaders with those of transforming leaders. Burns identified transactional leaders as those who sought to obtain something from followers in exchange for some form of compensation. Transforming leaders sought to identify followers' motivating factors and employ them to gain support for larger organizational objectives. The context of Burns theory development centered on historical political leaders and events, but it is applicable to any leadership activity or situation.

Transformational leadership has shown to produce a direct and positive impact on employee performance attributed to the ability of transformational leaders to develop a connection with subordinates that transcends a typical leader-follower relationship (Mittal, 2016). Transformational leaders provide their followers with challenges that can provide a purpose to their efforts, increase their commitment to organizational goals, and provide opportunities for personal and professional growth (Rana, Malik, & Hussain,



2016). The presence of a transformational leader in the workplace has been shown to increase employee dedication, increase performance, and improve the efficiency in the organization (Gozukara & Simsek, 2015). The actions and attitude of a transformational leader can create an environment that fosters employee trust and motivation and leads to the development of high performing employees.

Bass (1985) built on the original theory by expanding the characteristics of a transformational leader and developing the dimensions of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. The descriptions of transformational leadership developed by Burns and Bass are based on identifying and activating followers' motivation to engage all parties in raising their performance to achieve higher organizational goals and objectives (Pandey, Davis, Pandey, & Peng, 2016). The transformational leader achieves results by effectively communicating a clear vision that empowers followers to perform beyond expectations and reach organizational goals (Salem, 2015). Transformational leaders provide a demonstration of respect and confidence in their subordinates, motivating them to expand on possible solutions to problems and encouraging new ways of thinking and risk-taking to increase innovation and efficiency while improving leader effectiveness (Chang, Chang, & Chen, 2017). Employees respond to transformational leaders with increased trust, greater organizational commitment, reduced job stress, and greater job satisfaction (Salem, 2015). In this study, I examined whether the positive impact transformational leadership has on both individual and organizational outcomes also affects junior executive turnover intentions.

### **Locke's Range of Affect Theory**

While not included in the theoretical framework, this section on Locke's (1976) range of affect theory is included to provide clarity regarding the concept of job satisfaction as I used it in this study. Employee job satisfaction is more involved than a general overall feeling about a job or position. Specific facets of a job or work environment such as pay, benefits, promotion opportunities, supervisor and co-worker relationships, nature of work, and work conditions can affect job satisfaction (Keser & Yilmaz, 2016). In the range of affect theory, Locke asserted that job satisfaction is determined by the relationship between what the employee wants from the job, what the employee is receiving from the job, and the importance the employee places on that facet of the job (Deriba, Sinke, Ereso, & Badacho, 2017). When the employee receives the desired outcome in a job facet held in personal high importance, satisfaction will be high (McFarlin, Coster, Rice, & Cooper, 1995). Conversely, when there is a discrepancy between the desired and received outcome for a facet that is high in importance dissatisfaction will occur (McFarlin et al., 1995). Previous research has indicated job satisfaction has a negative correlation with turnover intentions (Lee, Yang, & Li, 2017; Masum et al., 2016). In this study, I have used the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) developed by Spector (1985) to examine the relationship between job satisfaction and junior executive turnover intentions.

## **Leadership Style**

Leadership style served as the independent variable in my study. The concept of leadership has presented itself in various forms, and past research has produced no single definition. Regardless of style, leadership involves the process of influencing a group of individuals to act in a manner that aids in achieving organizational goals (Amanchukwu, Stanley, & Ololube, 2015). Gandolfi and Stone (2016) suggested that leadership requires the existence of five components; one or more leaders, followers, activity or action, a course of action, and a goal or objective. Leaders exhibit different styles of leadership in their interactions with their employees that encompass dimensions of values, standards, norms, and behaviors affecting employees' performance, behaviors, and emotions (Belias & Koustelios, 2014). Leadership appears in many different forms, and its effectiveness can be impacted by various factors such as individual values, personalities, or situations. While there is no single leadership style considered universal, I will use the elements of transformational leadership style in this study and will introduce it first.

**Transformational leadership.** Following the early leadership theories, Burns (1978) further developed leadership theory with the introduction of transformational leadership style. Leaders who employ a transformational leadership style create a relationship with followers to inspire them to look beyond their own needs to collectively advance the goals of the organization (Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016). In the pursuit of the organizational goals, followers are motivated to increased levels of performance and realize the development of previously untapped potential. Followers of transformational leaders experience less job stress and burnout, contributing to their ability to increase

performance potential (Salem, 2015). Leaders' effectiveness can be connected to five attributes: modeling the behavior they want subordinates to follow, communicating and inspiring a vision, challenging the status quo, delegating authority, and motivating others to action (Gandolfi & Stone, 2017). In a study examining the effect of leadership style on leaders' abilities to achieve organizational objectives, Copeland (2016) found a significant relationship between transformational leadership and leader effectiveness. Effectiveness was evaluated based on whether employees admired and identified with the leader, shared an enjoyable working relationship, and were willing to perform at high levels for the leader. The link between leadership style and leader is supported by Soane, Butler, and Stanton (2015) who found a strong relationship between the effectiveness of the transformational leadership style and team performance. Their research indicated the dimension of individualized consideration was a significant factor in determining leader effectiveness. Transformational leaders employ four behavioral dimensions to motivate employees to achieve organizational goals.

***Idealized influence.*** Idealized influence, also referred to as charisma, involves the leader as a role model influencing followers to emulate the leader's behavior (Bayram & Dinc, 2015). Charisma is an important trait of transformational leadership and the element through which leaders create an image of the behaviors they expect subordinates to exhibit (Hamad, 2015). The behaviors and actions of the leader help to create a vision of what the organization can accomplish when all organizational members focus their efforts towards achieving those goals.

Leaders who exhibit the transformational leadership characteristics can create a tie between organizational goals and individual employees' work efforts. In a study conducted with bank employees in Turkey, Olcer (2015) found the dimension of idealized influence was the most crucial factor contributing to increased levels of employee commitment to achieving organizational goals. In idealized influence, the leaders draw their actions from their values and the values exhibited in the organizational climate (Martin, 2017). Managers exhibiting characteristics of idealized influence are capable of producing positive results in their organization through their charisma and role modeling (Brown, Chen, & O'Donnell, 2015). Leaders who exhibit this trait show their followers that their actions follow their words, building trust and establishing themselves as a role model for their followers. The transformational leadership dimensions of idealized influence and inspirational motivation have the potential to make the greatest impact on employees work effort, commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions.

***Inspirational motivation.*** Inspirational motivation holds the potential to make the biggest impact of any of the dimensions of transformational leadership. Leaders use inspirational motivation to communicate their vision and encouragement to followers, creating the motivation for increased performance (Kim, 2014). The leader's communication of the organizational goals provides a focus and challenge for employees that can result in greater engagement and effort (Khan, 2015). Researchers conducting a study of bank employees in India measuring the effectiveness of the four dimensions of transformational leadership found inspirational motivation was the most effective among

those surveyed (Dash & Chaudhuri, 2015). Inspirational motivation has the potential to increase employee productivity while providing satisfaction to the employee.

***Intellectual stimulation.*** Leaders develop intellectual stimulation by encouraging followers to apply analysis and problem-solving skills to break down preconceived barriers, thereby encouraging new approaches to old problems (Kim, 2014). This dimension of transformational leadership has been found to have a positive relationship with employee innovation, motivation, sense of work meaningfulness, and connection with the leader and organization (Smothers, Doleh, Celuch, Peluchette, & Valadares, 2016). Intellectual stimulation fulfills an employee's need for self-actualization and drive for further growth (Anjali & Anand, 2015). Through the challenges presented by intellectual stimulation an employee develops greater skills and improves their sense of well-being and satisfaction with their work.

***Individualized consideration.*** As with leaders, followers exhibit different behaviors and have varied needs and motivators. Leaders who exhibit individualized consideration recognize the needs of each individual and devote personal attention to motivate and develop subordinates (Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016). The leader discovers the employee's needs through communication, feedback, facilitation, delegation, and mentoring and provides the instruction and resources the employee needs to be successful (Zacher, Pearce, Rooney, & Mckenna, 2014). Communication is an important aspect of individualized consideration in that it allows for a flow of ideas between the leader and employee. The opportunity to present ideas for consideration can bolster an employee's sense of self-worth and increase their satisfaction in the work environment. By learning

what employees need to achieve individual success, the leader can guide their employees' efforts toward organizational goals. The satisfaction from receiving one-on-one guidance and assistance may decrease turnover but also holds the potential to develop future leaders who will employ the same approach with their subordinates.

### **Other Leadership Styles**

**Transactional Leadership.** This leadership style involves an exchange between leaders and their subordinates. Transactional leaders provide the intended goal, the means, and methods to achieve the goal, providing feedback on progress and effort, and distributing rewards for the achievement of the goal (Zareen, Razzaq, & Mujtaba, 2015). The leader's need to achieve organizational goals drives this exchange and does not focus on the subordinate's development (Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016). Clarity in the statement of the goals, methods, and rewards is essential in ensuring employee motivation and effort. The employees are not provided the opportunity for input or feedback and are not involved in the decision-making process.

While the methods leaders employ in transactional leadership can play a role in the successful attainment of individual tasks and organizational goals, they may also create tension and resentment between the leader and subordinate. If the leader exercises complete power over the subordinates without input from them, transactional leadership can take on an extreme autocratic form (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). Autocratic leadership stems from the premise that employees are unwilling or incapable of contributing to the decision-making process thereby the leader must focus on organizational performance with little or no emphasis on people (Fiaz, Su, Ikram, & Saqib, 2017). By taking full

responsibility for making decisions, leaders rely on their ideas and experience without the potential benefit of the knowledge, skills, and experiences of their employees (Gandolfi & Stone, 2017). An autocratic approach can be useful in crises situations when decisions must be made quickly but may cause employees to become more disenchanted. In transactional leadership employees' motivation to perform is solely driven by the guidance given and rewards promised by leaders.

Leaders employ one of three methods in the application of transactional leadership, contingent reward, active management by exception, and passive management by exception. In contingent reward, leaders are directive in nature, providing specific goals, standards of performance, and promised rewards (Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016). Active management by exception involves close monitoring by the leader to identify errors and intervene to correct those errors (Quintana, Park, & Cabrera, 2015). In passive management by exception leaders do not actively monitor performance, only intervening when subordinate bring errors to their attention (Tetteh-Opai & Omoregie, 2015). In each of these methods, both the leader and follower focus on the completion of specific tasks and requirements. These tasks may support organizational objectives but do not provide employees with the vision and direction of the organization. Regardless of the method used by leaders, the transactional leadership style creates the potential for leader-follower relationships lacking in depth and the capability for developing resentment between the parties involved.

**Laissez-faire Leadership.** The most common description of laissez-faire leadership is the lack of effective leadership, an intentional or unintentional decision not



to act. The leader provides no guidance or support, ignores issues and problems, and does not follow up on actions (Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016). The laissez-faire approach includes situations where leaders, by their inaction, effectively delegate the decision-making responsibilities to subordinates but also provide little in the way of support (Zareen et al., 2015). Employees are allowed great autonomy to make decisions or act but often without feedback or guidance that ensures subordinates focus their efforts in the right direction. This approach may be effective when supervising highly skilled and self-motivated individuals capable of independent action. However, it requires those two specific elements to be a productive approach to achieving organizational objectives.

**Situational Leadership.** This leadership style requires that the leader has the capability to analyze the situation and environment and determine the best approach to employ. The situational leadership style can be classified as a behavioral theory as it involves the leader to alter behavior from task-focused to people-focused (McCleskey, 2014). The type of approach used in situational leadership revolves around the nature of decision making required for the circumstance (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). The leader analyzes the situation, conditions, and objective and determines the style and approach that is most appropriate. The leader may employ an autocratic approach when decisions must be made quickly or a more collaborative approach when subordinates possess skills or experience that may contribute to the overall success of the organization.

**Authentic Leadership.** The theory of authentic leadership is based on positive psychology and describes a leader who has a strong sense of moral direction and applies their personal beliefs to their actions in the workplace. Authentic leadership requires

leadership to employ emotional intelligence in their interactions with their subordinates with attributes characterized by transparency, moral standards, and the awareness and regulation of emotions (Smith, 2015). Authentic leadership exhibits the four dimensions of self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized moral perspective, and balanced perspective (Braun & Peus, 2018). A criticism of authentic leadership is the leader does not account for situational or experiential circumstances when making decisions or interacting with others (Iszatt-White, Whittle, Gadelshina, & Mueller, 2018). The level of openness in authentic leadership is conducive to building a relationship between leader and follower with a high level of trust. Although beneficial to good working relationships, the attributes of an authentic leader do not ensure the ability to be an effective leader.

**Servant Leadership.** In this leadership style, there is a reversal of roles between leader and subordinate. Instead of subordinates supporting the leader, the leader provides the subordinates with personal development to engage and empower them to increase their performance levels (Smith, 2015). Servant leadership and transformational leadership share some commonalities in that both consider goals and people although the focus differs in each (Coetzer, Bussin, & Geldenhys, 2017). Servant leadership focuses first on the people in its approach to achieving organizational objectives. Through the leader's support and service to the subordinates, the leader grows the skills of the subordinates and provides the means of achieving organizational goals.

**Empowering Leadership.** This leadership style includes elements also seen in transformational leadership. Empowering leadership is characterized by a relationship of

coaching and mentoring through frank and open communication between the leader and subordinate (Smith, 2015). Involving subordinates in the decision-making process shifts the source of control from the leader to the subordinates and can result in greater commitment and motivation (Grill, Pousette, Nielsen, Grytnes, & Törner, 2017). Through this style, subordinates are delegated greater responsibility for decision-making and guided through the process. This type of leadership compares to the individualized consideration element of transformational leadership in seeking to motivate and develop subordinates.

### **Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction has been widely studied as a dependent variable examining the impact of various factors on levels of employee satisfaction. Job satisfaction serves as a link between motivation theories and their application to employees in the workforce (Skitsou, Anastasiou, Charalambous, & Andrioti, 2015). Job satisfaction contributes to organizational success and is a condition desired and valued by organizations (Alonderiene & Majauskite, 2016). Employees associate their job satisfaction with the gratifying feeling experienced by achieving one's work goals and satisfying personal values in the work environment (Lu et al., 2016). Discrepancies between the employees' aspirations and experiences in different job aspects can lead to dissatisfaction in the workplace. In this study, I employed job satisfaction as the independent variable examining its impact on employee turnover intentions.

Individuals can derive satisfaction from their job situation based on different factors. The factors considered by employees may contain both intrinsic and extrinsic

dimensions (Pan, Shen, Liu, Yang, & Wang, 2015). Some employees may derive their satisfaction from intrinsic factors such as a sense of accomplishment, attainment of a personal goal, or the level of freedom, decision-making, and control one has over their work projects (Singh & Sinha, 2013). The transformational leadership aspect of intellectual stimulation may add to the job satisfaction of individuals who derive their satisfaction from the challenge involved in having the freedom to work through problems, finding solutions through their own methods (Choi, Goh, Adam, & Tan, 2016). Other employees may derive satisfaction from extrinsic factors such as the level of pay, job title, status, benefits or work hours. While intrinsic and extrinsic factors may hold greater value for different employees, both can play a role in determining overall job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction is an evaluation of an individual's work situation based on personal goals and needs and their perception of the degree to which those issues are fulfilled. Employees' perceived organizational support may influence their level of job satisfaction and may cause them to become dissatisfied if they believe their organization and leaders do not value their contributions or care about their well-being (Pan et al., 2015). In a study conducted in rural China, researchers found that career development and the perception of increased job security had a high positive impact on employee job satisfaction (Masum, Azad, & Beh, 2015). The researchers' findings were supported by later studies in which researchers found that training opportunities and career development for all levels of health-care staff in rural China positively impacted job satisfaction (Wang, Tang, Zhao, Meng, & Liu, 2017). Alternatively, poor training

opportunities for career development can have a negative effect on job satisfaction (Zhang & Fang, 2016). Providing employees with the training and experience that allows them to be successful creates a favorable work environment that can improve personal welfare and contributions to the organization.

Recognition of an individual's ideas, contributions, and achievements can contribute to their sense of well-being and value to the organization. Employees who are allowed a high degree of autonomy have been shown to have a correspondingly high level of job satisfaction (Rodriguez, Van Landeghem, Lasio, & Buyens, 2017). A high level of self-efficacy has a strong positive correlation with employee job satisfaction (Kwok, Cheng, & Wong, 2015). When leaders allow subordinates the latitude to develop solutions to issues and the freedom to accomplish their goals, the employees will recognize their contributions are valued.

Employees' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their work situation may directly or indirectly impact their performance and actions. In a study conducted with health-care staff in rural China, researchers found job satisfaction to have a positive effect on employee motivation and performance (Wang et al., 2017). Low job satisfaction can impact organizational efficiency and productivity through increased absenteeism and turnover (Kwok et al., 2015). Creating an environment that improves and sustains employee job satisfaction may result in increased employee creativity and commitment and assist in the attainment of organizational goals (Masum et al., 2015). A high level of job satisfaction provides employees with the motivation to deliver their best efforts towards achieving organizational objectives and goals.

## **Turnover Intentions**

Turnover intention served as the dependent variable in my study. It is uncommon for employees to suddenly and voluntarily leave a job or organization. Generally, over time there can be factors that arise that influence an employee to begin considering other employment options. Turnover intentions reflect the employee's thought process leading to a desire to voluntarily leave a position (Wang & Hu, 2017). An employee's intention to leave an organization is a result of a cognitive process in which the employee considers their current situation and reasonable options, assesses their desire to leave the job, and begins making plans to leave (Shila & Sevilla, 2015). To interrupt this cycle organizations and leaders must identify the issues causing the turnover intentions and implement strategies to counteract those factors. During the turnover intention process employees may not be fully engaged in their work with productivity suffering. Organizations that can correct the issues causing employees to consider leaving can break the cycle and stop the turnover intentions from becoming an actual turnover. Retaining employees can assist in maintaining productivity and eliminate the additional costs of replacing and training employees.

There is some debate on whether turnover intention results in an employee's actual departure from the organization. Some researchers contend that turnover intention is the final step of a cognitive process that ends with the employee leaving an organization (Sun & Wang, 2017). Findings from several studies have shown a link between an individual's intention to perform a behavioral act and carrying out that intent (Cheng, Bartram, Karimi, & Leggat, 2016; Shanker, 2014; Sun & Wang, 2017). The

relationship between intent and action with regard to employee retention is supported by other research that shows a correlation between turnover intentions and actual employee turnover (Cohen et al., 2016). The linkage found between individual intention and action both behaviorally in general and towards employee retention specifically indicates the importance of implementing strategies that decrease employee turnover intentions. Turnover intentions can have a negative impact on productivity and also provide an indication of likely turnover within the organization.

Once an employee departs an organization, collecting data on the linkage between turnover intent and actual turnover actions is difficult, and because of the cognitive process the employee follows, turnover intention is widely used as a predictor of actual turnover actions. However, many factors may impact an employee's final decision to leave an organization regardless of intent. Job market demand may play a role in the employee's ability to act on their turnover intentions. The risks and costs associated with leaving a job may cause the employee to remain in their current position regardless of their turnover intentions. These costs may include financial costs, transaction costs, and psychological costs (Sun & Wang, 2017). Employees may also be concerned with achieving their career progression and goals. A perception that an organization or leader does not support or assist in those career goals may provide the incentive for employees to consider other options and increase turnover intention (Alhamwan & Mat, 2015). Although there may be multiple factors impacting employee turnover intentions, I did not attempt to identify the role or magnitude of all them. Leadership and job satisfaction

either directly or indirectly impact many of the factors identified and will be the focus of this study.

### **Leadership Style and Turnover Intentions**

An organization's leadership can play a positive or negative function in influencing employees' turnover intentions. Recent literature indicates an organization's leadership plays a critical role in the retention of employees (Khalid et al., 2016). Waldman et al. (2015) conducted a study on hospitality employees in China and found that transformational leadership had a significant negative correlation with turnover intentions and moderated the relationship between turnover intentions and actual employee turnover. Among workers in the United States, 16.5% of employees reported they planned to leave their job because the leadership behaviors exhibited by their direct supervisor did not align with the characteristics desired (Ariyabuddhiphongs & Kahn, 2017). In a study conducted in the banking industry, Kahlid, Pahi, and Ahmed (2016) found a direct relationship between leadership styles and the turnover intentions of employees. Gyensare, Anku-Tsedde, Sand, and Okpoti (2016) found the relationship between leadership style and turnover intention was mediated by an employee's affective commitment. Additionally, Kahlid, Pahi, and Ahmed (2016) found that job satisfaction significantly moderated the relationship between leadership style and turnover intentions. Addressing issues involving dissatisfaction with leadership styles and practices holds the potential to reduce employee turnover intentions.

Employees may choose to leave an organization for any number of reasons. Considerations for leaving may include pay, benefits, job responsibilities, differences in



values, concerns with work-life balance, or relationships with leaders (Fashola, Akanni, & Ajila, 2016). A discrepancy between desired and actual outcomes in any of these areas or others can lead to employee turnover. Employees may like the organization or its mission but consider changing jobs because of what they perceive to be ineffective leadership (Azanza, Moriano, Molero, & Levy Mangin, 2015). A less than satisfying relationship with leadership can outweigh a good employee fit with the organization. For industries that rely on qualified and competent employees, retention of those employees is a key aspect of organizational success.

Leadership styles may impact several aspects of employee perceptions, behaviors, and actions that in turn affect employee turnover. The significance of the relationship between leader and employee is such that an employee's belief of favorable or unfavorable interactions can compel employees to consider leaving the organization. In a recent study, 71% of the respondents indicated that interpersonal relationships were an important consideration in job satisfaction and turnover intentions (Erceg & Suljug, 2016). The relationship is significantly strong that employees may consider positions with lower salaries in order to work with an effective leader (Alatawi, 2017). In their study conducted in higher education institutions, Alonderiene and Majauskaite (2014) found that leadership style had a direct effect on employee job satisfaction which in turn had a direct effect on employee turnover intentions.

Additionally, Alonderiene and Majauskaite (2014) also found that a transformational leadership style had a stronger correlation with job satisfaction and turnover intention than a transactional leadership style. Leadership should not

underestimate the importance of interpersonal relationships in the workplace. An employee's relationship with a supervisor has shown to have a stronger impact on turnover intentions than relationships with peers or organizational environment.

A transformational leadership style can affect employee turnover intentions through the characteristics of idealized influence, individualized consideration, and inspirational motivation. Leaders who employ a transformational style can provide inspiration, cultivate a trusting relationship that builds respect, and develop their employees' self-worth and confidence, creating a connection that decreases turnover intentions (Caillier, 2016a). Leaders can create an environment of psychological empowerment that decreases employee turnover (Sahu, Pathardikar, & Kumar, 2018). A transformational leadership style can produce more significant outcomes over other styles by increasing the quality of the relationship between leader and employee (Notgrass, 2014). Current research supports the psychological aspect of employees' turnover cognitions and ways transformational leadership creates a supportive environment that employees desire. The dimensions of a transformational leader contribute to an employee's personal needs minimizing the likelihood of their leaving the organization.

The individualized attention a transformational leader provides can increase employee commitment and retention. The individualized consideration dimension of the transformational leadership style has been shown to reduce turnover intentions by engaging employees and meeting their individual needs (Caillier, 2016a).

Transformational leaders show a personal interest in their employees by employing human resources programs to promote individual development and career progression

(Caillier, 2016b). The support for individual needs and goals that transformational leadership provides decreases the likelihood that employees will look for other employment opportunities to meet their goals. An employee who is satisfied with their development and advancement opportunities is less likely to consider leaving the organization and will be more motivated to contribute to organizational goals.

The characteristics of a transformational leader create an environment in which the employee feels empowered and a significant part of the organization.

Transformational leaders build a bond between the employee, the leader, and their organization by conveying the organizational goals and mission and tying those to the individual employee's growth and development (Caillier, 2016a). They can develop an environment that fosters growth and development that links the employee to the organizational planning and success (Grissom, Viano, & Selin, 2015). Providing for employees' personal goals can motivate them to work towards a shared goal (Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016). Employees who are comfortable in their work environment are less likely to look for other employment opportunities when they perceive a beneficial relationship with their leadership (Madden, Mathias, & Madden, 2015). A positive work environment with supportive leaders has shown to have a negative impact on turnover intention (Al-Hamdan, Manojlovich, & Tanima, 2017). The transformational leadership dimension of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration have been shown to produce empowered employees with a bond with their supervisor and organization. Employees with such a connection are likely to be more productive and have less motivation to leave the organization. The

opportunities and shared identity the transformational leaders develop in their employees can lead to greater motivation and satisfaction which can lead to decreased turnover actions.

### **Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intentions**

Employees can derive job satisfaction from multiple sources that include leadership and manager competence, workload and assignments, workplace environment, and workgroup dynamics. Research findings have indicated that organizational turnover decreases relative to increases in employee job satisfaction (Cohen et al., 2016; Jagadale & Chinchpure, 2016; Kong et al., 2015). The most significant impact on job satisfaction are the factors involving leadership and management (Sojane, Klopper, & Coetzee, 2016). In a study conducted with health-care staff in rural China, researchers found low job satisfaction resulted in high turnover intentions (Wang et al., 2017). A separate study also conducted in rural China found that village doctors with low job satisfaction expressed higher levels of turnover intentions (Zhang & Fang, 2016). While many factors affect job satisfaction, research has indicated that transformational leadership has a direct impact on job satisfaction which then has a direct effect on turnover intentions among employees (Alonderiene & Majauskaite, 2016). In this study, I sought to identify relationships between overall job satisfaction factors and turnover intention but also to determine any mediating relationships the two dependent variables may have on their relationships with turnover intentions.

I selected junior executives as the target population for this study to identify the strength of the effect of the leadership and job satisfaction on the turnover intention of

this group. The impact of job satisfaction has been observed across demographic groups and has been found to be significant among early career employees (Lee et al., 2017). An early career employee who does not perceive the potential for personal growth and professional development will not be satisfied with their position and may begin to look for other positions that will fill their needs. These issues are significant since organizations may spend a significant amount of time, energy, and funds on recruiting and training these early career employees. These same factors hold for junior executives but extend even deeper. Junior executives are likely to have significant experience with the organization and possess a multitude of skills and knowledge that contribute towards organizational goals. The departure of junior executives can hinder organizational success when they leave to join other organizations.

Some research has indicated generational and employee position levels may be a factor in employee job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Researchers examined the behaviors of line employees and supervisors and found variances in turnover intentions between the groups as well as among different demographic groups (Lu et al., 2016). Supervisors were found to have lower turnover intentions than line employees. However, younger employees were less likely to consider leaving their job than their older counterparts. One possible explanation to account for this discrepancy is older employees may have defined career paths or goals and identification and understanding of any discrepancies between their goals and their actual position. When the employee perceives a situation where the two do not match, they are more likely to consider leaving their

position. With this study, I sought to determine if junior executives apply the same thought process to their career and turnover considerations.

The relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention does not appear to be isolated to any demographic or career group. In a study examining the relationship in the nursing career field, the researchers found a significant relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention in both the nurse participants and non-nurse participants (Andresen, Hansen, & Grov, 2017). Deery and Jago (2015) conducted a review of the current literature to examine the relationship between work-life balance, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions in the hospitality industry. Their review of 62 articles written between 2001 and 2012 supported research in other industries that showed a significant relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions. In this study, I examined similar relationships among junior executives in the energy industry to provide further support to the findings in other industries and job levels.

### **Transition**

Employee turnover can have a significant impact on the success of an organization. In addition to the cost of recruiting and training a replacement, the loss of an employee can negatively impact the continuity and momentum of operations and strategic plans. The specific business problem that I have addressed in this study is some senior executives in the energy industry do not understand the relationship between junior executives' perceptions of senior executives' leadership styles, junior executives' job satisfaction, and junior executives' turnover intentions. Burns' (1978) transformational leadership theory provides the framework I have used to examine the impact of

leadership style and job satisfaction on employees' turnover intentions. Section 2 contains information on study design, methodology, and data collection technique, instruments, and analysis. Section 3 includes the presentation of the findings along with an application to current business operation and recommendations for future research.

## Section 2: The Project

Section 2 outlines my role as the researcher in this study and presents the research method and design I employed. This section introduces the population and sampling, data collection techniques and instruments, study validity, and data analysis techniques I used for the study. An explanation of the informed consent method and protection of participants was included to outline procedures I used to ensure compliance with ethical research method requirements.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to examine the relationship between junior executives' perceptions of senior executives' leadership styles, junior executives' job satisfaction, and junior executives' turnover intentions. The independent variables were senior executive's leadership styles and junior executives' job satisfaction. The dependent variable was junior executives' turnover intentions. The target population for this study consisted of junior executives employed in the United States energy industry. A better understanding of the relationship between these variables may assist businesses in developing strategies to improve retention of junior executives. Improving retention and reducing turnover costs could provide an economic benefit of reduced costs for products and services, creating the opportunity for businesses to reinvest into the community or charitable organizations. Improved retention and stability in the workforce can reduce employee stress and thus potentially fostering innovation in sustainability efforts that benefit the environment (Derecskei, 2016).



### **Role of the Researcher**

My objective in this study was to collect data from the participants via electronic survey to identify relationships between junior executives' perceptions of senior executives' leadership style, junior executives' job satisfaction, and junior executives' turnover intentions. I examined correlations between the variables with the goal of objectivity in research (see Luft & Shields, 2014). Data collection was conducted using preexisting survey instruments, the MLQ-5X, the JSS, and the TIS. Data were analyzed using SPSS Version 25.

The researcher must identify any bias and take measures to minimize that bias to avoid influencing participant selection, data collection, and data analysis (Judkins-Cohn, Kielwasser-Withrow, Owen, & Ward, 2014). I have never worked in the energy industry and have no personal or direct relationship with the study participants. The researcher should be cognizant of the level of interaction or detachment from participants during data collection. If researchers allow themselves to become an integral part of the data collection, the potential exists for the creation of unconscious bias (Cairney & St Denny, 2015). I made the decision to employ a quantitative study to examine these variables in order to mitigate any bias by eliminating any personal contact with the participants. An additional mitigation measure was to use preexisting survey instruments that other researchers have used to examine these variables.

The content of the email invitation to participate included information on confidentiality and informed consent. I submitted a research ethics review application to the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and received approval prior to

contact with any participants. My function as a researcher was to establish a sampling strategy, initiate contact with participants or their organization, collect data via an online survey, analyze the resulting data, and evaluate the results of the analysis. Throughout the data collection process and contact with the participants, I adhered to the principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice in compliance with the Belmont Report (1978). I provided participants with information on all aspects of the research, minimized their exposure to risk while maximizing the benefits, and balanced the burden and benefits of the research between participants and the general public. I minimized direct interaction with study participants to reduce the possibility that researcher bias would affect participant response.

### **Participants**

The participants for this study comprised junior executives working for energy companies. For this study, a *junior executive* is an individual receiving training and mentorship from a senior executive. This group was selected for study due to increasing demand for senior executives as the baby boomer generation retires and vacates those positions. Banerjee-Batist and Reio (2015) found the relationship between junior and senior level employees is correlated to junior employee turnover. The use of non-probability purposive sampling is necessary to collect data from the specific population dictated in this study (Apostolopoulos & Liargovas, 2016).

Qualtrics provided data collection services to gain access to the target population for this study. I had no direct contact with the participants, with all interactions carried out via digital communication. To initiate a working relationship, I furnished all

participants with an opening letter to (a) introduce the research, (b) include the information necessary to allow them to understand what participation entailed, and (c) provide proper informed consent. I used follow-up reminders to build a relationship to gain the participants involvement and increase response rates (see Van Mol, 2017).

### **Research Method and Design**

In the following section, I provide justification for the study method and design. Research questions determine the research methodology and design that will provide data needed to answer them. To test the hypotheses regarding leadership style, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions, I selected a quantitative methodology and correlational design.

#### **Research Method**

In this study, I sought to determine relationships between leadership style, job satisfaction, and employee turnover intentions. A suitable research approach and method are determined by the research question, and the deductive approach of a quantitative method supports the testing of a theory (Gelling, 2015). A quantitative approach was selected for this study because it most suited the research question in determining relationships between the variables. A quantitative approach was appropriate for this study since it involves explanatory and deductive methods to test a theory, whereas qualitative methods use exploratory and inductive processes to generate themes that may develop a theory. The use of a quantitative method provides larger samples than qualitative, which allows the researcher to obtain results that may be generalized to other settings (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015).

The application of a quantitative approach provides greater statistical validity and reliability, yielding greater generalizability and strengthening the results of the study (de Kock, 2015). Surveys used in quantitative methods allow for a more efficient allocation of time, enabling the accumulation of a larger amount of data than qualitative methods in a given period (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). In studies where a quantitative or qualitative approach does not adequately address the research problem, a mixed-methods approach may be employed (Leider et al., 2014). Since a quantitative approach could provide the data necessary to address the research problem, it was the appropriate choice for this study.

My use of quantitative methodology for this study was consistent with the research methods employed for similar studies examining the impact of leadership style and job satisfaction (Shurbagi, 2014). Alonderiene and Majauskaite (2015) used a quantitative methodology to study the impact of leadership style on job satisfaction, and Khalid et al. (2016) employed the same approach to examine the relationship between leadership style, job satisfaction, and retention. Almandeel (2017) made use of quantitative methodology to study the effect of leadership styles on the relationship between employees' personality types and turnover intention, while Zareen et al. (2015) applied the same approach to assess the impact of transactional, transformational, and Laissez-faire leadership styles on employee motivation.

### **Research Design**

In this study, I examined the relationships between junior executives' perceptions of senior executives' transformational leadership styles, junior executives' job

satisfaction, and junior executives' turnover intentions. I used correlational research to explore relationships that exist among variables and delineate them in relation to their direction and strength; it is a suitable approach when testing for non-causal relationships between variables (Inabinett & Balero, 2014). A non-experimental correlational analysis was most appropriate for this research because it explores relationships between variables and subsequently identifies the magnitude and direction of the linear relationships between the variables (Prematunga, 2012).

Researchers adopting a quantitative approach can employ either experimental, quasi-experimental, or non-experimental design (Orcher, 2014). An experimental design involves an experimental group that receives the intervention of an independent variable and a control group that does not receive the intervention and serves as the baseline for comparison (Delost & Nadder, 2014). An experimental design would require manipulation of the independent variables of junior executives' perceptions of senior executives' leadership styles and junior executives' job satisfaction, which cannot be altered, making a non-experimental correlational design an appropriate choice (Orcher, 2014). A quasi-experimental study is similar to an experimental approach, as both employ a control variable to isolate a causal effect. However, the quasi-experimental approach differs from the experimental in that the introduction of the control variable is not randomized (Waddington et al., 2017).

### **Population and Sampling**

The participants for this study comprised junior executives working in the United States energy industry. For this study, a *junior executive* is an individual responsible for

exercising independent judgment in the management of business operations. My focus in this study was to examine the relationships between junior executives' perceptions of senior executives' transformational leadership styles, junior executives' job satisfaction, and junior executives' turnover intentions. I employed nonprobability, purposive sampling to collect the data for this study.

*Purposive sampling* refers to the inclusion of participants based on specific characteristics. Purposive sampling is a nonprobability sampling method that collects data from participants based on specific demographic characteristics such as age, jobs, or life experiences (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). This technique is used to select participants based on their distinct characteristics or experience with the goal of obtaining information unique to that group (Suen, Huang, & Lee, 2014). While purposive sampling is generally used in qualitative studies, it was appropriate for this study because the focus was on the experiences and perceptions of junior executives that may not be exhibited in other groups.

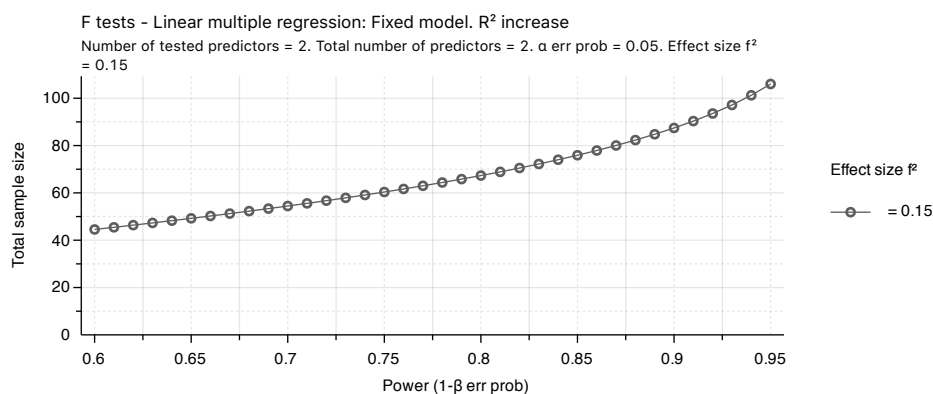


Figure 1. A priori calculation results.

I conducted an a priori statistical power analysis to determine the sample size needed to mitigate Type II error which occurs when the null hypothesis is false but not

rejected (Kim, 2015). I calculated the required sample size of 485 using an alpha level of 0.05, a power of 0.80, and an effect size of 0.02 with two predictors. Required sample size for this study was calculated using G\*Power 3.1 to ensure the data provided sufficient power to produce meaningful results. The effect size for an a priori power analysis refers to the magnitude of the real effect the researcher desires to detect with a value of 0.02 detecting a small effect size (Kim, 2015). The alpha determines the likelihood of a Type I error, or the possibility of finding a false positive with lower alpha values providing greater statistical significance in the results.

### **Ethical Research**

The Belmont Report provides the basic ethical principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice that all researchers should follow when conducting research. Researchers must evaluate their activities and adherence to the framework of the Belmont Report to determine appropriate actions that protect and respects participants by assessing risks of the project with potential benefits (Adams et al., 2015). Informed consent is the vehicle researchers use to follow the Belmont Report's *respect for persons* principle (The Belmont Report, 1978). It is the method used to safeguard participants by informing them of all aspects of the research and data collection in language understandable to the target population (Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Fomani, Shoghi, & Cheraghi, 2014).

The principle of *beneficence* holds that researchers should manage participant risk while attempting to maximize the benefits participants may receive (The Belmont Report, 1978). It is the responsibility of researchers to ensure the protection of participants from negative impacts they may experience and the benefits they may gain because of their

participation. The *justice* principle addressed in the Belmont Report calls for the researcher to balance the burden and benefits of the research among participants and the general population. Equitable treatment includes researchers' decisions in the selection of participants to ensure specific groups are not unduly burdened.

No research activities involving human subjects began until I received approval from the Walden University IRB. The Walden University IRB number for this study is 01-24-19-0600638. I provided participants with an informed consent form as a prerequisite to involvement in the study. The objective of informed consent is to respect and protect participants' autonomy through the concepts of voluntariness, capacity, disclosure, understanding, and decision (Tam et al., 2015). The informed consent form incorporated a description of the study, procedures for completion of the voluntary survey, risks and benefits of being in the study, privacy safeguards, voluntary completion or withdrawal from the study. I included contact information for me and the Research Participant Advocate at Walden in the explanation and instructions for the survey. Participants must be free to participate without undue influence and have the capacity to comprehend the nature of the study and all relevant information on risks and benefits before making their decision. All responses were voluntary. Participants implied consent by continuing to the survey after reading the informed consent document distributed by Qualtrics. Respondents were under no obligation to participate and were able to withdraw from participation at any point in the survey by closing the browser window (see Hardicre, 2014b). Participants received no compensation for their involvement in the research beyond that provided by Qualtrics.



Anonymous collection of survey responses protects the privacy and confidentiality of the participants. Any personally identifiable information was not tracked or included in the survey results. Qualtrics, the data collection company I used, transmits survey responses over a secure, SSL encrypted connection to protect the participants. Qualtrics treats all survey information as private and only provides collected information to the researcher. All data collected will be stored digitally on an external hard drive in a password protected Excel spreadsheet and SPSS dataset. I have secured the external hard drive and all hard copies in a fireproof safe. After five years, I will shred the hard copies, delete the digital files, and destroy the electronic storage media. I will not share or use the information for any other purposes.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

I conducted data collection using preexisting survey instruments, the MLQ 5X-short form, the JSS, and the TIS. Selection of a data collection instrument that measures the elements intended provides measurement validity to the collected data (Cor, 2016). Authors of each instrument conducted testing for instrument reliability and validity negating the need for a pilot study. The results of the testing for each instrument are identified in the subsequent sections.

### **Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire**

The MLQ developed by Avolio and Bass (2004) is based on the Full Range Leadership Theory and was formulated to assess the transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles (Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2015). The MLQ is widely used to assess full range leadership styles, capturing subordinates' perceptions of their superiors'

leadership style. The questionnaire was designed to collect a large volume of information surrounding leadership behaviors and characteristics to measure leadership styles as well as leader outcomes, effectiveness, and subordinates' satisfaction to differentiate between effective and ineffective leadership (Belias & Koustelios, 2014).

The MLQ consists of 45 items that measure distinct leadership behaviors, grouping specific items to identify the leadership styles of Transformation Leadership, Transactional Leadership and Laissez-Faire Leadership (Popli & Rizvi, 2015). The MLQ groups questionnaire items relating to behavioral components to each of the three leadership styles (Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2015). The components of transformational leadership include idealized influence behavior, idealized influence attribution, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Behaviors associated with transactional leadership include contingent reward, active management by exception, and passive management by exception. The laissez-faire leadership style is recognized as the non-leadership factor.

The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for the MLQ was measured at 0.834, with the  $\alpha$ 's for Transformational, Transactional, and Laissez-Faire measured at 0.934, 0.841, and 0.719 respectively (Popli & Rizvi, 2015). Dimitrov and Darova (2016) conducted an analysis of the scales and subscales of the MLQ and found acceptable internal validity and construct validity that corresponds with Avolio and Bass's (2004) theory model.

### **Job Satisfaction Survey**

The JSS is a 36-item scale developed by Spector (1985) that measures distinct aspects of job satisfaction. The instrument measures the discrepancy between nine job

facets; pay level, promotion opportunities, supervisor interaction, benefits, contingent rewards, operating procedures, interaction with co-workers, nature of work, and communication (Spector, 1985). Satisfaction is measured by a comparison of what the employee expects to receive in each job facet versus what they are actually receiving, based on the level of importance placed on each facet by the employee (McFarlin et al., 1995). Validation testing of the JSS produced a Cronbach's alpha of 0.91 for the total scale exceeding the conventionally accepted minimum standard of 0.70 (Smyth et al., 2011). The testing results for the individual facets ranged from 0.73 to 0.92 (Masum et al., 2016). The survey items are stated in both affirmative and negative which requires reverse-coding of the negative items (Masum et al., 2016).

### **Turnover Intention Scale**

The Turnover Intention Scale (TIS) is a 6-item scale developed by Roodt (2004). The TIS employs questions such as: *How often have you considered leaving your job?* and *How often do you look forward to another day of work?* to examine employee intent. Answers are provided using a six-point Likert scale using a range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Validation testing of the TIS produced a Cronbach's alpha of 0.80 justifying the use of the scale as a valid and reliable measurement to assess employee turnover intentions (Bothma & Roodt, 2013).

Additional studies have reported an internal consistency reliability coefficient in the range of 0.79 to 0.97 (Jacobs & Roodt, 2007; Malik & Khalid, 2016; Takawira, Coetzee, & Schreuder, 2014). The TIS was selected because it can provide a more accurate indication of turnover intention compared to other instruments employed in

literature that are based on only a relatively small number of items (Jacobs & Roodt, 2007). Multiple researchers have attempted to measure turnover intention with a single item (Guimaraes, 1997; Lambert, Hogan, & Barton, 2001; Anderson, 2015). Critics of the use of single item indicators point to the lack of construct validity in the measurement of turnover cognitions (Jacobs & Roodt, 2007).

### **Data Collection Technique**

I collected data for this study using Qualtrics, an online survey distribution and data collection service. Web-based data collection is an efficient method for researchers as it allows for a faster collection of random sampling and generation of large datasets for analysis (Tella, 2015). Potential questions regarding the survey process, survey questions, and response selection must be anticipated and addressed in the instructions provided for the administration of web-based surveys. Four principles that should be addressed by researchers in the development of a survey instrument are (a) simple design, (b) consistency throughout the survey, (c) a natural flow to the survey questions and responses, and (d) a clear and attractive design to entice participation and completion of the survey (Niero, 2014).

Research conducted involving human participants requires careful planning and administration with regard to ethical integrity, proper informed consent, participant confidentiality, and risk management (Hardicre, 2014a). Proper informed consent involves providing participants with the information necessary to allow them to understand what participation entails (Hardicre, 2014b). Such information includes the

use of the data collected, retention and confidentiality of any identifiable data, data security methods, and length of time data will be retained (Hartnett, 2014).

Qualtrics sent an invitation letter to survey panels whose members who met the inclusion criteria and requested their participation in the study. Qualtrics distributed the consent form and survey link to participants through their survey panels. Participants were asked to review the information on the study and the informed consent and were informed that they implied consent by continuing to the survey.

Obtaining an adequate response rate to ensure validity is a consideration for any data collection method but has been a concern in the past with the web-based surveys receiving lower response rates than other methods (Kaplowitz, Hadlock, & Levine, 2004). Several methods can be employed to increase participation and response rates of web-based surveys including the use of pre-notifications and post-notifications, with post-notifications providing greater results (Jordan, Brandon-Lai, Sato, Kent, & Funk, 2014). Rubsamen, Akmatov, Castell, Karch, and Mikolajczyk (2017) conducted a study examining survey response rates and patterns and found that both paper-based and web-based produced similar results.

Survey participants may exhibit some form of response bias when factors the researcher does not have the intention of measuring influence participant answers inadvertently (Kieruj & Moors, 2013). *Extreme response bias (ERS)* refers to the tendency of participants to select responses at the extreme ends of a Likert-type scale (Dowling, Bolkt, Deng, & Li, 2016). Factors that can contribute to extreme response bias include questionnaire layout, question format and wording, and type of rating scales used

for the questions (Kieruj & Moors, 2013). *Acquiescence response bias (ARS)* is the tendency for respondents to agree with question items regardless of question content (Kieruj & Moors, 2013). This phenomenon can occur with the respondent is unsure of their response and choose the answer that provides a positive response.

In a study examining factors that influence participant response, Kieruj and Moors (2013) found no evidence that the number of responses per question influenced the likelihood of extreme response bias. They found that older participants who viewed themselves as intelligent, sociable, extraverted, and with strong opinions were more likely to exhibit extreme response behaviors. However, Clarke (2001) found that using response scales with answers involving 5 to 7 items meaningfully reduced ERS with the greatest reduction occurring with a three-item scale. Costello and Roodenburg (2015) found that the level of ARS decreased with age and higher education levels.

### **Data Analysis**

In this study, I explored the relationships between junior executives' perceptions of senior executives' transformational leadership styles, junior executives' job satisfaction, and junior executives' turnover intention. Critical factors of the research process include the analysis and interpretation of data relating to the phenomena (Russell, 2014). The research question for this study was: What is the relationship between junior executives' perceptions of senior executives' transformational leadership styles, junior executives' job satisfaction, and junior executives' turnover intentions?

Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): A statistically significant relationship does not exist between junior executives' perceptions of senior executives' transformational leadership styles, junior executives' job satisfaction, and junior executives' turnover intentions.

Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_a$ ): A statistically significant relationship exists between junior executives' perceptions of senior executives' leadership styles, junior executives' job satisfaction, and junior executives' turnover intentions.

I conducted preliminary testing using Pearson correlation to test the strength of the linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Next, I employed multiple linear regression to determine the combined effect of leadership style and job satisfaction to predict the strength of their impact on junior executive turnover intentions. The dependent variable of turnover intention may appear to be a dichotomous variable but would require the use of a single item to measure the intent to stay or leave. Using a survey instrument with a single question that asks if the employee intends to stay or leave would provide the dichotomous data required for logistic regression. However, a criticism of the use of single item indicators is the lack of construct validity in the measurement of turnover cognitions (Jacobs & Roodt, 2007) Thus, I will be using the TIS to measure the dependent variable turnover intention, on a five-point Likert scale, with potential response scores could ranging from 6 to 30.

My use of the TIS with a five-point Likert scale to measure intent to stay made the use of logistic regression or point-biserial correlation analysis inappropriate for my study. This would violate the assumption of dichotomy necessary for both logistic regression and point-biserial correlation, which both require the outcome must be

discrete. Setting a cutoff score to create a dichotomous response is not possible. Bothma and Roodt (2011) conducted a study to validate the scale showing the scores for employees who resigned ( $M = 5.14$ ,  $SD = 1.26$ ) and those who stayed ( $M = 4.13$ ,  $SD = 1.28$ ). Because the standard deviations of each overlap with the other mean it is not possible to establish a score that has one group completely above and the other completely below.

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test can be used in studies that employ multiple independent variables. The test compares the means of different variables to identify between-group variability (Emerson, 2017). I am exploring potential relationships between junior executives' perceptions of senior executives' leadership style, junior executives' job satisfaction, and junior executives' turnover intentions and not variability between groups. ANOVA does not provide information on relationships between the variables and therefore is not appropriate for this study.

The survey instruments measured the independent and dependent variables on an ordinal scale level. Debate on the proper analysis of Likert scale data revolves around measuring interval data as ordinal, as parametric tests require interval data. Several studies have indicated parametric analysis of Likert ordinal data produces accurate results regardless of adherence to statistical assumptions (Sullivan & Artino, 2013). To measure the relationships between the variables and the strength of the relationships, multiple regression analysis is the most appropriate method of analysis.

Researchers who use parametric tests must ensure the data meets specific assumptions. The first statistical assumption of normality requires that the regression



produce residuals that follow a normal distribution (Sedgwick, 2013). The second assumption of linearity calls for a straight-line association between the independent and dependent variables (Sedgwick, 2013). The third assumption of homoscedasticity refers to the distribution of the residuals, with the variance the same among the values (Hunter & May, 1993). The fourth assumption of multicollinearity describes a situation of independent variables that are highly correlated which can cause inaccuracy in attributing variance of the dependent variable with the correct independent variable (Fotheringham & Oshan, 2016). I used SPSS Version 25 to check the correlation coefficient values and validate for a normal predicted probability plot to confirm the data complies with the assumptions.

The researcher addresses missing or corrupt data through a process called data cleaning which detects inconsistent data (Salem & Abdo, 2016). Procedures employed to deal with missing data include methods to repair records with missing data or to discard the data from the final analysis (Masconi, Matsha, Echouffo-Tcheugui, Erasmus, & Kengne, 2015). An electronic survey format employing a Likert scale aids in limiting corrupt data or unreadable data and allows for discarding surveys with missing data. Instructions to participants informed them to complete all items for their data to be included in the survey results. I did not include incomplete surveys in the final data analysis.

### **Study Validity**

The researcher conducting a quantitative study must ensure the survey instruments employed provide responses that accurately measure the constructs identified

and provide internal and external validity (Johnston et al., 2014). External validity addresses the extent that research findings can be generalized to other populations, settings, and environments (Pearl & Bereinboim, 2014). Internal validity concerns the potential influence of confounding variables on the outcome of research conducted using an experimental design (Halperin, Pyne, & Martin, 2015). The validity of a study and conclusions is also subject to statistical conclusion validity which focuses on the accuracy of any statistical inference found regarding relationships between the variables (Cor, 2016) and involves the assessment in the degree of confidence in the relationships between variables (Kratochwill & Levin, 2014).

External validity involves the ability to extrapolate study results to other groups, locations, or times (Hales, 2016). Threats to external validity can be minimized through population size and characteristics, validated data collection instruments, and the application of appropriate statistical analysis methods (Konradsen, Kirkevold, & Olsen, 2013). I calculated an a priori sample size using G\*Power 3.1 that produced a targeted sample size of 485 participants. The survey instruments I used in this study were the MLQ, the JSS, and the TIS. The MLQ is widely used to assess leadership styles, capturing subordinates' perceptions of the leadership style of their superiors (Popli & Rizvi, 2015). The JSS is designed to measure employee satisfaction in nine job facets and has shown good comparability in various types of organizations (Spector, 1985). The TIS uses a six-item scale which provides a more accurate indication of turnover intentions over other instruments based on a smaller number of items that lack construct validity (Jacobs & Roodt, 2007).

Internal validity is a concern to researchers employing experimental or quasi-experimental studies that introduce variables to determine causal relationships (Cor, 2016). Threats to internal validity encompass issues of accuracy of conclusions regarding causal relationships between variables (Bainbridge, Sanders, Cogin, & Lin, 2016). My intent with this study was not to identify causal relationships, instead, it was to ascertain possible correlations between the variables. Therefore, issues of internal validity are not a concern for this study.

Statistical conclusion validity refers to the use of appropriate statistical techniques and ensuring statistical assumptions are met to enhance the ability to draw the correct inference from the data (Cor, 2016). There are two types of statistical conclusion validity errors (Levine, 2011). A Type I error occurs when the researcher finds a relationship and incorrectly rejects a null hypothesis (Hales, 2016). A Type II error occurs when the researcher incorrectly supports a null hypothesis when a relationship actually exists (Hales, 2016). Examination of the selection of the appropriate statistical techniques and ensuring the relevant statistical assumptions are met are critical to establishing statistical conclusion validity. Violation of the assumptions of a given statistical test can affect the interpretation of the size and significance of an effect either by overestimation or underestimation (Whelan & DuVernet, 2015).

### **Transition and Summary**

In the preceding section, I presented the research method and design I used in this study as well as the ethical approach and methods employed in my role as the researcher. To test the relationship between junior executives' perceptions of senior executives'

transformational leadership styles, junior executives' job satisfaction, and junior executives' turnover intentions I applied a quantitative method and correlational design. This section introduced the population and sampling, data collection techniques and instruments, study validity, and data analysis. Section 3 reintroduces the purpose of this study and presents the findings. My analysis of the findings includes their application to professional practice, implications for social change, and concludes with recommendations for further study.

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

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to examine the relationship between junior executives' perceptions of senior executives' transformational leadership styles, junior executives' job satisfaction, and junior executives' turnover intentions. The independent variables were junior executives' perceptions of senior executives' transformational leadership styles and junior executives' job satisfaction. The dependent variable was junior executives' turnover intentions. The target population for this study consisted of junior executives employed in the United States energy industry. Data collection was accomplished using an online survey incorporating the MLQ, the JSS, and the TIS. Multiple linear regression results showed a statistically significant negative correlation between junior executives' perceptions of senior executives' transformational leadership styles, junior executives' job satisfaction, and junior executives' turnover intentions.

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

In this section, I will discuss the statistical tests employed to examine the stated hypotheses. Additionally, I will present the descriptive statistics, the results of the assumptions and inferential testing, discuss the findings, and conclude with a summary of findings relative to the research question. The overarching research question for this study was as follows: What is the relationship between junior executives' perceptions of senior executives' transformational leadership styles, junior executives' job satisfaction, and junior executives' turnover intentions? The two study hypotheses were:

Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): A statistically significant relationship does not exist between junior executives' perceptions of senior executives' transformational leadership styles, junior executives' job satisfaction, and junior executives' turnover intentions.

Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_a$ ): A statistically significant relationship exists between junior executives' perceptions of senior executives' leadership styles, junior executives' job satisfaction, and junior executives' turnover intentions.

Survey participants answered three demographic questions, 20 questions from the MLQ on transformational leadership style, the 36 questions of the JSS, and the six questions of the TIS-6 survey instrument. I tested the survey data using Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression with SPSS Version 25 to examine the data for statistically significant relationships between transformational leadership, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. Test results showed significant relationships between junior executives' perceptions of senior executives' transformational leadership styles, junior executives' job satisfaction, and junior executives' turnover intentions providing support for the alternative hypothesis.

### **Descriptive Statistics**

A total of 492 participants fully completed the survey and were included in this study. The demographic results showed male respondents ( $n = 325$ , 66.1%) outnumbered female respondents ( $n = 167$ , 33.9%). Individuals in the age group of 38 – 53 years old (Generation X) comprised the largest group of respondents ( $n = 183$ , 37.2%) followed by individuals in the 54-74 years old age group (Baby Boomers). The highest observed educational level reported by respondents was a Bachelor's degree ( $n = 189$ , 38.4%)

followed by a Master's degree, together making up 66.4% of the population. Table 1 provides details on the frequencies and percentages of the survey population.

Table 1

*Frequency Table for Demographics*

Variable	<i>N</i>	%
Gender		
Female	167	33.9
Male	325	66.1
Age		
18 to 24	5	1.0
25 to 37	129	26.2
38 to 53	183	37.2
54 to 74	171	34.8
Over 75	4	0.8
Education		
High school	28	5.7
Some college	61	12.4
Associates degree	47	9.6
Bachelor's degree	189	38.4
Some graduate school	14	2.8
Master's degree	138	28.0
Doctoral degree	15	3.0

*Note.* Due to rounding errors, percentages may not equal 100%.

I compiled composite scores for each of the survey instruments to obtain scores for transformational leadership, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. The observations for transformational leadership had an average of 72.83 ( $SD = 14.86$ ,  $SE_M = 0.67$ , Min = 29, Max = 100). The observations for job satisfaction averaged 153.97 ( $SD = 29.323$ ,  $SE_M = 1.32$ , Min = 65, Max = 216). The observations for turnover intention had an average of 14.79 ( $SD = 5.66$ ,  $SE_M = 0.26$ , Min = 6, Max = 30). Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for the three variables.

Table 2

*Means and Standard Deviations for Variables*

Scale	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE<sub>m</sub></i>
Transformational leadership	72.83	14.859	0.670
Job satisfaction	153.97	29.323	1.322
Turnover intention	14.79	5.661	0.255

*Note.* *N* = 492.

Cronbach's alpha is an accepted method to evaluate data to identify the existence of variable relationships and verify internal reliability (Vaske, Beaman, & Sponarski, 2017). My evaluation of the collected data followed the guidelines suggested by George and Mallery (2017) for Cronbach's alpha. Using the criteria recommended, the reliability of the transformational leadership and job satisfaction scales were excellent ( $> .90$ ), and the reliability of the TIS was good ( $> .80$ ). The values found for Cronbach's alpha values corresponded with previous research with reliability scores of 0.934 for the transformational leadership scale (Popli & Rizvi, 2015), 0.91 for the job satisfaction scale (Smyth et al., 2011), and 0.91 for the TIS (Malik & Khalid, 2016). Table 3 presents the results of Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis.

Table 3

*Cronbach's Alpha Reliability for Survey Instruments*

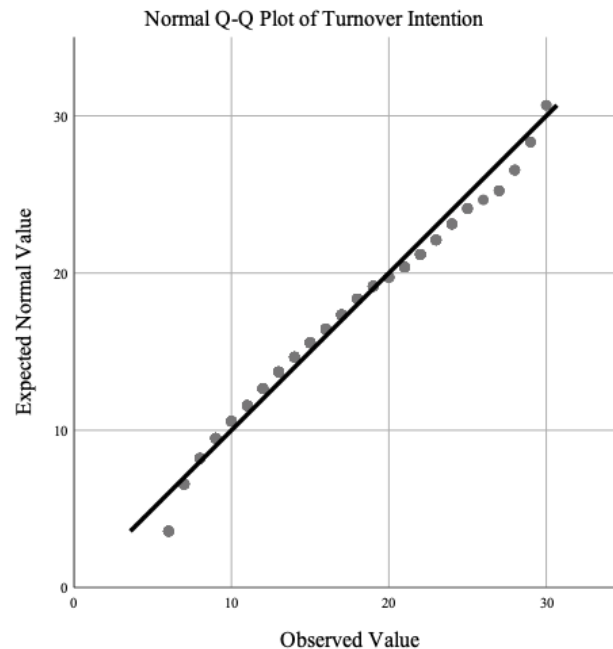
Scale	No. of items	$\alpha$
Transformational leadership	20	0.954
Job satisfaction	36	0.950
Turnover intention	6	0.861



## Tests of Assumptions

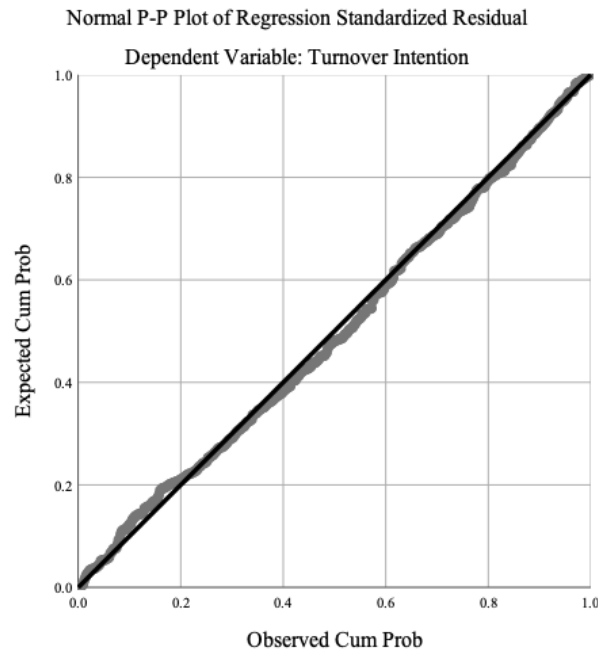
**Outliers.** A total of 500 completed surveys were received for this study. I screened the responses for outliers by applying the interquartile range rule using a value of 1.5. The calculations identified outlying responses in eight of the surveys. Those eight surveys were removed, and the final analysis was completed using the remaining 492 surveys.

**Normality.** Examination of a Q-Q scatterplot allows for visual identification of a normal distribution of data, comparing collected data to the theoretical expected data. Figure 1 shows the study data points closely follow the expected or normal outcomes depicted by the straight line; the normality of the data is assumed.



*Figure 2.* Q-Q scatterplot testing normality of turnover intention.

**Linearity.** The test for linearity was accomplished using a P-P plot examining the empirical cumulative distribution of the dataset with the theoretical expected cumulative distribution. Figure 2 depicts the P-P plot for the data points used in this study and indicates the assumption of linearity was met.



*Figure 3.* Linearity P-P plot testing linearity of turnover intention.

**Homoscedasticity.** To test for homoscedasticity, I viewed the scatterplot of the standardized residuals against the standardized predicted value as shown in Figure 4. The scatterplot shows the variation from the baseline is not consistent across the predicted values and presents a systematic pattern of the standardized residuals. Further analysis using the Glejser test confirmed the existence of heteroscedasticity with the job satisfaction variable. The results of the Glejser test are presented in Table 4.

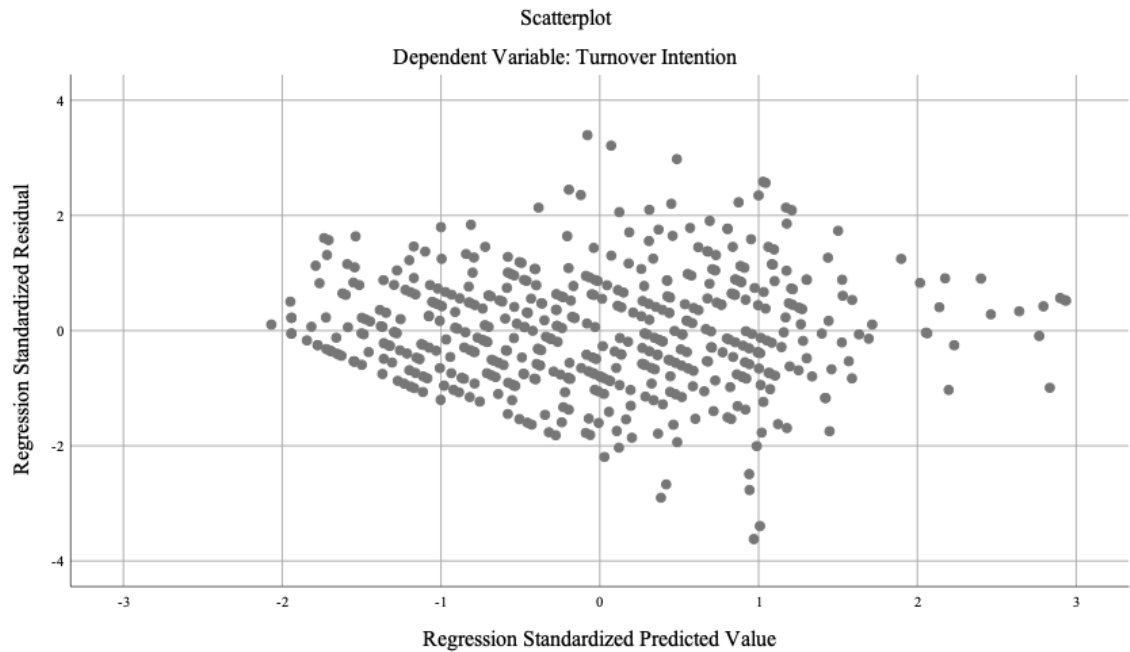


Figure 4. Residuals scatterplot testing homoscedasticity.

The existence of heteroscedasticity affects the accuracy of inferences drawn from the data. The use of weighted least squares is an alternative analysis that can be employed to remedy this situation (Williams, Grajales, & Kurkiewicz, 2013). Therefore, I employed the use of weighted least squares regression as a correction for the condition of heteroscedasticity.

Table 4

*Results of Glejser Test for Homoscedasticity*

	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
(Constant)	4.465	.583		7.663	.000
Transformational leadership	.004	.008	.029	.550	.583
Job satisfaction	-.013	.004	-.166	-3.126	.002

*Note.* Dependent variable = turnover intention.

**Multicollinearity.** Multicollinearity occurs when independent variables exhibit a strong correlation, making inferences problematic (Mishra, 2016). I evaluated multicollinearity of the independent variables in this study by calculating the variance inflation factor (VIF). A VIF value of 1 indicates the variables have no correlation, while values greater than 10 indicate a strong correlation (Weaving et al., 2019). The values produced for the variables transformational leadership and job satisfaction were both 1.419, and therefore a violation of multicollinearity was not evident. The coefficients and VIF for the independent variables are listed in Table 5.

Table 5

*Variables Test for Multicollinearity*

	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients			Collinearity statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	38.124	.959		39.754	.000		
Transformational leadership	-.015	.013	-.039	-1.147	.252	.705	1.419
Job satisfaction	-.144	.007	-.748	-21.779	.000	.705	1.419

*Note.* Dependent variable = turnover intention.

**Preliminary Correlations**

I conducted an initial analysis using the Pearson correlation to identify the relationships between transformational leadership, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. The relationship found was that turnover intention was significantly negatively correlated with both transformational leadership and job satisfaction. Table 6 shows the full correlation matrix.

Table 6

*Pearson Correlations for Study Variables*

Variable	1	2	3
1. Turnover intention	1		
2. Transformational leadership	-.441*	1	
3. Job satisfaction	-.749*	.556*	1

*Note.* \* $p < .01$

**Inferential Results**

I used multiple linear regression with two unordered sets of predictors,  $\alpha = .05$  (two-tailed) to examine the effect of transformational leadership and job satisfaction in predicting turnover intention among junior executives. The independent variables were junior executives' perceptions of senior executives' transformational leadership styles and junior executives' turnover intentions. The dependent variable was junior executives' turnover intentions. The null hypothesis was a statistically significant relationship does not exist between junior executives' perceptions of senior executives' transformational leadership styles, junior executives' job satisfaction, and junior executives' turnover intentions. The alternative hypothesis was a statistically significant relationship exists between junior executives' perceptions of senior executives' leadership styles, junior executives' job satisfaction, and junior executives' turnover intentions. Analyses were conducted to test the assumptions required for multiple linear regression, and no violations were noted in outliers, normality, linearity, or multicollinearity. However, I found a heteroscedastic condition, and as a result, used a weighted least squares regression to correct for the condition.

I conducted two linear regression analyses to predict junior executive turnover intentions. The first analyzed the predictors of transformational leadership and job satisfaction individually. The regression equation with transformational leadership as the predictor was significant,  $R^2 = .20$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .19$ ,  $F(1,490) = 118.55$ ,  $p < .01$ . The regression equation with job satisfaction as the predictor was also significant,  $R^2 = .56$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .56$ ,  $F(1,490) = 625.55$ ,  $p < .01$ . Based on these results, both transformational leadership and job satisfaction are predictors of turnover intention with job satisfaction the stronger of the two predictors. Table 6 shows the bivariate regression coefficients for each independent variable.

Table 7

*Results for Bivariate Linear Regression Testing of Transformational Leadership and Job Satisfaction*

	B	SE	$\beta$	$t$	$p$	95% CI
Transformational leadership	-.736	.068	-.441	-10.888	.000	(-.869, -.603)
Job satisfaction	-1.399	.056	-.749	-25.011	.000	(-1.509, -1.289)

*Note.* Dependent variable = turnover intention.

*Note.* Weighted least squares regression.

Next, I conducted a multiple regression analysis with both transformational leadership and job satisfaction as predictors. The linear combination of the two measures was significantly related to turnover intention,  $R^2 = .56$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .56$ ,  $F(1,489) = 313.26$ ,  $p < .01$ . The job satisfaction measure predicted significantly over and above the transformational leadership measure,  $R^2$  change = .37,  $F$  change(1,489) = 409.21,  $p < .01$ , but the transformational leadership measure did not predict significantly over and above the job satisfaction measure,  $R^2$  change = .00,  $F$  change(1,489) = .99,  $p = .32$ . Based on

these results, the transformational leadership measure appears to offer little additional predictive power beyond that contributed by a knowledge of the job satisfaction measure.

Of the job satisfaction measures, the measure for nature of work and contingent rewards were most strongly related to turnover intention. Supporting this conclusion is the strength of the bivariate correlation between the nature of work measure and the turnover intention measure, and the contingent rewards measure and the turnover intention measure, both of which were  $-.67, p < .01$ . Also strongly related was the communication measure with the bivariate correlation with the turnover intention measure of  $-.60, p < .01$ . Table 8 presents the regression coefficients for the nine subscales of job satisfaction.

Table 8

*Results for Bivariate Linear Regression Testing the Nine Subsets of Job Satisfaction<sup>a,b</sup>*

	B	SE	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Pay	-.654	.112	-.586	-16.009	.000	(-.734, -.573)
Promotion	-.548	.040	-.530	-13.828	.000	(-.626, -.470)
Supervision	-.748	.053	-.539	-14.149	.000	(-.852, -.644)
Fringe benefits	-.421	.049	-.365	-8.670	.000	(-.517, -.326)
Contingent rewards	-.799	.040	-.671	-20.045	.000	(-.877, -.721)
Operating procedures	-.504	.055	-.382	-9.154	.000	(-.612, -.395)
Coworkers	-.987	.065	-.567	-15.246	.000	(-1.114, -.859)
Nature of work	-1.121	.056	-.671	-20.047	.000	(-1.231, -1.011)
Communication	-.695	.042	-.601	-15.626	.000	(-.777, -.613)

*Note.* Dependent variable = turnover intention

*Note.* Weighted least squares regression

The results of this study confirm the findings of previous research on the existence of the relationship between transformational leadership style and turnover intention (Khalid et al., 2015; Maaitah, 2018; Waldman et al., 2016). It also confirms

previous research on the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention (Lee et al. 2017; Wang et al., 2017; Zhang & Fang, 2016). This study extends the knowledge regarding the strength of the relationships by indicating the greater influence of job satisfaction over transformational leadership style on employees' turnover intention.

### **Applications to Professional Practice**

Success in the business environment demands leaders that can create a vision for the future of the organization and lead and develop the next generation of leaders. The baby boomer generation is reaching retirement age and organizations may begin to realize the need to fill critical executive-level vacancies created by their departure. The results of this study may add to the body of knowledge regarding the importance of leadership style and job satisfaction in the retention of employees. Applying strategies that address the concepts found in this study may enable businesses to retain skilled and experienced junior executives that can maintain continuity and momentum of strategic efforts and reduce costs associated with the recruitment and replacement of employees.

### **Implications for Social Change**

Improving supervisor/employee relations, increasing job satisfaction, and reducing employee turnover holds the potential for positive social change and benefits to an organization, employees, and communities. A reduction in turnover and its associated costs could result in an economic benefit of lower costs for goods and services. Increasing job satisfaction can reduce employee stress and increase the creativity of employees, which can foster greater innovation. Creating a more stable workforce could



lessen the tension and disruptions to family and community activities caused by frequent job moves.

### **Recommendations for Action**

The findings of this study indicate that a transformational leadership style and job satisfaction can significantly influence employee turnover intention. Business leaders should develop training and mentoring programs to aid their employees to become effective leaders within the organization. Organizations should consider implementing a multi-rater, or 360-degree assessment program coupled with employee attitude surveys. These tools can provide feedback on leader performance that organizations can apply to strategies for improving leader development. The information can also be used to identify specific areas of job satisfaction or dissatisfaction within the organization. Business leaders should direct their efforts towards the areas that will provide the organization with the most return on investment, the areas that are most critical to their employees' job satisfaction and turnover intention. The results of this study identified the job satisfaction constructs of contingent rewards, nature of work, and communication as having the largest effect on turnover intention. An organization could schedule reoccurring surveys, sensing sessions, or other means to gauge the level of job satisfaction to identify which of the nine categories most strongly drives overall job satisfaction.

I will submit the findings and summary of this study to leaders in the United States Energy Association and the Association of Energy Services Professionals in the hopes they will share with the executives of their member companies. I will also post a summary on my projects page on ResearchGate. Finally, I intend to pursue publication in

professional journals and presentation at professional, academic, and leadership conferences.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

The target population identified for this study was junior executives in the energy industry working in the United States. Organizational culture can be influenced by many factors such as the personality of leadership, type of industry, nature of the business, or geographical region. I recommend this research be replicated to determine if other fields of business or industry produce similar results.

The data collected for this study showed evidence of heteroscedasticity which I addressed by using weighted least squares regression. Heteroscedasticity can be caused by the omission of an unidentified variable within the model (Klein, Gerhard, Büchner, Diestel, & Schermelleh-Engel, 2016). This study did not include variables for the length of time with the current organization or total years of experience. The inclusion of these or other variables may provide further insight into factors that impact employees' turnover intention.

### **Reflections**

During my military career, I had the opportunity to work for individuals with different leadership styles as well as receiving significant training in leadership skills. I supplemented the training with self-study centered around biographies of military and world leaders throughout history. However, I still found myself with questions about the impact of leadership on individuals and organizations. Through the DBA doctoral study process, I have been able to advance my personal and professional development and gain

confidence in my ability to research and analyze the information I find. I have discovered ways to answer some questions and have gained critical thinking skills to identify new questions.

My interest in studying employee turnover and the factors that influenced it were derived from observations of others and also my own experience. Through discussions with colleagues, I heard narratives of individuals who frequently moved from one position to another with no apparent benefit to career advancement. I also had an experience in which I made a career move due to my dissatisfaction regarding interactions with my supervisor. The findings of this study have made me realize that there may not be one single factor that influences employee turnover and in fact, may involve a myriad of factors that ultimately propel individuals to seek other employment. In retrospect, my decision to seek other employment involved factors related to both leadership style and job satisfaction. The findings of this study indicate there may be additional factors involved in employee turnover that I did not include in this model and opens the possibility for my future research.

### **Conclusion**

Maintaining continuity in senior positions is an area of concern for organizations as senior executives in the baby boomer generation reach retirement age. Demand for the best executive candidates will require organizations to identify strategies to retain these critical junior executives and maintain a competitive advantage (Anwar et al., 2014). I conducted this quantitative correlational study to examine the relationships between

junior executives' perceptions of senior executives' transformational leadership styles, junior executives' job satisfaction, and junior executives' turnover intentions.

Analysis of the survey responses from 492 junior executives in the energy industry showed a significant correlation between leadership style, job satisfaction, and turnover intention, supporting the alternative hypothesis. Job satisfaction was most strongly related to turnover intention, specifically in the areas of contingent reward, nature of work, and communication. Senior executives should view the results of this study as a stimulus for reviewing existing leadership and job satisfaction practices to identify areas of improvement for employee retention.

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Appendix A: Permission to Use Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

**Approval for Remote Online Use  
of a Mind Garden Instrument**

Effective date is October 19, 2018 for:

David Schmith

You submitted your Application for Remote Online Use at 2:07 pm EDT on October 19, 2018.



[v2]



**Remote online use of the Mind Garden instrument stated below is approved for the person on the title page of this document.**

**Your name:**

David Schmith

**Email address:**

david.schmith@waldenu.edu

**Company/institution:**

Walden University

**Mind Garden Sales Order or Invoice number for your license purchase:**

UBBFIAEWW

**The name of the Mind Garden instrument you will be using:**

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

**Please specify the name of and web address for the remote online survey website you will be using and describe how you will be putting this instrument online:**

The MLQ will be delivered to participants using the online survey service SurveyMonkey. Access to the questions will be through a link provided in the invitation. The MLQ questions will be included with Job Satisfaction Survey and Turnover Intention Statement. The survey has not yet been created but will be done at [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)

The Remote Online Survey License is a data license for research purposes only. This license grants one permission to collect and disclose (a) item scores and scale scores, (b) statistical analyses of those scores (such as group average, group standard deviation, T-scores, etc.) and (c) pre-authorized sample items only, as provided by Mind Garden, for results write-up and publication.

The instrument items, directions, manual, individual report, group report, and any other descriptive information available through Mind Garden is the intellectual property of the copyright holder and can be used only with purchase or written permission from Mind Garden.

*added 13 September 2018*

## Appendix B: Permission to Use the Job Satisfaction Survey

The JSS is copyrighted material but the author, Paul Spector, allows free use of the scale by researchers who comply with two conditions. The excerpt below comes from the JSS webpage and outlines those conditions:

### **Sharing of Results for Researchers Who Use My Scales**

All of my scales are copyrighted. I allow free use under two conditions.

1. The use is for noncommercial educational or research purposes. This means no one is charging anyone a fee. If you are using any of my scales for consulting purposes, there is a fee.
2. You agree to share results with me. This is how I continue to update the norms and bibliography.

#### **What Results Do I Need?**

1. Means per subscale and total score
2. Sample size
3. Brief description of sample, e.g., 220 hospital nurses. I don't need to know the organization name if it is sensitive.
4. Name of country where collected, and if outside of the U.S., the language used. I am especially interested in nonAmerican samples.
5. Standard deviations per subscale and total score (optional)
6. Coefficient alpha per subscale and total score (optional)

I would love to see copies of research reports (thesis, dissertation, conference paper, journal article, etc.) in which you used the JSS. Summaries are fine for long documents (e.g., dissertation), and e-mailed documents are preferred (saves copy and mail costs). Be sure to indicate how you want the work cited in the bibliography.

You can send the material to me via e-mail: pspector [at sign goes here] usf.edu or via regular mail: Paul Spector, Department of Psychology, PCD 4118, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL 33620 USA.

### Appendix C: Permission to Use the Turnover Intention Scale

Dear David

You are welcome to use the TIS!

For this purpose please find attached the longer 15-item version of the scale. The six items used for the TIS-6 are high-lighted. You may use any one of these two versions. The longer scale will generate higher coefficient Alpha reliabilities.

You are welcome to translate the scale if the need arises. I would like to propose the translate – back-translate method by using two different translators. First you translate from English into home language and then back from home language to English to see if you get to the original English wording.

This is the fourth version of the scale and it is no longer required to reverse score any items (on TIS-6). The total score can be calculated by merely adding the individual item scores. I would strongly recommend that you also conduct a CFA on the item scores to determine if any item scores should be reflected.

The only conditions for using the TIS is that you acknowledge authorship (Roodt, 2004) by conventional academic referencing (see article by Bothma & Roodt, 2013 in the *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*). The TIS may not be used for commercial purposes.

I wish you the very best with your research project!

Best regards

Gert

Prof Gert Roodt  
Dept Industrial Psychology & People Management