

2020

Strategies to Retain Employees Within an Organization

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Chawana M. Anderson

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2020

Abstract

Strategies to Retain Employees Within an Organization

by

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MBA, Keller Graduate School of Management, 2008

BS, Prairie View A & M University, 2004

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

April 2020

Abstract

Some organizational leaders are unable to retain talented employees, which results in productivity loss and increased costs associated with employee recruitment and training. The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies leaders of an oil and gas organization use to retain employees. The participants comprised 5 leaders located in Houston, Texas, with successful experience in implementing strategies to retain employees. The conceptual frameworks for this study were Argyris and Schon's organizational learning theory and Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman's 2-factor theory. Data were collected through semistructured interviews and archival company documents. Yin's 5-step analysis guided the data analysis process. The 3 themes that emerged from the analysis of data collected were establishing employee and employer relationships, clear communication, and professional development. The implications for positive social change include increasing employee retention that could lead to increased employment, which may improve the prosperity of employees and the local community.

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Dedication

I dedicate this study to my future children. Though you did not see my educational journey, you are able to see the results of what hard work and dedication will lead you. Now, this journey was not easy and there were times I wanted to quit, but with praying, fasting, and keeping the faith, you will be surprised what you can accomplish. Know that there are no limits when you have God on your side. You can do all things through Christ that strengthens you (Philippian 4:13).

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First and foremost, I would like to give honor to God. You are my father, my provider, counselor, waymaker, and much more. This journey would not have been possible without you making a way for me. This journey was neither short nor easy, but I made it and most importantly my faith has grown.

Secondly, I would like to thank my family for your encouraging words and prayers. To my husband, Percy, your unconditional love during this journey helped me to stay focused and patient. There have been many nights I have stayed up to work on my study and you didn't complain.

To my chair, Dr. Jaime Klein, and committee members, Dr. Jorge Gaytan and Dr. Matthew Knight, I would like to thank you for all of your help in making my study what it is today. Your critiques and suggestions allowed me to become a better researcher, writer, and student.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

In this study, I explored strategies leaders of oil and gas organizations used to retain employees. Organizational leaders faced an economic dilemma when employee turnover increased within the organization. One of the main challenges oil and gas organizations face is high employee turnover rates (Harhara, Singh, & Hussain, 2015). Leaders seek improved options to retain valuable employees by diminishing the negative impacts on organizational performance, which forced leaders to seek better ways to retain valuable employees (Chiedu, Long, & Ashar, 2017). In this section, I describe the background of the problem, problem statement, purpose statement, nature of the study, overarching research question, conceptual framework, assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and significance of the study. I also provide a review of the professional and academic literature.

Background of the Problem

Employee retention becomes problematic for some organizations (Flickinger, Allscher, & Fiedler, 2016). Employee resignations, layoffs, are some of the reasons organizations lose employees (U.S. Department of Labor, 2019). Retaining employees and attracting talent is a challenge for business leaders (Pritchard, 2015). Unforeseen employee loss has affected many industries, including the oil and gas industry (Agrawal & Aggrawal, 2015).

The oil and gas industry face organizational instability and financial challenges due to a lack of employee retention. Employee turnover in the oil and gas sector decreases the talent pool and knowledge base within an organization (Agrawal &

Aggrawal, 2015). For organizations to continue to exist in the industry, leaders will have to strategize to maintain talent. Researchers suggested implementing strategies to retain employees may increase employee retention (Aguenza & Som, 2012; Deery & Jago, 2015).

Problem Statement

Between October 2018 and October 2019, 67.4 million U.S. employees voluntarily separated from employers (U.S. Department of Labor, 2019), representing a significant challenge for all organizations, in general, and oil and gas organizations, in particular (Al-Ali, Ameen, Isaac, Khalifa, & Shibamh, 2019). Fifty-one percent of U.S. employees are actively looking for a new job (T. W. Lee, Hom, Eberly, & Li, 2017a), resulting in significant challenges associated with employee retention and financial losses for oil and gas organizations. The general business problem is that some organizational leaders are unable to retain talented employees, which results in productivity loss and increased costs for employee recruitment and training. The specific business problem is that some leaders of oil and gas organizations lack strategies to retain employees.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies leaders of oil and gas organizations use to retain employees. The targeted population consisted of five leaders in the oil and gas industry in Houston, Texas, with successful experience in implementing strategies to retain employees. The implications for positive social change included providing managers new insight on engagement strategies for employees that

may lead to lower voluntary and involuntary employee turnover, thus reducing unemployment within communities.

Nature of the Study

I used a qualitative methodology for this study. The objective for researchers using qualitative research is to understand the experiences and approaches of participants through the collected data (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). Examining relationships or differences among variables requires researchers, using the quantitative research method, to measure and analyze data collected using statistical procedures (Bernerth, Cole, Taylor, & Walker, 2017). The quantitative method was not appropriate for this study because I did not examine relationships or differences among variables or measure and analyze data collected using statistical procedures. Researchers using the mixed-method research methodology incorporate both quantitative research and qualitative research (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). The mixed-method methodology was not appropriate because I did not test hypotheses, use traditional surveys, or examine variables. I proceeded with the qualitative methodology to explore strategies leaders of oil and gas organizations used to retain employees.

During the process of exploring the qualitative methods, I decided against many popular research designs. A researcher using the phenomenology approach explores the essence of the meaning of experiencing phenomena to participants (Willis, Sullivan-Bolyai, Knafl, & Cohen, 2016). Researchers using the phenomenology research design focus on human experience through real-life situations, which was not the intent of this study. Researchers using the ethnographic research design define and interpret the social

dynamics of the culture shared among the group members (Bass & Milosevic, 2018). The ethnographic research design was not appropriate because I did not focus on the social dynamics of the culture shared among the group members. A researcher using the narrative design approach will only be presenting a chronological account of the events via spoken words or written texts (Cypress, 2015). A narrative design was not appropriate because I did not present a chronological account of the events via spoken words or written texts.

I explored strategies leaders of oil and gas organizations used to retain employees. Researchers using a case study design, focus on a case to retain a holistic perspective on individual life cycles, small group behaviors, organizational and managerial processes, neighborhood change, school performance, international relations, and the maturation of industries (Yin, 2018). I used the case study approach to investigate a collection of experiences, which enabled me to explore strategies leaders of oil and gas organizations used to retain employees.

Research Question

The overarching research question for this study was as follows: What strategies do leaders of an oil and gas organization use to retain employees?

Interview Questions

1. What strategies have you, as a leader, used to retain employees?
2. What procedures are implemented to determine the reasons employees leave your organization?

3. What strategies do you use to identify employees desiring to leave your organization?
4. What strategies have you used to change an employee's decision to leave your organization?
5. What barriers have you encountered in implementing employee retention strategies?
6. How do you address the barriers you encountered in implementing the employee retention strategies?
7. What additional information would you like to add regarding strategies to retain employees?

Conceptual Framework

I used Argyris and Schon's (1978) organizational learning theory and Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman's (1959) two-factor theory as a lens to ground the study to understand leaders' retention strategies in oil and gas organizations. Researchers use organizational learning theory to evaluate the structure and process of improving actions through enhanced knowledge and understanding of past actions, the effectiveness of those actions, and future actions (Chadwick & Raver, 2015; Dodgson, 1993; Fiol & Lyles, 1985). I used Argyris and Schon's organizational learning theory to define the process the organizations used to improve actions through better knowledge and understanding of past actions, the effectiveness of those actions, and future actions. Organizational learning theory is a dynamic process of creation, acquisition, and integrations of knowledge aimed at developing the resources and capabilities that allow

the organization to achieve better performance (Oelze, Hoejmose, Hasbisch, & Millington, 2016). Leaders implement strategies to increase job satisfaction and decrease dissatisfaction to retain employees.

In the two-factor theory, Herzberg et al. (1959) explored the causes of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. I used Herzberg et al.'s two-factor theory for this study to explore variables that influence job satisfaction, job dissatisfaction, employee turnover, and retention. To increase job satisfaction and job performance, managers should identify and address the factors that affect job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1987). I used Herzberg et al.'s two-factor theory to explore the strategies that leaders of oil and gas organizations used to retain employees.

Operational Definitions

Employee retention: Employee retention is the ability of an organization to retain its employees (T. W. Lee et al., 2017a).

Employee turnover: Employee turnover is an involuntary and voluntary separation act initiated by an employer or employee after establishing employment for any length of time (T. W. Lee et al., 2017b).

Involuntary employee turnover: Involuntary employee turnover is when an employee leaves an organization based on the employer's decision to terminate the employment relationship (T. W. Lee, Hom, Eberly, Li, & Mitchell, 2017b).

Voluntary employee turnover: Voluntary employee turnover is when an employee leaves the organization intentionally (T. W. Lee et al., 2017b).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Helmich, Boerebach, Arah, and Lingard (2015) identified components of the study that are essential in explaining and outlining a research study, including assumptions, limitations, and delimitations. Scholars identify assumptions, limitations, and delimitations to set the context for the researcher's focus on the study (Helmich et al., 2015). The following subsections include the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations for the study.

Assumptions

Assumptions are supposition researchers take for granted while conducting research (Helmich et al., 2015). I had three assumptions in this study. The first assumption was that the participants were honest about their management experience and the strategies they used to retain employees. The second assumption was that the participants felt comfortable sharing real-life experiences and strategies regarding employee retention. The third assumption was that I needed five interviews to achieve data saturation.

Limitations

Limitations to a research study are potential weaknesses that are difficult to control because of factors such as constraint of time, funding, or choice of study (Helmich et al., 2015). A limitation in this study was time constraints to gather and interpret the data because of the accessibility of the participants. Another limitation of this study was that only a few participants would participate in the study, which prevented the application of findings across the oil and gas industry.

Delimitations

Delimitations are characteristics that define the scope and boundaries of the study (Koskull, Strandvik, & Tronvoll, 2016). I selected leaders in oil and gas organizations in Houston, Texas, to participate in this study. The delimitations in this study were participants currently holding leadership positions within an organization and possessing a minimum of 2 years of experience in leadership, as well as experience in implementing employee retention strategies successfully.

Significance of the Study

Leaders of oil and gas organizations may use the results of this study to contribute and extend the existing knowledge of employee retention. Jaakkola, Helkkula, and Aarikka-Stenroos (2015) stated the significance of studying a phenomenon is to provide an agenda for future research. In assessing the significance of the study, I reviewed the contributing factors of this study that add value to the business, contribute to business practice, and have implications for social change.

Value to Business

The results of this study could contribute to positive business practices and add employee value to the business organization. The work environment could affect an employee's ability to excel within the organization (Rudolph, 2015). Some employees would like to enhance skills and knowledge to become an asset to an organization (Snorraddottir, Tomasson, Vilhjalmsson, & Rafnsdottir, 2015). An employee will decide to leave an organization once knowledge and skills are not increasing. The leader's

ability to implement innovative strategies could be beneficial to the morale of the company employees and result in increased employee retention.

Contribution to Business Practice

Organizational leaders can attract and retain employees by enhancing their views about the organization. As the job market for all industries becomes more competitive, organizations should enhance employees' quality of work life to attract and retain qualified employees (Tanwar & Prasad, 2016). Organizations can retain employees by understanding the employees' concerns. When leaders implement strategies to increase employee job satisfaction, employee productivity increases.

Implications for Social Change

By using the results of this study, organizational leaders could identify strategies to increase employee engagement and decrease unemployment. Managers implementing retention strategies should improve internal and external social interactions (Farooq, Rupp, & Farooq, 2017). If employers desire to maintain market efficiency, the subordinates have to continue working for the organization. The leaders need to increase employee job satisfaction and encourage employees to commit to community opportunities. The addition of external and internal social interactions in the work environment by leaders could increase employee job satisfaction and decrease voluntary employee turnover. When leaders create employee engagement opportunities within the organization, the actions add value to leaders, employees, and the surrounding communities (Shuck, Twyford, Reio, & Shuck, 2014). Organizational leaders can provide opportunities that benefit the leaders, employees, and communities.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies leaders of oil and gas organizations use to retain employees. In this literature review, I reviewed professional academic literature through a critical synthesis of historical and current research on the oil and gas industry, the conceptual framework, generation cohorts, cause of turnover, and retention strategies. I gathered materials for this literature review from academic databases including ProQuest, EBSCOhost, Academic Search Complete, SAGE Journals, Business Source Complete, and ScienceDirect.

The search words that I used included: *employee retention, employee turnover, motivation, voluntary turnover, strategies, job satisfaction, organizational culture, high-performing employee, employee commitment, career expectation, work balance, and leadership*. The literature gathering process included the use of peer-reviewed journal articles, seminal books, and relevant government websites. The literature review consists of a total of 181 sources, of which 172 peer-reviewed articles (95%) and 153 peer-reviewed articles (85%) have publication dates less than 5 years from my anticipated completion date of 2020 (see Table 1). This study contains 358 sources, of which 307 sources (85%) have publication dates within the last 5 years, confirming 85% of the total sources have a publication date 5-years or less from my expected graduation date.

Table 1

Study Source Content

Sources	2015 or older	2016 or newer	Total
Peer-reviewed articles in Literature Review	19	153	172
Non-peer-reviewed articles in Literature Review	0	2	2
Total sources in Literature Review	23	158	181
Percentage of peer-reviewed articles in Literature Review	10%	85%	95%
Total sources in Study	51	307	358
Percentage of sources in Study	15%	85%	100%

Organizations and Employees

Organizational leaders need to implement employee retention strategies to avoid losing employees to competitors. Terera and Ngirande (2014) showed that 90% of the employee participants indicated that competitive and lucrative reward packages could make the employee stay with employers. Leaders should attempt to create and foster a work environment that encourages current employees to continue employment with the organization, which includes implementing policies and practices that are satisfying to the employee (Oladapo, 2014; Reina, Rogers, Peterson, Byron, & Hom, 2017; M. Yu, Mai, Tsai, & Dai, 2018). Eberly, Bluhm, Guarana, Avolio, and Hannah (2017) stated that employee retention is a key factor in improving organization performance and enhance

the business process. Organizational leaders can implement employee retention strategies to be proactive in preventing employees from leaving.

Many managers are unaware of disgruntled employees in their department. Some employers are unable to retain employees due to employee job dissatisfaction (Deery & Jago, 2015). Oladapo (2014) explained that employees departed from employment positions due to employees' unsatisfactory in pay and benefits, supervisor relationships, work-life balance, work content, career path, trust in senior management, and the opportunity to join an organization for a better position. Organizational leaders are not aware of their employees' needs. Voluntary employee turnover is a concern for many organizational leaders (Oladapo, 2014; Peltokorpi, Allen, & Froese, 2015). Most managers are not able to predict the future needs of the employees (Stone & Deadrick, 2015). Leaders lack knowledge of what increases employees' job satisfaction, which can cause them to lose valuable employees.

Successful organizational managers depend on their high performing employees to meet organizational objectives. Organizational managers strive to achieve their strategic goals and keep their competitive advantage with high performing employees (Shmailan, 2015). If organizational leaders lack strategies to retain employees, they risk losing high performing employees to competitors (Call, Nyberg, Ployhart, & Weekley, 2015). Organizational managers understand the importance of keeping high performing employees satisfied.

Oil and Gas Industry

The oil and gas industry is a worldwide industry. The United States relies on crude oil and natural gas that the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) regulates, which included Algeria, Angola, Ecuador, Gabon, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Venezuela (United States Energy Information Administration, 2017b). OPEC governs more than half of the oil in the Middle East countries (Demirbas, Al-Sasi, & Nizami, 2017). In 2016, the United States Energy Information Administration (2017b) reported that the United States received a total of 3,681,395 barrels of crude oil and products from other countries. There are over 50 countries not regulated by OPEC, which exports oil and natural gas to the United States. The United States receives oil throughout many counties across the globe.

The oil and gas industry affect other industries throughout the United States. Leaders make decisions based on politics and economic strategies on crude oil (Pal & Mitra, 2015). Leaders' decision in setting the price for crude oil is subject to the supply and demand of crude oil (Abdullah & Masih, 2016; Demirbas et al., 2017). The United States Energy Information Administration (2017a) reported that crude oil averaged \$48.67 per barrel in 2015 and \$43.33 per barrel in the year 2016. Jiang, Todorova, Roca, and Su (2016) and C. Zhang and Qu (2015) suggested that crude oil prices affect other commodities within the energy and agriculture industries. For example, on the supply side of the agriculture industry, the increased price of ethanol and gasoline increased the prices to transport agricultural goods and maintain equipment, which affected the price of the products. On the demand side of the agriculture industry, organizational leaders used

cheaper crude oil products such as synthetic rubber to decrease expenses (Abdullah & Masih, 2016). Organizational managers outside of the oil and gas industries have to adjust products to withstand the increase in crude oil prices.

The cost to produce oil and gas affects the overall cost for oil and byproducts. Demirbas et al. (2017) indicated that the increased fluctuation in the oil price includes the cost of finding, developing, and producing the oil fields. It is hard for field engineers to find new oil fields that are economically viable to develop. Therefore, there is a potential delay in the development of oil and production of new products. Managers expected to spend \$42 billion in the 2016–2017 period on the exploration phase to find new oil and gas reserves (Crooks, 2016). In the upstream, midstream, and downstream sectors of the oil and gas industry, the employees managed to find, develop, and produce crude oil.

Employees work on different elements of processing the oil and gas in each sector. Workers in the upstream sector, also known as the exploration and production sector, search, recover, and produce crude oil and natural gas (Heckmann, Comes, & Nickel, 2015; Jafarinejad, 2016). The development of an upstream facility requires workers to search for oil and gas on reservoirs beneath the earth surface. Workers in the upstream facility are responsible for searching for the subsurface accumulation of hydrocarbons, drilling well, and production of the resources (Furman, El-Bakry, & Song, 2017). After the discovery of oil and gas, the employees develop a surface facility to produce oil and natural gas.

Midstream workers start working after the upstream workers. The employees in the midstream segment transport and store crude oil and natural gas from exportation and

production plants for further processing via pipeline, railway, road, or tanker (Heckmann et al., 2015; Jafarinejad, 2016). Concerning oil and gas reserves, the location of the upstream facilities is not usually in the same geographic location as refining assets and significant consumption units. Employees from a third-party vendor transport the crude oil and natural gas to the midstream facility for production and processing via pipelines, rails, barges, oil tankers, and trucks (Furman et al., 2017). The employees working in the processing phase of the midstream facility remove the natural gas liquid from the produced oil and gas. After the processing phase, employees transport, distribute, and transmission the treated oil and gas to infrastructures.

Employees' work in the downstream sector starts after the midstream employees. Workers in the downstream sector, also known as refining and marketing, process crude oil and natural gas into useful final products for other industries (Heckmann et al., 2015; Jafarinejad, 2016). Leaders in the downstream sector are concerned about the conversion of produced raw hydrocarbons into useful products (Furman et al., 2017). Oil refineries and petrochemical plants process the raw materials of crude oil and natural gas into higher value products. Furman et al. (2017) identified higher value products as plastics, kerosene, diesel fuel, heavy fuel oil, diesel fuel, light fuel oil, and liquid petroleum gas.

Oil and gas turnover. The fluctuation in the price of crude oil affects the organizations within the oil and gas industry. Within a 4-year period, the price of crude oil moved from US\$20 per barrel in 2004 to US\$140 per barrel in 2008, but decreased to a range of US\$100 to US\$110 per barrel in 2013 (Abdullah & Masih, 2016). When the organization performs well due to the price of oil, many organizations increase in

production and the size of employees (Fisher & Connelly, 2017). However, when the organization's marginal performance is below targeted goals, many organizations downsize employment due to the inability to maintain the organization's business and employees when the prices of oil fall below half of the price in 2014.

Organizational leaders risk losing employees to involuntary turnover. Al-Mamun and Hasan (2017) defined involuntary turnover as the employers' decision to terminate the employment relationship. Involuntary employee turnover is unavoidable and inevitable for the employees when the leaders decide to terminate the employee's position as the overhead expenses exceed the incoming income (Chakrabarti & Guha, 2016; Harhara et al., 2015). Organizational leaders hire business analysts to foresee the fluctuation in the expenses. Based on the business analysts' feedback, the employers may lay off employees to remain proactive in the organizational decisions.

Many leaders do not prepare for employees' voluntary turnover. Voluntary employee turnover depends on the demand of the employee's intellectual capital and the availability of alternative job opportunities in the market (Chakrabarti & Guha, 2016; Harhara et al., 2015). Harhara et al. (2015) developed a framework to understand the control factors affecting voluntary employee turnover in an organization and concluded that there is a disconnect in the communication between employers and employees. Managers not continuously communicating with employees risk the unawareness of knowing when the employees desire to leave the organization.

Conceptual Framework

I incorporated the theoretical frameworks of Argyris and Schon's (1978) organizational learning theory and Herzberg et al.'s (1959) two-factor theory as this study's conceptual framework. Researchers using either theory to provide organizational leaders with knowledge on employees' job satisfaction. Organizational managers use organizational learning theory to enhance employees' job satisfaction to motivate employees to participate in organizational knowledge sharing and decrease voluntary employee turnover (Dekoulou & Trivellas, 2015; Thakre & Shroff, 2016). Leaders using organizational learning theory evaluate the structure and process features of learning within an organization. Organizational leaders' ability to understand contributing factors that influenced job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are vital to the management team (Thakre & Shroff, 2016). Herzberg's two-factor theory enables leaders to identify the factors that affect job satisfaction and dissatisfaction that motivate employees (Herzberg et al., 1959). I selected organizational learning theory and Herzberg's two-factor theory to help synthesize the conceptual framework for employee knowledge sharing, organization interaction, job satisfaction, and leadership styles.

Organizational learning theory. Argyris and Schon (1978) developed the organizational learning theory to enable organizational leaders to detect and correct the errors in an organization, which fundamentally shows employees the process to improve actions through learning. Leaders' response to correcting a problem formulates the type of organizational learning for the organization. Organizational leaders select types of organizational learning based on where the organizational learning occurs (Dodgson,

1993). Employee learning can occur in different functions of the organization. Depending on the department or location of the employees will determine the way the employee will correct the error. Argyris and Schon categorized organizations into three types: (a) single-loop learning, (b) double-loop learning, and (c) deutero learning. Dodgson (1993), Fiol and Lyles (1985), Mason (1993), and Senge (2010) conducted further studies on learning from management's perspectives to find various and similar types of learning.

Organizational employees' actions in a single-loop learning environment affect the procedures in a project or department and not the organizational culture. Organizational leaders using single-loop learning discover and correct the errors in a project or single department without changing the organization's policies or goals (Argyris & Schon, 1978; Dodgson, 1993). Actions organizational leaders use with the single-loop learning consist of the organizational employees altering activities that change the routines and adding to the knowledge-based competencies (Dodgson, 1993). Other researchers consider the actions of not making changes to the entire organization as lower-level learning (Fiol & Lyles, 1985), adaptive learning or copying (Senge, 2010), and non-strategic learning (Mason, 1993). Organizational employees working in a single-loop learning environment focus on immediate problems and opportunities within a department or function, which cause the employees of the organization to continue working on the same techniques repeatedly. The organizational employees' knowledge development and behavior modification remain unaffected.

The actions of the organizational employees in a double-loop learning environment modify the behavior of all employees within the organization.

Organizational employees in double-loop learning environments detect and correct the errors in the organization by questioning and modifying the existing norms, procedures, policies, and objectives (Argyris & Schon, 1978; Dodgson, 1993). The organizational employees' knowledge-based competency or routines change in the double-looped environment (Dodgson, 1993). Various researchers use other names for double-loop learning such as higher-level learning (Fiol & Lyles, 1985), generative learning or learning to expand an organization's capabilities (Senge, 2010), and strategic learning (Mason, 1993). Organizational employees working in double-loop learning environments reflect on lessons learned, challenge the current process, and explore innovative approaches. Employees conducting double-loop learning will learn from the corrections made due to the development of transferred knowledge in the department and modifications of existing procedures and policies.

Organizational employees' actions in a deutero-learning environment focus on defining the problem and the actions needed to change the organization. Deutero-learning occurs when organizational employees learn the actions needed to carry out single-loop and double-loop learning (Argyris & Schon, 1978). The organizational leaders concentrate on the organizational learning process to change the principles, rules, and abilities (Liepe & Sakalas, 2015). Organizational employees working in a deutero-learning environment learn from previous incidents, and identify and address the weakness for the organization to move forward in establishing the actions needed to prevent the failures to occur by placing safety precautions and studying the learning process.

Chadwick and Raver (2015) and Fiol and Lyles (1985) used organizational learning theory to examine the process implemented by the organizational leaders to improve and enhance the employees' knowledge, understand past actions, and evaluate the effectiveness of current and future. The organizational leaders develop informational databases to store past actions of departments to share lessons learned and knowledge within the organization. An organizational employee's ability to learn the procedures to build on personal knowledge enables organizational leaders to interpret the type of organizational learning environment and assess viable strategies (Fiol & Lyles, 1985). Organizational leaders evaluate employees' performance to determine the effectiveness of the new strategies transferred throughout the organization to other employees. Effective communication among employees provides transferrable knowledge that contributes to the organizational learning and strategies.

The organizational leaders' ability to understand the strategies that contribute to organizational learning and the transfer of knowledge to the workplace environment is essential to an organization. Chadwick and Raver (2015) and Krylova, Vera, and Crossan (2016) determined that the type of organizational learning managers implement enables organizational leaders to facilitate a learning work environment to promote knowledge sharing. The culture and environment of the organizational leaders influence the employees' loyalty, job satisfaction, and motivation (Dekoulou & Trivellas, 2015). The methods the organizational leaders use to implement the strategies to transfer the knowledge affects the number of employees reached in the organization. Organizational

leaders implement methods that contribute to the probability of employees grasping strategies used by leaders to enhance employees' learning.

Fiol and Lyles (1985) identified four contextual factors affecting the probability that learning occurred: culture, strategy, structure, and environment within an organization. Ideologies and traditional patterns of behavior of the organizational leaders establish the organizational culture. The cultural background of the organizational leaders impacts the leadership style and employee behavior, which set the foundation of employee development or adjust to the organizational learning in the business environment (Jalal, 2017; Naseer, Raja, Syed, Donia, & Darr, 2016). Management's values, beliefs, and principles influence the organizational culture.

The organizational leaders' strategic stance determines the learning capacity that regulates the goals, objectives, and the scope of action available for carrying out the strategy (Fiol & Lyles, 1985). Pati and Bandyopadhyay (2017) and Valentine and Hollingworth (2015) considered the organizational leaders' business strategy a roadmap to an organizational management's success when the process describes the competitive market and different paradigms. The way leaders structure the organization, based on intuition, interpretation, and integration, enables organizational learning to take place (Crossan, Lane, & White, 1999). Organizational work environments are adaptable when organizational leaders implement learning behaviors. Organizational leaders with an adaptable organizational environment helps the organization remain competitive in the industry. Overall, the organizational leaders and employees adapt to an ever-changing environment to seek effective strategies for the organization (Oh & Kuchinke, 2017).

Huber (1991) proposed that knowledge acquisition, information distribution, information interpretation, and organizational memory as concepts related to organizational learning theory. The researcher's concept coincides with Crossan et al.'s (1999) four fundamental premises. The process to get the employees to obtain the knowledge within the organization defines the knowledge acquisition. The multifaceted knowledge acquisition consists of five subconstructs or subprocesses, which are (a) drawn from knowledge available at the organization's birth, (b) learned from experience, (c) learned to observe other organizations, (d) grafted onto itself components that possess the knowledge needed but not possessed by the organization, and (e) noticed or searched for information and about the organization's environment and performance (Huber, 1991).

Over time, experienced employees rely on past experiences to improve their work. Chadwick and Raver (2015) and Duffield and Whitty (2015) defined employee intuition as the process of employees' recognizing past patterns in work. Workers' ability to use employee intuition inspires creative thinking, which improves employee performance (Duffield & Whitty, 2015). Organizational leaders use information distribution to share new information to employees.

Managers use information interpretation to distribute new strategies or information to one or more employees (Huber, 1991), explain ideas, and communicate to others through words or action in an individual or group setting (Chadwick & Raver, 2015; Crossan et al., 1999). Organizational managers use a process to inform employees of the new strategies and information that could affect the employees negatively when

they are unable to comprehend or mimic the new information in the daily work tasks (Huber, 1991). Organizational leaders may be unaware of employees' misinterpretation of the new information correctly until the output of several employees' work is incorrect. A gap in the information interpretation may affect the performance of employees and the production of the organization.

Organizational managers will use organizational memory to share among the organization. Huber (1991) defined organizational memory as the process of storing knowledge for further usage. Leaders rely on files in company libraries, data in databases, and senior employees to contain organizational memory. Competitive organizations seek strategies and tools that preserve knowledge generated over time, which creates mechanisms that stimulate and empower professionals to share knowledge to support improvements and innovations in the organization (Chuang, Jackson, & Jiang, 2016; Tortoriello, 2015). Organizational employees sharing knowledge provides employees with the same strategies and tactics to use throughout the organization.

Researchers used organizational learning theory as a conceptual framework to explore the process of improved organizational actions through enhanced knowledge, understanding of past actions, the effectiveness of past actions, and future actions. Y. Li, Chen, Liu, and Peng (2014); Real, Roldan, and Leal (2014); and Schlagwein and Bjorn-Andersen (2014) indicated that organizational learning had a positive association with organization effectiveness. Y. Li et al. examined entrepreneurs in new ventures that used managerial ties to capture opportunities and concluded that managerial ties and social capital have a positive impact on the captured opportunity, and organizational learning

could influence the effectiveness of managerial ties on captured opportunities. De Noni and Apa (2015); Eriksson, Leiringer, and Szentes (2017); and Reyt and Wiesenfeld (2015) defined exploratory learning as a distant search and assimilation of new material with the purpose of discovering relationships between existing background knowledge and unfamiliar content and concepts. Scholars defined exploitative learning as a local search for common knowledge and technology to enrich the current knowledge set and achieve incremental development and continual improvement of existing solutions (De Noni & Apa, 2015; Eriksson et al., 2017). Organizational managers using exploitative learning utilizes the existing knowledge from experiences and routines and norms of the organization.

Organizational managers will outsource tasks to external individuals to obtain a needed service or knowledge. Organizational leaders use crowdsourcing, which is a tool used to form the foundation of new business models with outsourced tasks that external individuals used (Prpic, Shukla, Kietzmann, & McCarthy, 2015). Schlagwein and Bjorn-Andersen (2014) explored information technology crowdsourcing through organizational learning theory and concluded that crowdsourcing is a legitimate and effective form of organizational learning. Leaders use crowdsourcing for new business models and interpretation, but internal employees integrate the new model within the organization.

A type of organizational learning theory entrepreneurial managers use is entrepreneurial orientation. Van Doorn, Heyden, and Volberta (2017) defined entrepreneurial orientation as a tool used to practice strategic practices, managerial philosophies, and firm behaviors on the organizational. Real et al. (2014) examined the

influence of entrepreneurial orientation and learning orientation on organizational learning in the relationships between antecedent cultural values and business performance. Real et al. concluded that organizational learning partially mediated the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and performance, but fully mediated the link between learning orientation and performance. Real et al. also revealed that the relationship established between entrepreneurial orientation and organizational learning is more intended for groups in large firms than small- and medium-sized enterprises. Organizational leaders use the entrepreneurial orientation to continue traditional practices, but have to make adjustments to strategic practices when the practice affects the employees' performance.

Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman's two-factor theory. Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1959) developed the two-factor theory in 1959. Herzberg et al. identified factors that cause job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction and affect motivation among employees. Herzberg et al. discovered factors that enhance job satisfaction, including achievement, work, promotion, responsibility, and recognition. Herzberg et al. identified dissatisfaction factors including policies, supervision, interpersonal relation, salary, security, and status. An organizational leader's ability to identify factors that influence job satisfaction and dissatisfaction enables leaders to retain employees.

Jansen and Samuel (2014) and Raziq and Maulabakhsh (2015) indicated that employee job satisfaction had a positive association with organization effectiveness. Raziq and Maulabakhsh found that employees choosing a motivator as a job retention had more job satisfaction than individuals choosing a hygiene factor as a retention option.

Organizational managers are able to improve employees' job satisfaction by implementing motivational elements.

Jansen and Samuel (2014) examined model factors that motivated middle level managers within the context of Herzberg et al.'s (1959) motivation and hygiene theory. Middle level managers were key players in achieving organizational objectives when the managers were motivating employees, removing obstacles, clarifying paths to the goal, and rewarding them accordingly (Jansen & Samuel, 2014). The middle level managers were the employees' first point of contact within the organization. Employees and middle-level managers work consistently together on a day to day basis. Jansen and Samuel discovered that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational variables impacted the achievement of organizational goals with the middle-level of managers.

Yusoff, Kian, and Idris (2013) and Fareed and Jan (2016) examined Herzberg et al.'s (1959) two-factor theory across diverse organizational populations, cultures, and enterprises. Fareed and Jan disagreed with Herzberg et al.'s two-factor theory because the results of their study did not match the results of Herzberg et al.'s two-factor theory. Fareed and Jan found that many hygiene factors such as a relationship with supervisors, company policy, salary, social status, and working conditions have a relationship with job satisfaction. However, many factors mentioned by Herzberg et al., intrinsic factors, had no connection with job satisfaction.

Yusoff et al. (2013) also disagreed with Herzberg et al.'s (1959) two-factor theory. Yusoff et al. explored the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors affecting employees' job satisfaction. Yusoff et al. concluded that Herzberg et al. provided more

comprehensive sets of factors that cover basic individual internal and external needs to exert additional efforts into jobs. Herzberg et al.'s two-factor theory does not include all extrinsic factors, which makes the theory not transferable to all organizations.

Generation Cohorts

The United States' workforce contains four generations: Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation Xs, and Generation Ys (Lim, 2015). Clark (2017) defined a generation as a group of individuals born in a particular era that shares common knowledge and experiences that affect the thoughts, attitudes, values, beliefs, and behavior of the individuals. The U.S. Department of Labor (2015) reported the workplace in the United States comprised of 5% Traditionalists, 39% Baby Boomers, 33% Generation Xs, and 23% Generation Ys. Employees working with four generations diversify the workforce that requires the organizational leaders to understand and accept the different characteristics of each generation while embracing the similarities (Costanza & Finkelstein, 2015; L. F. Lewis & Wescott, 2017).

In contrast, Muller, Bermejo, and Hirst (2016) discovered generations have more similar values than different. The organizational leaders' ability to identify each generation's characteristics decreases the retention rate for employees. Organizational leaders invest into understanding and knowing the characteristics of each generation to enhance the organization's generational diversity. Employees' generational characteristics do not form the workplace stereotypes of the generations but provides insight of the similarities and differences between the ordinary members of one generation to another (Costanza & Finkelstein, 2015).

Generational characteristics do not form the workplace stereotypes and managers base the stereotypical behavior on generation cohort (Hillman, 2014). The addition of the new generation of employees demand organizational leaders to consider the different values, attitudes, and expectations, which is different from the workers that preceded them. Traditionalist, Baby Boomer, and Generation X employees' differences did not require employees to make drastic changes in the organization culture. Costanza and Finkelstein (2015) define values as the fundamental belief a person relies upon to be meaningful and valid.

Traditionalists (Veterans). Members of the Traditionalist generation were born between the years of 1900 and 1945 (Clark, 2017; Martin & Ottemann, 2016). There were approximately 5% of Traditionalist employees in the United States' workforce in 2015 as many of the generation retired from the workforce (Wiedmer, 2015). Researchers call the Traditionalist generation other names, such as the Silent Generation, Veterans, World War II generation, Builders, and Radio Babies (Clark, 2017; Wiedmer, 2015). Clark (2017) and Wiedmer (2015) described the generation in relations to world events and inventions created during the generation's timeframe. Historical and social events that influence the individuals from the Traditionalist generation are the Great Depression, World War II, Korean War, Cold War, Pearl Harbor, the invention of the radio, and the rise of labor unions (Clark, 2017; Wiedmer, 2015). The historical and social events also affect the generations' outlook on work, family, and the government. Researchers describe the Traditionalist generation as loyal, disciplined, respectful to authority, value integrity, character, and sacrifice (Clark, 2017).

Baby Boomers. Members of the Baby Boomer generation were born between the years of 1946 and 1964 (Fishman, 2016; Martin & Ottemann, 2016). The employees from the Baby Boomer generation represent approximately 80 million members of the United States' workforce in 2014 (Fishman, 2016; Martin & Ottemann, 2016). The Baby Boomer generation is the largest generation in the workforce. Clark (2017), Fishman (2016), and Martin and Ottemann (2016) drew many conclusions about members of the Baby Boomer generation based on previous research studies and observation.

Bano, Vyas, and Gupta (2015) consider the employees from the Baby Boomer generation loyal and dedicated to the organization. Baby Boomer members commit to lifetime employment and remain loyal to employers. Workers from the Baby Boomer generation do not voluntarily leave an organization. An employee from the Baby Boomer generation desires to work with an organization in which its members value both teamwork and individuality (Stanton, 2017; Stone & Deadrick, 2015). Baby Boomer employees accept and follow the chain of command and expect managers within an organization to provide directions and lead them toward the achievement of organizational goals (Young, Sturts, Ross, & Kim, 2013). Workers from the Baby Boomer generation understand the rules related to following authoritative positions. Life experiences dictate the viewpoints of the members of the Baby Boomer generation.

The Baby Boomer generation experienced substantial economic changes in a lifetime. Members of the Baby Boomer generation experienced the invention of televisions, Vietnam War, Civil Rights Movement, the John F. Kennedy and Martin L. King assassinations, and Watergate (Clark, 2017; Wiedmer, 2015). Many of the Baby

Boomers lived in a two-parent household and learned the importance of gender roles. Baby Boomers' experiences shaped the values and behavior of the generation. Hillman (2014) considered workers from the Baby Boomers generation *workaholics*, as these workers live to work for an organization. Many Baby Boomers exit the workforce through retirement (Jerome, Scales, Whithem, & Quatin, 2014). Although many Baby Boomers are approaching or reached retirement age, the vast majority of Baby Boomers decide to continue to work past the expected retirement age of 66 (Lim, 2015). Many Baby Boomer workers desire to continue working, past retirement, to avoid boredom.

Generation Xs. Members of Generation X were born from 1965 to 1980 and there were around 76 million Generation X workers in the workforce in 2014 (Fishman, 2016; Martin & Ottemann, 2016). Generation X cohorts thrive on open communication and seek the *why* in issues (Jorgensen, 2003). Members of Generation X are not afraid to question authority and to challenge the managers' decisions. Generation X members view work from an action-orientation perspective. Hillman (2013) and Young et al. (2013) considered employees from Generation X to be technologically advanced, skillfully sound, fast, pragmatic, and empowered.

Members of Generation X have experienced numerous important historical and social events. Clark (2017) considered members of Generation X technologically savvy because they were the first generation to have personal computers. Other social and historical events affected Generation X members during critical developmental periods, such as the AIDS crisis, fall of the Berlin Wall, massive corporation downsizing, the Los Angeles riots, Operation Desert Storm, women's liberation movement, and Reagan's

conservatism (Clark, 2017). Members of the Generation X embrace the changes and adapt to the new way of life.

Generation X members' experience in life affect their views in working. Atherton, Schofield, Sitka, Conger, and Robins (2016) and Clark (2017) considered members of Generation X the latchkey or the lost generation. At the adolescent age, many Generation X members grew up with both parents working outside the home, thus they were home alone or under sibling and peer supervision (Young et al., 2013). Laughlin (2013) identified that, while parents were working, older siblings and family members supervised 4.7 % of the members of Generation X at the age of 5 to 11 and 26.9% of the generation were at home unsupervised at the age 12 to 14. Individuals in Generation X spent early years of life in daycare and later years home alone or with older siblings. Members of the Generation X experienced more freedom and individualism (Gewald et al., 2017). The life experiences of the Generation X employees influence the workers to prefer to work on job assignments independently.

Generation Xs first encountered the view of work experience through the parent and employer working relationship. Members of Generation X saw family members work hard for an organization but, in return, the organizational leaders would lay off the parents or the parents did not have time for family interactions because of work commitments (Jorgensen, 2003; Oladapo, 2014). Generation X employees continue to search for other job opportunities to avoid the experience of job layoffs. Members of the Generation X saw that the economic state of little job security affects the generation,

which results in the employees not believing in employers and keeping work options open.

Employee commitment and loyalty to employers changed within Generation X. Generation Xs have a low level of organizational commitment and attitude toward authority (Krahn & Galambos, 2014; J. Yu & Miller, 2005). Members of the Generation X are less loyal to an organization, but are loyal to individuals. Generation X members desire flexible schedules, independence, impressive work, and professional growth (Jorgensen, 2003). If the opportunity for a promotion interferes with lifestyles, Generation X workers would decline the promotion. Generation X workers regard personal values and goals more important than work goals while maintaining the same values as older workers, such as honesty, responsibility, ambition, and freedom.

Millennials (Generation Ys). Millennials represent the youngest cohort group within the workforce. Some estimate 75 million Generation Ys members joined the workforce in 2014 (Fishman, 2016; Martin & Ottemann, 2016). Bujang, Jiram, Zarin, and Anuar (2015) and Sox, Kline, and Crews (2014) used terms, such as Generation Ys, GenMe, EchoBoomers, agent, and Net generation to identify the Millennials generation. The members of Generation Y were born between the years of 1980 to 2000 (Hillman, 2013). Millennial workers are the children of Baby Boomers and are the largest generation in the United States since the Baby Boomers (Sox et al., 2014). The Baby Boomer generation advanced higher in their careers and finances compared to their parents, while Millennials developed different characteristics than their previous generations.

Jerome et al. (2014) and Sox et al. (2014) described the characteristics of Millennials based on work experience and behaviors at adolescence. Millennial members are entertainment driven, technologically sound, physically inactive, adaptable, motivated, entrepreneurial, well educated, self-confident, multitask-oriented, with a strong sense of community and strong work ethic, valuing skill development (Jerome et al., 2014; Jorgensen, 2003; Sox et al., 2014). Change in humanity affects members of the Generation Y's characteristics. Botezat and Borza (2014) also described the generation optimistically and refer to Millennials as self-confident. Members of Generation Y believe they can do anything they put their minds to do. Millennials believe education is key to success.

Krahn and Galambos (2014) consider the Millennials more educated. Millennials have higher levels of post-secondary education compared to the earlier generations (Jerome et al., 2014; Krahn & Galambos, 2014). Some Millennials workers pursued master and doctoral degrees before entering the workforce, while others gained degrees while working and raising family members. The members of Generation Y are more inclined to question authorities' reasoning due to their higher expectations for themselves (Laird, Harvey, & Lancaster, 2015). Krahn and Galambos explained Millennials believe that hard work in school entitles them to receive a high paying position. Millennials perceive that the ability to gain advanced education through evolving technologies makes them more competitive and knowledgeable than peers with a bachelor's degree.

The Millennial generation is technologically sound with the development of the Internet and web browsing (Botezat & Borza, 2014). Members of Generation Y are the

most digitally advanced, which results in the use of technology in the homes for personal benefits and the workplace (Duffett, 2015). Millennials prefer 24-hour, around-the-clock information through their connection to technology. Jerome et al. (2014) and Ross and Rouse (2015) recognized Millennial employees as significant contributors to the economy. Members of Generation Y use technology to gather information rapidly from multiple sources to make connections between data (Duffett, 2015). Millennials' ability to multitask developed from the ability to gather information from numerous sources. Jerome et al. explained that the members of Generation Y are capable of handling challenging tasks because of the amount of stress received from higher education.

Causes of Turnover

Al Mamun and Hasan (2017) and Tarigan and Ariani (2015) discussed numerous factors that cause employee turnover. Tarigan and Ariani stated the absence of promotions, job security, job satisfaction, challenging and exciting work tasks, training, and development of new skills could affect employee turnover. The following subsections include some of the reasons employees volunteered to leave an organization.

Career expectation. Employees' expectations on management, career goals, work environments, salary, and work schedules changed as new generations entered the workforce. Generation X and Millennial employees expect rapid advancement and development of new skills, while also having a happy life outside of work (Aruna & Anitha, 2015; Kong, Wang, & Fu, 2015). Both Generation X and Millennial workers desire to advance quickly within the organization while having a work–life balance. Kong et al. (2015) asserted that young workers tend to have unrealistic career

expectations when compared to other generational workers. The unrealistic career expectations of Generation X and Millennial employees differ from the Baby Boomer and Traditionalist generations. The older generations understood the need to wait and earn positional advancement over time. Managers can communicate with employees to help them understand work evaluations and employee expectations (Alamro, Ghadi, Al-Qatawenh, & Farooq, 2017). Employees can improve their work habits after knowing what organizational managers expect to see in the employees' work.

Organizational managers benefit from understanding the differences and expectations of the various generations. Generation X and Millennial employees expect continuous and immediate feedback from employers to make sure their performance is up to standards (Aruna & Anitha, 2015; Winter & Jackson, 2016). Managers providing regular or continuous informal feedback to employees enable employees to know the organizational managers' expectations at all times. Employees receiving clear expectations from their organizational leaders are less likely to quit when conflicts decrease and growth opportunities increase (Al Mamun & Hasan, 2017). Organizational leaders communicating effectively with their employees provide employees with trust and, in return, receive employee commitment (Ogbonnaya, Daniels, & Nielsen, 2017). The employees' commitment to, and trust in, organizational management enhances when the employees develop positive perceptions about the extent to which the employer cares for the employees' well-being.

Organizational leaders implement promotion strategies based on evaluated skills, experience, and best candidates. Employees within the Baby Boomer generation

understand systematic promotions, unlike the younger generations (J. Yu & Miller, 2005). Baby Boomer employees follow the development progress scheme, starting from education, career, marriage, and promotion. Each development phase moves the generation toward self-achievement, while the Generation X and Millennial employees attempted to speed up the process and find self-achievement from the job and basic needs at the same time (Gichuhi & Mbithuka, 2018). If younger employees feel that career advancement is not occurring, they may leave the organization (Naim & Lenkla, 2016). Generation X and Generation Y employees will leave an employer when they feel they are stagnating in a position. When organizational managers fail to communicate their reasons for not promoting younger employees, employees arrive at their own conclusions.

Managers conduct yearly performance reviews to inform employees on their work progress and career development. During the performance review, organizational managers provide yearly feedback on an employee's job performance, including performance improvement plans that help employees maximize potential in a formal setting (Cravens, Goad Oliver, Oishi, & Stewart, 2015). Baby Boomer employees understand the performance management system and are inclined toward formal feedback mechanisms (Stone & Deadrick, 2015). Managers use formal feedback to inform workers about yearly raises based on employees' job performance throughout the entire year (Gorman, Meriac, Roch, Ray, & Gamble, 2017). Organizational leaders inform the employees about their job performance throughout the year in a performance review

meeting. Employees will receive a financial or position raise based on the information provided by the organizational leader (Gorman et al., 2017).

Employees' views of an employer can change over the course of time. An employee's frustration and dissatisfaction with the employer, during the early stages of a career, can cause a high turnover rate (Chong & Monroe, 2015; Pritchard, 2015; L. Zhang & Seo, 2016). Organizational managers are unaware of the employees' frustration, which enables them to rectify the issues. The employee and management disconnect in communication increases the gap in understanding.

Organizational leaders give employee assignments based on the priority of the assignment to the company and client. Young employees may not view employer assignments as challenging (Harju & Hakanen, 2016). Generation X and Y employees desire to work on assignments that challenge their skills and continue to expose them to new experiences (Botezat & Borza, 2014; J. Yu & Miller, 2005). Some organizational leaders incorporate a cooperative education, such as a co-op program, to enable young employees to connect the theory of subjects to work assignments (Nevison, Drewery, Pretti, & Cormier, 2017). Pennaforte and Pretti (2015) drew a connection between students' perceived relevance in professional and personal development and the increase in the development of individual and organizational performance, which motivated future workers to perform well.

Employees' adjustment to real-world assignments can become overwhelming. Younger workers may find adjusting to full-time employment from the college lifestyle difficult (Goldman & Martin, 2016). The younger generations become uninterested and

feel the work is routine when the work assignments are longer than the semester assignments. However, employees with internship and co-op experiences understand the role of the employees and assignment types because they work in positions before college graduation. Organizational leaders view co-op programs as opportunities that college workers could adapt and adjust to the changes from school assignments to real-world assignments quickly (Machado, Henkels, Dalfovo, & Goncalves, 2017). Employees having prior internship and co-op experiences will not have misconceptions on their assignments because they are aware of the differences between school and real-world assignments. Organizational managers can rely on the experienced young employees to join the workforce with realistic views and values.

Work–life balance. Workers of each generation value work–life balance differently. Younger employees desire to have a balance between work and family life more so than older employees. Costanza and Finkelstein (2015) discovered that Generation Y employees value leisure time significantly more than Baby Boomers and Generation X, while Generation X values work less significantly than Baby Boomers. There are differences in the work–life values of the generations based on the birth year of cohort membership and the age-related life state values development (Lyons, Urick, Kuron, & Schweitzer, 2015). Employees' values in work–life balance differ for each generation, which leads to differences in requested demands from employers.

Organizational employers work with employees to ensure they have work–life balance. Mas-Machuca, Berbegal-Mirabent, and Alegre (2016) defined work–life balance as the balance between work and family and the balance between work and private life.

Employees' ability to balance work and life decreases stress, increases job satisfaction, and strengthens organization commitment (Shanafelt et al., 2015). Mas-Machuca et al. researched the relationship between work–life balance, organizational pride, and job satisfaction. In a questionnaire survey, Mas-Machuca et al. found that organizational pride and job satisfaction relates to employee work–life balance. Organizational leaders are able to increase employees' job satisfaction when the employees have work–life balance.

Organizational managers ensuring employees have a balanced work–life increases employee retention. Deery and Jago (2015) identified the ability to maintain a work–life balance as a key factor when managers address the issues of employee management and retention. A. Li, Bagger, and Cropanzano (2016) and Malhotra, Smets, and Morris (2016) identified actions that organizations could take to retain staff and assist in work–life balance. Organizational leaders accrue additional demands from generational diversity, gender balance, and work–life balance, besides the enhancing innovation capacity. Malhotra et al. stated that organizations that proactively address work–life balance concerns retain valuable talent while enhancing innovation capacity. A. Li et al. indicated that managers are responsible for evaluating employees' job performance; therefore, the managers can adequately judge the level of work–life balance that conflicts with the employees' experience. Organizational leaders' observation of employees' job performance leads to the leaders having a conversation with employees about work- and life-balance.

Organizational commitment. Employees' commitment to an organization affects the organizational leaders and employees. Employees' organizational commitment includes the positive attitudes that employees have toward employers when there is an emotional and identity likeness with the organization (Vujicic, Jovicic, Lalic, Gagic, & Cvejanov, 2015). Employees committing to an organization performs 20% better and are 87% less likely to resign from their current employers (Lockwood, 2006). Workers' organizational commitment reflects on the morale of the employees and the dedication the employees have to the organization.

Organizational employees' dedication to their employers influences the employees' commitment to the organization. Posey, Roberts, and Lowry (2015) and Yousef (2016) categorized employees' commitment to an organization into three types of organizational commitments: affective, continuance, and normative. Employees with continuance organizational commitment continue to work for an organization due to the high cost of leaving the organization and becoming unemployed (Posey et al., 2015; Yousef, 2016). Workers with normative organizational commitment feel obligated to continue working in an organization because the employees already invested time with their employers (Meyer, Morin, & Vandenberghe, 2015; Posey et al., 2015). Although the employees continue to work for employers in both the normative and continuance organizational commitments, the employees' dedication will not solely be to the organization. Therefore, the employees may not be loyal to the organization.

Employees having affective organizational commitment to an organization are more loyal to an organization than employees with normative and continuance

organizational commitments. Huang, You, and Tsai (2012) and Posey et al. (2015) described affective organizational commitment as employees desiring to continue working with an organization because the organization's values, goals, and initiatives align with employees' views. Huang et al. expressed that employees identifying with the objectives and goals of the organization commit to the organization and wish to remain with that organization. Overall, employees identifying with the organization's values and goals decrease the desire to search for new opportunities. Employees' commitment to their employers leads to their efforts to work effectively.

Organizational leaders strive to hire employees with affective organizational commitment. Posey et al. (2015) stated that affective organizational commitment received more attention in the academic literature because employees with high affective organizational commitment are the individuals the organization desires to retain. Cao and Hamori (2016) explored the relationship between developmental assignment and organizational commitment and discovered that highly skilled employees in the early stage of their careers have organizational commitment, which stemmed from the developmental assignments and the support from senior managers. Organizational leaders need to have the ability to keep track of employees' ever-changing needs, which will encourage employees to continue working (Terera & Ngirande, 2014). Open lines of communication between the employees and management are essential to providing positive results for both the employee and the organization. The employees' ability to become aware of the future efforts of the organization enables employees to understand the assignment moves of the company.

The relationships between organizational employees and leaders affect the employees' commitment to the organization. An unethical relationship between the organizational leaders and employees has a negative impact on the employees' organizational commitment, which indirectly influences job performance (Demirtas, 2015). Employees base work commitment on the morals of the employer. Demirtas (2015) revealed that the ethical scandals affect the commitment that employees have with the organization. Employer loyalty to employees affects the organizational commitment the employees have for the organization (Vujicic et al., 2015). Employees' commitment to employers weighs on the actions of the organizational leaders.

A manager's value of employees affects the morale and job satisfaction of the employee, which also affects the employee's commitment to the organizational managers. Nouri and Soltani (2017) indicated that a high level of stress leads to reduced work motivation and job satisfaction and a reduced sense of dedication and loyalty to the organization. Employees' level of pay and satisfaction in pay are weak predictors of individual turnover decisions (Al Mamun & Hasan, 2017). Employees satisfied with current job position will not search for another job, unless the employees are not entirely satisfied with current employers.

Cost of Employee Turnover

The loss of any employee due to voluntary employee turnover is disruptive and costly to organizational leaders. Organizational leaders encounter expenses due to staff voluntary turnover rates that include advertising, recruiting fees, resource management, cost, time and productivity loss, work imbalance, staff training, and development costs

for new entrants (Kumar & Patel, 2017). Al Mamun and Hasan (2017) and Holtom and Burch (2016) affirmed that the costs associated with losing employees and recruiting, selecting, and training new employees often exceeded 100% of the annual compensation for the position. Hom, Lee, Shaw, and Hausknecht (2017) suggested that the total costs associated with employee turnover rate ranged between 90% to 200% of the annual salary for that position. Kumar and Patel (2017) identified that separation and replacement costs associated with employee turnover included human resource and management time, accrued paid time, temporary coverage, loss of clients, hiring inducements, application expenses, orientation, and training costs. Organizational leaders do not plan for employees to leave the company. Therefore, employers risk losses when employees leave the organization.

Organizational leaders' unexpected employee turnover affects organizational finances, productivity, and branding. The U.S. Department of Labor (2017) reported that 5.1 million employees separated from an organization with 2.1% of the total vacated in a month. Anitha and Begum (2016) advised organizational leaders to evaluate their organizational culture and make changes to the organization to increase their attractiveness to employees. The organizational leaders' view of the employee turnover rate dictates the loss to the organization.

There are two types of voluntary turnovers: dysfunctional and functional turnover. Sun and Wang (2017) and Skiba, Saini, and Friend (2016) defined dysfunctional turnover as the exit of well-performing employees with valuable skill sets. Organizational leaders consider losing high performing employees as a loss to the company because of the delay

in productivity and the knowledge gap of the employee absent from the organization. The organizational manager searches to find a replacement with the same qualities to fill the void and return to high productivity. Skiba et al. and Sun and Wang defined functional turnover as organizations losing poor performing employees. The loss of unproductive employees enables organizational leaders to find a better employee to replace the employee or not fill the position. The organizational leader's value of the employee determines the organization's process of finding a new employee.

Leadership

Organizational leadership affects employee turnover. Tian, Risku, and Collin (2015) explained that researchers studied organizational leadership to describe the leadership theory and development. Rost (1993) discovered 221 different definitions and concepts of leadership. Dong, Bartol, Zhang, and Li (2017) argued that the definition of leadership depends on the leadership interest to the individual. Organizational leaders' behavior influences employee engagement and the work environment (Breevaart, Bakker, Demerouti, & Derks, 2016). Organizational managers need to maintain the appropriate leadership style to retain employees. Leaders could use transformational and transactional leadership styles to address this problem.

Organizational leaders with transformational leadership styles motivate and include employees in company decisions. Transformational leaders motivate employees when demonstrating individual consideration toward an employee's developmental needs, elicit creative ideas for problem-solving, provide intellectual stimulation, and give

inspiration (Atmojo, 2015; Tian et al., 2015). The transformational leader motivates employees to perform beyond the employee's expectations.

Leaders using transformation leadership encourage employees to provide feedback. Transformation leaders using intellectual stimulation enable the employees to freely express themselves when solving problems and seek to develop uniqueness, which increases the employee's self-esteem and self-worth (Randel et al., 2018). Employees need to feel that employers value the knowledge and skills the employees add to the company (George, 2015). An employee's ability to strengthen personal skills increases the knowledge and experience of an employee.

Having a leader with a transformational leadership style helps employers by keeping the employee satisfied. A. Amankwaa and Anku-Tsede (2015) and Waldman, Carter, and Hom (2015) explained that leaders with transformational leadership skills strengthen the loyalty in the organization. Organizational leaders with transformational leadership styles build trust and loyalty with employees.

Transactional leaders focus on benefitting the employer and the employees. Yahaya and Ebrahim (2016) described transactional leadership as the exchange of activities between the leader and employee, providing the employee with a reward for performing a task or job. Transactional leaders ensure that employees and employers meet their expectations and reach the organization's goals (Breevaart et al., 2016). Leaders use the leader and employee communication exchanges to accomplish performance goals, while motivating employees through contractual agreements, rewards, and focusing on improved organizational efficiency (Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016).

Caillier (2018) indicated that leaders with transactional leadership influence the employees' motivation and satisfaction. Organizational leaders with transactional leadership styles motivate employees with rewards to complete the tasks.

Retention Strategies

An organizational leader's ability to understand the reason employees are willing to leave an organization helps restructure and improve the organization. Having an understanding of the reasons employees leave or want to leave an organization enables organizational leaders to implement effective retention strategies and reduce voluntary employee turnover (Al Mamun & Hasan, 2017; Peltokorpi et al., 2015). High employee turnover indicates an organization has challenges in retaining employees (Deery & Jago, 2015). Al Mamun and Hasan (2017) stated that organizational leaders' awareness of the significance of an employee's withdrawal process helps leaders to intervene in the withdrawal process before employees desire to leave the company. Leaders implementing retention strategies within the organization recognize the need to value and support employees.

Organizational leaders recognize that losing workers can negatively influence the organization's brand, cost, and productivity. George (2015) and Zheng, Molineux, Mirshekary, and Scarparo (2015) explained that managers valuing and supporting their employees' feelings and values are more successful in retaining employees. Improving practices that provide support to the employees and encourage positive relationships with coworkers can affect employees' intentions to turnover (Madden, Mathias, & Madden,

2015). Managers implement employee retention strategies to avoid voluntary employee turnover, which can affect the organization's brand and marginal cost.

Organizational leaders use employee feedback provided in surveys to design appropriate retention strategies. Zheng et al. (2015) identified that employee feedback on the employees' surveys and councils included creating a healthy working environment for managers and employees, flexible work schedules, supportive management, and excellent communication. Naim and Lenkla (2016) agreed that new employees need the ability to continuously grow and develop their work experience. Employees can continuously develop their experience and knowledge with training, knowledge sharing, benefits, and job satisfaction (Jaworski, Ravichandran, Karpinski, & Singh, 2018). Organizational leaders provide employees with tools that can enhance their skills and knowledge performance.

Training. Ineffective training affects employees' skills and knowledge performance. When organizational leaders provide proper training on key objectives and modules, employees' skills and knowledge increase (Cloutier, Felusiak, Hill, & Pemberton-Jones, 2015; Masalimova, Usak, & Shaidullina, 2016). The amount of time and money organizational leaders invest in the development of training employees affects the employees' productivity and effectiveness. Organizational managers implement training for employees to introduce a new process, improve staff efficiency, equip unskilled employees, decrease supervision, improve internal promotion opportunities, and reduce job accidents (Cloutier et al., 2015). Employees receiving continuous training become more knowledgeable and skillful in their position.

Experienced trainers can provide employees with personal knowledge and experience during training sessions. Masalimova et al. (2016) recommended organizational leaders use qualified trainers to conduct training to ensure the skills are transferable. Trainers with formal university teaching are more efficient in training than trainers without formal instructional training (Rangel et al., 2015). An organizational leader's efforts to find experienced trainers provide employees with transferable training. The organizational manager's ability to recognize factors that enable employees to learn effectively is a step in the right direction for employee development.

Employee training increases the productivity of the employees on the job after applying the training. Organizational leaders benefit from implementing training evaluations to assess the effectiveness of training sessions provided to employees (Getha-Taylor, Fowles, Silvia, & Merritt, 2015; Masalimova et al., 2016). Kogan, Conforti, Yamazaki, Lobst, and Holmboe (2017) explained that managers should assess training to improve the quality of the training. Trainers provide participants with training evaluations by using surveys and strength, weakness, opportunities, and threat analysis. Employees' feedback in the training assessment allows organizational leaders to evaluate the significance of the training.

Organizational leaders benefit from employees providing feedback about their training. Getha-Taylor et al. (2015) stated that when organizational leaders evaluate training sessions, the leaders are able to enhance the quality management purpose, provide feedback to human resource departments and trainers, and help leaders make accurate decisions about providing continuous training sessions. Baxter, Holderness, and

Wood (2016) considered training a waste of time when employees do not apply the skills and information learned to their work. In contrast, Hanaysha (2016) indicated that employees in Ghana receiving job-related training and development were able to use the new skills immediately and were able to improve their work performance. Employees attending training use new skills on the job, benefitting the organization, leaders, and employee.

The cost of continuous training becomes expensive over time for organizational leaders. Organizational leaders make a financial investment to ensure employees receive quality training materials and learning opportunities (Dhar, 2015). A manager providing continuous training to employees provides support for employees, develops lifelong learners, and actively enables an organization to become a learning organization (Farrukh & Waheed, 2015). Trainers providing employees and managers with post-training evaluations deliver feedback on the effectiveness of the training for the employees and justify the cost of training.

Organizational leaders offer employees training that could affect the cost to the organization positively or negatively. Konings and Vanormelingen (2015) and Leiser, Benita, and Bourgeois-Gironde (2016) evaluated the economic effect training has on an organization. Training instructors may receive immediate feedback from employees after a training session, but organizational leaders often wait several months after the training to receive the feedback of the training based on the productivity of the team. Training also increases the marginal product of labor that creates incentives for firms to invest in general training (Konings & Vanormelingen, 2015). Organizational leaders deem training

effective when there is an increase in productivity and the cost of the continuous training becomes an investment within the organization.

Employers investing in continuous learning adhere to the dimensions of job contents. Continuous learning is an essential part of successful careers and efficient organizations. Hennekam (2015) defined the competence of continuous learning as developmental activities and endeavors that are important to oneself, involving internal work standards, scholastic aptitude, or the ability to learn new things, and self-objectivity, or capacity to recognize one's own strength and weakness. Providing employees with continuous learning enables managers to manage their assets effectively, increase productivity, maintain standards, and enhance organizational performance (K. Kim, Watkins, & Lu, 2017). Organizational leaders provide continuous learning to offer employees new skills, increase employee productivity, and enhance organizational goals.

Knowledge sharing. For organizational employees to withstand the gap in knowledge, organizational leaders expand generational boundaries and increase organizational knowledge sharing. Each employee holds valuable knowledge such as ideas, facts, expertise, and judgment that enables them to add value to the employee, team, and organization (S. K. Kim, Kim, & Yun, 2015). Employees sharing knowledge across the organization increases and sustains the firm's competitive advantage in the industry (S. K. Kim et al., 2015; Savino, Messeni Petruzzelli, & Albino, 2017). Employees affected by organizational knowledge sharing depends on the way the organizational leaders promote or enforce employees to share knowledge.

Organizational leaders use techniques to enhance employee knowledge sharing. Kwahk and Park (2016) noted employee reciprocity, enjoyment, and social capital contributes to improvements in the workers' tactics and explicit knowledge sharing intentions. The organizational culture influences the knowledge of management and organizational learning (Asrar-ul-Haq & Anwar, 2016; J. Lee, Shiue, & Chen, 2016). Employees follow the lead of the organizational leader's leadership style, which could be either collaborative or competitive.

The way organizational leaders manage knowledge sharing could be a collaborative effort or a competitive effort. An organizational leader's view on knowledge sharing encourages or hinders knowledge sharing among employees. Organizational employees working in a competitive organizational culture withhold knowledgeable information from coworkers to appear more knowledgeable to the organizational leader. Asrar-ul-Haq and Anwar (2016) indicated that knowledge sharing enablers facilitate the actual provision of information. Organizational leaders focusing on trust among coworkers, or effective communication, enable workers to share knowledge within the organization. O'Neill, Beauvais, and Scholl (2016) explored the link between the culture and use of information in organizations that have undergone structural change. Organizational leaders sharing knowledge and information deem the organization as an informational culture (O'Neill et al., 2016). The nature of the organizational leader dictated management and employee response to knowledge sharing.

Organizational leaders can encounter unavoidable risks when older employees retire from the organization. Knowledge sharing among employees becomes a challenge

for organizational leaders, as the expectancy of Traditionalists and Baby Boomers retiring from the workforce increases each year (Burmeister & Deller, 2016; Lim, 2015). The possibility of older employees retiring from the industry puts the organizational leader in a vulnerable position. Organizational managers need to train younger generations for management positions before older workers retire from the workforce. Generation X and Generation Y employees understand the importance of on-the-job training and mentoring to better comprehend the principles, the foundation, and the skills behind the work (Oladapo, 2014). Having an older employee train and mentor younger employees can put the employer in a better position when the older employees retire.

Once older workers leave their employers due to retirement, the knowledge gap among employees increases and affects the job performance within the organization. Oladapo (2014) recognized that organizational leaders struggle to replace knowledgeable and talented workers, while Baby Boomers retire from the workforce. Burmeister and Deller (2016) explained that organizational managers need to acknowledge and identify the lost knowledge when the older employees leave the organization. An organizational leader cannot afford to lose the knowledge and experience of the Baby Boomer generation without first teaching the younger generations.

Proactive human resource managers ensure the organizational leaders prepare for the loss of older workers. Organizational managers incorporating a talent management program, or personal development plan, foresee that the employees' developmental skills and training needs to close the knowledge and skills gap. Oladapo (2014) defined talent management programs as the implementation of integrated strategies or systems designed

to increase workplace productivity, develop improved processes for attracting, developing, retaining, and utilizing people with the required skills and aptitude to meet current and future business needs. Organizational leaders employing Baby Boomers need to incorporate talent management programs to execute the business strategy (Sumbal, Tsui, See-to, & Barendrecht, 2017). Human resource managers encourage organizational leaders to be proactive in training employees to avoid unforeseen issues of retirement or employee turnover.

Employees save time using knowledge sharing to work on problems that other workers within the organization already solved. Jones, Woods, and Guillaume (2016) considered two-way learning an effective way for younger workers and older workers to learn from each other. Organizational employees' worldly experiences shape generations to have a variety of strengths within the workforce (Hajro, Gibson, & Pudelko, 2017). The Traditionalist and Baby Boomer generations' knowledge and skills combined adds many years of experience to the workforce. Generation X and Generation Y employees have not experienced half of the experiences that Traditionalist and Baby Boomer employees experienced. Members of Generation X and Generation Y gained progressive experience in technology as technology advanced throughout their lifetime. Traditionalist and Baby Boomer generations could also learn more about technology from Generation X and Generation Y employees through knowledge sharing. Organizational leaders benefit from combining generations in the workforce.

Benefits. Organizational managers invest substantial amounts of money and resources to develop effective employees. For organizational leaders to receive the

maximum return on their investments in employees the organizational leaders implement retention strategies to retain employees. Leaders implementing strategies to retain employees benefit in competitiveness in the workforce and productivity (Tanwar & Prasad, 2016). Organizational managers continue to produce desired results and increase productivity, quality service, and profitability when the managers implement strategies to retain employees (Babalola, Stouten, & Euwema, 2016). Strategies that some organizational leaders implement to retain employees are rewards, flexible schedules, benefits, increased salary, competitive wages, training, and knowledge sharing.

Organizational leaders can benefit from employees' organizational commitment and the increase in employer and employee relationships. Al Mamun and Hasan (2017) and Pritchard (2015) stated that organizations benefit from organizational commitment, management and employee relationship, an organizational leader's competitive aggressiveness, and corporate branding. Employee and community perception of an organization can hinder the brand of the organization. Managers focus on corporate marketing and building a strong corporate brand to gain competitive advantage (Stuart, 2018). Tanwar and Prasad (2016) examined the impact of employer branding on employee retention in existing workforces. Tanwar and Prasad discovered that employer branding can lead to increased employee retention and the employees spreading positive words about the organization. Organizational leaders want existing and future employees to perceive the organization as desirable, proper, or appropriate employers to advance and compete against competitors within the industry.

The emotional connection the employees have with employers and teams strengthens the loyalty the employee has with the company. Gao-Urhahn, Biemann, and Jaros (2016) stated that effective commitment occurs when the results of events and occurrences transpire that increase the emotional connection with the employees' work organization and team. Al Mamun and Hasan (2017) stated that organizations benefit from proactively managing employees' career paths and opportunities with benefits offered to the employees. Employees believing that they will receive career advancements and benefits from their employers are less likely to leave their employer.

Job satisfaction. Employees' satisfaction with their employer can have a negative or positive effect on employee retention. Al Mamun and Hasan (2017) and Mathieu, Fabi, Lacoursiere, and Raymond (2016) identified employee job satisfaction as a key factor that contributes to voluntary turnover behavior. Cheng, Liou, Tsai, and Chang (2015) stated that 35% to 60% of employees leave current employers due to lack of job satisfaction and motivation in 2014. Organizational leaders retain employees by enhancing job satisfaction (M. Yu et al., 2018). Managers exercising their ability to implement strategies improve the quality of work and meet employees' needs and requirements. Employee job satisfaction affects individual performance, organizational productivity, employee absenteeism, employee commitment, job involvement, employee engagement, and employee turnover (Gangai, Mahakud, & Sharma, 2016). Organizational leaders that implement strategies to retain employees improve the quality of the workplace and meet the needs of the employers at all levels of the organization

(Babalola et al., 2016). The employer and employee relationships increase when employees have job satisfaction.

Employees gain trust in an organizational leader when job satisfaction increases. Lu and Gursoy (2016) and Reina et al. (2017) indicated that employers should understand that employee job satisfaction affects the turnover rate. Job satisfaction comes from increased salaries, organizational reward systems, chances to learn new skills, and enhanced relationships with company employees and supervisors. Kundu and Lata (2017) identified the three Rs of employee retention consists of respect, recognition, and rewards. Organizational employees associate their respect, recognition, and rewards from organizational leaders as job satisfaction.

Managers implement the three Rs to decrease employee retention. Kundu and Lata (2017) discovered that organizations implementing the three Rs of employee retention decrease the voluntary turnover rates within an organization. Gallus and Frey (2016) identified that monetary and non-monetary rewards were important to raise employee retention. Organizational managers consider financial rewards as performance bonuses, reasonable salaries, and remuneration for limited skills, while non-monetary rewards include recreation facilities, extended leave, child care facilities, and promotions (Kosfeld, Neckermann, & Yang, 2017). An organizational leader providing rewards to employees indicate the organization acknowledges the employee's work and commitment.

Transition

Section 1 of this proposal included an introduction to the problem under study to explore strategies that leaders of oil and gas organizations used to retain employees.

Harhara et al. (2015) explored employee retention issues in many fields, especially the oil and gas industry. Some of the reasons employees volunteer to leave an organization are job satisfaction, compensation, training, work–life balance, and knowledge sharing (Mathieu et al., 2016). The literature review included discussions on the identified issues. I also discussed the oil and gas industry, four generations in the workforce, the cause of employee turnover, and leadership styles. The conceptual theory examined in the study included Argyris and Schon’s (1978) organizational learning theory and Herzberg et al.’s (1959) two-factor theory.

Section 2 includes a discussion of this study that has a restatement of the purpose statement, role of the researcher, participants, research method, research design, population, sampling, ethical research, data collection instruments and technique, data organization techniques, data analysis, and reliability and validity. Section 3 will include the findings of the study and the following subsections: application of professional practice, implications for social change, recommendations for action, recommendations for further research, reflections, and study conclusion.

Section 2: The Project

In this qualitative single case study, I explored strategies leaders of oil and gas organizations use to retain employees. In Section 1, the focus of the literature review was on the managerial improvements that promoted employee retention. In Section 2, I present the research portion of the project, the restatement of the purpose of the study, and the description of the process for collecting data. In this section, I will also describe the role of the researcher, participants, research method and design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection instrument, data collection techniques, data organization techniques, and reliability and validity of the study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies leaders of oil and gas organizations use to retain employees. The targeted population consisted of five leaders in the oil and gas industry in Houston, Texas, with successful experience in implementing strategies to retain employees. The implications for positive social change include providing managers new insight on engagement strategies for employees that may lead to lower voluntary and involuntary employee turnover, thus reducing unemployment within communities.

Role of the Researcher

In a qualitative study, the researcher is the data collection instrument (Simmons, 2016; Yin, 2018). In this study, I served as the primary data collector. I conducted the study in the geographic location where I live in Houston, Texas. I had no professional or personal relationship with any of the oil and gas leaders participating in this study. The

role of the researcher in qualitative studies is to secure accurate information, report all data collected, and identify the lived experiences regarding the phenomenon (S. Lewis, 2015).

Interviews are a primary data source for qualitative researchers because participants share the depth of experiences in open-ended interview questions during the interview process (Hays, Wood, Dahl, & Kirk-Jenkins, 2016; Yin, 2018). I asked open-ended interview questions and designed the interview questions to prompt the participants to provide in-depth descriptions that answered the central research question through semistructured interviews. Researchers conducting semistructured interviews allow participants to provide in-depth answers (Brown, Thomas, & Bosselman, 2015; Scott, 2016). The participants' in-depth answers may enable the researcher to discover new information that the research was unaware of knowing. Researchers ask planned secondary questions from in-depth responses received from prospective participants (Scott, 2016).

I was familiar with this population of workers because I worked in the oil and gas industry. To mitigate bias, I identified my bias using epoché. Qualitative researchers use epoché to document and describe experiences and knowledge regarding the phenomenon before studying the phenomenon from a fresh perspective (Moustakas, 1994; Scott, 2016; Simmons, 2016). I used bracketing to eliminate my viewpoints and to better understand the viewpoints of others through the study of the phenomenon. Sorsa, Kiikkala, and Astedt-Kurki (2015) defined bracketing as the researcher's ability to put aside knowledge and assumptions when researching a phenomenon. Scott (2016) and Simmons (2016)

used bracketing to put aside knowledge and assumption when researching a phenomenon. In order to remain unbiased during the interview process, I approached the study as an independent observer and acted only to gather data, while leaving out any personal beliefs.

The role of the researcher is to establish a rapport with the participants, maintain a researcher and participant relationship that will not bias the outcome of the study, and adhere to the ethical standards in *The Belmont Report* (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavior Research, 1979). I established a rapport with the participants, maintained a researcher and participant relationship that did not bias the outcome of the study, and adhered to *The Belmont Report*. *The Belmont Report* (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavior Research, 1979) has three basic ethical requirements for researchers to adhere to, which are the principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. To follow the Belmont protocol, I assured respect for people, beneficence, and justice in this study by treating participants fairly and distributing benefits fairly.

Researchers use interview techniques to prepare for interviews with prospective participants. Researchers need to develop interview techniques, plan for all aspects of the process, and choose the right method to make the interviews successful (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Kallio, Pietila, Johnson, & Kangasniemi, 2016; Yin, 2018). I used an interview protocol to structure the interviews for each participant and ensured the interview was consistent. Yin (2018) suggested six steps to include in the interview protocol: (a) an opening statement, (b) semistructured interview questioning, (c) probing questions, (d) participants verifying themes noted during the interviews, (e) follow-up

questions as needed for clarity, and (f) recording of reflective notes. I included the six steps in the interview protocol for this study (see Appendix B).

Participants

The participants in this study were individuals working as leaders in a single unit oil and gas organization, in the Houston, Texas metropolitan area with successful experience implementing strategies to retain employees. It is necessary to target a population that meets certain criteria of the study to access participants in the phenomenon (Scott, 2016; Simmons, 2016; Yin, 2018). A researcher can access information from individuals with experience in the phenomenon (Nwoye, 2017; Scott, 2016; Simmons, 2016). Multiple participants within one unit will provide similar information to the researcher. A researcher could conduct a qualitative study using one unit with multiple participants, within the same setting (Yin, 2018). Researchers can conduct a case study with a small- to medium-sized organization (Lingard, Turner, & Charlesworth, 2015; Nwoye, 2017). Inclusion criteria are vital to ensure selection of suitable participants.

Once I received approval from the Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), I identified and recruited eligible participants for the study. Social media platforms offer innovative means to target and reach potential participants (Kosinski, Matz, Gosling, Popov, & Stillwell, 2015; Simmons, 2016; Skoric, Zhu, Goh, & Pang, 2015). I used a strategy for gaining access to participants through professional networking, contacting professional contacts through LinkedIn, and using Google to

gather company officials' information. I followed Walden University's IRB guidelines to protect the rights of the participants.

Building a working relationship with participants is essential for effective qualitative research (Guillemin et al., 2016; LeRoux, 2016; Wolgemuth et al., 2015). I established a working relationship with participants, making sure the participants were comfortable throughout the research process through consistent phone and email communication, once the participant had agreed to participate in the study. The ethics-of-care approach ensures participants know the principles and responsibilities of the researcher throughout the process (Guillemin et al., 2016; LeRoux, 2016; Wolgemuth et al., 2015). I used the ethics-of-care approach to ensure the participants knew the principles and responsibilities of the researcher in the recruitment letter and consent form.

I solicited participants providing real-life context to the research question. Researchers can mitigate potential bias when the participants are experienced in the phenomenon (Roulston & Shelton, 2015; Scott, 2016; Yin, 2018). When the organization provided the established list of potential participants, I sent a recruitment letter (see Appendix A) to the participants to identify eligible oil and gas participants. Combs (2017), Nwoye (2017), and Scott (2016) used recruitment letters to officially recruit the participants to participate in the study and identify the criteria for selecting the participant. I ensured the recruitment letter specified the criteria for selecting the participants for the study. Leaders meeting the identified criteria qualified to participate in the study and aligned with the overarching research question.

Research Method and Design

The three types of research methods are quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2015; Yin, 2018). Combs (2017), Moustakas (1994), and Scott (2016) used the qualitative research method to explore the in-depth experiences of participants. I explored the strategies leaders of oil and gas organizations used to retain employees through a qualitative research method and a single case study design.

Research Method

Searching for an appropriate research method was vital to the study. The research method is the selected method researchers use to obtain knowledge about their research question (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). Combs (2017), McCusker and Gunaydin (2015), and Simmons (2016) used the qualitative method to explore and understand the perceptions of experiences based on the participants' perception and experience, with an in-depth review of the research topic. Using the qualitative method, I explored the leaders' lived experiences and strategies to employee retention to understand employee retention better.

Quantitative researchers examine variables using statistical analysis (Bernerth et al., 2017; McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). The quantitative researcher uses frequency, intensity, or numbers to derive broad concepts into specific conclusions and to explain variances among groups (Groeneveld, Tummers, Bronkhorst, Ashikali, & Van Thiel, 2015). Quantitative researchers can also accept or reject a hypothesis and use the sufficiency of the sample size to support the generalization of the study results to a

specific population (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). A quantitative method is not an ideal method for studies where the researcher is exploring perspectives related to *how* instead of *how many* (Fusch & Ness, 2015; McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). Quantitative method researchers enumerate the results and highlight problems based on the data provided (Pickering & Byrne, 2014). A quantitative method was not appropriate for this study because I was not interested in counting the results and highlighting the problems.

Mixed-methods researchers focus on incorporating both quantitative and qualitative research (Bernerth et al., 2017; McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). Makrakis and Koustoulas-Makrakis (2016) explained that mixed-methods researchers focus on exploring and explaining the complex organizational and social phenomenon. Mixed-methods research was not necessary for this study because mixed-methods researchers focused on exploring and explaining the complex organizational and social phenomenon. The objective of this study was not to test a theory or hypothesis, but to determine leaders' strategies used to retain employees in the oil and gas industry.

Research Design

Researchers using the qualitative research method used one of four designs: (a) narrative, (b) ethnography, (c) phenomenology, and (d) case study. I used the case study design to study strategies for employee retention. Case study researchers conducted a comprehensive analysis of a specific and complex phenomenon to comprehend context (Leppaaho, Plakoyiannaki, & Dimitratos, 2015; Yin, 2018). Research within one organization provides a useful assessment of strategies leaders implemented in that organization (Lyons, Schweitzer, & Ng, 2015). Researchers use the case study design to

explore people for uniqueness and hear about personal experiences (Yin, 2018). The case study design was appropriate to explore strategies leaders of oil and gas organizations used to retain employees.

A researcher using the phenomenological design explores the essence of the meaning of experiencing phenomena to participants (Khattak, Ramzan, & Rehman, 2015; Willis et al., 2016; Yin, 2018). Researchers using the phenomenological approach are required to use at least 20 participants over an extended period (Pirie, 2016; Yin, 2018). The use of phenomenological design does not include the use of secondary documentation to implement methodological triangulation (Robertson & Thomson, 2014; Yin, 2018). A phenomenology design was not the most appropriate design to explore strategies leaders of oil and gas organizations used to retain employees.

Researchers using the ethnographic design interpret the social dynamics of the culture shared among the group members (Bass & Milosevic, 2018). Ethnographic researchers observe the culture, perspective, and practices of participants to understand shared experiences based on class, race, and gender (Berglund, 2015; Lahlou, Le Bellu, & Boesen-Mariani, 2015; Rosenfeld et al., 2017). Researchers using the ethnography design absorb themselves into the day-to-day activities of the study group for an extended period (Fusch & Ness, 2015; S. Lewis, 2015; Siwale, 2015). Based on the nature of this study, the ethnographic approach was not appropriate to use, as I did not study the lived experiences of the leaders related to employee retention strategies. A researcher using the narrative design approach will present a chronological account of the events using spoken words or written texts (Cypress, 2015; De Loo, Cooper, & Manochin, 2015; Scott, 2016).

A narrative design was not appropriate because I did not present a chronological account of the events using spoken words or written texts.

Population and Sampling

The population in this study comprised of individuals that meet the criteria for participants in one company for a single case study. The population for the study consisted of five leaders working in an oil and gas organization in the Houston, Texas metropolitan area. Each participant had successfully implemented strategies to retain employees. I used an exploratory single case study design to understand the retention strategies of participating leaders within a natural environment using purposive sampling.

Purposeful sampling methods are tools researchers use in qualitative research to target a population meeting criteria to gain a sample of participants in the phenomenon (Nwoye, 2017; Scott, 2016; Simmons, 2016). I needed to select participants meeting the criteria of this study. Benoot, Hannes, and Bilsen (2016) suggested purposeful sampling is appropriate when a researcher has an interest in a group of people with characteristics or criteria. I used purposeful sampling to reach a target population of participants.

The target population consisted of at least five leaders to account for ideal and practical sampling. The preferred sample size in a qualitative study is between five and 50 participants (Simmons, 2016; S. Thomas, 2015). Yin (2018) suggested a population of no more than 10 participants is appropriate for a case study. However, Malterud, Siersma, and Guassora (2015) indicated the proper sample size depends on the power of information obtained relevant in the study. Although the researchers' recommended sample size does not align, the researchers noted that the goal is to reach saturation. Data

saturation is when no new information or concepts are identifiable (Nelson, 2017; Oberoi, Jiwa, McManus, & Hodder, 2015; Saunders et al., 2018). Fusch and Ness (2015) identified key characteristics of reaching data saturation include no new data, themes or coding emerge, and there is sufficient information for other researchers to replicate the study. The selected design the researcher uses in the study affects reaching data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Yin, 2018). I interviewed participants until I reached data saturation.

The participants required management experience in an oil and gas organization and implemented strategies to retain employees. Researchers use purposeful sampling to select participants meeting the specific requirement of the study (Benoot et al., 2016; Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016; Palinkas et al., 2015). Palinkas et al. (2015) defined purposeful criterion sampling as a standard technique in qualitative research for researchers to use judgment to select participants appropriate to the study. Selecting participants with key characteristics helped me explore strategies leaders of oil and gas organizations used to retain employees.

Ethical Research

The researcher has the sole responsibility to protect participants and strengthen the validity of the research result (S. Lewis, 2015; Wessels & Visagie, 2015). To ensure the ethical protection of participants and before collecting data, I followed IRB guidelines for Walden University, as well as researched protocols identified in *The Belmont Report*, to recruit study participants. The study included the identified research protocols in *The Belmont Report* and IRB guidelines to study human participants for selecting all

participants. Once granted permission to proceed with this study, Walden IRB Approval 01-17-19-0518368, I contacted the appropriate person of the organization to request participation from the leadership team. After I received contact information from participants, I verified that the participants met the participation criteria.

Participants of a study receive an informed consent form to enable participants to understand the process of the research, what to expect during the interview and throughout the data collection, and rights to opt out of the interview at any time without obligation (Blease, Lillienfeld, & Kelley, 2016; Grady, 2015). The consent form included (a) an invitation to consent, (b) background information, (c) research purpose, (d) procedures, (e) voluntary nature of the study, (f) risks and benefits of participating in the study, (g) compensation, (h) confidentiality, (i) sample's inclusion criteria, (j) adequate time to review the study information and ask questions, (k) language that will be understandable, (l) contacts and questions, and (m) statement of consent. I gave each participant an informed consent form and required each participant to sign an informed consent form before each interview. As a voluntary study, participants did not receive any compensation or incentives in exchange for participating in the study to avoid coercion. Researchers providing compensation or incentives to study participants risk the influence of financial gain (Persad, Lynch, & Largent, 2019). Researchers providing compensation or incentives to gain participants in a study risk coercion and bias data (Northway, Howarth, & Evan, 2015).

Researchers withdraw participants from the study when the participant requests to withdraw by confirming the request and acknowledging the removal of the participant's

information from the study (Bengtsson, 2016; Scott, 2016; Simmons, 2016). I informed participants that they could withdraw at any point prior to and during the interview process with a verbal or written notice. I did not receive a request to withdraw from the participants. In the event a participant wished to withdraw at any point of the study, even after the conclusion of data collection, I would have honored the participant's request.

Researchers implement precautionary measures to lessen the potential harm to participants (Northway et al., 2015; Nwoye, 2017). *The Belmont Report* ethical guidelines require researchers to implement precautionary measures to protect participants' ethics (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavior Research, 1979). Researchers ensure ethical protection by explaining the rights of the study participants, protecting the participants' rights to privacy ensuring confidentiality, informing the participants about the purpose of the study, explaining to the participant that participants can withdraw from the study at any time of the study, ensuring support is available should the participant becomes upset, and maintaining honesty in collaborating with other professional colleagues (Northway et al., 2015). I implemented ethical assurance by explaining the rights of the study participants, protecting the participants' rights to privacy ensuring confidentiality, informing the participants about the purpose of the study, explaining to the participant that the participants can withdraw from the study at any time of the study, ensuring support was available should the participant becomes upset, and maintaining honesty in collaborating with other professional colleagues. Researchers provide participants with a copy of the

results of the study for personal information (Nwoye, 2017; Scott, 2016; Simmons, 2016). Each participant received a summary report of this study's findings via mail.

The data storage and disposal process entails storing all data on a portable flash drive in a locked safe and shredding all paper data after 5 years of the completion of the study. Researchers maintained copies of the recorded interviews, the audio-recorded copy of interviews, and backed up copies of the recorded interviews in an electronic form as part of the 5-year data storage process before destroying the hard drives and digital devices (Combs, 2017; Nwoye, 2017; Simmons, 2016). I stored the electronic information on a password-protected flash drive and kept documents related to the study in a locked file storage cabinet, to which only I had access. Data will remain in this location for 5 years. At the end of 5 years, all computer and electronic data files will undergo complete deletion from hard drives and digital devices and shred all paper files.

Participants contribute information to a study with the belief that the researcher protected their personal information and privacy (Bengtsson, 2016; Johnson, 2015; Rashid, Caine, & Goetz, 2015). I protected the names of the participants and the organizations represented at all times. Researchers suggested avoiding disclosing participants' identities by replacing the names of the participants with special coding on documents and electronic files (Rashid et al., 2015; Scott, 2016; Wolf et al., 2015). I assigned identification numbers to participants in the form of L1 – L5 to distinguish the interview responses for transcribing and coding the data. The consent form was one of the steps I took to minimize risk and assure ethical protection of participants. I did not list the participants' personal and organization information on the consent form.

Qualitative researchers use the confidentiality and anonymity approach to ensure participants feel at ease to share certain information (Pezaro, Clyne, & Gerada, 2018). Confidentiality of information guaranteed privacy to participants (Bengtsson, 2016; Rashid et al., 2015). Anonymity is the state of being anonymous to all parties (Yin, 2018). I used the confidentiality approach because I was responsible for gathering the research data and reaching out to the participants. I assured participants that the information collected remained confidential and there was no need to use specific names of participants or note the name of the organization.

Data Collection Instruments

Data collection instruments are tools researchers use to retrieve information from participants in the study (Simmons, 2016; Y. Yang et al., 2018; Yin, 2018). I was the primary data collection instrument in this study. Qualitative researchers using case study methods use a variety of data sources such as semistructured interviews, in-depth interviews, documentation, survey data, observation data, and archival data (Simmons, 2016; Y. Yang et al., 2018; Yin, 2018). I used a semistructured interview instrument to collect the data from participants in the study. Researchers consider semistructured interviews as a useful approach to collect data from participants to gather useful data for the study (Simmons, 2016; S. Thomas, 2015).

In addition to conducting semistructured interviews, I requested secondary data sources from leaders. Secondary data sources can include company's documents and may lead to better understanding of the standard operating procedures and human resource techniques used in the organization (Gibsons, 2015; Scott, 2016; S. Thomas, 2015). I

asked each participant for company documents and records about employee retention strategies. Yin (2018) indicated secondary data sources such as documentation would provide researchers with additional information that adds strengths to the findings. I used secondary information to increase validity and improve data saturation in the research process.

I also used an interview protocol with scripted, open-ended interview questions to obtain participants' experiences and perceptions of strategies and methods used to retain employees. Researchers use interview techniques and plans to define the process of the interview (Kallio et al., 2016; Yin, 2018). The interview protocol served as a guide for collecting the data for the study (see Appendix B). Case study researchers use interview protocol to increase the reliability of the study and guide the researcher in carrying out the data collection from a single case (Yin, 2018). I followed all steps and procedures of the interview protocol for data collection, interpretation, and analysis.

Heale and Twycross (2015) recommended researchers conduct member checking to validate the accuracy of the information attained from participants in the study. Member checking provides participants the opportunity to verify the researcher's interpretations of the participant's comments and analysis of the company documents pertaining to employee retention strategies (Combs, 2017; Nwoye, 2017). I conducted member checking to enable the participant to verify the accuracy of my interpretation of the experience. To further address the reliability of the instrument, I used strategies such as member checking to follow up with participants after the semistructured interviews to

verify the data and triangulation of multiple data collection methods during the data analysis as applied to case studies to ensure validity.

Data Collection Technique

The data collection technique for this doctoral study involved on-site semistructured interviews using open-ended interview questions (Appendix C), member checking, and a review of documents received from the participants, such as companies' employee policies and handbook and employee surveys. In a qualitative case study, a researcher collects data through a variety of methods that includes interviews and documents (M. F. Chowdhury, 2015; Kallio et al., 2016). Walden University's IRB must approve the informed consent form and recruitment letter before approaching participants (Nwoye, 2017; Scott, 2016). All participants in the interviews received a recruitment letter or email explaining the study design, intent, and participant criteria (see Appendix A). All participants volunteered to participate in the study and responded to the recruitment letter via email or mail. Following the recruitment letter and email, I contacted each participant via telephone to answer questions and asked for their participation.

During the interview process, I followed the standardized interview protocol (see Appendix B). The interview protocol is a guideline for the researcher to follow during the interview (Cypress, 2015; Yin, 2018). Researchers use an interview protocol to guide their focus on the research questions (Wilson, Onwuegbuzie, & Manning, 2016). I recorded each participant's identifiable information to validate the participant's identity with the concurrence consent with the email before the beginning of the interview.

Before the start of the interview, I provided each participant a copy of an informed consent form as well as a verbal explanation of the expectations, reaffirmed the participant's confidentiality, and identified the benefits of the study. I also reviewed the consent form with each participant and asked the participant about any questions, concerns, or clarification. If there were no questions or concerns to address, I asked the participant to sign the consent form if they were willing to participate in the interview and study. Researchers withdraw participants from the study when the participant requests to withdraw by confirming the request and acknowledging the removal of the participant's information from the study (Bengtsson, 2016; Combs, 2017; Scott, 2016). I explained that a participant could voluntarily withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty. A participant could withdraw by contacting me via phone, mail, or email. Each participant received a copy of the signed consent form before placing the form in the locked file cabinet with the commitment of no access or retrieval for 5 years. After the 5-year period expires, I will shred all paper information and destroy electronic files.

I conducted face-to-face interviews at a secure location, agreed upon by individual participants. Data collection through face-to-face interviews is advantageous as researchers evaluate the nonverbal and paralinguistic behaviors of the participants while gathering quotes and descriptions of important factors to the participants (Abrams, Wang, Song, & Galindo-Gonzalez, 2015). A disadvantage of face-to-face interviews is the time and expense to complete the data collection process (Chen & Mykletun, 2015). Another disadvantage for conducting face-to-face interviews was that the participants may not feel comfortable in the environment. Setting a meeting in a neutral place will

allow for fewer distractions for the participants (Fischer, Collier-Meek, Bloomfield, Erchul, & Gresham, 2017; Lau et al., 2017; Schober, 2018). I scheduled interviews at a place where the participant was most comfortable and at a time that met the participants' and my schedule. I used public areas and business offices for all interviews. Researchers use recording devices to record the interview while the researcher gives the participants their attention and evaluate the nonverbal and paralinguistic behaviors of the participants (Nwoye, 2017; Scott, 2016; Simmons, 2016). During the interview, I had an audio recording device set up on the nearest table to record the semistructured interviews.

Case study researchers are able to collect data from additional sources that includes documentation and archival records (Gibsons, 2015; S. Thomas, 2015; Yin, 2018). Heale and Twycross (2015) explained that collecting supportive documents and archival records are beneficial to researchers, as participants can provide access to organizational managers' strategies not available in public records. I collected supportive documents and archival records from participants.

The use of supportive documents and archival records in the research had advantages and disadvantages. Disadvantages for using documentation and archival records includes increasing subjectivity with information that may be out of date, incomplete, or inaccurate (Kallio et al., 2016). The primary advantage for researchers using secondary data for a case study is the triangulation aspect to the primary data that delivers reliable study results (Heale & Twycross, 2015; Yin, 2018). I performed an extensive review of related company documents, including the standard operating procedures, employee survey data, and human resources practices. Additionally, I

evaluated and followed up with the participants to validate and verify interpretation of the data.

Member checking is a process of the researcher restating, summarizing, or paraphrasing the information received from participants in the study to ensure the interpretation of the comments are accurate (Combs, 2017; Scott, 2016). I conducted member checking with the participants to confirm that I documented the participants' responses correctly. Alimo (2015) specified member checking is important to determine if descriptions and themes accurately reflect the participants' views. Member checking increases the legitimization in the interview process (David, Hitchcock, Ragan, Brooks, & Starkey, 2016). I asked participants for corrections, if any, and took notes regarding each change the participant provided. The process I followed was restating or summarizing the participants' statements and opinions, and I asked the participants to confirm or correct my interpretation. Providing the participant the opportunity to check for any misinterpretation of the responses ensured that I captured each participant's intended viewpoints.

Data Organization Technique

Pinkelman and Horner (2016) proposed implementing appropriate data organization techniques to maintain the integrity of transcribed recorded interviews, audio-recorded copies of interviews, and backup copies of the recorded interviews as a part of the data storage process. Some participants take part in a study because they believe the researcher protects privacy and personal information (Acquisti, Brandimarte, & Loewenstein, 2015). Simmons (2016) and Wolf et al. (2015) suggested avoiding

disclosing participants' identities. In the first step of the coding process, I created a code for each participant by using a label name and number to keep the data separate. The code name was *leader* for the participant, and the numbers were one through five. Ose (2016) and S. Thomas (2015) suggested transcribing interviews in Microsoft Word document and then uploading the raw data to the NVivo software. I uploaded the transcribed interviews into the NVivo 12 software to identify themes and organize the coding for the data analysis.

Once I received each participant's responses to the interview questions, I transcribed the data into axial coding and categorized the data into codes. M. F. Chowdhury (2015) explained that coding is a part of the analysis in which the researcher labels and groups data according to content. Nwoye (2017) and Scott (2016) transcribed the participants' data into axial coding and categorized the data into codes. Researchers code the reflective journal notes to mitigate any bias and track the codes in NVivo software to organize the text data, code the text, manipulate the text data, and display the codes (Nwoye, 2017; Simmons, 2016). I coded the reflective journal notes to mitigate any bias and track the codes in NVivo software to organize the text data, code the text, manipulate the text data, and display the codes. Additionally, I transcribed the secondary data and uploaded the data to the NVivo software.

After the interview data collection, I filed transcripts in electronic folders on a password-protected flash drive to ensure I did not lose, misplace, or alter the transcripts. Combs (2017), Nwoye (2017), and Simmons (2016) maintained the copies of the recorded interview, the audio-recorded copy of interviews, and backed up copies of the

recorded interviews in an electronic form as part of the 5-year data storage process before destroying the hard drives and digital devices. I kept backup copies of all original files and data to prepare for the possibility of losing, damaging, or destroying the original files. At all times, I will store all data such as the audio-recorded interviews, notes, and supportive documents collected for this study in a locked filing cabinet for 5 years after the completion of the study. I will be the only person with access to the data files. Researchers can shred paper data and delete all electronic data after 5 years of research completion (Yin, 2018). At the end of the 5-year period, I will shred all paper files and destroy the electronic files.

Data Analysis

I used multiple data techniques to analyze strategies that leaders of oil and gas organizations used to retain employees. Data analysis is the process researchers use to review and interpret the data as a whole (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Nwoye, 2017). Researchers use triangulation to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of their study (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I used triangulation techniques to confirm the findings. The four types of triangulation noted by Denzin (1970) that qualitative researchers can use are (a) data triangulation, including gathering data through several sampling strategies; (b) investigator triangulation, involving more than one research to gather and interpret data; (c) theoretical triangulation, referring to the use of more than one theoretical position in interpreting the data; and (d) methodological triangulation, involving more than one method for gathering data. According to Fusch and Ness (2015) and Yin (2018), researchers use methodological triangulation to collect data from multiple sources. In a

case study, researchers use multiple data sources to distinguish patterns (Pucher, Candel, Krumeich, Boot, & De Vries, 2015; van Dijk, Vervoort, van Wijk, Kalkman, & Schuurmans, 2015; Yin, 2018). I used methodological triangulation to analyze oil and gas leaders' strategies by conducting interviews, reviewing supportive documents, and conducting member checking.

I analyzed the data using Yin's (2018) data analysis method. This process included the following five steps: (a) compiling the data, (b) disassembling the data, (c) reassembling the data, (d) interpreting the meaning of the data, and (e) concluding the data. S. Thomas (2015) used Yin's data analysis method for data analysis for qualitative single case studies and confirmed its appropriateness.

After I collected the data, I started analyzing the data. Data analysis consists of working through data to discover meaningful themes, patterns, and descriptions that answer the central research question of the study. First, I organized the collected data in categories relating to retention strategies. I selected the initial categories based on the findings from the literature review. Additional categories developed as I analyzed the data. If new information did not fit the initial categories, but developed during subsequent interviews, I established additional categories and reviewed previous interviews for information that I included in the new category. I transferred the raw data into NVivo software from Microsoft Word. After this process, I compiled the data. Researchers compile the data by organizing the data (Yin, 2016). I used the auto-coding feature in the NVivo software to identify similarities in data and prevalent themes.

Once I organized all the data, I began disassembling the compiled data to look for patterns and codes. Disassembling the data involves a formal procedure of coding data (Yin, 2016). Coding is the process of tagging segmented data with category names of descriptive words and then grouping the data (M. F. Chowdhury, 2015). I used the NVivo software to identify similar data and common themes in the participants comments to generate codes and categories to generate the emerged themes.

After I disassembled the data, I began the process of reassembling the data. Reassembling is the data analysis process involving considering the data under several arrangements until emerging themes are satisfactory (Yin, 2016). After I reviewed the organization of the data, I conducted a further-in-depth analysis of the data to identify themes and relationships. Researchers can compare data to distinguish the similarities from differences (Etikan et al., 2016). Successful reassembling is evident in the development of theme in data analysis (Yin, 2016). I removed data that was irrelevant to the research topic and question and left the unchanging elements and textual meaning of those elements to address the research question.

The next step in data analysis is interpreting the meaning of the data (Yin, 2016). Interpreting the data involves the researcher giving their own meaning to the data (Yin, 2016). I interpreted the reassembled data to provide meaning to the research. The researcher's ability to understand and describe the data is vital during data interpretation (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I expressed my understanding of the data collected based on my competence in the subject matter.

The final step in the data analysis is concluding the data (Yin, 2016). Concluding the data is the development of statements noting the finding of a study from the viewpoint of a larger set of ideas (Yin, 2016). Researchers can use data analysis software for creating themes (S. Lewis, 2015). I used NVivo software to input, store, code, and explore themes and patterns. NVivo is a software program that enables a researcher to collect, organize, and analyze data (Gibson, 2015; Lensges, Hollensbe, & Masterson, 2016; S. Thomas, 2015). I aligned the collected data with previous literature using the NVivo software. NVivo software helps researchers align the collected data with previous literature (Saunders et al., 2015).

The conceptual framework is the establishment of a link between the literature, methodology, and results of the study (Mayer, 2015). I analyzed data through the lens of Argyris and Schon's (1978) organizational learning theory and Herzberg et al.'s (1959) two-factor theory. I used these frameworks to help me in interpreting the meaning of the data collected. By examining retention strategies through the lens of Argyris and Schon's organizational learning theory and Herzberg et al.'s two-factor theory, I compared the data collected with established theories relevant to the phenomenon. I also used member checking to verify data.

Reliability and Validity

The research value of qualitative research does not compare to the quantitative research based on the reliability and validity of the research (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The criteria for the reliability and validity of qualitative research are not measurable but need to be established using qualitative methods (Cypress, 2017;

Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested assessing the reliability and validity of qualitative research through dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability. In assessing the reliability and validity of this study, I addressed the dependability, credibility, transferability, confirmability, and data saturation in the subsections.

Reliability

A researcher's ability to reproduce a study using the same research method and gather a comparable outcome of a study is reliability (Cypress, 2017). Dependability is comparable to reliability, and it refers to the accuracy of the findings and stability of the data over time and under different conditions (Alimo, 2015; Kelley, Fitzsimons, & Baker, 2016). I used an interview protocol to ensure the participants received the same semistructured interview questions and had the opportunity to provide me with documents on employee retention strategies. Researchers use an interview protocol that replicates the same steps in the interviews to elicit accurate experience with similar participants and similar conditions ensure reliability to the study (Harman & Azzam, 2018; Sarma, 2015). I also conducted member checking in this study to ensure reliability. Researchers conduct member checking to provide dependability to the research (Alimo, 2015; Yin, 2018). Dependability was a critical part of this doctoral study because future researchers can rely on this research and use the information for future research.

Validity

Qualitative researchers ensure validity in studies with trustworthy and accuracy in the research data (Aravamudhan & Krishnaveni, 2016; El Hussein, Jakubec, & Osujie,

2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In qualitative research, validity refers to the credibility, confirmability, and transferability of the finding of the study (Yin, 2018). Researchers provide credibility by ensuring the research findings are accurate and trustworthy through demonstration of engagement with participants and audit trails (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I established credibility and trustworthiness in this study with my commitment to implement the appropriate steps to maintain the highest level of academic research standards. I established credibility by conducting member checking, documenting the process, and recording any changes that can occur to provide a clear audit trail for future researchers. Researchers conduct member checking to provide validity to the study (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016; Morse, 2015). Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommended member checking to enhance rigor in qualitative research, proposing that credibility is inherent in the accurate descriptions and interpretations of a phenomenon. I provided additional credibility by conducting triangulation. Researchers conducting triangulation strengthen the construct validity by developing convergent evidence (Yin, 2018). Methodological triangulation is evidence of data validity (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Leung, 2015). I ensured data saturation by conducting methodological triangulation. Researchers conducting triangulation used methods to research data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Morse, 2015).

Researchers show transferability in a study by the finding of the study being transferable into general information through the lens of the reader and future researchers (L. Amankwaa, 2016; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I adequately described the original context of the research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) described transferability as the

trustworthy measure used to develop contextual statements that could transfer to other populations and other industries. Ultimately, the reader of the research is to decide if the findings are transferable to another context (Heale & Twycross, 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Morse, 2015). I attempted to assure the transferability in the study method, as I carefully documented and described the entire research process. I prepared and presented a detailed description of the research process to allow another reader to transfer the process to a different research setting.

Confirmability is the accuracy of the data and another form of validity to the research (L. Amankwaa, 2016; Bengtsson, 2016; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Following the interview, I transcribed the interviews based on the interviewee's facts and experiences and removed any bias I had during or after the interview to ensure confirmability. I also used member checking to confirm the participants' responses. Elbarouki (2016) used member checking to confirm the participant's responses with the transcript developed from the interviews with participants. I used member checking by interpreting participants' responses to interview questions and giving this interpretation back to the participants to give them an opportunity to make changes if needed. I also enhanced confirmability by conducting methodological triangulation. I gathered data from more than one method: semistructured interviews, reflective journal notes, and supporting organizational documents. Methodological triangulation is evidence of data validity (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Leung, 2015).

Transition and Summary

The purpose of Section 2 was to provide an overview of the role of the researcher in the study, participants, research method and design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection instruments, data collection technique, data organization technique, data analysis, and reliability and validity. I explained to understand qualitative case study research design applies to conducting this study and compiling results. I used the qualitative research method to explore strategies leaders of oil and gas organizations used to retain employees. I addressed ethical criteria to be in compliance, ensure confidentiality, and the protection of the participants based on *The Belmont Report* protocol and Walden University's IRB guidelines.

In Section 3, I present the findings of the study. The findings of the study include a detailed analysis of the data collected from the participants using interviews, and archival documents. I also address in Section 3 the study's application to professional practice, implications for social change, recommendations for action, recommendations for further research, reflections, and a conclusion.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies leaders use to retain employees. The data came from interviews with five successful leaders and the review of support documents these leaders use in the oil and gas industry in Houston, Texas. I used methodological triangulation of all data sources to identify themes. These data sources included interview data, employee surveys, and the employee policy handbook. The participants validated employee retention strategies the organization used. I found that the strategies leaders use to retain employees included establishing employee and employer relationships, clear communication, and professional development. I correlated the themes with the professional and academic literature and the conceptual frameworks, which were Argyris and Schon's (1978) organizational learning theory and Herzberg et al.'s (1959) two-factor theory.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question for this study was: What are the strategies the leaders of an oil and gas organization use to retain employees? I interviewed five leaders, identified as L1, L2, L3, L4, and L5, in an oil and gas organization with successful experience in implementing strategies to retain employees. I conducted semistructured interviews that lasted approximately 45 minutes each, and each participant answered seven open-ended questions about employee retention strategies. Additional study data came from employee surveys and an employee policy handbook. I used NVivo 12 for data organization, data coding, identification of themes, and audit trail development.

When no new information or themes appeared from the data analysis, I determined that I had reached data saturation. I also used member checking to ensure that I represented the ideas of the participants accurately.

Three themes emerged from the data. First, all five participants expressed the importance of establishing employee and employer relationships. Second, all five participants stressed a need for clear communication between employers and employees, which leads to employee retention. Third, three of the five participants asserted that attending to employee professional development assisted the organization in retaining employees. In this section, I cover each theme in turn and relate each one back to the literature and back to the theoretical framework.

Theme 1: Establishing Employee and Employer Relationships

All five participants asserted that establishing relationships with employees was important in retaining employees over time, and this theme included five connected elements. Establishing relationships included showing an interest in the lives of employees and ensuring that the interest was genuine and tailored to the individuals. By establishing relationships, the participants found that retention issues were not a result of issues they could control because employees were already communicating with them about issues that had the potential for resulting in individual level dissatisfaction with the job. The participants also mentioned fostering relationships between peers as another way to increase employee retention.

Showing interest in the lives of employees involved an informal strategy. All five participants repeatedly expressed the need to establish relationships with their employees as an informal way of fostering employee retention. L2 stated,

I make sure I know my employees' spouses and children's names during the first one-on-one interaction with my employees . . . I sit with each employee to learn something about them on a personal basis. Finding out if they are married, have children, and what they are interested in.

Several participants stated the importance of genuine relationships. L1, L2, L3, and L5 expressed that establishing a relationship with employees in which employees feel that the employer is genuinely interested in them helped them understand and predict the employees' movement within the organization. L1 stated, "I ask employees, where do they see themselves in 5 years within the organization?" Participants asserted that when employees felt that employers are genuinely interested in them, employees gave more candid responses. Participants found that genuine interest led the employees to provide candid information regarding their projected future within the organization, thus strengthening the relationship between employee and employer and increasing the likelihood of employee retention.

L2 and L3 emphasized the necessity of establishing employee-employer relationships because these relationships resulted in lower employee turnover rates. L3 stated, "I experienced voluntary employee turnover a few times, and many times the employee left because of situations that were out of my control. For example, the employee needed to move back home to be closer to older family members." L3

underscored the role of employee-employer relationships in employee retention and attributed most job turnover to situations beyond the employer's control.

According to L1, L2, and L5, this low turnover was due, in part, to their ability to address issues related to employee satisfaction early and effectively. L1 pointed out that making sure there is an established relationship between employer and employees opens the doors for employees to reveal personal, assignment, or team issues that can be resolved before the issues get out of control. In other words, the participants asserted that, when there was an established relationship between employee and employer, the employee felt empowered to share problems related to work, allowing employers to take action, if necessary, to rectify unfavorable situations, thus avoiding stressful issues that could lead to job turnover. L2 and L5 explained that helping their employees become successful within the organization was an appropriate practice to show care for their employees and strengthen the employee-employer relationship.

L2 and L5 emphasized the necessity of establishing employee-employee relationships because relationships resulted in lower employee turnover rates. L2 explained that connecting employees with other employees with the same social interests, or with children of the same age, helped build employee relationships within the organization that, in turn, can help the organization retain employees. L2 added that employees looking to move into a particular area of the city were able to connect with coworkers that currently stayed in the area to get their view of the neighborhood. Listening, sharing, and leading by example are ways L5 uses in an effort to establish and bolster the employee-employer relationship in order to foster retention.

After reviewing the company documents entitled *Employee Satisfaction Survey 2015* (DC1) and *Employee Satisfaction Survey 2017* (DC2) that included survey results on employee retention, I gained a better understanding of the significance of employee-employer relationships and the ways that the relationships affect employee retention. I discovered that employees of the case organization felt strongly about building relationships within the organization. For example, I found from the review of DC1 that 67% and 24% of the 115 employees of the organization strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, with the statement that it was important to establish a relationship with their immediate leader, which increases employee retention. Second, I found from the review of DC1 that 50% and 38% of the 115 employees of the organization strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, with the statement that it was important to establish a relationship with other employees, including management employees within the organization, increasing employee retention. Furthermore, I found from the review of DC2 that 88% of the 89 employees of the organization *liked* being a part of an organization that provides opportunities for employees to socialize with other employees from the company, including managers, increasing student retention. In summary, the survey participants stated that employees desire to establish relationships with their leaders and with other employees and that those relationships functioned to increase employee retention. From reviewing the employee satisfaction survey, I found that the leaders were accurate in their assessment of the importance of relationship building.

Correlation to the literature. Theme 1, establishing employee and employer relationships, aligns with the findings of Sahu, Pathardikar, and Kumar (2018) in that

managers' leadership behavior in establishing relationships plays a critical role in retaining employees. Nolan (2015) noted that managers' leadership behavior in valuing relationships affects the employees' engagement and turnover intent in various work environments. Establishing an employee-employer relationship can influence employees' trust, behavior, and productivity, which enhances employees' job satisfaction and employee retention (Carasco-Saul, Kim, & Kim, 2015; Nielsen, Skogstad, Gjerstad, & Einarsen, 2019).

Leaders' actions, such as knowing the names of an employee's immediate family members, communicate interest in the employee's life and build employee and employer relationships (Thacker, Sullivan, & Self, 2019). Participants asserted that knowing basic information about an employee's personal life enabled participants to establish respect, loyalty, and clear communication between employees and employers, which is associated with employee retention (Reina et al., 2017). When it comes to strategies used to retain employees, personal relationships that are built on trust allow for an open flow of communication and candid feedback (Carter & Walker, 2018).

Managers strongly influence employee-employer relationships that foster employee retention by setting the example of establishing meaningful relationships with employees. A leader can set a tone of genuineness in employee-employer relationships, thus encouraging employees to provide honest feedback to the leaders (Bhattacharya, 2015; Carter & Walker, 2018). I found that employees gain a sense of belonging to an organization when establishing a relationship with their managers, increasing trust, loyalty, commitment, and employee retention. Theme 1 correlates with existing literature

in that establishing employee-employer relationships is an effective strategy to retain employees.

Correlation to the conceptual framework. Theme 1 aligns with the hygiene factors and motivation factors of the conceptual frameworks, which are Argyris and Schon's (1978) organizational learning theory and Herzberg et al.'s (1959) two-factor theory. Rezaei, Allameh, and Ansari (2018) stated that organizational learning theory is a concept of everyday practical coping through internalized sensitivity and predispositions, which affect employee-employer relationships. Nieuwboer, van der Sande, van der Marck, Olde Rikkert, and Perry (2019) stated that leaders adopt effective characteristics to ensure their style of leadership is effective when building relationships with employees. Just as Matthies and Coners (2018) stated that organizations learn from past failures and successes, the five participants in this study learned what works for their department and employees and implemented strategies to increase satisfaction to retain employees by establishing employee-employer relationships that foster employee retention.

Establishing employee-employer relationships refers to hygiene factors leaders use to assist employees in experiencing general satisfaction and a low level of dissatisfaction (Holmberg, Sobis, & Carlstrom, 2016). Motivation factors, such as established employee-employer relationships in the workplace, lead to employee job satisfaction and aid in employee retention (Herzberg, 1974). Employee interactions and discussions that take place within the work environment can affect dissatisfaction (Kiruja

& Mukuru, 2013). All five participants illustrated employees' job satisfaction with established employee-employer relationships that encourage job retention.

Theme 2: Clear Communication

During the interview process, all five participants indicated that honest and clear communication is a vital strategy for retaining employees. Each participant emphasized the role of effective communication in employee retention. L3 stated, "I constantly make sure that I am open and honest in my communication so I can understand if there are some issues, either personal or professional, that can be addressed before the situations are out of my control." L3 strove to maintain open, honest communication to rectify difficult situations that could negatively impact both the employee and the organization, and potentially result in lower employee retention.

L2 emphasized the link between clear communication, guidance, and job satisfaction that leads to employee retention. L2 stated, "providing continuous communication with employees encouraged employees . . . to ask for clarification and assistance on topics they don't understand." L2 also explained that when employees can seek help without feeling ashamed or embarrassed, they felt more comfortable in the workplace.

Another aspect of continuous communication that affects employee retention is the confidential nature of the communication between employee and employer. L1 stated, "I let my employees know that I have an open-door policy where we could talk about anything. There is importance in letting my employees know that what is

discussed in my office is between us, and there would be no punishment for stating their true feelings.

As L1 suggested, when employees can speak with an employer honestly without threat of retribution, the employees are more likely to share information that might affect employee retention. Leaders relying on clear communication with employees work to model clear communication with themselves. L2, L3, and L5 explained that, as leaders, they have to set the example in the organization by promoting effective, transparent communication. L3 stated, "I made sure I provided clear instructions and agendas in meetings, emails, and informal conversations." L3 explained that employees value clear information and suggested that when company leaders model clear communication, the employees are more likely to communicate clearly with employers.

All five leader participants expressed the importance of clear communication with employees, but L4 and L5 explained ways to keep the communication consistent as a means of employee retention. L4 verified that employees work in order to prevent small issues from becoming big problems that could potentially affect employee retention negatively. L4 also addressed employees' concerns on a weekly basis to maintain open and continuous communication. These employee concerns can range from job-related to personal issues. L5 admitted to having scheduled biweekly meetings with each employee to verify job performance and to discuss any issues faced when doing tasks and assignments.

I reviewed the survey results and found that employees of the case organization felt strongly about regular interaction with organizational leaders. For example, I learned

from the review of DC1 that 52% and 35% of the 115 employee of the organization agreed strongly and agreed, respectively, with the statement that it was important to have a personal interaction with one's leader at least once a week, which increases employee retention. In the review of DC2, I found that 78% of the 89 employees of the organization liked receiving constant feedback from their leaders, while the remaining 22% disliked receiving constant feedback, increasing employee retention. In the review of the provided employee handbook (DC3), I found that the organizational leaders are required to clearly communicate with employees on a continuous basis to provide them with performance feedback and improve their performance, if it is found lacking. From reviewing the participant surveys and employee handbook, I found that the leaders were accurate in their assessment of the importance of providing clear communication.

Correlation to the literature. Theme 2, clear communication, aligns with existing literature wherein continuous communication has a strong link to employee retention. Researchers supported honest, continuous communication as a strategy for retaining employees (Nasir & Mahmood, 2016; Petrou, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2018; Watson, Heatley, Gallois, & Kruske, 2016). Open and honest communication helps both employees and employers avoid situations in which withheld information potentially leads to employee turnover (Aruna & Anitha, 2015; Jwu, Hassan, Adbulla, & Kasa, 2018; Letchmiah & Thomas, 2017). Employees value honest, continuous, and clear communication with their employers (Goujani, Shahin, Isfahani, & Safari, 2019). Nwagbara, Oruh, Ugorji, and Ennsra (2013) and Onyango, Nzulwa, and Kwena (2017) posited that a lack of clear communication could prompt employees to seek employment

elsewhere. On the other hand, employees confident that the organization encourages open, continuous, and clear communication are more likely to stay in their positions (Erasmus, Grobler, & van Niekerk, 2015; Taneja, Sewell, & Odom, 2015). Employees would like to be able to communicate their desire for input, feedback, and guidance (Farrell, 2016; Hall, 2016). Letchmiah and Thomas (2017) argued that employees likely to ask for help feel less frustrated in their jobs and are less likely to search for new positions. Kick, Contacos-Sawyer, and Thomas (2015) noted that if supervisors and employees do not engage in effective communication, employees' performance will suffer and conflicts might arise, resulting in the loss of talented employees. Giving continuous feedback to employees on their performance is an important indicator of higher employee productivity (Islami, Mullolli, & Mustafa, 2018). Numerous researchers have found that employees value honest, confidential, and clear communication with their employers (Erasmus et al., 2015; Farrell, 2016; Letchmiah & Thomas, 2017). When employees feel that they can communicate freely with their employers, they are more likely to be retained (Kontoghiorghes, 2016; Xi, Martinez, & Lv, 2017).

When employers regularly communicate openly and with clarity, both job satisfaction and employee retention increases (Cloutier et al., 2015; Erickson, 2015; Sithole & Pwaka, 2019). Regular interaction and meetings with employees facilitate continuous communication, fostering employee retention (Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013; Singh, 2019). Moreover, Bull and Janda (2018) stated that consistent gathering of feedback provides support in decision making that directly or indirectly affects employees and employee retention. When employees feel that management is taking their

concerns seriously because both parties can communicate clearly, employees are more likely to become satisfied with their jobs, increasing employee retention (Abdien, 2019).

These ongoing efforts to have honest and clear communication can prevent situations in which information is withheld, resulting in cascading problems (Nwagbara et al., 2013). Employees reluctant to communicate feel less committed to the workplace (Meng & Berger, 2019). Employees sensing that communication channels are inhibited are more likely to look for employment elsewhere and are less likely to stay in the organization (Raina & Roebuck, 2016). In addition, when employees feel that they can be honest in their communication with their employers, the employees are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs (M. Yu et al., 2018). Furthermore, employees trusting their employer to keep information confidential are more likely to remain committed to their jobs (Yasir, Imran, Irshad, Mohamad, & Khan, 2016).

Employees perceiving that they could communicate requests for guidance feel at ease in the workplace and are more likely to stay with the organization (Sarmad, Ajmal, Shamim, Saleh, & Malik, 2016). When employees feel that they can express their concerns, they are more likely to be retained (Abdien, 2019). Clarity in communication is linked to job satisfaction and employee retention (Bauer & Lim, 2019). Moreover, employees clearly understanding the employer's performance expectations for employees feel more secure in their jobs and are less likely to seek employment elsewhere (Nyaema & Wambua, 2019). According to Jiang and Luo (2018), transparent and clear organizational communication is critical in retaining employees in any organization. The more employees feel that they are involved in clear communication in an organization,

the less likely they will look for employment elsewhere (Bauer & Lim, 2019). I posit that the findings of this study are consistent with existing literature in that clear communication is an effective strategy to retain employees.

Correlation to the conceptual framework. Theme 2 also aligns with the conceptual frameworks, which are Argyris and Schon's (1978) organizational learning theory and Herzberg et al.'s (1959) two-factor theory. Argyris and Schon developed organizational learning theory to enable organizational leaders to detect and correct errors in an organization. Then, the organization implements a strategy recognizing previously learned behaviors and then requires organizational leaders to communicate new standards of behavior to employees (Xu, Loi, & Ngo, 2016). A strategy of honest, continuous, and clear communication facilitates both the discovery of ineffective behaviors and their correction (Walumbwa, Hartnell, & Misati, 2017). Clear communication is one mechanism through which institutional learning occurs (Aruna & Anitha, 2015). When employees have built relationships with their employers through honest and clear communication, employees are confident to report situations that may potentially affect organizational learning (Erasmus et al., 2015). Feeling useful in helping an organization improve strengthens an employee's links to the organization and increases employee retention. As Anitha and Begum (2016) noted, employees observing that information they had communicated resulted in positive changes in an organization are more likely to stay in their positions. Employees confident in their contributions to the growth of an organization are more likely to be retained (Letchmiah & Thomas, 2017). All five leader participants conveyed that when clear communication was implemented, personal and

professional feedback from employees resulted in institutional learning that directly or indirectly affected employee retention.

A strategy of clear communication organizational leaders implemented to foster employee retention also aligns with Herzberg et al.'s (1959) two-factor theory. Managers need to motivate, guide, and direct employees on task performance through clear communication (Asrar-ul-Haq & Kuchinke, 2016). Motivating factors positively influence employee morale, productivity, and job satisfaction, aiding in employee retention (Prasad Kotni & Karumuri, 2018). Consistent and clear communication with leadership affects employee job satisfaction and intent to stay with the organization (N. J. Thomas, Thomas, Brown, & Kim, 2014). All five participants emphasized the importance of establishing effective and clear employee-employer communication in order to positively influence organizational culture and employee retention.

Theme 3: Professional Development

Several leader participants strongly link professional development with employee retention. For instance, L2, L3, and L5 communicated that employees are more likely to remain in their positions if they can see themselves growing professionally within an organization. L3 expressed that understanding the manner in which employees envision their professional development requires knowledge of employees' long- and short-term goals in the organization. L2 stated, "I asked each employee what their short-term, medium-term, and long-term goals are to try to align the employee's interest with the organization's goals."

L5 also asserted, “If I can help an employee on my watch to reach a goal, I am helping the organization and the employee.” L2 explained that aligning employee and organizational goals is instrumental to strengthening the employee-employer relationship. L2 added that although the long-term goals may not be accomplished within the organizational leader’s department, the leader should nonetheless be willing to make an effort in helping the employee achieve short-term goals. In the end, that effort will assist the employee in achieving the long-term goals.

L2, L3, and L5 discussed the importance of professional development plans to ensure that employees can understand organizational context and employers are better situated to assist the employees in accomplishing their short- and long-term goals. L2 stated, “when we are able to align the goals, I make an effort to work with the employee to create a plan that can be accomplished.” L5 elaborated,

I worked with the employees to develop a professional development plan. The plan we developed is reasonable and attainable. I also acted as a mentor to the employees to help the employees along the way, providing feedback to ensure growth and development.

L2 and L5 stated that they work to accommodate the employee even when the professional development plan is out of their control. L2 explained that there have been occasions when the employee’s goals are outside of a particular department’s control; in this case, the organizational leader works with other functional managers to determine if there is an opportunity to transfer the employee to another department to train in an area that is more suitable for the employee. In the event this opportunity was not available, L2

informed the employee and an effort was made to reconvene to discuss the employee's options for training at the next review. L3 explained that a realistic timeline is provided to employees to illustrate that changes do not always occur quickly, and it could take up to 6 months to 1 year to move into a new position or new location.

L2 and L5 pointed out that professional development often entails training seminars and sessions. L2 stated that when there is enough interest among employees in a particular topic, the organization will host a training seminar. L5 also said that training sessions are supplied by the organization according to need.

I reviewed survey results and found that employees of the case organization felt strongly about career advancement. I found in the review of DC1 that 45% and 33% of the 115 employees of the organization agreed strongly and agreed, respectively, with the statement that it was important to have input into their own professional development. I found in the review of DC1 that 58% and 22% of 115 employees of the organization strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, that the organization's training and advancement courses have been effective. These statistics quantify the importance of professional development to employees. I also found in the review of DC2 that employees of the organization would like to have the opportunity to enhance their job knowledge. In the review of DC3, I found that employees of the organization can request to participate in off-site training or conventions for individual or group enhancements. In summary, the participants stated that employees desire to grow in their careers and want employers to provide professional development opportunities, which increase employee

retention. The participants in the employee satisfaction survey showed that the leaders were accurate in their assessment of the importance of offering professional development.

Correlation to the literature. Theme 3, professional development, aligns with existing literature wherein professional development has a strong link with employee retention (Childs, Weidman, Farnsworth, & Christofferson, 2017; Long et al., 2017; Nelissen, Forrier, & Verbruggen, 2017). When employees feel that the organization supports their professional development, they are more likely to be retained (Aguenza & Som, 2012). Employees desire the opportunity to grow in their careers and engage in career advancement opportunities that assist in accomplishing their career goals (Rui et al., 2018). Professional development is central to employee retention (Long, Kowang, & Chin, 2017).

Organizations offering professional development seminars and training sessions facilitate employee growth and promotability (Rubens, Schoenfeld, Schaffer, & Leah, 2018). When employees recognize that management is supporting them with learning opportunities, they are more likely to remain in their positions (A. Chowdhury & Hasan, 2017). Training and development programs that an organization provides affect an employee's job satisfaction and intent to stay with the organization (Aguenza & Som, 2012; Jehanzeb & Mohanty, 2018). Employee training helps employees enhance their knowledge and skills and develops positive behavior through a learning experience that is expected to help employees achieve a greater performance (Hanaysha, 2016). When employees feel that they are developing in their positions, they do not seek employment elsewhere (Childs et al., 2017; A. Chowdhury & Hasan, 2017; Nelissen et al., 2017).

Employers lacking professional development programs risk losing employees (Aguenza & Som, 2012; Nafeesa & Brindha, 2019).

Aligning an employee's goals with the organization's is instrumental in employee retention (Kalgin, Podolskiy, Parfenteva, & Campbell, 2018). Working together to reach goals provides the employee with the organizational support that is instrumental in employee retention (Aguenza & Som, 2012). Employees aware that their goals diverge from the organization's goals are less likely to remain in their positions (Arasanmi & Aiswarya, 2019). As long as employees feel that the organization is assisting them in reaching professional development goals, they are less likely to look for employment elsewhere (Arasanmi & Aiswarya, 2019). Additionally, supporting the employees' desires to move or relocate within an organization is central to employee retention strategies (Verma & Sarita, 2018).

Russell, Ferris, Thompson, and Sikora (2016) noted that employees feel motivated when the job is fully enriched in such a way that employees have an opportunity for advancement, recognition, stimulation, and responsibilities. Employees motivated by professional development opportunities in their current positions are significantly less inclined to change jobs (Rodriguez & Walters, 2017). Akkermans, Brenninkmeijer, Schaufeli, and Blonk (2015) emphasized that employees value career development opportunities. These career development opportunities are central to strategies for employee retention (Jehanzeb & Mohanty, 2018). Theme 3 correlates to existing literature and through the findings I posit that professional development is a strategy leaders use to retain employees.

Following through on an attainable development plan by providing mentoring contributes to the employee's growth and development. Mentoring is an important aspect of professional development since mentored employees learn and grow in their jobs, and are more likely to be retained (Lapointe & Vandenberghe, 2017). Organizations that foster professional development by supporting employee goals with mentoring are more likely to retain their employees (C. Yang, Guo, Wang, & Li, 2019). Employees lacking effective mentoring are less likely to develop professionally. Peltokorpi (2017) and Prapanjaroensin, Patrician, and Vance (2017) posited that a lack of professional development is one of the leading reasons employees quit their jobs.

Correlation to the conceptual frameworks. Using personal development strategies, such as training, mentor programs, knowledge sharing, and career advancement opportunities aligns with Herzberg et al.'s (1959) two-factor theory in which motivators are separated from hygienic factors. A combination of the related, but separate, motivators and hygienic factors are key to producing satisfied employees unlikely to change jobs (Alshmemri, Shahwan-Akl, & Maude, 2017). Motivators are positive factors that relate to employee self-realization (Herzberg et al., 1959). Phrases or words the participant leaders mentioned that align with concepts of Herzberg et al.'s two-factor theory included motivation, encouragement, commitment, positive working environment, job satisfaction, and trust. These factors strongly correlate with employee retention (Jehanzeb & Mohanty, 2018). Motivation factors, such as personal development and career advancement, lead to employee job satisfaction (Herzberg, 1974). Strong personal development can combat dissatisfaction with hygienic factors, such as salary,

paid vacations, and fringe benefits, because employees that advance in their positions are more likely to be paid more and have better working conditions. Employees advancing in their careers and obtaining more favorable work conditions are more likely to remain in their positions (Holtom & Darabi, 2018).

Training opportunities have a positive effect on employee job satisfaction (Jehanzeb, Abdul Hamid, & Rasheed, 2015). Moreover, Nkosi (2015) confirmed that training has a significant effect on employee commitment and overall employee retention. When the opportunities for growth are lacking or employees have reached the peak of their current positions, employers risk losing employees due to the potential negative effect on employee's satisfaction (Prasad Kotni & Karumuri, 2018). L2, L3, and L5 illustrated the importance of leaders offering personal and professional development to create a workforce likely to be retained.

Theme 3 did not align with Argyris and Schon's (1978) organizational learning theory. I was unable to find a link between personal development and Argyris and Schon's organizational learning theory. Organizational leaders use Argyris and Schon's organizational learning theory to share information and knowledge and create learning opportunities in skill development for all employees to benefit the organization (Naim & Lenka, 2018). L2, L3, and L5 implemented professional development initiatives to enhance employees' skills individually, which affected employee retention. I found that Argyris and Schon's organizational learning theory was used by organizational leaders to improve the organization and not employees individually.

Applications to Professional Practice

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore successful strategies that leaders use to retain employees. The findings from this study could be applied to professional practice to increase employee retention through changes in workplace policies and procedures. The specific business problem was that some leaders of oil and gas organizations lack strategies to retain employees. Understanding the factors contributing to voluntary employee turnover is crucial to organizational leaders seeking to maintain a stable workforce (Henderson & Sowa, 2018). Ahammad, Tarba, Liu, and Glaister (2016) posited that an increase in voluntary employee turnover affects productivity and profitability as well as weakens the overall ability of the organization to remain competitive in the industry. The five participants in this qualitative study provided strategies that, if implemented, could improve leadership practices and employee retention efforts.

Employee-employer relationships are a critical influence on employee retention. All five leader participants emphasized that employee-employer relationships can be informal or formal. The most important aspect is that employers take the time to build relationships with their employees by demonstrating genuine interest in the employees' lives. Knowing basic information, such as relationship status of employees, allows employers to foster bonds with employees that make it more likely that they will stay in their work positions. L1, L2, L3, and L5 conveyed that employee-employer relationships are key not only to retain employees but also to develop and maintain a workforce. Employee-employer relationships can extend from one-on-one meetings with

management to informal get-togethers in which employees strengthen connections with each other. I found that when employees are integrated into the social fabric and culture of an organization, it is less likely that they will look for employment elsewhere.

Clear communication is closely related to positive employee-employer relationships. All five leader participants emphasized the importance of clear communication in terms of reducing voluntary employee turnover. Communication plays a vital role in handling situations before they cascade and cause growing problems. According to L2 and L5, when employees feel that communication channels are open and that they can ask for help, they are more likely to alert management about potential issues. Employees also perform better in their jobs, consequently reducing frustration that leads employees to seek employment elsewhere. Trusting that communication will remain in confidence, if necessary, is key to effective communication, as L1 and L4 underscored that employees need to know that they can speak honestly and openly without threat of retribution. L2, L3, and L5 expressed the importance of employers setting the tone in communication with employees by modeling transparent, honest, and clear communication. Regular contact, review of employees' work, and performance feedback support clear and continuous communication. When organizational leaders implement clear communication strategies, employees are aware of their work goals and their leaders' expectations, which makes the employees feel more valued and more likely to stay in their positions. When clear communication is established, employees are more likely to share innovative ideas with organizational leaders. Intentional efforts toward positive social interactions between employees and employers could lead to an overall

decrease in voluntary and involuntary employee turnover and contribute to a more stable, coherent workforce.

All five leader participants also conveyed that professional development is essential for retaining employees. Employees motivated by opportunities to grow in an organization are more likely to stay in their job positions. L2, L3, and L5 stated that employers should become acquainted with employees' short- and long-term goals, and facilitate the employees' ability to reach those goals. L5 emphasized how important mentoring is in terms of professional development and employee retention. Mentoring allows employers to help employees have a realistic view of their goals as well as the timeline and required steps for achieving their objectives. Similarly, three of the five participants discussed the importance of having learning opportunities, such as training sessions and seminars, to help employees reach their personal development goals.

By implementing the findings of this study, namely, establishing employee-employer relationships, maintaining clear communication, and providing opportunities for professional development, organizational leaders may decrease voluntary employee turnover, reduce employee turnover costs, and increase organizational profitability. Developing and implementing strategies that retain employees could decrease the time, money, and energy spent on hiring and training new employees. Implementing employee retention strategies could potentially increase the likelihood of positive economic returns as well as create greater employee satisfaction and retention in the workplace.

Implications for Social Change

Stephan, Patterson, Kelly, and Mair (2016) stated that social change is the transformation of behavior, thoughts, structure, and relationships in order to create beneficial outcomes for organizations, employees, and communities. If implemented, the findings of this study may contribute to positive social change within the oil and gas industry by fostering a more stable, satisfied workforce that declines to seek employment elsewhere. Employees satisfied with their employment may provide strong, positive feedback about the employer and enhance its reputation in the community. Employers respected in the community attract more higher-quality employees than low-performing employees, strengthening the organization. When higher-quality employees join an organization, their presence may enhance the community. As more qualified employees settle in a community, they potentially create positive change in school systems, commerce, and local governments.

Greater employee retention may lead to the prosperity of the employees, the employer, and the community. Less voluntary employee turnover leads to a stable workforce with stable salaries, which may increase employee investment in their communities. A reduction in costs to replace and train workers may result in increased revenues that organizations may invest back into their businesses and the community. Organizational leaders should focus on refining company performance, which may lead to career opportunities affecting social change and behavior to the benefit of the organization, employees, and communities.

Recommendations for Action

Organizational leaders should consider if the strategies in this study align with their current business practices. I found that it is important for organizational leaders to consider past, current, and new strategies when determining the best option to reach the organization's goals. Based on the results of this study, I offer two recommendations that organizational leaders could consider when implementing strategies to improve employee retention in the workplace.

The first recommendation is that managers use employee surveys and exit interview results to become knowledgeable about employee concerns and interests. Conducting employee surveys enables organizational leaders to understand employees' perceptions of training, social exchange, and other job-related issues (Jung & Takeuchi, 2019). The surveys and exit interviews provide employee feedback to organizational leaders; this feedback is not necessarily revealed in one-on-one conversations. Organizations using employee surveys can become aware of the level of employee satisfaction, which is information that is vital to employee retention.

The second recommendation is that leaders establish professional development initiatives that provide timely seminars and training sessions to meet employee demand. Employees not specifically requesting a training session on a particular topic may be inclined to attend these sessions or request other forms of professional development. Professional development opportunities should be built into the company culture so that opportunities to learn and grow on the job are visible and readily available.

Organizational leaders at all levels in any industry desiring to retain employees should pay attention to the results of this study. Human resources personnel considering ways to brand the organization, recruit, and hire the best-qualified employees should consider the findings of this study. Students conducting employee retention research may find results from this study beneficial. Results from this study will be disseminated through Walden University scholarly works for academic purposes. I will disseminate a summary of the results through future training programs that I facilitate within various organizations seeking to train organizational leaders on employee retention. Teaching others about employee retention can positively affect an organization and its leadership, employees, and community.

Recommendations for Further Research

The findings of this study are a validation of prior and current literature. Oil and gas industry leaders need to implement successful employee retention strategies that decrease voluntary turnover. The recommendations for future studies address some of the limitations of this study. One limitation was that some participants might have time constraints hindering the opportunity for a face-to-face interview. Other researchers could explore research opportunities within a variety of industries to increase interview opportunities. Another limitation I experienced was the sample size, which did not provide adequate representation of the population. Researchers could conduct a multiple case study to broaden the perspective. Future researchers should explore the strategies that oil and gas industry leaders use to retain employees outside of Houston, Texas, to determine if different geographical regions have similar or different strategies.

I conducted a qualitative single-case study. I recommend that future research includes a quantitative or mixed method on employee retention to gain access to data not represented here. Future studies could help employers understand the risks associated with not implementing strategies to retain employees as well as deepening understanding of successful employee retention strategies, such as establishing employee and employer relationships, ensuring clear communication, and providing professional development opportunities.

Reflections

The decision to pursue a doctoral degree was not always my dream. While finishing my master's degree, I decided to take the next step and further my education. When I discovered Walden University's doctoral program, I felt I made the right decision for myself. During the research process, my perception and understanding of doctoral-level research expanded tremendously. Some days were harder than others, but with my family's and friends' encouraging words and a chair that pushed me every step of the way, I was able to keep moving forward. I have learned so much about myself during this journey.

I have worked in the oil and gas industry for more than 15 years. I have also experienced involuntary and voluntary employee turnover in the industry. As an employee in the oil and gas industry, I have seen employees leave an organization due to lack of communication, support, resources, understanding, and, sometimes, personal situations. Although this study validated my initial thoughts and concerns about retaining employees, I continuously ensured that my views did not create bias. As I presented these

findings, I presented strategies for business leaders that any industry could implement to decrease employee turnover, thereby improving productivity in the workplace.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative single-case study was to explore strategies oil and gas industry leaders use to retain employees. Oil and gas leaders participating in this study had successful employee retention strategies in place. Responses from interviews and triangulated data included member checking to ensure supportive documents provided an understanding of employee retention. Organizational leaders should implement strategies to reduce employee turnover. The three main themes that emerged from this study include (a) establishing employee and employer relationships, (b) clear communication, and (c) professional development. I linked the results of this study to existing literature related to employee retention. The conceptual frameworks for the research study were Argyris and Schon's (1978) organizational learning theory and Herzberg et al.'s (1959) two-factor theory.

I conclude that oil and gas industry leaders implementing employee retention strategies have the opportunity to increase employee engagement and produce positive social change. The potential outcomes could be beneficial, as lowering voluntary employee turnover would lower the associated costs of hiring new employees and reduce unemployment within communities. In conclusion, I recommend that organizational leaders and scholars use the findings and results of this study to understand and gain new insights into strategies for effective employee retention.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Letter

RE: A RESEARCH STUDY THAT MAY INTEREST YOU

Dear [Name]:

My name is Chawana Anderson, and I am currently a doctoral candidate in Business Administration – Project Management at Walden University. I am conducting research on leaders that implemented strategies to retain employees. This study is entitled: “Strategies to Retain Employees Within an Organization.” I am conducting this study to explore strategies leaders of the oil and gas organizations use to retain employees.

I am seeking face-to-face interviews with oil and gas leaders who meet the following criteria:

- The leader must have experience in implementing employee retention strategies.
- The leader must have management experience in an oil and gas organization.

I developed the study selection criteria to ensure study participants are likely to possess knowledge and information that are relevant to the purpose of this study. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time, even after I have completed data collection for the study. I will protect your identity and your response to interview questions will not be published or disclosed. All of your individual response to interview questions will be recorded for analysis and reporting in the study with no information that identifies you or your organization. I will be asking an organizational representative to share company documents and regarding employee retention strategies.

I am requesting that you participate in this study, please call me at (XXX) XXX-XXXX if you are interested in participating. I will also contact you within the next ten days to answer any questions that you may have and to ask for your participation.

To protect your privacy, no consent signature is requested. Instead, you may indicate your consent by clicking here.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Chawana M. Anderson
Doctoral Candidate
Doctor of Business Administration Program
Walden University

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

The interview protocol will consist of the following steps:

1. An opening statement
2. Turn on the recording device
3. Semistructured interview questioning
4. Probing questions
5. A recording of reflective notes
6. A closing statement

Appendix C: Interview Questions

Interview Questions

1. What strategies have you, as a leader, used to retain employees?
2. What procedures are implemented to determine the reasons employees leave your organization?
3. What strategies do you use to identify employees desiring to leave your organization?
4. What strategies have you used to change an employee's decision to leave your organization?
5. What barriers have you encountered in implementing employee retention strategies?
6. How do you address the barriers you encountered in implementing the employee retention strategies?
7. What additional information would you like to add regarding strategies to retain employees?