

2019

## Using Transformational Leadership to Reduce Employee Turnover in Hospital Organizations

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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Sylvia McManus

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Walden University  
2019

Abstract

Using Transformational Leadership to Reduce Employee Turnover in Hospital

Organizations

by

Sylvia McManus

MS, Walden University, 2014

BS, Walden University, 2011

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

December 2019

## Abstract

Employee turnovers have been challenging and costly for most organizations. Organization leaders are concerned with employee turnover due to the high cost of training replacements. Grounded in Burns's model of transformational leadership, the purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to identify strategies hospital managers used to reduce Environmental Services (EVS) employee turnover. The participants consisted of 5 EVS managers with recruiting and hiring responsibilities from the Piedmont Triad and Research Triangle Park of North Carolina who experienced EVS turnover, yet implemented effective leadership strategies to retain workers. Yin's 5 stages of data analysis were used to analyze data collected through semistructured interviews, company documents, and note taking. Four themes emerged from the analysis: communication, leadership, training and development, and employee engagement and productivity. The implications for positive social change include the potential for stakeholders to effectively use strategies to improve retention and turnover, decrease the unemployment rate, increase the growth of the organization, and increase employee productivity and patient safety. Positive social change may lead to better opportunities for employees and provide prosperity for families and communities.

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## Dedication

This study is dedicated to my wonderful children, DeOsher Little, and Kayla McManus-Wilson; to the loving memories of my father, William Little, my mother, Bettie Little, and my sisters, Ola Stone, Betty Ham, Marilyn Little, and Pattie Little; and to my four grandchildren, Nassir Martin, Ja'Marion Martin, Dezah'nya Martin and Amar'ee McManus. With a special thank you to my dear friend Cynthia Carmicheal and family.

## Acknowledgments

I thank God for an outstanding achievement I could not have done without his favor and blessings upon my life and family. I would like to thank Dr. Freda Turner as well as my chairperson, Dr. Roy Nafarrete, and my committee members, Dr. Tim Truitt, Dr. Julia East, and Dr. Mary Dereshiwsky for their support and feedback. I would like to thank my Editor Reginald Stone. I thank my colleagues at Walden University for the encouragement and for believing in me throughout my doctoral study.

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## Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Employees of any organization are the most significant asset and losing a skilled workforce can become a costly complex business problem. Employee turnover continues to be challenging for U.S. hospital organizations (Collins, McKinnies, Matthews, & Collins, 2015; Davis, 2013; Miller, 2014). The associated cost of replacing employees ranges from 32% to 114% of an individual's annual salary (Collins et al., 2015). Turnover in health care organizations is expensive, hurts patient care quality, and negatively affects the organization (Tullar et al., 2016). The price of losing employees in the health care industry is challenging and often problematic. Losing employees bear a significant effect on patients, and their satisfaction with the services received. As people live longer and baby boomers retire, and the need for health care increases, turnover is expected to remain at the forefront of an organization's priority list, and managers must realize their long-term advantages reside in their employees.

Retaining valuable employees is critical to an organization. Conversely, strategies that preserve experienced and talented workers are essential to organization growth and contribute to an organization's profitability and sustainability (Chen, 2014; Mann & Gupta, 2014; Vasquez, 2014; Shaw et al., 2013). Hospital organizations losing key employees must develop effective retention strategies (Mann & Gupta, 2014). The Association for the Health care Environment of the American Hospital Association (AHA, 2013) defines *health care environmental services (EVS)* technicians as integral members of hospital patient care teams who play an increasingly strategic role in health care. Although EVS workers perform crucial and potentially life-saving work, these

departments suffer from very high voluntary and involuntary turnover (St. Clair, 2014). The findings from this study may provide insight into how EVS managers can better retain qualified employees, which may help improve overall patient care and decrease costs for hospitals.

### **Background of the Problem**

Employees who remain with their organization help maintain a stable workforce while decreasing cost. Managers care about employee retention and turnover because having enough staff may ensure better work performance and productivity from workers. However, employee turnover continues to be challenging to health care industries and viewed as intrinsically harmful to an organization's bottom line (Collins et al., 2015; Davis, 2013; Miller, 2014). Failing to retain key employees is a costly proposition for an organization. In the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Report in (2017), 3.2 million people quit their jobs. One of the critical components for maintaining a sustainable and profitable organization is employee retention (Mann & Gupta, 2014). Employee retention strategies are vital to an organization because issues such as employee training, recruitment, and loss of job knowledge become costly to the business (Bryant & Allen, 2013). When the turnover rate in the EVS department is low, the hospital organization can benefit from their employee's talents, knowledge, and a sustainable workforce (Tews, Michel, & Ellingson, 2013). Organizations are failing to retain valuable employees in light of voluntary turnover, and leadership styles used to oversee the employee causes human capital to deplete (Shaw, Park, & Kim, 2013). Implementing retention strategies can be beneficial to employees and a business' performance. Organizations failing to

retain quality workers risk losing the valuable knowledge that can help the business to grow. Replacing valuable employees is costly and destructive to the organization.

### **Problem Statement**

U.S. business leaders spend more than \$720 million annually to retain experienced and talented employees (Collins et al., 2015). In the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Report (2017), more than 5.4 million employees separated from their jobs because of voluntary employee turnover, layoffs, and terminations. Housekeeping, or EVS, has the enormous responsibility of maintaining and cleaning a large, complex facility that operates 24 hours per day 7 days a week, using a workforce susceptible to high turnover rates (St. Clair, 2014). The general business problem that I addressed in this study is that high turnover of talented employees decreases organizational profitability (Awan, 2015; Lussier & Hendon, 2015; Terera & Ngirande, 2014). The specific business problem that I addressed in this study is some hospital managers lack strategies to reduce EVS employee turnover.

### **Purpose Statement**

My purpose in this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies that some hospital managers used to reduce EVS employee turnover. The population for this study consisted of two hospitals and five EVS managers with recruiting and hiring responsibilities from the Piedmont Triad and Research Triangle Park of North Carolina. The potential implications for positive social change include retaining experienced and talented EVS employees, decreasing voluntary turnover, decreasing the unemployment

rate, increasing the potential to improve sustainability and growth of the organization, and increasing patient safety by developing effective turnover strategies.

### **Nature of the Study**

I selected a qualitative methodology for this study because I sought to understand and gain a deeper insight into strategies EVS managers used to decrease EVS employee turnover. The qualitative research method is the collection, analysis, and interpretation of comprehensive narrative and nonnumeric data to gain insights into a particular phenomenon of interest (Vasquez, 2014; Yin, 2015). Myers (2013) and Hoare and Hoe (2012) found that quantitative research relies on the collection, analysis, and data interpretation by observing figures, and mathematical patterns that determine relationships between variables. The quantitative research method was not appropriate because I did not concentrate on experimental methods, measures to test theories, hypothetical modeling, or mathematical modeling. The mixed method is a combination of both qualitative and quantitative data that provides a broader perspective (Venkatesh, Brown & Bala, 2013; Yin, 2014). The mixed method approach was not suitable for this study because I did not use both quantitative and qualitative method for a single study. Therefore, there is no need to analyze data from the combination of both qualitative and numerical patterns used in a quantitative method. A qualitative method was appropriate because my purpose in this study was to explore how managers in the health care industry reduce EVS employee turnover.

I considered three research designs for this doctoral study, ethnographical, phenomenological, and case study designs. A case study allows the researcher to focus on

contemporary issues and does not solely address historical phenomenon (Noor, 2008; Yin, 2014). A case study design was an appropriate choice for this study because this approach allows for a better understanding of *how* and *why* questions based on real-life situations. An ethnographical researcher focuses on exploring distinct cultural traits of individuals, groups, shared patterns, beliefs, and behaviors (Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Petty, Thomson, & Stew, 2012). Ethnographical was not appropriate because I did not interact with group members or focus on cultural traits. A phenomenological researcher explores, describes, and analyzes the lived experiences of a phenomenon (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). The phenomenological approach was not appropriate because I did not focus on prolonged engagement and the essence of participants' lived experiences.

### **Research Question**

The overarching research question for this multiple qualitative study was as follows: What strategies do hospital managers use to reduce EVS employee turnover?

### **Interview Questions**

1. What strategies do you use to retain EVS employees?
2. How did you gather information to implement strategies to reduce EVS turnover?
3. How do you measure the effectiveness of EVS retention strategies?
4. How did the EVS employees respond to these strategies?
5. What elements of the occupation add to the employees' turnover?
6. Moreover, what elements of the organization contribute to, or detract from, EVS employee retention?



7. What advice can you provide to other management teams that struggle with implementing best practices for an effective leadership style that retain valuable employees?
8. What did I forget to ask that you found to be useful in reducing turnover?

### **Conceptual Framework**

I chose the transformational leadership theory (TLT) as the conceptual framework for this study. Burns (1978) introduced the theory and argued that to achieve high levels of performance, leaders must act as role models that inspire followers, challenge individuals to take greater ownership of their work, and understand followers' strengths and weaknesses to align their tasks more appropriately. Burns (1978) used TLT to link the roles of leadership and followership and to affect positive changes in individuals and social systems.

Bass (1985) later expanded and refined the works of Burns. Bass (1999) concluded that transformational leadership inspires followers to accomplish more than anticipated by increasing their awareness of the value of specified, idealized goals. Also, the process of transformational leadership motivates the worker to surpass their self-interest for the organization and to address higher level needs (Bass, 1999). The central constructs of TLT are (a) idealized attribution, (b) inspirational motivation, (c) intellectual stimulation, and (d) individualized consideration (Bass, 1985). The TLT provided a lens through which I explored effective retention strategies EVS managers used to reduce employee turnover. Current literature suggested transformational leaders

are effective at bringing positive change into an organization by being motivators and provides the support that positively affects followers (Carmeli, Sheaffer, Binyamin, Reiter-Palmon, & Shimoni, 2014; Herman, Huang, & Lam, 2013), which may benefit other managers challenged by turnover.

### **Operational Definitions**

The following terms and expressions are defined to advance clarity and consistency.

*Environmental services (EVS)*: Formerly referred to as *housekeeping*, EVS is departments that maintain and clean large, complex facilities that operate 24 hours a day 7 seven days a week (St. Clair, 2014).

*Job satisfaction*: Job satisfaction is the positive emotional state or pleasure an individual have about certain aspects of their job (Saks & Gruman, 2014).

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

In the following subsections, I illuminated the assumptions, limitations, and the delimitations of this study. Outlining the parameters of a study help establish the limits utilized in the study (Bass, 1978).

#### **Assumptions**

Assumptions are the uncertainties within the researcher's perspective regarding the theory, phenomenon, instrument, methodology, analysis, power, and participants in the study; these components are understood to be true as a result (Dusick, 2014; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Three assumptions may affect this research study. I assumed that participants provided accurate responses to the interview questions based on their

experiences and knowledge and with the understanding that their answers are confidential. Second, I assumed that semistructured interview questions and hospital documents provide sufficient data to address the central research question. Finally, I assumed that participant responses would help distinguish themes and effective retention strategies for managers to practice.

### **Limitations**

Bailey (2014), and Marshall and Rossman (2015), described *limitations* as boundaries that may or may not contribute to the understanding of the study, and Dusick (2014) stated that limitations are elements out of the control of the researcher. Connelly (2013) noted that some individuals may have selective memory and might not report information about a particular event as it transpires. The individual may describe real contents about events and outcomes of their actions and may relate adverse events and outcomes to external events, and even embellish the outcome of the event (Connelly, 2013). One of the limitations of this qualitative multiple case study was that some of the participants may not remember all of the steps used to reduce employee turnover. Other factors are time constraints; the participant work schedule may limit their participation.

### **Delimitations**

Delimitations are the constraints of the study imposed by the researcher (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). One delimitation of this qualitative multiple case study involved my confinement of the population to only managers of EVS departments in hospitals located in the Piedmont Triad and Research Triangle Park regions of North Carolina. Another prominent delimitation was the exclusion of health care workers within

EVS, which may minimize inside information as to why employees leave their job. Also, the nature of the study is limited to a specific department involved in the research.

### **Significance of the Study**

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

This study may contribute to the practice of business by helping EVS managers to understand the reasons why employees voluntarily or involuntarily leave their jobs; understanding the elements that cause retention and turnover may help reduce turnover. Furthermore, this study may uncover effective retention strategies already used by managers that can be used by others to improve their departments. Improved retention strategies may benefit a hospital's business practice regarding their financial performance and their ability to fulfill strategic goals.

Researchers have indicated that health care organizations experience high turnover rates (Collins et al., 2015; Sandhya & Kumar, 2015). Employee turnover remains one of the highest ranked organizational risks (Balakrishnan, 2014; Collins et al., 2015; Oladapo, 2014). Workforce shortages exacerbate the impact of losing experienced and talented health care workers (Collins et al., 2015).

Losing skilled employees has a significant effect on whether or not a health care organization achieves its strategic goals (Collins et al., 2015). These effects include increased recruitment and termination expenses, decreased productivity and morale of the remaining employees, and low performance by new employees until they achieve full competence at their jobs (Collins et al., 2015).

A retention strategy involves taking measures to encourage employees to remain with the organization (Ratna & Chawla, 2012). Implementing retention strategies is a crucial factor in reducing turnover (Ratna & Chawla, 2012). Therefore, a key component of having a safe, profitable, and sustainable health care organization is maintaining human capital. My objective was to focus on the reduction of EVS employee turnover. Health care managers struggle to retain their experienced and talented EVS workers (St. Clair, 2014). The results of this study could improve retention strategies for reducing employee turnover. The results could improve an organization's business practices because employee turnover hurts a hospital's financial performance and ability to care for patients (Ratna & Chawla, 2012; St. Clair, 2014).

### **Implications for Social Change**

The results of this study may contribute to positive social change by improving retention strategies for EVS managers. Voluntary turnover in EVS departments is high, which reflects low employee morale (St. Clair, 2014). With better EVS retention strategies the overall well-being of the workforce may improve. Managers with positive leadership strategies may inspire and motivate their employees (Cooper-Thomas, Paterson, Stadler, & Saks, 2014; Garg & Dhar, 2014; Karatepe, 2014). Improve employee performance may also result in positive social change as it may improve and increase the growth and sustainability of the organization and patient safety (Shuck et al., 2014). That may lead to better opportunities for employees and provide prosperity for families and communities.

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

In the literature review, I provide a foundation for the topics including Burns's TLT consisting of the conceptual framework for the study. I explored a variety of professional and academic resources in the field of business and specifically within the health care system that is crucial to understanding EVS employee turnover. I organized the literature review by themes to represent the information comprehensively. In addition, I detailed Lewin, Lippitt, and White's (1939) laissez-faire leadership theory, Von Bertalanffy's (1968) systems theory, and Bass's (1985) transactional leadership theory. I addressed the qualities, shortcomings, and constraints of each theory and explained why they are inappropriate for this study. I also provided reasons why Burns's TLT was the appropriate conceptual framework.

I used the following databases and search engines to retrieve peer-reviewed journals, articles, and seminal books: ABI/INFORM Complete, Business Source Complete, Academic Search Complete, Dissertation and Theses at Walden University, ProQuest, eBook Collection (EBSCOhost) Emerald Management Journal, SAGE Premier, Thoreau, Google Scholar, and NC Live.org. Also, I used U.S. government agency websites and search engines to obtain statistics and data. Terms that I used to retrieve information included *hospital retention and turnover challenges*, *job satisfaction*, *communication*, *transactional and transformational leadership theory*, and *laissez-faire leadership theory*. Other topics I researched included *voluntary and involuntary turnover*, *management-employee relationships*, *employee performance*, *engagement*, *empowerment*, and *organizational culture*. To expand further, on the study, I used

keywords such as *EVS workforce, entry-level and frontline employees, intention to leave, toxic employees, and toxic supervisors.*

The review of the professional and academic literature for this study included seminal books, dissertations, scholarly peer-reviewed articles, and other sources to acquire appropriate information about the research topic. There are a total of 237 sources in the literature review; 213 (89.87%) are peer reviewed, of which 207 (87.0%) were published in 2014 and beyond. The literature review consists of (a) TLT (b) contrasting theories of the conceptual framework, (c) association of turnover with poor leadership, (d) retention strategies, (e) the efficacy of transformational leadership as a retention strategy, and (f) health care EVS departments reflect themes.

### **Transformational Leadership Theory**

TLT is a leadership concept that motivates employees to engage more in their job and provides positive perception guide for employees in low paying jobs. Leaders place emphasis on satisfying the basic needs and meeting higher desires of employees while encouraging workers to provide new and creative solutions in the workplace. Gyensare, Ankus-Tsede, Sanda, and Okpoti (2016) used TLT to study retention and turnover that resulted in an adverse outcome for highly promoted and focused followers but a positive outcome for employees in a low paying job. Followers seeing their managers using transformational leadership are less likely to quit their job. Leaders using transformational leadership commonly known to get employees to transcend their self interest on behalf of the organization (Effelsberg, Solga, & Gurt, 2014). Transformational leaders act as role models, inspire and empower employees, and recognize individual

needs. Transformational leaders provide a platform for individuals to engage in new and creative solutions.

In addition, leaders who employ transformational leadership can move employees to surpass expected performance and can prompt workers to experience a high level of satisfaction and sense of commitment to the group and organization (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Choi, Goh, Adam, & Tan, 2016). Leaders who exhibit a transformational leadership style encourage and stimulate their workers, focus on their employees' needs, and connect their employees' goals and values to the organization (Bøgh Andersen, Bjørnholt, Ladegaard Bro, & Holm-Petersen, 2018). Leaders, placing emphasizes on satisfying the basic needs and meeting higher desires of employees, encourage workers to provide new and creative solutions in the workplace that bring about positive change. TLT also enhances employee motivations, morale, and work performance, and creates value in an employee commitment to the organization. Therefore, transformational leadership is a positive concept in retaining workforces and motivating the employee in low paying jobs.

Burns's work is used in various businesses that allows leaders to change and transform employees into better workers while exceeding the organization expectations. Historically, scholars focused their research on transformational leadership in the military. The focus later expanded to leadership in business, government institutions, education, health care settings, and the nonprofit sectors (Bass & Riggio, 2006). In 1973, Downton first created the term *transformational leadership* as part of the new leadership paradigm, which emphasized attention on the charismatic, compelling features of



leadership. The paradigm later emerged as a fundamental approach to leadership and a vital part of Burns's (1978) work. Burns first developed the concept of transformational leadership. Burns argued that to achieve high levels of performance among individuals, leaders must act as role models that will inspire followers, challenge individuals to take more significant ownership of their work, and understand workers' strengths and weaknesses to assign tasks in alignment with those strengths and weaknesses. Burns used TLT to link the roles of leadership and followership to affect positive changes in individuals and social systems.

In 1985, Bass expanded and refined the works of Burns by placing more focus on the followers rather than the leader's needs. Bass noted transformational leadership could measure how it inspires supporters' enthusiasm and performance (Ross, Fitzpatrick, Click, Krouse, & Clavelle, 2015). Transformational leaders can be measured by how their behavior influences people and the success and sustainability of the organization (Bottomley, Burgess, & Fox, 2014). Bass (1999) concluded that transformational leadership inspires followers to accomplish more than anticipated by raising their level of awareness of the value of specified and idealized goals. Transformational leadership is a leadership used by some scholars to bring awareness to leaders and followers helping each other to advance to a higher level of transforming, inspiring, and achieving goals beyond normal expectations. The use of TLT through the years expanded from military to a variety of other businesses that can change and transform individuals into leaders.

Researchers found that TLT is a full range leadership model deemed to explore effective leadership in organizations, has international acceptance in leadership literature,

and receives significant support from empirical research (Caillier, 2014; Paladan, 2015). TLT is also, the most common theory used by researchers to explore strategies that bring about positive change in organizations and most scholars prefer transformational leadership to transactional leadership (Caillier, 2014). In addition, through the years, researchers used TLT to explore and understand the phenomena of employee retention and turnover in the workplace (Gyensare, Anku-Tsedde, Sanda, & Okpoti, 2016). Transformational leadership has captured widespread attention and used by some leaders to explore strategies to implement positive change, which is helpful in the prediction of the business performance.

Transformational leaders help employees with their personal development and growth by challenging and stimulating their knowledge. Transformational leadership brings significant and positive change among supporters by leaders acting as role models who demonstrate intellectual motivation and concern for followers (Holstad, Korek, Rigotti & Mohr, 2014; Katou, 2015). Leaders focus on the growth of their employees and act on their talents to motivate and inspire. More so than with other leadership styles, leaders who use transformational leadership act as aides, guides, mentors, motivators, inspirers, listeners, and coaches to exchange the vision of members (Jyoti & Bhau, 2015; Mathew & Gupta, 2015). Leaders try to create a better working environment for workers of the organization. Researchers of transformational leadership Henker, Sonnentag, and Unget (2015) argued that transformational leadership is crucial to foster creative engagement in the workplace, primarily to explore new approaches without the fear of failure.

Employees are encouraged to participate in workplace decision making to add new ideas that help promote their talents. Leaders, who promote employee creativity, motivate employees to achieve a positive outcome (Dhar, 2015; Schmidt and Pohler, 2015; Qu, Janssen & Shi, 2015). In addition, transformational leaders are proactive in helping followers achieve unforeseen objectives and move past self-interest (Bass, 1999). The transformational initiative is an important forerunner to build the confidence or strength required for success when confronted with severe challenges (Gillet & Vandenberghe, 2014). Leaders who lead with transformational leadership have a positive outcome because managers empower, inspire, and encourage employees to voice their ideas. TLT managers give a real sense of a leader who wants employees to reach and exceed their usual levels of performance and their personal goals. Transformational leadership is the most leading leadership style used in the 2010's to bring about positive change in organizations.

Transformational leaders promote trust, admiration, trustworthiness, and respect among employees. Transformational leaders inspire followers to have an open mind and to develop a culture of trust and collaboration among team members (Boies, Fiset, & Gill, 2015). Transformational leadership positively affects employee satisfaction, productivity, performance and, their effectiveness (Andersen, Bjørnholt, Bro, & Holm-Petersen, 2017; Belias & Koustelios, 2014). Therefore researchers found it crucial for organizations to have influential leaders that help workers perform outside of their expectations, sustain a positive culture, and motivate followers to become transformational leaders themselves. Zwingmann et al. (2014) stated that the primary behavior of transformational leaders

includes articulating a vision for followers that emphasizes higher essential needs and organizational goals. Also, transformational leadership represents an exchange where both leaders and followers influence each other and gain something of value (Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987). Transformational leaders enhance their employee perception and expectation of the organization while working towards one common goal that affects the business bottom line. Transformational leaders promote trust, admiration, trustworthiness, respect amongst employees, and provides a clear vision of the organization.

Four components underlie the transformation leadership style that brings about positive change. Bass (1997) identified four dimensions of transformational leadership: (a) idealized influence, (b) inspirational motivation, (c) intellectual stimulation, and (d) individualized consideration. These four dimensions, often referred to as the *four I's* of transformational leadership, describe traits exhibited by an experienced leader in a knowledge based economy grounded in developing and managing intellectual resources within organizations (Ghasabeh, Soosay, & Reaiche, 2015). The components of transformational leadership are an essential role in modeling, motivating, developing, and encouraging creativity. The use of the four transformational leadership components helps leaders to empower, coach and nurture their employees to change for the purpose of the organization and themselves and move followers to go beyond than just meeting simple expectation but to reach their full potential.

Cetin and Kinik (2015) found that the dynamics of transformational leadership involved followers (a) identifying personally with a leader, (b) having a shared vision for

the future, (c) working collectively for the benefit of the group, (d) feeling respected and admired by other followers, and (e) having a clear sense of purpose. The demonstration of leadership should motivate employees through a commitment to goals and a shared vision; moreover, creativity should be encouraged, and individual differences respected. TLT is relevant for identifying effective leadership strategies because these leaders demonstrate practices and qualities of effective leadership.

Transformational leaders tend to share a common enterprise and depend on one another. TLT is a mechanism that promotes two-way communication where information and ideas exchanges. Also, TLT leaders transform employees and get them to pursue a higher purpose that leads to positive change (Van Dierendonck, Stam, Boersma, De Windt, & Alkema, 2014). Transformational leaders bring positive change that helps to recognize needed change and create a vision to guide the change through stimulating employees to follow along. Transformational leaders lead by example, support commitment to goals and create an environment of trust and self confidence in employees. Transformational leaders also, elevate on the maturity and ideas of followers, concern for the employee achievements, encourage employees' creativity, envision a desired future, articulate how to reach their goals, coach, support the employee's needs, and represent the four I's of the TLT.

Researchers in other fields have expanded on the works of Burns's (1978) TLT. Chou, Lin, Chang, and Chuang (2013) used TLT to explore relationships among transformational leadership style, cognitive trust, and collective efficacy and to explore how these variables impact team performance. The results of Chou et al.'s study revealed

that team leaders play a strategic role in determining group performance and that transformational leadership efficiently develops team performance. Ghasabeh et al. (2015) investigated TLT as a model leadership form in helping companies compete in global markets. Ghasabeh et al.'s study revealed that businesses in the world market applied intellectual stimulation strategies that motivated employees to create new and valuable services or products.

Quin, Deris, Bischoff, and Johnson (2015) explored the effectiveness of TLT practices in a study on school districts and school principal preparation programs. Quin et al. incorporated Kouzes and Posner's leadership practices inventory into school curricula to develop highly qualified school leaders. Kouzes and Posner's leadership practice entails young leaders helping others to make extraordinary things happen, transforming values, vision, obstacles to realities and innovations (Kouzer & Posner, 2014). Quin et al. revealed that school principals involved in the study used all five transformational leadership practices (model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart) regularly with high performance. Moreover, Kazmi and Naaranoja, (2015) and Quin et al. (2015) noted that the findings from the five leadership practices showed exemplary changes in an organization between transformational practices of inspiring a shared vision and challenging the process. The Kouzes and Posner (2012) theory referred to as *The Leadership Challenge* that entails and reflects Burns's concept that the ultimate effects of leadership are only understood by way of evaluating leader and follower interactions.

Some transformational leaders approach leadership power with hope for a positive outcome. Transformational leadership is more than exchanges or agreements. TLT centers on inspirations and qualities in surveying how a leader approaches power and achieve superior results (Bass, & Riggio, 2006; Yaghoubi, Mahallati, Moghadam, & Fallah, 2014). Both Burns's TLT and The Kouzes and Posner theory achieve extraordinary results by developing a shared vision, setting the example, challenging the status quo, and supporting employees that generate change within an organization.

In (1985) Bass expanded on Burns's (1978) TLT, described specific behaviors associated with each underlying key construct/propositions (a) idealized influence, (b) inspirational motivation, (c) intellectual stimulation, and (d) individualized consideration. Leaders approach to power makes a difference between a negative or positive working relationship. Some leaders coerce employees to perform their jobs and pending the outcome, rewards or punishment may follow. Leaders using transformational leadership use their approach to power to create valuable change in the employees and the organization. Leaders want to create a positive change and inspire employees to go beyond task setting.

**Idealized influence.** Idealized influence (II) is an underlying key construct/proposition of the TLT that involves risk sharing on the part of the leader. Yaghoubi, Mahallati, Moghadam, and Fallah (2014) described II as an emotional component of leadership, the charisma that motivates followers and creates trust, and confidence between the leader and the worker. Employees are more motivated and productive when they feel appreciated or valued when leaders communicate their role in

the organization (White, 2014). Managers in EVS valuing and appreciating employee contribution to the organization, communicating with employees in an authentic way that is encouraging and meaningful may increase productivity and reduce turnover. Leaders act as role models who demonstrate specific moral behaviors where leaders lead by example (Kamal & Kamal, 2014; Cetin & Kinik, 2015). Also, exhibited behaviors may reflect high moral and ethical principles (Sosik, Chun, Blair, & Fitzgerald, 2014). Followers strive to emulate the behavior of their leaders (Caillier 2014). Leaders acting in a way inspires followers to build trust, makes the employees feel appreciated and valued, leading to a better working relationship with their employees.

II measures on two components, attributional and behavioral. The II construct can be further broken down into two elements: *attributional* and *behavioral* (Schweitzer, 2014). The attributional element refers to how the subordinates perceive their leader (Northouse, 2013). For example, the charismatic leader ensures subordinates will overcome difficulties (Rana, Malik & Hussain, 2016). The behavioral element refers to the followers' observations of their leader's behavior (Belias & Koustelios, 2014). For example, workers may observe their leader overcoming difficulties (Northouse, 2013). The leader wants employees to have a positive perception of how they lead and interact with others. Leaders exhibiting excellent behavior affects how an employee perceives them, and it enhances the influence and performance of their team.

**Inspirational motivation.** Inspirational motivation (IM) is another construct of transformational leadership that facilitates a feeling of optimism and commitment. IM reflects on leaders who motivate followers to commit to the shared organizational vision



and to strive toward high expectations (Hoffmeister et al., 2014). One means of motivating workers involved articulating a clear vision of a desirable future (Avolio et al., 1999; Bass, 1998). Leaders detail group expectations, simplifying the language so all subordinates can understand, keeping complex issues to a minimum, and encouraging relevant sacrifices (Mittal & Dhar, 2015). Leaders facilitate a sense of priorities and purpose that aligned with the followers' interests as well as organizational goals (Cetin & Kinik, 2015). Leaders communicate the organization's expectations in the hope of motivating employees to commit to the business vision. Employees realize how they could play a part in the organization; by achieving their vision which, gives them a sense of belonging to something unique and raises their team morale and motivation.

Employees understanding the big picture of the business can make a difference in the organization achieving their goals. Northouse (2015) noted that leaders who demonstrated IM communicate the essential role followers played in the future growth of the organization. By uplifting the vision, subordinates found their work more meaningful which could decrease turnover (Cetin & Kinik, 2015; Patton, 2015). Leaders used symbols and emotional appeals to focus group interest (Northouse, 2013). TLT leaders displayed the team spirit to enhance enthusiasm and motivation within the organization (Jiang, Gao, & Yang, 2018). Demonstrated enthusiasm for and commitment to organizational goals challenges as well as persuades employees (Avolio et al., 1999; Bass, 1998). Employees can accept the challenge, strive toward the goals, and exceed expectations (Hirschi & Valero, 2017).

Furthermore, leaders encouraged team spirit to reach organizational goals. Also, leaders stimulated followers by being visionary and motivational that inspire followers to accept the commitment of the organization meeting future goals. The employee felt they have a purpose to come to work and perform high expectations.

**Intellectual stimulation.** The intellectual stimulation (IS) component refers to how transformational leaders shared knowledge and challenge followers to think outside their comfort zone. Without the fear of punishment, workers used innovative, possibly controversial, approaches and engaged in problem solving that stimulated excellent ideas. The leader wants employees to use their imagination and creativity when dealing with issues within the organization (Bacha, 2014). Leaders encourage subordinates to revisit problems and create a new approach to the way they think and solve problems. Through IS, transformational leaders reexamine critical assumptions (Cetin & Kinik, 2015). When employees use their knowledge and engage in problem solving that enables the worker to create and make decision influences creativity among followers. Moreover, there is an opportunity for an employee to learn, grow, and develop in the business.

**Individualized consideration.** Employing individualized consideration (IC), a leader mentor, facilitate, listen and support the employee needs. Leaders who demonstrate IC listen to and concentrate on the unique needs of followers, provide a supportive climate, and empower their supporters (Norman, Gardner, & Pierce, 2015). Leaders treat subordinates as individuals rather than group members, identified their individual needs, and addressed them in a unique way that is acceptable to each employee (Ghasabeh et al., 2015). Cetin and Kinik (2015) described the main features of IC as

having the ability to recognize differences in each person's strengths, weaknesses, likes, and dislikes. Leaders applied IC through active listening, assigning projects to appropriate individuals, encouraging two-way exchanges, and promoting self-development (Chua & Murray, 2015). As noted by Bass (1999) leaders used delegation of assignments as an opportunity for growth for their subordinates. Ultimately, leaders who displayed IC foster self-actualized employees by coaching, mentoring, and teaching their followers (Avolio et al., 1999; Northouse, 2013). Transformational leaders listen to what the employee needs and provide a supportive climate. Each employee possesses their characteristics, strengths, and weakness; leaders act as coaches and mentors assisting employees in overcoming their weaknesses and becoming better employees. The leader plays a decisive role in assigning employees tasks that boost morale and productivity.

Transformational leadership is among the most popular approaches to effective leadership that influenced positive change within a follower's behavior. Over the years, researchers have identified transformational leadership as the leadership style that leads to positive job satisfaction and improved employee performance (Jyoti & Dev, 2015). It is crucial for an organization to have a strong leader who can sustain a positive culture, influence workers to perform beyond expectations, achieve excellence, and motivate followers to become transformational leaders themselves (Tse, To, & Chiu, 2017). The components of TLT positively associated with employee job satisfaction in analyzing the relationship between leaders and their workers (Bayram & Dinc, 2015). A transformational leader influences their employees by listening, providing constructive

feedback, encourage employees to go beyond their usual task to meet the organizational goals and to forgo personal interests, and to come up with a new way to solve the problem. Transformational leadership is an effective and positive way to approach leadership among followers.

**Criticism of the transformational leadership theory.** Although many researchers have accepted the TLT, some researchers have identified several weaknesses. One of the weaknesses noted by Northouse (2018) is that TLT covers such a wide range of activities and characteristics that it lacks conceptual clarity and is hard to define precisely the parameter of TLT, which leads to uncertainty in measuring and explaining the effectiveness of transformational leadership. Another weakness described by Andersen (2015) is that transformational leadership is the dark side of charisma since some leaders have a powerful influence over their subordinates who idolize or worship the leader, which could lead to potential abuse of power. Leaders who follow transformational leadership used positive influence to transition followers to be better employees which helps the organization attain goals. Andersen also noted that such influence is dangerous because it makes followers more susceptible to deception. Burns described transformational leaders as *great men* (Northouse, 2013). Bass noted transformational leadership is a flawless, perfect, an idealized form of leadership (Lee, 2014). The four components of transformational leadership inspirational motivation, inspirational leadership, idealized influence, and charisma leadership as advocated by Bass significant overlaps and should not be used because they are used interchangeably and are conceptually distinct (Northouse, 2013). Though, there are many criticisms of

transformational leadership some scholars noted it has a positive effect on organizations, improve productivity, creativity, and the performance of the organization.

TLT is the most observed and least understood phenomena. Most researchers still prefer TLT versus transactional leadership theory or laissez-faire leadership theory because transformational leaders help employees to grow and develop into leaders by responding to the employees' needs, by empowering and aligning the objectives and goals of the individuals, the leaders, and the organization's vision and goals (Tyssen, Wald, & Spieth, 2014; Ghasabeh, Soosay, & Reaiche, 2015). Also, TLT has increased in popularity, and its advantages of leadership effectiveness (Men, 2014). Transformational leadership has a positive effect on the organization that improves employee motivation, performance, and productivity; their innovation; respect for others; and inspire creativity among employees. However, some researchers have different opinions about the theory of TLT. The leader used transformational leadership in influencing individuals to work toward the greater good of the organization.

**Implications of using transformational leadership theory.** Some scholars indicated that transformational leadership could improve organizational effectiveness and help build a sustainable workforce. Herman et al. (2013) noted that researchers have devoted a significant amount of time exploring factors that influence an employee to leave their organization voluntarily. Negative variables such as discouraging finances, declining employee attitudes about their supervisors and jobs, and the undermining of workforce productivity relate to a worker's decision to leave their job (Sun & Wang, 2016). The ability of managers to understand these issues and to deal with their

employees' wellbeing may provide the organization with an unparalleled resource for operational effectiveness (Cohen, Blake, & Goodman, 2016). Sometimes it may be difficult to pinpoint the exact reason an employee left their job. Occasionally leaders know an employee's reason at the exit interviews, which is sometimes too late for the manager to correct. Incorporating TLT can help to transition people to a more stable atmosphere where they have the freedom to voice their concerns without fear. Leaders using transformational leadership open up many possibilities for an employee to engage, and share knowledge.

Transformational leaders are influential leaders that supply the right tools to strengthen leader employee relationships. Taylor, Cornelius, and Colvin (2014) noted that transformational leadership could strengthen the relationship between a leader and subordinates by communicating the organization's vision. When the vision of the organization is clearly communicated, the employee does not spend time trying to figure out what direction to take or becomes nonresponsive to the vision. An enhanced relationship between managers and workers could elevate the interest of the employee and generate awareness, which could influence the worker to perform beyond their normal levels of performance (Chiaburu, Smith & Wangm 2014). Transformational leaders can enhance the way employees perform by articulating the organization's vision and empowering workers to engage in the growth of the business. This creates high levels of commitment, trust, motivation, and enhances the performance and effectiveness of the organization. Transformational leaders who create change among employees may result in a positive perception that motivates and encourages the worker.

Similarly, transformational leaders demonstrating charismatic behaviors can inspire, motivate, and intellectually stimulate employees (Afsar, Badir, & Bin Saeed, 2014). By sharing knowledge with workers, leaders welcome their employees to try innovative ways of completing tasks and solving problems. The practices help subordinates achieve their maximum capacity and produce the most unusual amounts of execution (Pradhan & Pradhan, 2015). Transformational leaders act in the best interest of their employee while creating a positive change to obtain a high level goal through their charisma and appeal for high moral and ethical standards that influence workers (Dartey-Baah, 2015). Also, transformational leaders acting as role models enhance employee productivity (Trmal et al., 2015). Leaders who created a better relationship with employees generate a better workplace that enhances the vision and goals of the organization. Therefore, I selected transformational leadership as the conceptual framework for this qualitative multiple case study and the lens through which I viewed my study. The results may prompt positive changes in business performance and help health care managers retain employees while decreasing turnover.

### **Contrasting Theories of the Conceptual Framework**

In addition to the TLT, researchers used other theories to explore employee turnover. To gain a more in-depth understanding of employee turnover, there were other theories considered that could have a profound effect on subordinates turnover. I considered using transactional leadership theory, laissez-faire theory, and systems theory but found those inappropriate to use as a conceptual framework. I selected TLT to guide

this study because it identifies strategies that managers can use to motivate their workers, boost employee performance, and reduce turnover.

**Transactional leadership theory.** Transactional leadership differs from transformational leadership and does not fit into an organization that values employees' ideas and their creativity. Leaders that use transactional leadership want a structure and order environment. The theory involves exchanges between the leaders and subordinates. These types of leaders use a system of punishment and reward to achieve their primary goals and to get subordinates to obey instructions (Birasnav, 2014). Bass (1985) noted that transactional leaders utilized different types of transactions based on what employees need to accomplish for their own desired personal outcomes. For example, an employee might want or need to work overtime to pay for a vacation.

Furthermore, transactional leaders exceedingly focus on reinforcement of hierarchical structures and compensation (Tyssen, Wald, & Spieth, 2014). Also, transactional leaders demonstrated reactive behavior, correcting mistakes after they arise, and dedicating a significant contribution to improving organizational performance (Birasnav, 2014). Transactional leaders tell the employee exactly what to do and expect the worker to follow through to complete the task. In the end, employees expect rewards for their performance. Transactional leaders used the reactive approach, positive and negative reinforcement to get employees to perform better. Although punishment is not always mentioned, it is understood that the employee not finishing assignments may lead to disciplinary actions.



In 1985, Burns described transformational and transactional leadership as a continuum. However, Burns had argued in 1978 that the use of transactional leadership leads to temporary relationships of exchange, as opposed to stronger, and more lasting relationships commonly associated with transformational leadership (as noted by McClesky, 2014). The literature reveals additional flaws in transactional leadership. Breevaart et al., (2014) and Northouse (2013) argued that as opposed to transformational leadership, which derives authority from leaders who motivate employees to go beyond expectations, transactional leadership derives authority from power because leaders convince employees to fulfill expectations by exchanging specified rewards. Dartey-Baah (2015) and Rawung, Wuryaningrat, and Elvinita (2015) noted that transactional leaders neither focus on each employee nor nurture their personal development. More importantly, transactional leaders are motivated by self-interest and not by the interests of their followers (Vito, Higgins, & Denney 2014).

On the other hand, transformational leaders are influential in convincing subordinates to make decisions according to their subordinate's own best interests (Northouse, 2013). Ultimately, transactional leadership uses coercive power to lead subordinates. I found transformational leadership more appropriate for this study because the goal was to explore what approaches managers can take to address the needs of EVS workers and to encourage those workers to be more engaged in the organization.

**Laissez-faire leadership theory.** Some scholars prefer to use laissez-faire leadership as the delegation leadership, which can lead to low productivity among employees. The theory involves a passive leadership style where leaders delegate full

decision making authority to subordinates (Zareen, Razzaq, & Mujtaba, 2015). Puni, Agyemang, & Asamoah (2016) described the approach as “hands-off” where managers tend to “let things ride.” Laissez-faire leaders empower workers with authority and responsibility, who may not have the abilities to accomplish the task without leadership guidance (Wong & Giessner, 2016). Laissez-faire leaders provide certain resources but allow subordinates to have the freedom to make their own decision without supervision. Laissez-faire leaders tend to trust the employees to work towards solutions on their own, deciding what is right or wrong.

Researchers identified a few benefits to using the laissez-faire style of leadership. Laissez-faire leaders may provide subordinates with necessary tools and resources to do their job (Northouse, 2015). Also, leaders who expect employees to solve their problems give workers the opportunity to develop and to better understand essential organizational tools (Zareen et al., 2015). Capable employees working under laissez-faire leadership may demonstrate high level skills, motivation, and willingness to take ownership of their decisions (Buch, Martinsen, & Kuvaas, 2015). Moreover, laissez-faire leadership may indicate a leader’s admiration for a worker’s capabilities in particular circumstances (Gilbert et al., 2016; Yang, 2015). Employees working independently may be capable of accomplishing the task with little guidance, and any decisions made, the leader takes full responsibility. This requires a great deal of trust from management. However, an employee with little knowledge may be unable to meet the deadline and work independently. Leaders having more interaction with employees can provide more

insights into how a worker can accomplish projects and deadlines. In addition, employees with the least knowledge about the task can shadow expert workers to gain information.

However, researchers found numerous negative aspects of laissez-faire leadership that could lead to disasters in the workplace (Yang, 2015). In general, laissez-faire leaders tend to avoid their obligations of directing and decision making, keeping themselves at a distance from the issues faced by their employees (Harold & Holtz, 2015; Buch, Martinsen, & Kuvaas, 2015). Leaders disregard their supervisory duties, provide little guidance or support to their subordinates, and pay little regard to productivity or deadline completion (Zareen et al., 2015). Leaders who choose to neglect their responsibilities may not be in the right position to exert authority. Moreover, the organization should scrutinize this type of leadership because it can lead to the inability or unwillingness of a leader to do their job (Yang, 2015). Some employees lack the knowledge and experience to perform their job duties, resulting in poor job performance, and an adverse outcome for the business.

Laissez-faire leadership managers transfer authority and responsibilities to employees can lead to small issues turning into serious problems. Flaws of the laissez-faire leadership style can be described by the expression *management by exception* (Bass, 1999). Laissez-faire leaders handle only exceptions and intervene when problems become perpetual (Gibert et al., 2016). Skogstad, Hetland, Glasø, and Einarsen (2014) described Laissez-faire leaders as those who wait for issues to emerge before making a restorative move. The absence of laissez-faire leaders can leave employees feeling unimportant,

frustrated, and disconnected. A lack of feedback from leaders on a special project might be problematic.

Laissez-faire leadership is a passively destructive form of leadership that could hurt the performance and attitudes of subordinates as well as the organization (Yang, 2015). It may cause stress in the workplace, demotivation, or bullying (Saeed, Almas, Anis-ul-Hag, Niazi, 2014). Lack of communication between leaders and employees may cause avoidance, or abandonment of representation (Yang, 2015). Ineffectiveness may result from the overall failure of leaders to take responsibility for managing employees (Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016). Similarly, Fors Brandebo, Nilsson, & Larsson (2016) asserted that leaders with no organizational vision, lack clear competencies, or responsibilities, lack authority to discipline, or make demands of subordinates. I decided against using laissez-faire leadership theory as the conceptual framework for this study because it regularly involves unconcerned leaders who act passively towards potential issues. Laissez-faire leadership did not align with this study's purpose in solving turnover problems in hospital EVS departments and finding strategies to retain skilled EVS employees.

**Systems theory.** I considered the systems theory for the conceptual framework for my study because this theory provides a panoramic view of an organization that gives leaders an understanding of how the business functions. Organizations utilizing this concept aim to reach their full potential through system wholeness of human capital, social prospects, and technology (Karniouchina, Carson, Short, & Ketchen, 2013). Credited with the initial development of the systems theory in 1968, von Bertalanffy first

introduced the general system theory in 1937 and further developed the theory in 1949 and 1972. The theory describes systems as comprised of interdependent components, which includes the study of science, and living organisms as well as social phenomena (Caws, 2015). Other researchers described systems theory as the input-throughput-output of an organization (Adams, Hester, Bradley, Meyers & Keating, 2014). Conceptually bringing together the subsystems aids the understanding of how those systems function within the organization (Young & Leveson, 2014). As Rousseau (2015) described systems theory as any group of objects that collaborate to produce some results. Eason, (2014) emphasized the appropriateness of systems theory for examining, managing, and planning within the organization. The concept may also reestablish a point of view that permits managers to comprehend their workers' importance as a vital system in the organization (Morgeson, Mitchell, & Liu, 2015). The perspective of systems theory will allow a leader to gain a deeper understanding and the big picture of the relationship and function of a general nature, and society as a whole.

However, systems theory was not appropriate for this study because it incorporates a wide field of research with different conceptualizations and areas of focus. Conversely, TLT portrays more explicitly how managers can create and actualize necessary changes in an organization. Leaders engage with their subordinates, which fosters increased inspiration and better-quality work for both employees, and leaders. TLT embraces leaders with specific qualities, such as certainty, extroversion, and specific values, which in turn motivate subordinates. Transformational leaders nurture their employees and help workers achieve their highest potential.

### **Associating Turnover with Poor Leadership**

**Turnover.** Turnover is challenging and costly to any organization from the demand of replacing employees who voluntarily quit or fired from their jobs to training employees. Employees seeking better employment sometimes leave their jobs with important knowledge and experiences that could help the competition. That could sometimes reduce morale among other workers (Collini, Guidroz, & Perez, 2015; Katisikea, Theodosiou, & Morgan, 2015). *Turnover*, defined by Martin (2015) as the rate at which employers gain and lose employees, is endemic (Babalola, Stouten, & Euwema, 2016; Nivethitha & Kamalanabhan, 2014). The high rate of turnover cost businesses billions of dollars annually (Alexander, 2016; Nichols et al., 2016). The forthcoming retirement of the baby boomer population, which forms a significant portion of the workforce, threatens organizations that have poor retention, as those organizations will either be understaffed, or confronted with a low performing workforce (Kraemer & Gouthier, 2014; Milman & Dickson, 2014). Employee turnover hurts a company bottom line and damages the morale among the remaining staff. Hiring the correct person that fits the organizational culture may eliminate some turnover.

Effective leadership is critical to any organization. Having good leadership builds teams, set goals, motivates, and inspires others to accomplish goals. As noted by Puni, Agyemang, and Asamoah (2016) leadership continues to shape organization strategies, and their performance; and sustainability inspires workers to execute tasks past expected organizational targets accomplishing articulated organizational goals. In a different sense, poor leadership style may be the reason why a worker stays, quit their job, or even

participate in Counterproductive Work Behaviors (CWBs). Also, poor leadership can lead to employees' dissatisfaction and can hinder worker retention. Leaders are essential to the organization and having good leadership knowledge to lead can build trust in the leader employee relationship that drives morale, and productivity. Good leaders can motivate and inspire workers to accomplish goals. On the other hand, poor leadership can be devastating to the organization, which causes a loss of motivation, and a loss of productivity among workers, and create damaging relationships between the leader and the employee. It is imperative to have good leadership that drives the team to success or suffer the consequences of turnover.

**Impact of turnover.** Some researchers suggested that turnover is suitable for an organization but detrimental turnover can impact the revenue and profitability of the business. Lashley (2001) noted that turnover might benefit some companies because it allows the firm to replace poorly skilled and unmotivated employees. However, most researchers suggested that turnover is disruptive to an organization and can limit the ability of the business to provide adequate service to its customers (Hunter, 2014). When workers leave, these employees may take away information that is valuable to the company's' future growth. Employees leave an organization for different reasons for retirement, job dissatisfaction, too much work for the pay, not enough flexible hours. Deciding to leave an organization reflects the choice of the worker to terminate the employment relationship. Therefore, employee turnover negatively affects the organization's workforce planning and strategy (Hongvichit, 2015; Babalola, Stouten, & Euwema, 2016). Employee turnover can rid businesses of poor performers who perform

below the organization expectations. Any turnover can affect the organization, not just revenue but also the knowledge that the employee gained from the business. Therefore, turnover has a negative impact on the organization.

Voluntary turnover of main employees may cost businesses directly and indirectly. Recruitment and training of new hires incur direct administration costs, and sometimes this can hinder the growth and success of the firm (Hom, Lee, Shaw, & Hausknecht, 2017; Polanski, Avey, & Jiraporn, 2014; Peachey, Burton, & Wells, 2014). Time, another of a company's valuable resources, is also diverted to filling open positions in organizations with a high turnover rate (Anvari, JianFu, & Chermahini, 2014; Cloutier, Felusiak, Hill, & Pemberton-Jones, 2015). The manager foresees voluntary turnover and prepare, so productivity and time are not lost. Recognizing the commitment an individual has for their organization and an organization has for its workers create an environment where workers want to work, will help a business meet the needs of the employees, and the goals of the organization.

Employee turnover presents several additional difficulties to businesses including the loss of knowledgeable and experienced employees, a reduction in employee morale, and unpredictable financial performance (Eckardt, Skaggs, & Youndt, 2014; Katsikea, Theodosiou, & Morgan, 2015). Although employees are the backbone of any business' success, Collins et al. (2015) emphasized that employee, the expense maybe even more disturbing than the related financial expense associated with turnover. Individuals who do not fit into an organization may spend a lot of their time upsetting the morale of more satisfied workers. Therefore, before an employee decides to leave the organization, they



tend to irritate the client, customer, and community relations, which are all noteworthy costs. On the other hand, losing valuable employees with useful information may also have a detrimental consequence on the organization (Hofhuis, Van der Zee, & Otten, 2014; Nica, 2016; Zhang, 2016). Turnovers can have many consequences. Understanding the cause and effect can help business development strategies and policies to increase retention.

**Causes of turnover.** Employee turnover is expensive, and management may be the cause of some employee's voluntary resignation. Katsikea et al. (2015) noted that one of the more apparent reasons a business may experience turnover is that employees may receive higher pay at another organization. This phenomenon could apply to all levels of the economic ladder, from entry-level positions to top executives. However, research has demonstrated that although money plays a role when an employee decides to leave their position, it is often not the cause of turnover (McManus & Mosca, 2015). Circumstances that lead to turnover included the lack of employee engagement, poor communication, poor working conditions, a negative atmosphere, not enough benefits or rewards. Also, ineffective leadership, inadequate supervision, lack of advancement opportunities, and job dissatisfaction (Arnold, & Malshe, 2017; Babalola, Stouten, & Euwema, 2016; Chughtai, Byrne, & Flood, 2014; Rothausen, Henderson, 2017). Leaders that find ways to involve employees in departmental operation have a mass communication system in place for employees to learn about the organization, and its future, while also allowing feedback may eliminate some of the causes of turnover. The following are factors that contributed to turnover.

*Job satisfaction.* Job satisfaction is a critical aspect of organizational success. An employee is having a positive feeling or emotional state about what they perceived about the nature of work that could be inclined by factors such as organization administration, also, policies, supervision, quality, and salary (Diestel, Wegge, & Schmidt, 2014; Dusek, Ruppel, Yurova, & Clarke, 2014; Farooqui & Nagendra, 2014; Huang & Gamble, 2015). There are also, times when an employee is not satisfied with their job and want to seek employment elsewhere (Mohsin & Lengler, 2015). Katsikea et al. (2015) identified low levels of job satisfaction as one of the leading causes of turnover. As noted by Waldman, Avey, & Jirapiron (2014) that the lack of job satisfaction increases absentee rates and turnover while presenting additional organizational challenges.

Furthermore, Buky, Asare, Kwesiga, and Bline (2014) and Kim, Henderson, and Eom (2015), stated that organizational commitment and job satisfaction are a prominent predictor of employee turnover intention and absenteeism. When employees leave the organization, it is not always for better pay. Some leave because of poor morale and unmotivated employees that caused problems for others, and sometimes good employees leave lousy management. Organizations hiring leaders and managers that fit not only the business but also the culture can eliminate bad supervisors, and managers.

Therefore, Chen, Friedman, and Simons, (2014) evaluated whether senior management who has no contact with the line employee affect their satisfaction or dissatisfaction, and their turnover intention. The fact of middle manager's satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their senior executives trickle-down to line employee's satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their supervisors plays a significant role, on employees (Chen et al.,

2014). Moreover, Cloutier et al. (2015) suggested that business leaders contribute significantly to high turnover due to poor relationships with employees. Having a good relationship with employees creates a pleasant work environment. An employee likes to know that as a person they matter and fit into the organization. Leaders showing an employee that they care may keep that person from leaving the organization and reduce turnover.

*Engagement.* Employee engagement is an important concept that is based on trustworthiness and honesty, and employee engagement contributes to employee productivity and performance. Employee engagement is a vital indicator of intrinsic motivation and an essential component of employee performance to their wellbeing (Alagaraja & Shuck, 2015; Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014). Saks and Gruman (2014) and Memon, Salleh, and Baharom (2016) defined engagement as an individual's involvement with, satisfaction with, and enthusiasm for their work. Strong employee engagement positively affects morale and productivity within an organization and therefore helps businesses to retain their workers (Anitha, 2014; Lu, Lu, Gursay, & Neale, 2016). When employees engage in organizational decisions, it gives them a sense of pride, belonging, and security. Engaged employees demonstrate more accountability for decision making and job performance (Kopperud, Martinsen, & Humborstad, 2014; Kumar & Pansari, 2016).

Similarly, Neves and Eisenberger (2014) also found that when subordinates engage in the decision making process, they tend to demonstrate consistency in achieving organizational goals and their own goals. Employees are a company's greatest asset, and

they want to feel they are a big part of the business success; these feelings contribute to an employee's self-determination (McManus & Mosca, 2015). An employee with self-determination provides the satisfaction that is essential for adequate performance (Kovjanic et al., 2013). Engaged employees have support from leaders to express their views on concerns of the organizations. When leaders include employees, they tend to develop a positive attitude, a sense of pride in belonging to something great.

On the other hand, disengaged employees lack the initiative to engage and disconnect from the organization. Organizations around the world suffer from the phenomena of employee disengagement (Aslam, Muqadas, Imran, & Rahman, 2018). Disengaged employees tend to perform poorly, say bad things about the management staff and the organization, and look for another job. Carpenter and Berry (2014) referenced statistics indicating that 56% of workers in the United States lacked engagement with their work and that about 15% of employees actively disengaged with their work. Chaudhary, Rangnekar, and Barua (2013) asserted that employee engagement decreased to 56% in 2010 in the Asian/Pacific Region from 60% the previous year, which represented the most significant decline globally in the last 15 years. Disengaged employees lack motivation and innovation; they make no effort to help the organization reach goals, always have a negative attitude about one thing or another, and continuously undermine their coworkers. Disengaged employees can disrupt and collide with other members. Leaders recognizing disengaged employees should include involving workers in the day to day operations, develop a strategy to stimulate employee engagement, and use their talents to motivate.

The consequences of disengaged employees can cost the organization more than a financial burden. Auh, Menguc, Spyropoulou, and Wang (2016) noted that little interactions between supervisors and employees might form a critical barrier to employee engagement. Bonner, Greenbaum, and Mayer (2016) stated that leaders are in a position to have extensive influence on their workers' perceptions of ethical standards and subsequent behaviors. Leaders that suffer from moral disengagement may negatively influence subordinates (Christie, Bemister, & Dobson, 2015; Egan, Hughes, & Palmer, 2015). Although leaders are in a position to influence employee behavior, some leaders may lead with an iron fist that neither motivate nor inspire an employee to engage. Hiring the correct leader that represents a decisive leadership such as transformational leadership to help employees to work beyond their normal performance will change the perceptions of the employee.

Disengaged employees may have been superior workers who became ordinary workers. For some reason, these employees lost enthusiasm for their occupation or their organization (Saunders & Tiwari, 2014). Leaders and managers must fix the problem by executing new strategies that guarantee employees stay inspired by their employment (Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2014). The economic losses for employees not engaged is estimated at approximately \$500 billion annually (Miller, 2014). However, different circumstances may cause employees to become disengaged. Some employees experience a lack of trust and confidence in senior management; some employees perceive too few opportunities for job advancement within their department or organization (Jin & McDonald, 2016). In some cases, job expectations may have changed from how they

were described at recruitment, which may cause employees to feel a misuse of their talents (Valentin, Valentin, & Nafukho, 2015). In addition, employees tend to disengage when they have to deal with the bad behavior of their managers, and management may fail to intervene quickly when a good employee shows signs of poor engagement (Saunders & Tiwari, 2014). Managers have begun regarding worker engagement as a priority for action because of the adversities caused by disengaged employees (Saunders & Tiwari, 2014). Management needs to consider implementing strategies to encourage learning, performance, and change.

The lack of employee engagement, caused by employees feeling left out of organizational decision making, can lead to employee absenteeism. Businesses in the United States spend \$720 million annually to improve employee engagement and retain skilled workers (Alagaraja & Shuck, 2015; Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014). Leaders who fail to recognize and address employee disengagement may have an adverse effect on the organization's success (Chandani, Mehta, Mall, & Khokhar, 2016). Exploring strategies to improve employee engagement may be essential to the organization's success and vital to the long-term growth of the business (Radda, Maiidadi, & Akanno, 2015). The focus of disengaged employees is epidemic and costs business millions of dollars. Developing strategies that engage employees may reduce absenteeism and tardiness, and even reduce turnover.

*Communication.* Communication in the workplace can improve employee engagement. Scholars suggested that communication between leaders and employees should address the vision, mission, values, and policies of an organization (Cloutier et al.,

2015). Failure to communicate these components in a way that is understood by employees can lead to unhealthy communication and can contribute to an unhealthy work culture, which in turn may lead to employee turnover (Mikkelsen, York, & Arritola, 2015). Therefore, managers having internal communications with the employee are the underlying influence of employee engagement that helps to decrease turnover and improve the organizational image (Karanges, Johnston, Beatson, & Lings, 2015). With many organizations struggling to keep skilled employees, excellent internal communication can be beneficial to the business. It builds trust and fosters employee engagement (Mishra, Boynton, Mishra, & Martin, 2014). The central concept of communication is sharing information among employees.

In addition, employees may respond better when receiving information from a channel they prefer (Mishra et al., 2014). Face-to-face communication allows a person to have a dialogue with a critical audience (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014). Having internal communication ensures the business operates effectively and productively while increasing employee morale and job satisfaction.

*Toxic employees.* The destruction caused by toxic employees can crush a business by reducing the morale and productivity of others. Numerous organizations employ harmful workers that threaten to undermine the working environment (Minor & Housman, 2015). Toxic employees spread discontent among their peers, which brings down a department's morale and productivity. Toxic workers may engage in adverse behavior, may become involved in workplace violence, and may sometimes breach company policies (Self & Self, 2014). A toxic employee tends to hang around the

business to influence others to act like them or bully and intimidate others until they decide to leave. Leaders must deal with toxic employees to ensure they do not influence the departure of a good employee or influence others to adopt their adverse behavior.

Toxic workers tend to gossip and contaminate the working environment, yet management may neglect to deal with them; this neglect may potentially be more damaging to the business (Cheang & Appelbaum, 2015). On the other hand, toxic employees sometimes have unique skills that a company needs to maintain a vast domain of product and services (Minor & Housman, 2015). Some managers are reluctant to discipline these particular employees for fear of not being able to find other qualified applicants (Özer, Ugurluoglu, Kahraman, & Avci, 2017).

However, the poor demeanor of toxic workers may cause their performance to decrease and their negative attitude to spread (Saunders & Tiwari, 2014). These workers tend to locate in a business where they recapture their interest, which leads to a spike in productivity until they lose interest six months later (Bektas & Erkal, 2015). Managers must identify these types of employees and eliminate them from the business because disengaged employees may be bitter and may disrupt workflow.

*Abusive supervision.* Abusive supervision is a serious and growing problem in today's organizations. Workplace mistreatment encompasses a multitude of behaviors such as harsh criticism, silent treatment, ridicule, and abusive supervision. The volatile behavior described as abusive and destructive leadership may have a detrimental effect on staff (Barnes, Lucianetti, Bhawe, & Christian, 2015; Day & Sammons, 2016). Both scholarly and practitioner interest in abusive supervision have grown due to its pervasive



negative impact on an organization regarding decreased employee organizational commitment, job performance, and citizenship behavior (Gabler & Hill, 2015). Abusive supervisors engage in hostile verbal and nonverbal behavior, which creates an undue hardship on their subordinates.

Similarly, Mackey, Frieder, Brees, and Martinko (2015) argued that abusive supervision causes a wide assortment of undesired consequences. The performance of a demanding boss contributed to low-quality exchanges and dysfunctional work behavior (Farh & Chen, 2014). Some employees who experience abusive supervision seldom report it due to fear of losing their job or they do not want to cause trouble for themselves. Abusive supervision may increase subordinates' emotional distress, counterproductive behaviors, deviation, and turnover (Chua, Murray, 2015; Mackey et al., 2015). Also, abusive supervision may cause some employees to experience depression, which may lead to additional health issues (Decker, & Van Quaquebeke, (2015). As noted, some supervisors usually target victims whom they felt were disrespectful and annoying, which creates negativity and poor work performance among employees, eventually creating a turnover (Hoobler, Wu, Liden, Hu, & Wilson 2017). Abuse from workplace authorities is a serious problem that creates an undue hardship on employees, emotional distress, health problems, and severe problems for the organization. Inappropriate behavior from a supervisor leads employees to call off work to escape the abuse. Although abuse happens, organizational leaders must implement primary preventive measures such as; training and development programs that model appropriate behavior, stringent policies to counter abusive behavior, and enact policies

that welcome whistleblowers. Stringent policies can reduce unethical behavior among employees, address the causes of turnover, and provide goals to engage and encourage the worker to meet. Such policies also increase morale, productivity, and employee motivation.

Although supervisors hold power over the subordinates, employees may consequently retaliate against the supervisor when frustrated with the abusive supervision. However, this would lead to formal sanctions on or punishment of the employee (Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara & Suárez-Acosta, 2014). Retaliatory employees may experience counterretaliation by abusive supervisors, especially when those supervisors report unfair acts against them from other departments or workers, which are called the *trickle-down fashion* (Chen, Friedman, & Simons, 2014). Supervisors' depression and emotional distress linked to their perceptions of injustice and subordinate's reports of abusive behavior (Wang, Harms, & Mackey, 2014). Emotional distress may lead supervisors to engage in hostile behavior such as retaliation against employees, with those workers subsequently left feeling scared of losing their job or feeling as if they work in a hostile environment (Parks et al., 2017). According to guidance provided by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, employees have the right to report abusive supervision without fear of retaliation from the supervisor or employer. Supervisors must learn to have self-control and not abuse their supervisory power to retaliate against their workers (Harvey, Harris, Gillis, & Martinko, 2014; Lian et al., 2014). Supervisors and employees must learn to work out their differences in a nonhostile environment that allow each party to stress concern without retaliation, which

can build a respectful relationship between supervisors, and subordinates. The immediate supervisor can play a significant role in building a positive work environment that may help retain valued employees.

### **Retention Strategies**

**Importance of developing retention strategies.** Effective employee retention strategies are essential to organization stability and revenue. Employees are the vital assets of any organization (Kossivi & Kalgora, 2016). Organizational leaders face the dilemma and challenges of replacing 70 million experienced and talented workers (Oladapo, 2014). Also, researchers have found that retaining employees is challenging due to different employees are motivated by different retention strategies, such as training and development, appraisal and compensation which are essentials of the job (Mohamed, Nor, & Dahalan, 2014). A strategy to retain employees is the use of reward programs that reward employees for a job well done (Ferreira & Almeida, 2015). When leaders recognize employees for their work, they tend to be happy and have job satisfaction. For businesses to remain competitive and decrease turnover managers will need to develop or strengthen their retention strategies to attract, hire, develop, and retain valuable employees.

Also, retention in a health care organization is a significant and costly concern when it comes to organizational performance and quality of care (Steinmetz, Vries, & Tijdens, 2014). Researchers have defined retention as the process where those employees are encouraged to remain with their employer for a satisfactory length of time (Gupta & Singh, 2014; Kossivi & Kalgora, 2016). Sandhya and Kumar (2015) agree that employee

retention is a systematic effort by employers to develop an environment that encourages current employees to remain with the organization. Leaders, operating in a competitive business market, are concerned with and challenged by this task (Terera, & Nigirande, 2014). Therefore, the ability of organizations to manage and survive turnover is increasingly essential.

Similarly, Martin (2015) noted that employee retention has emerged as management's most critical challenge of the workforce of the future. Sypniewska (2014) also asserted that businesses face dilemmas when trying to decrease turnover related to low job satisfaction, lack of skills, training, knowledge, and leadership. Employee retention strategies should be a vital part of an organization's best practice of operations. Replacing knowledge and talented employees are expensive, including the expenses of recruiting to fill vacated positions and training. The development of retention strategies can help keep critical employees.

The disruption of the workflow can interrupt the success of the business. The inability to maintain employees makes it difficult to maintain a positive employee culture and morale (Cloutier et al., 2015). As technology continues to advance, the skills of the workforce need to be updated, and so retaining valuable employees is essential to the organization's stability, development, and revenue (Aruna & Anitha, 2015; Darkwa, Newman, Kawkah, & Chowdhury, 2015). Therefore, it is vital that managers implement retention strategies that strengthen the ability of the business to grow with higher competence, with more innovation, and with long lasting strategic business objectives (Mahesh, 2017). Employees that understand the retention strategies work better for the

welfare of the organization (Ashmore & Gilson, 2015). Develop programs that enhance the workflow of the organization. Therefore, retaining workers and having employee strategies in place that enhance the organization are crucial elements of the organization's vision, mission, values, and policies (Mahesh, 2017). However, developing employee training programs, explaining employee expectations, and providing a platform for the employee to speak without fear of retaliation are long lasting strategies for retention that allows a business to grow.

**Possible retention strategies.** A successful retention strategy requires leaders to think from the employee's view. One of the most significant challenges in the business world is the perplexing problem of employee retention (Yang, Wan, & Fu, 2012). Employee turnover can bring devastation to an organization regarding decreased productivity, increased costs involved with training and recruitment, stress, and the inability to reach organizational goals. There are four retention strategies managers used to help reduce turnover (a) effective communication (b) hire a diverse workforce, (c) hire skilled employees who are appropriate for the job, and (d) implement development and training programs that can help employees to grow and advance within the organization (Mamun & Hasan, 2017). Retention strategies reduce turnover and absenteeism.

Researchers have found that compared to workers in other industries, workers in the health care industry experienced a high level of job satisfaction, but turnover is still high (Morgan, Dill, & Kalleberg, 2013). In addition, Sandhya and Kumar (2015) and Abu Elanain (2014) argued that creative strategies need to go beyond pay and benefits to retain employees. These strategies may include programs such as; fostering employee

engagement programs, health programs, and safety; providing flexible work schedules for work life balance and regular wellness programs. Leaders and managers need to work together to build a rapport with subordinates to help decrease employee turnover.

Both job satisfaction and leadership function as important indicators of whether an employee remains at their job and contributes to the success of the organization, or instead leaves their job, and contributes to the failure of the organization (Alex & George, 2014). Similarly, Ahmad and Rainyee (2014) stated that organizational commitment and job satisfaction plays a prominent role in employee turnover retention and absenteeism. Furthermore, Ahmad, Abbas, Latif, and Rasheed (2014) found that when an employee receives feedback, has job security, and a work schedule that fits their lifestyle, the employee tends to stay with the organization.

Other scholars have identified job satisfaction as the means to attract and retain qualified employees (Kumar et al., 2014). Many aspects influence job satisfaction: supervisor-employee relationships, compensation, benefits, rewards, leadership, communication, colleagues, recognition, and employee advancement opportunities (Mohammad et al., 2011). Based on the finding of Terera and Ngirande (2014) rewards and job satisfaction have many bearings on retaining employees. Also, training and development opportunities and promotion and performance management are factors contributing to employee job satisfaction. Another contribution to whether an employee stays or leave is compensation. Employees want to know what benefits an organization has to offer that is beneficial to workers and families. Another possible retention strategy is employee engagement, which researchers have identified as a solution to reducing

turnover. When a department has high employee engagement, they tend to experience less turnover (Mumtaz, Salleh, Baharom, 2016). Therefore, it is essential for an organization to develop a retention strategy that highlights both job satisfaction and compensation as significant factors.

Communication plays a vital role in the organization that reaches all types of audiences. The ability to communicate the challenges and strategies to employees enable the workers to provide feedback and suggestions. For an organization to maintain success, leaders need to follow and understand five levels of communications: intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, organizational, and intercultural (Cloutier et al., 2015). Also, as noted by Cloutier et al. understanding these communication levels allows managers time to examine the employee to see if they adopt the vision and fit into the business culture. The positive effect of training employee influences workers' satisfaction and performance. Mandhanya (2015) recommend that as a retention strategy for decreasing turnover organizations needs to develop recruiting, reward, and training programs that help retain human capital. Hafeez and Akbar (2015) found that employee training has an enormous effect on the efficiency of organizations and allocating more money into training programs leads to more productivity. Equipping employees with the right kind of training and information allows for the capabilities of carrying out their responsibilities.

Therefore, it is vital that managers of the organization implement retention strategies that strengthen the ability of the business to grow with greater competence and innovation as well as to attract and retain their workforce with long-lasting strategic

business objectives (Sandhya & Kumar, 2015). Organizations with high turnover are inundated with the high cost of recruitment and the time spent replacing open positions (Anvari, JianFu, & Chermahini, 2014). It is evident, that EVS encounters many challenges such as retention and turnover. Implementing effective strategies can help eliminate some challenges in retaining, training, and motivating employees. For a business to grow, leaders have to allocate resources to equip the employees with the correct training that promotes, inspires, motivate, and increase productivity.

**The efficacy of transformational leadership as a retention strategy.**

The strategy of transformational leadership in retaining employees goes beyond exchanges between the managers and subordinates. Although these aspects play a role in employee job satisfaction, transformational leaders focus on promoting and developing their subordinates (Patiar, & Wang, 2016). Adopting an effective leadership style helps leaders to manage critical problems and overcome challenges (Sethuraman & Suresh, 2014). Leadership style affects employee development and commitment to the organization (Nanjundeswaraswamy & Swamy, 2015). Leaders of transformational leadership cultivate the foundation for creating a great place for employees to work. TLT leaders using their leadership style to encourage employees to exceed their normal expectations has a direct impact on the results the leader achieves.

Transformational leaders created an atmosphere of confidence that improves productivity and job satisfaction among employees while decreasing the turnover rate (Yao, Fan, Guo, & Li, 2014). Transformational leaders and workers motivate each other to more inspirational and ethical quality (Burns, 1978). Also, transformational leadership



functions better than transactional or laissez-faire leadership regarding job satisfaction and retention (Kumar et al., 2014). The way a leader act and lead employees can have a profound effect on a follower being supportive of them or not.

The consideration from transformational leaders builds a solid foundation for the manager and their workers that reduces employee turnover (Root, 2016). Also, transformational leaders aim to connect with and draw out the best in each employee (Perko, Kinnunen, & Feldt, 2014). These managers take the time to invest in workers; developing approaches that will make the subordinates' jobs easier while helping them build careers (Kumar et al., 2014). Because transformational leaders care about their employees' well-being, that leadership style tends to reduce stress, and work pressures while raising employees' self-esteem, all of which result in increased job satisfaction (Salem, 2015). Transformational leaders used their influence to draw employees towards achieving their goals and the organization goals by acting as role models.

Moreover, organizational leaders play a significant role in the outcome of the business, regarding factors such as employee attitudes, employee commitment, and the finances of the company (Robertson & Barling, 2013). Love, Trammell, and Cartner (2010) demonstrated the efficacy of transformational leadership as a retention strategy when using it to increase minority representation and retention in the predominantly white institution of higher education. While placing focus on how diverse groups learn, transformational leaders, increased the ability to support changes in the way instructors teach and the way various groups learn.

A shared vision and commitment to institutional changes created an innovative learning environment that engaged a shared community and led to improved retention among academic success for minority groups. Also, as noted by Love et al. that the foundation of institutional diversity and equality of education involved building change through transformational leadership by creating a learning environment that engages a shared community. Therefore, transformational leadership is useful in boosting employees' morale and has a positive outcome of job satisfaction (Asrar-ul-Hag & Kuchinke, 2016). Some researchers found that transformational leadership characteristics and behaviors have a positive effect on the organization in the areas of teamwork success, effectiveness, staff satisfaction, commitment; and enhanced followers' work-oriented values, and shaped self-efficiencies of followers (Mah'd Alloubani, Almatari, & Almukhtar, 2014). Transformational leaders behavior played a unique role in the outcome of the organization day to day operations that can aid the employee commitment which in turn encourages retention.

### **Health care EVS Departments Reflect Themes**

**Background on health care EVS.** The literature indicated that many of the above-described phenomena are evident both generally in the hospital industry and specifically within EVS departments. Understanding some background of the department and its unique role in the hospital industry helps illuminate how these phenomena manifest in hospital EVS. Housekeeping plays a different role in the hospital industry than in the hotel industry, where it first originated (Hines, 2013). Cleaning services,

health and safety, medicine recycling, waste management, toxic waste disposal, and many other areas fall under the EVS umbrella.

**Importance of EVS.** Environmental Services is one of the most critical departments in the hospital organization. Caring for the health care environment is one of the most critical responsibilities in a health care facility. The most vital role of environmental services is controlling and preventing the spread of hospital infection (Ling et al., 2015). Employees accomplished this by cleaning patient, clinical, examination, and procedure rooms as well as disposing of patients' bodily fluids. Han et al. (2015) noted that health care associated infectious diseases have claimed a vast number of lives and cost hospital billions of dollars annually. EVS provides the best possible cleaning of the physical environment and critical in battling the spread of infectious diseases. Every EVS employee must, in addition to basic cleaning, learn about the transmission of infections and be well prepared to utilize best practices that shield patients from harm (Rupp et al., 2014). The EVS team handles toxic waste and follow strict infection control guidelines requiring extensive training (Ling et al., 2015). Hospital EVS employees must adhere to federal, state, and local health codes that ensure a safe and healthy environment (Hines, 2013; Leas et al., 2015). Failure to adhere to all regulatory guidelines may result in stiff financial penalties against the hospital. Understanding the role of the EVS is crucial to capitalize on the performance and productivity of the staff. Environmental cleaning is an essential principle of infection prevention in health care settings.

EVS cleans patients' rooms, procedure rooms, surgical areas, and all other parts of the hospital. EVS is the primary defense against eliminating infectious diseases. EVS serves as the hospital's first line of defense for many issues, such as reporting broken equipment, in addition to fighting infectious disease (Mosadeghrad, 2014). Hospital EVS is one of the most diverse departments in the hospital and interacts with nearly every department (Nayak et al., 2015). A vital influence on the cleanliness score, the quality of EVS departments correlates to overall patient satisfaction (Swanberg et al., 2016). EVS has a critical job in the hospital industries in the prevention and controlling of serious infectious diseases to keep patients and others safe. Therefore, comprehensive understanding and recognizing the value and importance of caring for the health care environment from the perspective of patients is critical in providing excellent customer services.

***Work conditions.*** Most frontline jobs in the health care industries usually considered low wage workers with limited advancement opportunities. Nichols et al. (2016) defined frontline health care support employees, which includes EVS, as those who provide direct care or support services and earn less than \$40,000 per year at jobs that require minimum levels of education and training. Hospitals in the United States provide vast quantities of low-skilled, low-wage occupations such as EVS and nursing assistants, dietary, and patient transportation to name a few (Dancer, 2014; Nichols et al., 2016). These jobs make up a large number of jobs that, seemingly invisible, form the backbone of any U. S. hospital. The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) predicted frontline jobs would increase by 28% of the total workforce in 2012-2022, with the majority of

health care facility jobs performed by frontline workers, EVS, dietary, nursing assistants, and patient transportation (Nichols et al., 2016). The Bureau of Labor Statistics revealed in 2017 that EVS employees working in hospitals earned an average of \$27,450 a year. EVS employees take on many responsibilities and paid less than most frontline workers. These employees work on the frontline of defense. EVS employees work in a challenging and demanding environment, sometimes overwhelming, often considered invisible to most people in the organization, and paid less.

EVS employees often do not need an education credential to apply for the job; however, hospitals prefer to hire high school graduates with excellent communication skills and physical ability to perform the cleaning task. Although there is, no particular training required for hire in an EVS department, most employers require workers to have a high school diploma or equivalency, and some prefer applicants to have some previous experience (Knox et al. 2014; Keller, 2014). Also, noted by Knox and Keller in earlier years, EVS employees had little or no formal education and carried out job duties with little training. Employees learned everything on the job, and their job duties seemed ritual (Keller, 2014; Knox et al., 2014). In the late 2010's, before an EVS employee starts working, they must attend training classes, learn hospital EVS policies, and adapt to hospital EVS procedures so that patient care is not jeopardized, and the department avoids scrutiny (Zoutman, Ford, & Sopha, 2014). Although EVS employees are not paid for their education because the job only requires a high diploma or equivalent, education has become an essential aspect of the EVS Department requirement, as well as excellent communication skills. A big part of the job is being able to communicate and convey

information to patients, nursing, and other departments. Being able to communicate is also a part of providing excellent customer services.

EVS Techs must be able to work in high risk and challenging environment. An employee may be exposed to unforeseen and uncomfortable settings along with exposure to strong cleaning agents. In addition to potential exposure to infectious substances (blood, body fluids, and needle sticks), employees may also be exposed to upsetting sights, and images of death (Boyce, 2016). These employees may be at risk for infection and may become a risk factor (Dancer, 2014). It is essential for all EVS Techs to have some education and the reading skills to perform everyday job duties, such as being familiar with chemicals and reading labels, and having knowledge of Safety Data Sheets (SDS). Employees receive on the job training to ensure proper techniques are performed to protect patients, themselves, and others.

**Turnover and retention in EVS Departments.** Health care services are increasing rapidly. One challenge confronting service business leader is retention of frontline employees, such as EVS, who perform critically, lifesaving tasks and often act as ambassadors for the firm (Kumar, Dass, & Topaloglu, 2014). Nichols et al. (2016) stated that 24 million people quit their jobs in 2013 and that 20% of all workers quit in U.S. hospitals alone. Therefore, it is crucial for EVS employees to stay satisfied with their jobs because this department experiences the highest turnover rate in the industry (Heavey, Holwerda, & Hausknecht, 2013; Nayak et al., 2015). The consequences of frontline employee turnover reduce the quality of service and can be damaging to the safety of patient care; it also affects the morale and motivation of the staff. With health

care increasing rapidly and turnover being one of the leading challenges, implementing retention and turnover strategies can ensure adequate services.

***Impact of turnover in EVS departments.*** Turnover in EVS departments creates challenges for management and hardship amongst employees, generates extra workload for employees, and increases over time for the department. Shortages of staff interfere with patient care and have an adverse impact on the hospital (Robinson, Kralj, Solnet, Goh, & Callan, 2014). The adverse impact on the quality of patient care, which also ultimately hurts the business overall financial performance, has resulted in increased concern with high turnover rates (Heavey et al., 2013; Swanberg et al., 2016). High turnover rates in the hospital put patient care at risk because the demand for health care is proliferating (Swanberg et al., 2016). A shortage of staff can be detrimental to the safety of patients and creates an undue hardship on others. Developing a defensive plan of action to retain employees can help prevent inadequate staffing.

Turnover in the health care industry could cost hospital billions of dollars. Turnover in the EVS and dietary services departments could cost hospitals as much as 100% of a worker's salary (Swanberg et al., 2016). Health care organizations in the United States continue to face dynamic and complex problems, such as retention issues, that affect their success in providing the best, and most affordable health care (Collins et al., 2015). Also, as noted by Collins et al. employee turnover, the shrinking of a skilled workforce, remains one of the highest ranked organizational risks, and annually cost the U.S. industry billions of dollars. Turnover in health care poses a significant challenge to

the organization while trying to build high performing teams to take care of patients and customers' needs.

***Causes of turnover in EVS departments.*** Some frontline workers such as EVS employees are treated differently in the organization due to their jobs. Auh et al., whose 2016 study involved 25 million employees in more than 189 countries, asserted that frontline workers represent some of the most disengaged employees in the workforce. Kumar, Dass, and Topaloglu (2014) also characterized frontline employees, such as EVS, as underpaid, undertrained, overworked, and highly stressed. EVS is one of the most critical departments in health care. Hines (2013) and Leas et al. (2015) noted that EVS employees play a huge role in the control of infections in hospitals, but viewed, as “behind the scene” players, do not get the same consideration as other members of the health care team. Similarly, Nayak et al. (2015) noted that these employees receive little recognition from senior management or other departments compared relative to their essential and challenging role contribution within the hospital.

Hospital leaders, thinking of EVS employees as expendable, provided the least investment in, status for, and respect for a department that has one of the essential jobs in the hospital (Holman, 2013; Knox et al., 2014; Nayak et al., 2015). EVS employees are one of the lowest paid workers in the health care system (Nayak et al., 2015). Also, Knox et al. characterized frontline health care employees as the least educated workgroup with few advancement opportunities. Many of these workers have a low education level and receive low pay yet undertake vital tasks (Dill, Morgan, & Marshall, 2013). EVS employees have a job that is physical, occasionally hard, employee sometimes works in



unpleasant and stressful environments, sometimes exposed to life threatening diseases, handle unpleasant blood and body fluids but paid less than most. Sometimes EVS employees received little respect and viewed as the invisible employees. Employees' working in difficult areas with unpleasant sights of death do not feel they receive enough pay like other departments. EVS is the first line of defense when it comes to fighting infectious diseases.

*Job dissatisfaction.* There are many reasons an employee can become dissatisfied with their jobs such as low wages, workload, lack of control, unfair treatment from the boss, and unpredictable schedules. In addition, some EVS supervisors' jobs require employees to work hours that interfere with their family and social life (Fiksenbaum, 2014). Supervisors must often manage chaotic inconsistency in work schedules (Gerhart, & Fang, 2014; Swanberg et al., 2016). Schedules in frontline health care jobs demonstrate instability, rigidity, and unpredictability. Employees want schedules that are more attractive to their lifestyle. Instability in schedules occurs when time adjustments are made to accommodate patient care needs (Swanberg et al., 2016). Rigidity in schedules arises when managers instruct employees to report to work on days not noted in their schedules. Employees, in these cases, have no control over when they work or take breaks. Unpredictability in schedules occurs when employees call off of work or called in to work without notice because of staff shortage or other reasons. These challenges contribute to voluntary turnover and may negatively affect the quality of patient care while straining the overall financial performance of the hospital (Hayward, Bungay, Swanberg et al., 2016, Wolff, & MacDonald, 2016). Working a set schedule in a

health care setting where adequate staffing is necessary, may not always fit the person. However, a flexible schedule could reduce employees being disappointed because they cannot meet their personal needs or outside commitments; and may even reduce turnover and decrease absenteeism, and tardiness. When some employees fail to show up for work they leave coworkers taking on more work responsibility because there is not enough staff to take care of patients.

*Turnover as a cause.* Research indicated turnover itself contributes to additional turnover. Although some employees voluntarily leave, those who stay may have to pick up extra duties. An excessive workload may increase stress, which may decrease the satisfaction of both patient and employee. Therefore, employees may then start to feel disinterested and be triggered to leave (Thanacoody et al., 2014; Swanberg et al., 2016). Also, employee turnover links to additional administrative costs incurred by the process of recruiting and hiring staff, and errors often made in the course of hiring new employees (Collini, Guidroz & Perez, 2015). That may lead to low morale among staff, to the loss of productivity, and to overwhelmed, burned-out workers. With the increase of turnover having direct and indirect adverse impacts on employee morale, and productivity, it also plays a significant effect on an organization's reputation, productivity, and effectiveness (Collini et al., 2015). Change is inevitable as people get older and retires; companies have to make the necessary adjustments to seek more employees that are dependable to continue the organization day to day mission. There are many reasons an employee leaves their current job and transition else somewhere.

Whatever the reason, finding out why a person wants to leave helps the organization to develop policies and strategies to eliminate short staffed and hardship on others who stay.

**Transformational leadership as a retention strategy.** Using transformational leadership in a health care setting promotes teamwork among employee, job satisfaction, decrease turnover and improves patient care, and encourages positive self esteem. Early research on transformational leadership draws heavily on leadership studies in the military; later the research expanded, exploring business leadership in government, education, health care settings, and in the non-profit sector (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Lavoie-Tremblay, Fernet, Lavigne, and Austin (2016) stated that developing transformational nursing leadership is a vital organizational strategy to improve patient outcomes. Lavoie-Tremblay et al., also, used transformational leadership practice among nursing management in a diverse field of military and financial industries that improved job satisfaction, productivity, retention, and patient satisfaction. The strategy involved defining the transformational leadership style, the use of role-playing that demonstrated the use of transformational leadership in a work setting, and one-on-one sessions with leaders. Transformational leaders can influence the way employees act and achieve hospital goals that promote patient safety.

On the other hand, poor leadership can destroy an organization. Weberg (2010) described poor leadership as a mutating cancer cell that causes toxic symptoms that have an adverse impact on health care organizations: disgruntled employees, burnout, and stress at all levels. Also, noted by Weberg that implementing Burns's (1978) TLT in the health care system increased employee job satisfaction and decreased employee stress

and intent to leave. In Addition, Weberg compared other leadership types, such as transactional leadership and laissez-faire leadership, and found that those styles led to employee dissatisfaction, stress, and burnout. Weberg emphasized that health systems should facilitate transformational leadership for the ultimate purpose of creating a healthy work environment and improving job satisfaction to reduce employee turnover. Inspiring an employee through transformational leadership creates a better working environment, fosters job satisfaction, and generates employee awareness of and commitment to their organization's mission and values (Weberg, 2010). Interacting and working with people in a hospital setting can bring about stress and anxiety but using the right leadership style such as transformation leadership can influence how people deal with change and build a relationship that increases the likelihood of people being motivated, and meeting the organizational goals.

### **Transition**

Section 1 included the foundation of the study, the background of the problem, the problem statement, and the purpose statement. The foundation of the proposed study focused on the background of retention, turnover, and leadership in hospital organizations. The background of the study described problems faced by U.S. hospital leaders, the increase in employee turnover, retention, the importance of retention strategies, and leadership style. The problem statement included the hook, anchor, general problem, and specific business problem that explained, and provided the context for the study. The purpose statement described the primary goal of the research,

identified the specific population group, the geographic location, and the contribution to business practices and social change for this proposed study.

Section 1 in addition included the nature of the study, the overarching research question, the interview questions, the conceptual framework, operational definitions, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations. The nature of the study included a description of the research method and design as well as the reasons for selecting the qualitative method and a multiple case study design. The overarching research question encapsulated the fundamental core of the study that shaped the directions, stages of inquiry, analysis, and reporting and needed addressing with reliable, and valid methods. The interview questions, a vital source of the research study, guided the conversation between the interviewer and the interviewees (Yin, 2014). Burns's TLT is the conceptual framework for the proposed study. The operational definitions referred to terms utilized in the proposed study. Assumptions involved facts that I as the researcher assume to be true but cannot verify. Limitations involved potential weaknesses of this study that I cannot control, and delimitations provided the boundaries I set for this study.

Section 1 concluded with the significance of the study followed by a review of the academic literature. The significance of the study included an explanation of potential benefits and the overall impact the study may have on business practices. The literature review included Burns's TLT and its constructs that set the underlying foundation for this study. I based the research used in this study on previous literature that relates to retention, turnover, and leadership style. Header and subheaders utilized in this study focused on the EVS workforce regarding turnover, work conditions, salary, education,

retention, turnover challenges in hospitals, job satisfaction, and job dissatisfaction. Other header and subheaders utilized in the study focused on employee engagement and disengagement, toxic employees, abusive supervision, supervisory retaliation, research on retention, retention strategies using transformational leadership, and leading causes of employee turnover.

Section 2 included the business project purpose, the restatement of the purpose statement, the role of the researcher, the participants, the research method and design, the population, the sampling, and ethical research. Also, Section 2 described data collection instruments and technique, data organization skills, data analysis, and reliability and validity.

Section 3 begins with the introduction of the purpose of the study, the presentation of findings, application to professional practice for a social change, the recommendation for action, and further research. Section 3 concludes with the reflections of the study, conclusion, and appendices.

## Section 2: The Project

Section 2 comprises the purpose statement, my role as the researcher, descriptions of participants, research method and design, population and sampling, ethical research, an in-depth description of the data collection instruments, data technique, data organization approach, and data analysis. Sections 2 also contains a description of the reliability and validity of data and concludes with a transition and summary.

### **Purpose Statement**

My purpose in this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies that some hospital managers used to reduce EVS employee turnover. The population for this study consisted of two hospitals and five EVS managers with recruiting and hiring responsibilities from the Piedmont Triad and Research Triangle Park of North Carolina. The potential implications for positive social change include retaining experienced and talented EVS employees, decreasing voluntary turnover, decreasing the unemployment rate, increasing the potential to improve sustainability and growth of the organization, and increasing patient safety by developing effective turnover strategies.

### **Role of the Researcher**

The researcher is the primary data collection instrument in qualitative studies (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Morse, Lowery, & Pezalla, Pettigrew, & Miller-Day, 2012, Steury, 2014). I served as the primary data collection instrument by conducting semistructured interviews, audio recording, note taking, and viewed departmental documents. Regarding my relationship with the topic and participants, I was familiar with the themes of this study because I am an EVS operational manager with experience in

hiring, training, and retaining EVS employees. However, I did not know the manager participants selected for this study. My role was to explore the subject in an unbiased manner. Part of my role in this study as the researcher was to select the appropriate procedures to complete the research, which includes recruiting potential participants, collecting and analyzing data, managing the interview process, selecting the appropriate research methodology and design for this study, and respecting the rights of the participants.

I adhered to the highest ethical standards by not plagiarizing or falsifying information. Collecting and honestly reporting data ensured accuracy and credibility (Yin, 2014). I collected documents and maintained data in a professional competence that ensured trustworthiness. I adhered to the protocol outlined in the Belmont Report. According to the Belmont Report, the informed consent form services two objectives: (a) to respect and promote participants' autonomy and (b) to protect participants from potential harm (U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1979; Judkins-Cohn, Kiewasser-Withrow, Owen, & Ward, 2014). The foundation for these objectives lies in the Belmont principles of *autonomy, respect for the person, and beneficence*. Autonomy requires that before enrolling in a research study, a participant must provide voluntary, informed consent or that an alternative means must be explored and participant(s) notified (Judkins-Cohn et al., 2014). Respect for the person requires that during the informed consent process there is full disclosure of any information that pertains to the participants, such as their name, organization's name, and location. The researcher is obliged to protect each participants identity, places, and the location of the interview



(Anney, 2014). I shared the nature of the study, the process, the possibility of withdrawal from the study, and measures taken to maintain the privacy of the participants. The informed consent for this study consisted of disclosure, capacity, comprehension, and voluntary, independent permission.

I advised participants on the requirements needed to meet the demands of this study. All steps within the process met the expectations set by the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines (Bebe, 2016; Judkins-Cohn et al., 2014). Informed consent is a process that protects human subjects (Boblin, Ireland, Kirkpatrick, & Robertson, 2013; Judkins-Cohn et al., 2014; Stuckey, 2014). Judkins-Cohn et al. (2014) stressed the importance of the participants' understanding of the informed consent process. Before starting the interview process, I explained to each participant the nature of the study, the purpose of the study, the participants' rights, and my responsibility to protect their identity, privacy, and confidentiality. I maintained ethical procedures, during this study to prevent any moral and legal issues.

As Moustakas (1994), Scott (2016), Wilson and Washington (2007), and Berger (2015) noted bias could occur at any point in research or exposed bias that cannot readily be eliminated, the use of bracketing and reflexivity can help eradicate. Following their recommendation, I acknowledged the core assessment of my research topic to mitigate bias in data collection through bracketing and reflexivity. Reflexivity or reflection is the ability to evaluate oneself and does not let the researcher views and bias influence the study (Berger, 2015). I maintained an objective focus throughout the study that helped to eliminate bias and not knowing the participants helped to reduce bias. I conducted this

study in the Piedmont Triad and Research Triangle Park of North Carolina but not in my place of employment. I avoided using any data collection from my place of employment to protect the integrity of data collected for this study. In addition, as the researcher, I worked with the participants in an ethical manner by respecting their lived perceptions of the phenomenon in this study (Scott, 2016).

One of the most important sources of a qualitative research study is the interviewing process (Yin, 2016). Although I was familiar with the themes presented in this study, I did not personally know the participants selected for this study, which reduced bias. An interview protocol enhanced the reliability and quality of data obtained from the participants (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). It is essential to use the same interview protocol (see Appendix B) with each participant to ensure the consistency of the interview process among all participants. I avoided bias by selecting participants and organizations unknown to me. By using these methods, I refrained from bias, which ensured the responses come from the human participants' perspective.

### **Participants**

Selecting the correct participants with the most knowledge was critical to the study because the research depended on the validity, honesty, and actual participation (Bebe, 2016; Yin, 2014). The participants in this study were five environmental services (EVS) managers who work in the health care industry in the Piedmont Triad and Research Triangle Park in North Carolina. The eligibility criteria for this study consisted of full-time managers who have (a) 5 years of EVS experience, (b) recruiting and hiring responsibilities, and (c) implemented strategies reducing EVS employee turnover. This

purposive sampling method targeted a population that met specific criteria. Purposive sampling referred to selective sampling that allowed the researcher to select informative and unique cases or to target specific, difficult-to-reach populations, and to identify a particular type of case for in-depth study (Pezalla et al., 2012; Rowley, 2012; Sangestani & Khatiban, 2013). I selected five managers from two hospitals: three from the Piedmont Triad area and two from the Research Triangle Park area.

I gained access to participants from the recommendations of the human resource coordinator of the hospital organizations. I obtained the contact information of potential participants from the coordinator. I then called and talked to each manager, explaining who I was and what the study was about, and obtained permission from participants to email them the informed consent form. The informed consent document explained the nature of the study, the purpose of the study, the rights of participants, and my responsibility to protect their identity, privacy, and confidentiality (Bebe, 2016; Hammersley, 2014; Judkins-Cohn et al., 2014).

It was essential to establish a working rapport with the participants built on honesty and trust to gain access to data (Rowley, 2012). I established a positive working relationship with participants at the initial contact by having open communication and dialogue, introducing myself, clearly stating my intent and the purpose of the study, and I let the participants know that their identity and organization are confidential and anonymity throughout this study. It was crucial to establish permission from the organization before collecting data from the participants (Strauss & Corbin, 2015). I obtained written permission before conducting an interview and collecting data. I

contacted participants to set up face-to-face appointments at their facilities for the interview .

### **Research Method and Design**

As the researcher, answering the research questions relies on identifying the appropriate research method and design. I selected a qualitative research method and multiple-case designs.

#### **Research Method**

I focused on exploring EVS managers' perspective on strategies that hospital managers used to reduce EVS employee turnover. Qualitative researchers explore human behaviors of individuals or groups in a social phenomenon (Hazzan & Nutov, 2014), which is why I used a qualitative method to explore EVS employee turnover reductions strategies. A qualitative study allowed the researcher to engage in an efficient process for studying managers who operate in different locations within one complex program (Stake, 2013). The qualitative approach required a sympathetic understanding in that investigators must try to explore the situation, events, and actions from the participant's point-of-view and not imposed their perspective (Holloway & Galvin, 2016). Yin (2016) and Robson and McCartan (2016) described the allure of qualitative research as conducting in-depth studies about a comprehensive selection of topics. Yin (2016) also noted qualitative research had become the mainstream form of research in many different academic and professional fields. Qualitative research method includes three principal purposes of research: to explore, explain, or describe the phenomenon of interest (Marshall & Rossman, 2014), which is what I used to explore, explain, and describe the

phenomenon of this study. The qualitative method was appropriate because it allowed me to explore, explain, and describe the phenomenon of how managers in the health care industry reduced EVS employee turnover.

Quantitative research approach required the gathering of data in large volumes that examined the relationship between variables, using standardized methods, generalized samples, hypothesis testing of theories, and relied on statistical information instead of the perception of individuals (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015; Yilmaz, 2013). I found quantitative research inappropriate for this study because I did not test a theory using variables or measurements with numbers and I did not analyze statistics in the framework to determine if the theory explained or predicted the phenomenon of interest. I did not use a hypothesis, manipulated and control data, or used surveys, and systematic measurements. Instead, I used the qualitative method to explore strategies to reduce turnover. I did not select a mixed method design for the study because that method involved collecting and analyzing a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data in a single study of inquiry. Mixed research required the researcher to have expertise in qualitative and quantitative methods (Anwar, Rahman, & Ismail, 2016; Cameron, 2011; Razali,). There was no need to use two research methods because the purpose of the research study was to explore strategies that leaders in the health care industry used to reduce EVS employee turnover, which I accomplished using the qualitative method because it allowed me to conduct an in-depth study with open-ended questions.

## Research Design

The case study design provided a blueprint of the research that addressed the research question in the form of asking *why* and *how* questions (Wahyuni, 2012; Yin, 2014). A case study distinctly studies complex issues such as retention and turnover from a holistic, real-world perspective (Wahyuni, 2012). Also, the case study design allows the facilitation of an in-depth investigation of a contemporary phenomenon, using natural context sources such as people and their interactions while focused on contemporary events as opposed to historical events (Wahyuni, 2012). Harland (2014) described a case study design as a complex real-life social situation that makes use of the ability of humans to learn from each other's experiences. A multiple case study design is more compelling and regarded as a more robust study. It allows the researcher to explore different locations with the same problem and provides a more comprehensive understanding (Yin, 2014). I selected the case study design because it enabled me to gain an in-depth view of the situation. The case study design also allowed for how and why questions that are suitable for extensive and in-depth descriptions of complex social phenomena.

I did not find an ethnographic approach appropriate for this study because ethnographers, while participating in the lives of those under study, carefully depict the beliefs and feelings of a group or culture and look for predictable patterns in lived human experiences (Reich, 2015; Sangasubana, 2011). Ethnographers also obtain rich data from human participants by observing their behavior through different manifestations of data collection including interviews, collaboration from a team discussion, incidental

conversation, reviewing of documents, and observing nonverbal communication (Phelps & Horman, 2010). In this study of retention strategies, I focused on neither a group nor culture nor did I involve my participation in the lives of those under study. Thus, an ethnographic design was not the best design for this study.

A phenomenological design relies on the interpretive understanding of human experiences that have already passed (Conklin, 2014; Tomkins & Eatough, 2013). Moustakas (1994) noted that phenomenology refers to the way a person lives, creates, and relates to the world, which is not the intent of this study. I did not use a phenomenological design because phenomenologists explore the participants' lived experiences and the meaning of those experiences. The focus was on gaining in-depth information that was not solely focused on addressing the historical phenomenon. I did not find a narrative approach for this study appropriate because narrative researchers focus chronologically on the events that have occurred in an individual's life (Rooney, Lawlor & Rohan, 2016). Scholars have described a narrative as a sequence of events or as individual events presented in a coherent story (Augenstein & Palzkill, 2015; Press & Arnould, 2014). In a multiple case study design, scholars can understand a complex social phenomenon (Yin, 2014). I found a multiple case study design most appropriate because it better permits the understanding of the complex social phenomena such as retention and turnover in a hospital setting.

Following researchers' suggestions, I will ensure data saturation by observing patterns and themes from participants until reaching data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Ragab & Arisha, 2013). Fusch and Ness also noted that a researcher could meet data

saturation when enough information has been obtained to replicate the study. O'Reilly and Parker (2012) asserted that data saturation has occurred when a researcher can no longer obtain additional new information and when there is no need for further coding. Data saturation depends on the depth of data and not about how many people have been interviewed (Fusch & Ness, 2015). To ensure data was captured correctly, I used an audio recorder to collect the data along with note taking and member checking. To achieve data saturation, I repeated the questions to each participant until all findings were exhausted, and no new information emerged. Though two hospital organizations were the intended sample, there was an extra participant in the event additional information was needed to reach data saturation or scheduled meetings to the initial interviews to attain further data collection from the five participants until all data is exhausted.

### **Population and Sampling**

In this qualitative multiple case study, the population consisted of purposeful sampling. The geographic area consisted of two large hospitals in the Piedmont Triad and Research Triangle Park of North Carolina and five managers who work in those hospitals and are responsible for the recruitment and hiring of EVS employees. These EVS managers have experienced turnover and have explored strategies to reduce EVS employee turnover. Using a small, purposeful criterion sampling can increase the credibility of the results substantially (Suri, 2011). Ishak and Baka (2014) and Yin (2014) also suggested that a sample size of 10 participants could provide compelling support in a multiple case design study. The sample size included two large hospital and five participants. Gentles et al., (2015) noted that a purposeful sampling allows a researcher to



gather in-depth information and learn a great deal about the issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry. I used purposeful criterion sampling that enabled me to conduct a qualitative inquiry, gave vital insight into the subject while allowing me to gain an in-depth understanding. Purposeful sampling also allows the researcher to select participants based on their knowledge and relevance of information about the study research question (Yin, 2014). I used the purposeful criterion sampling to select participants for this study (a) managers employed full-time with five years with EVS experience who (b) work in a hospital environment (c) have recruiting and hiring responsibilities, and (d) had implemented strategies reducing EVS employee turnover. The purposeful criterion sampling method targeted a population that met specific criteria for this proposed study. Dworkin (2012) and Yin (2009) noted that small sample size could provide adequate information in a case study; therefore, I used a purposeful criterion sample size of five participants because these managers shared insights on how to retain EVS employees in a hospital organization. I used purposeful sampling because it enabled me to gain an in-depth, comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, and achieved data saturation.

The concept of reaching data saturation in the course of the interviews, there is no new data, no new themes, no new coding, and the information can be replicated (Fusch & Ness, 2015). In other words, obtaining data saturation occurs when (a) all significant data has been obtained, (b) no new themes emerge, and (c) no additional coding exists.

I obtained data saturation through face-to-face interviews with each participant in their place of employment. As suggested by Khan (2014) and Dikko (2016) researchers

should provide a comfortable, private place without any interruptions. I ensured the participants of their privacy and confidentiality of the interview. Prior to the interview process, I asked the participant to provide a private, comfortable place with no interruptions. Selecting the correct place to interview a participant can have a profound effect on the direction the interview will go, and the content shared (Yin, 2016).

Fusch and Ness recommended interviewing multiple participants and asking the same questions until the researcher can no longer identify new information or otherwise data saturation would not be achieved, as it would be a continually moving target. I followed the interview protocol (see Appendix B) to attain rich data. To achieve data saturation, Daniel (2012) asserted that a researcher should continue the interview the participants until no new information is identified. I asked probing questions to each participant until all findings were exhausted, and no new information emerged. There was also an extra participant in the event additional information was needed to reach data saturation or schedule meetings to the initial interviews to attain further data collection from the five participants until all data saturation is obtained.

### **Ethical Research**

The consent form was used to support the participants when trying to decide whether to participate in a research study (Schrems, 2014). Protecting the research participants confidentiality is crucial to safeguarding the research and the collection of data (Abbott, & Grady, 2011; Check et al., 2014; Yin, 2014). In accordance with recommended research practices, I ensured all aspects of the participants' privacy and confidentiality was safeguarded by ensuring the disclosure of information. Yin asserted

any information that can identify a participant should be disclosed to protect the person. I completed the National Institute of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research training on November 9, 2014 and pledged to protect human research. The participant consent form included my IRB Approval number 04-04-19-0140259. In addition, the informed consent process provided the essential function of protecting participants from any unethical research during the interview process (Jackson, 2013; Judkins-Cohn et al., 2014). Therefore, ethics permeated every step of this investigation.

After receiving permission from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB), I delivered to each participant an informed consent form, which each participant signed electronically by replying *I consent*. I also delivered to the participants an invitation to participate, the purpose of the study, the research procedures, and information regarding compensation. The consent form also explained the participant's right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalties (Hardicre, 2014; U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2014) by notifying me by telephone or email. If a participant withdrew from the study, I was compelled to discontinue all communication and destroy any data collected from the participants (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2014).

It is up to the researcher to offer participants incentives such as voucher and small prizes, and cash of monetary value. I offered no incentives for participation in this voluntary study. The researcher offering participants incentives must understand that incentives can affect the reliability and validity finding of the study (VanderWalde & Kurzban, 2011). I explained to participants the importance of disclosing names and other

identifying characteristics along with company documents. It is imperative that all information about participant be disclosed for the protection of human subjects (Yin, 2014). I called participants to schedule an appropriate and convenient interview appointment. This conversation provided the managers with an opportunity to ask questions about the research and the intent of the study.

I conducted myself professionally, adhered to the interview protocol throughout the selection of, and while interviewing participants. I followed the universal protocol for ethical research to the highest standard in upholding the protection of participant's identity, privacy, and confidentiality (Judkins-Cohn et al., 2014). To ensure the protection of participants and organizations, I identified each as P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5. I stored collected data in a security safe, computer, and on a flash drive with password protection for 5 years. After five years, I will destroy all consent forms, interviews, recordings, notes, and transcribed data by deleting the electronic data from the hard drive, and by shredding the written data (Yin, 2014).

### **Data Collection Instruments**

In a qualitative research study, the researcher serves as the data collection instrument (Merriam, & Tisdell, 2015; Morse et al., 2014; Pezalla et al., 2012; Yin, 2011). Therefore, I served as the primary data collection instrument for this study. As a case study requires a minimum of two data, collection instruments (Yin, 2016). I conducted face-to-face interviews, opened-ended questions using a semistructured interview technique, viewed hospital EVS documents, note taking, and audiotaped the interview for data collection. Dikko (2016) noted face-to-face interviews as a data

collection method gives the researcher a better insight into the subject of the study and allows for more personal, and insightful access to data. I conducted face-to-face interviews using the interview protocol (see Appendix B) in a private setting at each participant's place of employment. Stuckey (2014) suggested that the advantage to qualitative methods involving open-ended questioning and probing where the researcher avoids driving participants' attention to fixed responses is that those types of interviews give participants the opportunity to answer questions in their own words.

Researchers have described semistructured interviewing as a highly used method for collecting data in qualitative social research method with respect for interpretation of data of the described phenomenon (Anyan, 2013; Doody & Noonan, 2013; Harvey, 2001). Stuckey (2014) stated that the researcher sets the outline for the topics covered, but that the participants determine the way the interview is directed. Therefore, the purpose of the prepared interview questions was to explore themes in a consistent, systematic manner to gain rich insight on retention and turnover in health care EVS. This process included using follow-up questions for gaining additional information from participants (Dikko, 2016). Note taking can improve the researchers' memory and reduce bias as well as allow the researcher to compare and gain new knowledge from the interview (Akhavan & Dehghani, 2015). Audio recording allows the researcher to capture the participant's words verbatim for transcribing data accurately (Christie, Bemister, & Dobson, 2015). The use of audio recording and notes allowed me to capture the participant's conversation verbatim for interpreting data. The viewing of company documents provided background and historical information on the context of the study.

(Houghton et al., 2013). Each interview consisted of eight semistructured, open-ended interview questions regarding their experiences with retention and turnover, and their strategies used to reduce turnover (see Appendix A).

I used member checking to enhance the reliability and validity of the data collected. Harper and Cole (2012) defined member checking as a quality control process used to improve the accuracy, credibility, and validity of recorded information during the interview process. Qualitative inquiries employ a variety of techniques, but member checking is the most appropriate for this study because it allows the participants to verify their information (Carlson, 2010; Fusch & Ness, 2015; Harper & Cole, 2012). I gave participants 24 hours to check and approve all aspects of their recorded interview, from the interview process itself to my interpretation of the data (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Ortman, 2017).

### **Data Collection Technique**

In this study, I collected data by conducting face-to-face interviews, asking opened-ended questions using a semistructured interview technique, taking notes, and audio-taping each participant in their place of employment (see Appendix A). Also, I viewed hospital EVS documents. The advantages of interviewing included meeting the participants face-to-face, which increased the probability that the participants will share vital, honest information about their retention and turnover experiences. Another advantage of employing face-to-face interviews enabled me to gain a deeper in-depth understanding of turnover in the EVS department from participants' experiences and their views and allows for more personal insights, and access to data. Face-to-face

interviewing allowed for asking follow-up questions for gaining additional information from participants. Dowling, Lloyd, and Suchet-Pearson (2016) and Cassidy, Sherman, and Jones (2012), noted face-to-face interviewing enables the researcher to gain in-depth information from participants and enables the researcher to ask an additional follow-up question. The disadvantages of face-to-face interviews for collecting data were the participants may act different from usual, and the participants may not comment or willingly share all information when asked (Vogl, 2015) about their retention and turnover. I followed the interview protocol (see Appendix B) as suggested by Yin (2014). Before meeting with participants, I emailed each person a recruitment letter for study participants which stated who I was, what the study was about, and the eligibility requirement to see which participants are eligible for this study. After determining the eligibility of the participants, each person received an email to confirm the date and time. To ensure the participants' confidentiality, all interviews were done separately, privately, and in their place of employment. The use of an audio recorder to record the interviews was essential to collecting data for this study and a test conducted to ensure the device works before the interview process. It is imperative for a researcher to test any devices used in an interview to ensure it works (Feilzer, 2010). In accordance with recommended research practices, I checked to see how clear and loud the recorder records, which allowed for efficient transcription, and use the audio recorder application on my Apple iPhone® as a backup.

Reviewing documents for a research study can have advantages and disadvantages. One of the advantages to reviewing the EVS departmental documents

such as the attendance policy and retention and turnover documents provided background information as well as historical insight on the context of the study and allowed me to ask more probing questions. Marshall and Rossman (2014) noted that reviewing company documents may generate new interview questions, can contain valuable information in tracking change and development, and can help to verify the finding. The disadvantage of viewing company documents was the information can contain insufficient details to the context of the research study (Yin, 2016), so attaining the correct documents to review is crucial the study.

Once the participants agreed to the study, each person received a copy of the signed consent form; I answered questions containing to the interview process and explained their right to withdraw from the interview anytime without penalties. Grant et al. asserted when a participant agrees to participate in a research study it is highly recommended that the researcher discusses with the participant their right to withdraw from the study at any point and time without any retaliation or penalties. As suggested by Berete (2011), I asked the participants for permission before recording the interview. In accordance with recommended research practices:

1. I asked for permission to audio record the interview and explained its necessity to transcribe their responses accurately
2. The notebook contained written notes with the date and time of the interview, and any follow-up questions, and
3. I introduced the participant to codes used in the study ensures their identity is safe and the reliability of the study (Yin, 2016).



The semistructured interview started with question 1 through 8 followed by additional probing questioning. After each interview, I transcribed participant responses and used member checking to ensure accurate information was obtained. A researcher should allow the participants to review their transcribed responses for any inconsistencies in data collected (Al-Kadri et al, 2013). Following all steps and procedures to obtain data collection and the use of member checking in this research study enhanced the reliability and validity of the data that enhanced the trustworthiness of the study. Member checking is useful to confirm the credibility of the results (Carter et al., 2014; Thomas, 2017). The participants had a final chance to review the results.

### **Data Organization Technique**

The way a researcher collects, documents, and organizes the data is crucial in a qualitative case study (Yin, 2014). I used the QuickTime™ Player audio recorder located on my laptop for each interview session. Prior to each interview session, I tested the QuickTime recorder to ensure it works properly. The use of a pen and a small notebook to record the day, time, and coded location of the interview. Note taking is a valuable tool for documenting notes in interviewing (Murthy, 2013; Yin, 2016). I ensured the data was not altered, lost, or misplaced by organizing, and storing data on a device that is password protected (Saldana, 2013; Yin, 2014). The recorded interviews were labeled and stored for later transcribing to a Microsoft Word document. Taylor and Land (2014) noted that when a researcher conducts interviews it is important to label, store, organize, and use codes for easy analyzing data. The data collection technique consisted of semistructured, face-to-face interviews with open-ended questions. I also viewed each departmental

attendance policy, retention and, turnover documents, and created a folder in Microsoft Word called “organization and participant info” that housed the transcribed interviews. Researchers assigning a genetic code for participants will ensure the protection of human subject (Johnson, 2015). The data information folder contained five subfolders labeled with the identity-protected codes for each participant, organization and documents viewed as P1; P2, P3; P4; and P5. Having identity protection codes ensured that the participants and organizations used in this study were kept confidential. Identity codes will ensure the confidentiality and the anonymity of the participants in a qualitative study (Gibson, Benson, & Brand, 2013).

To ensure collected data is not lost, I stored data on a password-protected USB drive and hard drive on my computer located in my home, which I am the only person with access. Raw data such as documents were stored in a security safe within my home. As noted by Wolf et al. (2015) any information used in a research study about participants should be destroyed after the initial intent. All information will be stored for 5 years. After 5 years, all collected data from organizations and participants will be destroyed because of the universal best practice for research. I am the only person who will have access to any information involving the organizations and participants of the study.

### **Data Analysis**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple-case study was to explore strategies that managers in the health care industry used to reduce EVS employee turnover. I created interview questions that facilitated themes and patterns answering the central research

question. In a qualitative research study, methodological triangulation is used to gain rich and thick data from multiple sources (Carter et al., 2014; Wilson, 2014). I used methodological triangulation to gain rich and thick data, from the interviews, notes, and departmental documents (e.g. attendance policy, retention, and turnover). Asking interview questions enabled me to understand the participants' insights on EVS turnover better. Carter et al. (2014) and Wilson (2014) noted the usefulness of methodological triangulation in collecting data about the same phenomenon using multiple methods such as interviewing and note-taking. Triangulation allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon and increased validity through the convergence of information from various sources (Carter et al., 2014; Wilson, 2014).

After the face-to-face interviews with participants, I collected the department attendance policy along with retention and turnover documents. I carefully examined these documents and took notes for later compilation. I organized participant data by categories established in the literature review relating to retention, turnover, and leadership strategies. For turnover and retention strategies, I used *the role of EVS in hospital organizations, work conditions, salary, recognition and reward, opportunities, training, voluntary turnover, involuntary turnover, and employee engagement*. Other topics, I used *communication, supervisor leadership style, encouragement, motivation, manager-employee relationship, coaching, and decision-making*. I selected the categories according to those that emerged from the literature review, I in addition analyze data according to themes that may emerge during the interviews. If for some reason the previously selected categories did not fit, I adjusted. The themes emerged from all data

collected for this study to provide an accurate indicator of this study. These categories may provide the most insight on how to reduce EVS turnover.

Researchers have suggested a logical and sequential order for data processing (Harper & Cole, 2012; Schreier, 2014). The data process includes collecting open-ended data from participants. After each interview, I (a) transcribed information the same day for accuracy, (b) emailed participants a copy of the transcribe responses for member checking and validation of their responses, and (c) asked participants to confirm that I have accurately interpreted their responses. I uploaded the transcribed audio recordings onto my desktop computer. I used NVivo 12 Plus software because it is comprehensive in qualitative data analysis (Zamawe, 2015). Hilal and Alabri (2013) noted that NVivo 12 Plus provides ease of use and yields results that are more professional. The software assists me in organizing, analyzing, and coding transcribed interviews (Hutchison, Johnson, & Breekan, 2010; Zamawe, 2015). Researchers have asserted the necessity of the data cleaning process (Devi & Kalia, 2015; Harvey, 2001). This process helps to eliminate incorrect conclusions (Devi & Kali, 2015).

I analyzed data using Yin's (2011) five stages of data methods: (a) collected and compiled data, (b) disassembled the data, (c) reassembled data, (d) interpreted data, and (e) concluded the data. I imported the textual transcript into NVivo 12 Plus from Microsoft Word. After completing this process, I compiled the data by organizing it into categories. Next, I disassembled the compiled data by breaking it into smaller pieces. My next step involved reassembling the data into different groups until themes emerged to satisfaction (Sharon, 2013; Yin, 2011). I interpreted the reassemble data and described its

meaning in my own words (Sharon, 2013; Yin, 2011, 2014). Finally, I concluded the data. Concluding the data relates to the interpretation of data and bring unity to the entirety of the study (Yin, 2011).

## **Reliability and Validity**

### **Reliability**

Reliability ensures dependable research and the consistency and accuracy of the findings that engender similar results (Ali & Yusof, 2014; Yin, 2014). Dependability is an element that increases the confidence of the qualitative findings (Munn, Porritt, Lockwood, Aromataris, & Pearson, 2014). To ensure dependability, I used comprehensive documentation of the process for data collection. Loh (2013) recommended using more than one source to collect data such as semistructured interviews and document analysis. I used an interview protocol with the precise open-ended questions using a semistructured technique for each participant, allowing the same amount of time for response (see Appendix A). As noted by (Alshengeeti, 2014) an interview protocol strengthens the dependability of the data collection. The use of the interview protocol allows the researcher to gain a more in-depth understanding of additional information relative to the study at hand (Castillo-Montoya, 2016).

Castillo-Montoya (2016) also recommended asking four types of questions that can preserve the conversation and inquiry goals of the research: (a) introductory questions, (b) transition questions, (c) key questions, and (d) closing questions. Asking these questions, the interviewer tends to solicit the most valuable information from participants. In addition to asking interview questions, document analysis, and an audio

recording device was used to ensure accurate data collection, which creates dependability. The view of departmental documents provided background information and together facts.

The concept of dependability aligns with reliability (Munn et al., 2014; Harvey, 2015). Dependability refers to the stability of the data (Bengtsson, 2016). The researcher establishes dependability by maintaining an accurate and consistent recording of the research and decision-making. Member checking is a form of dependability that is a quality control process, which qualitative researchers used to validate interview data (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Member checking permits each participant to read his or her transcribed responses to ensure these have been recorded and therefore credible.

### **Validity**

Azham and Hamidah (2011) stated that validity ensures that researchers have captured what they planned to study and truthfully recorded what they have seen or heard. Kihn and Ihantola also, noticed that validity alludes to the degree to which the conclusions drawn in research give an accurate description or explanation of what happened. Validity reflects trustworthiness of the data (Boesch, Schwaninger, Weber & Schotz, 2013; Yin, 2014).

Researchers consider credibility, transferability, and confirmability as trustworthiness criteria that ensure the rigor of qualitative studies (Anney, 2014). Researchers are known to established credibility when the results of data collected from participants are believable (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). I used member checking of the interview data and triangulation through the use of interviews and document analysis to

achieved creditability. Also, Yin suggested that member checking of participants' transcribed responses ensures credibility and mitigate bias. Each participant had a chance to view his or her interpreted responses to ensure trustworthiness.

Transferability refers to the degree to which the findings from the study can be transferred to other settings or groups, allowing the reader to identify with the finding based on their knowledge (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I used an interview protocol (see Appendix B) and provided a comprehensive description of the context topic of this study that ensures transferability of the study's findings.

Confirmability researchers focus on the authentic and accuracy of the data collected and the findings from a qualitative study are verifiable by other researchers (Houghton et al., 2013; Marshall and Rossman, 2016). Researchers achieve confirmability when other scholars confirm or corroborate the research results and enable scholars to contribute to the study (Nilsson et al., 2016). To ensure confirmability Fusch and Ness (2015) noted that member checking is useful in validating a qualitative case study. I employed member checking to validate the interview data where each participant had the chance to view and validate my interpretation of their interview responses.

Achieving data saturation is not about the number of interviews but about attaining in-depth data to reach data saturation, which is an essential part of improving validity in a qualitative study (Yin, 2015). Moreover, the researcher should select and interview a sample size of participants to reach data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I interviewed five participants that were familiar with the topic for better elaborating on employee turnover in the EVS department. To confirm data saturation was met, the

researcher must continue to interview the participants until no new data is obtained (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). To confirm data saturation, I utilized data triangulation by asking probing interview questions to EVS managers until no new data emerged, and no further coding was feasible and viewed departmental documents, and asked follow-up questions.

### **Transition and Summary**

In Section 2, I provided a more in-depth analysis entailed of the purpose statement, a description of the participants, the research method and the research design. I provided a description of the population and sampling method, ethical research, data collection instruments, data collection techniques, data organization techniques, and data analysis techniques. Section 2 concluded with a discussion regarding reliability and validity. Section 3 begins with an introduction and will entail (a) presentation of the findings, (b) applications to professional practices, (c) implications for social change, (d) the recommendation for action, (e) the recommendations for further research, and (f) researcher reflection and the conclusion.



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

#### **Introduction**

My purpose in this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies that some hospital managers use to reduce EVS employee turnover. I conducted semistructured interviews with five EVS hospital managers from the Piedmont Triad and Research Triangle Park of North Carolina. The interviews occurred in a private, relaxing and quiet setting where the interviewees provide informative answers to the semistructured interview questions. I took notes collected from participant interviews and reviewed hospital and departmental documents (e.g., documents related to attendance policies and retention and turnover). I reached data saturation when no new data emerged from interviews, notes, or documents review.

The participants answered eight open-ended questions (see Appendix A) to identify the strategies that they use to retain EVS employees and increase productivity. After audio-recording and thoroughly transcribing the interviews, and reviewing data from department documents and my notes, I allowed each participant to review and validate my interpretation of their interview responses. The corrected and revised transcripts of the interviews analyzed and coded into themes using NVivo 12 plus for Microsoft.

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

The overarching research question of this study was: What strategies do hospital managers use to reduce EVS employee turnover? The conceptual framework for this doctoral study was TLT.

Data obtained from multiple sites and all data collected from participants, hospitals and departmental documents were confidential throughout Section 3. In this study five hospital managers identified as Participant (P1), Participant (P2), Participant (P3), Participant (P4), and Participant (P5). Documents consisted of the hospital and departmental attendance policy, retention, and turnover. Evidence from the literature review coincided with the themes that emerged from the data collection. Following is a discussion of the findings that identify with the emerging strategies and conceptual framework of Burns's TLT. The four themes that emerged through my analysis of the data: (a) communication, (b) leadership, (c) training and development, and (d) reward and recognition.

Table 1

*Summary of Themes for Strategies to Retain EVS Employee*

	Theme	%
Theme 1	Communication	27
Theme 2	Leadership Style	26
Theme 3	Training and Development	25
Theme 4	Reward and Recognition	22

**Keys Words**

After reviewing participants responses, departmental documents, and notes, I created a list of keywords (*see Table 2*) and their frequency. The word *leadership* occurred the most and participants used it in their explanation of recruiting the right person for the job. All the participants referred to the word *employees* approximately 117 times during the interview. Also, *EVS* (110) was another popular word used during the interview process. Another word used during the interview and document review

*turnover* used 81 times. Other words used frequently in the interviews were *retention*, *strategies*, *training*, *communication*, *feedback*, and *expectation*.

*Transformational leadership* and *training and development* phrases used 67 times during participants interview. Other key phrases used during the interview were *reward* and *cognition and job satisfaction*. Participants used the following when describing strategies used to retain employees.

Table 2

*Keyword Frequency: Top 14 Keywords and Phrases*

Keyword/phrases	Frequency
Leadership	120
Employees	117
EVS	110
Turnover	81
Transformational leadership	67
Training and development	67
Retention	66
Strategies	63
Reward and recognition	60
Training	54
Job satisfaction	54
Communication	50
Feedback	27
Expectation	25

### **Emerging Theme 1: Effective Communication**

The first theme that emerged from the analysis of participant's responses was *effective communication* as an important strategy that helps improve EVS employee's retention. The participant's response showed that managers use effective communication, feedback, and expectations as a crucial element for retention. P1 stated,

I believe one of the essential elements of retaining employees is to communicate in a clear and concise manner and allow the employee to share their feedback. When an employee understands his or her responsibilities and expectations it allows the employee to perform their job at a satisfying level. Without communicating clearly to employees, managers are unable to get assignments completed in a timely manner.

Northhouse (2015) noted that transformational leaders clearly communicate expectations to the employee in a clear manner so that employees can see how their work is meaningful. P2 discussed having an environment where employees are free to share feedback about their job with someone who values their ideas. P2 also noted that keeping the lines of communication open is a vital part of employee retention strategy used to retain employees. P2 stated,

My employees can come to me with questions, concerns, or just to share their ideas. I feel keeping the lines of communication open, employees can contribute to the department and it enables the employees and employer to connect and have a better working relationship.

P4 stated,

Effective communication starts when an employee is first hired, and it is important to communicate a clear vision and employee expectations. Stress the purpose of their job and the importance they bring to the big picture of the organization.

P5 discussed that having consistency in communication is the blueprint to employee understanding their expectation. Since EVS is frontline employees they do not always have time to read their emails and some are not computer savvy and have a hard time getting the information. It is up to the management team to ensure each employee is knowledgeable about what is going on in the department and organization.

All participants talked about how daily huddles as a forum for sharing departmental and hospital information, sector meetings, which allows the employee to share their views on other issues. Cloutier et al. (2015) noted that communicate in a way where people can understand this will allow for employee engagement. When employees are engaged, they tend to stay on the job because they feel they are a part of the organization. When a leader fails to communicate in a clear voice it could lead to an unhealthy work culture (Mandhanya, 2015). Another important point P1 and P2 shared in the communication process, always be willing to listen to feedback from employees. In comparison to P1 and P2, P3 stated, “I listen to my employees, I observe and seek to understand what they are doing by asking pertinent questions. I use this information to retain my employees. I want to hear what employees need and want, I take this information and use as a retention strategy.”

### **Emerging Theme 2: Leadership**

The second theme that derived from data analysis was *leadership*. The second theme emerges from the strategies and conceptual framework of Burns’s TLT. P1, P2, and P4 had similar comments noting that, to sustain a better working environment EVS managers must hire the right person for the job. Hiring the correct person who has the

skills to manage other people is a strategy to combat employee turnover. P1 discussed having the correct person in place who comprehends what the EVS employees endure on a day-to-day basis adds to the comfort of the employee knowing someone cares and understands what they go through. P1 believes that a manager needs to be personable and qualified to lead a team because bad or poor management makes it difficult for an employee to work. P2 noted that hiring the wrong person to lead a team could be a disaster to the department and aids to the loss of good employees. P3 and P5 discussed a manager should want an employee to achieve their day to day task. P3 noted a leadership is all about inspiring people to do their best, motivating people to do more each day. P4 stated,

A leader must give everyone the opportunity to shine in their own strengths and develop in areas for growth. A leader must have the courage to let the best shine and look for opportunities for increased levels of responsibility for them to pursue.

P5 discussed when a manager leads by example showing employees that the leader is committed to the job and creating an environment of trust that most employees will follow and improve their productivity. P5 also stated,

Effective leadership comes from remembering the human aspect. In order to lead by example, or apply the fair and consistent treatment, you must be willing to listen to staff. You must keep an unbiased, open mind and really listen to what they have to say.

P3 noted transformational leadership was founded to be the most rewarding to employees because employees are influenced and empowered to do the right things and creating ways for employees to reach their goals. Being a transformational leader allows the manager to attend to employee's needs. Kamal and Kamal (2014) stated that listening and learning what is valuable to the employee and communicating appreciation allows the employee to focus more on the job.

### **Emerging Theme 3: Training and Development**

The third theme that emerged from the analysis of participant's responses and departmental documents was *training and development*. P1 and P2 noted training program starts with an orientation class and continues throughout the employee employment at the hospital. P2 added that the EVS department has a training development mentoring program in place in which each employee attends. Each must go through a 40 hours training program that is intense and hands on. Employees must be able to demonstrate their knowledge of learning at the end of the program. P3's response confirmed what P1 and P2 noted; EVS employees in a training and developmental mentoring program gives the employee a chance to develop, be productive, and helps enables the manager to retain valuable employees. Also, there is a team leader program that provides team leaders opportunities to mentor and coach, while allowing team leaders to develop supervisory skills. P4 and P5 also noted that EVS employee training and development start at the beginning of employment, continuing throughout the employee's tenure. Employees must attend all training sessions that place emphasis on their health care training and development.

Documentation from each participants' organization indicated training and development programs are in place to help employees engage and grow within the business. Coloquhoun et al. (2016) noted that training and development programs should be relevant to the job that increases the best practice for job responsibilities and productivity. Mamun and Hasan (2017) denoted a similar finding that implementing training and development programs that help to grow and advance employees within the organization reduces turnover. The employee gains experience and a high level of job satisfaction. When an employee has job knowledge of their responsibilities it can ensure organizational commitment and influence retention.

#### **Emerging Theme 4: Employee Engagement and Productivity**

The final theme that emerged from the participant responses was *employee engagement and productivity*. Managers focus on strategies that are nurturing to employees such as job satisfaction, employee engagement, and employee productivity. Fostering a culture of employee reward and recognition translates to higher employee productivity. Engaged employees tend to have a high level of job satisfaction when rewarded for a job well done and distinctly influence employee performance behavior, and ultimately impact the organization success (Alagaraja & Shuck, 2015). Since employees thrive on feedback, having a one on one conversation with employees is a phenomenal way to get employees engaged. One on one conversations allows the manager and employee to connect, and discuss the employee's expectations and productivity (Saks & Gruman, 2014).



In reviewing participants departmental documents there are several rewards programs employee can be engaged in and receive rewards. Employee handbooks from participants P1, P2, and P3 showed the organization has implemented several rewards and recognition programs to help motivate employees to engage more in their work. The reward and recognition programs include various incentives such as a managers tool kit that have various items like gift cards, shout outs, and thank you cards. The employee is also rewarded with accrued paid time off, years of service reward and recognition. Another incentive for employees is education reimbursement, which may provide up to 50 percent of their paid tuition. The employee also has the opportunity to be an employee of the month, which may include getting to park in a special more convenient area.

Participant P1 noted that to keep employees happy and engaged leaders must continue to find ways to involve employees to help motivate and improve their performance. P2 stated,

management must communicate with employees on how important they are and their work is to the organization, and how the employee can contribute to the business success.

P3 stated,

must be willing to talk and listen to their employees to see what motivated them because reward and recognition are very important in the retention of employees keeping in mind that most employees want recognition when they are doing a good job.

P4 and P5 hospital organizations reward and recognition programs consist of accruing paid time off, and if more than 280 hours PTO is accrued they will roll over into a long term sick leave bank. Employees who report to work and accumulate 88 hours or more PTO time, can sell back their time per quarter. Another reward program is the annual recognition celebration and awards which is based on the length of services, and is given at 5-year intervals. Employees have the opportunity to become an employee of the month. The employee handbook also revealed the inclusion of various educational rewards.

The environmental services managers of the health care organizations I interviewed applied retention and turnover strategies to decrease turnover and retain valuable employees by using a transformational leadership style. The data revealed that managers using effective communication and employing the right leadership allowed employees to feel connected to their superiors and the organization. Managers utilizing training and development programs where employees learn new and innovative ways to do their jobs, and enhance existing employee knowledge, and skills lead to a loyal employee and a cohesive workforce. (Cloutier et al, 2015). Training and development of employees allow employees to engage in daily activities, improve morale, productivity, and enhance motivation (Karanges et al., 2015). Employees' engagement and productivity lead to a higher level of job satisfaction that contributes to the overall organization. The findings of this doctoral study align with Burns's TLT and the literature review. The study revealed retention and turnover strategies on effective

business practices that managers used to decrease turnover, retain valuable employees, and increase productivity.

### **Applications to Professional Practice**

The consequences of losing good employees are critical to the health care industry. Maintaining a productive workforce is the essence of recruiting and retaining top talented employees. Some researchers have revealed strong evidence that unwarranted turnover is detrimental to organization performance because it slows down work productive and brings on added cost in replacing employees (Sun & Wang, 2017). Losing valuable employees brings on the loss of talented employees with the correct knowledge and experience to keep things running smooth. The emerging demand for skilled and talented employees is becoming more important in a competitive world of uncertainty. The development of new strategies and the enhancement of old strategies may significantly reduce turnover as managers strive to meet the demands of the organization. It is important to retain hospital EVS employees that work in the patient care areas because it takes a special person to work in the emergency room or ICU, for these employees are exposed to unexpected and uncomfortable settings.

Environmental Services Managers in the hospital industry used several strategies to enhance and implement employee retention strategies that are applicable to the sustainability of the health care organization. The findings from this study are relevant to sustaining and improving business practices by providing better communication tactics, allowing the employee to provide feedback, and being clear about employee job expectations. Cloutier et al., (2015) noted leaders who communicate with employees

daily, employees feel better about their job and provide better feedback without fear of retaliation and understand their job expectations. The study also revealed that employees want leadership that fits the job and leaders that share the interest of the employees. Investing in training and development programs that give the employees the opportunities to learn and improve their skills and day to day experience, give the employees a sense of belonging, an environment of trust, and relationship (Anitha, 2014). Organizations that have little to no training and developing programs tend to have poor job performance and a high degree of turnover (Al Mamun & Hasan, 2017). Organizations using training and development programs have a high ratio of accomplishment and minimize employee turnover (Andersen et al., 2017). Employees want to engage in different aspects of the job. Workers want to engage in hospital activities and decision making, which creates job engagement, job satisfaction and increase job productivity (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014). Allowing the employee to engage stimulates workers to want to be on the job and perform their job duties to a high expectation. Managers implementing the findings from the study will improve patient safety because there would be enough staff in environmental services controlling and preventing the spread of hospital infection that may save a patient's life. The findings from this doctoral study may also contribute to strategies that lead to improving how managers make decisions that deal with employees, lower the turnover rate, improve employee productivity, and job longevity.

### **Implications for Social Change**

The implications for positive social change include the potential for job longevity and increased retention, which contributes to the financial state of the organization

stability, the success of employees, the communities, and families. Managers realized that turnover in a hospital organization is inevitable; where there are opportunities for job improvements, some people will leave their job to seek employment elsewhere. Ensuring that an employee stays committed, the hospital organization rewards employees for a job well done. Every employee wants to feel that their work is meaningful and makes a difference. EVS employees play a vital role in patient care and provide a lifesaving task that utilizes best practices to shield patients from harm. EVS is the first line of defense and acts as an ambassador for the organization. Without EVS employees, a hospital cannot meet its full potential of serving the community.

### **Recommendations for Action**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that some hospital managers used to reduce EVS employee turnover. A high turnover rate delays the efficiency of products and services to customers and patients (Cloutier, 2015). The studied participants identified the importance of having open communication, allowing employees to provide feedback, and explaining employees job expectations. Participants emphasized the importance of having leadership that fits the job and show interest in the employees and their needs. Organizations need to provide opportunities for the employee to grow by implementing training and development programs and engaging employees in aspects of the business and the decision-making process that helps to improve productivity. Based on the results of this doctoral study, implementing effective strategies to retain valuable employees and increase productivity are essential to the success and wealth of the organization. Although I interviewed only EVS managers in

hospital organizations, the findings are relevant to all levels of leadership within a hospital; and leaders in various industries can benefit from the findings of this study all over the world.

Leaders in the service industries should pay close attention to the results of this study and implement strategies to reduce turnover and enhance employees lives on the job because this industry has a workforce that is susceptible to very high turnover rates (St. Clair, 2014). Managers that implement retention strategies reduces turnover (Park & Shaw, 2013). Managers are struggling to come up with ways to reduce turnover and deliver quality services (Steinmetz, Vries, & Tjzens, 2014).

I will disseminate the results of the study through conferences, scholarly journals, and business journals. I will also circulate the results from this study through participants email that include a one to two pages summary of the study and leadership training classes regarding retention strategies that company leaders need to retain EVS employees. Dissemination will also include publication in ProQuest Dissertation and Theses Database for future scholars and other organizations.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

This study intends to identify strategies hospital EVS managers used to reduce EVS employee turnover. The findings from this study warrant additional exploration of retention strategies for EVS employees. Therefore, the manager should explore other strategies that could help retain valued employees. I also suggest that the researcher to further explore the limitation of retention and turnover strategies from the views of the EVS employees and not only those in a leadership role. One of the limitations noted from

this study was the participant's knowledge of the strategies used by the department to reduce employee turnover limited the purposeful sample selection. The second limitation was the honesty and thoroughness of the participants' responses to the interview questions because the responses were self-reported information and could contain biases, selective memory, telescoping, and attribution (Connelly, 2013; Stocia, 2015). Further recommendations for future research are to expand the population to supervisor and EVS employees in a larger geographic location and focus on strategies that could strengthen the supervisor-employee relationship.

### **Reflections**

My aspiration for this doctoral degree started long ago as a dream, and now that dream has turned into reality. The doctoral program was a challenging yet rewarding experience. I faced many challenges and setbacks, often left feeling frustrated, discouraged, and overwhelmed but was told many times by a colleague quitting is not an option, so I kept pressing on. The support and prayers from a good friend helped me to focus and stay on task. I was able to collaborate on various topics that expanded my learning comprehension and enhanced my abilities as a researcher. Learning to use a scholarly voice took time to acquire, however, I am a better writer today. I found joining a group of scholarly writers to hash out a solution to problems or just expound on a word of encouragement kept me focused and true to my dream. The support I received from family and friends was impeccable. As this wonderful journey come to an end, I will always be grateful. I will never forget the engaging learning experiences and development I received from Walden faculty.

The finding from this study affected me personally because I have focused my past research on EVS leadership, and I wanted to see what other managers thought and perceived about their employees. Using a transformational leadership style, I have always been able to build a strong team and retain employees and minimize turnover. One thing I learned is that employees are the greatest asset within an organization and treating employees well and letting them know that they are valuable to the organization increases productivity. Observing other managers in this field who were not supportive of their employees revealed the risk of losing many valuable employees. I eliminated personal bias by self-reflecting, I had to step back from my behavior, and preconceived notions about turnover, and focus objectively on the information I collected through participant interviews. Also, not knowing the participant personally and using an interview protocol made the process more objective to focus on the research and maintain honesty.

The participants in this doctoral study were knowledgeable about the strategies used by EVS departments to retain EVS employees emphasizing the importance of communicating, and sharing knowledge with the employees, allowing for feedback, importance of explaining job expectations, having a person in leadership that fits the job, creating training and development programs for employees to learn and advance to the next level, and allowing the employees to engage in their job to increase productivity. This information can provide a blueprint to gaining a competitive advantage in my new role as a manager in a different hospital and my future business endeavors as a business owner.



### **Summary and Study Conclusion**

For an organization to have a competitive advantage, leaders must place retention and turnover strategies at the forefront of their business to survive. Some researchers noted employee turnover in hospitals increases employee recruitment and training costs, which can be 200% of an employee's salary, thereby impacting the profitability of hospitals, and increasing patients' health care costs (Call et al., 2015), can be disruptive to the operation which affects the organization's overall success. EVS employees are valuable and indispensable to a hospital organization. These employees merit respect and gratitude from others who work within their environment.

The conceptual framework for this doctoral study provides a platform between the strategy's managers espoused on implementing for reducing turnover. Transformational leadership is about leaders achieving a high level of performance from their subordinates (Moynihan, Pandey, & Wright, 2015). Leaders must learn to inspire workers to have more interest in their job and motivate employees to accomplish more than anticipated that brings about positive change. To bring about positive change and reduce turnover, the participants in this study provided four key determinants of effective leadership strategies that reduced turnover: (a) communication, (b) leadership, (c) training and development, and (d) employee engagement and productivity. Applying effective retention strategies starts with the findings of what employees need, feel, and want as the basis for developing a strategic plan to achieve.

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## Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. What strategies do you use to retain EVS employees?
2. How did you gather information to implement strategies to reduce EVS turnover?
3. How do you measure the effectiveness of the EVS retention strategies?
4. How did the EVS employees respond to these strategies?
5. What elements of the occupation add to the employees' turnover?
6. Moreover, what elements of the organization contribute to, or detract from, EVS employee retention?
7. What advice can you provide to other management teams that struggle with implementing best practices for an effective leadership style that retain valuable employees?
8. What did I forget to ask that you found to be useful in reducing turnover?



## Appendix B: Interview Protocol

1. Introduce self to the participant.
2. Present consent form, go over consent and answer questions and concerns of the participant.
3. Give participant a copy of consent form.
4. Turn on the recording device.
5. Follow the procedure to introduce the participant to pseudonym code identification, note the date and time.
6. Begin semistructured interview with Question 1; follow through to the final question.
7. Follow up with additional probing questions.
8. End interview sequence; discuss transcript review and member checking with participants.
9. Thank the participant for participating in the study. Reiterate contact numbers for follow up questions and concerns from the participant.
10. End of the protocol.