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Strategies for Increasing Healthcare Employees' Retention

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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2019

Abstract

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MS, Virginia College, 2011

BS, Howard University, 2007

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Employee turnover in healthcare negatively affects patient care. The purpose of this multiple case study was to identify the strategies that managers used to increase employee retention in healthcare organizations. The study population was healthcare managers and human resources personnel in 3 healthcare organizations in the southeastern region of the United States who had successfully implemented strategies to increase employee retention. The conceptual framework was the job-embeddedness theory. The data collection process included semistructured interviews and the review of organizational documents. Data analysis included identifying patterns and developing themes. Three key themes emerged from the data: increased, effective communication; praise and recognition; and options of flexibility to improve the work environment, career development, and work–life balance. These findings might contribute to social change by supporting leaders of healthcare organizations in maintaining sufficient workforce capacity to provide patient care and a healthy work environment for the employees.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Turnover is a challenge that managers face in many industries (Fibuch & Ahmed, 2015; Lopes, Guerra-Arias, Buchan, Pozo-Martin & Nove, 2017). In the healthcare industry, turnover leads to increased workloads and poor quality of patient care (Lopes et al., 2017). For the organization, turnover also leads to increased costs in recruiting, training, and retention efforts. The objective of this study was to identify strategies to improve retention in healthcare organizations.

Background of the Problem

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimated there will be an 18 million healthcare worker shortage by 2030 (Lopes et al., 2017). Healthcare managers continue to struggle to provide quality care to patients because of the lack of staff. Organizations incur indirect and direct financial costs from the vacant positions. The direct financial costs are the result of recruiting, training, and costs of vacancies (Collini, Guidroz, & Perez, 2015). The indirect financial costs occur when employees take on additional responsibilities in understaffed units (Collini et al., 2015).

The vacancies lead to a decrease in the quality of patient care, as well as a negative reputation for high turnover rates (Collini et al., 2015). Managers need to identify the factors that cause employees to leave their jobs. Human resource personnel and managers must identify factors to retain skilled employees and to remain competitive in the market (Nolan, 2015). As organizational managers continue to strive to retain knowledgeable employees in an ever-changing environment, managers strive to find strategies to improve retention.

To improve retention, managers need to identify the factors that lead employees to become dissatisfied and leave the organization. Employee dissatisfaction is the result of salary discrepancies, lack of advancement, and a lack of support from leadership (Parveen, Maimani, & Kassim, 2017). Another issue that causes an increase in stress and burnout among healthcare workers is the increase in workload because of vacant positions (Traynor, 2017). The development of policies and strategies to address the concerns of employees may lead to better retention.

Problem Statement

Burnout and stress levels continuously influence the shortage of healthcare workers (Voci, Veneziani, & Metta, 2016). The costs incurred when employees leave an organization range from 93% to 200% of the employees' salaries (Van Dierendonck, Lankester, Zmyslona, & Rothweiler, 2016). The general business problem was high employee attrition affects the profitability and quality of care in the healthcare industry. The specific business problem was some managers lack strategies to increase employee retention in healthcare organizations.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to identify the strategies that managers used to increase employee retention in healthcare organizations. The population was healthcare managers and human resource personnel in three southeastern region states' healthcare organizations who had successfully implemented strategies to increase employee retention. The implications for positive social change included the potential to benefit society by ensuring quality healthcare provided to the community and a positive work environment for employees.

Nature of the Study

Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods are three research methodologies. Qualitative researchers gather rich textural data from a small purposefully selected sample of the population (Gerring, 2017). Quantitative researchers examine relationships and test hypotheses to compare the variations among variables using numerical data (Yilmaz, 2013). Quantitative research was not an appropriate choice because I did not examine relationships or test hypotheses of retention. Researchers utilize mixed method studies when the analysis requires a combination of quantitative data and qualitative analysis of rich textural data to examine and explore a problem from different perspectives (Yin, 2014). Mixed method research was not used because I only explored qualitative analysis and not both quantitative and qualitative. Qualitative analysis was the most appropriate because I explored strategies to improve employee retention in the healthcare industry.

The purpose of case studies is to understand a specific attribute within a complex topic and add additional information to fill the gaps in the research (Crowe et al., 2011). I chose a qualitative multiple case study design for this study to explore strategies that managers used to increase employee retention in healthcare organizations. The multiple case study design was appropriate to explore strategies from different sources to develop a conclusion on the strategies to improve employee retention. Phenomenological research explores the meaning of participants’ lived experiences (Kumar, 2012). The exploration of participants' lived experiences was not the purpose of this study. Ethnography researchers explore groups' cultures (Sangasubana, 2011). A groups' culture was not the purpose of the study.

Research Question

What strategies do managers use to increase employee retention in healthcare organizations?

Interview Questions

1. What are the strategies used by managers to increase employee retention in your healthcare organization?
2. What, if any, leadership strategies have you identified that affect employee retention?
3. What were the key changes you made or suggested to the retention strategies?
4. How do you assess the effectiveness of the employee retention strategies that you implemented?
5. What, if any, information have you learned from exit interviews that led to changes in policies with the intention of increasing employee retention?
6. What other information would you like to share about any strategies that have been used to increase employee retention?

Conceptual Framework

Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablynski, and Erez (2001) developed the job embeddedness theory in 2001. The job embeddedness theory consists of three components: (a) links, (b) fit, and (c) sacrifice in the organization and the community

(Borah & Malakar, 2015). *Links* are ties to the community or organization (Allen, Peltokorpi, Rubenstein, 2016). *Fit* is a person's belief they belong to the community or organization (Allen et al., 2016). *Sacrifice* is the costs of leaving an organization or the community (Allen et al., 2016). The proposition of job embeddedness theory is to identify why employees stay with an organization (Ghosh & Gurunathan, 2015). Managers could use the information to develop strategies that could improve employee retention. The job embeddedness theory was expected to be useful in explaining managers' use of strategies to increase employee retention. The job embeddedness theory could help align the strategies for employee retention with the components of the job embeddedness theory.

Operational Definitions

Error management: A concept utilizing errors to teach rather than reprimand employees (Guchait, Pasamehmetoglu, & Madera, 2016).

Job embeddedness: What causes employees to stay in their positions (Collins & Mossholder, 2017).

Rounding: The discussion between the manager and the employees to discuss what things are important to them and for their well-being (Harms, 2018).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

In the study, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations might affect the accuracy and reliability of the study. Assumptions, as defined by Ellis and Levy (2009), are elements of the study that the researcher believes are true without evidence. Ellis and

Levy (2009) defined limitations as an uncontrollable internal threat to the validity of the study. Delimitations are defined as boundaries of the study (Ellis & Levy, 2009).

Assumptions

I assumed that the interview questions were appropriate to address the research problem and easily understood by the participants. I also assumed the information I obtained would result in information to help healthcare organizational leaders develop new strategies for employee retention. I further assumed the participants would have sufficient experience in employee retention efforts and were willing to share those experiences openly. I assumed that the information provided by the participants was honest, and I would work to ensure they did not feel coerced in any way.

Limitations

Because the participants were from a purposefully selected sample, the study was limited in generalizability. Telephone or Skype interviews might limit my ability to judge body language or other nonverbal cues. The amount of experience the participants had in employee retention might further limit the results of the study, as the years of experience might vary. Finally, the participants' responses must be honest and forthright, which might further limit the results of the study.

Delimitations

The participants included managers and human resource personnel in the healthcare industry in hospitals and independent healthcare organizations with (a) 5 years of human resources or healthcare management experience, (b) experience planning or implementing retention strategies, and (c) employment in the current organization for a minimum of 2 years. The participants were only from southeastern region states. The information in the study did not include any involuntary turnover data. The information in the study was not limited to a specific department in a healthcare facility.

Significance of the Study

Significance of the Study to Business

The cost of turnover in healthcare affects the quality of care provided to patients while potentially negatively affecting the organization financially (Fibuch & Ahmed, 2015). By reducing turnover intentions, organizational leaders benefit from the retention of trained and knowledgeable employees. The negative influences of turnover are increased costs to recruit, hire, and train new employees as well as loss of productivity (Fibuch & Ahmed, 2015). As employees decide to leave, their productivity decreases, which can affect the productivity and attitudes of their coworkers (Fibuch & Ahmed, 2015). The implementation of workforce flexibility was a strategy that could potentially increase employee retention. Workforce flexibility allows managers in healthcare organizations to decrease training times by training in the critical needs areas that are specific to the environment in which they work (Nancarrow, 2015). Healthcare managers who utilize strategies to increase employee retention of healthcare employees could reduce the costs of recruiting, hiring, and training while also maintaining knowledgeable employees and the quality of patient care.

Significance of the Study to Social Change

Employees benefit from a better work environment as well as financial stability. The community benefits from employee retention by receiving continuous quality health care. Retention of qualified employees reduces the workload for employees while improving the healthcare professional to patient ratio, therefore providing a better patient experience (Cheng, Bartram, Karimi, & Leggat, 2016).

Turnover in healthcare contributes to the deterioration of the quality of care and patient safety (Warrner, Sommers, Zappa, & Thornlow, 2016). Healthcare facilities that do not have adequate staff will inadvertently contribute to poorer population health (Robyn et al., 2015). The results of this study might contribute to social change by maintaining an adequate number of employees to provide safe and quality care to communities. The adequate number of employees might improve the quality of care while hospitalized, could provide better preventive care, and fewer errors because of heavier workloads.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

In the professional and academic literature, I explored the strategies of healthcare managers and human resource personnel to improve retention in healthcare. The purpose of the study was to identify strategies to retain experienced, knowledgeable staff (Holland, 2015). Managers and human resource personnel must work in collaboration to find solutions to sustain and compete in the healthcare market (Holland, 2015). Offering retention strategies might improve employees' commitment to the organization.

The literature review consisted of journal articles that cover the retention strategies through a variety of organizations. I retrieved journal articles from (a) Google Scholar, (b) Business Source Complete, (c) Sage Journals, (d) ABI/INFORM Collection, and (e) Emerald Insight. I used the following keywords when conducting searches: (a) *turnover*, (b) *stress*, (c) *workplace environment*, (d) *personal demands*, (e) *job satisfaction*, (f) *job embeddedness,* (g) *leader-member exchange*, (h) *career development*, (i) *leadership*, (j) *work-life balance,* (k) *employee engagement*, and (l) *rewards*/*recognition*/*tuition reimbursement*. The topics addressed in the literature review were (a) factors contributing to turnover intention, (b) factors contributing to retention, (c) job embeddedness theory, (d) Herzberg's two-factor theory, and (e) human capital theory.

The majority of the articles were from peer-reviewed journal articles. I cross-checked each reference with Ulrich's Periodicals Directory to verify the journals were peer-reviewed. The references used in the literature review consisted of peer-reviewed journal articles, a few journal articles, and other sources within the 5-year range. I had 85 total peer-reviewed journal articles, three outside of the 5- year range, and 88 within the 5-year range, which encompassed 96%. I also used one source that was outside the 5-year range that was not from a peer-reviewed journal, which accounted for 1% (see Table 1).

Table 1

Source Material

Sources	Outside of 5-year Range (2013 and earlier)	Within 5-year Range (2014-2019)	Total
Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles	3	85	88 (96%)
Other resources	1	3	4 (4%)
Total	4	88	92 (100%)

Factors Contributing to Turnover Intention

Turnover is a challenge that managers face to retain skilled employees (Erat, Kitapci, & Comez, 2017). Turnover intentions increase as employees experience increased job demands and stress levels (Erat et al., 2017; Guchait et al., 2016; Yim, Seo, Cho, & Kim, 2017). Three major factors contribute to turnover intentions: stress, workplace environment, and personal demands (Erat et al., 2017; Yang, Ju, & Lee, 2016; Yim et al., 2017).

Stress. Stress is a contributing factor to turnover intention (Yim et al., 2017). Stress could cause burnout in employees. Although the causes of stress may vary, managers agree it is necessary to find ways to reduce stress and improve job satisfaction (Gao, Newcombe, Tilse, Wilson, & Tuckett, 2017; Mullen, Malone, Denney, & Dietz, 2018; Yang et al., 2016; Yim et al., 2017). The development of strategies to reduce stress, improve job satisfaction, and increase employee retention must first identify what employees seek for fulfillment. Previous researchers found different strategies to reduce stress, including personal development, training, and support (Gao et al., 2017; Yang et al., 2016; Yim et al., 2017).

Additional training and development helps reduce stress levels (Gao et al., 2017; Mullen et al., 2018; Yim et al., 2017). The implementation of occupational stress management programs by managers helps employees cope with occupational stress and turnover intentions through relaxation techniques and skills, facilitating resiliency in the employees (Yim et al., 2017). Managers must also address the need to reduce stress by providing employees with the necessary skills for increasing their job satisfaction and self-esteem to reduce turnover intentions. Managers who provided a support system for employees increased their job satisfaction and decreased employees' turnover intention. Yang et al. (2016) had a different opinion, stating the need to support their families in a struggling market leads employees to ignore their stress levels.

Managers must understand factors such as stress and burnout to begin to develop strategies to address turnover intention (Mullen et al., 2018). The personal well-being of employees' psychological state was a topic managers could address to improve job satisfaction. Psychological capital (PCP) as a mediator of occupational stress and turnover intentions could help managers in reducing turnover intentions. Yim et al. (2017) found (a) increased levels of stress are significantly related to increased turnover intentions; (b) PCP decreased the levels of turnover intentions, and (c) PCP mediated the relationship between stress and turnover intentions.

Managers could decrease stress levels by providing employees with skills to cope with increased stress levels. Cognitive behavioral intervention allows individuals to evaluate their mental state as their stress levels increase; they can use the appropriate relaxation techniques to reduce stress levels (Yim et al., 2017). Employees equipped with the proper skills and techniques can reduce their stress levels, improving their mental state and job satisfaction (Gao et al., 2017).

As stress increases, employees become less satisfied with their jobs (Yang et al., 2016). The development of plans to reduce stress levels and improve job satisfaction can help to reduce turnover intentions (Gao et al., 2017; Mullen et al., 2018; Yang et al., 2016; Yim et al., 2017). As employees see managers working to develop strategies to reduce stress, their turnover intentions might decrease. The implementation of PCP programs helps decrease turnover intentions, assist organizational managers to empower employees to minimize their stress levels, and improve commitment to the organization (Yim et al., 2017).

Workplace environment. Workplace environments can affect the turnover intentions of employees (Guchait et al., 2016). In an environment where employees are stress free and have open communication, they have a lower level of turnover intention (Guchait et al., 2016). An increase in reprimands creates a stressful environment and can cause increased levels of turnover intention (Guchait et al., 2016). Employees might be influenced by the workplace environment. Several factors in the workplace can influence the turnover intentions of employees: (a) error management culture, (b) career advancement opportunities, and (c) staffing issues (Guchait et al., 2016).

Error management culture is a concept used to reduce stress levels by learning from others rather than being reprimanded for the errors (Guchait et al., 2016). Managers must create an environment in which employees learn and work together as a team (Guchait et al., 2016; Leone et al., 2015; Olckers & Enslin, 2016; Wan, Li, Zhou, & Shang, 2018). As employees felt they could ask questions and work together cohesively, the turnover intentions might decrease. The stress of making mistakes and being reprimanded for the errors could lead employees to increased turnover intentions. Managers taking the initiative to change the environment to reduce stress and other negative characteristics can decrease turnover intentions (Guchait et al., 2016; Yang et al., 2016; Yim et al., 2017).

Managers and human resource personnel who provided career advancement opportunities could reduce turnover intentions. Employees who take advantage of career advancement opportunities become involved in decision making and job activities to increase their job satisfaction, which may alter their turnover intentions (Leone et al., 2015; Ozer, Santas, Santas, & Sahin, 2017). As managers increased efforts to improve job satisfaction for employees through career advancement, retention might increase.

Staffing issues challenged managers and human resource personnel on a regular basis. As employees leave an organization, the workload and stress levels of the remaining employees increases leading to higher turnover intentions (Holland, Tham, & Gill, 2018; Leone et al., 2015; Ozer et al., 2017). The managers' and human resource personnel's responsibility was to identify why employees left and increased efforts to recruit and retain skilled employees. Efforts to improve staffing and job satisfaction could shift turnover intentions.

In summary, training, development, staffing, and advancement opportunities were factors that influenced the retention of employees. An error management culture allowed employees to learn from their mistakes without the fear of reprimand, which could reduce the amount of stress for the employee and the employee could learn new strategies of how to avoid the error in the future. Providing employees with training and career advancement opportunities increased job satisfaction, which could improve retention. Addressing staffing concerns and increasing efforts to recruit and retain employees could alter the employees' turnover intentions. Providing employees with an environment where they could work diligently, safely, with opportunities for growth and development could help in the retention of employees.

Personal demands. Working individuals struggle with the balance of the demands of their personal lives with their job responsibilities. Managers must provide policies that enable the employees to have the flexibility of work and maintain the balance of the family. Several programs such as alternative work programs, childcare programs, employee assistance programs (EAP), reduction in workloads, and improving the workplace environment may improve employee retention (Caillier, 2016; Mauno et al., 2015; Pandita & Singhal, 2017).

Employees who experience high levels of work-life imbalances have an increase in turnover intentions (Mauno et al., 2015). As the level of work engagement increases, the employees may take work home, leading to work-life imbalances (Pandita & Singhal, 2017). Alternative work programs offered employees a way to alter their work schedules, childcare programs, and EAP so employees could handle family tasks. By offering this alternative work program, employees' satisfaction increases as they feel leaders in the organization care about them, as well as their families (Caillier, 2016). The improvements made by managers increase the embeddedness and commitment of the employees (Caillier, 2016; Mauno et al., 2015; Pandita & Singhal, 2017).

The development of strategies to maintain a work-life balance could be beneficial for employees, as well as the organizations. As managers create programs and policies to improve work-life balance, it can result in increased employee satisfaction and decreased turnover (Caillier, 2016; Mauno et al., 2015; Pandita & Singhal, 2017). As work-life balance improved for employees, the organization's productivity increased, and turnover intentions decreased.

In summary, personal growth improved attitudes, reduced stress, and increased productivity while decreasing turnover intentions. The balance of work and life was a struggle that employees continued to face. Employers should try to accommodate employees by offering alternative methods such as alternative schedules, assistance programs, and health and wellness programs. Offering alternatives decreased the stress levels and improved the productivity of the employees, which was a benefit for the company. As the stress levels and attitudes increased, the turnover intentions increased and productivity decreased. By providing the alternatives, the employers kept the employees satisfied, and managers could retain the employees.

Factors Contributing to Retention

The improvement of retention was a continuous challenge for managers and human resource personnel. Managers and human resource personnel search for factors other than compensation to retain employees (Lardner, 2015). As human resource personnel provided more options to retain employees, it might improve the satisfaction and productivity of the individuals, as well as the organization. Some of the contributing factors of retention include leadership, work-life balance, employee engagement, and rewards and recognition (Alatawi, 2017; Lardner, 2015).

Leadership style. Leadership styles could influence the turnover intentions of employees. Managerial styles significantly affect the decisions of employees to stay or leave an organization (Alatawi, 2017). Employees who had supportive leaders were more likely to remain with the organization. There were several types of leadership styles that influenced employees' decisions, including transformational leadership, authentic leadership, and servant leadership.

Transformational leaders encouraged employees to remain with the organizations. Transformational leaders encourage employees to increase teamwork, performance, productivity, and ties to the community and the organizations (Alatawi, 2017; Cheng et al., 2016; Eberly, Bluhm, Guarana, Avolio, & Hannah, 2017). As leaders increase the embeddedness of the employees, their intentions to leave decrease (Alatawi, 2017; Cheng et al., 2016; Eberly et al., 2017).

Authentic leaders encourage self-awareness, transparency, and balanced relationships of the employees to increase commitment to the organization (Azanza, Moriano, Molero, & Mangin, 2015; Cheng et al., 2016; Oh & Oh, 2017). Authentic leaders built relationships and trust with the employees, resulting in decreased turnover intentions. Authentic leaders must create an environment of work engagement achieved through being role models, training and recognition, setting clear expectations, providing feedback, and creating career opportunities to retain employees (Azanza et al., 2015; Cheng et al., 2016; Lu et al., 2016; Stumpf et al., 2016).

Servant leaders put the employees' needs first (Kashyap & Rangnekar, 2016). Servant leaders helped employees build the behaviors necessary to make better decisions about their lives, building the character necessary to become assets to the organization. It was beneficial for the leaders of the organization to work to improve employee engagement, satisfaction, and commitment. Servant leaders encourage employees to build their self-esteem and personal healing (Jit, Sharma, & Kawatra, 2017; Schwepker & Schultz, 2015).

Leadership styles could influence employees to commit to the organization, resulting in decreased turnover. Transformational leaders utilized the support of employees to increase the commitment to the organization. Employees who believed leaders support them were more likely to stay with the organization. Authentic leaders encouraged employees to build relationships, be fully engaged, and have the self-awareness to decrease employee turnover. Servant leaders put the employees' needs before their needs, helped to build the individual's confidence, and led by example to alter turnover intentions. Although one style of leadership could influence employees' turnover intentions, a combination of qualities from each style was more effective in its influence.

Work-life balance. The topic of work-life balance is a widespread concern in many industries (Vong & Tang, 2017). Employees strived to find a balance between work and their personal lives. As managers continued to face employment shortages, the development of policies was necessary to allow flexibility for employees to balance work and life. Managers and the environment influence the employees' work-life balance (Boamah & Laschinger, 2016). The implementation of work-life balance initiatives could be beneficial for the organization as satisfied employees become more productive and are less likely to leave the organization (Odle-Dusseau, Hammer, Crain, & Bodner, 2016).

As employees experience increased levels of stress and workloads, it becomes evident that there is a need for different options to find the balance between work and life (Ahmad, Shaw, Bown, Gardiner, & Omar, 2016; Boamah & Laschinger, 2016; Deery & Jago, 2015; Odle-Dusseau et al., 2016). The result of turnover could lead to an imbalance between work and life. Offering different options such as flexible work schedules and childcare alternatives in an organization allows flexibility, improved teamwork, alternative schedules, and benefits increased the employees' commitment to the organization (Ahmad et al., 2016; Boamah & Laschinger, 2016; Mas-Machuca, Berbegal-Mirabent, & Alegre, 2016). As leaders developed policies and alternative options, the employees' intention to leave might decrease.

As employers develop strategies to allow flexibility to improve work-life balance, managers' participation in training to support employees becomes necessary (Odle-Dusseau et al., 2016). The ability to (a) provide alternative work schedules and telework, and (b) share job responsibilities decreases the stress of work and the ability to balance non-work lives (Ahmad et al., 2016). Offering different work options and organizational support improves cohesiveness within the organization, increases teamwork and productivity, and improves commitment to the organization (Boamah & Laschinger, 2016). The support of leaders through improved work environments permits work-life balance and job satisfaction, decreasing the intention to leave (Deery & Jago, 2015; Mas-Machuca et al., 2016).

Employee engagement. Employee engagement is a factor that alters the employees' intent to leave or stay with an organization (Karatepe & Avci, 2017).

Employees who exhibited engaged behaviors were less likely to leave an organization. As managers attempted to identify the characteristics of an engaged employee, they could develop a plan to increase employee engagement and retention.

Managers and human resource personnel must develop plans to provide support, motivation, and encouragement to the employees to increase employee retention (de Oliveira & da Costa Rocha, 2017; Karatepe & Avci, 2017; Lu Lu, Gursoy, & Neale, 2016; Shuck, Adelson, & Reio, 2017). Some additional ways to increase employee engagement were to increase employees' skills and involve them in decision making. Managers should provide additional training for employees and high potential leaders to increase engagement, hard work, and commitment to the organization (de Oliveira & da Costa Rocha, 2017; Karatepe & Avci, 2017; Shuck et al., 2017). The employees who became more engaged increased job satisfaction, which in turn decreased their intention to leave the organization.

Employee training improves job satisfaction and retention (de Oliveira & da Costa Rocha, 2017; Lu et al., 2016). The development of training programs increases employee engagement, decreasing the intention to leave an organization (de Oliveira & da Costa Rocha, 2017). Managers should provide support and encouragement to retain employees and increase their engagement (Karatepe & Avci, 2017). Support and development strategies allowed employees to become satisfied with their jobs.

Rewards and incentive packages. Managers have historically utilized only financial benefits to attract and retain talented, knowledgeable employees (Bussin & Toerien, 2015). The managers and human resource personnel need to develop a flexible reward and incentive package that can accommodate different generations and skills (Bussin & Toerien, 2015; Michael, Prince, & Chacko, 2016; Rani & Samuel, 2016). The needs of employees were different based on generations. Although pay has been the primary tool, there are other incentives available to attract and retain employees (Michael et al., 2016; Pregnolato, Bussin, & Schlechter, 2017).

Generational differences had different concepts that drove their commitment to an organization. As a result of these differences, it was essential to have several options available to meet the needs of the employees. Baby boomers, who are closer to retirement, concentrate on insurance and retirement benefits (Pregnolato et al., 2017). Since the Baby boomers were close to retirement, their turnover intentions were likely lower. Generation Xers are attracted and potentially retained by compensation and other financial incentives (Pregnolato et al., 2017). Generation Xers would have higher turnover intentions if their current organization did not offer competitive salaries and financial incentives. Managers must provide an environment that encourages training and cohesiveness with coworkers to guide their career goals (Lub, Bal, Blomme, & Schalk, 2016; Mencl & Lester, 2014). Providing the Gen Xers with the ability to continue to develop skills with a clear, concise plan for the future in mind, could alter the employees' intent to leave an organization. Generation Yers or millennials, similar to Gen Xers, share the concern with compensation and advancement but differ in that they also look for recognition and work-life balance (Lub et al., 2016; Pregnolato et al., 2017). The sense of having the independence of working through challenges, variations, and involvement in decision making allows millennials to gain experience in their goals

(Kim, Knutson, & Choi, 2016; Lavoie-Tremblay, Trepanier, Fernet, & Bonneville-Roussy, 2014; Lub et al., 2016).

Developing an all-inclusive policy that is flexible to address employees' requests for better personal time off/sick leave, retirement benefits, and career advancement requests can increase retention of employees within the different generations (Lu & Gursoy, 2016). Having several options might provide a benefit to the employees and the organization. The organization can increase retention through improved compensation packages, praise, and recognition (Barker, 2017; Law, 2016; Michael et al., 2016).

The premise that monetary rewards alone could retain skilled employees were found to need a psychological competent to be successful. Employees needed psychological awards, such as training and recognition, along with monetary compensation, to improve commitment to the organization. Managers needed to develop compensation policies that allowed flexibility to meet the needs of as many employees as possible. Managers who engaged employees as they developed compensation policies allowed the development of policies that met the needs of the employees. For organizational managers, identifying what employees required to stay with an organization, gave the basis for better compensation plans and retention of knowledgeable, skilled employees.

Job satisfaction. Human resource personnel and managers play an essential role in employee job satisfaction (Maimako & Bambale, 2016). Job satisfaction was a factor in determining the turnover intention of employees. Decreased job satisfaction led to increased turnover intentions and decreased organizational commitment. Managers need to develop strategies to address the characteristics of job embeddedness, leader-member exchange, and growth opportunity to improve employee retention (Borah & Malakar, 2015).

Employees who experience exhaustion and burnout, lead to dissatisfied employees, resulting in increased turnover intentions (Lu & Gursoy, 2016). Managers needed to identify the causes of the employees' dissatisfaction and develop a plan to increase their satisfaction and commitment to the organization. Managers and human resource personnel use employee surveys to identify ways to improve job satisfaction (Frederiksen, 2017). Several tasks that increase satisfaction include structure, learning new skills, work engagement, and challenges (De Simone, Planta, & Cicotto, 2018; Frankel, 2016; Pugh, 2016). Increasing the skills and providing an environment that enabled growth could alter employees' turnover intention.

Millennials, for example, would leave a position because of job dissatisfaction, which could result in an imbalance between work and life. Challenges and learning new skills encourage millennials to remain with the organization (Frankel, 2016). Although employees wanted challenges and responsibilities, they also wanted a continuous balance between work and life. To increase their satisfaction, human resource personnel and managers needed to develop strategies that increased the challenges, rewards, and recognition for their work.

The development of strategies to improve employees' job satisfaction might benefit the organization through retention. The employees' intent to leave the organization would likely decrease as managers found ways to provide a challenging and rewarding work environment without disrupting the work-life balance. Utilizing the information obtained from employee surveys would guide managers and human resource personnel in developing policies that incorporated the important factors of the employees leading to improved job satisfaction.

Leader-member exchange. Leader-member exchange is defined as the relationship between the leader and the employee (Kim, Poulston, & Sankaran, 2017). The relationship between the leader and the employee can influence the employees' commitment to the organization or turnover intention (Dechawatanapaisal, 2018; Gaudet & Tremblay, 2017; Kim et al., 2017). Leader-member exchange could alter the relationships within the organization and commitment to stay employed with the organization.

As employees identified the support provided by the leaders, they increased commitment, productivity, and embeddedness. As the relationship between the leaders and employees improves, the employees can handle different situations, although it may increase stress levels (Lam, Xu, & Loi, 2018). As the levels of stress increased, the employees' turnover intentions increased leading employees to find organizations with better benefits.

As the relationship between leaders and employees might provide a positive result, it could also lead to a negative result as employees began to feel more stress. The employees who discover the leaders are less likely to support them develop increased turnover intentions (Jha & Kumar, 2015; Kim et al., 2017; Kwak & Choi, 2015). When leaders support employees, the employees become embedded in the organization, increasing their effort to meet organizational goals and are less likely to leave the organization (Dechawatanapaisal, 2018; Jha & Kumar, 2015). Affective commitment or emotional attachment and perceived organizational support (a) led employees to remain committed, (b) take on extra roles, and (c) were less likely to have turnover intentions. Leaders who maintained a structured, respectful relationship with employees could increase the level of commitment to the organization.

Employees who had less experience or were not embedded in an organization had higher turnover intentions. Younger, less experienced employees have increased turnover intentions as they want to find organizations that allow them to develop their full potential with better compensation and benefits (Jha & Kumar, 2015; Kim et al., 2017). The leaders' support could alter the turnover intentions through strategies that could assist in decision making and increased embeddedness within the organization.

The leader-member relationship was key to influencing employees' commitment to the organization and reducing turnover intentions. As the leader-member relationship became effective, the employees' commitment to stay with the organization also increased (Dechawatanapaisal, 2018; Jha & Kumar, 2015). Alternatively, as the level of the relationship decreases, the commitment to stay in the organization also decreases, resulting in increased turnover intentions (Jha & Kumar, 2015; Kim et al., 2017; Kwak & Choi, 2015). Employees who believed they had organizational support were more likely to commit to the organization. Respect and support from leaders altered the employees' intentions to leave the organization, developing a level of commitment.

Career development. As employees go through their careers, they want a clear idea or plan to advance their career (Petrucelli, 2017). Managers and human resource personnel needed to develop strategic plans for employees to help advance their careers. Career development provided (a) promotions, (b) salary increases, (c) more responsibilities, (d) coaching and mentoring to give employees the opportunities to explore more options for career advancements.

Employees who wanted career advancement sought organizations that offer career advancement potential. Organizations that did not offer career advancement plans might find increased levels of turnover intention. Managers and human resource personnel should develop career development plans, to include mentorship and sponsorship, to assist employees in meeting career goals while maintaining knowledgeable staff (Frenkel & Bednall, 2016; Huang, Chou, & Chen, 2017; Strickler, Bohling, Knesis, O'Connor, & Yee, 2016).

Employees who entered an organization and did not have a clear career advancement plan would search for organizations where they had better potential for career advancement and incentives. To achieve improved job satisfaction, growth potential, and compensation, employees' turnover intentions may increase (Huang et al., 2017; Petrucelli, 2017; Strickler et al., 2016). The employee's career advancement was the individual's responsibility; employees should take the initiative to participate in the opportunities, if offered by their employer, to achieve their goals.

Career development had many opportunities but also had challenges. Women face challenges in achieving career advancement (Allen et al., 2016). There were other challenges as well, such as the incompatibility with mentors or not having a clear strategic plan for advancement. Women faced the stereotypes of not being strong enough for leadership positions or not being able to balance work and family life, which caused advancement opportunities to be difficult if not impossible. Some managers believe women lead by emotions and are incapable of leading (Allen et al., 2016; Patwardhan et al., 2016). As women decided to advance their careers, they must consider how to balance work and their personal lives. To increase the chances of career advancement, managers should encourage employees to participate in mentorship and sponsorship in the organization to discuss goals and steps to achieve those goals, regardless of gender.

Employees who wanted career advancement must become involved in the organization. Participation in mentorship and sponsorship might improve the chances of career advancement. Men accept mentorship and sponsorship opportunities without hesitation, while women consider if it will interfere with work-life balance (Allen et al., 2016; Helms, Arfken, & Bellar, 2016). As a part of these programs, feedback guides the employees to meet their career goals and how to handle themselves similarly to the mentor or sponsor (Bradford, Rutherford, & Friend, 2017; Helms et al., 2016). The career advancement program, such as mentorship and sponsorship, should be improved to increase job satisfaction through career advancement plans (Allen et al., 2016; Helms et al., 2016; Rosa, Hon, Xia, & Lamari, 2017).

Career development was a process for employees to advance their careers. Employees sought career advancement opportunities, and if they were not available within their current organization, they chose to leave to achieve those opportunities.

Training, mentoring, and sponsorship assisted employees in achieving career advancement opportunities; if provided, these opportunities were more likely to increase the commitment of employees to the organization. Women face gender-based challenges and work-life balance issues, which by altering the flexibility in schedules and mentoring, can reduce the challenges (Allen et al., 2016; Helms et al., 2016; Rosa et al., 2017).

Job embeddedness. Job embeddedness is defined as what causes employees to stay in their positions (Collins & Mossholder, 2017). Employees who felt embedded in an organization were less likely to have turnover intentions. Employees who had ties to the community and relationships with coworkers could alter turnover intentions. Managers must identify the characteristics employees looked for to remain in the organization. To accomplish the goal of increased embeddedness and decreased turnover intentions, managers and human resource personnel should concentrate on hiring, development, and performance feedback (Esmaelzadeh, Abbaszadeh, Borhani, & Peyrovi, 2017; Ferreira, 2017; Marasi, Cox, and Bennett, 2016; Tian et al., 2016). Employees who felt a part of the organization were able to contribute to the organizational goals and increased their embeddedness within the organization.

The support and trust of leaders could encourage employees' embeddedness. When employees have increased support and family-like characteristics on the job, the links and fit help to increase embeddedness and decrease turnover intentions (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017; Coetzer, Inma, & Poisat, 2017). Managers should (a) build an environment in which employees can share ideas, (b) build teamwork, and (c) support the employees' contribution to the organization (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017; Coetzer et al., 2017; Ferreira, 2017). Employees who felt supported and appreciated increased commitment to the organization.

In an effort to increase job embeddedness, leaders must develop policies that reflect a clear, concise plan to increase employee participation in the organization. As managers identify strategies to increase embeddedness and commitment, employee growth, a sense of security, open communication, and involvement in decision-making improve job satisfaction and decreases turnover intention (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017; Esmaelzadeh et al., 2017; Marasi et al., 2016; Narayanan, 2016; Purba et al., 2016). Ensuring the employees fit, had links in the organization and community, and communicated the sacrifices they would incur if they left the organization could lead to decreased turnover intentions.

Job embeddedness was key to keeping employees in the organization. Job embeddedness helped the organization reduce the costs of turnover by keeping the employees in the organization. The three levels of job embeddedness (fit, links, and sacrifice) guide human resource personnel to find the correct candidates for the positions and the managers to keep them invested in the organization (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017; Esmaelzadeh et al., 2017; Marasi et al., 2016; Narayanan, 2016; Purba et al., 2016). Feedback was important to ensure that managers were providing the correct training and development to the employees and that the correct communication occurred at all times. Trust in the supervisor must be a priority to confirm that there was an established on-the-job embeddedness to help reduce potential turnover intention. An embedded employee must know they belong and have support.

Job Embeddedness Theory

Mitchell et al. (2001) defined job embeddedness theory as the fit, links, and sacrifice that influence employees to stay or leave an organization. Employees who had job embeddedness had higher job satisfaction and commitment to the organization and community. *Fit* is how an individual perceives themselves as a part of the group or organization (Young, Stone, Aliaga, & Shuck, 2013). Managers and human resource personnel must assist employees in determining how they would fit into an organization. The better the employee fit, the more committed the employee (Borah & Malakar, 2015; Holtom & Inderrieden, 2006). Building an environment where employees have a sense of belonging and involvement can increase retention (Borah & Malakar, 2015; Holtom & Inderrieden, 2006).

Links are the collaborations or interactions with others in the organization and the community (Young et al., 2013). Managers built environments where employees freely interacted and bonded with coworkers and community members. The more links employees establish within the organization and community, they become more embedded (Borah & Malakar, 2015; Reitz & Anderson, 2011; Young et al., 2013). As the employees become more embedded, they are less likely to have turnover intentions and have more sacrifices if they decide to leave (Borah & Malakar, 2015; Reitz & Anderson, 2011; Young et al., 2013).

Sacrifice is the cost of losses when leaving the organization (Borah & Malakar, 2015). As employees became embedded in the organization and the community, the level of sacrifice increased. When employees consider leaving the organization, sacrifices are not only in the organization but the community as well (Allen, Peltokorpi, & Rubenstein, 2016; Holtom & Inderrieden, 2006; Reitz & Anderson, 2011). Managers should communicate the benefits of working in an organization and the connections within the community to increase retention.

The managers could improve retention by focusing on why employees stay rather than why they leave. Utilizing the concepts of job embeddedness, involving employees in planning and decision making of retention strategies increased the embeddedness of the employees. The more links an employee developed, the more sacrifice existed if they decided to leave an organization. Sacrifice became a different decision for employees who were involved in the organization and the community. Managers should focus on helping employees to be more involved and embedded to reduce turnover.

Job embeddedness theory was an appropriate theoretical framework to help managers develop strategies to improve retention by incorporating the employees into the organization and community. The job embeddedness theory utilized the key concepts of fit, links, and sacrifice to influence employees to remain with the organization. As managers continued to develop strategies, each concept should be addressed to increase the satisfaction and retention of knowledgeable staff. The key was to make the employees feel they belong and could contribute to the organization, which embedded them in the organization.

Herzberg Two-Factor Theory

Herzberg’s two-factor theory, also called the Herzberg motivation-hygiene theory, developed by Frederick Herzberg in 1959, described work motivations and job satisfaction (Ahmed, Taskin, Pauleen, & Parker, 2017). The two factors in Herzberg's theory are *motivation* and *hygiene*. Managers must identify what motivated employees to stay in an organization. Herzberg's two-factor theory provided a foundation to use motivation and hygiene characteristics to influence employees' improved satisfaction and remain employed with an organization.

Managers need to identify strategies to motivate employees, increasing job satisfaction, which could lead to decreased turnover intentions. One key strategy to motivate employees was through personal development. Personal development increases employees' skill sets, self-esteem, and job satisfaction leading to improved commitment and retention (Rahman, Akhter, & Khan, 2017; Weisberg & Dent, 2016). As an incentive to encourage employees to remain in an organization, the managers need to continue to invest in the employees.

Hygiene factors typically incorporate financial benefits as a means to influence employees to remain with an organization (Fareed & Jan, 2016; Weisberg & Dent, 2016). Although the use of financial benefits might influence employees, it might not lead to a commitment. Other changes in the workplace environment may decrease the level of dissatisfaction but may not lead to a satisfied, committed employee (Kang, 2014; Petersen, Wascher, & Kier, 2017). Finding an inclusive strategy that improved employees satisfaction, while increasing retention was where managers and human resource personnel should concentrate.

Although hygiene and motivational factors were separate entities, to improve overall satisfaction and retention, managers should evaluate them together. Offering employees personal development, improved work environments, and financial benefits might increase employees' job satisfaction and commitment to the organization. Satisfied, well paid employees could increase retention within the organization.

The Herzberg two-factor theory was a viable option to describe factors that influenced employees'satisfaction and decisions to stay or vacate an organization. Managers would determine what items motivated the employees, therefore, leading to satisfaction. The hygiene factors if believed unsatisfactory, led to unsatisfied employees. The Herzberg two-factor theory was not appropriate as the theoretical framework because it did not provide information on what factors influenced employees to commit to organizations. Although the Herzberg two-factor theory included motivation factors, it did not address how to get employees involved and incorporated into an organization, resulting in increased satisfaction and retention.

Human Capital Theory

The human capital theory was established in 1962 by Gary Becker. The human capital theory is defined as the investment into the people within an organization to progress in their careers (Hayek, Thomas, Novicevic, & Montalvo, 2016). Investing in employees was beneficial for both the organization and the employees as they became more knowledgeable and productive, which might lead to financial benefits. Although the knowledge gained might be beneficial for the organization, employees became more marketable, taking their knowledge to other organizations.

Having different skill sets determined if the knowledge was transferable or nontransferable to other organizations. Employees who obtain general skills through education may lead employees to higher turnover intentions because they can use the knowledge at other organizations (Cooper & Davis, 2017). Specific skills, such as the production of a specific product or the skills that align with specific needs of the organization, are beneficial in the current organization and cannot be utilized in other organizations (Bae & Patterson, 2014; Le Counte, Prieto, & Phipps, 2017).

The scrutiny of the investment in human capital was deciding if it is worth the risk. Managers investing in the development of employees risk them becoming marketable, increasing their turnover intentions, which leaves the managers with no return on investment and continuous training (Bae & Patterson, 2014; Harris, Pattie, & McMahan, 2015; Mubarik, Devadason, & Chandran, 2016; Skeenackers & Guerry, 2016; Veld, Semeijn, & van Vuuren, 2015). Therefore it became a challenge for managers and human resource personnel to continue to invest in human capital with no guarantee of the benefit.

Investment in human capital could be beneficial or nonbeneficial, as well. The general skills benefited the employees, as it could help to advance their career without being in the current organization. Specific skills were beneficial to the organization but could result in continuous training, when skilled employees left the organization. Investment in human capital has benefits as well as risks (Bae & Patterson, 2014; Harris et al., 2015; Mubarik et al., 2016; Skeenackers & Guerry, 2016; Veld et al., 2015).

Transition

In Section 1, I identified the problem and purpose statement, defined the overall research question, and compiled interview questions relating to retention in healthcare organizations. Also, in this section, I identified the conceptual framework of the job embeddedness theory for my study. I researched articles as part of the literature review that related to my research topic of turnover in healthcare organizations.

In Section 2, I defined the role of the researcher, participants, and the methodology used for developing retention strategies. In Section 2, I discussed the details of how reliability and validity are a part of ethical research. Also included in this section was the description of the data collection process and analysis. Section 3 included the findings of the research, the use in the industry, its impact on social change, and recommendations for future research. Also, as a part of Section 3, I included the reflections and experiences throughout the doctoral process, followed by the conclusion of the data.

Section 2: The Project

Section 2 included a detailed discussion of the purpose of the study and the components required to design the study. This section included information about the population and the selection of a sample to ensure information was inclusive and pertinent to the overall research question. This section also included research methodology, data collection techniques, and analysis information used during the study. Section 2 concluded with the reliability and validity of ethical research in the study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to identify the strategies that managers used to increase employee retention in healthcare organizations. The population was healthcare managers and human resource personnel in three southeastern region states' healthcare organizations who had successfully implemented strategies to increase employee retention. The implication for positive social change included the potential to benefit society by ensuring quality healthcare provided to the community and a positive work environment for employees. The adequate number of employees might improve the quality of care while hospitalized, could provide better preventive care, and fewer errors because of a heavier workload.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher in qualitative research studies is to define the study, develop the design, interview the participants, and analyze the information obtained during the interviews (Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Fomani, Shoghi, & Cheraghi, 2014). Researchers act as a guide and protect the participants through the interview process (Rosenthal, 2016). I was the primary data collection instrument in this study. I developed a working relationship with the participants by explaining my role as a student researcher, and the research was a part of the doctoral program requirements. Participants should feel comfortable with the relationship and the interview process to provide thorough responses (Rosenthal, 2016). I followed ethical research guidelines established through the Belmont Report (1979) and Walden University's Institutional Review Board. Although I work in healthcare, I did not have experience in employee retention strategies. To eliminate bias, I maintained an open-mind and increased my listening skills to gather a thorough understanding of the participants' perspective.

The responsibility of researchers was to inform and protect human subjects. The researcher must provide as much information about the research as possible, to include any risks and benefits to the participants (The Belmont Report, 1979). The ethical principle of respect of persons ensures the researchers are interviewing those participants who came of their own accord and protects them from any harm or respects the opinions of the participants, as long as it does not present harm to others (The Belmont Report, 1979). As part of the ethical principles, beneficence, or protection of the participants' well-being, is the researcher's responsibility (The Belmont Report, 1979). Justice for participants is an ethical principle where everyone is receiving the same information and treatment (The Belmont Report, 1979). I followed all the ethical principles outlined in the Belmont Report and ensured that no participants felt coerced to participate and knew they were free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

The topic of turnover in healthcare organizations and the improvement of retention was a topic of interest because I am in healthcare management with knowledge of the effects of turnover. After several years of observing continuous turnover rates increasing, and different strategies attempted to increase retention rates, turnover and retention became areas of interest for me. I utilized resources within my current organization as well as other healthcare organizations in the southeastern region states. Some of the participants, although in the same organization, were individuals with whom I had not worked with on the development of retention strategies. Limiting the interactions with participants contributed to the elimination of bias in the study. I limited the interactions to only discussions about the topic under study.

I described my reasons for conducting the research to the participants and encouraged them to share their opinions. Researchers attempt to gain a better understanding of a topic from the participants' perspective to add to the knowledge of the topic (Rosenthal, 2016). In the interview, open-ended questions allowed participants to express opinions without any recourse. Notes during the interviews and information obtained from journal articles allowed me to remain on track to gather the necessary information. I utilized the interview protocol as a guide to keep the interview on track to gain information that was relevant to the research topic and covered all the necessary questions. I approached the interview with an open mind and thoroughly listened to the participants' perspectives. If the participants' answers need further clarification, I asked relevant follow-up questions to gain in-depth understanding (Chu & Ke, 2017; Masdonati, Fournier, & Lahrizi, 2017).

Interviewing the managers and human resource personnel provided insight into how different companies approached retention strategies. Through the interviews, I gained different perspectives on how to improve retention in healthcare organizations. The interviews allowed the identification of the concepts that were important to employees to increase their commitment to the organizations. Multiple interviews could produce ideas and strategies needed to implement and improve employee satisfaction, commitment, and retention.

Participants

The selection of participants was from a population of human resource personnel and healthcare managers in healthcare facilities in southeastern region states. I considered human resource personnel and healthcare managers who met the following criteria for participation in the study: (a) at least 5 years of human resource or healthcare management experience with evidence of improved retention strategies, (b) experience in creating or implementing retention strategies, and (c) be employed in the current healthcare organization for at least 2 years. The researcher has the responsibility to select an adequate sample that represents the population to avoid bias (Nichols, 2015).

I used LinkedIn to contact administrators at healthcare facilities in southeastern region states. The administrators identified potential participants and provided their contact information. In the communication to the participants, I explained the purpose of the study, informed them that participation is on a voluntary basis, and all responses were confidential throughout the process (Tinkler, Smith, Yiannakou, & Robinson, 2017). If the participants have any questions, I provided them with answers. I ensured an appropriate sample size that was representative of the population and achieve data saturation (Boddy, 2016; Nichols, 2015).

Researchers should develop a relationship with the participants for the success of the study (Halcomb & Peters, 2016). I established a working relationship with participants through email, phone or Skype conversations, and in-person meetings to ensure they were comfortable and understood the overall goal and purpose of the study. Researchers use several means to establish relationships with participants such as email, phone conversations, and in-person interaction (Carduff, Murray, & Kendall, 2015; Newton, 2017). I provided the participants with the consent form outlining the study. I answered any questions about the study and maintained a professional relationship with the participants throughout the study.

As the relationship between the researcher and the participants developed, the participants provided thorough, in-depth responses to the interview questions (Halcomb & Peters, 2016). When the participants confirmed interest in participating in the study, I sent the informed consent form via email for formal response of “I consent” to the email. Researchers share information about the purpose of the study, explain the participants’ identity will remain confidential, and their role is voluntary (Tinkler et al., 2017). I shared the information during the initial correspondence and in the informed consent form before data collection began. The relationship allowed for knowledge exchange between the researcher and the participants. The participants and researcher selected a date and time for the interviews to begin after the approval of the Institutional Review Board.

Research Method and Design

I used the qualitative research method to answer the question: What strategies do managers use to increase retention in healthcare organizations? The semistructured interviews allow the researcher to use the structured questions to guide the interviews and then delve further based on the participants' responses (Peters & Halcomb, 2015). I utilized a case study design to gather information from participants to add to the knowledge of strategies to improve employee retention. Case study design uses the experiences of the participants to increase the knowledge of a specific topic (Gammelgaard, 2017).

Research Method

Researchers should identify the research methods they will utilize. I used the qualitative research method to conduct the study. Qualitative researchers provide an in-depth understanding of a situation in its natural environment (Barnham, 2015; Park & Park, 2016). The researchers using quantitative research gather data through measurements that result in statistical analysis (Goertzen, 2017). Mixed methods researchers incorporate the statistical analysis of the quantitative method and in-depth analysis of the qualitative method to gain an inclusive conclusion (McKim, 2017).

Researchers who utilize a qualitative methodology obtain data through observation and interviews to gain an understanding of a phenomenon (Park & Park, 2016). The information gathered during the research fills the gaps of knowledge on a subject (Goertzen, 2017). The knowledge obtained could help identify new strategies to improve processes. Qualitative researchers use the information from the *what* questions to increase the inquiry of the *why* questions (Barnham, 2015).

Researchers who use quantitative methodology use measurement to evaluate data to present generalizable data to the population (Park & Park, 2016). Quantitative studies answer *what* and *how* questions (Goertzen, 2017). The basis of quantitative methods is incidence while the qualitative basis is a distinction (Barnham, 2015). Quantitative methodology was not appropriate for this study because the goal of the study was to identify an understanding of strategies used to retain healthcare employees.

Mixed methods research requires combining both qualitative and quantitative methods to quantify the experiences and provide an understanding of processes through rich textural data (McKim, 2017). Triangulation increases the validity of the information gathered by different methodologies (Almalki, 2016). Integration of both methodologies provides an encompassed understanding of the data through the experiences and the statistics to become justified (McKim, 2017; Park & Park, 2016). Although mixed methodologies might be more rigorous in its evaluation, quantitative analysis was not appropriate to discover successful strategies for healthcare managers to retain healthcare workers.

Research Design

The qualitative research design consists of four research styles: (a) narrative inquiry, (b) phenomenological, (c) ethnographic, and (d) case study research (Campbell, 2015). For my doctoral study, I used a case study research design. Narrative research is a method used to provide a means to tell a story with a beginning, middle, and an end (McAlpine, 2016). It is the study of the development and transitions of people's lives (Treloar, Stone, McMilken, & Flakeus, 2015). Learning about the participants' life, identity, and culture is the foundation of the narrative research methodology (Butina, 2015). My objective was to find the strategies used to improve retention; therefore, stories about the culture told by participants would not help to identify those strategies.

The phenomenological research design is the study of the participants' lived experiences (Horrigan-Kelly, Millar, & Dowling, 2016; Wilson, 2015). The practice of epoche or bracketing, defined as the return to natural thinking, is a concept incorporated by researchers in phenomenological designs (Englander, 2016). Phenomenological research was not appropriate to identify retention strategies; therefore, it was not an adequate design for my study.

Ethnographic researchers examine how culture and social relationships shape behavior (Trnka, 2017). The use of open-ended questions allows for the understanding of cultures or individuals in the natural environment (Litchterman & Reed, 2015; Trnka, 2017). The data collection process may take extended time as the researchers conduct direct observations and record the data (Hammersley, 2018). I could not use ethnography to identify retention strategies, as its use was to understand people and their culture in their environment.

The case study design was the appropriate choice to address the research question in this study. Researchers use the case study design to explain a phenomenon that involves real-life context (Tetnowski, 2015). Case study research is the study of an individual, situation, an organization, or phenomena in the natural setting (Campbell, 2015). Case study design provided detailed information to gain an understanding of *how* and *why* questions. I intended to gain an understanding of *how* and *why* managers and human resource personnel developed certain retention strategies.

I ensured that data collection was exhaustive of the data on employee retention strategies through data saturation. Saturation occurs when the researcher has an adequate sample size with an in-depth analysis of data that results in no new concepts (Morse, 2015). Researchers need more exhaustive resources to reach saturation; the in-depth analysis of data with no new information reaches saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I ensured the study achieved saturation by collecting data from multiple sources until there were no new concepts.

Population and Sampling

The population for this study was managers and human resource personnel in three healthcare organizations in southeastern region states. The managers and human resource personnel must have experience with successful implementation of retention strategies within a healthcare organization. A sample of managers and human resource personnel, drawn from the population, provided the researcher with information on retention strategies and policies.

Sampling is the selection of data sources that address the research questions (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, & McKibbon, 2015). I used purposive sampling to select participants who were knowledgeable about employee turnover and retention strategies. Purposive sampling is the selection of participants on the potential they may provide valuable information related to the study (Etikan, Musa, & AlKassim, 2016; Moser & Korstjens, 2018). The use of purposive or judgment sampling allows the researcher to choose participants identified with specific qualities and knowledge related to employee retention that can lead to new ideas (Etikan et al., 2016).

Sample sizes for qualitative research are not defined (Nichols, 2015). Researchers must continue to conduct interviews until there no new information is discovered, leading to data saturation. Data saturation achievement occurs when there are no new themes or concepts (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). I utilized purposive sampling to gather information through interviews to improve retention strategies.

The achievement of data saturation occurs through data triangulation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The interviews, member checking, and observation notes enhance the reliability and credibility of the study (Yin, 2014). I achieved data saturation through triangulation of interviews and company documentation; I continued to collect and analyze data until no new information was revealed. Interviews were in an area free of distractions and interruptions to allow the participants to have my undivided attention.

The participants were healthcare managers and human resource personnel in three southeastern region states. The participants in the study had experience in employee retention strategies in healthcare organizations. I reached out to the human resource department and some managers in healthcare organizations. I incorporated human resource personnel and managers from both large and small organizations to identify the differences in the strategies used to retain employees.

The organization's leaders and human resource personnel had retention strategies that might alter turnover intention. I attempted to discover the differences in strategies used to retain employees in the organizations with variation in size and location in southeastern region states. I also attempted to identify managers and human resource personnel who had additional ideas or strategies to improve retention in healthcare organizations by speaking with human resource personnel and managers who used the strategies and improved retention rates.

The criteria for selecting participants in the southeastern region states included (a) 5 years of human resource or healthcare management experience, (b) experience in planning or implementing retention strategies, and (c) employment in the current healthcare organization for a minimum of 2 years. I emailed participants to ask them to participate in the study. After receiving a confirmation of participation, I sent a follow-up email that included an informed consent form, outlining the interview protocol and the request for dates to schedule a face-to-face or Skype interviews (Kendall & Halliday, 2014).

I conducted face-to-face interviews in an area free of distractions to ensure the full attention of both parties (Tinkler et al., 2017). The setting is important to ensure the privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity of the participants (Peters & Halcomb, 2015). The time allotted for each interview was 1 hour, to gain thorough responses to open-ended questions. I recorded interviews to ensure the accuracy of the data and took notes to assist me in the interpretation of the data.

Ethical Research

Ethical research for qualitative studies requires the compliance of the guidelines outlined in the Belmont Report (1979). Ethical research adds to the body of knowledge without causing any harm to the participants (Ngozwana, 2018). The researcher ensures the protection of the participants from coercion or force to participate (Lee, 2018). Participants participated willfully and agreed to an informed, written consent before any data collection. The approval of the Institutional Review Board must occur before any data collection.

The information in the informed consent form had simple language so participants with a variety of backgrounds could understand and protect vulnerable participants (Oye, Sorensen, & Glasdam, 2016). The voluntary consent is necessary before the collection of data (Ngozwana, 2018). The participants did not receive any incentives or compensation for participation in the study to avoid any bias. I informed each participant they could withdraw from the study at any time without explanation and removal of any data before withdrawal from the study (Haines, 2017; Ngozwana, 2018). The participants could withdraw through written, electronic, or verbal communication.

Each participant received a code, such as Org1P1, to maintain the anonymity and privacy of the participants. The use of codes throughout the interviews, transcripts, and analysis of the data will maintain anonymity (Ngozwana, 2018). Protecting the confidentiality of human subjects is an important component of a study (Ummel & Achille, 2016). The information shared throughout the study remained coded throughout the process, with only the researcher's knowledge of the participants' identities. The codes of participants' responses maintain the anonymity of the organization and participants (Ross, Iguchi, & Panicker, 2018).

The storage of the data collected during the study was held in a secured file cabinet for 5 years. The researcher provides a code for the participants' responses to protect their identity and confidentiality (Morse & Coulehan, 2015). An encrypted password file on my computer and a backup on an external hard drive ensured the protection of data. There was no collection of participants' demographic information in the study to maintain the confidentiality of the participants' responses and keep other related resources private (Morse & Coulehan, 2015).

Data Collection Instruments

A researcher is the primary data collection instrument who makes the decisions about what information to collect through open-ended questions and the utilization of the information (Johnston, 2014; Yin, 2014). I was the primary data collection instrument. As the primary data collection instrument, I conducted the interviews and compiled the data for the study. I used the notes taken during the interview to assist in the compilation of data and analysis.

The data sources for the study included interviews and company documents. Qualitative researchers use open-ended questions to keep communication open to the discovery of new ideas or concepts (Wright, Daker-White, Newman, & Payne, 2018). The documents included policies, procedures, employee handbooks, and exit interview templates (if available). Company documents provided validation or complement the information gathered in interviews (Bowen, 2009). To enhance reliability, I incorporated member checking. To increase the depth of understanding, a qualitative researcher should search for information that refutes the data obtained through interviews to provide a thorough understanding of the research topic (Varpio, Ajjawi, Monrouxe, O'Brien, & Rees, 2016).

To ensure the accuracy of the transcripts, a review of the audio is necessary (Rosenthal, 2016). After verification of all documents, notes, and transcripts, I gave a detailed summary and interpretation of the data to the participants to incorporate member checking. I asked participants to provide feedback based on the information gathered from the interviews. The participants can correct the information if it is incorrect or provide more details to clarify the interpretations (Iivari, 2018). Participants might then submit corrections or clarification via email.

Member checking is the participants' review of the researcher's interpretation of the data (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). The review of the data ensures the researcher obtained the information participants may want communicated from their viewpoint (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The review through member checking allows the researcher to reflect, clarify, gain further understanding, and identify and remove any areas of bias (Madill & Sullivan, 2017). The participants reviewed the interpretation to ensure the researcher captured the correct interpretation from the information gathered in the interviews.

I used face-to-face and Skype interviews utilizing semistructured questions and follow-up questions to gain an in-depth understanding of the strategies used in the organizations. As the researcher, I utilized the interview questions to assist in guiding the participants to reveal pertinent information, which related to my overall research question. Using open-ended questions gives the participants a level of comfort as they interact with the researcher throughout the interview (Yin, 2014).

The purpose of the study was to gain knowledge of the strategies used to retain healthcare employees. The interview questions aligned with the overall research question to explore different strategies used in employee retention from the purposive samples. As part of the research protocol, obtaining permission from the participants is necessary before the collection of data or recordings of interviews (Yin, 2014). The language of the questions should be easy to understand and elicit in-depth responses of the participants' experiences (Castillo-Montoya, 2016).

Using standardized questions enhanced the consistency, reliability, and validity of the study. The use of documents enhances the credibility, reliability, and validity of the study as it provides corroboration of the information gathered throughout the interviews (Bowen, 2009; Fusch & Ness, 2015). The participants reviewed the information to validate that I captured the correct responses and the appropriate documents to complement their responses.

Data Collection Technique

In qualitative research, interviews are a common data collection technique (Peters & Halcomb, 2015). The use of semistructured, open-ended questions allows the interviewees' responses to be thorough, in-depth depictions of their experiences (Ellis, 2016; Peters & Halcomb, 2015). Because I conducted in-depth semistructured interviews with the possibility of follow-up questions, no pilot study was necessary. In-depth interviews increase the understanding of participants' experiences and why specific actions will be taken as it relates to the overall research question (Rosenthal, 2016). During the interviews, I recorded the participants' responses to ensure accuracy. Researchers record the interviews to ensure the accuracy of responses to the interview questions and to assist in accurate interpretation (Ellis, 2016).

The interviews took place in a quiet designated area or via Skype, with minimal or no distractions (Ellis, 2016). Before the interview begins, I did a formal introduction describing the purpose of the research study and provided the boundaries of the interview, to include the withdrawal process, to ensure the collection of rich data while maintaining confidentiality and anonymity (Ellis, 2016). I then allowed participants to introduce themselves. The interview commenced after the introductions. During the interviews, if there was a need for clarification about the research questions, I reworded the questions for a better understanding. If responses need clarification, asking follow-up questions assisted in gathering in-depth and thorough responses. At the end of the interview, I thanked the participants for taking the time to be a part of the study and concluded the interview.

Qualitative researchers use documents to assist in developing a thorough interpretation of the research data. The compilation of different data sources reduces the bias of the use of a single source (Bowen, 2009). The compilation of the data leads to a unified, thorough analysis for researchers to increase the credibility of the study (Bowen, 2009; Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Member checking allows the participants to verify the information is correct and the researcher's interpretations reflect the meaning they wanted portrayed (Birt et al., 2016). I sent the interpretation to the participants to verify I covered the necessary information and had the correct interpretation. The review of the data and interpretations increases the accuracy of the study (Yates & Leggett, 2016). As the participants review the data, they can provide corrections or additional, pertinent information to the study (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Member checking allowed the participants the opportunity to ensure I captured their perspectives.

As with any data collection methodology, there were advantages and disadvantages. The primary advantage of data collection through interviewing is gaining rich, in-depth data (Ellis, 2016). The interviewer's use of open-ended questions allows interviewees to express their experiences with detailed information elicited by the questions (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). The researcher having face-to-face interaction with participants allows them to observe the body language and other nonverbal cues (Goldstein, 2017). The interviews also allow researchers to ask follow-up questions to increase understanding and depth of responses (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). The researchers may ask follow-up questions to gain understanding and depth of the participants' responses (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). The advantages of using documents as a part of the data collection include (a) efficiency, (b) availability, (c) cost effectiveness, (d) stability, and (e) coverage (Bowen, 2009). The ability of the researcher to conduct document analysis requires less time (Bowen, 2009). Documents such as human resource policies and exit interview transcripts or notes provided a foundation for retention strategies. The availability of the supporting documents was less expensive than continuous data collection by other methods such as interviews and focus groups. The documents are stable as the information does not change and is available for repeated reviews (Bowen, 2009). Documents have a broad range of coverage that can withstand time and changes (Yin, 2014).

The disadvantages of interviewing can stem from the lack of experience of the researcher (Ellis, 2016). The researcher must ensure the questions were clear and produced responses that align with the research question. As researchers transition from an employee to a researcher, there are times the researcher provides information that results in bias (Ellis, 2016). Another disadvantage of interviewing was the time needed for interviews and the variation in participants' responses.

The disadvantages of the use of documents include (a) lack of details, (b) lack of access, and (c) biased selectivity (Bowen, 2009). Publicly accessible documents might not provide sufficient information to triangulate adequately to increase the knowledge of the topic. Individuals outside of the organization might experience difficulty obtaining documents from some companies. Therefore, the need to find other means of data collection might be necessary. Bias selectivity is information chosen by others, which leads to less thorough information, as the researcher does not have an opportunity to choose the information that pertains to the research topic (Bowen, 2009). The overall disadvantage was not having thorough, in-depth information from the document sources.

Data Organization Technique

The identity of the participants is confidential and outlined before data collection (Petrova, Dewing, & Camilleri, 2016). To ensure the anonymity of the participants and the organization, each participant had a code. The coding of the data obtained during the interviews adhered to the following format, such as Org1P1, to protect the anonymity of the participants. When choosing the codes, the code must not provide too much information that could make them easily identifiable (Saunders, Kitzinger, & Kitzinger, 2015).

Coding is the process that links the collection and analysis of the data (Clark & Veale, 2018). Coding assists in drawing the important concepts from the data while maintaining the meaning (Clark & Veale, 2018). Coding led to the identification of themes and patterns. I coded the documents obtained from the participants' organizations with alphanumeric codes, such as Org1D1, to maintain privacy and protect the identity of the organization. The notes collected during the interview followed a similar coding as the participants, Org1N1. Notes I recorded helped identify nonverbal cues, observations, and interpretations at the time of the interview. I maintained participants' anonymity by providing a code to participants, organizational documents, and notes recorded during the interviews. The observations led to follow-up questions to elicit further knowledge from the participants on the topic. After completing the interviews, I reflected on the information collected and how it related to the overall research question.

I used Nvivo, a qualitative data analysis software program for data management (Houghton et al., 2016). Nvivo allows the coding of notes, transcripts, and other data

(Zamawe, 2015). I utilized the software to help identify themes and patterns throughout the research documentation, which assisted in analysis. Although Nvivo acted as a repository of the information, I made the decisions to ensure the analysis of all information.

I stored the information in a password protected file on my computer and backed up on an external hard drive for 5 years. The external hard drive was stored in a locked file cabinet to protect the information. After 5 years, I will destroy all files and documents related to the study.

Data Analysis

Data analysis begins with a reflection on the study protocol, followed by a review of the data for patterns, concepts, and themes (Yin, 2014). Data organization allowed the researcher to identify patterns and common themes. Data triangulation ensures (a) the reliability and validity through member checking, field notes, and journal articles and (b) an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012; Denzin, 2012).

Triangulation consists of four types: (a) method triangulation, (b) triangulation of sources or data triangulation, (c) analyst triangulation, and (d) theory triangulation (Patton, 1999). I utilized method triangulation to provide an in-depth understanding of employee retention strategies in healthcare organizations. Methodological triangulation is the comparison of multiple data sources to increase the validity and reliability of the data (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012; Patton, 1999).

The process of data analysis begins with five steps: compiling, dissembling, reassembling, interpretation, and conclusion (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). The first step, compiling, consists of organizing the data in a way to code and categorize (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). The compilation includes the organization of transcribing the transcripts and other resources in a more useful manner (Yin, 2014). Once I completed the compilation of the transcription data, then I could move to the dissembling of the data.

Dissembling is separating the data and putting them into workable categories (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). By classifying the data into categories, I could develop codes that categorized the similarities, differences, and patterns. Computer assistant qualitative data analysis software assisted with the organization and identifying patterns.

Reassembling is a process in which the reviewing of codes leads to themes (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). The themes provided the researcher with information from the data to create meaning that related to the overall research question. The review of the themes leads the researcher to the development of the findings, which encompasses member checking to increase the validity of the study (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018).

Interpretation was a process of critical thinking to find the meaning of themes and its relation to the research question. The interpretation should be consistent with all raw data (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). The interpretation discusses the relationship between the themes and the codes to provide an understanding of the overall research question (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018).

The conclusion is a compilation of the interpretations of raw data, codes, and themes as it answers the research question (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). Although the information from the study was not generalizable, others could utilize and alter the information to fit into other organizations. The conclusion contained detailed information that contributed to the knowledge of a given topic.

Analysis software assists in identifying repetitive words or phrases and other patterns necessary for proper coding (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). I used Nvivo as a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CADQAS) to compile data and assist in the development of themes and patterns (Yin, 2014). Nvivo assisted in the organization of data to lead to the interpretation to answer the research question. After the compilation and categorization of the data, I manually reviewed for additional patterns and determined the need for further analysis (Moser & Korstjens, 2018).

The combination of key themes identified distinguished successful strategies to retain healthcare employees. I reviewed the themes discovered and confirmed the support in the current literature on employee retention strategies. The key themes must relate to the overall research question (Yin, 2014). The information obtained should thoroughly explain both supporting and nonsupporting data ensuring the evaluation of all information (Yin, 2014).

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined dependability as the reliability of the data and the ability of other researchers to duplicate the study. As the primary data collection instrument, my goal was to ensure dependability through (a) a clear description of the study methodology, (b) a written description of the interview protocol, and (c) member checking. Member checking is the participants' review of the researcher's interpretation of the data (Birt et al., 2016). Reviewing the interpretation confirms the researcher recorded the participants' responses accurately (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Consistency is the use of the same methodology and steps leading to similar results (Leung, 2015). To achieve consistency, the researcher should incorporate rigor, the concept of thoroughness, and accuracy (Cypress, 2017; De Massis & Kotlar, 2014). As a part of achieving consistency, I had participants complete member checking for accuracy. The participants can provide additional feedback on the data through member checking for accuracy and consistency (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014). The consistency of the interview questions and the focus on the research question provides increased reliability (Leung, 2015).

Validity

Validity is the appropriateness and trustworthiness of the study through a continuous review of the research (Leung, 2015). Validity is the information grounded in theory and principles (Cypress, 2017). The achievement of validity and rigor is through the researcher's investigation of a theory and its connection to the research question (Cypress, 2017). I reviewed the data to ensure validity through ongoing comparison to the overall research question.

Credibility. Credibility is the true and accurate interpretation of the participants' viewpoints (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Credibility is accomplished through member checking, continuous observations, and engagement (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). I increased the credibility by having participants review the interpretations made from the interviews. The use of multiple comparison methods improves the trustworthiness and credibility of the study (Stewart, Gapp, & Harwood, 2017). The accuracy of the data and the data interpretation enhances credibility (Liao & Hitchcock, 2018).

Transferability. Transferability is the ability to utilize the findings in one study and share the findings with other areas (Amankwaa, 2016). The use of purposive sampling, thick descriptions, and a wide range of data sources increase the transferability to other businesses (Cypress, 2017; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). In the study, I provided detailed information that organizations could utilize using a similar process to transfer the concepts. By providing thorough information, others could decide if the strategy or principles could transfer to their business.

Confirmability. Confirmability is the ability of others to authenticate the data (Connelly, 2016; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). An audit trail is necessary to use as a guide for researchers to mimic the study to come to similar conclusions (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The use of triangulation, the incorporation of multiple data sources, and journaling assists in providing an understanding to the readers (Amankwaa, 2016). To ensure that my study had confirmability, I included thorough details and notes in the interpretations for member checking.

Transition and Summary

In Section 2, I restated the purpose statement, explained the role of the researcher, and identified strategies to gain access to participants and the methodology used to collect data. The methodology used was a multiple case study with purposive sampling to gain knowledge from knowledgeable participants. The participants, selected from the southeastern region states healthcare organizations' population, were human resource personnel or healthcare managers. The research followed the ethical research guidelines outlined by the Belmont Report and Walden University's IRB committee. The collection of data through interviews, notes, and other sources led to data saturation.

In Section 3, I presented the findings of the data collection along with my interpretation. Section 3 also included an explanation of the application of the data in practice and its implications for social change. I concluded Section 3 with recommendations for future studies, reflections of the doctoral process, and the conclusion from the data.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

The turnover in healthcare organizations affects the profitability and the quality of care provided to the patients. In Section 3, I explored the strategies used to implement and improve the retention of healthcare personnel successfully. In this section, I presented an introduction to the study and a presentation of the findings. Section 3 also included the application to professional practice and implications for social change. Section 3 concluded with recommendations for action, recommendations for further research, reflections, and a conclusion.

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to identify the strategies managers used to increase employee retention in healthcare organizations. The population for this study was healthcare managers and human resources personnel in three southeastern region states' healthcare organizations that successfully implemented strategies to increase employee retention. Turnover in healthcare is the result of several factors (Willard-Grace et al., 2019). Leaders need to develop retention strategies that address the different factors while developing policies to improve retention (Willard-Grace et al., 2019). As turnover results in increased workloads, the development of proper retention strategies may lead to improved retention and patient care.

I conducted semistructured interviews with three community partners from the southeastern region states. After receiving approval from Walden's IRB and consent from each participant, I began data collection. I used the interview protocol as a guide for the interview process to gain knowledge of the retention strategy development and implementation. The participants and organizations identity remained confidential throughout data collection and analysis. I informed each participant they could withdraw from the study at any time. The participants provided information on the successful retention strategies used in their organizations. The findings indicated several factors applied to improve retention: (a) communication, (b) praise and recognition, and (c) options.

Presentation of the Findings

Theme 1: Communication

Communication is necessary to engage employees and provide and obtain feedback**.** Leaders are the key to ensuring communication is effective, allowing the employees' voices to be heard. "We make ourselves as leaders very accessible to our front line staff" (Org1P1). Five out of six participants agreed that managers used communication to identify what is working well, what is not working well, and allow employees to voice any concerns (Org2P1, Org1P1, Org1P3, Org3P1, & Org3 P2).

Leaders must make themselves approachable, visible, and accessible to have continuous lines of open communication. Communication allows employees and managers to provide feedback, voice concerns, and provide solutions to improve the work environment. "The one-on-one conversation allows team members to discuss reasons why they are staying at Org 3 and also opportunities for improvement" (Org3P1). Managers who are encouraging employees to have open lines of communication and create an environment where an open door policy enables continuous communication improve job satisfaction leading to improved retention (Brown, Johnson, McMillian, &

Branden, 2018). The communication between leaders, employees, and other departments' employees can lead to improved processes, involvement in decision making, and improvements in patient care. "I really think being approachable, where I give respect to them and respect their opinion, and I am going to do everything that I can to make changes for you" (Org1P3).

Town hall meetings, rounding, and other open forums allow employees and managers to ask questions and provide feedback. Rounding is the discussion between the manager and the employees to discuss what things are important to them and for their well-being (Harms, 2018). Org2P1 commented,

> In team talk, each executive is responsible for giving their frontline, in other words, they go to their areas, get a couple of messages out. The next thing is open dialogue about what's bothering them, how can we do this better, what kind of atmosphere are you working in and what they would like to change.

Town hall meetings allow employees to discuss concerns, receive immediate feedback, and follow up with information suggested in the meetings to improve patient care" (Brown et al., 2018). Employees who intend to stay with the organization may provide the information to make changes to improve retention. Employees who feel embedded and have a voice, communicate more openly, effectively, and proactively to make improvements when they have the support of those in the organization (Tan, Loi, Lam, & Zhang, 2019).

Adequate and effective communication improves relationships between employees and managers. As managers build trust with the employees, they can utilize the information from the communication to improve retention. “Rounding in our areas. Sometimes we are just bringing lunch to them. It’s all about building a healthy relationship with your staff” (Org2P1). Incorporating team building exercises help to improve communication and open the group’s lines of communication. “The team building of understanding each other’s roles and respect for each other” (Org3P1). As employees and managers continue to build an environment where communication although with some disagreements, discussions lead to a solution. “So it’s a healthy team environment that encourages a lot of constructive discourse or discussion. And if there is discourse, it is for the betterment of the organization; it’s not political, it’s not personal” (Org1P1). Company turnover data revealed how communication throughout the organization improved retention. The retention in Org1 over time revealed the retention improved.

Table 2

Turnover Data Org1

Region	Quarter 1 2018	Quarter 2 2018	Quarter 3 2018	Quarter 4 2018
East	31.8	34.3	29.5	28.1
Central	37.6	35.4	35.7	35.1
West Region	42.9	47.1	35.5	38.0
South Carolina	37.8	30.4	30.5	31.5
Org1 Total	33.7	32.7	30.7	31.0

Communication is a way employees can express their similarities, difference, and agree to make improvements (Seymour & Geldenhuys, 2018). The information from the interviews revealed communication is significant in employee satisfaction and finding solutions for improvements within the organization. Employees who are involved in communication that leads to decision making identify their fit within the organization, which increases their commitment (Seymour & Geldenhuys, 2018). The employees who are involved in the organization take on more responsibilities developing their fit within the organization. When employees find the fit they seek, they are more likely to remain in the organization.

Communication in healthcare organizations is essential to provide quality care to patients. “EVS workers felt marginalized because they were EVS and really didn’t add value to the patient experience, which was untrue. So when the reports were given, they were a part of that because making sure that the rooms were cleaned in the proper time, and comprehensive cleaning, or deep cleaning” (Org2P1). As managers continue to communicate with employees, they unveil issues or concerns which need to be corrected to improve patient care. As the employees communicate with managers, and they begin to find how they fit in the organization by getting involved in decision making processes.

> Another thing that I kept hearing over and over us that the EMR was redundant. People were saying I have to document the same thing three places or sometimes four places that doesn't make sense. It was causing frustration on the part of the staff, and actually some families were complaining that they felt like the nurse, all they did was type. So we are doing charting by relevance, just means I only need to chart on the stuff that is pertinent to this particular visit, patient, and family. (Org1P2)

Employees who participate in frequent communication through huddles, meetings, forums, and email are more engaged and committed to the organization. Through communication, issues and concerns may get resolved and improve patient care. "The nurses were having to rechart everything because the wi-fi would go down, and they wouldn't have the documentation and would have to redo it. We got it fixed." (Org3P1). Communication allows the employees to express themselves and enables managers to provide feedback or insight into ways to make improvements in the work environment. The development of relationships with managers and coworkers opens the communication to get the thoughts and goals of the individuals and how to improve their job satisfaction to retain them. "You have to look at retention differently. Think outside of the box. You have to create that environment of expectation and manage it. I don't expect millennials to be here10 years, so I manage what I believe that research says and I get the most out of that expected time" (Org2P1). Through constant communication, leaders get to know what is important to employees as well as their goals (Reynolds, 2019).

Communication allows employees to become involved and develop relationships that link them to their coworkers. Managers supplying employees with consistent, valuable feedback and guidance increases the commitment and embeddedness of the employees to the organization (Dechawatanapaisal, 2018). As employees realize they are a part of the organization and community they understand if they leave, they will have to sacrifice relationships, opportunities, and the connection to the community. The friendship bonds developed in the organization and the community increases the employee's embeddedness and fit but also increases the sacrifices if they decide to leave an organization (Gonzalez, Ragins, Ehrhardt, & Singh, 2018).

Communication contributes to the job embeddedness theory as employees communicate with managers; they can determine what factors are important to keep them embedded in the organization and the community. When employees communicate with managers and coworkers, they can determine how they fit in the organization and the community (Tan et al., 2019). Communication allows employees to build relationships, which links them to the organization and community. Managers who build a trusting work environment can have continuous lines of communication through open, honest communication (El Masri & Suliman, 2019). Employees who are more embedded in smaller organizations and communities have higher levels of sacrifice than those in larger organization and communities (Coetzer, Inma, & Poisat, 2017). The links, fit, and sacrifice experienced by employees is built on the foundation of communication to build relationships to lead to improved retention.

Theme 2: Praise and Recognition

Praise and recognition demonstrates to employees that managers notice and appreciate their hard work. Managers who engage in praise and recognition celebrations have more engaged, valued, and committed employees. “So once a month on Thursday, the executives and some of the administrators are at key entrances and exit places of the hospital, and we have a token of thanks for them” (Org2P1). Employees who feel valued and a part of the organization are less likely to have turnover intentions. The strategies that managers use to increase employee retention a lot if it is recognition of the nurses and the hard work they do (Org1P1).

“Recognition is also a key strategy” (Org3P1). Praise and recognition encourages employees to continue the hard work. “Some people want a formal - in front of a lot of people - recognition, and some would like a pat on the back in the moment” (Org3P1). Managers who know the employees and what they like becomes key in the praise and recognition efforts. Employees need praise and recognition for their hard work and dedication to the organization (Reynolds, 2019). “And figuring out what they want in the way of recognition” (Org3P1). Options such as thank you notes or gift cards are small tokens given by managers to let the employees know they are doing a job well done. “Something that is specific and that would let staff know what they are doing right and what we appreciated” (Org1P2). “And the manager might would [*sic*] have a $10 gift card to Chik-fil-A, she could give that nurse for recognition of what she did above and beyond her role; she helped out her peers" (Org1P2). Rounding provides opportunities for leaders to acknowledge individuals for their contributions to the team as well as to the organization (Brown et al., 2018). Expressing gratitude, publicly or privately, for the work the employees do to improve the work environment and teamwork embeds the employees in the organization. Celebrations offered as a way to recognize employees may contribute to their retention. "They offer several opportunities to celebrate team members, including birthday celebrations" (Org3P2). Any means of celebration improves employee satisfaction and commitment to the organization.

Taking time to acknowledge employees may improve their productivity and job satisfaction. As employees feel more valued, managers increase the chance to retain them. Praise and recognition increases the happiness of the employees in the workplace, which results in improved dedication and commitment to the organization (Shehawy, Elbaz, & Agag, 2018). Praise and recognition acknowledges their contributions to the organization and patient care. Managers who want to see continuous efforts from employees should create praise and recognition strategies.

"Recognizing individuals on the team but recognizing the team as a whole kind of making sure they are not forgotten about" (Org3P1). Although there are no formal policies and procedures on praise and recognition from the participants, the executives expect that some form of praise and recognition takes place at least quarterly. Hand written notes sent to the employees' homes (Org1D4; Org3D5), giving gift cards to thank the employees for assisting other team members (Org1D3), and recognition at the leadership meeting (Org3D4) are ways the managers express gratitude for the employees' contribution to the team and organization. Written recognition from departments, recognition in the organization's newsletters, and weekly or monthly emails gives leaders another source to recognize team members for their contributions and accomplishments (Brown et al., 2018). The weekly newsletter for the leaders recognizes the leaders' and departments' accomplishments in the organization (Org3D2; Org3D3). Bulletin boards in the departments provide a means to display recognition for the employees. As employees receive positive feedback, patient care, productivity, and commitment may increase. Praise and recognition provide a link to the hard work and dedication that employees contribute to the organization and the community.

As employees feel the support from the managers for their work, they know they fit into the team within the organization. When employees develop support systems inside and outside the organization, they are less likely to have turnover intentions (Treuren & Fein, 2018). Employees who decide to leave an organization that celebrates the employees' achievements, sacrifices the celebrations and comradery established during the celebrations. If the employee decides to the leave the organization, he or she will sacrifice the relationships built in the organization with those who have supported their efforts as an employee (Shehawy et al., 2018).

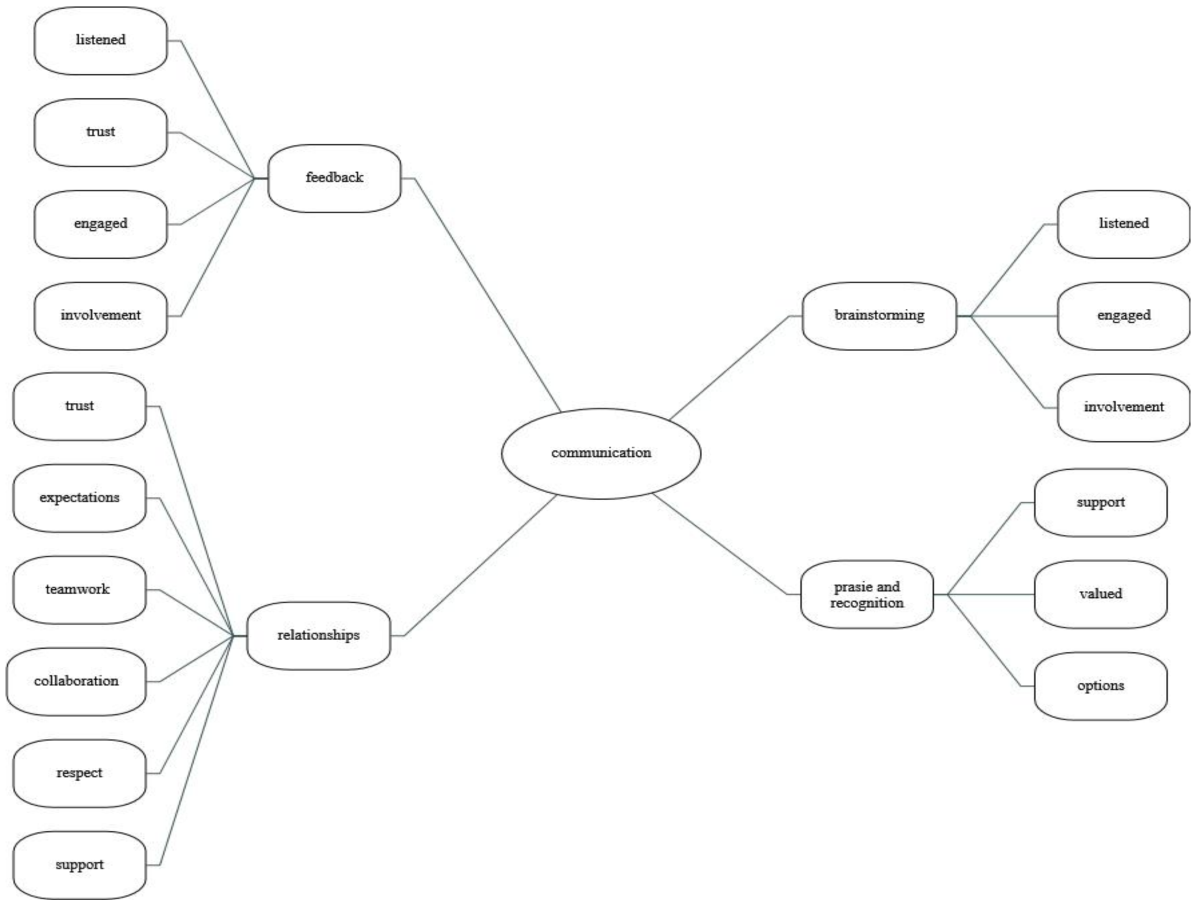

Figure 1. Communication word tree with subcategories of communication characteristics discovered during the interviews.

Praise and recognition are characteristics that assist in the links, fit, and sacrifice of the job embeddedness theory. As employees assist others through teamwork, it links them by helping others. Organizational leaders who acknowledge and celebrate the contribution of healthcare workers recognize the value of the care they provide to the patients (Steiner, 2018). The praise and recognition may be from patients, managers, or coworkers thanking them and increasing their link and fit into the organization. Employees recognition improves their performance and creates a healthy work environment (El Masari & Suliman, 2019). Employees who have developed a rapport with patients, coworkers, and members of the community would sacrifice the recognition for their commitment and dedication to the organization and the community. The support given by leaders and coworkers contributes to the sacrifice employees may experience if they decide to leave the organization (Kester & Wei, 2018). The praise and recognition given by organizational and community members embeds the employees by being a part of an organization and community that provides the recognition for the care provided to the patients.

Theme 3: Options

There are several options available to have increased flexibility to improve the work environment, career development, and work-life balance. "Just to be open to different ways to improve patient care at a high level but accommodating that individual nurse as to what her needs may be" (Org1P1). The flexibility to provide options that benefit both the employee and the organization improves employee satisfaction, and the organization may gain employee retention. "One of the things with retention is having different pay structures" (Org1P2). Different pay structures allow managers to provide options based on the needs of the employees. "Some of the leaders in a couple of departments have been, specifically environmental services (EVS) and food services, focus on appreciation and recognition as well as adjusting assignments to fairly and equally do the workload" (Org3P2). Employees who have options for work schedules improve loyalty and commitment to the organization. Offering options other than compensation incentives, such as career development, keep the employees involved, increasing the likelihood to retain them (Fowler, 2018). Employees search for different options when looking for jobs or reviewing their current job (Reynolds, 2019). Offering employees educational options that will help advance their careers may increase their embeddedness to the organization. As team members have emergent situations and require the need for coverage in the area, managers who support flexibility and may cover the area when necessary builds respect, teamwork, and a cohesive work environment.

Managers who can provide options to improve work-life balance may retain employees. “So that’s why we try to get them a little more flexibility in their staffing options, especially with smaller offices that’s the one that bear the brunt” (Org1P1). For employees who need an option of an alternative schedule may improve their work-life balance. The employees who work on call shifts need options to improve work-life balance. Employees who work all night, on-call with the expectation to work a partial shift during the following day, can get rest without the use of personal time off (PTO).

> Making sure that they are getting sleep deprivation time and that this time is not taken away from their PTO or their vacation time, that is part of their hours so to speak, it is work hours, and they are not punished for taking the time down. (Org1P2)

Also, a part of alternative scheduling is the alternative productivity calculation to ensure the employees’ productivity is calculated fairly based on the tasks completed. “So one of the things that I am in the process of implementing, the reporting part is almost finished; it's what I am calling a weighted productivity” (Org1P2). A flexible strategy becomes necessary for managers and human resource personnel to recruit and retain employees

(Reynolds, 2019). The organization's policies on pay structures and work schedules outline the different pay scales and work schedules to provide additional options for the employees (Org1D1). When employees feel the organizational leaders invest in their interests for work advancement and care about work-life balance, it may lead to decreased turnover intentions. Work-life balance for employees becomes a task for leaders to assist in retaining employees (Reynolds, 2019).

Offering the option to provide collaboration opportunities may lead to improved retention. "So I got to partner with my extended healthcare community, which is the city, what is it that we both need and that is for them to stay (Org2P1). The collaboration with the employees, managers, and other outside resources provide strategies to improve options available to increase job satisfaction and retention. Collaboration with community partners and other organizational departments to teach the employees skills to improve patient care.

> We found a lot of that early on; we would suggest that the leader to connect with someone in organizational development (OD) and they would come and do games and team building to boost morale and get everybody talking to each other a little more. (Org3P1)

Improving the morale of the team and providing opportunities to excel in their career increases the chance of retaining the employees. "So I partnered with her to say here, how can we enhance this team even more because a lot of what they do is OD work" (Org3P2). Enhancing and improving the skill set of the employees may assist in retention and decreasing turnover intentions. "So people that they are hiring we can help them prepare for the exam" (Org3P2). Preparing the employees for career advancement and increased skill set may increase the retention of skilled employees. For the success of educational and career development options, the options must align with the goal of the employees (Reynolds, 2019). Instead of more reactive exit interviews, stay interviews are more proactive.

> So what we found was by doing stay interviews just like we do when we sit down and talk to people we are able to be a lot more impactful with what we do because we can make those changes, and we can work with that leader to make those changes before that team member even thinks I'm ready to leave. (Org3P1)

Managers who strive to improve the employees' experience, the employees' job satisfaction may increase, resulting in increased commitment to the organization. "Stay interviews helped in changing policies or procedures" (Org3P2). Alternatively, other organizations' leaders learned information from the exit interviews to make improvements in the future to assist with employee retention. "And we learned from exit interviews that it (transfer policy) was too stringent and that we needed to be a little more lenient to give people a little more options. So we changed our policies as a result of that (Org2P1). Others were able to find out why there was a larger turnover in entry level positions. "We learned that two new German grocery stores were coming into our community. And they were paying $11, and we didn't even know it. We found out from that, and we did a living wage adjustment. So anyone making less than $12/hour was raised" (Org2P1).

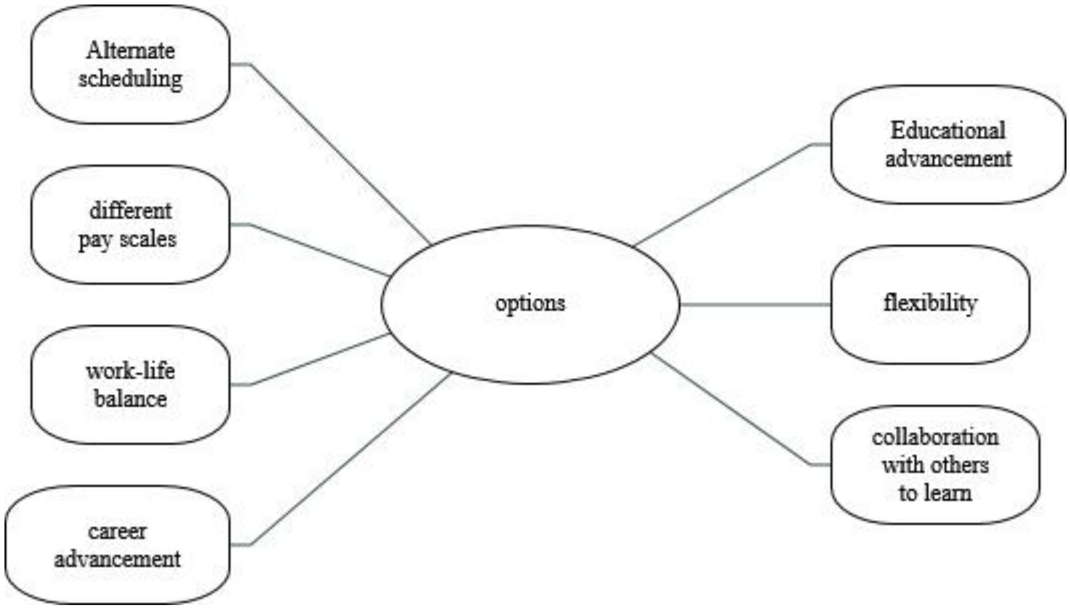

Figure 2. Option word tree.

The options offered to the employees increase the factors of the job embeddedness theory. Offering a variety of options allows employees to discover how they fit into the organization. As the fit is established, the employees can link themselves with others as they partake in the options. Organizations that offer employee development increase the fit and links within the organization and community leading to improved employee retention (Kester & Wei, 2018). Employees who take advantage of the options available sacrifice those options as they leave the organization and community. The organizations that encourage employee development, teamwork, and involvement in decision making, increase the factors of the job embeddedness theory, leading to increased embeddedness and retention of the employees (Tian et al., 2016).

Applications to Professional Practice

Healthcare managers and human resource personnel strive to find successful retention strategies. The themes identified through the interviews and company documents provide managers and human resources personnel with successful strategies in three healthcare organizations. Open communication between the managers, employees, and coworkers allows for the discussion of concerns and to come to a resolution. Managers must communicate clear expectations of what they want from the employees (Nagai, Fujita, Diouf, & Salla, 2017). Praise and recognition for employees by management demonstrates the importance and significance of the work of the employees. Praise and recognition encourages teamwork and improved patient care (Goetz, Kleine-Budde, Bramesfield, & Stegbauer, 2017). Employees who feel valued are less likely to leave an organization. Providing employees a wide range of options that range from scheduling, compensation, and personal development embeds the employees into the organization. Offering a variety of options improves job satisfaction, which may lower turnover intentions (Boonluksiri et al.; Goetz et al., 2017; Gostautaite et al., 2018). The development of retention strategies must include a range of topics to be successful.

Exploring different successfully implemented retention strategies allow managers and human resource personnel to build strategies that fit the needs of their organization and the employees. Managers should build an environment that is conducive to have open lines of communication, continuous praise and recognition tactics, and options that fit the needs of the employees, as well as the organization. Building the retention strategies that are fair and people-centered improves employee satisfaction deterring their turnover intentions (Gostautaite et al., 2018; Nagai et al., 2017). Managers and human resource personnel who can incorporate a successful strategic retention plan can improve productivity, patient care, and profitability for the organization.

Implications for Social Change

Managers and human resource personnel who identified and implemented successful retention strategies improve the work environment for the employees and patient care. As the employees become more satisfied, they can provide better patient care to the community. Getting involved in the community, sharing information that may improve the health of the community members, gives employees a purpose, and embeds them into the community (Boonluksiri et al., 2018). Being able to retain knowledgeable employees, allow those employees to train newer, less experienced employees to provide the best patient-centered care. As employees determine their fit in an organization, they take on more responsibilities to improve the workplace and community environment (Nagai et al., 2017). As employees provide better patient care, it can lead to a healthier community. Also, as healthcare organizations retain employees, they can also contribute to the financial well-being of the community.

Recommendations for Action

The recommendations for managers and human resource personnel is (a) to build an environment that is conducive to open communication, (b) build relationships between managers, employees, and the community and (c) offer different options for employees to include compensation, work-life balance, and employee development. Employees need to understand how they fit into an organization and the links that keep them embedded and what they give up when leaving an organization and community. Managers need to include employees in the decision making process to increase the embeddedness in the organization. The incorporation of praise and recognition for the small and large accomplishments in a way that pleases the employees, lets the employees know that management is paying attention to their contributions to the organization.

Managers and human resources personnel should look at the results of this study to find and develop strategies to retain healthcare workers. I plan to publish my study in human resources and healthcare management journals to share potential strategies to improve retention in other healthcare organizations and speak with groups from human resources and healthcare managers. Sharing the information from the study may provide ideas that can be adjusted to meet the needs of the organization. The information from this study may also encourage managers and human resource personnel to conduct a similar study to identify other potential options to assist in the improvement of retention of healthcare personnel.

Recommendations for Further Research

To reach other industries and expound upon the study, I would recommend future researchers repeat the study and (a) expand the region to reach more areas of the country, (b) expand to industries other than healthcare (i.e., banking, teaching, etc.), and (c) and conduct in-person interviews for all interviews to read the body language and other nonverbal cues. When selecting participants, select participants with more years of experience in human resources or management with the success of employee retention strategies. Managers and human resource personnel can use the information in this study to build a retention strategy that fits the needs of both the organization and the employees.

Future researchers may benefit from utilizing a mixed method research strategy. The use of quantitative data can quantify the topics that are important to the employees to improve retention. By engaging employees in questionnaires, the arrangement of the number of similar responses is combined to quantify the results. Interviewing others can provide the perspective of the employees. Merging the qualitative and quantitative data will give comprehensive knowledge retention, providing managers and human resource personnel more strategies to retain employees.

Reflections

I found the doctoral process to be challenging, frustrating at times, and rewarding when overcoming the hurdles. I learned that attention to details was key to getting through the program. The support of my chair and fellow doctoral students motivated me to stay focused on the ultimate goal of becoming Dr. Lee. My preconceived idea that pay was the most important factor in retention was proven incorrect as I went through the literature review and interview process. After the completion of the study, my thoughts changed about retention strategies as the support of, investment in, and recognition of the employees create an environment that builds commitment. It is not always about financial benefits; it is about the well-being of the employees.

Conclusion

The purpose of this multiple case study was to identify retention strategies used by healthcare managers. I conducted semistructured interviews via Skype or in-person interviews. The themes that emerged from the interviews were (a) communication, (b) praise and recognition, and (c) options.

To retain employees, human resources personnel, and healthcare managers need to invest in the development of employees in a way that appeals to them. When employees work in an environment that is conducive to having options, recognition for the work they have done, and communication that allows for feedback and participation in decision making, employees are more embedded with less chance of turnover intentions. After the development and implementation of the strategies, the focus should become the reason the employees decided to choose healthcare as a career and on providing the best patient care to the employees.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol	
What you will do	**What you will say-script**
Introduce the interview and a brief overview of the purpose of the study	I want to thank you for taking the time to participate in the research study. The interviews will include human resource personnel and healthcare managers discussing the strategies utilized to retain healthcare personnel. The goal is to find several strategies human resource personnel and managers have successfully implemented to retain employees. I would also like to identify any challenges in the process and the process to overcome them.
• Watch for nonverbal cues • Ask follow-up questions for clarification or more in-depth answers • Explain the question if necessary	• What are the strategies used by managers to increase employee retention in your healthcare organization? • What, if any, leadership strategies have you identified that affect employee retention? • What were the key changes you made or suggested to the retention strategies? • How do you assess the effectiveness of the employee retention strategies that you implemented? • What, if any, information have you learned from exit interviews that led to changes in policies with the intention of increasing employee retention? • What other information would you like to share about any strategies that have been used to increase employee retention?
Wrap up interview thanking participants	If there are no further questions or anything else you would like to share, this will conclude the interview. I want to thank you for your time.
Schedule follow member checking	As a follow-up, I would appreciate if you would review the data and my interpretations. Please provide feedback or any suggestions. I will send you an email with the summary attached. Please return your feedback within one week of receiving the email.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. What are the strategies used by managers to increase employee retention in your healthcare organization?
2. What, if any, leadership strategies have you identified that affect employee retention?
3. What were the key changes you made or suggested to the retention strategies?
4. How do you assess the effectiveness of the employee retention strategies that you implemented?
5. What, if any, information have you learned from exit interviews that led to changes in policies with the intention of increasing employee retention?
6. What other information would you like to share about any strategies that have been used to increase employee retention?