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Employee Retention in Small Retail Businesses

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Bernard Essel

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Walden University
2019

Employee Retention in Small Retail Businesses

by

Bernard Essel

MBA, DeVry University, 2013

BEd, University of Education, 2007

Proposed Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

December 2019

Abstract

Retail small business leaders face the challenges of retaining their employees. Retail small business leaders are concerned with ineffective retention strategies, which can increase employee turnover and collapse their businesses. Grounded in Herzberg's two-factor theory the objective of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore small retail business leaders' strategies to retain employees. The participants comprised 5 small retail business leaders from Minneapolis, Minnesota, who had 5 to 10 years of employee retention experience. Data were collected from semistructured interviews and business documents. Data were analyzed using Yin's 5-phase process; 5 themes emerged to include frequent communication between management and employees, employee compensation and welfare, employee engagement, employee recognition, and employee advancement. The implications for positive social change include the potential small business leaders to explore effective retention strategies, which can result in stable employment for employees and their families.

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Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral study to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for his grace and strength to help me complete this journey. I also dedicate this degree to my loving wife; Mrs. Sarah Essel for continually, encouraging and providing me the opportunity to maintain a balance between my education and personal life. This study is also dedicated to my parents Mr. Barnabas Kojo Essel and Marta Nkruma who instilled in me the values of education as the only way for the poor to rub shoulders with the rich. I am glad I made them proud. The next dedication goes to my daughters; Donaldan Essel, Mireille A. S. Essel, and stepchildren; Ayew Paintsil, Esi Paintsil, Benjamin Paintsil, and Sheerah Paintsil, my uncles Mr. Joseph Annim and wife, Dr. Kofi Agyeman, Mr. M. A. K. Essel and for their wonderful support when times became hard in my education journey. My stepsiblings; Evelyn Donkor, Achia Somuah, Dominic Essel, Emmanuel Essel, Anthony Essel, Abena Ponwah and friends; Samuel Ampofo, Nana Quansah, Yeayea Naa, and Emmanuel Akomaning. Thank you all for praying for my success in this doctoral journey and believing in me to get it done. Finally, this study is dedicated to all children from poor families who think there is no light at the end of the tunnel and can never be called Doctor (Dr.). I am a living testimony and assure you that, there is light at the end of the tunnel and assure students from poor backgrounds that they can also be called Dr. hence Dr. Bernard Essel.

Acknowledgments

Firstly, I would like to thank the Almighty God for the strength and guidance bestowed upon me to persevere to the end of my doctoral journey, I say thank you, Baba, you made me do it.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Employees play significant roles in organizational success (Mugaa, Guyo, & Odhiambo, 2018). Mugaa et al. (2018) added employees remain committed and engaged when their efforts are appreciated and recognized. The retention, learning, and growth of employees in an organization continue to be a concern to small business leaders (Hanaysha, 2016). Retention and employee engagement are a significant concern to small business operation, especially in times of high turnover rates (Aguenza & Som, 2018). Aguenza and Som (2018) expounded on the need for small business leaders to adopt motivational and retention strategies such as financial rewards, recognition, and work-life balance to reduce turnover rates in an organization. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore retention strategies small retail business leaders use to improve employee retention.

Background of the Problem

Best entrepreneur capabilities and action plan to improve employee performance to meet customer needs are necessary for business operations (Lee, Hallak, & Sardeshmukh, 2016). Herzberg (1987) posited the need for business leaders to ensure employees are satisfied and motivated with their respective job roles. Kwon (2014) explained the need for business leaders to explore retention strategies because they are key elements to organization growth. Small business leaders should understand that employees have a different perception of job satisfaction. Retail business leaders fail to keep retail employees satisfied, and subsequently, this has led to an increase in turnover in the industry (Arndt, Arnold, & Landry, 2006).

The continued voluntary turnover among employees in the retail industry is costly (De Mesquita Ferreira & De Aquino Almeida, 2015). De Mesquita Ferreira and De Aquino Almeida stated that the ability for retail business leaders to lower employee turnover is a sign of financial recovery through employee productivity. In 2015, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015) indicated that over 2.5 million employees quit their job voluntarily in the United States in 2015. The number of employees who continue to voluntarily withdrew from their jobs in the diverse industries in the United States increased to 3.3 million in 2018 (U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics report, 2018). Retail business leaders should deploy retention strategies to reduce the turnover rate. Without retention strategies, employees will continue to quit (Robinson, Kralj, Solnet, Goh, & Callan, 2014). Supportive management, fair pay, and work-life balance will contribute to low turnover in the retail industry.

Problem Statement

Some retail organizations face a daunting challenge in the retention of the workforce causing high employee turnover rates in the United States retail industry (Aruna & Anitha, 2015; U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, 2015). In the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics report (2018) on employee retention, 3.3 million people (2.3%) quit their jobs voluntarily by the end of 2017. The general business problem is that the inability of business leaders to retain employees has resulted in lower productivity and more business closures. The specific business problem is that some small retail business leaders lack retention strategies for improving employee retention.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore retention strategies small retail business leaders use to improve employee retention. The population of the study included five business leaders from five small retail businesses in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Each of the participating businesses had operated successfully for more than 5 years in the city of Minneapolis and used successful retention strategies to reduce employee turnover. The findings from the study might contribute to positive social change if small retail business leaders apply the retention strategies, which might contribute to improved working conditions and reduction of unemployment.

Nature of the Study

A qualitative multiple case study is appropriate to explore the strategies small retail leaders used to improve employee retention. Using the qualitative method can result in new insights when a person, group, organization, or situation is studied (Wilkinson, Podlowska, & Sakel, 2016). The qualitative approach is a method that researchers use to assess how individuals experienced a situation (Baskerville & Wood-Harper, 2016). As posited by Yin (2015), scholars use qualitative research to gain direct insights into phenomena. Quantitative research is more effective to use when the research consists of theory testing, establishing a relationship, or analyzing a given set of data (Lobiondo-Wood & Haber, 2013). The mixed-method approach is applicable when researchers use both quantitative and qualitative methods to identify potential relationships as well as understanding a phenomenon. The quantitative and mixed-method did not fit this study

because the study was not geared toward theory testing or establishing statistical relationships among variables. I chose to use the qualitative method.

I used a multiple case study for this research because the goal of the study was to explore in-depth strategies used by small retail leaders to retain employees to increase productivity. A single-case study is appropriate when researchers study a unique person, a group, organization, or situation for a stipulated period to identify possible factors affecting a problem (Keenan, Teijlingen, & Pitchforth, 2015). I considered, but rejected the narrative, phenomenological, and ethnography designs for this study. Sandelowski (2014) indicated a narrative design recounts systematic stories of participants and therefore would not address this study's purpose. Researchers use the phenomenological design to explore the meanings of the lived experiences of participants (Khan, 2014). The ethnographic design is used by researchers who study unique cultural attributes over a prolonged period (Langley, Smallman, Tsoukas, & Van de Ven, 2013) which also was not aligned with the purpose of my study.

Research Question

The research question for this study was: What strategies do small retail business leaders use to improve employee retention in their organizations?

Interview Questions

1. What strategies do you use to retain employees over a lengthy period?
2. What challenges did you face in implementing the strategies and how did you overcome the challenges?

3. How do you address and communicate implementation barriers with your employees to increase productivity?
4. How do you assess employee commitment to ensure retention and productivity?
5. What leadership strategies have worked in retaining employees?
6. How do you measure the effectiveness of your leadership strategies on employee retention?
7. How has employee retention affected productivity?
8. What else would you like to share regarding employee retention strategies and its effect on productivity in the retail industry?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation. Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman, (1959) developed the two-factor theory of motivation addressing job satisfiers and dissatisfiers in the late 1950s. The parameters identified by Herzberg included job satisfaction, job dissatisfaction, motivation, interaction, and communication. According to Herzberg, job satisfaction is the real workplace condition for enhancing employee retention, performance, and productivity. Herzberg noted the two factors which influence employee performance and behavior in organizations as job satisfaction and motivation.

Motivation is a significant force in retaining employees in an organization. Maslow (1943 & 1970) emphasized the need for business leaders to motivate employees either intrinsically or extrinsically to avert labor turnover. As noted by Maslow (1943),

motivated employees give their best to any given task, which in turn increases productivity. Researchers use Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation to understand psychological attributes that help business leaders to understand employee turnover (Gupta & Shaw, 2014). The findings from this study might be useful for business leaders to understand how Herzberg's two-factor theory can positively impact employee retention in the retail industry.

Operational Definitions

Employee Retention: Employee retention is the process of physically keeping employee members in an organization for organizational success (Aguenza & Som, 2018).

Job Satisfaction: Job satisfaction is an essential attribute that causes employees to remain engaged and find happiness in what they do as a job (Peng & Mao, 2015).

Labor Turnover: Labor turnover is when a percentage or portion of a company's workforce (Aguenza & Som, 2018).

Retention Strategies: Retention strategies are action plans to retain employees refers to a situation where a person is moved into action for a more cognitive orientation (Robyn et al., 2015).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

The purpose of this qualitative multiple-case study was to explore retention strategies small retail business leaders use to improve employee retention. The study has assumptions, limitations, and delimitations because it is not realistic that the study

captured and expounded on all issues concerning employee retention in the retail industry.

Assumptions

Yin (2015) indicated an assumption with qualitative researchers to focus more on the viewpoint of participants in order to prevent bias. Assumptions can be risky because of opinion already formed, hence, researchers ought to consider other factors when conducting a research study to ensure rigorized findings (Wortham, 2015). Yates and Leggett (2016) opined that assumptions used by researchers could be unverifiable. I made three assumptions in this study. I assumed: (a) some retail business leaders established businesses with no strategies in place to retain employees, (b) participants who engaged in the study provided honest and truthful responses, and (c) Minneapolis, Minnesota, was a large enough size area to obtain enough data for the study.

Limitations

The limitations of the study are the deficiencies that restrict the study (Liu & Ding, 2016). A researcher has no control over the limitations of a study (Bryman, 2016). As the primary researcher, there were limitations beyond my control. Firstly, the participants of the study were limited to the city of Minneapolis, Minnesota. The tendency of the responses of participants might not be the true reflection of the views of all small retail business leaders in the United States. Secondly, a limitation of some participants rescheduling the interview prolonged the completion time for study. Finally, some participants bias responses might have been a limitation to this study, which might have resulted in the inaccurate information received. Due to response bias, researchers

are likely to receive imprecise data from participants (Schouten, Cobben, Lundquist, & Wagner, 2016).

Delimitations

Delimitations of a study explained the boundaries a researcher imposes to narrow the scope of the study (Yin, 2015). The delimitations or boundaries of a study are in a researcher's control (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). In this study, there were deliberate boundaries I intended to impose. The geographical area where the study is intended is a delimitation to this study. For this study, I selected participants from small retail businesses in the city of Minneapolis, Minnesota. Additionally, I interviewed business leaders of small retail businesses that had been in operation for at least 5 years.

Significance of the Study

Employee retention involves physically keeping employee members in an organization for organizational success (Gupta & Shaw, 2014). According to Bode, Singh, and Rogan (2015), business leaders play a key role in the retention of employees through efficacious strategies and human capital management. Employee retention strategies are the panaceas for helping an organization to thrive in its industry.

Contribution to Business Practice

The findings from this research might help retail business leaders with strategies to retain employees in the workplace. The findings might also guide retail business leaders to increase productivity through employee retention, improving profits, and reducing costs. As indicated by Wegner (2011), increased employee retention contributes to a sense of empowerment in an organization. Additionally, the findings might enable

retail business leaders to identify and invest in key employees who can catalyze business growth. Employees are instrumental in overall business growth (Bravo-Biosca, Criscuolo, & Menon, 2016).

Implications for Social Change

The findings of this study might help small retail business leaders to adopt retention and management strategies, which could contribute to the reduction of employee turnover and generate financial savings for benefiting social and organizational opportunities like job creation. There are numerous opportunities in the retail industry for small retail business owners with the potential for sustainable growth (Ayers & Odegaard, 2017). Some retail businesses that exhibit potential for growth attract investors for funding (Schroff, Meyer, & Burghof, 2016). Attracting investors might lead to retail expansion, which in turn can create jobs for the unemployed and, encourage more entrepreneurs investing in small retail business operations.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

As described by Massey, Chaboyer, and Anderson (2017), a literature review involves critically evaluating other studies that examine an existing phenomenon. In this study, it was my goal to collect data from existing published studies to explore retention strategies small retail business leaders use to improve employee retention. To capture all relevant data to explore the purpose of the study, I reviewed information from multidisciplinary databases such as ProQuest, SAGE, Google Scholar, SAGE, and Emerald Insights. Other relevant sources included information from state and government websites such as the State of Minnesota and Small Business Administration.

I used the following search terms for my literature review: retail, retention strategies, business leaders, the two-factor theory of motivation, and qualitative method. I found 270 references about retention strategies small retail business leaders used to improve employee retention. The literature review consisted of 100 references, 75 of which were peer-reviewed. Eighty-five percent of the peer-reviewed journals that I used for the study had publication dates 2015 or later.

The central themes used in this literature review included:

- Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation
- Examples of research using in Herzberg's two-factor theory
- Challenging employee retention factors
- Strategies to maximize employee retention
- Retail employee turnover
- Leadership
- Retail employee satisfaction
- Retail employee retention
- Retail employee engagement
- Retail employee training and leadership
- Retail employee performance
- Organizational culture
- Employee compensation
- Employee communication
- Synopsis of literature review on employee retention

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation

The two-factor theory of motivation was developed by Herzberg (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959). Herzberg spearheaded the two-factor theory, hence the name Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory (Herzberg et al., 1959; Herzberg, 1974). The factors that cause individual employees to exhibit job satisfaction or dissatisfaction were different in each case (Herzberg et al., 1959).

In Herzberg's original study, he gathered data from accountants and engineers through interviews to understand satisfiers and dissatisfiers with respect to employee performance (Herzberg et al., 1959). The tenets of the two-factor theory are hygienic factors and motivators. Hygiene factors are associated with dissatisfiers and motivators are associated with satisfiers (Lacey, Kenneth-Hansel, & Manolis, 2015). Herzberg et al. (1959) indicated there were separate factors that led to job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction. Herzberg identified elements that promote job satisfaction and classified them as motivator factors and were as follows (a) recognition, (b) growth, (c) achievement, (d) work itself, (e) promotion, and (f) responsibility (Herzberg, 1974; Vijayakumar & Saxena, 2015). Elements of job dissatisfaction also called hygiene factors were (a) company policy, (b) supervision, (c) relationship with Boss, (d) work conditions, (e) relationship with peers, and (f) salary (Herzberg, 1974; Damij, Levnajic, Skrt, & Suklan, 2015; Singh, 2016).

Herzberg (1974) indicated satisfiers promote employee retention and dissatisfiers increase employee turnover. In a situation where the employee does not experience satisfiers or dissatisfiers, the satisfaction or dissatisfaction level of the employee remains

neutral (Herzberg, 1968). Herzberg indicated job satisfaction or job dissatisfaction is not a compliment to each other indicating they are not mutually exclusive. Herzberg argued the opposite of job satisfaction or job dissatisfaction is not job dissatisfaction, but rather no job satisfaction or no job dissatisfaction respectively. According to Oluwatayo (2015), Herzberg's two-factor theory is a good mechanism to determine the factors that give birth to either job satisfaction or job dissatisfaction. According to Herzberg, job satisfaction is the real workplace condition for enhancing employee retention, performance, and productivity.

Herzberg noted the two factors that influence employee performance and behavior in organizations are job satisfaction and motivation. Herzberg et al. (1959) suggested employees' performance also comes from physiological and psychological needs satisfaction. Herzberg explained physiological needs such as the monetary rewards that employees get in the workplace, and psychological needs are emotionally related to acceptance, empathy, and achievement. Herzberg referred to the physiological needs as extrinsic factors, and psychological needs as intrinsic factors. Sauer and Valet (2013) discounted Herzberg's extrinsic factors and argued that employees' job satisfaction is intrinsically motivated. Herzberg (1959) indicated motivating factors are extrinsic and hygiene factors are intrinsic. Extrinsic motivators such as salary, interpersonal relationships, working conditions, rank, and job security may account for job satisfaction (Holmberg, Solis, & Carlstrom, 2015). The demands of an organization are met when the employees are satisfied with what they do as jobs (Huang & Gamble, 2015). Employees' attitudes toward work in relation to work performance stem from two key indicators: job

satisfaction and job dissatisfaction (Islam & Ali, 2013). An employee is not excited about the conducive working environment but rather growth-inducing tasks in job-related environment (Limbu et al., 2014). Organizational growth is achieved when employees are satisfied with exciting work that promotes positive response and contribution to the growth (Park, Song, Kim, & Lim, 2015).

The supporting theory that I used in this study was Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Maslow (1943) indicated individuals must meet certain needs in life to function properly and be more productive. Maslow (1943) identified five needs in a pyramidal form starting from the bottom were as follows: (a) physiological or basic needs, (b) safety/security needs, (c) social / love needs, (d) esteem needs, and (e) self-actualization needs. Maslow came out with these assumptions in relation to individual needs: (a) individual needs are arranged in order of importance, (b) lower needs must be satisfied first before higher needs, (c) individuals have five need classifications (Rahman & Nurallah, 2014).

The physiological need is the first found at the bottom of the pyramid and consists of food, air, water, and shelter (Maslow, 1943). The second need is safety or security which indicates an individual must be free from harm or threats (Maslow, 1943). Social or love is the third need suggesting individuals must experience belongingness, associating with others, friendship, and affection (Maslow, 1943). The fourth is esteem needs which consist of appreciation, respect, and approval from others (Maslow, 1943). The last and final need at the top of the pyramid is called self-actualization, which suggests individuals can develop to the fullest potential (Maslow, 1943). Kuranchie-

Mensah and Amponsah-Tawiah (2016) linked Maslow's hierarchical needs to how leaders will adopt recognition of needs at the workplace to ensure employees develop their full potentials by providing security, interpersonal relationships, financial rewards, promotions, training, respect, and self-actualization. Maslow and Herzberg's theories have commonalities that suggest individuals' needs depend on both motivational and hygienic factors for employees to produce their best at the workplace.

According to Herzberg's theory, work itself gives fundamental job satisfaction. The theory looks at the relationship between job design, motivation, and leadership. Leadership plays a key role in administering the Herzberg two-factor theory. Leadership style is the vehicle for producing organizational results by implementing the available strategies.

Herzberg (1965) concluded hygienic factors constituted 80% of employee's feelings about their work, whereas motivating factors were 90%. Herzberg's two-factor theory supports the idea that employees experience an increase in job satisfaction when motivated (Herzberg, 1965). The two-factor theory does not recommend hygienic factors alone for job satisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). The theme of Herzberg's two-factor theory is to understand psychological attributes that help business leaders understand employee retention which forms the basis of this study.

Example of Research Using Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

The conclusions drawn from using Herzberg's two-factor theory to employee motivation produce a myriad of outcomes from various researchers' views from appreciating the motivational factors to opposing the ideas of hygiene factors as having

less impact on job satisfaction. Islam and Ali (2013) stated that motivational factors form the basis of Herzberg's job satisfaction assessment and hygiene factors of pay and administrative policy, whilst sustaining Herzberg's view of dissatisfaction. Researchers agreed hygiene factors of supervision, working conditions, and leadership had a positive correlation with job satisfaction (Islam & Ali, 2013). Islam and Ali's (2013) research result depicted various levels of agreements with Herzberg's hygiene factors as a direct impact on employee satisfaction.

Islam and Ali's (2013) research was on a private university in Pakistan. The study was not meant to generalize the outcome or to be of use in other countries, but was designed to test Herzberg's motivational and hygiene factors in relation to the employees of the university. Because of the study's design, researchers used a small sample size. Islam and Ali (2013) broadened the scope of the study to include job satisfaction and provided the opportunity for future students' learning. The results of the research were useful in appreciating the motivational and hygiene factors in relation to employee's job satisfaction.

Challenging Employee Retention Factors

Small business leaders face the challenge of retaining valuable and talented employees. Employee retention is a challenge confronting small business leaders in the retail industry causing a high rate of employee turnover (Halebic & Nivin, 2012). Hancock et al. (2013) noted the following factors to be associated with employee retention: pay satisfaction, career advancement, and employee to employer relations.

Employee retention is a pervasive issue in organizations. Small business leaders must focus on the retention of talented and valued employees (George, 2015; Hancock et al., 2013). Proper screening methods in the recruitment process promote qualified candidates to be selected, which can increase employee retention (Kam & Meyer, 2015). Gupta and Shaw (2014) argued performance rewards that align with employees' expectations uplift and sustain the goals of an organization. Employees attaining their expectations in the organization depends on the business leader's application of incentives (Fisher, 2014).

The work-family conflict poses issues for employees' performance in the workplace and affects commitment to the organization (Demsky, Ellis, & Fritz, 2014). Conflicts between work and family have created a paradigm shift of employees' perceptions toward the quality of family and work-life balance since employees do not get enough time to relate with their families as a result of dynamic nature of retail businesses (Friedman & Westring, 2015). In recent times, employees place value on family more than work, and that impacts negatively on the employee's productivity.

Employee training is one of the factors affecting employees in the workplace. Lack of employee training affects performance and creates frustrations at the workplace. Hancock et al. (2013) noted employee training is a vital element to make employees stay and excel in the workplace. Good outlined and structured employee training promotes confidence and prevents ambiguity and frustrations. The nature of tasks and match-up training for proper execution, remuneration, benefits, and retirement package, employees' team spirit, and interrelationships, employee flexible time offs and family-related issues,

and leader-employee relations account for the will and love for an employee to be at work.

Strategies to Maximize Employee Retention

Adopting strategies to maximize employee retention can promote the organization's efficiency, effectiveness, and reduce the cost of continuous hiring. Employee retention helps the organization to save money which impacts employees financially through profit-sharing, bonuses, and incentives. Aubert and Hollandts (2015) argued 7% of French-listed organizations reduced absenteeism and turnover by profit-sharing as a short-term financial incentive strategy. Aubert and Hollandts noted long-term financial incentives practiced by organizations through various purchase options such as stock price and doubling 401ks maximize employee retention. In line with this, Gabriel and Nwaeke (2015) examined the relationship between employee job satisfaction and nonfinancial incentive in five hotels in Port Harcourt. Gabriel and Nwaeke (2015) concluded that there was a positive correlation between the two variables, and it was clear that business leaders must value employees as the most important asset and empower them to make decisions in performing their duties. It is a strategy that business leaders must adopt both nonfinancial and financial incentives to bring out the best in the employees in order to retain them.

Retail Employee Turnover

In 2016, close to 8,440,000 retail employees were separated from their workplace in the United States (U.S. Department of Labor, 2017a). Retail small business leaders face the primary challenge of employee retention, and turnover negatively affects the

organization's performance either directly or indirectly (Bandura & Lyons, 2014).

Organizational leaders depend on high performing and productive employees to excel in the retail industry (Harrison & Gordon, 2014). Organizational success, profitability, and competitive advantage depend on satisfied employees (Martin, 2015). The U.S.

Department of Labor (2017b) projected that the retail sales force would increase by 97,000 employees from 2016 to 2026. A high rate of employee turnover in any organization results in a myriad of negative consequences (Guilding, Lamminmaki, & McManus, 2014; Vasquez, 2014).

Terera and Ngirande (2014) indicated employee turnover costs organizations in terms of the financial burden. Apart from the financial burden encountered by an organization's employee turnover, customer satisfaction both internally and externally are impacted as well as economic liabilities and regression (Vasquez, 2014). Indirect costs associated with employee turnover are intangible asset costs, opportunity costs, lost production, quality costs, and competitive disadvantage (Wang, Wang, Xu, & Ji, 2014). Bryant and Allen (2013) argued the annual salary of an open position in an organization costs less than employee turnover. Bandura and Lyons (2014) supported this assertion with these figures; employee turnover costs organizations 150% - 200% of the annual salary of an open position. Companies lose lots of money when an employee quits. White (2017) identified three main costs associated with an employee departure from an organization as hard costs, opportunity costs, and soft costs. Hard costs consist of expenses as employee replacement costs, fees, and services (White, 2017). The job advertisement, application reviews, interviewing, onboarding, and employee training

constitute employee replacement costs (Arnaize & Verseman-Morrison, 2014).

Opportunity costs include opportunity lost as a result of employee turnover vacancy (White, 2017). Manager's time to set up an interview, interview time or sourcing for potential hires constitute soft costs (White, 2017). According to White (2017), among the three costs associated with employee turnover, hard costs have a greater impact on the financial burden on the organization as compared with soft and opportunity costs.

Hancock et al. (2013) indicated the type of employee quitting the organization will suggest the type of financial burden in terms of employee replacement costs. Companies with high labor costs will incur high replacement costs from employee turnover than low labor costs companies (Hancock et al., 2013). Retail organizations rely on the labor market for successful retail operations. In the retail industry, high turnover rates are equal to the extensive retail costs (Tan, Liu, Oh, & Weitz, 2014).

Types of Employee Turnover

Employees are valued assets of any organization and losing these assets may destabilize the organization on the grounds of productivity and profitability. Employees leave organizations on varied reasons which include: (a) resignation, (b) discharge, (c) termination, and (d) job abandonment. There are two forms of employee turnover namely voluntary and involuntary (Pietersen & Oni, 2014)

Voluntary Employee Turnover

Voluntary employee turnover occurs when employees willingly exit the company on reasons best known to them. The aim of employees is to work for an organization to retire but for unexpected reasons, some of them leave. The rate of employees voluntarily

quitting the organization may be attributed to a lack of job satisfaction (Chiedu, Long, & Ashar, 2017). Voluntary turnover affects the totality of an organization's performance. Voluntary turnover is costly to organizations because there is a need to replace the employees who left. The benefits and investments are at risk when there is an increase in voluntary turnover, so organizations must prevent since the direct costs for recruitment and training are expensive (Kessler, 2014). Mobley (1977) argued there is a relationship between job satisfaction and voluntary turnover. The employees staying with the organization is indicative of job satisfaction and vice versa. The morale of the employees is affected when the organization is experiencing voluntary turnover (Memon, Sallah, Baharom, & Harun, 2014).

According to Gialuisi and Coetzer (2013), there are causes of employees voluntarily leaving the organization and may be due to the following: (a) lack of career advancement, (b) unfavorable work-related issues, and (c) refusing to accept changes. Even though some school of thought believed that voluntary turnover opens doors for recruiting new people with new ideas for the benefit of the organization (Ampomah & Cudjoe). Voluntary turnover is not a good situation for an organization because the quantum of money that goes into recruiting new people is expensive and if proper measures are put in place from happening, these financial resources may be used for organizational expansion. Business leaders must understand the determinants of voluntary employee turnover and address them in order to retain employees.

Involuntary Employee Turnover

Involuntary turnover is said to occur when the management team terminates an employee on grounds of performance, misconduct or any other negative attitude exhibited which affects the entire performance and productivity of the organization. In simple terms, no value-added benefit to an organization from an employee (Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, & Meglino, 1979). Involuntary turnover affects the organization because it takes time for replacement and cost of recruitment. Unlike the voluntary turnover, management in this situation is in control whether to keep the employee or discharge him or her. Management must have measures in place to prevent involuntary turnover since it is controllable in order to retain the employees save money on recruitment.

Supportive work environment. Harrison and Gordon (2014) carried out quantitative research to ascertain the relationship between employees' work environment and turnover intentions. As part of their research, Harrison and Gordon (2014) developed a model called the structural equation model (SEM). Two findings emerged from the research: (a) employee's value system depends on feelings, fairness, and rewards, and (b) employee's perception of workload depends on his or her sense of control (Harrison & Gordon, 2014). The SEM research concluded there was a significant positive correlation between employee's exhaustion and workload (Harrison & Gordon, 2014). Leaders of organizations should create a conducive work environment for employees to feel valued and will help employee retention. To confirm and support a positive work environment, Herzberg's (1974) two-factor theory opined workplace conditions as dissatisfiers.

Employee dissatisfaction is reduced when retention strategies are geared toward positive working conditions for the employees.

Work-life balance programs. Employees who have work flexibility are so pleased to be with their organizations. Business leaders' resort to work-life balance programs as retention strategies for employees (Deery & Jago, 2015). The importance of work-life balance (WLB) programs vis-à-vis employee retention strategies was assessed in organizations (Deery & Jago, 2015). WLB is a situation where the employee has the flexibility to be away from work without any repercussions to attend to family-related issues or nonwork-related issues (Deery & Jago, 2015). There is the need to ensure employees keep an equilibrium between work and outside workplace programs because it has immersed positive on the productivity of the employee (Khan & Fazili, 2016). WLB satisfies Herzberg's two-factor theory of both motivators and hygiene factors which has a positive impact on job satisfaction (Herzberg, 1974). Organizations adopting WLB programs are not mandatory for all employees to use but all the same, the benefits cannot be underestimated, so business leaders offer WLB options (Berg et al., 2014). Examples of some WLB programs are scheduling options and virtual work (Asiedu-Appiah, Mehmood, & Bamfo, 2015; Berg et al., 2014). For purposes of employee retention, business leaders must initiate programs for WLB for their employees to be productive and profitable.

Leadership

The topic of leadership is surrounded by many definitions (Dinh et al., 2014). Researchers have tried to come out with definitions for leadership and consistent way of

looking at the leadership traits but realized it sets the tone for how organizations function (Colbert, Judge, Choi, and Wang, 2012). Fiedler developed a contingency model titled the least preferred coworker contingency model. The aim of the study was to establish the relationship between traits and effectiveness of leadership. Boehe (2016) using Fiedler's model as a basis of the study to establish the relationship of traits and effective leadership concluded that there is effective leadership when there is a quality working relationship between the leader and the followers.

Researchers in their quest to study leadership theories shifted their interest to transformational leadership theory (Markham, 2012). A transformational leader is the one who can inspire and connect with the followers on the following grounds; respect, trust, growth, achievement, admiration, and confidence-building (Poole, 2016). Greaseley and Bocarnea (2014) established there is a link between job satisfaction and leadership. Efficient and effective leadership could transform the workplace environment and create employees' job satisfaction. Gardner and Sels (2015) were of the view leaders play an effective role to improve the work environment when they have the authority to address employees' concerns. Leaders must work hard in providing concerted effort to meet the needs of the followers and build a healthy relationship with them to improve employee retention (Hamdani, Valcea, & Buckley, 2014). Transformational leadership is a force to reckon with in employee retention. Some small business leaders treat employees as if not important to the organization. Employees are the most valued asset of the organization, so any maltreatment meted out results in low morale, poor performance, absenteeism, and eventually leaving the organization. Leaders must appreciate the concept of servant

leadership as well and will make the employees realize how valuable they are because there is a good rapport between them and the leaders. Leaders can develop the potentials of employees to the extent of understanding the mission and vision of the organization and help make valuable decisions. An organization with poor leadership strategies affect the success and survival in business. Employees excelling in an organization depends on the quality of the leaders steering the affairs.

Retail Employee Satisfaction

The search for employee job satisfaction originated from research conducted in the 1930s, and the concept goes beyond just PAY (Girma, 2016). The reason why researchers see the concept of retail employee satisfaction as being a cardinal issue is that it is linked to employee turnover (Li, Lee, Mitchell, Hom, & Griffeth, 2016). Some researchers have defined job satisfaction as to how they perceived the concept, and among them is Unal (2013). Unal (2013) defined job satisfaction as behavior and attitude exhibited by an employee concerning the whole job structure. Basak (2014) agreed to Unal's idea of job satisfaction to some extent and added that from a holistic point of view two key factors determine job satisfaction; external and internal factors. The degree of responsiveness shown by employees defines job satisfaction (Basirudin, Basirudin, Mokhber, Rasid, & Zamil, 2016). Personal feelings exhibited outwardly defines job satisfaction (Masum et al., 2016). Employees are dedicated and committed to their jobs when they are satisfied with their working conditions.

Even though there are differences in how researchers perceived the concept of job satisfaction, but one key phrase runs through all of them 'personal feelings of an

employee in relation to a job done. According to Che Nawi et al. (2016) employees are satisfied with their jobs when they demonstrate a higher level of skill in performing it. Karabina (2016) in an argument for job satisfaction linked Herzberg's two-factor theory to connect feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction exhibited by an employee in relation to job performance.

The sustainability of an organization depends on employee satisfaction (Girma, 2016; Gonzalez, Sanchez, & Lopez-Guzman, 2016). The ultimate results for customer satisfaction stem from increased employee job satisfaction which helps the organization to thrive in business hence increasing profitability and tenure (Che Nawi et al., 2016). Employees are very satisfied with their jobs when they find comfort and happiness in what they do. Lu and Gursoy (2016) defined employee job satisfaction as the total fulfillment employees find in their jobs. The mutual trust creates job satisfaction for employees and forms an adequate bond between the organization and employees (Gupta & Singla, 2016). Job satisfaction and psychological contract are branded by the employer are significant attributions for employee attrition and employee turnover (Tanwar & Prasad, 2016). Workplace fun is a good rudiment for employees to have trust in management and impact positively on the organization. High-level workplace fun experienced by employees creates trust-in-management and job satisfaction (Chan & Mak, 2016). McPhail et al. (2015) argued overall job satisfaction comes about as a strong relationship for career advancement, control and variety, and internal consistency. Motivational factors are key elements in the workplace to improve employee job satisfaction. Small business leaders are the drivers for steering employee job satisfaction.

Unethical behaviors by business leaders to ethical employees cause employees to be less valuable and decrease job satisfaction (Pierce & Snyder, 2015).

Herzberg (1968) posited management must focus on job environment; policies, procedures, supervision, and working conditions to increase employee job satisfaction. Silpa (2015) argued skilled employees stay longer in organizations if they are satisfied with their jobs, and linked the relationships among respect, reward and recognition, and employee development in any organization. Employees are more likely to strengthen their relationships with the organization and stay when they are satisfied with their jobs (Wyld, 2014). Hauff and Richter (2015) suggested diverse cultural surroundings create national differences in job satisfaction on employee's work-life situations. In a retail environment, employee satisfaction is important for the success of the organization and depends on small business leaders employing both internal and external factors to the advantage of the employees. A motivated employee achieves higher productivity in an organization if they receive a higher level of job satisfaction (Sharma & Nambudiri, 2015). Motivating employees is a way to make employees appreciate the job and take ownership because they feel part of a team. In line with this, employees go above and beyond to continue to do right to be recognized by the leadership, and this helps employee retention.

Retail Employee Retention

Human capital is very important for the success of any organization, and a loss of such resources is damaging to small businesses that have scarce financial resources in nature (Onkelinx, Manolova, & Edelman, 2016). A projection is made that 49 million

employees will leave their place of work worldwide by 2021 (Tanwar & Prasad, 2016). Employee retention is a worldwide issue irrespective of any industry. Achieving and maintaining talented employees in the workplace is a difficult task. Business leaders face the challenge of employee retention especially with new and existing employees (Aruna & Anitha, 2015). Retention is achieved when leaders of an organization develop and implement strategies or actionable plans to encourage employees to stay with the organization (Dankwa, Newman, Kawkab, & Chowdhury, 2015). The organization's core fundamental duty is to put in place a retention strategy to maintain goodwill amongst its partners, customers, and competitors. Small business leaders must take the initiative on how to retain their valuable employees. Business leaders must understand that lack of implementing good employee retention strategies will result in loss of valuable employees and organization knowledge as well as a decrease in profits and negative reputation (Kraemer et al., 2016; Swarnalatha, & Vasantham, 2014). Retention strategies when developed and implemented properly strengthen employee commitment, motivation, improve job satisfaction levels, and eventually reduce employee turnover. Managers must develop strategies to ascertain which employees will be a good fit for the workplace (Wei, 2015). The retail industry should have the requisite number of employees to achieve the organization's designated goals. An organization that lacks human capital may be in jeopardy for being competitive and fails to attract and retain employees. Business leaders must be willing to create a conducive and enabling environment to motivate employees to stay and grow their careers.

For small businesses to be competitive, the employees must possess competitive skills and knowledge to survive all business challenges (Johennesse, & Te-Kung, C, 2017; Sarmad et al., 2016). Efficient retention strategy is essential to gain a competitive advantage over competitors in a competitive market (Ashmore & Gilson, 2015; Nzewi et al., 2016). Employee retention strategies increase efficiency if an only proactive approach is adopted (Singh & Sankhi, 2016). Harrison and Gordon (2014) argued businesses can implement practical and efficient strategies for retaining employees but there is no perfect retention strategy. Indeed, there is no perfect strategy, but some strategies are more result-oriented than others, so adopting the right strategies is important and expected of a leader. The bottom line is retaining employees is the focus of the organization. In business organizations, leaders must determine what retention strategies work best depending on their unique needs (Davis, 2013). Retention strategy differs from one organization to the other to some extent, but irrespective of the organizations there are some commonalities permeating through all of them; leadership style, motivation and rewards, working conditions, training programs, and opportunities.

Retail Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is a concept that business leaders have studied for the past 20 years and was defined by personal achievement (Kumar & Pansari, 2015). Employee engagement is a link to various aspects of the environment that help the employee to be productive (Huang et al., 2016). Retail business leaders struggle to achieve and maintain profitability as a result of disengaged employees (Salimath & Kavitha, 2015). Kumar and Pansari (2015) stated the profitability measured by earning per share increased by 132%

in a retail company when employee engagement was increased. Work environment and job satisfaction propel proper engagement and productivity (Fu & Deshpande, 2014). Kahn (1990) was the first to propound a theory contributing to engagement for the past 30 years, upon which further researches were done by others including Saks and Gruman (2014). Kahn's (1990) study centered on general employee experiences with respect to engagement or disengagement. Kahn (1990) formulated a description theory by using two qualitative studies that looked at the work-role of employees in relation to engagement and disengagement. Kahn (1990) argued that employee engagement consisted of one's ability to express oneself on emotional, cognitive, or behavioral levels at the workplace which was shared by these groups of researchers (Alvi, Haider, Haneef, & Ahmed, 2014). In Kahn's (1990) study, there were consistent engagement and disengagement to determine their responses (Dagher et al., 2015). The outcome of the study indicated workers who were engaged showed a form of expression, and on the contrary showed a form of defense (He, Zhu, & Zheng, 2014). In short, engagement leads to expression whilst disengagement leads the defense.

The expression indicates favorable optimal working conditions that harness individuals into work roles (Mampilly, 2015). Kahn's (1990) study revealed engagement allowed individuals to be in the best shape to contribute maximumly via emotional, cognitive or behavioral attributes to achieve designated goals. Kahn (1990) further argued disengagement propels individuals to be on defense and contribution to the company's goals is zero. An individual is classified to have a personal disengagement when there is a detachment from his or her work (Valentin, Valentin, & Nafukho, 2015). Valentin et al.

(2015) argued personal engagement or disengagement is not only related to the work environment but also job satisfaction needs. Business leaders having the knowledge and sharing it on disengagement is important for organizations (Ford, Myrden, & Jones, 2015). The inability to share disengagement knowledge creates incompetence on the part of employees (Ford et al., 2015). Alagaraja and Shuck (2015) questioned the popular measure and mental presence in relation to the validity of engagement. The study of engagement starts with cognitive presence, which results in emotional development that eventually translates to physical behavior (Alagaraja & Shuck, 2015). There is more research on employee engagement, but there is a lack of consensus on this topic (Alagaraja & Shuck, 2015).

Kahn (1990) developed three ways to express employee engagement tenets: emotionally, cognitively, or physically. Despite the lack of consensus on the topic of employee engagement, employee commitment, dedication, and positive attributes to yield positive work outcomes were necessary (Saunders & Tiwari, 2014; Sondheim et al., 2017). Jose and Mampilly (2015) indicated engagement deals with an individual's level of absorption, attentiveness, and perception toward his or her work. Lee and Ok (2015) examined two predictors; environment perception and self-perception as factors of employee engagement. Lee and Ok (2015) collected data from 394 hotel managers and frontline employees, incorporated Kahn's (1990) ideas into the research. After using statistical means to analysis, the data concluded that four components of psychological climate cum self-evaluations were directedly related to employee engagement (Lee & Ok, 2015). Those components were managerial support, customer orientation of the

management, information-sharing, and internal service (Lee & Ok, 2015). Alvi et al. (2014) indicated employee's cognitive engagement is at a full functioning level and free from distractions. Higher engagement environments produce higher accomplishment and psychological well-being among employees. Workers experiencing the right psychology climate, experience cognitive work engagement (Lee & Ok, 2015).

Alagaraja and Shuck (2015) annotated the constitution of the emotional engagement of employees is manifested in their willingness to personally bond, engage cognitively, and share ideas for a common organizational goal. Emotional engagement is depicted by employees if involved and play a role in the company's mission and vision of the organization. Emotional engagement of employees is shown in an organization when employees feel they are part of the organization and contribute to decisions made in the organization. Employees feel neglected emotionally if they have no idea of what is going on in the organization.

Physical engagement is explained by Rothmann and Baumann (2014) as one's willingness to apply cognitive and emotional forces to perform a task freely. Cognitive and emotional elements exhibited by an employee leads to physical execution of a task. Khan's (1990) engagement concept is a phenomenon, psychologically capturing three main areas; meaningfulness, availability, and safety. Khan argued employees show their utmost best at work when they feel part of the process and will contribute massively to the success of the assignment. The employees will never hold on to any information but rather voice out to help in accomplishing the assignment. For this reason, it is imperative for a leader to appreciate diversity in its entirety to promote openness and maximize

engagement in the organization. Engagement must run through from the top to bottom of the hierarchical structure of the organization. In a situation when the leadership is selective in engagement with the employees as a result of personal diverse orientation such as race, religion, nationality, and gender affect employee retention since employees feel neglected. Employee engagement is a key element that business leaders will harness to ensure employees grow their talents with the company.

Retail Employee Training and Leadership

Employee training is made possible through good leadership. Leadership practices are key elements that business leaders must have to be successful. Baron (2016) assessed a 3-year training program to determine how effective authentic leaders can raise the performance of the organization. Leadership is an imperative element that steers human resources and available resources for employees' knowledge to grow the company (Hu, Zhang, Wang, & Tran, 2018; Mohd-Shamsudin & Chuttipattana, 2012). Employees' confidence is uplifted when leaders usher their training on an individualized basis, and this helps higher achievement in the organization. Employee training is good for an organization to ensure all workers know what is expected of them. Employees should be trained to assess the demands of the customers and satisfy them. The type of leader suggests the kind of employees an organization will develop. Eliophotou-Menon and Ioannou (2016) indicated transformational leaders have the employees at heart and align the motives and needs of the organization to tie in with the level of satisfaction of the employees. Transformational leaders' engagement with employees elevates their levels of commitment, motivation, and morality (Moon, 2017a; Pradhan & Pradhan, 2015).

Anderson and Sun (2015) argued employees' true potentials are unfolded that promote growth and development. Employees' attitudes, behaviors, job satisfaction, and turnover come about as a result of the combinations of dynamics and complex mechanisms emanating from the environment (Jutras & Mathieu, 2016). Jin, Seo, and Sharpiro (2016) researched the effect of employees' organizational commitment and a leader's emotional state. The emotional state of a leader can be catastrophic for the organization. A leader is expected to inspire, motivate, and lead by example, so in the absence of these as a result of emotional issues affect the overall designated goals of the organization. The leader must show enthusiasm and ready-to-go attitude, then followers will be energized.

Comparison is made between transformational and transactional leadership (Afsar, Badir, Saeed, & Hafeez, 2017; Hamstra, Van Yperen, Wisse, & Sassenberg, 2014; Masa'deh, Obeidat, & Tarhini, 2016). Bass (1996) indicated transactional leadership is a springboard in the leadership cycle and forms the foundation upon which transformational leadership builds up in leaders and hence their followers. Aga (2016) argued transactional leaders use rewards, motivational promises, and praises to employees to boost their morale in training and hence high workplace performance.

Leadership and employee training go hand in hand because employees who do not get the requisite training will not find their jobs satisfying and might quit. Thus, business leaders must be an instrument of change in shaping employees' paths in the workplace and hence their performance. Leaders can help employees to excel by meeting their needs as outlined in Maslow's hierarchical needs.

Retail Employee Performance

The behavior engineering model was developed by Thomas F Gilbert in 1978; an engineer who championed as the father of performance technology (Gilbert, 1978). Gilbert (1978) argued employees who are terrible at their jobs must not be blamed because performance goes beyond the human being variable. Gilbert (1978) opined business leaders must create variables in the work environment full of technology to give skills and knowledge to the employees to excel. Thus, Gilbert (1978) was of the view for employee performance to happen positively, there must be good work environment variables. Gilbert (1978) identified six variables for performance: resources, incentives, capacity, information, knowledge, and motives. Gilbert (1978) argued lack of performance support to employees affects their overall performance. Business leaders must make work performance condition variables priority in assessing employee's performance than the employee variables (Gilbert, 1978; Martens & Carvalho, 2017). In line with this employee staying with the company depends on the work conditions. A good employee will only stay if the prevailing conditions at the workplace meet the expectations. Good working conditions can change the mind of even bad employee's attitudes, develop an interest in the company and stay.

Professionals and scholars realized that the components to set expectations for employee performance depends on performance improvement strategies outlined by an organization (Engelbrecht, Johnson, & Hooper, 2017; Khan, 2013; Kim, 2014; Wang, Waldman, & Zhang, 2014). Understanding the strategies for improving employee performance is one of the core duties of a successful business leader. Business leaders

use rewards to raise the morale of employee performance. The rewards can either be financial or nonfinancial given to the employees, help to retain them in the organization.

Organizational Culture

According to Harrison and Gordon (2014), organizational culture consists of the actions, behaviors, habits, and values exhibited at the workplace. Understanding the functions of the organization in terms of shared values, visions, symbols, and beliefs promote employees' commitment (Gerhart & Fang, 2014). Selden and Sowa (2015) stated employee's performance, interactions, and retention increase when they value and shared organizational culture to be more important than the national culture. Diversity and its implications at the workplace are part of organizational culture and must be managed effectively and efficiently. Joshua and Taylor-Abdulai (2014) stated ineffective managed diverse forces affect employee performance and created problems for organizations. Employees must know the entire culture of the organization to know the expectations and how to apply in their daily dealings. Culture is the unique way a group performs to distinguish from others. In other words, what is acceptable as an organizational culture in one organization is frowned upon in another organization. It is impeccable for employees to be versatile with the organization's culture.

An organization with a solid organizational culture and managed properly had higher employee retention and effective workplace diversity (Werner, Kuate, Noland, & Francia, 2015). Reinvesting in employees aligns with an organizational culture which increases employees' level of commitments at the workplace. Minneapolis leaders of small retail businesses should create retention programs investments as part of the

organizational culture which will lead to organizational climate and workplace diversity conducive for employee retention.

Employee Compensation

Compensation is a determinant for an employee to decide whether to stay or leave the organization (Michael et al., 2016). It is a critical element for employee retention. Employees are in search of organizations paying higher remuneration to satisfy their demands for higher compensation. Employers appreciate the idea of providing compensation as a good incentive for employees (Aa & Berkel, 2014). Employees are satisfied if the compensation package is good, motivates them to be productive. A good compensation package promotes ownership of the employees to excel because of sustainability and satisfaction. Employees' behavior can be influenced by the kind of compensation they receive (Dixon, 2016). According to Herzberg (1974) classified compensation is not a motivating factor but rather a hygiene factor. Compensation not meeting the expectations of employees can lead to employee turnover (Garbers & Konradt, 2014; Gupta & Shaw, 2014). Employees require both monetary and non-monetary compensations to stay with the company, and employers not meeting both forms of compensation may lead to employee turnover (Nzewi et al., 2016). Employees of organizations participate in some forms of non-monetary compensation such as discount cards, performance bonuses, project bonuses, and stock options in the stock exchange market (Onyango & Wanyoike, 2014). Terera and Ngirande (2014), argued compensation is a factor for consideration if an employee wants to stay or leave the organization. Compensation expectations among employees and their positions differ

from one person to others and many times employees are satisfied with their jobs based on the organization meeting their expectations.

Employee Communication

According to Gordon et al. (2015), employees' daily work tasks and professional development are enhanced through the help of communication. Strategic leaders adopt effective communication skills to improve employees' job performance such as time management skills in the course of their duties (Byrne et al., 2017). Communication is a means by which management and employees respond to situations to benefit the organization (Kahn, 1990). There are different forms of communication and with the emergence of technology, this field has seen absolute enhancement. Examples of organizational communication are kick-off meetings, flyers, company's brochures and messaging on the company's intranet (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). Communication is a good tool for helping employees to realize their potential, excel, feel comfortable and confident to stay with the organization.

Shared knowledge. Research studies have shown participation and creativity of employees are their best when knowledge and information are shared at the workplace (Martinez, 2015). A leader must exhibit traits that motivate, value other views and able to cognitively share information and knowledge to the employees to help exercise their tasks diligently (Offord et al., 2016). Leadership has the duty to communicate the vision and the goals of the organization to the employees for them to achieve the expected goals with one accord. Kahn (1990) argued effective and efficient leaders, breakdown the big picture of the organization into sub-visions to the employees to make the goals easier to

achieve. Knowledge is very important in every business setting, and for all the employees to speak one business language, the knowledge must be shared to ensure the visions and goals are all known by all parties involved.

Synopsis of Literature Review on Employee Retention

A vivid review of the literature indicated that there was a considerable amount of deficiencies in the research. The gap in literature review emanated from the understanding of small business leaders using methods toward how to retain employees more effectively. The objective of my research is to close the gap by analyzing data from small business leaders in Minneapolis to determine the most functioning ways to retain employees in small business retail organizations.

Small business leaders are the implementers of various disciplines to ensure the work environment constitutes the following; motivation, employee satisfaction, employee engagement, and employee performance that will promote a culture of full participation of employees (Garg & Rastogi, 2006). Employee retention is a challenge and requires proper strategies by business leaders to ensure employees grew their professions and potentials with the organizations. If business leaders increase employee engagement, financial and nonfinancial incentives, employee empowerment, and decrease micromanaging, they increased employee retention. Employees are the most valued asset because their performances were what determines the growth of the organization. Even though a leader gives direction and creates a conducive environment for the employee to excel, the feeling of the employees determined their performances. The employee must be fully catered for in terms of working conditions including pay, nonfinancial rewards,

training, benefits package, interpersonal relationships, and diverse issues. Diversity in opinions, race, sexual orientation, language, nationality, religion, and any form of potential discrimination must be handled with care by the leaders. Leaders are expected to forgo their personal sentiments and play by the rules of the organization. At times it was intriguing to note when an organization was known to be doing well but found it difficult to retain employees. Employee retention is becoming a canker in most organizations including small retail businesses. The research analyzed data from small business leaders in Minneapolis to close the gap in other research works done on this topic to determine the most functioning way of retaining employees.

Transition

I used a qualitative multiple case study to justify strategies small retail business leaders used to improve employee retention. The section included the background of the problem, problem statement, purpose statement, the nature of the study, the conceptual framework, and the research question. Also included in Section 1 involved the interview questions, operation definitions, assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and significance of the study. Next, I expounded on the review of professional and literature review on the topics of Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of motivation.

In Section 2, I started with a restatement of the purpose of the study, the role of the researcher, the participants, research method and design, population and sampling. I also explained the procedures involved in ethical research, data collection instruments and techniques, data organization technique, and analysis of data. I concluded the section with the reliability and validity of the project.

I started Section 3 with a presentation of the findings, recommendations, and the prospects for future research of the study. I also included the application of the professional practice of the study.

Section 2: The Project

The section of this study includes information regarding the purpose statement, the role of the researcher, participants, research method and design, and population and sampling. Next, I will provide information which will explain the ethical research practices, data collection instrument, data collection technique, data organization technique, data analysis technique, and reliability and validity.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore retention strategies small retail business leaders used to improve employee retention. The population of the study included five business leaders from five small retail businesses in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Each of the participants had operated successfully for more than 5 years in the city of Minneapolis and used successful retention strategies to reduce employee turnover. The findings from the study might contribute to positive social change if small retail business leaders apply the retention strategies, which might contribute to improving working conditions and reduction of unemployment.

Role of the Researcher

Yin (2015) explained the role of a qualitative researcher involved the collection and analysis of data. Yin (2015) indicated that the role of a qualitative researcher had been categorized into five sections: startup, design, data collection, analysis, and composing. It is the role of qualitative researchers to obtain a comprehensive understanding of their roles in the data collection process (DeLyser & Sui, 2014; Shaban, 2015). My role as the qualitative researcher of the study involved recruiting participants

for data collection, conducting data collection, and analyzing all collected data from small retail business leaders in the city of Minneapolis, Minnesota.

A relationship between the researcher and the research area is significant to aid researchers to gain a level of familiarity with the study (Berger, 2015). Bryman (2016) posited that a researcher's familiarity with the field of study facilitates a connection that motivates the researcher. With over 10 years of working experience in the retail industry, I was motivated to obtain in-depth information and understanding regarding data for this study. I have 5 years of work expertise in my previous role as a store associate at a store in Minneapolis and 5 years of experience as a store manager in a large store. With the years of experiences gained in the retail industry, I had observed the challenges faced by retail business leaders to retain employees. In addition, I have lived in Minneapolis for over 10 years and was familiar with the research location.

It is significant for researchers to remain ethical when collecting data from participants (Morello-Frosch, Varshavsky, Liboiron, Brown, & Brody, 2015). Morello-Frosch et al. (2015) stated that the *Belmont Report* aids researchers with information regarding ethical principles to mitigate any form of bias when collecting data from participants. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (1979) indicated the *Belmont Report* contained ethical principles that guided researchers during the data collection phase. The principles in the *Belmont Report* included respect, beneficence, and justice. As a researcher, my role concerning ethics and the *Belmont Report* was to treat participants with respect, protect the participant's identity, and treat all participants with impartiality.

Oikonomidou and Wiest (2015) posited that researchers should mitigate biases and establish an in-depth understanding of research by not including personal viewpoints in the study. Yin (2015) advised researchers to be mindful of personal assumptions that affect the collection and analysis of data. It is significant for researchers to understand that careful planning is needed in each step of the research design to mitigate all biases (Althubaiti, 2016). As the researcher of the study, I ensured that I did not have any personal connections, relationships, or rapport with the participants of the study. I avoided the use of personal assumptions but rather included more of participants' voices during the collection and analysis of data.

Qualitative researchers use interview protocol as a guide to outlining the structure of the interview to ensure accurate data collection process (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Similarly, the use of an interview protocol keeps researchers from missing out on the collection of useful data (Drabble, Trocki, Salcedo, Walker, & Korcha, 2015). I used an interview protocol (see Appendix A) to outline the structure of the interview, averted any deviation, and ensured consistency with the data collection. I conducted a member checking process with participants by making follow-up discussions to ascertain the veracity of my analysis of the interview responses.

Participants

Establishing an eligibility criterion to select participants is most suited to the interactive dimension of qualitative research (Padgett, 2016). Yin (2015) added qualitative researchers include an eligibility criterion to obtain accurate data from resourceful participants. Similarly, researchers use eligibility criteria to select participants

with relevant experience in the research topic (Latiffi, Brahim, & Fathi, 2016). For this study, I selected three eligibility criteria on which to base the selection of participants who could provide relevant data for the study. Firstly, the participant had to be a small retail business leader with more than 5 years of retail industry experience. Secondly, the participant should be willing to join an audio-recorded interview. Lastly, the small retail business leader such as owner, manager, or supervisor had successfully retained employees for more than 5 years.

Researchers can access participants through organizational gatekeepers (Lund, Panda, & Dhal, 2016). As noted by Lund et al. (2016), researchers need the permission of organizational gatekeepers to unravel spaces of inclusion and exclusion among participants involved in the research study. Likewise, gatekeepers are those who give access to a research field (Reid, Brown, Smith, Cope, & Jamieson, 2018). Gatekeepers such as administrators, business owners, or managers have knowledge of the organization, which assisted in smooth research cooperation (Dempsey, Dowling, Larkin, & Murphy, 2016). Leaders of the small retail businesses received an invitation letter (see Appendix B) to engage them in a semistructured interview after the approval of the Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Developing a working relationship with researchers and participants help to build trust during data collection (Holloway & Galvin, 2016). As noted by Lindlof and Taylor (2017), researchers must establish a working relationship with participants to draw attention to any form of incongruence during the data collection process. A trustful working relationship between researcher and participants help to bridge the vast differences in orientation, background,

goals, and skills (Moser, 2016). For the researcher to ensure a good working relationship with participants, it is a goal to respect participants' viewpoints, assure them data confidentiality, and build a healthy rapport to enhance open communication and thoughts.

Research Method and Design

Researchers use a qualitative research method and design to gain a better understanding of the why and how of a phenomenon (Silverman, 2016). As posited by Silverman, qualitative research involves an essential step-by-step guide to carrying out a research study. In this study, I used a qualitative multiple case study to explore retention strategies small retail business leaders used to improve employee retention.

Research Method

A qualitative research method is an expressive method used by researchers to explore a given phenomenon (Makrakis & Kostoulas-Makrakis, 2016). Similarly, Berger (2015) indicated a qualitative method as a type of research method that allows selected participants to express their experiences in face-to-face communication freely. The qualitative research method is used by researchers to study difficult problems in a meaningful way (Cairney & St Denny, 2015). Consequently, I used a qualitative research method because my goal was to conduct a face-to-face interview with participants to ascertain relevant data by using an audio recorder to capture their voices. Additionally, using a qualitative research method helped to gain a direct insight into the existing phenomenon participants faces.

I considered but rejected the use of both the quantitative and mixed methods for this study. Quantitative researchers are committed to a research method that neglects the

distinctive character of the social world because the research is based on facts and figures (Park & Park, 2016). Park and Park (2016) noted using a quantitative research method is excellent for discovery. I did not use this method because it was my goal to explore an existing business problem in the social world. Denzin (2017) described mixed methods as a design for collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a study to understand a research problem. Mixed methods researchers use this method as a rigorous approach to identifying anything novel (Fetters, 2016). I had no intention of using a quantitative method to establish any form of relationship between small business leaders strategies and employee retention.

Research Design

Yin (2017) described a qualitative case study as a research design that involves the use of interviews, observations, and other relevant documents that contribute to addressing a research problem. Similarly, qualitative researchers use a case study to facilitate an understanding of a bounded system (Yazan, 2015). Single case qualitative research comes short of generalization because there are no statistical techniques to substantiate a finding. Multiple case qualitative study involves a repeat of various participants' responses to interview questions which help to draw a pattern in an analytical model. It is my goal to use a multiple case study design to gain a deeper understanding of the why and the how of a phenomenon.

I had no intention of using either ethnographic or phenomenological designs because their descriptions did not fit the purpose of my study. Ethnography is a design that involves researching people, their experiences, everyday activities, material cultures,

and social environments (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, Pink, 2016). Phenomenological researchers study the lived experiences of participants (Chan & Walker, 2015). This research study did not align with the study of cultural groups or lived experiences of participants. I rejected the use of both ethnographic and phenomenological research design.

Researchers acknowledge data saturation as evidence of rigor in qualitative research (Constantinou, Georgiou, & Perdikogianni, 2017). A researcher reaches data saturation at a point where the collected new theme emerges from the collected data (Fusch & Ness, 2015). To ensure data saturation, I kept asking different participants the same questions until no new information emerges. During the data collection process, I made data saturation a primary concern by consistently looking out for new ideas as I collected data from participants. After I interviewed the fifth participant, I reached data saturation.

Population and Sampling

The sampling technique for this study was purposive. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method used by researchers to ensure that minority populations are adequately represented in the sample (Setia, 2016). Researchers use a purposive sampling method to select participants who can communicate their experiences in a reflective manner (Palinkas et al., 2015). Barratt and Lenton (2015) described purposive sampling as a sampling method used by researchers to break up a research study into subtitles for efficient data analysis. I used purposive sampling to select potential

participants who had industry experience and knowledge about small retail businesses in Minneapolis.

This study included five small retail business leaders in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The sample size was determined by data saturation (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). To reach data saturation, I collected relevant data until no new themes emerged. Qualitative researchers view data saturation as a gold standard to determine the sample size (Morse, 2015). Saunders et al. (2018) used a sample size of 30 to 40 participants for qualitative research to obtain the desired level of depth for research questions. I used a population sample size of five small retail business leaders in Minneapolis, Minnesota for this study and achieved methodological saturation.

Researchers establish eligibility criteria to ensure the appropriate selection of participants (Padgett, 2016). For this study, the eligibility requirement included small retail business leaders with more than 5 years of retail industry experience. Participants accepted to join an audio-recorded interview. Next, the small retail business leader such as owner, manager, or supervisor had successfully retained employees for more than 5 years. In the interview settings, all participants were engaged in face-to-face interviews guided with open-ended questions. Researchers use interviews to obtain information from participants in a more subjective way (Orcher, 2016). I recorded each interview conducted for data analysis and member checking purposes.

Ethical Research

Qualitative researchers use an informed consent form as an ethical research guide (Sanderson et al., 2016). As noted by Yin (2017), the use of ethical guidelines in a

research study ensures the credibility of the study. Providing participants with informed consent helps to preserve the privacy of participants (Hammersley, 2015). For this study, the informed consent form consisted of the background of the study, policies, and procedures, the benefits, risks, any stipend or payments, and data privacy. To comply with the ethical standards, I asked each potential participant to read, understand, and respond to the informed consent form prior to commencing an interview. I assured participants that every information they provided was kept confidential and a copy of the consent form saved or downloaded by each participant.

It is a research protocol for qualitative researchers to allow participants to withdraw from the study whenever they wish and at any point in the research study (Carey et al., 2016; Gleibs, 2017; Harriss and Atkinson, 2015). I informed all potential participants that they might withdraw from participating in the data collection process without any information on an adverse consequence. Researchers provide participants with incentives or stipends to motivate participants to provide quality information (Smaglik, 2016). I did not provide participants with any form of allowance, incentives, or stipends for participating in the study.

Ethically protecting participants in a research study is significant to curtail data leakages and any form of risk associated with the engaging participants (Barazzetti, Hurst, & Mauron, 2016; Vayena, 2016). I assured participants their identities and information were kept confidential. To avert revealing participants' information, I ensured that I codified all participants' identities such as names and organization. Also, I

had the interview discussions with participants in closed office spaces to protect participants' privacy.

For data security purposes, I stored all electronic data in my Apple iCloud account and hard copies in a personal safe locked for at least 5 years to protect the confidentiality of participants. I will destroy all hard copies after 5 years to avert data leak and permanently delete electronic files from my iCloud storage. After the approval of Walden University's IRB, I included the approval number and expiration in my study. The Walden IRB approval number is 08-29-19-0529424 and it expires August 28, 2020.

Data Collection Instruments

The researcher is the primary data collection instrument in qualitative research (Mayan, 2016; Williamson, 2015; Yin, 2017). In the study, I was the primary data collection instrument. As the primary data collection instrument, I used semistructured interviews and company documents such as policies and procedures, activity logs, and other useful company documents to collect data. Qualitative researchers encounter a total observation process during face-to-face interviews, which helps to understand participants' reflective opinion (Wilson, 2016).

To ensure that I did not deviate from the purpose of the study, I used the interview protocol as a guide (Appendix A). Researchers use interview protocol to avert unconsciously overlooking essential components of the study (Amankwaa, 2016; Castillo-Montoya, 2016). I administered eight interview questions, which were restricted to at least 45 minutes. Prior to commencing the face-to-face interviews with each participant, I sought their permission to audio record the interview discussion to

transcribe for member checking purposes. Qualitative researchers prefer audio record interviews to note-taking because note-taking is likely to disrupt the natural flow of the conversation (Van Bruinessen, Leegwater, & van Dulmen, 2017).

To enhance the reliability and validity of the data collection process, I used member checking. Researchers use member checking to ensure the credibility of the findings (Young et al., 2018). During member checking, the researcher follows up with each participant to ensure the originality of the data provided (Aziato, Dedey, & Clegg-Lamprey, 2015). After collecting interview data, I sent a summary of transcribed data via email to each participant to enhance the credibility of the information. Furthermore, I triangulated the data by retrieving information from company documents, policies, and procedures, and activity logs with the interview data.

Data Collection Technique

Data collection techniques involve the methods used by the researcher to gather and manage information from participants (Kratz, Kalpakjian, & Hanks, 2017; Taylor, 2017). As described by Yin (2017), data collection techniques involved an effective data collection method for effective analysis. I used semistructured interviews guided by eight open-ended interview questions (see Appendix C). I also used secondary data by reviewing company documents to triangulate with interview data. For an effective interview session with each participant, I made a phone call to schedule a date and time that works best for each participant after responded “I consent” to my email of invitation. During the request for date and time for an interview, I also requested to review company documents relevant enough to support the interview data.

There were advantages and disadvantages with the use of both semistructured interviews and company data review. Firstly, data obtained from semi-structured interviews were more reliable because the responses were firsthand information, which provided an in-depth understanding of an issue (Helle, Trull, Widiger, & Mullins-Sweatt, 2017). Similarly, semistructured interviews had the advantage of permitting the interviewer to glean extra insights that enriched the study findings (Kazan, Tan, Lim, Sørensen, & Damsgaard, 2018). Stage and Manning (2015) indicated researchers might sometimes find the use of company data as unfit enough to support interview data. Participants engaged in semistructured interviews might be selective in the data they provided (Wildavsky, & Hammer, 2018).

To ensure effective member checking for this study, I provided all the participants with my analysis of the interview responses via email to validate my analysis representing the participants' intent. As described by Blikstad-Balas and Sørvik (2015), member checking is a methodological validation process used by researchers to ensure the rigor of the study. I used member checking to validate the accuracy of my analysis of interview responses and to determine if there is anything else participants wanted to add.

Data Organization Technique

Yin (2017) described data organization as a significant aspect of a research study where researchers analyze, review, and report collected data. Similarly, researchers use data organization techniques to categorize and interpret data (Brennan & Bakken, 2015). Researchers use data organization techniques to enhance efficient data analysis (Gibbs, 2018). I developed an Excel spreadsheet database to help organize and maintain the

collected data. I also organized data by coding all data collected from participants to avert revealing data identity.

It is significant for a researcher to keep track and guarantee participants of the security of collected data (Chang & Ramachandran, 2016). To store data collected, researchers should use an internet cloud application to ensure data security (Hashem et al., 2015). It used google cloud storage to store the electronic data and protect it with a password to avert unauthorized access. I stored all hard copies in a locked safe for at least 5 years. After 5 years, I will be destroying all hard and soft copies by shredding or by using electronic erasure

Data Analysis

Guo and Guo (2016) described data analysis as an analytical review of data for effective use. Researchers rely on empirical thinking for efficient data analysis (Yin, 2017). Data analysis is used by researchers to organize and report collected data obtained from a research study (Lewis, 2015). For this study, I used triangulation to ensure the rigor of this study. As explained by Joslin and Müller (2016), triangulation involves supporting the study with different sources for a deeper understanding of the study. During the interviews, I also took notes and requested to review small company documents such as activity logs to support interview data. I used the notes from the interview, compare documents to ensure the validity of the method. For triangulation purposes, I reviewed organizational documents to correlate with the interview responses.

To have a logical and sequential analysis of collected data, I translated all interview data. Qualitative researchers transcribe information obtained from interviews to

mirror the responses provided by participants (Sutton & Austin, 2015). I also supported the transcribed interview data with information obtained from secondary documents such as notes taking and the company's activity logs to enhance the rigor of the study. Next, I grouped data into topical themes for effective analysis.

I used NVivo 12 software to organize and sort of data, code, and develop themes. The use of NVivo software helps researchers with efficient data organization, analysis, and management (Edhlund & McDougall, 2017). As described by Zamawe (2015), researchers use the features embedded in the NVivo software to aid in coding and categorizing data into themes. Qualitative researchers use the NVivo software to establish themes of the findings (Lunny, McKenzie, & McDonald, 2016). Qualitative researchers use the thematic analysis approach to increase the rigor of the study (Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen, & Snelgrove, 2016). During data analysis, researchers should ensure that topical themes align with the purpose of the study to enhance consistency (Bogers et al., 2017). I used a thematic analysis approach and NVivo software to ensure that the themes align with the study to avoid deviating from the purpose of the study.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are relevant in a qualitative research study to vigorous verification of a research study (Glaser & Strauss, 2017). As noted by Yin (2017), researchers ensure reliability and validity through dependability, credibility, transferability, conformability, and data saturation (Yin, 2017). Consequently, I ensured vigorous verification of the study through the measures suggested by Yin (2017).

Reliability

Researchers establish reliability to ensure the credibility of a study to minimize errors in the study (Chong & Yeo, 2015). As noted by Duncan and Fiske (2015), reliability comprises the consistency and dependability of a study. Researchers want their study to be acceptable by all users and for that matter must be credible and reliable (Hauch, Sporer, Masip, & Blandon-Gitlin, 2017).

Dependability guides researchers to focus on the reliability of the data used in the results of the study (Anatan, 2014). Consequently, I used member checking to ensure the dependability of the study to minimize errors in the interpretation of the collected data. Member checking involves engaging participants to verify the participants' responses (Bartholomew, Pérez-Rojas, Lockard, & Locke, 2017). When member checking, I shared my analysis of their responses to all participants and requested they review to ensure I captured the intent of their responses.

In addition to member checking, I used multiple data sources as a methodological triangulation strategy to ensure the reliability of the study. As recommended by Leung (2015), researchers should verify the content of data accuracy with other data sources to support findings. Researchers make sound judgment through methodological triangulation by using multiple lines of evidence to ensure the reliability of the study (Joslin & Müller, 2016).

Validity

Qualitative researchers use validity to ensure the quality and accuracy of the researcher's study (Leung, 2015). As noted by Dikko (2016), researchers establish data

validation to ensure that the data findings are consistent with the goals of the study. I ensured validity through the credibility, transferability, and confirmability of the research findings.

Credibility. Researchers use the judgment of participants regarding the findings of a study to ensure the credibility of the study (Subramaniam et al., 2015). Similarly, Christensen and Miguel (2018) posited that researchers use the credibility criterion to ensure trustworthiness and research transparency by verifying findings with the participants. To ensure the credibility of the study, I employed member checking. Researchers use member checking to provide an opportunity for participants to review the intended meaning of the information provided by participants (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). I sent emails to all participants with a summary of the findings to ensure the creditability of the study.

Transferability. Researchers use the transferability criterion to ensure the findings of the study apply to other settings in the study (Noble & Smith, 2015). With the transferability criterion, readers can understand the context of the study and identify with the findings from their own experiences (Hays, Wood, Dahl, & Kirk-Jenkins, 2016). Sarma (2015) described the reader of the study as the primary determinant of transferability in a qualitative research study. To ensure the transferability of the study, I provided enough information with their sources so that readers can determine whether the study is transferable to their situation or experience.

Confirmability. As noted by Yin (2017), researchers ensure the confirmability of the study using a diverse source of data. Similarly, the confirmability of the study

involves the neutrality, or the degree findings are consistent (Connelly, 2016). Al-Natour, Qandil, and Gillespie (2015) described confirmability as a criterion by researchers to ensure data findings do not contain any personal viewpoints. To ensure confirmability to the study, I used observation, multiple data sources, and other company documents to assure the rigor of the study.

Data Saturation. Yin (2017) described data saturation to validate collected data. During data saturation, researchers stop the collection of all additional information when no new information provides a new theme (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Morse 2015). To ensure data saturation in this study, I planned to discontinue data collection the very moment I realized additional information did not provide any new theme.

Transition and Summary

In Section 2, I restated the purpose statement after which I continued to expound on my role as a researcher. Next, I provided information regarding the participants of the study, the research method and design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection instruments, and technique. Also, the section contains information about the data organization technique, data analysis, and concluded with information concerning the rigidity of the study through reliability and validity.

I will commence Section 3 with an introduction and presentation of the findings of the study. Next, I will provide information regarding the applications of the findings on the study, implications of social change, recommendations for action and further research. The section will finish with a reflection and conclusion.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Section 3 consists of the introduction of the study and the presentation of the findings. In addition, this section includes the application to professional practice and implications for social change. There will be a discussion for small retail business leaders and managers with recommendations for action. Section 3 outlines the recommendations for further research on employee retention. In the reflections, I annotate my experiences during this doctoral study journey. I conclude the study with a synopsis outlining the important strategies that small retail business leaders and managers adopt to improve employee retention.

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore retention strategies small retail business leaders used to improve employee retention. The targeted population consisted of five business leaders from five small retail businesses in Minneapolis, Minnesota who used employee retention strategies to be successful in their business operations. I conducted face-to-face semistructured interviews on employee retention in small retail businesses using my interview protocol (see Appendix A). Participants provided their experiences on employee retention strategies in their businesses. Organizational documents such as employee handbooks, retention policy, and my journal to reflect the observations, provided in-depth knowledge to confirmed data saturation along with the interviews. Each participant's interview was recorded, transcribed, and analyzed by themes using Herzberg's two-factor theory. I used NVivo version 12 software to analyze the recorded interviews and transcripts. The study findings

showed methods that business leaders of small retail businesses used to retain their employees. The study revealed five themes: (a) frequent communication between management and employees improved employee retention, (b) employee compensation and welfare improved employee retention, (c) employee engagement improved employee retention, (d) employee recognition promoted job satisfaction, and (e) employee advancement increased job satisfaction.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question for this study was: What strategies do small retail business leaders use to improve employee retention in their organizations? To answer the research question, I conducted a multiple case study with five business leaders in small retail businesses in Minneapolis, Minnesota, reviewed relevant literature on the topic of employee retention, and reviewed organizational documents. I conducted face-to-face audio-recorded interviews and transcribed interview data from five participants. I also reviewed the company documents and used NVivo version 12 software to develop thematic codes for the data collected. Five themes emerged after analyzing the data. The small business leaders appreciated the findings addressed that confirmed the key tenants of Herzberg's two-factor theory.

Sample Description

The participants in this study were business leaders of small retail businesses located in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Five participants from five companies participated in the study. The participants chose the locations for the interviews. The locations were convenient making the entire process successful. To ensure the privacy of the

participants, the identities of the participants were concealed, using codes as identifiers. I used the letter 'P' to indicate participant, and the number attached to the letter P represents the order in which the interview occurred (P1 to P5). All participants for the study met the eligibility criteria of: (a) being business leader, (b) working in small retail business in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and (c) having experience with successful employee retention strategies implementation resulting in high employee retention. Participants freely and voluntarily shared their knowledge, ideas, strategies, and experience on the topic of employee retention in small retail businesses. The participants were in management positions with at least 5 years of experience with employee retention strategies in small retail businesses.

Participants received the interview questions a few weeks prior to the initial interviews. The interview lasted for 45 minutes, with each participant responding to eight questions. A follow-up member checking took place a week after the initial interview at the same location which lasted for 20 minutes. I went through the responses of the participants to the interview questions to confirm their interpretations to support the validity and reliability of the study.

I used NVivo 12 version software to organize, sort, categorize and code the data. Each participant's transcript was analyzed, identified significant information from the data, labeled the data, and described and categorized the codes based on similarities. Five themes emerged from the data analysis of responses to the interview questions of the retail business leaders and reviewed organizational documents. The participants involved had the following number of experiences: (a) P1, 6 years of experience, (b) P2, 8 years of

experience, (c) P3, 5 years of experience, (d) P4, 8 years of experience, and (e) P5, 10 years of experience.

Documents Reviewed

The participants provided documents from their respective businesses for review. The provided documents helped me to analyze the prevailing retention strategies. The following documents were reviewed: (a) retention policy, (b) employee handbook, and (c) financial records. I received an employee handbook from P1, P4, and P5 which had the following commonalities: employee benefits, personnel policies, training, and development. P2 and P3 gave me their employee retention policies as well as their financials. The financial records indicated less is spent on recruiting employees due to less employee turnover. The policies outlined employee retention guidelines in the business. The policy indicated that there was a 60-day or a 90-day probation period for new hires. New hires received the employee retention policy on their first day at work.

The interview question responses, along with the reviewed documents, raised my understanding of the business leaders' strategies for employee retention in small retail businesses. The businesses' progress reports and financial reports revealed less employee turnover over the years which confirmed the participants' responses. For the purpose of triangulation, I examined the businesses' documents and records to confirm the data from the interviews before developing the themes.

Thematic Findings

Theme 1: Frequent Communication Between Management and Employees

The first theme that emerged from the data analysis was communication between management and employees. When discussing effective retention strategies, communication became a recurring theme. Communication is a key instrument that helps managers and employees to interact for the better of the company. All the participants indicated communication as being a good strategy for employee retention. P1, P2, P3, and P4 mentioned that their businesses practice an open-door policy. Open-door policy as explained by them indicated that employees have every right to by-pass their immediate supervisors to go higher and discuss their concerns without seeking permission from anyone. Communication is defined as an exchange of information between two or more people (Mishra, 2014). Communication between employees and management cement the relationship for the two to have one objective and goal. P2 indicated the title of a manager is nothing that must scare the employees since all managers and other employees are all employees, so communicating frequently with each other brings belongingness. P3 and P4 stated communication must happen every day for the employees to perform their best at work. P4 indicated a good strategy of retaining employees is practicing coaching by walking around (CBWA). The explanation given for CBWA was managers walking on the sales floor and asking employees how they are performing their tasks and following up to check the right thing is done. CBWA promotes constant interaction daily and this strengthens employee performance and increases retention with the company because the employees understand the business. P1

posited communication breeds comfort and motivation among all the employees. The thematic finding of frequent communication suggests a form of reducing employee turnover and improving employee retention (Osman, Noordin, Daud, & Othman, 2016; Panagiotakopoulos, 2014). From the analysis, two subthemes emerged from the communication theme; management and new hires, and a positive working environment.

Management and new hires. Retention of new hires of any business depends on management as stated by P5. P5 further stated employees are not at work just because of a paycheck, it goes beyond; “employees work because they want to showcase their skills and contribute their quotas to the development of the company.” P3 stated communication as a key role in helping new hires to stay. P2 buttressed P3 point in a way of an established practice called 30-60-90 day period. The explanation P3 gave was new hires are always spoken to daily to find out how they were performing, on the thirtieth day the store manager meets them one-on-one to find out their challenges and how to help them. In the 60th and 90th days, the same meetings occur between the new hires and the store manager. P2 said it is very important for business leaders to value the employees because they are the ones that do the work, so not treating them well means work not done. P2 further said employees are valuable assets of the organization and must be treated with respect and decorum. P1 also said for business leaders to make employees comfortable, they must once a while taking their lunches with the employees at the breakroom and engage them in a conversation to know them better both at work and a little about their private lives. Treatment of management to employees can cause

employees to leave the organization but not just because of the position and job requirement (Okan & Akyuz, 2015).

Positive working environment. A good working environment is a condition that allows employees to feel comfortable and excel in the workplace. P1 stated when management is supportive of whatever employees do, it is a win for the organization because both parties achieve the designated goals of the business. P4 said strong relationships between employees and management help the business to accomplish a lot together and therefore employees see themselves as valuable assets, increasing their morale for work and stay. P5 said, “employees and management must work together to be supportive of each other which promotes open communication and job satisfaction.” Everyone including management wants to work in a conducive environment, and hence creating the delight for them to be at work all the time said by P3.

Theme 1: Correlation with peer-reviewed studies. The participants’ concept of frequent communication between management and employees (FCBME) in small retail businesses correlates with various peer-reviewed studies. The participants’ acumen on the concept of FCBME likened to Gardner and Sels (2015) who were of the view leaders that have authority to address employees’ concerns play an effective role to improve the work environment. Assertively, the theme FCBME aligns with the work of Gerhart and Fang (2015); employees’ commitment is promoted when there is a clear understanding of the functions of the organization or business in terms of shared values, visions, symbols, and beliefs. Fu and Deshpande (2014) confirmed this view on the importance of FCBME and agreed work environment and job satisfaction propel proper engagement and

productivity. The implications of FCBME seemed to be an ensuing challenge among some small retail business leaders in addressing employee retention strategies. All participants (P1 to P5) believed in improving their knowledge on FCBME to lead effectively in retaining employees. The participants appreciated the theme of FCBME as one of the strategies to identify the opportunities and challenges of small business leaders in employee retention.

Theme 1: Correlation with the conceptual framework. Theme 1 correlates to both Herzberg's two-factor theory and Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Herzberg and Maslow agreed there are determinants as to whether employees retain their work or not. Herzberg (1959) classified these factors into two: motivators and hygiene factors whilst Maslow (1943) aligned with the five major needs of the employee to perform, stay, or leave the company. Herzberg argued job satisfaction exhibited by employees depend on real workplace conditions for promoting employee retention, performance, and productivity. Real workplace conditions are not limited to only FCBME but a host of others which include the relationship with the bosses and their supervisions. Maslow's hierarchy of needs includes physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. The two theories examined the employee in totality for the business leader to have a holistic idea on employees to retain them. The participants (P1 to P5) agreed employees are valuable assets of the company and therefore must be treated with care and in high esteem in order to retain them by promoting all the key tenets of job satisfiers, dissatisfiers, and needs. By conducting feasibility groundworks companies, A,

B, C, D, and E were able to develop comprehensive FCBME strategies in their business operations to retain employees.

Business leaders who displayed transformational leadership styles such as promoting employees intellectually, providing freedom, giving individual consideration, inspiring employees, addressing frustration and anxiety, preventing fear and ambiguity, and uncertainty linked with new ideas work behavior is reduced (Afsar & Masood, 2018). P3 said, “when I embraced employees’ viewpoints and recommendations in decision-making situations, they produced more because they felt welcomed.” All the participants agreed on Herzberg and Maslow’s strategy as a form of business leaders in retaining employees by paying close attention to the needs of the employees.

Theme 2: Employee Compensation and Welfare

Compensation and welfare were the second themes that emerged from data analysis. For this study employee compensation and welfare is defined as incentives, bonus, and employee discounts. All the participants (P1 to P5) said compensation and welfare had proved to be an effective strategy used by business leaders to retain employees. P5 indicated, “when management increase employees' pay structure, it increased efficiency.” P1 said, “employees were satisfied when their pay commensurate the work done.” On the other hand, P3 indicated employees take their work seriously when they receive compensation and benefits that were comparable. P4 said, “financial compensation has shown to be very effective because employees’ productivity in the very week they get paid is higher than weeks when no payment was received.” Financial rewards are the first things that make employees stay with a company. P1 stated,

“employees might have different priorities and therefore compensation and welfare might not necessarily be a good strategy for employee retention.” Ibidunni, Osibanjo, Adeniji, Salau, and Falola (2016) posited compensation and welfare as a good strategy for employee retention and P3 shared the same view. From the NVivo analysis for the compensation and welfare, subthemes emerged; incentives, bonuses, and employee discounts.

Incentives and Bonuses. Incentives and bonuses were some of the responses given by participants in relation to strategies for employees to stay or leave an organization. Incentives and bonuses boost the morale of the employees since they are considered as “add on”. The employee gets the base pay and these incentives and bonuses are decided by management to add to the employee’s base pay to motivate them to be productive. Bennett and Levinthal (2017) financial rewards make employees work harder and responses from participants P2 to P5 shared the same view. P2 and P3 said, “incentives and bonuses are good strategies to retain employees.” P1 to P5 responded, “their retail businesses match up 401k contributions by employees, securing their retirement and benefits.” The participants said, “the 401k was another form of incentive for employees to stay with the company; a good retention strategy.” Employees envisaged a better life when they go on retirement, so the implementation of 401k in businesses promotes employee retention.

Discount Program. Discount program constituted another form of compensation and welfare instituted by my participants' companies per their responses. P1 to P5 indicated employees get to enjoy the discount when they fulfill their 90 day period of

probation. According to my participants (P1 to P5), employees receive discount cards after 90 days of working of which can be used by the employee and his or her immediate family. P1 to P4 said, “employees receive 10% on all merchandise bought from the retail store.” P5 said, “employees receive 10% on selected items.” P1 to P5 further said, “the discount card usage goes beyond the four corners of the store, by enjoying a discount on restaurant, hotels, renting a car, school fees and purchasing of a vehicle.” P1 to P5 said, “the discount program sought to give employees more gains and savings since the company subsidized some of the expenses in a way.” P3 indicated a discount is a form of welfare which helps to subsidize the family’s expenditure.” P1 to P5 all responded, “discount program was a good strategy to retain employees.” The discount program helps employees save money by not paying the full price of the merchandise and this strategy will serve as a form of motivation.

Theme 2: Correlation with peer-reviewed studies. Participants' concept of employee compensation and welfare aligns with Sharma and Nambudiri (2015). Sharma and Nambudiri argued motivated employees receive a higher level of job satisfaction and higher productivity. P1, P2, and P4 said: “employees highly motivated translated to job satisfaction which produces higher productivity.” P3 and P5 said, “employees are highly motivated when they received competitive compensation and welfare.” Lu and Gursoy (2016) indicated employee job satisfaction depends on holistic fulfillment employees find in their jobs. P5 confirmed Lu and Gursoy on employee job satisfaction depends on what compensation and welfare management gave to employees. Karabina (2016) indicated that there is a link between Herzberg’s two-factor theory employee satisfaction or

dissatisfaction and job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Employees who find themselves satisfied with their jobs may have both the hygiene and motivators working in his or her favor, hence creating job satisfaction and vice-versa.

Theme 2: Correlation with the conceptual framework. Theme 2 correlates with Herzberg's two-factor theory. Compensation is considered as a hygiene factor and not a motivating factor under Herzberg's two-factor theory. P4 and P5 agreed employees get motivated when there was an added incentive to what they receive on top of their base pay. P3 said, "job dissatisfaction exhibited by employees is normally due to poor compensation received from management." Herzberg et al. (1959) realized job satisfaction and employee retention was attained as a result of proper rewards systems instituted. Understanding the behaviors of employees help management to institute good employee compensation and welfare schemes to retain the employees. By acknowledging the tenets of compensation and welfare in small retail businesses, participants learned how to effectively apply the compensation and welfare strategy to retain employees. Terera and Ngirande (2014), indicated rewards system and employee retention are positively correlated.

Theme 3: Employee Engagement

Employee engagement was the third theme emerged from the participants' responses. The participants' articulated that employee engagement as a strategy is essential to improve employee retention. The participants (P1 to P5) explained how they spent time to engage the employees on how to perform their daily tasks. The employees' engagement starts at the time they are given a job offer and made aware of their job

descriptions and the expectations of their assignments. The job description allows an employee to stay engaged with management in performing their duties. P1 to P5 said, “their management team had been practicing ‘listen to ten’ which had helped to address employees’ concerns.” The participants explained that ‘listen to ten’ meant for every month business leaders call 10 employees to listen to their views and address them to improve their welfare as well as the company. Management uses this channel to solicit hidden opinions from the employees to improve on workplace-related issues. P5 said, “I always met my employees in my office one-on-one to ask them how they see the management’s performance and what can be changed as well.” All the participants indicated there have been meetings daily with the employees to engage with them on work excellence and be independent in performing their duties. P3 stated, “employees were assigned in taking part in job-site projects to strengthen their skills.” Employees engage in area meetings to brainstorm on how to improve their departments to meet the standard of the business. Hollis (2015) indicated employees can perform their duties properly if they experience a productive workplace environment. The business leaders must create a serene environment to allow the employees to be engaged and productive.

According to Karatepe and Aga (2016), there is a positive correlation between employee engagement and workplace environment. Business leaders must understand the concept of employee engagement in management since it is a strategy for employee retention. Shuck et al. (2016) noted employees’ engagement is made effective and efficient when business leaders discuss and clarify their concerns. P2 said, “engaged

employees understand the business vision, go above and beyond to achieve results with less supervision from the management.”

Employee engagement is a strategy for employee retention which can promote organizational profitability and stability. A disengaged employee contribution to productivity will be minimal and affect the morale of the team hence rendering the business goals unachievable. P2 said, “employees want to be engaged, recognized, interacted and treated with respect than being considered as a robot; who comes into work, no interaction and leaves.” Employee engagement is empowering the employees to share the vision of the business and see the big picture and contribute their quotas to productivity and profitability. Engaged employees work hard to achieve the goals of the organization because employees who feel negatively not connected and valued, would be less productive and profitable. Employee engagement is a strategy that all the participants agreed on in helping employee retention since the employees see themselves as valuable assets.

Theme 3: Correlation with peer-reviewed studies. The importance of employee retention strategies participants adopted in theme 3 by small retail business leaders on employee engagement on the conclusion of Huang et al. (2016), who confirmed employee engagement thrives on the various aspects of the environment that help the employee to be productive. Kahn (1990) studied general employee experiences with respect to engagement or disengagement. Kahn concluded employee engagement consisted of cognitive, emotional state, and behavioral levels at the workplace which leads to expression whilst disengagement lead to defense. P1 to P5 said, “employee

engagement is a key strategy that helped employees to see how the business leaders' value as the assets of the company." P3 stated, "engaged employees brought out the innovative ideas because they saw themselves as players of the company contributing their quotas to the success of the company." P4 said, "disengaged employees were not productive since their emotional state was affected at the workplace." P5 explained the need of how employee engagement affected behaviors of employees either positively or negatively. P5 further said, "positive employee engagement produced splendid metrics and vice-versa." Business leaders adopting an employee engagement strategy to retain employees promotes profitability and productivity if the implementation is done right for employees to be impacted.

Theme 3: Correlation with the conceptual framework. Theme 3 correlates with Herzberg's two-factor theory and Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Herzberg (1974) argued motivation factor propels employee engagement leading to employee job satisfaction. Herzberg's theory is in consonance with previous findings on employee engagement as a strategy to reduce employee turnover. Maslow's (1943) hierarchical needs of physiological, safety, belongingness and love, esteem, and self-actualization play a key role in employee engagement. Both theories suggest employee engagement is paramount in the success of the business. P1 to P5 noted, "employees are valuable assets and whatever it takes for them to excel must be provided." P5 said, "employees do the job, so engaging them positively gets the work done else the business leader has to it." P5 further said, "the business leader must provide all the needed acumen to the employees to be successful and show how satisfied they are with their jobs." P3 said, "providing the

needed communication and the necessary tools keep the employees engaged to be more productive at their jobs.” P1 said, “engaged employees see themselves as enjoying all the needs available to the average employee as well as being satisfied with the motivational factors help to business to be profitable and productive.”

Business leadership is critical to ensure the success of any organization (Blomqvist et al., 2016; El Toufaily, 2018). The employee engagement strategy is workable in retaining employees depends on the implementation mode by the business leaders. The participants all agreed business leaders were the sole agents to make sure the employee engagement strategy is implemented properly to retain employees.

Theme 4: Employee Recognition

The fourth theme that emerged from the data analysis was employee recognition. Employee recognition is important in any establishment. Employees are valuable assets of the business, so if their efforts go unnoticed it affects their morale and productivity. For this reason, employee recognition is paramount for the sustainability of any organization. Employee recognition is the way of appreciating or thanking an employee for awesome work performance. Recognizing employees can be either intrinsically or extrinsically administered. Intrinsically recognizing employees can be in the following forms; words of thank you at employee’s meetings, saying thank you and praising employees at the end of the shift or after successful completion of a task. Recognizing employees extrinsically is giving tangible items for appreciating the work done which can be in the form of giftings like money, cards, or physical items. The participants’ responses depicted employee recognition is another strategy for employee retention.

P1 said, “recognized employees see themselves as valuable assets and work hard to achieve results.” P4 confirmed P1’s assertion and said, “recognized employees go and beyond to achieve results and keen with their jobs.” P5 stated, “recognizing employees is an antidote for productivity and profitability.” P3 said, “thank you has been a great medicine to boost the morale of recognized employees.” P2 confirmed P3’s statement, “thank you”, ‘well done’, ‘good job’, ‘what will I do without you’, ‘I appreciate you’ are all words of high-spirited for the employee to be more productive and profitable”. Kim (2014) advised the management team to create a program for acknowledging employees for them to feel valued and give out their best for retention, productivity, and profitability in the organization. From the responses collected from the participants suggest business leaders must pay keen interest in developing a strategy for employee recognition to help retain the employees.

Theme 4: Correlation with peer-reviewed studies. The importance of employee recognition strategy that participants used in the fourth theme align with organizational culture. The business leaders see employee recognition as an organizational culture and reinforce the conclusion of Harrison and Gordon (2014), as the actions, behavior, habits, and values exhibited at the workplace. The participants were of the view that employee recognition must be an organizational culture. Organizational culture shows an act becomes a hallmark for the business and the leaders use it routinely. The organizational culture must be considered more than the national culture because employee’s performance, interactions, and retention promote when employees value and share the vision (Selden & Sowa, 2015). P1 stated, “business leaders use employee recognition as a

means to boost the morale of the employees.” P3 confirmed the P1 statement, “employees must be recognized routinely to serve as organizational culture.” P5 said, “management of his organization must by Friday recognize at least five employees and post on the company’s noticeboard.” The employee recognition strategy practiced by business leaders helps to boost the morale of employees in the organization and retain employees.

Theme 4: Correlation with the conceptual framework. Theme 4 correlates with Herzberg (1974) which indicated that employee job satisfaction depends on recognition as a motivation factor. Herzberg et al. (1959), stated recognition as a factor that improves employee retention. P3 said, “recognizing employees had been the best way of retaining our employees.” P5 confirmed the P3 statement and said, “employees feel motivated when recognized at employee meetings which inculcate in others to learn the same.” P1 stated, “recognized employees always go the extra mile to ensure the business goals are realized.” Herzberg's employee recognition motivation factor was confirmed by all the participants as a good strategy for employee retention.

Theme 5: Employee Advancement

The NVivo software data analysis emerged the fifth theme as employee advancement. Advancement is a way the business leaders put measures in place to improve the potentials of the employees through education and training. Business leaders must create a conducive environment for employees to advance their careers, and this helps employees to have hope for career development and a strategy for retention. Employees are loyal to the organization when management makes employee

advancement and training a priority in their career development. Baron (2016) argued authentic leaders can raise the performance of the organization through training programs. The organization's success is based on employee training and helps all employees to know what is expected of them. Employees without requisite training will not find their jobs satisfying and might quit and vice-versa. For this reason, management must make it a point to have advancement, training, and education for all the employees. To buttress the employee advancement theme, the participants gave their perspectives on this topic.

P3 said, "employees need advancement in their workplace to perform their tasks." P5 stated, "business leaders value employee training and hence put new hires into computer-based learning (CBL) to understand how the vision of the company can be realized." P1 said, "employees who are denied training and advancement were not satisfied with their jobs, whilst those who went through training and have defined a route to job advancement were satisfied with their jobs." Employee advancement is a good strategy for employee retention because the employees see a sense of fulfillment with job satisfaction when their training needs and route of career development are defined in the organization. To steer employee training and advancement properly is through proper leadership acumen in the business.

Theme 5: Correlation with peer-reviewed studies. The participants' concept of employee advancement aligns with Anderson and Sun (2015), employees' actual potentials growth is promoted through training and development. P1 to P5 argued employee advancement is an effective and efficient strategy for employee retention. P2

said, “business leaders must know the vision and live it, so employees will appreciate and learn the skills to keep the vision and mission alive.” P4 stated, “employees’ job satisfaction is at its best when the employees know they are well equipped in performing their tasks as demanded.” P5 said, “good business organization invests in its employees to be able to perform their duties.” P3 confirmed P4 and P5 statements, “employee advancement is one of the keys to growth and job satisfaction when they see a clear path to their career development.” Employee advancement is a strategy for employee retention and an imperative element is a leader to steer the resources available for employees’ knowledge to grow the business (Hu, Zhang, Wang, & Tran, 2018).

Theme 5: Correlation with the conceptual framework. Theme 5 correlates to Herzberg’s two-factor theory, advancement promotes job satisfaction. Herzberg (1974) argued an advancement is a form of motivational factor resulting in employee job satisfaction. Herzberg et al. (1959) findings agreed on advancement as a motivation factor. Even though some employees are resistant to change but organizational change is very critical in this modern era of business operations. An organization that invests in its human resources promotes productivity and profitability. Advancement and training in any organization bring hope and job satisfaction to the employees. The success of the business is essential to management and owners, but the individual employee’s career path in the organization is crucial for employee retention. All the participants confirmed employee advancement as a strategy to retain employees and saw the need to teach, train, and put employees through other forms of employee advancement and training.

Applications to Professional Practice

The purpose of this study was to identify the effective employee strategies small retail businesses use to retain employees in their business operations in the retail industry. The findings of the study along with the analysis of the literature review and the study's conceptual framework provide a detailed academic framework for professional business practices. The effective employee retention strategies from the findings of the study may be applicable to professional business practices and serve as a foundational reference for small retail business leaders. Many small retail business leaders lack the strategies in retaining employees in their businesses creating a loss of human resources, productivity, and profitability. The data gathered from the participants emerged 5 themes supporting effective retention strategies for improving business practices: (a) frequent communication between management and employees improved employee retention, (b) employee compensation and welfare improved employee retention, (c) employee engagement improved employee retention, (d) employee recognition promoted job satisfaction, and (e) employee advancement increased job satisfaction.

The findings in this study could lead to a higher employee retention rate because of management and employees improved relationship. Small retail business leaders may appreciate and understand the retention strategies for retaining employees. Findings from the study may be appropriate by small business leaders reviewing, adapting, and developing employee retention strategies in business operations in the retail industry to improve business practices. According to Prince et al. (2017), there is more than one factor for employee retention to be successful. The themes emerged from this study

showed frequent communication, compensation and welfare, employee engagement, employee recognition, and employee advancement are factors to be taken into consideration when developing strategies for employee retention. Elements of employee retention strategies that small retail business leaders could positively utilize will help overcome the challenges of employee retention in business operations in retail industry may include: (a) attentive listening, (b) observation, (c) open communication, (d) knowledge sharing, (e) recognition, (f) flexibility, and (g) commitment.

Small retail business leaders with motivational intelligence could easily adapt and adjust to employee's behaviors accordingly by assessing employee retention strategies factoring the challenges and attitudes of employees in small retail businesses. Small retail business leaders can use employee retention strategies to motivate and increase employees' job satisfaction, productivity, and profitability. Herzberg's two-factor theory also known as Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory and dual-factor theory outlined workplace factors for both job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction. The small retail business leaders must be knowledgeable on how to apply these factors to the advantage of both the employees and the business. The employee retention strategies emerged from this study may contribute to employee job satisfaction, productivity, and profitability for the business at large.

Implications for Social Change

The fundamental objective of this study was to explore effective strategies to retain employees. The results of the study present opportunities for effecting positive social change in small retail businesses and outline the impacting factors for employee

retention. The themes identified may contribute tangibly to individuals, organizations, institutions, communities, and societies. The identification of the strategies helps the business to minimize the financial costs of recruitment and hiring, promoting employees to stay with the organization. Small retail business leaders seeking to expand business operations have been successful in practicing the identified strategies. Birt et al. (2016) averred there are ethical responsibility and transferability of study results to contribute to social change. The implications for positive social change signify a better understanding of employee retention strategies identified, its application by business leaders at the workplace increased employee retention in the society helping the citizenry at large.

Terera and Ngirande (2014), stated economic growth and cultural prosperity depend on employee retention which has positive effects on both the community and the nation as well. Small retail business leaders maintain human capital by promoting stability, commitment, communication, and motivation to employees. The study findings could possibly help small retail businesses in Minneapolis, Minnesota to improve employee retention because of the insightful information outlined. The implementation of the identified employee retention strategies from the study may possibly help small business leaders increase the following aspects of their businesses; employee retention, growth, productivity, and profitability.

Recommendations for Action

The study results could help small business leaders to review, develop, and implement the retention strategies tailored to address specific business needs. The needs of every small retail business differ from the other, so it behooves the business leaders to

assess the challenges for employee retention. The assessment will serve as a springboard to review and modify employee retention strategies to retain employees. It is evidential from the findings of this study, small retail business leaders devised and implemented workable and successful retention strategies in their businesses to retain employees and reduce turnover. From the study's analysis of the emerged five themes, I have five recommendable actions for the retail industry: (a) retail leaders and managers should encourage frequent and effective communication, (b) retail businesses should offer competitive salaries, benefit and welfare packages, (c) retail leaders and managers should engage employees to create maximum participation, (d) retail leaders and managers should have effective and efficient ways of recognizing employees, and (e) retail businesses should inculcate career advancement and training in human capital development.

The first recommendation is for retail leaders or managers to encourage frequent and effective communication at the workplace. From the study, frequent communication was a good retention strategy business leaders and managers used to retain employees. Frequent communication between the leadership and the employees helped the employees to be abreast of the business operations and contributed to the achievement of the designated goals. The business leaders communicated the goals and vision of the organization to the employees, broke them down as to when an aspect is expected to be achieved, and this promotes commitment and dedication on the part of the employees to help achieve the productivity and financial goals of the organization. Frequent communication made the employees express their views on any grey issues confronting

and impeding their progress to management. For this reason, management understood the employees and helped to execute their tasks with confidence and in a timely manner. The business leaders interviewed indicated their organizations practiced open-door policy as a form of open communication when employees needed to report leaders and managers to their superiors without fear. The open-door policy helped the workplace to appear free and respectful in all manners of dealings. The business leaders and managers indicated frequent communication helped them to retain the employees, and P5 confirmed, “employee retention rose from 20% to 95% when this strategy was adopted.” Retail business leaders and managers should consider frequent and effective communication as a good employee retention strategy and use it in their business to promote productivity and profitability.

The second recommendation is for retail businesses to offer competitive salaries, welfare and benefit packages. All the participants said, “employees were happy when they receive substantial pay and benefits enough to take care of them and their families.” Every employee has basic needs to satisfy and the inability to meet these needs affect the performance of the said employee in any activity. A confirmation of this were the theories propounded by Herzberg and Maslow as compensation is a key factor to aid an individual’s performance. For this reason, it behooves retail businesses to design a pay, benefit, and welfare structure well enough to cater to the basic needs of the employees and their families in order to get the best from them at the workplace. The business leaders emphasized how competitive pay, benefits, as well as welfare packages, had helped to retain employees in their organizations. The analysis of the data showed the

business leaders' companies practiced competitive pay, issuing of employee discount cards used within and outside, and matching up 401k contributions helped to retain employees. It is an indisputable fact that employees are productive and profitable if they receive good income and incentives as compared to those who lack these needs. The participants viewed the competitive pay, benefit and welfare strategy as employee retention, lived to the expectation of retaining employees created financial wealth to the organizations. The competitive salaries, benefits, and welfare strategy are recommended for retail businesses or business leaders and managers offering advice to the various retail Head Offices (HO) to implement it to retain employees creating productivity and profitability.

The next recommendation from the study findings is for retail leaders and managers to engage employees maximumly at the workplace. Employee engagement is crucial to the success of any organization. Engaging employees implies they are aware of their role, expectations and other available tools to help achieve their designated goals. Retail business leaders and managers should make every tool to aid the employees to be successful, productive, and profitable in performing their tasks. The analysis of data from the study indicated retail business leaders and managers who engaged the employees help the organization to be productive because the leaders provided CBWA to the employees, information, and available resources for effective and efficient work performance. This aspect suggests there should be constant follow-up by leaders and managers to make sure the employees are on course in achieving good results. The retail business leaders and managers said, employee engagement strategy was good, created job satisfaction and

brought out the potentials and innovative skills of the employees. I am recommending an employee engagement strategy for retail business leaders and managers to adopt in their business operations to retain employees for productivity and profitability.

The fourth recommendation is for retail leaders and managers to establish effective and efficient ways of recognizing employees at the workplace. Employees want to be appreciated for any good performed at the workplace to be a valued employee. The study findings indicated various means of appreciating employees either extrinsically or intrinsically. The retail business leaders mentioned some of the intrinsic means as words of encouragement; good job, great work done, good performance keep it and thank you. The retail business leaders and managers gave some of the extrinsic ways as gift cards and other forms of monetary giftings. The retail business leaders said, recognizing employees in front of the rest of the team promotes self-esteem and self-actualization on the part of the recognized employee and inculcate in the rest the idea emulation to be recognized in future meetings. Employee recognition strategy helps employees to stay committed, dedicated, and taking ownership of what they do and continue to stay in the company. Employee recognition strategy speaks to the emotions of the employees and they feel valued as part of the key contributors to help the organizational goals realized. Retail business leaders and managers who want business expansion should use an employee recognition strategy to retain employees and create financial wealth for the business.

The last recommendation is for retail businesses to inculcate career advancement and training in the organization for employee development. The retail environment has

become so robust and dynamic for organizations to be abreast of contemporary changes in the industry. Retail businesses must design ways of making sure the employees stay current with changes and vision of the organization. As part of employee training, the retail business leaders mentioned CBL for the employees on how to do their jobs and improve their performances by a standard of procedures of the company (SOP).

Employee training is very important and these days most retail companies have resorted to retail academies to train the employees to continue to stay with the organization and grow their potentials as well. Employee advancement is very important to retain employees. If an organization has clearly defined the way for employees to move up on the organizational ladder, employees will stay with the company. P5 confirmed, “there is no need to leave the company to change jobs, you can change roles in the same company.” Retail businesses should have advancement and training programs in place to assure the employees to grow their careers with the organization. I am recommending advancement and training programs strategy as a way for businesses to keep employees to grow theirs and should be adopted as such.

Small retail business leaders and managers who participated in the semistructured interview will receive a copy of this study with a two-page results summary. The results of this study will be disseminated or published in the ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Database for review of other scholars and practitioners. Other forms of opportunities will be sought to present the research findings through conferences, organizational training, seminars, and community stakeholders. The results from this finding could possibly help

small retail business leaders and managers as well as retail businesses, in general, to enhance their employee retention strategies to increase productivity and profitability.

Recommendations for Further Research

The purpose of this multiple case study was to explore strategies small retail business leaders used to retain their employees. To address the limitations of this study, further research is recommended. In this study, participants included some of the limitations. The participants years of experience were restricted from 5 years, from small retail business leaders who have managed employees in Minneapolis, Minnesota locality. Future researchers can address this limitation by expanding the data collection in terms of sample size, geographic locations, and retail industry, in general, to produce more accurate and comprehensive results to reflect the entire employee retention in the retail industry. Basias and Pollalis (2018), argued analyses of the phenomena through multiple organizations provided multi-perspective in-depth analysis and explanation for the findings.

The research included only store leaders who have had 5 years or more of retaining employees as participants for the study. It would have created a more meticulous understanding of employee retention if some employees were also selected as participants to express their viewpoints on the topic. Inghan-Broomfield (2016), stated a deeper understanding is achieved as a result of more data collection to allow the voices of everyone to be heard on the phenomenon.

Another recommendation for future research is to use quantitative methods and mixed-method to help other researchers compare and contrast the effectiveness of

employee retention in small retail businesses and retail businesses in totality. Both quantitative and mixed-method approaches, complex research questions would be answered reflecting validity and reliability.

Reflections

In 1985, my Dad took me to a high school in Ghana called Foso Secondary School, I was asked by the headmaster; what will you do when you grow up? I told him; I want to be in the business field. However, after my secondary school, my parents made me attend teacher training college of which I was hesitant because I realized they were shifting my dream. I completed the training college and became a trained and certificated teacher. I went to Cape Coast Polytechnic and the University of Education, Winneba after completing the teacher training college, and completed with Higher National Diploma (Accountancy) and bachelor's in education (Accounting Studies) respectively. I came to the United States in 2009, and in 2011 started the Keller Graduate School of Management and completed a Master of Business Administration degree in 2013. From leadership positions both in Ghana and in the United States, I realized employee turnover was high in the retail industry and encouraged myself to pursue a Doctor of Business Administration degree (DBA), which became my mission to accomplish to research why more employees in the retail sector are quitting their jobs.

My experience during the DBA study process was unprecedentedly challenging and engaging but rewarding due to additional knowledge acquired from top business executives, United States retail business operations, and doctoral residencies. Reading multiple scholarly peer-reviewed articles helped me acquired lots of information too. The

DBA program is rigorously robust, entailing and a very demanding journey that cannot be taken for granted. It is not a straightforward degree as compared to the other degrees I obtained. I nearly gave up because combining family, school, and work lives were too much to deal with stress and frustrations. The reason why I did not quit was the amount of time and money invested in the program, and eventually may regret my decision in the future if I do not achieve my mission, thus I endured the frustrations and very happy I did. I did more research on the topic of employee retention and seen real-world applications and how to address employee-related issues.

I focused on the retail sector, and with my passion for employee retention, I decided to research this topic. The semistructured interviews were so enticing and the participants' responses showed commonalities that were intriguing and fascinating. I used the interview protocol and member checking approach to minimize personal biases. The completion of the DBA program showed my mission has been accomplished and fulfilling to come alive in the academic fraternity. The knowledge I acquired after the completion of my study will help students and businesses.

Conclusion

Employees are human capital needed for organizational stability and sustainability. Most organizations including the retail industry lack the expertise to retain employees. Small retail business leaders lack strategies for retaining employees as well. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies small retail business leaders use to retain employees. I used open-ended interview questions to conduct a semistructured interview with five small retail business leaders in Minneapolis,

Minnesota. The participants gave in-depth knowledge on the strategies to retain employees. Five themes emerged from the analysis of data collected: (a) frequent communication between management and employees improved employee retention, (b) employee compensation and welfare improved employee retention, (c) employee engagement improved employee retention, (d) employee recognition promoted job satisfaction, and (e) employee advancement increased job satisfaction.

Small retail businesses unable to retain employees result in low productivity, growth, customer counts and traffic in the retail stores (Chen et al., 2016). For small retail business leaders who lack the strategies to retain employees in retail businesses can resort to the five themes to review and develop retention policies and increase employee retention, productivity, and profitability in the retail industry.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Interview: Finding out about retention strategies small retail business leaders use to improve employee retention.

1. I will begin the interviews by greeting and thanking the participants for agreeing to participate in the interview. Next, I will make sure I introduce myself and the research topic to the participants.
2. I will explain the voluntary nature to participate and the flexibility to withdraw at any time.
3. I will ensure participants read and ask related questions before signing the consent form.
4. I will give participants a copy of the consent form to keep.
5. I will inform participants of the interview procedures, which involves the use of audio recording the interview.
6. The interview will be restricted to 45 minutes for responses to 7 interview questions, in addition to any follow-up questions.
7. I will inform participants that I will make the transcribed interviews available to them via email to ensure appropriate interpretation of their responses.
8. At the end of the interviews, I will thank the participants for agreeing to take part in the research study.

Appendix B: Invitation to Participate

<Date>

<Address Block>

Dear Sir/Madam,

As part of my doctoral dissertation research at Walden University, I invite you to participate in a research study on the retention strategies small retail business leaders use to improve employee retention. I have selected you to participate in my doctoral study because of your professional experience and industry knowledge. Please be assured that your participation is voluntary and confidential. Enclosed is a consent form. I request that you read and ask any questions before acting on this invitation to participate.

Your participation depends on satisfying the following criteria. Firstly, participant must be a small retailer business leader with more than 5 years of retail industry experience. Secondly, participant should be willing to join an audio-recorded interview. And lastly, the small retail business leader such as owner, manager, or supervisor has successfully retained employees to sustain a consistent improvement in business operation for a long period of time.

If you satisfy these criteria, kindly notify me via the contact information provided below. I will contact you via phone call for the interview. The interview, which will last for about 45 minutes, will be audio recorded and transcribed. To ensure privacy, the location will be coordinated before the interview. To validate completeness, and accuracy of themes, I will provide you with the opportunity to conduct a member checking period to review my interpretation of your responses.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with questions. I appreciate your kind assistance and cooperation with my request.

Sincerely,

Bernard Essel

Appendix C: Interview Questions

1. What strategies do you use to retain employees to over a lengthy period?
2. What challenges did you face in implementing the strategies and how did you overcome the challenges?
3. How do you address and communicate implementation barriers with your employees to increase productivity?
4. How do you assess employee commitment to ensure retention and productivity?
5. What leadership strategies have worked in retaining employees?
6. How do you measure the effectiveness of your leadership strategies on employee retention?
7. How has employee retention affected productivity?
8. What else would you like to share regarding employee retention strategies and its effect on productivity in the retail industry?