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# Retail Employee Motivation and Performance

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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Angela Michelle Addair

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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the review committee have been made.

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The Office of the Provost

Walden University
2019

Abstract

Retail Employee Motivation and Performance

by

Angela Michelle Addair

MBA, Walden University, 2007

BSBA, Concord College, 2004

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

October 2019

Abstract

Retail industry leaders seek effective strategies to improve employee motivation to increase levels of workforce productivity. The purpose of this single case study was to explore the strategies successful retail industry leaders used to motivate their employees to achieve higher levels of workforce productivity. The conceptual framework for the study was Vroom's expectancy theory of motivation. The research participants consisted of 2 retail store managers from the same retail store located in southeastern mid-Atlantic region of the United States who successfully motivated their employees. Data collection consisted of semistructured interviews, direct observation, and review of company documents. Data analysis included theme interpretation and data grouping, as well as transcript reviews, and verified the emerging themes from the interview data. The 3 main themes developed from data analysis were workplace motivation, leading by example, and performance. Retail industry leaders might use the findings of this study to provide managers with strategies to motivate their staff. The implication of this study for social change is that retail leaders might apply strategies that engage employees in their jobs while maximizing the sustainability of the organization.

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# Dedication

I would like to dedicate this study to my family who has shown me endless support, encouragement, and love. To my children, Christian and Christina, may you always believe in yourself and follow your dreams. Nothing is impossible. I love you both with all of my heart and I thank God for you every day. Don't ever give up. To my parents, Calvin and Bonnie, you instilled the importance of education in me at a very young age; I hope I have made you proud. I couldn't have done this without you. Thank you for your encouragement and believing in me when I didn't believe in myself. For my Grandpa Lummie, I know you are in heaven, smiling down.

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First, I want to thank God above, because without his strength, love, support, and guidance obtaining this degree certainly would not have been possible. My Mom and Dad, who have been my cheerleaders, my shoulders to cry on, who have always supported me, believed in me, and loved me through it all. Christian, my son, who has encouraged me when I was ready to quit, I remembered you were watching. Kandi, my sister, thank you for encouraging me and making me laugh when I wanted to cry. Don and Lynn, my second set of parents, who have also cheered me on and helped me when I felt this was impossible. My family, friends, and coworkers who have all helped support and encourage me along the jouney. Dr. Brown, Dr. Muhammad, and Dr. Mathur you all have been fantastic. Thank you so much for the guidance and support.

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# Section 1: Foundation of the Study

The retail industry in the United States is highly competitive and has undergone significant changes within the past decade as it was impacted by the national economy (Goyal & Gupta, 2016). Businesses are trying to stay profitable by adjusting to the changes in order to be successful at meeting their consumers' needs (Felfe & Schyns, 2014). One significant factor to consider concerns the employees of the retail business organization. It is imperative that business organizations develop the skills of their employees and help them grow and develop (Wang, Tsai, & Tsai, 2014). Employees who are not in a management position may not have the same work ethic regarding job performance, time management, or the improvement of their skills as those who are in supervisory roles (Felfe & Schyns, 2014). In this single case study, I have explored what motivational strategies retailers use to improve the motivation among their employees.

## Background of the Problem

Decreased worker productivity, retention costs, and unmotivated employees are concerns that employers face (Goyal & Gupta, 2016). Some members of management fail to realize the significance of employee motivation in being a successful manager. Prior research has shown management is responsible for the degree in which they motivate their employees (Holden & Overmier, 2014). Management styles, work atmosphere, as well as other internal and external factors, can affect employee motivation (Felfe & Schyns, 2014). Motivation is a procedure that first begins with an unmet need or deficiency, followed by demand, which causes an action towards a persistence to fulfill that unmet need (Karami, Dolatabadi, & Rajaeepour, 2013). An employee's needs,

either aware or unaware, create their motivation. An employee does not implement any performance without motivation or an unmet need as an incentive (Holden & Overmier, 2014). Employers need to employ the best workforce possible and find methods to motivate them to be productive and resourceful employees to achieve profitability (Fernet, 2013).

## Problem Statement

Unmotivated employees negatively affect organizational profitability and workplace productivity (Aryee, Walumbwa, Seidu, & Otaye, 2013). In 2013, U.S. organizations spent approximately $720 million dollars to improve employee motivation, employee commitment to the organization, and job satisfaction (Gerst, 2013). The general business problem is that when employees are not motivated to increase productivity, they cause the business establishment to have a loss in profits. The specific business problem is retail industry leaders lack strategies to motivate employees to higher levels of workplace productivity.

## Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies that retail industry leaders use to motivate employees to achieve higher levels of workplace productivity. I collected data from two retail managers in southern West Virginia because they had successfully implemented strategies that increased employee workplace productivity. The results of this study may provide insights and strategies that allow business leaders to improve workplace productivity among their employees. Employees will be more satisfied when used to their fullest potential and importance (Daga &

Kapoor, 2014). The findings from this study may contribute to positive social change when leaders recognize employees' strengths, which may result in improved morale and productivity.

## Nature of the Study

A qualitative research study was an appropriate method for the study because one can use this strategy to explore the participants' experiences through persistent communication (Miles, Huberman, & Saldan, 2014). Patton (2015) described a qualitative method as suitable when the researcher inquiries about a subject to understand a bounded case. I used open-ended questions to explore the personal lived experiences of the participants. Quantitative researchers use closed-ended questions, and often lack the richness open-ended questions allow (Tvinnereim, Flottum, Gjerstad, Johannesson, Norde, 2017). I did not test a hypothesis in order to explore successful employees' motivational strategies, and so a quantitative study would not have been a suitable method for this study. Mixed-methods studies are a combination of quantitative and qualitative studies (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Patton, 2015). I did not complete a mixed methods study because the problem I examined was not of a quantitative nature.

I considered narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study designs for my study. I did not select a phenomenological design because the human lived experiences that were described by participants were not distinguished and intense. As Moustakas (1994) described a phenomenological design is one where lived experiences of the participants would be sufficiently distinctive and intense. Narrative research studies require the researcher to gather information from one participant to

extract practical meanings and interweave the past, present, and future (Garud & Giuliani, 2013). A researcher using a grounded theory includes a meticulous strategy of gathering and evaluating multiple sources of data over a long period of time in their study (Ahmed & Haag, 2016; Johnson, 2015). Ethnographic researchers describe and interpret common views, the daily lives, and behaviors of a culture group (Meyer, Crane, & Lee, 2016; Vignehsa, 2015). After I evaluated multiple qualitative designs, I selected the case study design to explore the research question. A case study was selected because it was the most appropriate design to explore the strategies retail industry leaders use to motivate their employees to higher levels of workplace productivity. Interviews, surveys, documentation, archival data, and direct and participant-observation are data sources for case studies (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2012). I collected data that best addressed my research question by interviewing the participants. The participants were asked *what*, *why*, and *how* questions.

## Research Question

The following research question guided my study: What strategies do the retail industry leaders use to motivate employees to achieve higher levels of workplace productivity?

## Interview Questions

I used the following interview questions to gather data from participants.

1. What strategies you would recommend implementing to motivate your employees?

2. How would you describe the effectiveness of the motivational strategies implemented by your organization?
3. Describe any barriers you encountered when implementing motivational strategies.
4. What other information can you add that would be helpful to anyone trying to motivate employees to higher workplace productivity?

## Conceptual Framework

Vroom developed the expectancy theory in 1964. Vroom (1964) discussed the expansion of the expectancy theory of workplace motivation and employee performance. Vroom indicated that employees are motivated by their logic of effort equivalent to the reward that the employee is going to perform in a specific manner to receive perceived incentive.

The expectancy theory relates to the research problem regarding how business leaders experience productivity and profit loss when their employees are not motivated. Unmotivated workers have an adverse impact on the business organization's competitive success (Ozlen & Hasanspahic, 2013). Management may try to focus on rewards simply to maintain daily operating standards. It is crucial that managers determine what to use and how to motivate their employees. Monetary incentives, pride, empowerment, and acknowledgment are all common workplace motivators (Ozlen & Hasanspahic, 2013). Vroom's expectancy motivational theory aligns with this study as I explored the strategies that the retail industry leaders use to motivate employees to higher levels of workplace productivity.

## Operational Definitions

The following is a list of terms used in my study.

*Autonomous motivation*: A form of motivation in which an employee is pleased in their work, for the essential contentment they experience, because the employee individually validates the significance of their effort (Fernet, 2013).

*Controlled motivation*: A form of motivation in which an employee performs actions to achieve self-respect or to avoid feelings of blame from a member of management (Fernet, 2013).

*Job satisfaction*: The level of contentment an employee has regarding their individual work (Yirik & Oren, 2014).

*Motivation:* The level to which an individual is willing to exert effort to attain organizational goals (Vroom, 1964).

## Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

In the following sections, I will describe the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of the study. In scholarly research, identifying assumptions, limitations, and delimitations guide the research and help solidify the validity and dependability of the research.

### Assumptions

Assumptions are the researcher's vision of the study, and therefore they shape the application of methods throughout the entire study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The focus of this single case study was on a retail business organization located in southern West Virginia. One assumption is that each of the participants' responses to the

interview questions will be their honest and true opinion without any outside influence from their peers or managers. Another assumption is that the participants will suffice as a demonstrative illustration of retail industry employees. The last assumption is that the participants' responses will provide the necessary data to complete the study.

**Limitations**

Limitations are external factors that confine the parameters of the research study, and which could result in possible weaknesses of the research study (Owsiak, 2014). One limitation is that the participants in this study will be from the same retailer in the same location. Their experiences may not represent the views for every employee who has worked in the retail industry. Another limitation is that participants may have different levels of experience and job duties although they are all employees of the same organization.

**Delimitations**

Delimitations are factors established by the researcher to confine the parameters of the research study (Owsiak, 2014). The employees are from the same retail establishment in this single case study. Therefore, the focus of the scope will only be on the responses of the participants of the study. The way the individual participant construed his or her individual experiences may influence the way they will respond to each interview question. I will make no attempt to assess gender, race, age, or other demographic categories.

## Significance of the Study

In the following subsections, I will describe the importance of the research study to business practices as well as its implications for positive social change.

### Contribution to Business Practice

The conclusions of this study may be significant because the results may serve as an addition to the existing knowledge of retail management to help provide retail leaders with a better understanding of their employees and ways to motivate them. Employers using the findings of this study may lead to their employees becoming more satisfied with their jobs, working more productively, and improving their job performance. By retaining motivated workers in the business organization, increased profitability and effectiveness may result. Motivated employees may reduce employee turnover, resulting in significant business operational savings. This study may provide insights and information that business leaders can use to motivate their employees. The results could then create a better working environment for everyone involved (Harrington & Lee, 2015). Organizational leaders may gain competitive advantages through using human capital to increase workplace productivity.

### Implications for Social Change

The findings from this study may contribute to positive social change by providing insights into factors that may improve retail industry employees' motivation and job performance. As a result, motivated employees might also lead to greater job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and increased involvement in the organization (Harrington & Lee, 2015). The findings from this study might lead to improved

interactions with the retail industries' customers, which may affect customer spending, resulting in improvements in the U.S. economy. Grigoroudis and Zopounidis (2012) have shown similar studies contributed to improving employees' morale and motivation which led to positive social change within the given business organization. More specifically, this study's implications for positive social change include the potential to improve retailer's employee relationships, efficiency among employees, and increase production. Social change may also occur through improved communication, enhancing employee performance and engagement, as well as overall wellbeing. Another opportunity for social change to occur is by the having motivated employees strengthen the values and culture of the organization, which would, in turn, extend beyond the organization and create a better relationship between the industry leaders and their communities. This partnership should provide both social and financial benefits.

## A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this literature review is to provide background information and justification for the need to explore the central research question: What strategies do the retail industry leaders use to motivate employees to achieve higher levels of workplace productivity? A thorough literature review justifies the need for the research study. In the following sections, I have included a detailed look at the current peer reviewed literature pertaining to the various components.

### Organization of the Review

This literature review contains scholarly books, peer-reviewed articles, and other scholarly works that I located using keyword searches through the Walden University

Library databases. I used the following databases and search engines for this literature review: Business Source Complete, SAGE Premier, Social Science Research Network, Emerald Management Journals, Academic Search Complete/Premier, EBSCOhost, ProQuest Central, Google Scholar, ABI/INFORM, and LexisNexis Academic. The total of related references was 164 sources, of which 90% are peer-reviewed, and 140 or 85%, of the references dated from 2014 to 2018. The keyword search terms I used were: *retail business*, *motivation*, *key success factors*, *successful motivational strategy*, *leadership*, *performance*, *organizational culture*, *empowerment*, *compensation*, *job satisfaction*, *employee performance*, *performance appraisals*, *communication*, and *expectancy theory*. Deviations and groupings of these terms produced more than enough material to support the study on employee motivation for retailers.

The first section of this literature review includes an overview of the conceptual framework selected for the study as well as supporting and contrasting theories. In the next section of the literature review, I identify the retail industry and motivation. The conclusion of the literature review includes factors of motivation and performance that affect the motivation of employees within the retail industry, including age, organizational culture, leadership, communication, empowerment, compensation, job satisfaction, employee performance, and performance appraisals.

**The Conceptual Framework: Vroom's Expectancy Theory of Motivation**

This study includes an evaluation of the Vroom's expectancy theory role regarding motivational strategies used by retail managers that contributes to employee motivation and improved employee performance. There is a correlation between

employee performance and employee motivation (Vroom, 1964). Nimri, Bdari, and Bitar (2015) highlighted the value of Vroom's expectancy theory as a resource for observing individual surroundings and successive interactions. Motivation is a conscious choice process as Vroom's expectancy theory reminds us (Parijat & Bagga, 2014).

There are four main assumptions based on Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory of motivation. The first assumption is that individuals join the organization with some expectations regarding their motivations, desires, and previous experiences (Parijat & Bagga, 2014). The second is that the behavior of the individual is deliberate and of their own choice (Parijat & Bagga, 2014). The third is that individuals want a variety of different things from their employers (Parijat & Bagga, 2014). Some employees want promotion, security, a good career, flexibility within their schedules, and good pay. The fourth is that individuals will begin to think about ways to improve their results for them on a personal level (Parijat & Bagga, 2014). These assumptions are important for managers as they work to motivate their employees.

Many scholars have communicated the significance of Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory as an instrumental tool for relating employee motivation within the business environment. Awasthy, Banerjee, and Banerjee (2012) created an expectancy theory-based framework to examine consumer motivation. Their study results agreed with Vroom's theory regarding the experiences of motivation (Awasthy et al., 2012). The results also confirmed a substantial connection between job satisfaction and the culture of the organization (Terera, & Ngirande, 2014). As the needs of the employees' change, their motivation may also change (Vroom, 1964).

Individuals also choose to behave in a specific manner based on his or her analysis of the perceived outcome associated with that behavior and the expectation that such behavior will result in desired reward (Terera, & Ngirande, 2014). Individual employees prefer work performances they believe lead to the results they value (Vroom, 1964). A deferred satisfaction or negative connotation may be the result of unethical decisions or actions by the individual (Parijat & Bagga, 2014). When financial success has been determined to be the entrepreneur's incentive, the output of effort has been high regardless of expectancy (Sullivan & Meek, 2012).

Vroom (1964) specified that factors of value to the individuals themselves motivated them. The individual is motivated then to put forth the efforts necessary to achieve their desired goals (Soni & Rawal, 2014). There will always be factors that surround the attempts of the employee. Therefore, the employees' performance will depend on the value of the desired outcome by their motivational factors. Valence is the value associated with the outcome of their efforts (Soni & Rawal, 2014). Valance must be worthwhile to the individual for them to want the reward; otherwise, they may not be motivated (Purvis, Zagenczyk, & McCray, 2015). As Sullivan and Meek (2012) pointed out, Vroom's expectancy theory of motivation is a prestigious work motivation theory that embraces itself within psychology literature to assist in explaining motivational factors to individuals. Vroom did not stipulate which precise rewards motivated individuals. Vroom explained how individuals make their decisions with hope that they are going to achieve the result they have desired (Purvis et al., 2015).

The very principle that the expectancy theory is based on is that an individual believes that putting forth a specific amount of effort will result in the desired performance, and then receiving the perceived reward (Blotnicky, Mann, & Joy, 2015; Hema Malini & Washington, 2014). The expectancy theory focuses on the value the individual has placed on the outcome determines the effort and behavior exhorted by the individual (Ramli & Jusoh, 2015). Vroom (1964) and Bourne, Pavlov, Franco-Santos, Lucianetti, and Mura (2013) have explained that the previous factors could only impact employee motivation as it relates to their existing conditions.

Motivation incorporates a variety of approaches on how to support individuals to achieve goals and remain subjective throughout the process. Employees will feel motivated when the goal is achievable and they have the belief that they can accomplish it (Vroom, 1964). The expectancy theory incorporates the connection between an employee's individual performance and the results of that employee's actions, which means that human beings psychologically can gain motivation and encouragement through attaining the individual goals along with the business organization's objectives (Berson, Halevy, Shamir, & Erez, 2015; Vroom, 1964). Vroom's expectancy theory of motivation is about the specific way an individual performs when their actions have expectations to result in a predicted outcome (Ramli & Jusoh, 2015). Berson et al. (2015) indicated that individual employees have the motivation to attain the goals they have set for themselves due to the connection between the outcome and their own efforts. Researchers (e.g. Aruna & Anitha, 2015; Munoz, Miller, & Poole, 2015; Selesho & Naile, 2014) all have emphasized the significance of managing employee expectations to

improve employee motivation. Add summary and synthesis to fully conclude the paragraph and section.

**Supporting and Contrasting Theories**

Leaders in business organizations have a responsibility to motivate their employees (Bassou, 2015; Zamecnik, 2014). Operative leadership starts with comprehension of authority and the responsible use of authority and influence with employees (Mehdinezhad & Sardarzahi, 2016; Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2014). Leadership and motivation are theorized in several methods (Creech, 2016; Davis, 2017), and detailed below are descriptions of motivational strategies and styles concerning business organizations.

Adams' (1963) theory of social equity is founded on the theory that individuals seek out social equity from various rewards such as high performance. The employees received social equity based on their various job outcomes. Various factors such as education, experience, and time commitments were required by the individuals to obtain the rewards (Adams, 1963). These rewards included pay increases, job promotion, special recognition, and others. Individuals tend to view their input and output in a ratio format (Adams, 1963). Adams emphasized that employees then compare their ration with their coworkers; those with a higher ratio are perceived to be more motivated than those with lower ratios.

Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation was derived when Herzberg (1964) composed and analyzed data from interviews conducted with 200 accountants and engineers from a variety of industries located in the Pittsburg area. While conducting the

interviews, Herzberg asked the participants to describe satisfaction and dissatisfaction within their jobs. The conclusion derived from the study was that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction resulted from two factors that the researcher labeled motivational factors (intrinsic elements) and hygiene factors (extrinsic factors). Herzberg (1966) discovered that improved retention, job satisfaction, and enhanced motivation are achieved by intrinsic factors. Extrinsic factors of motivation tend to lead to increased turnover, job dissatisfaction, all which are unmotivating to employees and negatively affect the rate of retention for the business organization (Herzberg, 1966; Sankar, 2015). Extrinsic factors are expected by employees but can result in high levels of dissatisfaction if they are not present (Selesho & Naile, 2014). Working conditions, job security, leadership, and company policies are all examples of extrinsic factors (Herzbergy, 1964; Selesho & Naile, 2014).

In the self-concept motivation theory, Grover (2014) explained compelling leaders have a trait, that when respected, it is effective in attracting followers. The performance of the leaders and their interactions with their employees is significant when exploring the motivational methods of leaders in a large business organization (Balaji & Krishnan, 2014; Bassou, 2015; Zogjani & Raci, 2015). Grover noted that respect is the focal point of the self-concept motivational theory as it can assure employees they are being valued in the decision-making process.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory has several contrasts with Vroom's expectancy theory. Vroom focused more on the outcome of the person's motivation and not on the satisfaction of the person's individual needs (Baumann & Bonner, 2016).

Wood, Logar, and Riley (2015) agreed that Maslow focused on the individuals and the level of their needs, more than their level of motivation. Harris, Murphy, DiPietro, and Line (2017) applied Vroom's expectancy theory to determine the motivational level of employees within the food service industry. Harris et al. concluded that motivation depended on the length of time the employee had been employed within the food industry but did not comment on the individual needs of the employees.

**Research Methodology**

A review of the professional literature published regarding this subject supports my use of the qualitative, single case study design, and conducting interviews to collect the data for this study. The focus of this study was to determine what strategies the retail industry leaders can use to motivate employees to higher levels of workplace productivity. The lens of qualitative research is a social assembly of what has occurred (Koopman, 2015). The individual pieces cannot be examined so the large framework of employee operation must be examined (see Koopman, 2015; Robinson et al., 2016).

This is a qualitative method research study. The results of the interviews from this study represent the data presented from the gathered participants' responses. The qualitative method will be the best method for this study because the goal is to explore the strategies that retail industry leaders use to motivate employees to higher levels of workplace productivity.

Some research studies require numerical answers, while others do not (Patton, 2015). Qualitative research examines and explores a specific problem by addressing what, how, when, and where (Patton, 2015). Triangulation has significantly enhanced the

credibility and reliability of qualitative studies (Patton, 2015). Triangulation is a method employed by qualitative researchers to combine methods to collect data during their research (Patton, 2015; Vizzuso, 2015). By using methodological triangulation, a researcher can ensure data saturation has occurred evaluating multiple sources to obtain data (Agyemang & Carter, 2014; Fusch & Ness, 2015; Heesen, Bright, & Zucker, 2016). I was able to perform triangulation within my study by using semistructured interviews, direct observation, and review of company documents as my data sources.

Qualitative and quantitative research differs in several ways. Qualitative researchers are conducting their research to understand a social or cultural occurrence (Sutton & Austin, 2015). Qualitative researchers do not know the variables of their studies before they conduct their research, nor do they know how they are associated with one another (Sutton & Austin, 2015). Another way qualitative research and quantitative research are different is by the size of the sample for the research. Miles, Hubberman, and Saldan (2014) noted that quantitative research requires the researcher to use a plentiful sample to ensure that the researcher will have enough contributors to capture a statistical significance; while qualitative research typically requires much less participants.

**Retail Industry**

The U.S. retail industry is experiencing above average turnover rates (Cho, Rutherford, & Park, 2013). Widespread research on the turnover rates of sales industry employees (Bande, Fernandez-Ferrin, Varela, & Jaramillo, 2014). The main issue with employee turnover is the loss of a skilled and talented employee leaving who is already

knowledgeable about the business organization and the practices of the organization (Park & Shaw, 2013; Selden & Sowa, 2015). The employee is the most important and most expensive asset to the business organization (Hitka & Balazova, 2015; Kim, 2014). Voluntary employee turnover is a significant business issue and challenge among the retail industry and researchers (e.g. Flickinger, Allscher, Fiedler, 2016; Peltokorpi, Allen, & Froese, 2014; Spell, Eby, & Vandenberg, 2014) have evaluated how specific factors such as leadership, compensation, job satisfaction, and the culture of the organization can affect employee retention rates. Additional issues with employee turnover involve profit loss, low satisfaction of customers, limited sales growth, and the negative return on equity (Park & Shaw, 2013; Rizwan, Saeed, Sikander, & Waseem, 2014). Bande et al., (2014) stated that retaining the talented, skilled, and resourceful sales employees is a major concern of business organization's management. Contrary to what is often believed, pay and benefits are not the principal reason employees give for retention (Oladapo, 2014). The employee relationship with his or her supervisor, the balance between work and personal life, the content of their jobs, the potential for advancement within their careers, and the amount of trust they have in the leadership of the business organization was given as reasons for retention failures (Oladapo, 2014).

Employees are an essential part of the business equation. Employees are critical to the retail industry because they are in constant contact with the customers of the business and they can significantly affect the success of the business (Singh & Prakash, 2013). The satisfaction levels of employees can directly connect with the satisfaction levels of customers (Singh & Prakash, 2013). An employee's productivity level relates to

the motivation level of the employee, both of which affects the bottom line of the retail business organization (Singh & Prakash, 2013). Conrad, Ghosh, and Isaacson (2015) noted that constant monitoring of employee motivational needs would enhance the commitment from the employee to exceptional work and help with retention efforts. There is a direct link to their level of productivity and their level of motivation Singh & Prakash, 2013). It is imperative that management work to keep their employees motivated.

As Scheers and Botha (2014) indicated, employees working in the retail industry are often the biggest asset to the business organization because they sell items that are readily available at other stores. These employees are the individuals who provide the customer service to the retailer's customers (Scheers & Botha, 2014). Businesses are spending large amounts of money to attract customer loyalty, but they are ignoring the dynamics that help to enhance employee motivation (Ganesh, 2016). Excellent customer service is an essential component to the successfulness of the retailer because of their lack of specialization among the products they sell (Scheers & Botha, 2014). The link between customer loyalty and winning their trust is achieved by the business organization's employees (Ganesh, 2016).

**Motivation**

Motivation in any business organization should align with the goals of the business to promote employee performance (Medsker & O'Connor, 2015; Ozlen & Hasanspahic, 2013). A main concern for the retail industry is determining what to do to motivate their employees and how to keep them motivated. Research has shown there

are a wide variety of approaches to motivation and employees' acceptance of such techniques (Ozlen & Hasanspahic, 2013). The additive to provide additional energy to help employees overcome fatigue, disinterest, stress, and feelings to quit the job is motivation (Hitka & Balazova, 2015). The concept of motivation within a workplace is generally recognized by management but not often addressed in practice (Cheng, 2015; Cowley & Smith, 2014).

The performance of employees is significant to understanding the level of motivation the employee has within them. Members of management may choose to use a differential outcome tool to help them study the performance of their employees (Dipietro, Kline, & Nierop, 2014; Fisher & Royster, 2016; Moffett, Frizzell,

Brownlee-Williams & Thompson, 2014; Safiullah, 2015). Differential outcomes state that employees anticipate a reward, and even the thought of such affects their behaviors and performance (Holden & Overmier, 2014). The motivation of the employee significantly affects job performance (Holden & Overmier, 2014). Aryee, et al. (2013) pointed out that when employees are unmotivated; the business organization is negatively affected.

Employees feel motivated when management differentiates their separate goals and objectives and explains how the goals and objectives can be achieved (Hitka & Balazova, 2015; Strizhova & Gusev, 2013). The desire of accomplishing a goal motivates the employee to make a difference within their organization. Employees who have set goals and objectives tend to outperform their peers in their job responsibilities (Strizhova & Gusev, 2013). Motivation and retention techniques that have been

successful in other industries should be applied to the retail business industry as well (Singh & Prakash, 2013). These include an enjoyable working environment, sufficient training and educational opportunities, and a competitive salary (Singh & Prakash, 2013). One of the largest opportunities that the retail industry misses out on is challenging their employees to their fullest potential, making them feel appreciated, and finding ways to limit the anxiety and frustration the employees feel (Singh & Prakash, 2013).

One of the most critical and indispensable factors in trying to influence employee behaviors and stimulate their job performance is motivation itself (Mangi, Kanasro, & Burdi, 2015). For purposes of this study, the operational definition of motivation will be *an individual's willingness to exert effort to attain organizational goals* as was defined in Vroom Expectancy theory of motivation (Vroom, 1964). Another factor to consider on employee motivation is the level of involvement they have within their specific jobs as well as their commitment to the organization. There is a strong importance placed on the level of commitment an individual gives to their career (Cherian & Jacob, 2013).

Motivation has been determined to be one of the most important elements in influencing employee behaviors and how they perform (Mangi, Kanasro, & Burdi, 2015; Medsker & O'Connor, 2015). Word and Carpenter (2013) stated that employees search for numerous things outside of the salary for the profession they choose, and the characteristics of that profession will keep them motivated as they continue their career. Business organizations must fully understand the importance of these aspects of the chosen profession and to continue to keep the employee motivated. One study by Word and Carpenter (2013) implicated that the simple act of including the employees in policy

making helped to improve the employee's feeling of being important and making a difference within the organization.

When an employee has the opportunity for growth or promotion within their job, this can increase the motivation of the employee to improve their job performance (Giancola, 2014). The more an employee is motivated or empowered to perform, the higher the level of engagement that employee will have within the business organization (Jose & Mampilly, 2014; Medsker & O'Connor, 2015). It is crucial to the long-term success of the business to motivate employees to believe in the changes within the business establishment. Motivational factors occur in two types within the workplace environment. Intrinsic motivational factors come from within the individual employee. Extrinsic motivational factors come from the external environment to motivate the employee (Giancola, 2014; Masvaure, Ruggunan, & Maharaj, 2014; Mehrzi, & Singh; 2016).

It is important that the business organization recognize that motivation includes economic and non-economic incentives that will stimulate the employee to act in a favorable way (Ganesh, 2016; Hitka & Balazova, 2015). Therefore, the organization needs to implement both financial and non-financial incentives to motivate their employees and enhance employee performance (Ganesh, 2016). Wang, Tsai, and Tsai (2014) emphasized the importance that retail business organizations ensure the development of the skills and help their employees grow and develop.

**Lack of Understanding the Factors of Motivation and Performance**

Business leaders defined motivation as a catalyst to create ambition, goals, and objectives within the employee that causes them to act in a specific behavior while performing the duties of their job (Bajwa, Yousaf, & Rizwan, 2014; Ufuophu-Biri & Iwu, 2014). Motivation influences one to fulfill their purpose, which causes specific behaviors, and stimulates the need to continue to work toward achievement of goals created (Hunter, Neubert, Perry, Witt, Penney, & Weinberger, 2013). Motivation in an organization, as described by Hunter, Neubert, Perry, Witt, Penney, and Weinberger (2013), guides the employees to achieve the organizational goals and objectives as well as their own personal goals and needs.

Business leaders created the most efficient practices of management, team performance, guidance, ethical decision-making, and changes among the organization based on the motivational theory (Hunter et al., 2013). The motivational system creates a way to meet the employees' needs, while the workers determine their desire of completing the tasks and their level of satisfaction after doing so (Ufuophu-Biri & Iwu, 2014). Motivation is different for each individual based on his or her own personal goals, needs, and objectives.

Numerous influences that can affect the way an employee performs within the organization. The employees' level of training, their personal skillset, their level of motivation, the work itself, their coworkers, their support staff, and their managers are all factors that may affect employee performance (Grigoroudis & Zopounidis, 2012). If internal factors motivate an employee, they may anticipate a close rapport with their business organization (Goyal & Gupta, 2016). It is important to evaluate the

performance of the employee and their level of contribution towards achieving the goals and objectives of the business organization (Grigoroudis & Zopoundidis, 2012).

Goyal and Gupta (2016) conducted research by using surveys and identified several problems of retail employees. The employees had to work long hours, and they were tired because of having to stand continuously throughout their workday. They experienced unnecessary pay cuts, insecurity of their job, favoritism among management, and not enough personal time. There was confusion due to having multiple bosses, problems due to egoistic customers, management has difficulty understanding problems or does not seem to have an interest to understand them. Employee did not receive adequate training to perform the job duties, experienced limited growth potential, and the job is not in accordance to employee's education or experience, were all problems found among the retail industry employees surveyed (Goyal & Gupta, 2016).

**Factors Affecting the Motivation and Performance of Retail Employees**

**Age.** Motivation may vary greatly among associates in relation to work and their level of accountability (Strizhova & Gusev, 2013). Ganesh (2016) suggests motivating employees should occur on a more individual basis. The traditional methods are no longer producing effective results. Every employee is different. The same element does not motivate all employees (Ganesh, 2016). If business organizations want to be successful at managing their employees, and motivating them, they must respect the differences among them (Hitka & Balazova, 2015).

Researchers found that four generations had different needs according to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Differences in employees' levels of motivation exist based

on their workplace environment. Psychological needs were the most important for the Traditionalists Generation (1922-1945). Self-esteem needs were more important to the Baby Boomers Generation (1946-1960). The Generation X (1960-1980) main need was self-actualization. The Millennials or Generation Y (1980-2000) concentrated mostly on social needs (Gupta & Mirchandani, 2018). An employee's level of motivation can differ by age, their connection within the culture of the business organization, as well as, their hierarchy of needs (Hunter et al., 2013). It can be somewhat challenging for management to balance the work environment between generations when there is a struggle between needs, morals, and what motivates them (Gupta & Mirchandani, 2018). The retail industry employees in general are difficult to motivate (Cowley & Smith, 2014). By contrast, Strizhova and Gusev (2013) believed that employee motivation might not have significant differences among generations.

Stereotyping of older workers varies in frequency depending on the industry of the business organization. However, government policies have created an entrenched retirement culture, union contracts, and pension plans that have led to the expectancy of mature workers retiring early (Calo, Patterson, & Decker, 2013). The number of years an employee has remained with the business organization barely influenced the differentiation of employees in regard to their job satisfaction and motivation (Hunter et al., 2013).

Hitka and Balazova (2015) conducted a study to explore the impact of age, education, and seniority on the motivational levels of employees. The researchers had an under the age of 50 group for their study, and an over the age of 50 group. Both groups

reported that basic salary was their most important factor for motivation. However, the group that was under the age of 50 stated that their next highest ranked motivational factors were: further financial reward, fair appraisal system, job security, and good work team The over 50 age group stated their next highest ranked motivational factors as follows: job security, good teamwork, social benefits, and fair appraisal system (Hitka & Balazova, 2015).

**Organizational culture.** The conception of organizational culture arrives from a variety of disciplines including management, anthropology, and sociology. Entrepreneurs develop the culture of the organization from their idea of how they want their business to be (Blomme, Kodden, & Beasley-Suffolk, 2015). The culture of an organization affects employee motivation in several ways. The following methods aspire a creative working culture in the organization: offering flexible work arrangements, offering interesting and challenging work, allowing creativity, and having a supportive and accessible supervisor who provides feedback in a timely manner (Scheers & Botha, 2014). If objectives and goals are set high, the employees will feel encouraged to meet or exceed those (Akhtar, Aziz, Hussain, & Salman, 2014; Pandey, 2014). Management in the organization should feel motivated first, before they try to motivate their employees (Bandyopadhyay, 2014; Sarros, Luca, Densten, & Santora, 2014).

A crucial success factor for employee motivation is the culture of the organization and the engagement of the employees (Strom, Sears, & Kelly, 2014). The culture of the business also creates a positive outcome for the business organization as well as the individual employees; along with more effective management practices (Blomme,

Kodden, & Beasley-Suffolk, 2015). The business organization needs to maximize the talent and skills of their employees (Lakshman & Rai, 2014). The business organization would suffer greatly if it was to lose their highly skilled and talented workforce (Guha & Chakrabarti, 2014). The business organizational culture is a system that depends on the strength of the bond between their constituents (Farzanjoo, 2015).

**Leadership.** Retail industry organizations need leaders that will motivate their employees to effective change management (Dan-Shang & Chia-Chun, 2013, Sullivan, Rothwell, & Balasi, 2013). Leadership can best be described as an arrangement of activities used by an important individual to affect the behavior or others (McDermott, Conway, Rousseau, & Flood, 2013). Leadership is the ability to encourage, impact, and change the behaviors and actions of employees by effectively communicating to them and inspiring them (Mastrangelo, Eddy, & Lorenzet, 2014). Leadership styles and strategies have connections to employee motivation. Leaders must be imaginative thinkers, good at solving problems, and be able to motivate employees successfully within the organization (Callier, 2014). Cohen (2014) reported that only 21% of the employees surveyed were very satisfied with the communication between employees and senior management. This same sample showed that 50% of those surveyed felt that such communication was very important.

The behavior of leaders contributes to the successfulness of the organization. Leaders often possess similar characteristics and behaviors such as: (a) being strategic thinkers, (b) good communicators, (c) have authority, (d) handle responsibility well, (e) are trustworthy and empathetic (Shen, Li, & Yang, 2015). More importantly, leadership

must utilize these behaviors within the workforce to be effective. Redick, Reyna, Schaffer, and Toomey (2014) noted that the most important tool for an organization to be successful is having effective leadership. Shen et al., (2015) did not discuss characteristics and behaviors that leadership should not possess. Improved performance of the organization can occur by the characteristics and behaviors of the leader by inspiring and supporting their employees (Tavitiyaman, Weerakit, & Ryan, 2014). Members of management who have a captivating style of leadership can determine their team innovation swiftly to motivate their employees to cooperate and work together with team decisions (Diskiene & Pauliene, 2014).

Employees know better than anyone what they want, and it is important for leaders to include employees in their decisions, so they have an understanding of what their employees are wanting (Vroom, 1964). Leaders must lead based on the situation and it is imperative they comprehend the circumstances of the situation (Fehr, Yam, Dang; 2015; Ho & Lin, 2016). A leader needs to be flexible and able to adapt to the situation (Van Dierendonck, Stam, Boersma, de Windt, & Alkema, 2014). Mumford, Watts, and Partlow (2015) emphasized that leaders should have the intellectual capability to be able to apply leadership skills to solve problems within the organization.

Leadership for sustainability must have leaders who possess excellent talents and abilities (Coronado & Cancino, 2016). Leaders must be able to find the suitable balance between understanding dependability, effectiveness, modernization, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (Ho & Lin, 2016; Van Dierendonck et al., 2014).

To improve human resources, management must recognize how to motivate their staff (Scheers & Botha, 2014).

Leadership styles may differ based on the leader (Coronado & Cancino, 2016). The basis for leadership among any organization is transactional leadership. Transactional leadership connects to transformational leadership by having leaders motivate their employees' performance (Tyssen, Wald, & Heidenreich, 2013). Leaders can increase an employee's concerns and, as a result, they select the performance measures for incentive compensation that are more precise (Coronado & Cancino, 2016).

Managers must understand as much as possible about how to motivate their employees and follow the actions allowed by their business organization regarding human capital (Muscalu & Muntean, 2013). Management must also know the needs of the employees and the mental and emotional process to be effective in leading them to meet the goals and objectives of the business organization (Ganesh, 2016). High-quality leadership is a requirement for a successful business (Coronado & Cancino, 2016). Leaders who valued their employees and offered to help develop their skillsets often achieved higher performance levels from their employees (Boverie, Grassberger, & Law, 2013).

Concerning leaders' actions, Lam, Loi, Chan, and Liu studied actions some ethical leaders took: (a) listened to what the employees were saying, (b) disciplined employees who were violating ethical standards, (c) personal life was ethical, (d) had the employees best interest in mind, (e) made fair decisions, (f) were trustworthy, (g) discussed business ethics and values with their employees, (h) set a good example by doing the right thing,

(i) defined success by the steps taken to get to the end result and (j) they asked what is the right thing to do during decision making activities. Lam et al. concluded that ethical leaders had a positive influence on the motivational levels of the individual employees. The researchers proved that if the management' style was consistent with ethical leadership; their employees would voice their issues more often and feel more comfortable doing so. The researchers also proved in their study that having such a positive impact could account for why employees were more willing to stay and use their voice to discuss issues, rather than leave the business organization (Lam, Loi, Chan, & Liu, 2016).

**Communication.** Employers must create an open environment to provide for employees to voice their opinions, suggestions, and needs to their supervisors and managers. Such communication lines are crucial for successful employee performance within the retail business organization (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014; Mishra, Boynton, & Mishra, 2014). Mor, Morris, and Joh (2013) concluded that communication from management positively influenced the business organizations employees and positively influenced financial outcomes. Members of management who have open lines of communication with their employees may send messages verbally and nonverbally that may influence the areas outcomes in a positive manor (Men, 2014).

A single-case study conducted within a department store showed the significance of effective supervisory skills, particularly daily communication, between the supervisors and their employees, as well as the significance of the employees receiving feedback

(Janhonen & Lindström, 2015). Ganesh (2016) stated that the extraordinary problems require thinking outside of the norm and open communication to develop the resolutions.

Often times the members of the retail business industry fail to maintain active lines of communication properly. The employees need to be able to communicate their problems and ideas to their managers in ways that can create collaboration among their peers instead of conflicts (Scheers & Botha, 2014). One of the problems of retail employees identified in the study conducted by Goyal and Gupta (2016) was that the employees did not feel that their voices made an impact. Muenjohn and McMurray (2016) found that organizations must have proper interactions among their employees and leaders to achieve employee loyalty. Dedicated employees are more likely to stay with the organization (Kim, Henderson, & Eom, 2015).

**Empowerment.** For many business organizations and members of management empowerment is not much more than a slogan (Scheers & Botha, 2014). Emphasizing the power held by the employees is the definition of empowerment (KazemiKani, Kazemian, Damirchi, Hafezian, Gholizadeh, & Balooie, 2013). Empowerment can also affect employees' attitudes and behaviors (Alex & George, 2014; Samnani & Singh, 2014). Empowerment is also an element that inspires employee pro-social activities which holds the employees responsible for their actions, and makes the organization better (KazemiKani et al., 2013). Reinforcement, positive feedback, and empowering the employee may increase the motivation for the intrinsically motivated employee (Belle, 2015). Having an employee to be empowered allows the employee to realize their purpose. Empowering employees also allows them to utilize their skills and expertise

towards their purpose (Carasco-Saul, Kim, & Kim, 2015; KazemiKani et al., 2013). It is important that employees satisfy both professional and personal ambitions to attain peak performance for their organization (Appelbaum, Karasek, Lapointe, & Quelch, 2015; Soni & Rawal, 2014).

Employees within the retail industry work schedules that compromise personal and family time, including weekends and many holidays (Solaja & Ogunola, 2016). It is imperative managers are mindful of the association between empowerment and how encouraging employees increases the employee's power and expands their responsibilities (KazemiKani et al., 2013). Employees want to feel empowered by management's decisions because the perceived fulfillment from their jobs generates positive feelings among one another, creating positive reactions towards desiring empowerment (Kumar & Pansari, 2016; Souliotis, Mantzana, Rekleiti, Saridi, & Contiades, 2014). The approach management uses is closely associated with the empowerment of the employee, giving their staff the opportunity to benefit from all of the organization's expertise, skills, capabilities, and motivation (KazemiKani et al., 2013).

Low levels of employee empowerment and increased employee turnover rates can lead to performance problems within the organization. Influencing employees in a positive manner and reinforcing their motivation achieve persistence that can increase loyalty to the organization (Malik, Wan, Ahmad, & Rehman, 2015). Employees need to be empowered to serve customers in the retail industry. Retail industry employees constantly experience situations that are unique to the customer and sometimes beyond

the existing policies boundaries. Empowerment is about challenging the employees and letting them meet that challenge on their own terms and in their own way. For employees to feel empowered, management must encourage their workers to think and do on their own. They need to take more responsibility for achieving their own goals (Scheers & Botha, 2014).

Medsker and O'Connor (2015) described employees as often feeling valued and empowered in different ways depending on what their career anchors were. For example, if an employee's career anchor is autonomy and independence then the employee would feel empowered by being free from close supervision and made to feel as if they were an individual contributor to the organization. If the employee's career anchor is a technical or functional competence then the employee will feel empowered if they are respected as a skilled and knowledgeable employee in their area (Medsker & O'Connor, 2015). Another example is if the employee has security and stability as their career anchor that individual employee will feel empowered by having a stable and economically secure position (Alex & George, 2014; Medsker & O'Connor, 2015).

**Compensation.** Compensation paid to employees has an effect on the employees' motivational level. Employees need to feel that they are receiving a fair amount of pay in accordance with the duties and responsibilities of their job. If the employee believes that their pay is satisfactory, then the employee will be motivated. If, however, the pay is not meeting the employee's expectation, then the employee will not be motivated (Samnani & Singh, 2014). Offering adequate compensation to the employee decreases the level of stress the employee may have (Samnani & Singh, 2014). Management of the business

organizations determines the incentives offered to motivate employees to work and impact employee behavior (Aisha, Hardjomidjojo & Yassierli, 2013).

The salary, benefits, and perceived fairness surrounding compensation are all controlling factors, but they do make an impact on employee motivation (Kumar, Dass, Topaloglu, 2014; Kuranchie-Mensah, Amponsah-Tawiah, 2016). Replacing employees can be very costly for the business organization. Employee replacement can cost between $12,000 and $31,000 for each individual employee. These costs include advertising for the vacant position, reviewing applications and resumes, interviewing candidates, hiring and on the job training of the new employee (Arnaiz & Verseman-Morrison, 2014). Employees tend to perform at higher levels when they have the desire to remain with the organization ((Alonderiene & Majauskaite, 2016; Bebe, 2016; Mekraz & Rao Gundala, 2016).

One study by Cohen (2014) found that 59% of overall employees had concerns regarding their compensation or overall pay within their business organization. The study also showed that 54% of overall employees were concerned about their pay being competitive within their local market. It was also determined that only 25% of the employees surveyed were very satisfied with their compensation, yet, 60% of those surveyed stated that compensation was very important to them. Of the employees surveyed only 26% were very satisfied with their benefits, while 53% stated that benefits were very important to them (Cohen, 2014).

Salary is one motivational factor that can have a significant influence on an employee’s workload and plays a notable role in the motivation of human resources

(Muscalu & Muntean, 2013). The higher the level of commitment an employee has to the organization the more engaged the employee tends to be regarding the objectives of the organization. Therefore, those who design the incentives for the employees typically select the incentives that align with the objectives of the business, regardless of the risk and the effects on any bonuses earned (Coronado & Cancino, 2016).

Hitka and Balazova (2015) indicated as a conclusion of their study, that basic salary was the most important motivational factor regardless of seniority within the organization, the employee's age, or the employee's level of education.

**Job satisfaction.** Job satisfaction itself is one of the most discussed issues in the management field (Yirik & Oren, 2014). Job satisfaction and being committed to the business organization have a large impact on the level of motivation the employee may have (Cherian & Jacob, 2013). Job satisfaction has a very broad perception, but it is imperative for the individual employees, and the business organization itself (Scheers & Botha, 2014). While job satisfaction can be defined as many things, it is a complex concept that can mean something different to each individual who tries to explain it (Chomal & Baruah, 2014). For most employees they will be satisfied with their jobs as long as the job itself is providing results or things that they deem significant (Janicijevic, Kobacevic, & Petrovic, 2015; Song & Alpaslan, 2015). According to one Gallup study, 70% of front-line employees do not reach their full potential (Korschun, Bhattacharya, & Swain, 2014). Having employees who are engaged tends to reduce turnover intentions of employees because they are more apt to have positive emotions and are satisfied with their jobs (Hunter, Neubert, Perry, Witt, Penney, & Weinberger, 2013).

Job satisfaction is associated with employee motivation, but the details of the relationship are not certain (Chomal & Baruah, 2014; Tejeda, 2015). Satisfaction and motivation are two different things (Chomal & Baruah, 2014). Promotion opportunities within an employee's career is one of the top three motivators; meaning that when an employee realizes that he or she has the opportunity to advance, the more engaged the employee will become (Secara, 2014). Employees, who demonstrate loyalty to their employer, enjoy their job more, satisfy their needs, and have a positive outlook about their job tend to have higher job satisfaction (Talachi, Gorji, & Boerhannoeddin, 2014).

Job satisfaction along with employee motivation can create inspiration and optimism among employees (Talachi et al., 2014). In 1959, Herzberg studied job satisfaction and developed a theoretical framework that breaks apart job satisfaction into two separate classifications: motivation and hygiene factors. Recognition, advancement, and appealing to a higher order of needs are all motivational factors. The environment of the work itself, and the conditions of the work performed relate to hygiene factors (Talachi et al., 2014). Both environmental and individual factors influence how satisfied an employee is with their job (Scheers & Botha, 2014). The more control an employee has over their work by helping in the decision-making process the more satisfied the employee is with his or her job (Wang & Yang, 2015).

Job satisfaction includes how an employee feels about the elements of their job. Motivational changes and commitments from the employee will have an impact to sway an employee on their level of dedication to the business organization (Souliotis et al., 2014). Job satisfaction has numerous factors that can make an employee feel satisfied

within their given job (Oyler, 2014; Tews, Michel, & Allen, 2014). Management factors such as the quality of the leaders, the level of motivation, the attitudes of the employees, and the organizational culture of the business all have an influence on the level of satisfaction the employee has with their job (Ganesh, 2016). Lack of supervision or poor quality of supervision is one factor that can cause dissatisfaction at work. Management needs to consider the quality of service they provide to their employees as that will lead to employee satisfaction with their job and loyalty to the business organization (Dahl & Peltier, 2014). Dahl and Peltier (2014) also indicated it was imperative that management allow the employees the take responsibility for his or her work assignments. The variety of work assignments and relationships among co-workers also affect the employee's job satisfaction and level of motivation (Okan, & Akyüz, 2015).

Okan, and Akyüz (2015) noted that there are several factors that can lead to decreased job satisfaction. Low pay, working long hours, poor management, heavy workloads, lack of personal time, and no recognition are all factors that have caused employees to have dissatisfaction within their job (Sok, Blomme, & Tromp, 2014). Ganesh (2016) found that the job atmosphere, opportunities for future promotions, personal growth, and satisfaction are all factors that can determine employees' satisfaction or disaffection with their job. Staggering the hours and shifts an employee works could reduce absenteeism; improve worker attitudes, and motivation (Ganesh, 2016; Watanabe & Falci, 2014).

Individual employees who have chosen their career professions place a very strong importance on their level of satisfaction (Cherian & Jacob, 2013). Employees tend

to be more satisfied when used to their fullest potential and importance (Daga & Kapoor, 2014). Cherian and Jacob (2013) also articulated that for this reason, the employee's chosen profession not only gives them a source of income, but a sense of security within their job as well. Individuals may show job satisfaction by striving to improve their skills and their performance to help motivate themselves (Cherian & Jacob, 2013; Word & Carpenter, 2013). The attitude of the employee toward the workplace is often an implication of job satisfaction levels (Ibrahim Al-Shuaibi, Subramaniam, & Mohd-Shamsudin, 2014). Social skills are also an important factor because often employees work together to achieve their goals (Mallick, Pradhan, Tewari, & Jena, 2014; Panaccio, Vandenberghe, & Ayed, 2014).

**Employee performance and performance appraisals.** As employees pursue feedback regarding their performance, management views this as a form of motivation (Jacobs, Belschak, & Den Hartog, 2014). Feedback provided by managers to employees needs to be consistent (Medsker & O'Connor, 2015). Employees are motivated when managers establish goals and objectives individually for their employees and explain to them how to achieve them. This guides the employee to believing they are making a difference within their workplace. Employees then strive to achieve their goals and are inclined to outperform their work responsibilities. Conducting an employee performance appraisal is the process of reviewing the contributions that the employee has made to the organization, and how well they have performed within their set goals and objectives and measuring those against the standard (Grigoroudis & Zopoundidis, 2012; Javidmehr, & Ebrahimpour, 2015; Jha, 2016). The performance appraisal process helps employees to

develop their performance by providing them specific feedback regarding the need for improvement to encourage employees to do their best by providing encouraging reinforcement to motivate them (Jacobs, Belschak, & Den Hartog, 2014).

Management should recognize and comprehend how to motivate their employees to enhance human capital (O'Connor & Raile, 2015; Scheers & Botha, 2014). The link between employee motivation and employee performance can affect the effectiveness of the business organization. Human resource management is a primary factor regarding the performance of the employee, their career growth, and the level of satisfaction they have within their job (Van De Voorde & Beijer, 2014). It is also imperative for management to recognize external factors also affect performance and retention of the employee (Kozak, 2014; Rothausen, Henderson, Arnold, & Malshe, 2015). Additional factors like salary, management, rewards, and recognition can all increase or decrease job performance of the employee (Lin, Yu, & Yi, 2014; O'Connor & Raile, 2015; Sengupta, Yavas, Babakus, 2015). Business organizations need to conduct periodical performance evaluations of their employees because they can increase employee effectiveness (Coetzee, Oosthuizen, & Stoltz, 2015). Private businesses hold their employees more accountable for job performance (Calo, et al., 2013).

Job performance is the essential factor of motivation that influences both the individual and workplace levels of performance (Chinomona & Dhurup, 2014). A fundamental part of employee performance is person-environment fit. As person-environment fit improves, the goals and objectives of the workplace tend to be successful. This is because the employee realizes the similarity of characteristics between

their own individual goals and the organizations goals (Sun, Peng, & Pandey, 2014). Performance connected to rewards acts as a motivator for employees to enhance job performance (Chomal & Baruah, 2014). Over 55% of the employees who participated in the survey implicated that the opportunities to use their skills and abilities were very important to them. Only 33% of those same participants were currently very satisfied with their current employers' opportunities to utilize them (Cohen, 2014). Not every employee has the same work ethic regarding their job performance or strives to improve their skills (Felfe & Schyns, 2014).

The relationships employees have with their coworkers and members of management typically influence the job performance of the employee (Kempegowda & Purushotham, 2016). Employees who believe their supervisors are listening to them tend to work harder and feel more appreciated (Lam, et. al., 2016). Giving an employee work that is challenging to them will lead them to creative thinking and therefore increase their potential in performing their work and enjoy performing their job (Kempegowda & Purushotham, 2016, Izogo, 2017). Feedback provided by the managers greatly influences the performance of the employees (Medsker & O'Connor, 2015).

## Transition

In Section 1, I discussed the background of the problem, the foundation for the study, the problem statement, the purpose statement, the research question, the conceptual framework, the significance of the study to the business environment, as well as a review of the literature. In Section 2, I have expanded on the role of the researcher, the qualitative method, single case study research design, population and sampling,

ethical research, validity and reliability, data collection techniques, data analysis techniques, and the organization of the data.

# Section 2: The Project

In this section, I have discussed the methods I used for my study and the processes I took to safeguard the participants of my study, as well as their responses, and the results of the study as they addressed the primary research question.

## Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies that retail industry leaders use to motivate employees to achieve higher levels of workplace productivity. I collected data from two retail managers in southern West Virginia because they had successfully implemented strategies that increased employee workplace productivity. The results of this study may provide insights and strategies that allow business leaders to improve workplace productivity among their employees. Employees will be more satisfied when used to their fullest potential and importance (Daga & Kapoor, 2014). The findings from this study may contribute to positive social change when leaders recognize employees' strengths, which may result in improved morale and productivity.

## Role of the Researcher

The researcher's role is data collection, data organization, and analysis of the results (Miles, et al., 2014). In this qualitative single case study, I conducted face-to-face interviews. Qualitative researchers must accept the responsibility of being the data collection instrument (Gaya & Smith, 2016).

I used the interview questions to collect, analyze, and interpret the data, as well as identify ethical issues such as prejudices and discretion. I will keep the information I

collected from the participants confidential to safeguard the data. Qualitative researchers recognize they are the research instruments and must collect and safeguard data in multiple ways (Gaya & Smith, 2016). Once I identified similar issues, I summarized the information based on the category in which the information best fits. I provided an explanation of the data analysis and findings on common strategies retail industry leaders used to motivate employees to higher levels of productivity with the interpretation of the results.

I offered a complimentary copy of the findings from the study to the participants. Personal association with the topic does exist, as I have formerly worked within the retail industry. To remain unbiased in the interview process, none of the participants involved in this study was anyone I had personally worked with on any level.

The Belmont Report contained guidelines for researchers to be considerate of the nature, likelihood, and extent of risk to judge if the study harms or benefits (Hamel, Lantos, & Spertus, 2014). I adhered to all ethical standards during the study as suggested within the Belmont Report with respect, integrity, and proper documentation. I ensured I obtained the informed consent of each participant. Participants could take part in the study if they had experience as a member of management in the retail industry. I established this criterion to ensure participants would have the knowledge to understand the questions during their interviews. I will keep all data obtained confidential and I will only disclose the summary of the information.

## Participants

The participants for this study consisted of two members of management located in southern West Virginia all working for the same retail establishment. Each individual participant, as required by Walden University, also completed consent paperwork. A case study approach is best for studies when the researcher is looking to explore the details of a conventional situation (Yin, 2012). For the purpose of this study, a single case study approach was most applicable.

Because qualitative research typically involves interviewing a small number of participants, I focused on the complexity and details obtained by the lived experiences of each participant (see Patton, 2015). The individuals worked for the same retail business at the same location. The educational background and years of work experience also varied based on the individual participant. It is also important to emphasize that participants were informed that there were no correct or incorrect answers, nor should they try to explain things regarding how they might be for other individuals' viewpoints (see Patton, 2015).

I initially e-mailed potential participants an invitation to participate in the study. I then obtained access to participants by making appointments for face-to-face interviews and scheduled follow-up interviews by telephone as needed. Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan, and Hoagwood (2015) emphasized the importance of scheduling the appointments with the participants so they can determine the time best suited for their schedule. I conducted interviews by speaking face-to-face with the participants in their personal settings, so they felt comfortable to provide the information needed to conduct

the qualitative study. I also visited the retail establishment to collect data using direct observation of the workflow practices and processes, interactions between leaders and employees, and the retail business environment.

I offered a complimentary copy of the findings to the study participants. None of the participants were anyone I had personally worked with on any level. I also did not provide any compensation for participating in the study. The data collection focused on the strategies each participant has used to motivate their employees to higher levels of productivity. By interviewing each of the participants individually, I was able to ask relevant open-ended interview questions.

By inviting participants from a retail business in southern West Virginia, I was able to fill the needed number of participants. Additionally, as multiple retail stores exist in that location, I had access to other establishments should have the need arose.

## Research Method and Design

There are three typical approaches, quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods, to conduct research for a dissertation (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). I selected a qualitative method and a single case study design based on the expectancy theory of motivation. McCusker and Gunaydin (2015) emphasized that case studies allow researchers to concentrate on the context of the case within its own real-world environment. The method and design related to the exploration of the strategies retail industry leaders use to motivate employees to higher levels of workplace production.

**Research Method**

Qualitative researchers do not focus on *how many* or *how often*, instead, they try to answer *what, why* and *how* something occurred (Mukhopadhyay & Gupta, 2014). Patton (2015) described the qualitative research method as the appropriate method when the researcher is inquiring about a subject to understand a bounded case. Mukhopadhyay and Gupta (2014) confirmed that qualitative research occurs in real-world environments and includes studying the experiences of individuals by using multiple data sources. Qualitative methods are valuable for producing comprehensive data that would be difficult to quantify, such as explanations, understandings, opinions, views, and experiences (Bristowe, Selman, & Murtagh, 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I selected a qualitative method because the purpose of the study was to explore the strategies the retail industry leaders use to motivate employees to higher levels of workplace productivity.

Barczak (2015) asserted that researchers performing quantitative studies concentrate on computing and determining the relationship between the variables, and researchers performing qualitative studies will focus on examining or discovering the research problem. Each individual participant had his or her perception and experiences, and the results of the study may not necessarily be quantifiable (Johnson, Buehring, Cassell, & Symon, 2007). I did not test any hypotheses in order to explore successful employees' motivational strategies, so a quantitative study was not an appropriate method for this study. Mixed-methods studies also include hypotheses, as they are a combination of quantitative and qualitative studies (Patton, 2015). A mixed methods research study

includes collecting and analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data and combining them into a single study (Gaya & Smith, 2016). Trying to perform a quantitative method to discover the participants' experiences would be difficult (Moustakas, 1994). I determined that a qualitative research study was most appropriate method because researchers use the qualitative methodology to explore the personal experiences of individuals within a study (see Flyvbjerg, 2006).

**Research Design**

Developing the essential research question that supports the purpose of the study and selecting applicable questions and strategies that will assist the researcher to investigate the research problem are components of the research design (Yin, 2012). Case studies and phenomenology studies are seemingly appropriate research strategies for exploring strategies that management utilizes to motivate their employees (Ezeobele, Malecha, Mock, Mackey-Godine, & Hughes, 2014; Yin, 2012). Interviews, surveys, documentation, archival data, and direct participant-observation are data sources for case studies as they are time intensive (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2012). Semistructured interviews, direct observation, and review of company documents were my sources of data for the study. Case study scholars may use multiple locations, methods, and designs to gather and interpret their information (Yin, 2012). A single case study does not compare or contrast variables (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2012). Researchers using a case study research design will attempt to document participants' experiences they describe during their interviews; the researcher will then examine and evaluate the data collected to establish a better comprehension of the phenomena (Raeburn, Schmied, Hungerford, & Cleary,

2015). Qualitative case studies are useful within the management field to gain a better knowledge of new or current occurrences (Hauck, Ronchi, Lourey, & Lewis, 2013). The overall focus of this study was to explore strategies retail industry leaders use to motivate their employees to higher levels of productivity.

Case study was not my only option for the methodology of my qualitative study. I also investigated phenomenology, narrative research, grounded theory, and ethnography. I did not select a phenomenological design because, as Moustakas (1994) contended, the human lived experiences described by participants will not be sufficiently distinctive and intense. Phenomenology is a research method that allows scholars to establish a clearer understanding of the phenomenon within the lived experiences of the participants (Moustakas, 1994). A phenomenological study researcher attempts to determine the reasoning and rational of the phenomenon (Ejimabo, 2015). Narrative research studies require the researcher to gather information from one participant to extract practical meanings and interweave the past, present, and future (Garud & Giuliani, 2013). The purpose of my study did not need an analysis about an event or particular occurrence; therefore, a narrative design was not appropriate. Grounded theory includes a meticulous strategy of gathering and evaluating multiple sources of data over a long period of time (Ahmed & Haag, 2016; Johnson, 2015). There were time constraints to completing this study so a grounded theory design was not selected for the design of this study. Ethnography has the researcher describing and interpreting common views, the daily lives, and behaviors of a culture group (Meyer et al., 2016; Vignehsa, 2015). As I did not

observe the culture and relationships of individuals or groups, an ethnography research design would not be appropriate.

Qualitative researchers must determine how many interviews are sufficient to achieve data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). O'Reilly and Parker (2013) stated that interviews were very useful to achieve data saturation among qualitative studies. Some researchers achieve data saturation by interviewing a small sample while others may require a larger sample; it is essential to understand that data saturation is about depth, not quantity (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Once the researcher reaches the point that, no new emerging data, patterns, or themes is occurring during collection, data saturation has most likely been achieved (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013).

The interview questions were the same for each participant. This helped to achieve data saturation by developing the patterns or themes of the data. Asking different interview questions to the participants would make it difficult to achieve data saturation because the data would be difficult to interpret (Fusch & Ness, 2015). In addition, integrating the use of a personal lens to identify my own individual opinions and observations of the research topic helped to diminish bias and achieve data saturation. Fusch and Ness (2015) noted that when researchers have the ability to identify their own personal opinions and acknowledge the presence of the personal lens, they are more apt to listen and decipher what the participants are expressing, which will help the researcher identify data saturation.

## Population and Sampling

The population sample derived from a retail corporation located in southern West Virginia. The population consisted of managers employed by the retail corporation. All participants were over the age of 18, had been an employee of the corporation for a minimum of 2 years, and had been in a management position for a minimum of 1year. Each participant had also received a performance review of *solid performer or better*, a scale determined by the retail corporation. The total population for the store consists of three members of management at a comanager level or higher. I interviewed two members of management who met the criteria. The rationale for selecting two participants was to allow for adequate data for my study (see Suri, 2011).

A purposeful sample was essential for the research study. Purposeful sampling enables the researcher to collect widespread material from a few participants with explanatory detail (Suri, 2011). This enables the researcher to identify emerging themes and improves data saturation (Suri, 2011). Purposeful sampling allows the researcher to choose participants who have met the predetermined conditions for their study (Suri, 2011). Purposeful sampling was appropriate for this study because the participants were required to have knowledge and experience about the retail environment. Purposeful sampling is best when the participants need to have specific knowledge pertaining to the research topic (Patton, 2015). Tan and Manca (2013) used purposeful sampling in their research because it helped them gather a variety of data and identify emerging themes. Jones (2014) speculated that when a researcher is concerned about studying individuals with specific characteristics then purposeful sampling is required.

I anticipated a maximum selection of two managers of a retail corporation to achieve data saturation for this qualitative single-case study; however, I would have interviewed additional participants had data saturation not occurred within the two participants. I provided each participant with a copy of his or her responses to the interview questions for verification of my interpretations. If there were misinterpretations, the participant made the appropriate corrections and sent the document back to me. I continued this process until there was no new information and my interpretations were correct. Once my interpretations were correct for all participants, I verified that the data confirmed I reach data saturation. Data saturation is achieved when the researcher determines that they are not receiving any new or varying material from the participants and that conducting further interviews are no longer necessary (Oberoi, Jiwa, McManus, & Hodder, 2015). By pursuing depth within each interview, a researcher can have a smaller number of participants with a wide range of experiences (Patton, 2015). Qualitative research focuses on a thorough understanding of a phenomenon; therefore, qualitative research has a smaller sample size than quantitative research methods (Dworkin, 2012). I followed Trotter's (2012) direction that the model standard for a qualitative study's sample size is to continue to interview until redundancy has occurred. I was able to reach data saturation with the two participants as most of their responses were almost identical.

My interaction with the selected participants included semistructured interviews, where I asked open-ended interview questions. I conducted these interviews in a setting preferred by the participants, a conference room near the facility, and at a time

convenient for the participants. Qualitative interviews are more than mere conversations because the interviewer asks most of the questions, and the interviewee answers the majority of them (Patton, 2015). This causes the interactions to be more in-depth and intensive (Patton, 2015).

## Ethical Research

Walden University requires all agreeable participants to complete their written consent form before participating in the study. Walden University also requires that the institutional review board (IRB) approval is required before data collection can begin. Once I received IRB approval (number 03-07-19-0103751), I began interviews and collecting data from the participants. I did not give any monetary incentives to the participants for partaking in the study. I offered a copy of the study, once published, to each participant. I advised participants that they could willingly withdraw from the study at any time by simply informing me in writing via email. Interviews were audio recorded if allowed by the participant. If the participant wished not to have the interview recorded, I took extensive notes in lieu of any recording device.

I will store all data collected from the participants in a safe locked box for a minimum of 5 years to protect everyone involved in the study. All participants and business organization's names will remain confidential within the study for privacy and ethical reasons. It is vital to protect the privacy and integrity of the participants (Ababneh, & Al-Waqfi, 2016). To ensure confidentiality of the participants of the study, I replaced all names and identities with a classification label such as Participant 1, and

Participant 2. This allowed data collected from each interviewee to be publicized without compromising any ethical or privacy protocols.

## Data Collection Instruments

Qualitative researchers utilize face-to-face interaction as their data collection method, where the researcher interviews the participants to increase their comprehension of the participant's views and perspective on a particular subject (Patton, 2015). Parker (2014) indicated that there are three types of interviews a qualitative researcher employs to collect their data: (a) unstructured interviews, involves informal discussion with research participants; (b) structured interviews, involves a specific list of questions that the researcher asks in a specific order and has a limited number of responses; (c) semistructured interviews, consists of interview questions prepared in advance and the researcher has the flexibility to evaluate the responses of the participants. Semistructured interviews allow the researcher to ask several open-ended questions that will not produce predetermined answers (Panagiotakopoulos, 2014). The researcher is the primary person collecting the data in qualitative research studies (Neuman, 2014; Patton, 2015). As the researcher, I served as the human instrument to collect all of the data for the study itself. I conducted the semistructured face-to-face interviews and was the sole viewer of all of the participants' responses. Drew (2014) emphasized that the most effective method to understand experiences of the participants is by conducting semistructured interviews because the interviewees are able to clarify and explain in detail their experiences and perceptions.

Prior to conducting the semistructured interviews, I established an interview protocol (see Appendix C) for consistency of the process. I utilized the interview protocol to direct my research and interviews with the participants of my study. I made certain that the individual had signed a consent form, agreeing to participate in the study and to be interviewed. After I have received responses from the participants, I scheduled an interview location and time.

Before starting the interviews, I reminded each participant that their participation is voluntary, they were free to withdraw from the study at any time, and that their identities would remain confidential and that I would be the only individual to see their specific responses. I also explained to the participant that if they need to ask for clarification of an interview question, they were free to do so. Gibbons (2015) emphasized the importance for the participant to fully understand the questions they are being ask during the interview process.

I recorded and described the participants' answers to each question asked to ensure legitimacy, consistency, and remained neutral without bias within the study. Interview questions are available in Appendix D. After the interviews were conducted, I transcribed the information from the interviews into a Word document and sent these to the participants. The participants then performed a transcript review to evaluate their answers I had recorded for accuracy and validity. I gave all interviewees the opportunity to give their remarks on the accurateness of the outcomes during their follow-up interviews.

Case study research permits the researcher to gather data from supplemental resources in addition to interviews to obtain sufficient data for their study (Gibbons, 2015; Yin, 2012). Triangulation is the process that allows investigators to utilize more than one method to obtain research data (Yin, 2012). In addition to the semistructured interviews, I also retrieved and reviewed documents from the employer's website, as well as performance evaluations, and observed the participants in their own working environment to document their actions with their employees. My role as the researcher included searching the retailer's website for company documents and interviewing the managers to gain their insight on their experiences. Yin (2012) also explained that the documents provide specific details to validate and verify confirmation from other sources.

I participated in the direct observation of typical workday processes to help gain comprehension of the behaviors, actions, and motives related to the phenomenon. I also developed an observation protocol (see Appendix E) to record researcher interpretations. Direct observation occurred for approximately 16 hours during business operation, covering multiple shifts. I occupied the role of observer to achieve data regarding how the participants interact among one another, interactions among their staff, and the information that may increase motivation within the organization. As Patton (2015) indicated, direct observation of participants allows the researcher to collect data based on the interactions of the participants within their own environments.

I communicated with the store manager of the retailer to set a date for me to visit the store and introduced myself to the potential participants and explained briefly the

reasoning behind the research study. By using multiple resources I was able to examine multiple measures of information for the same purpose, which added to the advantage of developing lines of analysis that are similar, as is the process of triangulation (Yin, 2012).

## Data Collection Technique

Before collecting the data, I submitted the required paperwork to Walden's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval to conduct research. I hand delivered a copy of the IRB approval and confirmation to perform research (see Appendix A) requesting permission to have access to the participants, as well as the facility, to the store manager of the retailer, once I received approval from Walden University IRB personnel, I began contacting the participants. The technique for collecting the data was by face-to-face interviews, direct observation of all participants, and collecting relevant documents. I did not conduct a pilot study for this project. I scheduled the interviews, observed them, and documented all answers. An advantage to interviewing participants is that researchers give participants an opportunity to describe their lived experiences in their own terms and provides an understanding of the phenomenon (Yin, 2012). As Barusch, Gringeri, and George (2011) described, one disadvantage is the time consumption of conducting face-to-face interviews in comparison to online surveys and questionnaires. By utilizing qualitative research methods, the researcher can gain value by understanding human behaviors drawing from the large amounts of data gathered from the interviews (Bailey, 2014).

A list of the questions used in the personal interviews is located in the Appendix D. The questions allowed the relative material to be transferred in a way that represents meaning for the individuals participating in the study.

The process of the semistructured interviews followed the following basic steps. The first step involved planning where to conduct the interviews. In this study, I conducted the interviews individually with every participant. As the researcher, this method allows me to concentrate on the perceptions and lived experience of the interviewee as they shared their story. Semistructured interviews afford the participant the opportunity to describe in rich detail their experiences (Johnson, Buehring, Cassell, & Symon, 2007). The length of time for the interviews varied depending on the participant's answers to the individual questions, however, I initially scheduled 45 minutes for each interview.

The second step was determining the suitable questions to ask, prior to the interview, and ensuring that the objectives of the research study are met. I then ask semistructured interview questions, following my interview protocol, to prompt the interviewees to explain their experiences in detail as they wish to express.

The third step involved conducting the interviews with the participants at the designated location. Although the consent form included a statement about the interviews being recorded, I reminded each participant before starting the interview process. I also reminded each participant that their participation in the study was voluntary and they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. Additional prompts were that their identities will remain confidential and I will be the only individual to see

their specific responses. I also explained to the participant that if they need to ask for clarification of an interview question, they were free to do so. Gibbons (2015) emphasized the importance for the participant to fully understand the questions they are being ask during the interview process. Babbie (2015) emphasized that face-to-face semistructured interviews can give the researcher an advantage by observing the facial expressions and body language of the participant during their interview. The participant also had the opportunity to review their transcribed interviews to ensure accuracy. I sent a typed Word document copy of my interpretations of their responses for each participant's verification. By performing the transcript review after each interview conducted, I was able to enhance the reliability of the study. Additional notes taken during the interview process seized the participant's sentiments and reactions. During the interviews, I followed the same interview process and asked all interviewees the same interview questions. I transcribed each interview as quickly as possible so that the participants would be able to perform a transcript review while their responses were still fresh in their mind. Yilmaz (2013) stressed that an imperative step in the data collection process is understanding the response given by the participant, and the researcher should understand the importance of documenting the participant's answers correctly. Triangulation helps to increase the accuracy and validity of the research results (Prion & Adamson, 2014).

An advantage of direct observation of the participants within their natural working environment allows the researcher to understand experiences, processes, and procedures of the participants (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2012). Observations of the settings, interactions, and routines of the participants allowed me to understand their general

working environments. Another advantage of direct observation is that it allows the researcher the ability to evaluate the practices, and procedures as they are occurring that have become routine for the employees, and they may have failed to mention during their interviews (Patton, 2015). A disadvantage of direct observations is that the researcher may observe something and make an immediate conclusion. However, if the researcher conducted long-term observations, a different conclusion may be derived (Patton, 2015).

Additional information was reviewed by collecting documents from the participants such as performance evaluations. Case study research is highly rated in terms of quality when multiple sources of evidence are collected (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2012).

## Data Organization Technique

I collected audio recordings, as well as notes of observation, from each interview. I transcribed the audio-recorded interview and contain the data within a folder created on my flash drive. I recorded the participants' responses to the interview questions onto a spreadsheet. The data was then uploaded to the NVivo 12 software program to analyze and report the results. I also kept a research spreadsheet log. I updated the log as the data information was collected. I read and recorded data while examining every detail for segregating purposes the data into sections of emerging patterns and themes. It was also important to be mindful of not imposing patterns or themes where in fact there are none (Lamont & Swidler, 2014).

All data collected from the participants will be stored in a safe locked box in my home for a minimum of 5 years to protect everyone involved in the study. This includes

all written documentation, as well as my flash drive that will contain the spreadsheets along with all information from the folders created on my computer. After 5 years, I will erase the flash drive, and shred the paper notes. All participants and business organization's names will remain confidential within the study for privacy and ethical reasons. It is vital to protect the privacy and integrity of the participants (Ababneh, & Al-Waqfi, 2016).

## Data Analysis

I utilized the triangulation process for data analysis of the study. Triangulation includes gathering data from multiple sources, to verify the validity of the data collected (Lillie & Sippola, 2011; Yin 2012). I applied the methodological triangulation process by collecting each participant's documents such as performance evaluations, participated in the direct observation of typical workday processes, and audio-recorded semistructured interviews. I also employed transcript review to verify the data accuracy within the transcriptions of the interviews. Qualitative researchers triangulate the collected information by observing and hearing from multiple points of view (Patton, 2015).

The data analysis process involved the following steps: (a) collecting data from interviews and observations, (b) exploring text and data descriptions, (c) comprehending and formulating data for analysis, (d) progressing deeper into the comprehension, and (e) interpretation of the data (Hutchison, Johnston, & Breckon, 2010). I followed the same steps to analyze my data. Data analysis will begin by using NVivo 12 qualitative data analysis software. NVivo 12 software is best because it has the capability to confirm that coding will remain consistent during the entire analytical progression (Hutchinson et al.,

2010). Having such capabilities make this type of software vital to researchers who are looking to study and comprehend qualitative outcomes (Hutchinson et al., 2010).

I organized the responses from the interviewees and input the findings into NVivo 12 qualitative software. I categorized and discussed the findings based on the conceptual framework and models recognized within the literature review to code the extracted data. The conceptual framework is what connects the literature, the methodology, and the outcomes of the study together (Borrego, Foster, & Froyd, 2014). The resulting analysis may provide insights to allow business leaders strategies to improve workplace productivity among their employees. The coded thematic outcomes of this study may aid in determining the strategies that are most effective for motivating their employees. I used a mixture of sources of information, such as the interviews conducted as well as the literature review to form the themes arriving from the study.

NVivo codes information and classes it into a variety of categories (QSR International, 2017). The reason for utilizing codes in a research study is to organize information prior to determining the significance of it (Hutchinson et al., 2010). Once the data had been analyzed, the emerging themes was identified. The same section of data may have been sorted into several categories. The software deciphered the categories to determine if there was a trend among other interview responses (QSR International, 2017). NVivo is one of the leading code-based options available to researchers seeking themes to build upon from their raw data. The software used word recognition to cultivate themes that the researcher alone might not have initially seen (QSR International, 2017).

With the use of the triangulation, I clustered the identified themes and develop the successive theme explanations for additional analysis of the information compiled. I reviewed all themes identified significant to the study. I paid particular attention to the themes providing insights to determine the most effective strategies. Once I had identified the themes, I organized the information to validate both the minor and major themes formulated from the data. I then aligned the collection and the analysis of the data with the conceptual framework of the study as well as the categorical findings from the literature review.

## Reliability and Validity

To confirm the reliability and validity of the research, I applied several procedures. The following section included information regarding methods chosen to ensure dependability, transferability, credibility, and confirmability. Confirming reliability and validity was a critical component for the research study.

### Reliability

For this qualitative single-case study, I have addressed the four areas of reliability significant to qualitative research: (a) credibility, (b) transferability, (c) dependability, and (d) confirmability (Barushch, Gringeri, & George, 2011). Applying reliability strategies are vital to any study to ensure the outcomes are dependable (Yin, 2012). Demonstrating reliability approaches in a research study confirms dependability (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Reliability approaches include checking transcripts for accuracy; ensuring no codes were changed, and cross checking (Leung, 2015). I documented in-depth all of the steps of the research process, and kept all information to

guarantee what is stated is reliable, dependable, truthful, and accurate. Researchers should document the details of their interviews for dependability when utilizing a case study design to eliminate transcript and coding errors (Yin, 2012).

The process for accessing legitimacy and consistency involved collecting feedback from the participants and creating a descriptive examination of the results. As Harvey (2015) stated, researchers are encouraged to clarify the participants' responses to the interview questions, and to approve the precision of the data collected. I applied the transcription review process to enhance the validity and the reliability of my study. I utilized the following methods to ensure reliability within the study: (a) interview protocol, (b) double checked my interpretations of the participants' responses, (c) analyzed collected documents, (d) substantiated data, participated in direct observation of typical workday processes, and (f) documented all steps of the research process for replication purposes.

**Validity**

Robinson et al. (2016) stated that validity referred to the credibility, transferability, and confirmability of the instruments used for the research, the process used to gather the data, and the results achieved by the research. When achieving validity for a qualitative study researchers confirm precision by using specific techniques (Leung, 2015). The validity techniques include cross checking the coded responses, member-checking, presenting negative or differing information, and having an external examiner to audit the findings (Leung, 2015). The transcript review allowed participants to authenticate the information they communicated during their interviews, therefore

providing accuracy and credibility for the results (Elo, Kääriäinen, Kanste, Pölkki, Utriainen, & Kyngäs, 2014).

Validity helps create a valid assumption regarding how one aspect influences another (Leung, 2015). Future researchers will be able to duplicate the study because I described the research process in detail to ensure transferability. Griffith (2013) stated that by documenting the research process in full detail, such as providing rich descriptions of the population, demographic, and geographic boundaries of a study, transferability is easier for other researchers to duplicate the study. As Johnson, Buehring, Cassell, and Symon (2007) illustrated the interview process must continue until the researcher gathers no new information and data saturation occurs.

Researchers who perform case studies utilize triangulation to determine and confirm the validity of the research (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2012). One of the benefits of triangulation is the confirmation of the validity of the findings. Triangulation may also help the researcher to provide a better understanding of the problem. Providing specific descriptions of the research population, and the demographics and geographic boundaries of a study, helps support the transferability of a research study (Griffith, 2013). I thoroughly documented the research process to allow other researchers to replicate my procedures to generate similar results. I meticulously explained the research background and assumptions. I also included precise information about the participants of my study, demographic and geographic boundaries, research method and design, data collection instruments and techniques, data organizational techniques, and data analysis.

Fusch and Ness (2015) indicated that data saturation is about the richness of the data, not the quantity of the amount of data collected.

## Transition and Summary

The main purpose of this study was to explore motivational strategies retailers use to motivate their employees in order to improve employee performance. I described in Section 2 the qualitative single case study design approach and the visions of the research, the process, collection, and organization of the data are all within an ethical framework. After I collected, transcribed, validated, and coded the data, I then performed the analysis of the data. I presented my findings in Section 3 and included recommendations for future research.

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

Section 3 includes an introduction, the purpose of the study, presentation of the findings, application to professional practice, implications for social change, and my recommendations for action and furthur research. Section 3 contains the research findings to the predominant research question, interview questions, and an investigation of the relation to the conceptual framework. This section also contains a through analysis of research findings' themes, discusssions of how the findings and themes apply to retail employee moivation and performanace practice. Also included in Section 3 is a complete analysis of the research findings, with my reflections, the summary, and study conclusion.

## Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies retaile industry leaders use to motivate employees to achieve higher levels of workplace productivity. The population for this case study consisted of two managers, 18 or older, who have been an employee of the corporation for a minimum of 2 years, and had been in a management position for a minimum of 1 year. Each participant had also received a performance review of *solid performer* or better.

To collect the data, I used semistructured interviews and direct observation. To reinforce the reliability and validity of my study, I used a transcript review and methodological triangulation of multiple sources of data. Upon completion of data collection and verification, I used NVivo 12 qualitative data software for coding the data

and analyzing the emerging themes: (a) workplace motivation, (b) lead by example, and (c) performance.

## Presentation of the Findings

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies that retail industry leaders use to motivate employees to achieve higher levels of workplace productivity. After receiving IRB approval from Walden University, I proceeded with the next research process. During my visit to the retail store and the meeting, the manager of the retail store received a hand-delivered copy of the IRB approval. I briefly explained the study and gave the managers an information packet, which consisted of a confirmation to perform research (see Appendix A), data and company release form (see Appendix B), and a consent form for review.

Two managers participated in semistructured interviews, during which I achieved data saturation because the responses shared were similar and added no new information. Participants signed a consent form at the time of the interview. Each interview lasted about an hour without interrupting normal business processes. Participants received an emailed copy of the findings and interpretations to perform a transcript review and to strengthen the reliability and validity of the results. I observed the workplace environment, which included the organizational environment, management interactions, worker and manger interactions, and workflow processes. I used my interpretations of activity observations and recorded them during my visit to include with the triangulation of data for credibility.

Once my interview interpretations and observations were transcribed and confirmed through transcript review, I loaded the data in NVivo 12 for coding by participant interviews, interview questions, and observation interpretations. There were three main themes that assembled from the data: (a) workplace motivation, (b) lead by example, and (c) performance.

**Theme 1: Workplace Motivation**

The first theme derived from the study was motivation in the workplace. Grant (2017) pointed out that creating an internal desire for an employee to perform at a higher level of engagement is the true definition of employee motivation. Researchers also found that employees who were given a monetary method of motivation outperformed their competitors by 10%, which also impacted their financial results (Olafsen, Halvari, Forest, & Deci, 2015). The participants responses aligned that workplace motivation improves their employees' potential and significantly increases their enthusiasm to perform better at work, therefor, increasing engagement. It is vital that managers understand motivational strategies and how they correlate to employee performance to encourage it in their own employees. Employee motivation strengthens job performance by enhancing vitality and diminishing the stress levels felt by the employees themselves (Menges, Tussing, Wihler, & Grant, 2017). Namatovu and Dawa (2017) found that business organizations with motivated workers tend to provide better customer service, sell more quality products, and are more creative, innovative thinkers. Bakker (2017) found a direct correlation between employee motivation and productivity. Reduced employee motivation led to decreased productivity, while increased employee motivation

lead to an increase in employee productivity (Bakker, 2017). During the direct observation, I noticed management had an open-door policy and allowed their employees to freely communicate with them as needed. The employees seemed to have a comfortable working relationship with their managers as they were talking and laughing while working together. This led me to believe that the managers did take time to get to know their employees and were able to know them on a personal level. It is the responsibility of the management of the business organization to motivate the employees to achieve the objectives set by the business organization as well as the employees' personal goals (Grant, 2017; Namatovu & Dawa, 2017).

**Theme 2: Lead by Example**

The second theme that emerged was to lead by example. This viewpoint aligns with the leader-follower relationship theory. Grabo, Spisak, and van Vugt (2017) suggested that followers watch leaders, which may indirectly cause followers to create their own sense of empowerment, position, and significance within the organization. In face-to-face interviews, both indicated they lead by example. That was also apparent in the observation activities conducted on site. There was nothing asked of the employees that the managers were not doing themselves. Participant 1 emphasized

> You can't expect your employees to do well if you are unclear in establishing what they need to do to begin with. Each employee needs to have very clear expectations of what their job is. Also, follow up, execute, after they have done what has been ask of them. Don't just assume it was handled, follow up. Give

> compliments if it was done well, or work on a performance improvement plan if changes are necessary for improvement.

Participant 2 stated,

> Always bring the employee along with you. Include them on a personal level. Always try to fill your own job with someone else. Take someone else under your wing, nurture them, help them grow, train them to fill your shoes. Make sure they have a good strong work ethics.

Leading by example was also witnessed during the direct observations. Several times I observed the participants stopping what they were doing to help an employee who needed to ask them something or they would go and show them something instead of just telling them.

**Theme 3: Performance**

The third theme discovered from the study was performance, which reflects the organization's management process and is a true asset to any organization. Because employee performance determines the overall effectiveness of the business organization, the management of the organization should formulate the performance management system suitable for business development (Jayaweera, 2015). The participants indicated that motivated employees significantly increased employees' performance and often increased their enthusiasm to work as well. Participant 1 commented,

> You have to set goals to motivate the employees. We try to help our employees in setting goals and motivate them along with their benefits provided along with certain benchmarks along the way. It is important to know your employees.

> Learn them. Encourage them. Don't get so busy that they go to the wayside. Where do they fit best? Take an interest in them. Observe them, encourage them, see them get excited when they see the potential, they have within themselves.

They treated every employee as a unique individual, and showed interest in them on a personal level. They emphasized that motivation was not a one size fits all solution. The participants enjoy their work and they take an interest in being mentors to their employees.

During my observations the participants knew every employee's name we encountered. They were also able to tell me something personal about that employee.

Participant 1 also commented when discussing employee performance evaluations,

> Look at the evaluations as they are tied to pay raises and have been for over 25 years. So, we don't just do them for nothing, and put them in a file. We spend time doing them, and they do motivate the employees because are tied to a potential raise. This was also evident when I reviewed the documents at the establishment. Time and effort were certainly put forth into these employee evaluations. Participant 2 mentioned, "the owners here really pushed us. They took us in and started working with us at a young age. They started molding us. They sent us to classes. They invested in us and seen potential in us probably before we even seen it in ourselves.

During my observations, as well as the interviews, it was apparent that the participants took their jobs very seriously but also enjoyed their work. They work hard to gain the

trust of their employees, often working alongside with them to set the example. They set the expectations but do not ask anything of their employees that they were not willing to do themselves.

**Vroom's Expectancy Theory**

Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory of motivation was the conceptual framework for this study. The comprehensive view of Vroom's expectancy theory is that employees are motivated and make a thoughtful and meaningful choice to perform a task expecting to be compensated for their actions (Crossley et al., 2018). Vroom's expectancy theory is centered around the concept of how much does the goal mean to a person(valence), how much effort the person has to put forth to achieve it, and how much the goal is it worth to that person (expectancy) (Lloyd & Mertens, 2018). Honkaniemi, Lehtonen, and Hasu, (2015) noted that one of the most significant factors to understanding employee motivation, based on the expectancy theory developed by Vroom, was that the employees must be pursuing a goal they feel passional about, and that the likelihood of that reward can be achieved. According to Vroom, employees are encouraged and motivated when their managers provide them with tasks that they are confident they can accomplish and believe that they will be rewarded for completing the assigned tasks. Managers need to embrace the motivational fundamentals of the expectancy theory to create the motivational desires of each employee to improve their own performance and productivity (Lloyd & Mertens, 2018). Expectancy is the employees' expectation that they will be rewarded that causes them to show an increased level of performance (Lloyd & Mertens, 2018). Once employees understand what the expectations of them are within

the organization, their work and contributions become more meaningful and they take pride and have a sense of overall accomplishment. Managers need to create a work environment in which employees understand that their work is meaningful and valued and that they do provide value to the business organization.

## Application to Professional Practice

Business leaders in the retail industry can apply the study findings to implement successful strategies to motivate employees to achieve higher levels of workplace productivity in their organizations. Based on the results of the research, managers could improve their worker productivity by three motivational strategic methods: workplace motivation, lead by example, and performance. Ozduran and Tanova (2017) stated that having a sincere professional between the manager and employee motivates and encourages employees, which leads to increased employee engagement, job performance, and productivity. Having employees feel that managers care about them and have their best in mind, they become more engaged and productive in their work.

Overall, it is important that managers lead by example. One example documented during my observations was the managers got to know their employees and connected with them based on their motivational needs. Ryan (2018) had also emphasized the importance of connecting with the employees on an individual basis based on their motivational needs. Huang (2018) recognized extrinsic motivators as on the spot cash bonuses, gift cards, or excellent job performance rewards. Intrinsic motivators, as Woolley and Fishbach (2018) reported, consisted more of non-financial rewards. These

included, days off from work, vacations, flexible work hours, and discounts at local restaurants.

In order to get the employees fully motivated it is important that expectations be established and discussed by management. Petrou, Demerouti, and Schaufeli (2018) noted that the expectations of employees should be manageable so the employees are able to feel they can be successful. Participants set expectations and communication them with each employee regarding their job responsibilities and ensure that all expectations set were attainable. By utilizing strategies to motivate employees to achieve higher levels of workplace productivity in their organizations their leaders can generate higher profits and promote economic security within the business (Safiullah, 2015). Which could also lead to improved profitability and productivity within the business.

## Implications for Social Change

The findings of this study may contribute to social change by assisting retail store leaders with strategies to motivate employees to achieve higher levels of workplace productivity in their organizations, which can reduce employee turnover, therefore creating job opportunities for families in the community. As a result, motivated employees might also lead to greater job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and increased involvement in the organization (Harrington & Lee, 2015). The findings from this study might lead to improved interactions with the retail industries' customers, which may affect customer spending, resulting in improvements in the U.S. economy. Employees who are motivated are engaged, skilled, and devoted to their organization (Lavy & Littman-Ovadia, 2017). Employees who are engaged tend to reveal passion,

interest, enthusiasm, and individual efforts in accomplishing their goals to provide goods and services to humanity (Walby & Luscombe, 2016).

## Recommendations for Action

The following recommendations for further action to improve employee motivation and performance arise from the study findings. Retail business leaders must realize the individual needs of their employees. The motivators that impact one employee may differ when compared to another employee. The research participants agreed that when management showed appreciation to their employees, or rewarded their employees, their employees were more engaged. Therefore, I recommend that retail business leaders give their employees a feeling of being independent and accountable, empower them to lead tasks within the business organization. Upon completion of the research, I plan to disseminate the findings from the study by providing the research participants with a copy of the study as well as meeting with them to answer any questions they may have. In addition, study findings will be published by Walden University in the ProQuest/UMI dissertation database. It is also my goal to submit research findings to Business Source Premiere, Public Personnel Management and the EBSCO. I am also looking to present my work at seminars, conferences, and additional professional events as they arise.

## Recommendations for Further Research

The purpose of this research was to explore strategies that retail industry leaders use to motivate employees to achieve higher levels of workplace productivity. The findings of the research study were limited to the geographical area of Southern West

Virginia and the population therein. Future research efforts could focus on motivational methods in other geographical areas, or other types of businesses other than retail. In addition, my data collection consisted of face to face participant interviews, archival documents, and direct observation of day to day processes. Recommendation for further research could include a mixed-method study in which both quantitative and qualitative can be collected to obtain a more comprehensive analysis of the results. Obtaining the experiences of participants from only one organization may have limited the information received from the study. For further research, one might consider conducting a qualitative multiple-case study to capture the experiences from a larger population of participants.

## Reflections

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies that retail industry leaders use to motivate employees to achieve higher levels of workplace productivity. I have several years of work experience in the retail industry and have the desire to help industry leaders understand the importance of motivation within the workplace environment. I conducted this qualitative single case study following the data collection technique outlined in Section 2, which allowed me to focus on collection the pertinent details on motivational strategies in a comfortable setting by those who were successfully motivating their employees. During my visit to the retail store, I explained the purpose of the study, along with the process of participating in the study. I also provided the managers with an information packet, and addressed any questions they had.

During the interviews it was obvious management had an abundant wealth of information regarding motivational processes and advice on how to help their employees improve. This study may have improved my way of encouraging and motivating those I encounter now within my workplace. This doctoral process has shown me the value of workplace motivation in regards to retail employees and how great of an impact management plays towards having their employees motivated.

## Conclusion

Employee motivation is a necessary element that leads to an increased productivity in retail businesses. Organizations with higher levels of motivated employees are more resourceful and operative than those that have employees who are not motivated. Motivation is the internal force that causes one to act in a specific manner, including desires, goals, and dreams that stimulates the individual to move in a specific direction (Hitka & Balazova, 2015). Motivation is a source of encouraging energy that encourages an individual's lives, both personally and professionally (Walby & Luscombe, 2016). There are a variety of ways that a business organization may try to keep employees motivated such as an increase in pay, more benefit options, or offering educational opportunities (Ismiyarto, Suwitri, Warella, & Sundarso, 2015).

This qualitative single case study allowed for the in-depth study of one retail business organization from Southern West Virginia, which has maintained organizational success and profitability. Vroom's expectancy theory was the lens used to capture literature and align the participants responses. The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies that retail industry leaders use to motivate employees to

achieve higher levels of workplace productivity. Semistructured interviews were conducted with managers to gather strategies from the participants. Direct observation of the settings, interactions, and routines of the participants allowed me to understand their general working environment in a real-life context. After I transcribed each interview, and had each participant review the transcript for any errors, I loaded the transcriptions and researcher observations into NVivo 12 software, which assisted categorizing the themes. Three major themes emerged from the data analysis; workplace motivation, lead by example, and performance.

In summary, knowledge from this study could help further other retail industry leaders increase their levels of productivity by ensuring their workforce is highly motivated. Jayaweera (2015) stated that it is the responsibility of management to take the initiatives to encourage motivation among employees. Knowledge from this study could also help other retail industry leaders increase their employee retention, thus resulting in a reduction in employee turnover, and providing a cost savings to the organization.

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Appendix A: Confirmation to Perform Research

This is to confirm the following as we had discussed when I had asked if you would allow me to use your store for my research.

I will be examining store policies, an employee handbook (if one is available), as well as the employee evaluation form you use. These will not have been already completed on any individual employees.

As I had initially explained here is a brief reminder of the criteria for the participants: All participants must be over the age of 18, had been an employee of the corporation for a minimum of two years, and had been in a management position for a minimum of one year. Each participant had also received a performance review of, solid performer, or better.

Recruitment process- once I have received a list of eligible participants, I will contact them via phone or email to see if they are willing to participate in my study. Once I have willing participants, I will schedule face-to-face interviews potentially using your conference room during their work hours.

Observations of the manger and the four areas will also be allowed Organizational Environment, Management Interactions, Worker and Manager Interactions, Workflow Processes over approximately a two-day process. These days will be mutually agreed upon between myself and the store manager depending upon the participants work schedule.

Again, I will provide you a copy of my completed study, as well as a summarized version of the data from your store to use as you would like. Thank you again for your cooperation and I look forward to getting started. Please don’t hesitate contact me should you have any questions or concerns at any point throughout this process.

Sincerely,

Angela M. Addair

# Appendix B: Data and Company Release

## Data and Company Release

To Whom It May Concern:

I understand I will be disclosing company data (evaluation forms, for example) that is not public information. This information will be kept confidential by the researcher and is to be used for the research study only.

I also understand the researcher will be conducting interviews with our top store management. I have agreed that our store will be allowed to be used for this study, with the understanding that the store name, will be kept confidential, but we will receive a copy of the study from the researcher once it has been completed.

_____ (Store Manager) _____
(Date)

# Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Date: _____

## Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

(a) Introduce myself to the participant(s).

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study and allowing me to interview you today. My name is Angela Addair and I am a graduate student at Walden University conducting my doctoral study in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctorate of Business Administration with an emphasis in Finance. This semistructured interview will last approximately 45 minutes and will include four questions regarding the strategies you use to motivate your employees within the retail industry. I would like your permission to tape record the interview, for better accuracy of your response, but if you do not feel comfortable with me doing so that is okay as well. If at any time during the interview you wish to discontinue the use of the recorder or the interview itself, please just let me know. All of your responses are confidential. Your information will be kept confidential, as well as the company name itself. The responses given will be used to develop a better understanding of how you and your peers motivate your employees and what other retail industry leaders may can do to motivate their employees to achieve the higher levels of workplace productivity your organization has achieved.

(b) Provide participants with the consent form.
(c) Review the contents of the informed consent form with the participants, answering questions and concerns of the participants.
(d) Participant signs and dates the consent form.
(e) The researcher signs the consent form.
(f) Provide the participant with a copy of the signed informed consent form.

At this time, I would like to remind you of your written consent to participate in this study. I am the responsible researcher, specifying your participation in the research project: *Retailer Employee Motivation and Performance.* You and I have both signed and dated a copy of the consent form, which certifies that you agree to continue this interview and participate within the study. You have received a copy, and I have kept a copy. I will store my copy securely in my home, separate from your reported responses.

Again, your participation is completely voluntarily. If at any time you need to stop, or take a break, please let me know. Also, if you need clarification of a question asked, please let me know that as well. You may also withdraw your participation at any time without consequence. Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin? Then with your permission, we will begin the interview.

(g) Turn on the recording device, as allowed per participant.
(h) Commence the interview with question one, following through to the final question.
(i) Follow up with additional questions stemming from responses or observations.
(j) Complete the interview sequence and discuss transcript review with the participant(s).
(k) Thank the participant(s) for their participation in the study. Reiterate all contact information available for follow-up questions and concerns from participants.

# Appendix D: Interview Questions

To answer the overarching research question, what strategies do the retail industry leaders use to motivate employees to achieve higher levels of workplace productivity?

The following interview questions will be asked during semistructured interviews.

1. What strategies you would recommend implementing to motivate your employees?
2. How would you describe the effectiveness of the motivational strategies implemented by your organization?
3. Describe any barriers you encountered when implementing motivational strategies.
4. What other information can you add that would be helpful to anyone trying to motivate employees to higher workplace productivity?

# Appendix E: Observation Protocol

## Observation Protocol

After receiving permission from each participant, I will spend 2 days approximately 16 hours observing their interactions with their employees. I will occupy the role of observer to achieve data regarding how the participants interact among one another, interactions among their staff, and the information that may increase motivation within the organization.

## Observation Data Collection Form

| Criteria | Observation Notes | Researcher Reflections |
|---|---|---|
| Organizational Environment: | Very relaxed environment, employees were smiling, some were laughing while they were getting their work done. | Managers placed an emphasis on employee happiness. |
| | Office doors were open, managers often were on the floor and not just sitting behind their desks. | Managers have an open door policy, and place a great emphasis on communication. They allow multiple opportunities for the staff to come and approach them. |
| | Bulletin boards with important announcements posted for employees were hung near the timeclock. | Bulletin boards allow more communication lines with employees. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Management Interactions: | Managers work very well together. They communicate with one another, they appear to get along very well. They often go to one another to discuss important issues. | Managers have an excellent working relationship. They trust one another and work very well together. They are friendly, professional, and overall seem very happy with one another. They seem to enjoy their times when they overlap with working together. |
| Worker and Manger Interactions: | Several times an employee approached one of the managers with a question. The answer was never rushed, each time the manager took their time explaining the answer, why it was given, how it related to the job, and what they were getting done. Very thought out and detailed with their answers. | In my opinion they never made their employees feel like they were a bother coming to them with a question. They took their time explaining the why, which is often important to understand for an employee. It can make the employee feel more important to the organization. |
| Workflow Processes: | Managers were on the floor with their employees often during the day. They | Managers were very hands on with helping their employees. They were offering tips, suggestions and compliments to the employees. |

didn’t just sit at their desks in their office. They were working by the side of the employees, and often offered suggestions to make things better, whether it was stocking shelves or improvements to customer service. They also complimented the employees on jobs well done. I heard that often.