2018

Turnover: A Case Study of Middle Managers in the Landscape Industry

Jason Richard Stroman
Walden University

Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Jason Stroman

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Review Committee
Dr. David Banner, Committee Chairperson, Management Faculty
Dr. Judith Forbes, Committee Member, Management Faculty
Dr. Nikunja Swain, University Reviewer, Management Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
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Abstract

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MGMT – Leadership and Organizational Change

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Abstract

The landscape industry in the United States suffers higher turnover among middle management positions. Upper management does not know why this is occurring and currently has no strategy to deal with it. The purpose of this study was to investigate the reasons for high turnover among middle managers and explore the ways to reduce turnover. Reducing turnover may help with the stability of the landscape industry and increase employee retention. Conceptual framework for this study included Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Herzberg's two factor theory, situational theory, and contingency theory. This qualitative exploratory case study addressed the reasons for high turnover of middle managers and the strategies that might prevent high turnover in landscape industry. Three cases were selected, and each case included a sample of 5 middle managers in addition to publicly available company archival information. Middle managers were interviewed using semi-structured interviews. Archival data were used to achieve data saturation. Thematic analysis reviled the following results. The findings indicate that middle managers typically perceive that stress to sell and loss of contracts cause turnover. By creating strategies to reduce stress and manage contract loss, upper management may reduce turnover. The implications for social change include increased viability of landscape companies, which could result in decreased unemployment and increased quality of life for middle managers within the industry.

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Dedication

This journey is dedicated to my family. Without their support and understanding this would not have been possible. I would like to thank my wife Crystal for the push and drive to finish. Lastly to my children I hope this shows you the power of education and that it is never too late to start again and achieve your dreams.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge my family for their support especially my wife Crystal. Without her this journey would have ended before it began. I also want to thank my Chair Dr. Banner and Committee Dr. Forbes for the guidance and help throughout this process. I would like to thank my children Nico, Rocco, Ronin and Agapi for the patience and understanding when Dad could not play.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Turnover is a major problem in many industries that causes a plethora of problems and issues (Garazi, Molero, & Mangin, 2015). Turnover of employees has the potential to cause loss of production as well as loss in revenue. Increased costs also occur as a result of the orientation and training of new employees who have to fill the empty position that occurs as a result of the turnover (Call, Nyberg, Ployhart, & Weekley, 2015). Every industry is affected by turnover and loss of motivation, and the more severe the turnover and loss of motivation, the more severe the results.

Causes for turnover could be lack of motivation, other turnover within the organization, and poor employee relationship with the management (Arekar, Desphande, & Sherin, 2016; Hale, Ployhart, & Shepherd, 2016; Mohammadipour, Dehghani, Hamedani, & Shafiee, 2016; Hanna, 2017; Wiltermoth & Flynn, 2013). In particular, Wang (2014) noted that positive employee management relationships reduced turnover.

When relationships are poor between manager and employee, an increased possibility of turnover of the employee, manager, or both exists (Call et al., 2015; Garazi et al., 2015; Soebbing et al., 2015). Stress can also exist within an organization or industry. As the stress increases within an organization, the probability of turnover increases (Ali & Kakakhel, 2013).

Researchers have explored higher-than-average turnover rates in different industries. However, a lack of research exists in the landscape industry. The green industry, which includes the landscape industry, is currently a $73-billion industry, employs more than 87,8000 people, and has an expected growth of 3.7% per year (IBIS

World, 2014). The landscape industry in the United States suffers from a turnover rate of 30% or more each year and has been shown to have poor retention of middle and upper managers (IBIS World, 2014).

As with other industries, the landscape industry can have long hours and high stress. Job stress and pressure can lead to poor job satisfaction, increased turnover, and a lack of job commitment (Burnett & Pettijohn, 2015). Furthermore, stress among managers can lead to increased turnover among the managers (Burnett & Pettijohn, 2015).

Background of the Study

Turnover is a major problem in many industries that can cause a variety of issues and problems (Garazi et al., 2015). Turnover of employees can lead to a loss of production, a loss in revenue, and increase in costs associated with the training of new employees (Call et al., 2015). When loss of revenue and loss of production occurs, more turnover in the management positions occurs because upper management often blames middle managers for the ineffective production and potential loss (Qazi et al., 2015).

Arekar et al. (2016); Hale et al. (2016); Hanna (2017); Mohammadipour et al. (2016); and Wiltermoth and Flynn (2013) explored possible reasons for turnover. Studies have shown the possible reasons for turnover include lack of motivation, loss of production, poor manager relationships, and stress (Arekar et al., 2016; Hale et al., 2016; Hanna, 2017; Mohammadipour et al., 2016; Wiltermoth & Flynn, 2013). Arekar et al. (2016), Hale et al., (2016), and Wiltermoth and Flynn (2013) looked directly at manager interactions, the perceptions of effective management and the effect it had on turnover, motivation, and profitability. Kun-Chih, Qiang, Ying Chou, Yu-Chen, & Xing (2016), and Keller (2014) looked directly at the negative consequences of turnover within industries and found turnover caused an increase in loss of production and revenue.

Different reasons occur for the increase for the intent to quit. When employees within an organization believe that managers are making decisions for political gain, the employees have an increased intent to quit (Abbas, Raja, Darr, & Bouckenooghe, 2014). Another common factor for increased turnover is the relationship they have with the manager (Garazi et al., 2015). When disconnect between the manager and employee exists, both the manager and the employee have an increased probability of turnover due to unhappiness (Call et al., 2015; Garazi et al., 2015; Soebbing et al., 2015).

Poor management within an organization can also cause turnover. In a management perception study, Rosenblatt (2012) found that as the perception of the management turned negative, there was a direct correlation to increased turnover within the branches. Researchers who conducted studies in both the hospitality and oil industry also found that disconnect between the management and the employees that led to an increase in turnover and mistrust in the management (Saud Alotaibi, 2014; Scheers & Botha, 2014).

The relationship between the manager and the employee is important because management needs to nurture relationships with employees to reduce turnover (Wang, 2014). Kun-Chih, Qiang, Ying Chou, Yu-Chen, and Xing (2016), as well as Keller (2014), offered examples of the negative effects of turnover and why a study onnover is important. Mikluic (2013) explained the ways that turnover and loss of motivation can harm a company, as well as potential ways to implement new strategies to increase motivation and increase retention.

Another issue within the landscape industry is the stress that managers can experience. The landscape industry has long hours and high expectations to perform and produce. Stress within the organization can cause a host of issues, such as lack of commitment, lack of job satisfaction, productivity reduction, and higher turnover within the organization (Burnett & Pettijohn, 2015). When stress is present within the workplace an off-balancing or off-kilter effective within organization can occur (Florea & Florea, 2016). When an organization is off balance or off kilter, an increase in productivity and loss occurs. The higher the organizational stress, the lower the organizational commitment and less buy-in by the employees (Ali & Kakakhel, 2013).

The potential for social change exists to decrease turnover and increase profits, which may reduce one of the stressors of the managers as well. A reduction of stress to middle managers may reduce stress in home lives. The current background research makes beneficial reference material in gaining knowledge on why the turnover problem might be occurring within the landscape industry and can provide examples to follow when setting up this current study.

Problem Statement

The general problem that I addressed in this study is that turnover occurs among middle managers at a higher rate than other levels of management within the landscape industry (IBIS World, 2014). The specific problem that I addressed in this study is that some landscape industry upper managers do not understand why high turnover of landscape industry middle managers occurs and lack strategies to prevent turnover of middle managers in the landscape industry. Turnover is a major problem, which can lead to loss in production and loss in revenue, as well as an increase in costs associated with the training of new employees (Call et al., 2015).

Different reasons for the increase for the intent to quit exist. When employees within an organization believe that managers are making decisions for political gain, the employees have an increased intent to quit (Abbas et al., 2014). Another most common factor for increased intent for the employees to leave is the relationship they have with the manager (Garazi et al., 2015). When a disconnect between the manager and employees exists, both the manager and employee have an increased probability of leaving that position due to unhappiness (Garazi et al., 2015). Although previous studies have explored high turnover rates in different industries, a large gap in research of the green industry exists, given the little to no research on the landscape industry.

Purpose of the Study

My purpose in this qualitative multiple case study was to understand why high turnover of landscape industry middle managers occurs, and I sought to explore possible strategies to prevent high turnover of middle managers in the landscape industry. The sample for this study consisted of three cases. Cases were bounded by companies who have who have experienced high turnover in middle management. Each case consisted of a sample of five middle management employees for a total of 15 participants. The implications for social change could include the increased viability of the landscape companies due to a decrease in turnover. The social change could result in the decreased unemployment and increased quality of life for the employees.

Research Questions

The research question that guided this study was: Why does high turnover of landscape industry middle managers occur and what strategies might prevent high turnover of middle managers in the landscape industry?

Conceptual Framework

In this research, the specific problem that I addressed is that some landscape industry upper managers do not understand why high turnover of landscape industry middle managers occurs, and they lack strategies to prevent turnover of middle managers. Existing theory can add framework for management to follow. The specific problem that I addressed in this study is explored through the theoretical lens of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Herzberg's two-factor theory, Vroom's expectancy theory, context emergent turnover theory, Adam's equity theory, situational theory, contingency theory, and behavioral theory.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory states that five different levels of needs people travel through exist (Maslow, 1943; McLeod, 2007). Maslow's hierarchy of needs is based on the needs of employees that managers can fulfill to motivate them to perform a task that the employee otherwise might not have completed (McLeod, 2007). The different levels of needs range from basic necessities that are primal in nature, to self-actualization, which is a person's ability to hit the pinnacle of life (Maslow, 1943;

McLeod, 2007). Employees require all needs met to move to the next level in the hierarchy (Maslow, 1943; McLeod, 2007).

Maslow's hierarchy of needs can be used within organizations as a framework to develop meaningful need fulfillment to employees such as benefits packages (Sadri & Bowen, 2011). The inclusion of meaningful things in an organization increases the employee motivation, productivity and the overall profit of the company (Sadri & Bowen, 2011). People are motivated at work for many different reasons that fill the individual statuses in the hierarchy of needs (Sindhu & Sindhu, 2014).

People tend to try to fulfill multiple levels of the hierarchy of needs simultaneously and look for employment that can accommodate that (Sindhu & Sindhu, 2014). People also tend to leave a company or organization in which needs are not or cannot be met (Sindhu & Sindhu, 2014). Changes made both internal and external in our personal environments can lead to a fulfillment of our needs, which in turn can increase personal growth and development (Sparks & Repede, 2016).

Maslow's contribution to human study is his "hierarchy of needs," which describes levels of needs that try to explain human motivation on a step up level system (Sparks & Repede, 2016). Research, as well as everyday examples, show how people can become stuck on a need they cannot fulfill, which in turn can lead to a lack of continued personal and professional growth and development (Sparks & Repede, 2016).

Herzberg Two Factor Theory

Herzberg two factor theory (1959) is useful in understanding why the organizational and psychological factors associated with turnover through an exploration of factors that influence retention, turnover, and workplace satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Gupta & Shaw, 2014; Herzberg, 1959). Other studies have used Herzberg two-factor theory to show that employee retention correlated with increased productivity (Fareed & Jan, 2016; Hyun & Oh, 2011; Schaffner, Schiefele, & Ulferts, 2013). Likewise, studies have indicated a relationship between motivation and job satisfaction (Fareed & Jan, 2016; Hyun & Oh, 2011). Aspects such as employee engagement serve as a key driver of organizational success (Sinha & Trivedi, 2014). Additional elements such as intrinsic, extrinsic, work, and individual relationships are all key to organizational success (Sinha & Trivedi, 2014).

Vroom's Expectancy Theory

Vroom's expectancy theory (1964) explores motivation in the context of why employees chose one behavior over another. In this research, this theory is appropriate for trying to understand motivation in terms of why employees do what they do. This theory shows that a positive correlation exists between motivation and the reward for that motivation was positive for the employee (Vroom, 1964). An employee works hard and is loyal to a company because that employee expects a positive outcome in return (Vroom, 1964). The positive return could be things as benefits or high compensation (Vroom, 1964).

Based on Vroom's expectancy theory, managers should focus on using rewards that resemble the performance of the employees. As employees perceive a reward the motivation to perform to achieve that reward increases (Vroom, 1964). Expectancy theory is about the individual's choices. As the individual make decisions based on what the outcomes of that choice were and lead to a positive gain for the individual (Vroom, 1964). The motivation to perform is a result of the expectancy that the productivity of the individual result in an equal reward for that effort (Vroom, 1964).

Adams Equity Theory

Adams equity theory (1963) explores the relationship between the perception of the distribution of resources equally between two parties. For this research, the two parties are the employee and the employer. This theory is appropriate for this study because people who are treated fairly in the workplace tend to show an increase in motivation (Adams, 1963). Equity theory works on the basis that employees tend to want to keep the relationship of performance is the same as what is received from work (Adams, 1963). The employee has to feel as they are getting as much as they give and if this occurs the employee is motivated to work (Adams,1963).

Employees expect that the relationship between employee and employee be equal and fair (Adams, 1963). If a perception of over or under equality exists, a loss in trust and performance can exist (Adams, 1963). The underpayment of performance can lead to anger within an organization while the overpayment can lead to feelings of guilt (Adams,1963). Fair and equal relationship between performance and reward for maximum productivity need to exist (Adams, 1963).

Context Emergent Turnover Theory

Context emergent theory looks at the collective turnover of employees and the effects on an industry (Nyberg & Ployhart, 2013). This theory shows that the turnover of one employee can lead to a collective of turnover (Nyberg & Ployhart, 2013). When turnover or collective turnover occurs in an industry, a loss of knowledge, resources and human capital occurs (Nyberg & Ployhart, 2013). This ties directly to the landscape industry and is one of the problems within the landscape industry with turnover.

Situational Theory

In situational theory, no one management style is best but it is the situation that the manager is in that should determine the management style (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). Hersey and Blanchard (1969) developed a rating system for managers based on the task and relationship behaviors and how the managers react. This rating system is scaled from S1-S4 (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969).

S1 managers are directing and they excel at giving one-way directions (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). An S2 manager is a manager that is coaching and builds buy in and trust from the employees (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). An S3 manager is supporting in the way they provide the decision making process to the employees (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). An S4 manager is delegating of tasks and are always involved in the decision making but let the employees play an active role (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969).

Contingency Theory

Contingency theory is a leadership theory in which the leadership style is based on the life experiences of the manager and because of this the management style is hard to change (Fiedler, 1964). In the theory, the manager within an organization needs to adapt the management style accustom to the situations (Fiedler, 1964). Management behavior can be changed only by revisiting the role of the manager or by restricting power and authority of the manager (Fiedler, 1964). Managers need to be aware of strengths and weakness to be effective and appropriate in the organization in which they work (Fiedler, 1964).

Behavioral Theory

Blake and Mouton (1964) developed a theory based on a grid for showing different management styles. The grid contains an X axis of concern for production and an Y axis that is the concern for people (Blake & Mouton, 1964). Where a managers concern for the two axis put them in one of the different management styles (Blake & Mouton, 1964). The first is an indifferent manager in which the manager has a low concern for people or production (Blake & Mouton, 1964). These managers work to keep themselves out of trouble and can blame others or shortcomings (Blake & Mouton, 1964).

Accommodating mangers have a high concern for people but low concern for production (Blake & Mouton, 1964). Dictatorial managers have high concern for production and low concern for people (Blake & Mouton, 1964). The status quo manager falls right in the middle of concern for people and concern for production (Blake & Mouton, 1964). Sound managers place high value on both people and production (Blake & Mouton, 1964). Opportunistic managers are those that adapt to all places on the grid in order to best suit the manager’s needs (Blake & Mouton, 1964). Managers can be put in situations where the appropriate management style works.

Nature of the Study

This study was a qualitative study. I used a qualitative study because qualitative studies allow for open-ended questions that can answer the “why” questions (Leedy &

Ormord, 2013). Questions that are qualitative in nature should be open ended giving the details and patterns to emerge (Leedy & Ormord, 2013). My purpose in this qualitative multiple case study was to understand why high turnover of landscape industry middle managers occurred and explored possible strategies to prevent high turnover of middle managers in landscape industry.

My qualitative research study was an exploratory multiple case study design. A case study was appropriate because the research explored the decisions or reasoning for the phenomenon rather than the phenomenon itself (Yin, 2014). Exploratory case studies fit because exploratory tries to explain a phenomenon in which no clear single set of outcomes has been found before (Yin, 2014).

Given a current gap in research, an exploratory case study can be beneficial in filling that gap. Multiple case studies have the tendency to strengthen the case by replicating the results across the cases (Yin, 2014). In this study, using each company as a separate case replicated the effects and strengthened the overall findings within the study.

Definitions

Adams equity theory: Adams equity theory is a theory that explores motivation in the aspect of equal input-output (Adam, 1963). Motivation increases if employees believe that the input provided was equally met with return to them from the company (Adam, 1963).

Behavioral theory: Behavioral theory is a based on a grid where the X and Y axis represent concern for production and concern for people respectively and where a manager’s traits fall on that grid determine the type of manager (Blake & Mouton, 1964).

Context emergent turnover theory: Context emergent turnover theory is a theory in which the turnover or collective turnover of employees leads to a loss of knowledge, resources, and human capital (Nyberg & Ployhart, 2013).

Contingency theory: Contingency theory is a theory where a manager's style is based on the life experiences of that manager and that the management style is hard to change because of this (Fiedler, 1964).

Herzberg's two-factor theory: Herzberg's two-factor theory is a theory in which two factors, mostly one organizational and one physiological, are used to explain the reasons for an event like turnover. In this study factors that influence turnover and motivation was used (Gupta & Shaw, 2014; Herzberg, 1959).

Landscape industry: The landscape industry refers to any company or organizations involved in the design, maintenance of plant material, install of plant material, install or maintenance of trees, fertilization applications, pesticide applications, and hardscape install (IBIS World, 2016).

Manager: The term *manager* refers to a person or persons who are in charge of other people or a piece of an operation within a company or organization (Marais, 2014).

Maslow's hierarchy of needs: Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a theory that attempts to explain motivation from the perspective of a hierarchy of needs. These needs have to be met in order of how they are listed, or an individual can become stuck in one order and not be able to move on and fulfill other needs. This can limit one's growth and development (Sparks & Repede, 2016).

Middle managers: Middle Managers are people who are in charge of other people or a piece of an operation within a company or organization but answer to another manager above them (Anicich & Hirsh, 2017).

Motivation: Motivation is any physical act or verbal act that stimulates a feeling of improved attitude or feelings toward a situation. It can be a tool used to increase production, profits, and anything else a manager is looking to make better (Jacobsen & Jensen, 2017).

Organizational stress: Organizational Stress refers to the unnecessary stress that a position within an organization or company can put on an individual. This stress can be stress that carries over to home life as well as work life (Osibanjo, Salau, Falola, & Oyewunmi, 2016).

Situational theory: In situational theory, no set leadership style is better than another and management styles need to be changed based on the situation (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). Management styles are rated on a scale of S1-S4 (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969).

Turnover: Turnover refers to the voluntary or involuntary leaving or termination from a current position. The turnover either resigning or termination can be planned or not planned (Caesens, Stinglhamber, & Marmier, 2016).

Vroom's expectancy theory: Vroom's expectancy theory is a theory in which tries to explain why people are motivated (Vroom, 1964). People are motivated in a certain way when they see the return of that behavior as positive or them.

Assumptions

Assumptions are parts of the research that the researcher believes to be true or takes for granted (Leedy & Ormord 2013; Simon 2011; Yin 2014). I assumed that the participants answered all interview questions honestly. For the data to be valid data, the answers have to be truthful. Without truthful answers, a potential for the results to be false or incomplete exists. As I asked questions, I needed the interviewee to provide all answers as in depth and truthful as possible.

Another assumption is during data collection, during the interview, I assumed that all of the information the interviewee gave was all of the information and that the participants had; in other words, I that participants were not holding back information. Researchers assumed that the interviewee did not have a reason to hold back any information and giving all information they could.

This research was based on the information that has been obtained from past peer-reviewed research. Another assumption that I made was the research was accurate and correct. An assumption turnover in the landscape industry is similar to problems stated in existing research. An assumption that all of the research used as sources in this study had been correct and truthful. If any of the research that had preceded this study was falsified or incorrect, it could have thrown off this study. My last assumption was that turnover within the landscape industry continued to be an issue. Therefore, one must assume that the problem still existed as the research continued.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope and delimitations define the study boundaries (Leedy & Ormord 2013; Simon 2011; Yin 2014). Within this study, limits that set the scope of this study. The study consists of three landscape companies within the United Sates. This research is limited to the United States only. The three companies that are in the study had a yearly revenue of more than $250 million.

I excluded all companies that earn less than 250 million dollars a year. This ensured more middle managers to interview. Middle managers who have experienced turnover or loss of motivation participated for the interviews within the study. I excluded new or inexperienced managers. All results of this study did not include companies outside the landscape industry or smaller than $250 million dollars a year.

Limitations

Factors that limited the scope of the research were called limitations (Leedy & Ormord 2013; Simon 2011; Yin 2014). Some of the limitations were minor but some could be problematic to a proper study. This study had limited transferability due to its sample size, case size, and companies used in the study. This study was limited to three cases of landscape companies within the United States that earn more than $250 million a year. The results are only applicable to other landscape companies that earn more than $250 million a year in revenue and are located in the United States.

A limitation of researcher bias existed. As the researcher, who worked in the landscape industry in the United States for companies that made more than $250 million a year in revenue, a potential existed for my past experience to bias interviews. Some of my experiences as a manager in this industry were positive and some negative. I kept all of my past to myself and did not let it interfere with the study.

Another limitation was participant bias. Bias of the experiences of the participants and how those experiences affected the responses. If the experiences are positive the answers might have been more skewed positive or vice versa if negative the answers might be more negative. Bias of researcher was a possible limitation in this study. That would be that the participants did not like me or the questions I ask. This could have given little to no information or it could possibly have given incorrect information. This is something that needed to be controlled for.

A limitation of participant fear of retaliation from the employer exists. The information gathered might be seen as something that could limit the answers that are given. The answers could upset the managers and other upper officers of the companies. That is why the interviews were not recorded and all participants were coded and records kept with no personal information

Significance of the Study

Significance to Practice

In this qualitative multiple case study, I explored possible strategies to prevent loss of motivation and turnover of landscape industry middle managers. Improved understanding of landscape industry middle managers' motivations has the potential to improve retention within that position, which could lead to job stability and quality of life. The costs associated with turnover can be great for a company to bear. On average, turnover costs a company 16% of the annual salary for a person who makes under

$30,000 a year, 20% of the annual salary to replace a mid-ranged employee who makes between $40,000 to $40,000 a year, and up to an extreme 200% for upper executive management (Keller, 2014).

Significance to Theory

The specific problem that I addressed in this study that some landscape industry upper managers do not understand why high turnover of landscape industry middle managers occurs and lack strategies to prevent turnover of middle managers in the landscape industry. Managers applying Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Herzberg's two-factor theory can help reduce the turnover and increase motivation within the green industry. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a theory that managers could use to fulfill the needs of the employees and to motivate employees to perform tasks that otherwise might not have completed (McLeod, 2007).

The different levels of needs range from basic necessities that are primal to the self-actualization, which is a person's ability to hit the panicle of what they are working on (Maslow, 1943; McLeod, 2007). If managers were able to apply this theory to the employees, then the needs of the employees would be met, increasing happiness and ability to move to a new level of self-realization. People, especially employees do not grow or obtain the next level in the hierarchy until the current level is met and fulfilled by either the manager or self-realization (Maslow, 1943; McLeod, 2007). When this occurs, a decrease in turnover and an increase in motivation occurs.

Herzberg two-factor theory (1959) is useful in understanding why the organizational and psychological factors associated with turnover through an exploration of factors that influence retention, turnover, workplace satisfaction and dissatisfaction. (Gupta & Shaw, 2014; Herzberg, 1959). Other studies have used Herzberg two-factor theory to show that employee retention correlated with increased productivity (Fareed & Jan, 2016; Hyun & Oh, 2011; Schaffner et al., 2013). If managers were to use Herzberg's two-factor theory, they could discover the factors that motivate and decrease turnover within the employees because studies have indicated a relationship between motivation and job satisfaction (Fareed & Jan, 2016; Hyun & Oh, 2011).

Vroom's expectancy theory (1964) explores motivation in the context of why employees chose one behavior over another. This theory shows that a positive correlation exists between motivation and the reward for that motivation was positive for the employee (Vroom, 1964). A Jordanian study found significant relationships among increased motivation, increased job performance and the employees expecting a reward for that performance (Nimri, Bdair, & Bitar, 2015). Research in Brazil found that individual reward and social inclusion were the two main drivers of motivation (De Mesquita Ferreira & de Aquino Almeida, 2015). If landscape managers used this theory, the managers could find out what motivates the employees within the industry.

Adams equity theory (1963) explored the relationship between the distribution of resources equally between two parties. This theory is appropriate for this study because people who are treated fairly in the workplace tend to show an increase in motivation (Adams, 1963). Research demonstrated that employees were willing to work harder and were more content within a position if the company was willing to make sure that the employees felt that the input they gave is equally rewarded by the company (Ryan, 2015; Buzea, 2014).

Context emergent theory looks at the collective turnover of employees and the effects on an industry (Nyberg & Ployhart, 2013). When turnover or collective turnover occurs in an industry, a loss of knowledge, resources and human capital exists (Nyberg & Ployhart, 2013). Managers need to know how to manage for turnover and be able to prevent collective turnover. Single turnover causes issues such as loss of production and revenue, but when the turnover becomes collective those issues are multiplied (Nyberg & Ployhart, 2013).

Situational theory is a theory in which manager's styles are rated on a scale of S1-S4 (Hersery & Blanchard, 1969). Within the landscape industry, the styles of the management could be rated on this scale, and the results could be used to better management objectives. Managers can gain better understanding if they spend time with two or more levels down from them, because situational leadership is best when a manager has all the information they are able to obtain (Schmalz, 2016).

Behavioral theory rates managers on a grid to determine the kind of style they possess and based on that style where a manager should be in the organization (Blake & Mouton, 1964). Within a telecommunication company, a difference of perception existed of what the managers thought the management style was compared with the perception of where the employee's management style fell on the Blake-Mouton grid (Versiani, de Lima Caeiro & Carvalho Neto, 2017). With this information, it would be beneficial to see where the perceptions of management and employees fall within the landscape industry.

Contingency theory is a theory in which the manager's life experiences determine the management style (Fiedler, 1964). This makes changing the management style difficult (Fiedler, 1964). Grötsch, Blome, and Schleper (2013) explored situations in which advanced supply chain risk management changed. It was concluded that both the leadership and the followers need to be more in sync (Grotsch et al., 2013). The landscape industry could look at the experiences of the managers and then put the appropriate managers in the appropriate positions.

Significance to Social Change

Costs of turnover can be large when up to 30% of the employee's turnover a year, as has happened in the landscape industry (IBIS World, 2014). Large costs are associated with turnover and the potential loss of profitability. One study found that a direct negative correlation between the turnover of the management and the profitability exist (Kun-Chih, Qiang, Ying Chou, Yu-Chen, & Xing, 2016). Given the high turnover of managers within the landscape industry, the assumption that an equally strong possibility of loss of profitability exists. Loss of profitability can lead to layoffs, contributing to higher unemployment. The impact for social change could be the reduction of turnover and the decrease of unemployment within the landscape industry.

Summary and Transition

Turnover is an issue in many different industries that cause a varied amount of issues (Garazi et al., 2015). When turnover occurs an increased potential for loss of production, loss in revenue and an increase in the training of new employees occurs (Call et al., 2015). The landscape industry as a whole suffers from an average of 30% turnover a year with a majority of that turnover coming from middle and upper management (IBIS World, 2014). In the landscape industry this turnover leads to an increased loss of production and revenue. The specific problem was that some landscape industry upper managers do not understand why high turnover of landscape industry middle managers occurs and lack strategies to prevent turnover of middle managers in the landscape industry.

In this study, I looked this turnover and loss of motivation buy using a qualitative multiple case study to look at reasons for and what a manager might do to prevent loss of motivation and turnover of middle and upper managers within the landscape industry. Maslow's hierarchy of needs was used to explore the needs that the management within the landscape industry could use to motivate and reduce turnover (McLeod, 2007). Herzberg two factor theory was used to look at the factors that assisted in increasing motivation and reducing the turnover within the landscape industry. Herzberg's two-factor theory is the theory where two factors, mostly one organizational and one psychological, that can affect the motivation and potential turnover within the industry (Gupta & Shaw, 2014; Herzberg, 1959)

Vroom's expectancy theory (1964) was used to explore why employees behave the way they do and to help motivate. If used properly it helped to motivate the employees and potentially increase productivity. Adams equity theory (1963) looks at the way people expect resources to be equally distributed among parties. In the landscape industry, managers can use this theory to explore what employees think is a valid return on the dedication and commitment from them.

Context emergent turnover theory or collective turnover came about because of the abundance of single turnover and the lack of research on collective turnover (Nyberg & Ployhart, 2013). Single turnover causes issues such as loss of production and revenue but when the turnover becomes collective those issues are multiplied (Nyberg & Ployhart, 2013). The managers in the landscape industry can use research like this to be prepared to look for signs of collective turnover. This would reduce costs, maintain production, and help the business thrive. Behavioral theory, with its grid understanding of leadership styles, would be beneficial as the landscape industry can use it to assess the current management (Blake & Mouton, 1964).

Contingency theory is a theory where managers style is attributed to the past life experience and are hard to change (Fiedler, 1969). The appropriate management style needs to be put in the correct situation (Fiedler, 1969). The landscape industry could use this theory to help place management in the correct places based on the life experiences of the managers. Situational leadership has a rating system in which managers are ranked on a scale of 1 to 4 based on the management style (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). Managers within the landscape industry need to be ranked so they can be placed in appropriate positions or receive the help they need to correct any potential shortcomings.

Possible social changes if motivation is increased and the turnover is decreased within the landscape industry exist. Some of the changes that can occur for the managers within the landscape industry would be the reduction of turnover, which may lead to less unemployment, the increase of financial stability of the employees and increased overall quality of life of the managers within the landscape industry. For the landscape industry as a whole, the social change can be increased viability of the industry. Increased viability is due to a potential increase in profits because of the decrease in costs associated with turnover. Costs such as the increased expenses to train new employees and the loss of production as new employees get adjusted.

In Chapter 2, I address the causes of loss of motivation, workplace stress, and turnover. This was achieved through peer reviewed research on these topics in different industries from around the world. I explore these theories in Chapter 2. They were Herzberg's two-factor theory, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Vroom's expectancy theory, Adams equity theory, situational theory, contingency theory, behavioral theory, and context emergent turnover theory. Theories were explored by looking at previous peer-reviewed research in different industries as they relate too turnover and loss of motivation.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The specific problem that I addressed in this study is that some landscape industry upper managers do not understand why high turnover of landscape industry middle managers occurs and lack strategies to prevent turnover of middle managers in the landscape industry. My purpose in this qualitative multiple case study was to understand why the high turnover of the landscape industry middle managers occurs and to explore possible strategies to prevent high turnover of middle managers in landscape industry.

The population for this study consisted of three cases of landscape companies in the United States who have experienced high turnover in middle management. Each case consisted of a sample of five middle management employees. The implications for social change could include the increased viability of the landscape companies due to a decrease in turnover. Social change could come about in the decreased unemployment and increased quality of life for the employees.

Literature Search Strategy

My purpose in this qualitative, multiple case study was to look at why so much turnover exists in the landscape industry. The literature review adds an analysis of the peer reviewed research that is in line with the problem. The peer-reviewed articles add justification for the setup of study and the theory. An exhaustive review of trade journals, reports, scholarly books, and any peer reviewed journal articles was performed.

The following key search words consisted of the literature search*: loss, turnover, increased turnover, decrease turnover, termination, quit, motivation, loss of motivation, increase motivation, lack of motivation, green industry, landscape industry, middle* *management, management turnover, management loss, leadership, good leadership, poor leadership, leadership and turnover, leadership and motivation, power and authority, power, authority, power misuse, authority misuse, stress, stress and turnover, good manager, poor manager, power and turnover, authority and turnover, Maslow, hierarchy of needs, Vroom's expectancy theory, Adams equity theory, Context Emergent Turnover Theory, contingency theory, behavior theory, situational theory,* and *Herzberg two factor theory.* All articles are peer reviewed and 84% of the 113 articles in this research were published between 2013 and 2017. The following search engines used in the search for the literature were: Sage Journals, Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, ProQuest, and ABI/INFORM Complete.

In the literature review, I explore information on the theoretical foundation, which includes Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Herzberg two-factor theory, Vroom's expectancy theory, Adams equity theory, and Context emergent turnover theory. The next area to be explored is management leadership, turnover, the relationship between poor leadership and turnover, problems that result from increased turnover, and impact on the organization from turnover.

Theoretical Foundation

The general problem that I addressed in this study is turnover occurs among middle managers at a higher rate than other levels of management within the landscape industry (IBIS World, 2014). The specific problem that I addressed in this study is that some landscape industry upper managers do not understand why high turnover of landscape industry middle managers occurs and lack strategies to prevent turnover of middle managers in the landscape industry. The general and specific problems can be explored through the theoretical lens of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Herzberg's two-factor theory, Vroom's expectancy theory, Adams equity theory, situational theory, behavior theory, contingency theory, and context emergent turnover theory.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's hierarchy of needs can be used by managers as a way to develop a framework for things such as benefits packages and other motivational tools (Sadri & Bowen, 2011). When managers fulfill the needs of the employees the results can be, increase motivation, productivity and the overall increased revenue of the company. (Sadri & Bowen, 2011). Individual motives for commitment to work can be dependent on the fulfillment of the hierarchy of needs (Sindhu & Sindhu, 2014).

Employees try to meet all the needs at the same time and look for a position that has the potential for the meeting these needs (Sindhu & Sindhu, 2014). When employees find that a lack of needs being met exists, they become less satisfied with the position (Sindhu & Sindhu, 2014). Decreased satisfaction can lead to increased turnover (Sindhu & Sindhu, 2014).

Herzberg Two-Factor Theory

Research, using Herzberg two-factor theory, found nurses claimed job satisfaction and information were the highest ranked factors in happiness at the workplace (Holmberg, Sobis, & Carlström, 2016). Salary was only useful in creating job satisfaction but it did not decrease dissatisfaction (Holmberg et al., 2016). In another study, Jordanian nurses were asked about motivation.

The findings were that training and responsibility were factors that best increased motivation (Dobre, Davidescu, & Issa Eid, 2017). What was interesting about the study is, that like the previous study, money was a demotivating part and only worked as a reward but not to increase motivation (Dobre et al., 2017). It was interesting to note that in the study the administrative staff and management were motivated the most on recognition and the support staff was motivated by knowledge and training but neither listed money as the main driving factor (Dobre et al., 2017).

Vrooms Expectancy Theory

A Jordanian study found that significant relationships among increased motivation, increased job performance and the employees expecting a reward for that performance (Nimri et al., 2015). Public sector employees worked harder when they expected a reward (Nimri et al., 2015). What was interesting was a positive correlation between motivation and intrinsic rewards compared to a negative correlation between motivation and extrinsic rewards existed (Nimri et al., 2015). This shows that employees are more motivated by rewards that are personal to them rather than rewards such as pay (Nimri et al., 2015).

In the banking industry in Brazil, a study was performed to see what motivated employees to engage in volunteer activities (De Mesquita Ferreira & de Aquino Almeida, 2015). The research found that individual reward and social inclusion were the two main drivers of motivation (De Mesquita Ferreira & de Aquino Almeida, 2015). The more the employees felt included in activities, the more motivated they became to engage in volunteer activities (De Mesquita Ferreira & de Aquino Almeida, 2015). The reasons for a decrease in motivation were a perceived decrease in personal time and the feeling of being overworked (De Mesquita Ferreira & de Aquino Almeida, 2015).

Adams Equity Theory

Research in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) looked at why the demand for ex-patriots to relocate and start a new career (Ryan, 2015). The public sector positions in the UAE offer rewards of shorter work hours, better pay, better job security, and better holidays (Ryan, 2015). A motivation to move to the UAE exists because the return on the investment of moving is equal (Ryan, 2015). Employment goes to UAE nationals more than ex-patriates, but the feeling of equal equity in the potential positions make the drive to move to the UAE higher (Ryan, 2015). Landscape managers can use the benefits of the UAE to try to draw a bigger group of employees to the landscape industry.

In Rome, perceptions were explored in relation to expected rewards for contributions, fairness of employee management relationships, what is a rewardable contribution and the best way to reduce inequity (Buzea, 2014). It was found that recognition and accolades were as positive as financial gain such as raises (Buzea, 2014). It was interesting that the Roman employees did not care to discuss or compare what they thought were rewardable contributions (Buzea, 2015). Romans thought that the relationship at work should be an equal work for equal rewards (Buzea, 2015). If they were not equal the Romans would work less but still expect the same rewards (Buzea, 2015).

Context Emergent Turnover Theory

Context emergent theory looks at the collective turnover of employees and the effects on an industry (Nyberg & Ployhart, 2013). This ties directly to the landscape industry and is one of the problems within the landscape industry with the turnover. Context emergent turnover theory or collective turnover came about because of the abundance of single turnover and the lack of research on collective turnover (Nyberg & Ployhart, 2013). Research found that when single turnover occurs the increased probability of collective turnover exists (Nyberg & Ployhart, 2013). Single turnover causes issues such as loss of production and revenue but when the turnover becomes collective those issues are multiplied (Nyberg & Ployhart, 2013).

Situational Theory

In situational theory no one management style that is best but it’s the situation that the manager is in that should determine the management style (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). Managers can gain a better understanding if they spend time with two or more levels down from them as situational leadership is best when a manager has all the information they can (Schmalz, 2016). Information is key in situational leadership and the more information that a leader can gather the better the manager and build stronger relationships (Schmalz, 2016). As the managers built stronger relationships with the employees within an organization, an increase in productivity and pride occurs (Schmalz, 2016).

Contingency Theory

Contingency theory is a leadership theory in which the leadership style is based on the life experiences of the manager and because of this the management style is hard to change (Fiedler, 1964). Grötsch et al. (2013) explored situations in which advanced supply chain risk management changed. It was concluded that both the leadership and the followers need to be more in sync (Grotsch et al., 2013). When the managers and employees were not in sync or on the same page, a disconnect and loss of production occurred (Grotsch et al., 2013). When loss or turnover in the advanced supply chain management occurred, it decreased loss and increased profits (Grotsch et al., 2013).

Behavioral Theory

Blake and Mouton (1964) developed a theory based on a grid for showing different management styles. The grid contains an X axis of concern for production and an Y axis that is a concern for people (Blake & Mouton, 1964). Accommodating mangers have high concern for people, but low concern for production (Blake & Mouton, 1964).

Dictatorial managers have high concern for production and low concern for people (Blake & Mouton, 1964). The status quo manager falls right in the middle of concern for people and concern for production (Blake & Mouton, 1964). Sound managers place high value on both people and production (Blake & Mouton, 1964). Opportunistic managers are those that adapt to all places on the grid in order to best suit the manager's needs (Blake & Mouton, 1964). Managers need to be put in situations where the appropriate management style worked.

Leadership and Turnover

Turnover

Turnover is a problem in many different industries, and it can have very adverse effects on the industry. Employee turnover has been a problem for decades. The problems that are associated with turnover have worsened over the past decade (Call et al., 2015). The work ethic and mindset of the generation Y and millennials are leading to more turnover than the past generations (Call et al., 2015).

New situations exist where employees expect more from the managers (Bos-Nehles, Van Riemsdijk, & Kees Looise, 2013). Managers that are perceived as good and competent by the employees can decrease the intent to quit while managers that are perceived as negative or poor leaders increase the intent to quit (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013). A trusting relationship within the workplace between the management and employees needs to exist. If no trusting relationship is existent then an increase of the intent to quit increases (Rathi & Given, 2017).

Negative effects of turnover within the organization need to be managed. One of the problems associated with turnover is the potential loss of revenue (de Mesquita Ferreira & de Aquino Almeida, 2015). Loss of revenue is possible because as people quit, a slowdown in production occurs (de Mesquita Ferreira & de Aquino Almeida, 2015). Less production equals less produced and less sold (de Mesquita Ferreira & de Aquino Almeida, 2015).

Loss of motivation exists when turnover occurs. When an employee is terminated or quits a reduction of motivation exists among the associates of that employee (Pfeffer, 2013). The loss of motivation occurs because the existing employees are forced to fill in and perform the duties of the employee that is no longer employed (Pfeffer, 2013) This causes demotivation as the existing employees have work harder for no reward (Kostovetsky & Warner, 2015).

When management turns over a different reason for loss of motivation occurs. Research has shown that when management is replaced, the new managers tend to come into an organization and replace the teams under them (Garazi et al., 2015). Employees within an organization know that this happens. When management is replaced a decrease in motivation occurs as employees become concerned with the potential of being replaced (Garazi et al., 2015). This is a relevant topic as loss of revenue can reduce the market share of an organization. It can make stakeholders upset with the management (Ali & Kakakhel, 2013). Stakeholders upset with management can increase the turnover, as the management responsible for the loss of revenue are found without gainful employment (Ali & Kakakhel, 2013).

Loss of motivation among the employees can cause a slowdown in work and other losses. Employees that are unmotivated and unhappy within the position only work hard enough not to get terminated (Mikluic, 2013). That type of mentality and drive can influence others. The influence of others can decrease motivation and increase the turnover within an organization (Kostovetsky & Warner, 2015).

Poor Leadership and Turnover

When poor leadership is within an organization many problems that can arise. Poor leadership can create an atmosphere of poor motivation (Wiltermoth & Flynn, 2013). Poor motivation leads to turnover (Wiltermoth & Flynn, 2013). Poor motivation from poor leadership causes loss of production and loss of revenue (Wiltermoth & Flynn, 2013). Poor leaders make poor decisions, which can alienate customers and lead to customer loss (Wiltermoth & Flynn, 2013). When increased loss of customer base occurs the manager have the increased potential of being let go (Wiltermoth & Flynn, 2013).

Different reasons occur for poor leadership within an organization. The obvious one is that a manager just might not be trained. An example would be someone who got promoted early and were not ready for the new position they received (Wiltermoth & Flynn, 2013). When a new manager is not prepared for the new role, poor decisions can be made. If a poor relationship exists between a manager and an employee the employee has an increased likelihood of quitting (Wiltermoth & Flynn, 2013). Another effect of new management is if a new manager feels threatened by the current employees it can lead to the termination of the existing employees (Wiltermoth & Flynn, 2013).

Poor leadership can lead to poor performance within the organization. A damaging effect of poor leadership is the increased potential for poor financial performance and profit loss (Wiltermoth & Flynn, 2013). When leadership is poor it leads to increase turnover of employees as they are dissatisfied with the position and the leadership within the organization (Tost et al., 2013). Turnover of the employees leads to an increase in financial loss as an increase in spending occurs in the training of the new employees (Wiltermoth & Flynn, 2013).

Revenue loss occurs when turnover occurs. When new employees are in training a loss of production occurs (Tost et al., 2013). If employees are dissatisfied but do not want to leave the position, those employees tend to work just hard enough to not get fired but still underperform (Tost et. al., 2013). This increases the chances of poor financial performance of an organization.

Problems That Result From Increased Turnover

Turnover is a problem that plagues most industries and organizations. Turnover can cause a loss in motivation as well as a loss of production and revenue (Garazi et al., 2015, Mikluic et al., 2013). A study in the automotive industry showed that the turnover of upper management eventually led to the turnover of middle management (Pfeffer, 2013). The turnover of managers in the automotive industry led to a decrease in production and a reduction in revenue (Pfeffer, 2013).

Another problem with turnover, besides the loss of production and revenue, is that turnover adds costs (Call et al., 2015). The increase in costs come at the expense of the increased human resources in training and developing of the new employees (Call et al., 2015). When costs increase because of turnover, blame gets added to the existing managers that cannot manage the situation. This added blame can lead to eventual turnover of those managers, which in turn starts the cycle over again (Qazi et al., 2015).

When turnover and change exists in the management positions, the potential to negatively affect the rest of the organization exists. Loss of motivation and the increased intent to quit can occur, especially if they do not like the replacement management (Soebbing et al., 2015). In a securities and exchange company research showed that when the management turned over it caused a ripple effect that went all though the workplace (Kostovetsky & Warner, 2015).

Turnover can increase for many different reasons. A reason for turnover is when the employees perceive that management is using the position or decisions for political or career advancement (Abbas et al., 2014). If that perception occurs the employees' intent to quit increases as the employees look elsewhere for employment (Abbas et al., 2014). Another factor that can contribute to increased intent to leave a position is the relationship that an employee has with his or her manager (Garazi et al., 2015). Positive relationships between managers and the employees produce less turnover, but negative manager and employee relationships lead to increased turnover (Garazi et al., 2015).

Organizational Impact of Turnover

Problems associated with turnover, that can be detrimental to an organization, are a loss in motivation in the existing employees and a loss of production. Both motivation and production can be affected because of the improper number of employees to get the work complete (Garazi et al., 2015). Research has been performed in different industries and different reasons for the loss of motivation, loss of production and loss of revenue were found (Tost, 2013; Pfeffer, 2013; Frick, 2016; Mikluic, 2013; Wiltermoth & Flynn, 2013; & Owler, 2012). Research by Tost (2013), Pfeffer (2013), Frick (2016) and Wiltermoth and Flynn (2013) explored different management relationships, perceptions of employees, what effects both negative and positive relationships, and what affect those attributes have on an organization.

In the oil industry, a direct correlation between the profits turnover of the employees exists (Harhara et al., 2015). As more people in the industry turned over the more the profits were diminished compared to times when turnover was low and very high profitability (Harhara et al., 2015). In a retail chain as turnover increased the profitability of the branch was directly correlated to the turnover (de Mesquita Ferreira & de Aquino Almeida, 2015). Like in the oil industry as turnover increased the profits decreased (de Mesquita Ferreira & de Aquino Almeida, 2015).

Other articles that looked at issues with turnover and loss of motivation are by Kun-Chih, Qiang, Ying Chou, Yu-Chen and Xing (2016) and Keller (2014). They both looked at the negative effects of turnover and what those negative effects had on the company and the employees within the organization. Both articles found that as the turnover increased the revenue, employee motivation, and employee performance declined (Chen, 2009; Keller, 2014).

A company with poor employee and fiscal performance, poor management, and high turnover can have a poor public image (Tortosa-Edo, López-Navarro, Llorens-Monzonís, & Rodríguez-Artola,2014). This can affect the entire community if the company or organization is the stale of that community (Tortosa-Edo et al., 2014). In small locations and larger locations, negative attitudes of employees can affect the image of the organization within the community (Tortosa-Edo et al., 2014). Poor management, seen as bullies, can negatively affect the public perception of an organization (Tortosa-Edo et al., 2014).

Negative information spreads faster than positive (Parker, 2014). As demotivated employees discuss work at home and in the community it spreads the poor reputation for a company (Parker, 2014). For example, a website, Glassdoor.com gives employees an anonymous place to state whatever they like and dislike about the work environment and the position.

Potential Causes of Turnover

Many reasons for turnover exist. Stress and lack of motivation are two of the more common ones. Pressure and stress in the workplace can be both a negative and positive (Dubey, Roubaud, Gunasekaran, Childe, Papadopoulos, Hazen, & Giannakis, 2017). Negative stress can cause a reduction in work and positive pressure can show an increase in production (Dubey et al., 2017). A fine line exists that a manager needs to balance to get the most out of employees without de-motivating them (Burnett & Pettijohn, 2015). Stress can cause similar problems to turnover, such as loss of production, lack of engagement and lack of satisfaction in work (Burnett & Pettijohn, 2015).

Motivation is something that can increase or decrease in turnover. Proper motivation can increase loyalty and engagement from the employees and decrease the intent to quit (Core, 2014). Poor motivation leads to increased intent to quit from the employees (Core, 2014). When a manager can motivate employees a decrease in turnover exists (Wilcox, Stephen, Laran, & Zubcsek, 2016). Managers that cannot motivate see an increase in unhappy employees and the intent to quit (Wilcox et al., 2016). Managers need to manage both stress and motivation to decrease the turnover within an organization.

Stress

Stress is a different reason for turnover. Stress is common in many positions and different industries. When long hours are expected and the demand to perform is constant stress can increase (Burnett & Pettijohn, 2015). Stress can lead to the eventual need to leave a position for less stress position elsewhere (Burnett & Pettijohn, 2015). Stress can cause similar problems turnover can cause such as loss of production, lack of engagement and lack of work satisfaction (Burnett & Pettijohn, 2015). These problems can all lead to turnover when employees look to reduce stress and its issues by going to a different organization (Burnett & Pettijohn, 2015).

Stress within in an organization disrupts the employees (Florea & Florea, 2016). When employees within an organization feel off or something is not right, Motivation, productivity and revenue decrease (Alit & Kakakhel, 2013). Loss of motivation and productivity increases in the intent to quit among the employees because they become unhappy in the current roles (Alit & Kakakhel, 2013).

Stress can be inadvertently added by the management. Managers tend to push employees to work harder and be more productive, but this same push can lead to demotivation and increased stress (Dubey et al., 2017). In a hospital stress can be so bad that motivation decreases and the intent to quit increases (Saleem et al., 2015). That same research found that even the perception of stress in others caused a reduction on motivation and increase of stress in the nurses (Saleem et al., 2015). Stress is not just induced in a stressful environment but the thought of stress caused stress (Saleem, et al., 2015).

A case study with six teams of middle managers from two different firms made up the sample group in a study on stress (Bryson, Barth, & Dale-Olsen, 2013). Stress can lead to change within an organization (Bryson, Barth, & Dale-Olsen, 2013). When the change occurs more stress is created in the work environment, creating a cycle of change and stress (Bryson, Barth, & Dale-Olsen, 2013). When added to an already stressful environment an increase of turnover and resistance to any other future change within the organization builds (Bryson, Barth, & Dale-Olsen, 2013)

Loss of Motivation

Motivation is greatly affected by turnover and proper motivation is needed to keep employees engaged (Wilcox et al., 2016). The lack of a good motivational plan can lead to a loss of production and an increased intent to quit (Wilcox et al., 2016). Proper motivation can increase loyalty and engagement while decreasing the intent to quit (Core, 2014). Managers need to use the proper management theories to properly motivate employees (Vele et al., 2014). Some management theories are better than others in increase motivation while decreasing turnover (Vele et al., 2014).

Research performed in different industries looked at different management issues causing turnover. In the banking industry, the findings were the majority of the turnover within the industry was caused by management misusing and abusing the position in which they have (Wiltermoth & Flynn, 2013). In the automotive industry, management turnover was explored. It was found that in most cases when a new manager came into an organization they replaced the other team members with new employees (Pfeffer, 2013).

The negative perception of management can increase the lack of motivation and increase in the intent to quit by the employees. Negative attributes such as favoritism, abuse of power, and social inequalities can cause an increase in turnover and loss of motivation within an organization (Rosenblatt, 2012). This is true in the abuse of employees. This is a leading reason for employees to leave a position and look for work somewhere where abuse won't occur (Geppert & Dörrenbächer, 2014). This often occurs with foreign employees within organizations and that management feels that they can abuse them and exploit the cultures of the nation in which they come from (Geppert & Dörrenbächer, 2014).

Abuse of subordinates is a leading reason for loss of motivation and employee turnover (Tost et al., 2013). When employees feel loss of motivation and abuse they increase the likelihood of leaving the position to look for a new one (Tost et al., 2013). Managers that are seen as bullies are a very negative aspect of an organization and can affect other areas of the organization (Parker, 2014).

This occurs as within an organization people communicate and negative managers are something that is brought up (Parker, 2014). Sometimes the management for whatever reason has an affluent attitude and they feel that they are above the employees within the organization (Lockett et al., 2013). Poor manager attitude causes a discourse between the employees and the management, increases the intent to quit (Lockett et al., 2013).

When turnover occurs change follows. When employees are faced with change it can cause more problems within an organization (Bryson et al., 2013). Change increases stress, decreases motivation, and increases turnover (Bryson et al., 2013). Reducing unnecessary change is beneficial for an organization (Bryson et al., 2013). When the change that follows a turnover is not managed well, turnover and un motivated employees increased (Guha & Chakrabarti, 2016).) If management does not reduce the stress of a change, turnover and un motivated employees increased (Bordia et al., 2013).

Another reason for loss of motivation is turnover of management. When managers turn over an increase of intent to quit and loss of motivation within the organization occurs (Guha & Chakrabarti, 2016). Turnover of the manager made the employees so unhappy and distraught that they lost all motivating to keep up production as well as thought about leaving themselves (Guha & Chakrabarti, 2016). In the Philippians, research looked at the effects of the turnover of management on the motivation and intent to quit within the employees (Bordia et al., 2013). It was found that the loss of motivation and turnover occurred because the change in management caused disparage and confusion among the employees (Bordia et al.,2013).

In other research the turnover and loss of motivation from loss of management was due to the attachment of current employees to the past manager (Soebbing, Wicker, &Weimar, 2015). Negative feelings can arise when a liked manager is terminated or quits (Soebbing et al., 2015). The result of the negative feelings can lead to employees wanting to leave the organization (Soebbing et al., 2015). The connection between the manager and the employees can be so strong that when the manager leaves employees can have sadness and depression (Soebbing et al., 2015).

Management and Leadership

Manager personalities have an effect on the motivation and the turnover within an organization. The personal skills of international managers need to be better than the average manager due to the knowledge of different customs and traits of employees in different countries (Millar, Chen, & Waller, 2015). The traits of leaders are more compared to a manager in a global business. When working on an international or global scale the management running the organization need to be seen as leaders and not just managers (Welsch, 2014). Managers can be seen as a position, while a leader is seen as the one that makes sure that the employees and organization are heading in the right direction (Welsch, 2014). Leaders are people that employees follow where managers are people that employee's listen too (Welsch, 2014).

Knowing that a difference exists between a manager and a leader, research has been performed to try to determine what makes a good leader. The research found that not all managers make good leaders and that fact was very evident in a global organization (VanderPal & Ko, 2014). As expected a good manager and leader is beneficial to an organization while a poor manager or leader can be detrimental to an organization (VanderPal & Ko, 2014). This conclusion was based on traits of managers and what traits can be seen as making good leaders (VanderPal & Ko, 2014).

Sometimes the experience of the manager can make a better leader. Research performed by Terrell and Rosenbuch (2013) looked at what experiences that managers had and if it made them better managers or leaders. Managers reported that experiences had both the negative and positive effects on the management style and skill as a leader (Terrell & Rosenbuch, 2013).

Different management theories exist throughout history that managers have used. Theory for management has been existent as far back as ancient Greece (Allio, 2013). Some are effective while others are not (Allio, 2013). Theories change or have to change and adapt throughout time to keep up with the demand of society (Allio, 2013). Sometimes the experiences of the managers and employees within an organization can change the used theory to a more effective theory for the current situation (Allio, 2013). New theory is created as the times change and the needs of the manager and organization change (Allio, 2013).

Power and Leadership

Power and leadership go together in most situations. The managers use of power or what type of power they use is more relevant than the actual power (Waddell, 2013). In human history leaders and followers have always existed (Waddell, 2013). These leaders and followers form groups where the leaders gain power and followers are submissive (Waddell, 2013). To be an effective leader the power is to be used to help and lead others not abuse and dominate (Waddell, 2013). Having power alone does not make a good leader (Waddell, 2013).

Different types of power exist that leaders can have over the employees or followers. They are reward, coercive, legitimate, expert and referent (French & Raven, 1959; Green, 1999). Leaders use these types of power to get the employees or followers to do what they want (French & Raven, 1959; Green, 1999). Power where the employee or follower completes a task because they are going to get a reward is called Reward power (French & Raven, 1959; Green, 1999). When the consequences for not completing a task are avoided by completing the task, it is called Coercive power (French & Raven, 1959; Green, 1999).

When an employee or follower completes a task because they are supposed to complete it, it is called legitimate power (French & Raven, 1959; Green, 1999). If an employee or follower completes a task because they feel the leader has knowledge in that area, it is called legitimate power (French & Raven, 1959; Green, 1999). Lastly, is referent power. This is when the employee or follower completes the task because they have grown admiration or respect for the leader (French & Raven, 1959; Green, 1999). This is the hardest of the powers to gain and the easiest to lose (French & Raven, 1959; Green, 1999).

Authority can be confused with power. The difference is authority is the perceived right to give orders to others and expect he obedience from them while power is given regardless of perception (Arendt, 1954; French & Raven, 1959; Green, 1999). The issue with authority is that every leader has authority but not everyone with authority should be a leader. The biggest difference between power and authority is that in authority employees and flowers do what is asked without persuasion or acts or repercussion where power has elements of persuasion and repercussion (Arendt, 1954).

The Nature of Power and Authority as Used by Leaders

When managers are in a position of power, authority was used (Cairns, 2017). Managers and leaders always had power and authority (Cairns, 2017). The important thing is how they used that power and authority (Cairns, 2017). Good strong managers and leaders know how to use power and authority for good (Bear, Cushenbery, London, & Sherman, 2017). Proper use of power and authority make an organization better and stronger while poor managers tend to use abuse power and authority, making the organization weaker (Bear et al., 2017).

Leaders use power to gain submissiveness and conformity from the employees (Bear et al., 2017).). Managers use different forms of power based on the situation and the employees that they are dealing with (Bear et al., 2017). Referent power is the one that all managers should strive to gain as with referent power the employees do what is asked because of respect (Green, 1999). When a manager or leader gains referent power within an organization that leader has the potential to build new managers and other leaders (Green, 1999). When leaders have referent power it increases the loyalty of the employees. Employees follow the leader because of respect and want to, not because they are fearful or feel like they have to (Tost et al., 2013). Referent power is earned by building trust and admiration from the employees (Tost et al., 2013; Green, 1999). Referent power is difficult to earn but is the easiest to lose (Tost et al., 2013; Green, 1999).

Managers who hold a position of power are generally given the power and authority of that position only (Pollack & Algeo, 2014). Managers only hold power and authority of the current position and no other power or authority (Pollack & Algeo, 2014). When employees are promoted they are then given the power and authority of the new position and at the same time lose the power and authority of the past position

(Pollack & Algeo, 2014). It becomes common place and the culture within an organization to have positions of authority (Pollack & Algeo, 2014).

People get promoted at different rates throughout a career and the power and authority they develop throughout a career is no different (Arendt, 1954; Green, 1999). Sometimes it can develop quickly and sometimes it can develop slowly. It is something that goes con current with advancement (Arendt, 1954; Green,1999). The most difficult power to gain is referent power as it is mainly built on trust (Arndt, 1954; Green 1999). Referent power it is not something that a promotion or new position can give a manager (Arendt, 1954; Green, 1999). Power and authority are not always a way of motivating (Diversity, 2016). Sometimes the location of the organization or the way the organization is run can be a positive driver for motivation is (Diversity, 2016).

The Development and Use of Power

Power develops many different ways at the workplace but the most common is it is built over time from building trust (Cairns, 2017). Power can develop from relationships with employees (Cuddy et al., 2013). The relationship that is formed can help determine what type of power is developed (Cuddy et al., 2013). As a manager or leader fulfills the wants and needs of the employees, the manager builds trust and power with the employees (Cuddy et al., 2013). Relationships can be formed as the manager performs tasks as the manager (Cuddy et al., 2013) Managers get to know the employees better and can use what was learned to build a better relationship and power to build an organization (Cuddy et al., 2013).

Power and Leadership Influence Contingent on Situational Contexts

Sometimes influences such as the situation can influence the type of leadership that the manager or leader uses as well as the type of power that is gained (Diversity, 2016). Other factors that can affect the way that leadership or management perform are race, gender, and culture (Diversity, 2016). Race and culture can affect the leadership but stereotypes can change the way that that the leaders and managers are perceived (Diversity, 2016). The employee perception can affect the way that the power can be lost or gained (Diversity, 2016). The employees themselves can affect the leadership and the management within the organization. Cases where employees of different race or culture have turned down or not willing to go up for promotion exist because of negative perceptions (Diversity, 2016)

Different cultures from around the world can affect leadership and the power relationships (Caulkin, 2016). In China and India where males outnumber the females in the workplace, the power and leadership are male dominated and this changes the managements actions (Caulkin, 2016). Using the example of China and India the power that is most often used is legitimate power (Caulkin, 2016). In China and India, the heavy male influence, the culture of people being taught from a young age to be yielding to people in power, and management style, can change the perception of management compared to other places such as the United States (Caulkin, 2016).

As discussed in the earlier paragraphs, power and authority go hand in hand with management positions. Managers need to be aware of what types of power they are using and need to make sure that the power and authority they use is correct and effective for the situation (Cuddy et al., 2013). The power and authority used at the wrong time or in the wrong situation can be detrimental to an organization (Cairns, 2017).

When managers use power and authority poorly it can produce a hostile work environment and decrease motivation in other managers and employees (Cuddy et al., 2013). Managers and leaders often confuse power and authority. Authority is people or employees following the manager because they are being obedient to the manager and forced to perform while power can have elements of force to get the employees to do what is asked (Arendt, 1954: Green, 1999).

Manager Abuse of Power and Turnover

When some managers misuse power and authority increased turnover and decrease in motivation are the result (Tost et al., 2013). When employees and followers are demotivated it can cause a slowdown in production as well the increased potential and intent to quit (Tost et al., 2013). Interoffice relationships can have a positive correlation between the employee's motivation and intent to quit (Tost et al., 2013). As the relationships are more positive the motivation increases and intent to quit decreases (Mikluic et al., 2013; Tost et al., 2013). If the relationships are poor, the motivation decreases and the intent to quit increases (Mikluic et al., 2013; Tost et al., 2013).

Within the banking industry research was conducted and employees were asked if the managers were using power wisely or abusing it (Wiltermoth & Flynn, 2013). As the perception of abuse increased so did the intent to quit and the motivation decreased (Wiltermoth & Flynn, 2013). In the auto industry new managers that have not abused the power were seen favorably (Pfeffer, 2013). The interesting result from the study was that the act of the brining on the new manager caused demotivation among the employees as they feared that they too might be replaced (Pfeffer, 2013).

Efficient good managers that use good motivational tools can increase the motivation within the employees and at the same time decrease the employee turnover (Frick, 2016). Within the fast food industry, it was found that a good manager that was attentive, did not abuse power or authority, and was approachable was a manager that was favored the best from employees (Frick, 2016).

Steps to Reduce Turnover

Ways exist to reduce turnover and make turnover less problematic in an organization. One way to help increase employee loyalty and engagement could be to incorporate a reward system. A system that would reward appropriately for the work that is performed and time at a position. In a study on motivation the results showed that a proper well planned reward system increased motivation, production and employee retention (Mikluic et al., 2013). Another good way to reduce turnover is to make a better work environment. Research showed that a good work environment where a manager connected with employees and built a relationship was an environment where employees were more loyal and engaged (Cuddy et al., 2013).

Turnover can be reduced by setting up proper teams within the organization. When human resources set proper teams, and the teams felt help and support from the human resources, a significant reduction in the turnover was the result (Hossam, 2014). Proper work environment with proper relationships and support can greatly increase the engagement and overall happiness within an organization (Tost et al., 2013).

When proper teams are made an increase in the positive relationships that are made occur (Wang, 2014). When a positive work environment exists in which the employees feel appreciated and they have true relationships with others, the turnover is greatly reduced (Wang, 2014). Proper teams can play a pivotal role in the strength and unity within an organization (Bush, 2014).

Manager's Role

Teaching new forms of management compared to the past works better in today's management environment (Trosten-Bloom et al., 2014). Positive managers run teams with positive reinforcement and leadership over dictatorship (Trosten-Bloom et al., 2014). In Taiwanese banks, a positive correlation between positive attitude and the increase in the production and loyalty among the employees within the banks (Liang-Chieh & Wen-Ching, 2015).

Managers are the lynch pin that motivates all departments into working together (van Elst & Meurs, 2015). When departments work together an increase in moral and decreases in turnover exist (van Elst & Meurs, 2015). This is especially true in any non-profit sector. In non-profit sector and volunteer situations, no monetary exchange exists so the role of the manager is a key in keeping employees happy (Rathi & Given, 2017).

Manager Perception

The perception of a manager is an aspect of the manager within an organization. Managers are generally seen as negative in the work force (Jones, Donaldson, Freeman, Harrison, Leana, Mahoney & Pearce, 2016). Steps need to be taken by the management team to make sure that the negative perception is changed to a positive one (Jones et al., 2016). In Saudi Arabia, proper relationships and perception of the management lead to great gain and growth within the contracting industry (Saud Alotaibi, 2014). Perception of a manager's ability to motivate is more relevant than the perception of the ability to manage (Saud Alotaibi, 2014).

When managers are perceived as a positive role model within an organization, an increase in productivity and teamwork occurs (Bos- Nelesh et al., 2013). An increase in loyalty and trust of the organization and reduction of poor perception reduces perceived negative attributes of managers (Bos- nehesh et al., 2013). Communication is a part of improving the organizational relationships and reducing the turnover (Besic & Stanisavljevic, 2014). Managers can spend up to 60% of the day communication and building relationships with employees (Besic & Stanisavljevic, 2014). When management is perceived to listen to employees, an increase in employee satisfaction, motivation and a decrease in turnover was found (Lloyd et al., 2015; Lloyd et al., 2017)

Managers that can communicate effectively and can solve conflict are perceived as better managers that can perform better (Kahn et al., 2015). Another way to reduce turnover and increase employee motivation is to increase the support that they receive from the management (Yu & Lee 2015). When employees feel that the management and human resources are more supportive of needs they are more content in the current position (Yu & Lee, 2015).

The perception of employees is as necessary as the manager's day to day duties. Managers that were perceive to be organized, able to deal with day to day tasks, and can increase proficiency, were manager that employees related to the best (Borgoni, Dello

Russo, & Latham, 2011). A manager that was perceived organized and efficient was a manager that increased motivation and decreased turnover (Borgoni et al., 2011).

Different organizations can have an effect on the type of manager and the interactions they have with employees (Rathi & Given, 2017). In a nonprofit organization the managers need to be more effective than that of a traditional organization (Rathi & Given, 2017). In a traditional organization the employees allowed more from a manager before they become demotivated or quit as they are getting a salary (Rathi & Given, 2017). In a nonprofit setting the employees are mostly volunteers so the employee has nothing to lose by just walking away if they do not like the manager (Rathi & Given, 2017).

Leadership Styles

Different leadership styles can be more effective at reducing turnover. Different leadership styles were looked at and transformational and transactional management did a good job of building relationships and increasing motivation (Barrick et al., 2014). These leadership styles work well as the managers have to be open to the suggestions and perform more as a leader then a dictator in the workplace (Barrick et al., 2014).

Leaders who practice transformational and transactional leadership tend to have a higher emotional intelligence (Băeşu & Bejinaru, 2015). When leaders are perceived as being able to connect emotionally with employees, the employees are more content in the position (Băeşu & Bejinaru, 2015). Transformational and transactional management has the ability to create teams and employees that have more individual identities and creativity (Henker, Sonnentag, & Unger, 2015).

In the hospitality industry in India, Hazra et al., (2015) found that motivation is the easiest way to keep employees happy and reduce turnover within an industry. The right traits in leadership can help increase motivation and overall employee happiness in the industry (Hazra et al., 2015). Personal traits are valuable as the right personal traits in leadership can increase overall satisfaction and loyalty within an organization (Lavanya & Kalliath, 2015). When employees are comfortable with leaders within an organization and build trusting relationships, a reduction in turnover and an increase in productivity occurs (Lavanya & Kalliath, 2015).

Management Influence

Positive management styles and theories exist that can help managers be successful, help with motivation, and overall workplace environment (Trosten-Bloom, Deines & Carsten, 2014). Management styles that have a manager interacting with employees, letting the employees make some decisions, and building trust are recommend styles (Trosten-Bloom et al., 2014).

Personality traits have an effect on the organization. Personal traits have both negative and positive effects depending on the situation in which the management finds themselves (Liang-Chieh & Wen-Ching, 2015). Managers with positive personal traits like happy, outgoing and personable are seen as positive managers and good leaders (Liang-Chieh & Wen-Ching, 2015). Managers perceived to have negative personal traits such as rude, standoffish, and quiet, can be seen as poor managers and leaders (Liang-Chieh & Wen-Ching, 2015).

Summary and Conclusions

Turnover can be detrimental to an organization regardless of industry. Turnover can be caused by many different factors. Poor management, stress, poor work environment and lack of motivation can cause turnover. Managers need to be prepared to manage for them. Managers have the most influence on the turnover as they can change the work environment either negative or positive (Trosten-Bloom et al., 2014). If managers are seen as positive, employees are happy and content (Wiltermoth & Flynn, 2013). If managers are perceived as poor, employees are often unhappy and start to look for new employment (Wiltermoth & Flynn, 2013). If employees are dissatisfied, but do not want to quit, those employees have the tendency to underperform and work just hard enough to not get fired (Tost et al., 2013).

Turnover can cause problems within an organization. Poor performance and production are two things that increase as turnover increases. Poor production and performance leads to a reduction in revenue and increase in stress among the management and employees. Turnover can lead to a loss of revenue and in increase of poor reputation of the company (Wiltermoth & Flynn, 2013).

Stress comes at the hands of the upper management wanting to increase performance and blaming the other managers for the shortcomings. When employees within an organization feel off or that something is not right it causes loss of motivation which in turn decreases productivity and can lead to a loss in revenue (Alit & Kakakhel, 2013). When this occurs it repeats the cycle of people wanting to leave and go elsewhere.

In the Landscape industry an increase in turnover and a decrease in motivation exists. Research needs to be performed to see if the themes within chapter 2 is affecting the landscape industry. Chapter 3 lays out the set up for research to answer; why does high turnover of landscape industry middle managers occur and what strategies might prevent high turnover of middle managers in the landscape industry?

Chapter 3: Research Method

My purpose in this qualitative multiple case study was to understand why high turnover of landscape industry middle managers occurs and explored possible strategies to prevent high turnover of middle managers in landscape industry. The sample for this study consisted of three cases. Each case was a landscape company in the United States that has experienced high turnover in middle management.

Each case consisted of a sample of five middle management employees and archival records, including publicly available company information. The implications for social change included increased viability of the landscape companies due to a decrease in turnover and reduction of stress among the middle managers. Social change could come about in the decreased unemployment and increased quality of life for the employees.

This chapter explains the method and design of this study. In this chapter, I explain the research design and rational, role of the researcher, methodology, and data analysis plan. I detailed issues of trustworthiness including credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and outline the ethical procedures as they relate to this project.

Research Design and Rationale

The central research question guiding this study is as follows. Why does high turnover of landscape industry middle managers occur and what strategies might prevent high turnover of middle managers in the landscape industry? I used a qualitative approach to this study. Qualitative was the most appropriate design, because qualitative studies allow for open-ended questions that can answer the “why” questions (Creswell, 2016; Leedy & Ormord, 2013). Questions that are qualitative should be open ended in nature giving the details and patterns to emerge (Creswell, 2016; Leedy & Ormord, 2013). My goal in this study was to find out why so much turnover in the landscape industry exists.

In this qualitative research study, I used an exploratory case study. A case study was appropriate because the research explored the decisions or reasoning for the phenomenon rather than the phenomenon itself (Yin, 2014). An exploratory case study was used because exploratory tries to explain a phenomenon in which no clear single set of outcomes that has been found before (Yin, 2014). Given a current gap in research, an exploratory case study was beneficial in filling that gap. Multiple case studies tend to strengthen the case by replicating the results across the cases (Yin, 2014). In this study using each company as a separate case should replicate the effects and strengthen the overall findings within the study.

Phenomenological design was not appropriate for this study as phenomenological studies explore at lived experiences and this study is not based on lived experiences. Ethnographic design was not appropriate as ethnographic looks at culture and turnover within the green industry is not a cultural issue (Hammersley, 2016). Narrative study is based on the life story of a person or group (Creswell, 2016). This study was based on the observations of groups not the stories of individuals. Grounded theory is a study based on a theory that is brand new and being developed by the researcher as the research develops

(Creswell, 2016). Theory exists that fits this study so grounded theory was not appropriate.

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher often serves as the data collection instrument using inductive analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yilmaz, 2013). In this study, I played the role of the researcher. I collected and analyzed all data in this multiple case study. I collected data through semi structured interviews and archival records to understand the turnover within the landscape industry. I achieved data triangulation by collecting data from these multiple sources (Yin, 2014).

A factor is to identify and potential relationships and affiliations with the topic or participants within a study (Yin, 2014). I used to have a career in the landscape industry and no longer have any affiliation within that industry and do not have a personal relationship with any potential participants. Bias was mitigated through bracketing during the research (Perry, 1998; Yin, 2014). I managed any potential researcher bias by remaining objective and neutral during the research. I adhered to the ethics outlined in the Belmont report including individual consent, confidentiality and safety, and that benefits of the research outweigh the risk. (US Dept of Health and Human Services, 1979).

Methodology

I used a qualitative method to explore turnover in the landscape industry. The qualitative method was more appropriate then a quantitative method because quantitative looks at the “why” whereas quantitative looks at “what” and in the study the “why” was explored (O'Donnell, 2014; Yin, 2014). If the research was the revenue lost because of turnover, quantitative method would be appropriate.

Participant Selection Logic

The population of this study is middle managers in the landscape industry. The middle managers were from companies that have at least 1 million in yearly revenue and at least 100 employees. Middle managers were defined as anyone who has at least three direct reports. The cases are defined by three companies, which are going to be the three largest in the industry. Each case included five participants, for a total of 15 participants. Data saturation was achieved by including multiple participants in each case (Tumele, 2015; Yin, 2014).

Participants were identified through established contacts within the landscape industry. Initial contact was via personal email, Facebook, or personal phone call to avoid any contact with the companies themselves and to add a layer of protection for the participants. Purposive sampling is used when a researcher needs participants meeting specific criteria (Yin, 2014). I used a purposive sampling strategy including the following criteria: One of the three companies, the participants have to work or have worked at one of the three companies, they have to be a middle manager as defined as have at least three people as direct reports and the participants must be familiar with the turnover within the company.

Instrumentation

Data were gathered from semi structured interviews and archival data. The interview protocol was researcher designed and included a specific set of questions

(Appendix A). I used member checking to ensure reliability and validity by providing written participant responses for participant review. At that point, participants had the opportunity to clarify or add any pertinent or additional information. This process continued until no new information is gained by the data collection, and data saturation is achieved.

I collected Archival data through company websites and the companies 10K document. These represented the best sources of data for this study as the 10k and websites show year over year changes within an organization. Using websites and 10K eliminated outside bias or input without having to directly speak to the companies, which could have jeopardized the relationships of the companies with the participants in the study.

To develop the interview protocol, I used previous developed ideas outlined in previous literature. Content validity established by using the same set of questions in the semi structured interviews for all of the participants. Each question in the semi structured interviews directly related in some way of fashion directly back to the research, which established a sufficiency of the data collection instrument.

Field Test

A field test consisting of experts in the field enhances the validity of the data collection instrument (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). The field test consists of experts in the field to review the questions for validity before they are used for data collection (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). I defined experts as holding a doctoral degree in the appropriate field, or 10 years' experience in the related field. The experts reviewed the questions for clarity in the questions and that the responses answered the research question: Why does high turnover of landscape industry middle managers occur and what strategies might prevent high turnover of middle managers in the landscape industry?

Reviewers were experts in the fields of management, landscape industry, or qualitative research. I gave all experts the protocol in Appendix B. The three types of experts were used to make sure that all interview questions are reviewed as well as opinions of the experts were used to strengthen the study.

Experts in management validated if the interview questions answer the research question: What strategies might prevent high turnover of middle managers in the landscape industry? Landscape industry experts validated if the interview questions answered why high turnover of middle managers occurs in the landscape industry. The qualitative experts validated if the interview questions are appropriate for obtaining the needed information to answer the research question.

Results of Field Test

Four experts were used in the field test. The experts were noted as expert A-D. Expert A is a manager in the landscape industry. Expert B is a manager in the pest control industry. Expert C and D are both experts in qualitative research methods. All experts thought that the interview questions answered the research question but they had some suggestions.

Expert A stated that one of the issues or reasons people might stay in a position in the landscape industry, despite being unhappy, is a non-compete agreement. It is standard for most large companies to make employees sign a non-compete which restricts them from working in the same industry doing similar work anywhere from 6 months to a year after quitting or being terminated. It was suggested that I try to find out if the participants had or have a non-compete and what part that plays in them leaving or staying in a position. Experts B-D all thought that the questions about motivation need to be deleted or changed as the questions do not answer or add to the research.

Expert B suggested that the questions all ended with “in the landscape industry” as some of the questions did not state that. Experts C and D gave the most feedback. Both experts suggested that question #1 should have “factors of turnover” within the question. Question 3 should be two questions not one with parts A and B in it. Question 5 should be about the factors that could decrease turnover. All of the suggestions can be seen in the new interview protocol in Appendix A.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Data were collected through semi structured interviews using a data collection protocol and archival records including company’s websites and 10k. The semi structured interviews were conducted where the participant feels comfortable enough to have the interview. The interviews were either face to face or via the phone or technology such as Skype. The data collection did not occur at or during hours of work to keep the places of employment out of the influence of the data collected. The data were collected by the researcher. The data were collected on a timeframe and frequency that is conducive to the participants in the study. Each data collection event had no time limit and run for the time needed to collect all data.

The data were hand recorded using a pen and paper. An electronic recording device was used to record the interview. Due to the sensitivity, the nature of the questions, and fear of potential repercussions, the participant can opt out of having the interview recorded. If the participant does not agree to be recorded no recording took place and only hand written notes were taken. Follow-up interviews occurred on a needed basis to clarify information or if additional information arises. When the semi structured interviews were completed the participants were given the notes that were taken throughout the interview.

The participants were able to look over the answers and change or add whatever is felt necessary. Once, and only, when the participants are happy with the answer the notes were added to the study. The participants have my personal email and were able to contact me if any further questions or data arise. If saturation was not met, further interviews were conducted until the information that was needed for the study was obtained.

Archival data were collected via the internet and my computer. The archival data were collected by accessing the securities and exchange (SEC) website as well as the company's websites. The researcher was the one collecting all of the archival data. This archival data was collected once now and then again before submittal to make sure that the numbers have not changed, and the most recent data were used in the study.

The data were written down and copied from the online sources and then added to the research via a chart or graph. No debriefing or follow up information was needed as the data were collected from a non-living source. If limited archival data existed, other sources were explored until the data that is needed is obtained for the study.

Data Analysis Plan

The data analysis plan helped answer the specific research question, why does high turnover of landscape industry middle managers occur and what strategies might prevent high turnover of middle managers in the landscape industry? A data analysis strategy is needed in multi-case research to organize and analyze data in a consistent way (Tumele, 2015: Yin, 2014). I began the data analysis process by coding and labeling the interview data in each case. I used MS Excel for this task. Interview data were moved to NVivo software for qualitative analysis. Common themes of the coded data were expressed within NVivio as well as reoccurring themes and statements. Those themes were compared to the research and themes in the found literature (Borrego, Foster & Froyd, 2014; Demassis & Kotlar, 2014).

Any discrepant cases were treated accordingly to what the discrepancy is and on a case by case basis. A similar process was completed with the archival data. The archival data were used to answer the research question, why does high turnover of landscape industry middle managers occur and what strategies might prevent high turnover of middle managers in the landscape industry?

Any data, like the company name or anything that could be used to figure out what companies are being used was coded to protect the participants in the study from any potential retribution. Pertinent data on each company was copied into MS excel then moved to NVivo to look for any similarities and differences on pertinent information among the companies. Discrepant cases were looked at on a case by case basis based on the severity or type of discrepancy that is existent. Fusch and Ness (2015) discussed the use of methodological triangulation to achieve data saturation. In this study I used methodical triangulation of semi structured interviews and archival data to achieve data saturation in this multiple case study.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Internal validity in qualitative research is addressed by defining strategies to define credibility (Yin, 2014). Researchers credibility can be achieved through proper documentation and coding of the data (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Data triangulation was used to achieve data saturation and credibility. I used member checks after the data were transcribed to achieve and or enhance credibility.

Transferability

I achieved external validity through strategies to achieve transferability. Transferability allows a reader to apply research results to other settings (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Transferability was achieved by following a detailed interview protocol and specifying study limitations. The sample data collection and coding was detailed to enhance transferability. The use of multiple cases and the variation of participant selection and thick descriptions helped enhance transferability. The actual transferability of findings was left to the reader (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Dependability

Reliability was achieved in qualitative research through strategies to establish dependability. Following an interview protocol helped with the dependability of the study as well as using set coding and data organization techniques (Tumele, 2015; Yin 2014). I created an interview protocol and used the same coding and data collection process with each participant to ensure dependability. An audit trail, bracketing, and number checking enhance the dependability of the qualitative study (Goldblatt, Karnieli-Miller & Neumann, 2011; Kikooma, 2010). In this study I created an audit trail through detailed record keeping throughput the data collection process.

Confirmability

I achieved objectivity by adhering to the following strategies to establish confirmability. I used bracketing by setting aside my own feelings, prior background, and experiences aside during the study. Member checking and reflectivity were used to enhance confirmability (Goldblatt et al., 2011). I used member checking to ensure that participants statements were reviewed by the participants.

Member checking in this study the participants reviewed all of the information that was given during the interview (Goldblatt et al., 2011). The reviewing of the responses gave the participants an opportunity to make sure the answers that were provided were truthful and complete (Goldblatt et al., 2011). The reviewing of the responses given during the interview gave the participants an opportunity to add anything that might have been originally excluded in the answer (Goldblatt et al., 2011).

Ethical Procedures

I began collecting data after receiving approval from Walden University's institutional review board (IRB). Written consent forms and confidentiality statements are important so that participants understood that the study participation is voluntary and that they were free to withdrawal from the study at any time (Yin, 2014). I provided participants with a written consent form and confidentiality statement (Appendix B). I discussed the process of withdrawing from the study so participants fully understood that the participation was completely voluntary and that they could have revoked it at any time.

I used word of mouth recruitment with no actual contact with the companies themselves. Only personal communication was used to separate and reduce the chance of potential retribution from the companies. Participants were free to participate in the study or decline involvement in the study without reward or retribution. Those terms were addressed in the participant consent form.

I kept data confidential through the use of alpha numeric case numbers for each company as well as participant alpha numeric codes. No company names, individual names, company identifiers, or personal identifiers were used in this study to insure company and individual confidentiality. Raw data were saved using only established alpha numeric codes and stored in an online file in a locked computer at my residence.

After 5 years I will delete all files to ensure confidentiality. Any paper files are locked in a safe at my residence and will be destroyed after 5 years in order to maintain confidentiality. These steps were taken to minimize potential participant risk and ensure participant confidentiality. Participants will be offered a copy of the findings at study completion.

Summary

This qualitative multiple case study is set up to answer the question, why does high turnover of landscape industry middle managers occur and what strategies might prevent high turnover of middle managers in the landscape industry? Three cases with 5 semi structured interviews of middle managers from each case was used. A middle manager was defined as a manager that has at least 3 people underneath them. Each case represented one of the companies that were looked at in the landscape industry. The companies were companies that earn at least 1 million a year in revenue and have at least 100 employees. Archival data in the form of company 10K was used to enhance saturation of data.

Data were recorded and kept organized. Protocols exist for data collection and semi structured interviews, which enhanced the credibility, transferability and dependability. To enhance confirmability bracketing and member checking was used. Walden University's institutions review board approval was obtained and policies used during the research to keep the entire data collection process ethical. All participants were not rewarded or punished for participation or declining involvement.

All participants had access to all notes at the end of the semi structured interviews. All companies and participants were assigned alpha numeric codes for anonymity. All data are kept in a locked location and will be destroyed 5 years after the research has concluded. Lastly all participants were offered copies of the final project when it is available. In chapter 4 the results of the project are outlined and discussed.

Chapter 4: Results

The general problem that I addressed in this study was that turnover occurs among middle managers at a higher rate than other levels of management within the landscape industry (IBIS World, 2014). The specific problem that I addressed in this study was that some landscape industry upper managers do not understand why high turnover of landscape industry middle managers occurs and lack strategies to prevent turnover of middle managers in the landscape industry.

My purpose in this qualitative multiple case study was to understand why high turnover of landscape industry middle managers occurred and explored possible strategies to prevent high turnover of middle managers in the landscape industry. The problem and the purpose of this study were answered by the following research question: Why does high turnover of landscape industry middle managers occur and what strategies might prevent high turnover of middle managers in the landscape industry?

This research was necessary because turnover of employees has the potential to cause loss of production as well as loss in revenue, leading to increased costs associated with the orientation and training of new employees that have to fill that gap (Call et al., 2015). Every industry is affected by turnover and loss of motivation, and the more severe the amount of turnover and loss of motivation, the more severe the effects.

Research Setting

The data collection was done at the choosing of the participant in the study. This was because of the potential sensitivity of the information and the fear of retribution from the employers. All data were collected during personal time at the participant's place of residence or a public place. Never was any data collected during work hours or at the places of employment.

Fourteen of the 15 interviews were conducted over personal phone lines. One of the 15 interviews occurred over Skype. Most requested the questions be emailed to them ahead of time for review. All interviewees had the option to opt out of being recorded if they felt uncomfortable with being recorded. Every participant chose not to be recorded as they were worried and feared that somehow the answers in verbal form would, or could, be found by the employers. A fear existed that in having a recording, an employer could figure out the person in the recording and that could lead to retribution. This in itself was a significant finding, in that fear of retribution heavily impacted participants' involvement in this study.

Demographics

The participants in this study were all either currently in a middle management position or have previously been in the middle management position within the landscape industry. *Middle management* in this study is defined as anyone who has at least three direct reports. All of the participants worked for a company within the landscape industry that made at least 1 million a year in revenue and had more than 100 employees. Three national companies were chosen, and participants came from different states along the east coast of America. Fifteen participants were used in this study.

Data saturation was achieved by including multiple participants in each case (Tumele, 2015; Yin, 2014). All of the participants in this study were male. The ethnicity ranged from Caucasian, Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander. My purposeful sampling did not include race or gender as a factor. Future research could explore the same topic but based on gender or race.

Data Collection

This research consisted of semi-structured interviews and archival data. The semi-structured interviews consisted of seven questions that the current or previous middle managers within the chosen companies, with defining characteristics of at least 1 million in yearly revenue and at least 100 employees. I interviewed middle managers that had at least three direct reports.

This study was an exploratory multiple case study, which included three cases. The cases were bound by company, which were some of the largest landscape companies in the industry. The fifteen participants included in this study were from three landscape companies within the United States. No companies from outside the United States were used. The three companies in the study have a yearly revenue of more than 250 million each.

Data collection took place at the location of the participants choosing. This was to limit any risk of any retaliation of the employers that the participants were answering the questions. All of the fifteen interviews were completed by phone or Skype at a time that the participants felt comfortable. None of the interviews were completed at the place of employment or during work hours. Fourteen of the 15 interviews were completed on a personal phone call and one of the 15 was conducted via Skype.

Each participant was only contacted and interviewed once. This study used data saturation to determine when and if proper data were collected. Within the three cases and 15 interviewees, sufficient data saturation and repetition of answers of the interview questions occurred. The interviews lasted 15 to 30 minutes. All participants had the answers to all of the questions repeated to them to ensure member checking. Only when the participants agreed that the answers repeated to them were correct, did the interview conclude.

The data were recorded via hand written notes. As the interviews were conducted the researcher wrote down what was said. After each question was asked and answered, the answer was repeated to the participant. After the seven interview questions were asked, the answers were then again repeated and reviewed by the participant. This was used as the member checking portion of the interview to ensure answer validity.

The original plan for the data collection was face to face interviews with the participants in the study. The study stated that all interviews were held at the location and time chosen by the participant. What occurred was that 14 of the participants chose to not meet face to face and requested to have the interview via a phone call, and one choose to interview via Skype.

This changed the way member checking occurred. The original research plan was to have the participants physically look at the answers they provided to the questions. With switching to phone calls and Skype, the member checking occurred by each answer being provided was repeated to the participant. At the conclusion of the interview all answers were again repeated to and reviewed by the participant. Any necessary changes were made until the participant was satisfied with the answers.

I also collected Archival data. The companies' public 10K and web pages were reviewed to analyze whether public information regarding turnover, or plan to deal with turnover, existed. The archival data were collected after the all of the interviews were conducted. The data were collected at my place of residence. The three companies 10K and web pages were viewed to gather the information that was needed or searched for. I wrote the data in note form then added to this study. The collection of the archival data went exactly as it was stated in Chapter 3.

Data Analysis

Coding

Coding in this study was simple in design. This study had a total of 15 participants that included 3 cases made up of 5 participants in each case. The numbers 1, 2, and 3 were assigned to the individual cases. Letters A, B, C, D, and E were assigned to the participants. This gave an alpha numeric combination where the number denoted the case then letter the participant. For example, 1B would be case one, participant B.

Coding was used in this study to minimize the risk to the participants. The information that the participants had the potential to be sensitive and put the company or industry they work for in a negative light so coding was necessary to protect them. Nowhere in this study were any names of participants or companies written down or used.

NVivo

NVivo is a qualitative analysis software. It was used in this study to look for themes and sub themes with in the data that were collected. Four main themes were discovered. They were factors that lead to middle manager turnover, why a manager left a position, the factors companies could use to reduce turnover, and Non Competes and the role they play in turnover. The factors that led to middle manager turnover, why a manager left a position, the factors companies could use to reduce turnover, and non-competes and the role they play in turnover were the themes that the interview questions produced in order to answer the research question; why does high turnover of landscape industry middle managers occur and what strategies might prevent high turnover of middle managers in the landscape industry?

Excel

All secondary data were collected and put into excel spreadsheets. The data collected in the spread sheets were then used to create the charts in this study. The charts showed whether or not any mention of the turnover was acknowledged.

Themes

Factors that lead to middle manager turnover. The first theme that came out of the data were the theme of factors that lead to middle manager turnover. This was something that was very interesting, as the direct thoughts from the middle managers were heard. Several instances of repetition occurred in the answers given by all 15 participants in the study. The most common answer and sub theme was a loss of contract led to the termination of the middle manager. “The quick blaming of the manager when a contract is lost, when there are other factors that might prevent that manager from doing their job” (1B, Personal Communication, June 1 2018).

The next most common answer and sub theme was the pressure to perform. Participant 2C noted “There is a great pressure to perform. The pressure is what have you done for me lately. Screw up today fired tomorrow regardless of your past” (Personal Communication, June 25, 2018). A middle manager has the pressure of setting a budget and sticking to that budget. If that budget is missed repercussions for that miss occur. Sometimes it is a warning and sometimes it can be a dismissal. The pressure of missing a budget and not being able to hit the budget it can lead to managers looking elsewhere for employment. “I knew some months that the budget was not going to work and I thought it would be better to leave then be let go over a budget I could not keep” (1E, Personal Communication, June 18, 2018).

The participants stated that a pressure to sell and grow the business exists. Quotas of how much managers are supposed to sell are common. If budget numbers are not met, managers can be terminated over it. One of the problems is that if you pass the quota 11 months out of the year but miss one the company does not care and a potential retribution is termination. Participant 3B noted that pressure to sell leads to turnover. “Pressure to sell and perform. It does not matter what you did last week or moth but what you did today” (3B, Personal Communication, June 22, 2018).

Why a manager left a position. Within the next interview questions, the theme of why a manager turned over was explored. Two major subthemes existed within why a middle manager either left or was let go from a middle management position. Quick data saturation occurred in this area as 80% of the participants stated the one main reason why they felt they were let go from a position.

The most common response was that the middle managers felt the loss of the position was a result or directly caused by the loss of a contract. “When a big contract was lost they let me go and used me as a scapegoat because the contract was in the process of leaving before I started” (3D, Personal Communication, June 23, 2018). When a contract is lost, depending on the value of that contract, the middle manager is most likely the one who feels the blame for that loss.

When a major contract is lost, it is likely that the branch that the middle manager works at was negatively affected. A major contract is one that can account for 10% or more of the total branch revenue. A negative effect that occurred as a result of the loss of a contact was a reduction in staff or hours available to work. Sometimes the contract loss had nothing to do with the current middle manager. Rebidding of the contract is one example. This happens when the current contracted client wants to see if they can get a lower price for the service. Participant 2E stated that “I have no control over pricing. Pricing is done by sales not me, yet I get blamed if the job is lost” (Personal Communication, June 22 2018). When a contract is rebid for price, what a middle manager did, or did not, do has nothing to do with the contract loss, yet they were often still blamed for the loss.

The factors companies could use to reduce turnover. Two interview questions looked at what companies do about the turnover. In this study, participants were asked if the company has any polices to deal with or reduce turnover. All participants stated that no policies existed that they knew of. The participants had similar responses in how they felt companies could reduce turnover. They stated that if the upper management reduced the pressure to hit budget or other goals the result could be a reduction in potential terminations. Participant 3E stated turnover might reduce "If they reduced the pressure to sell and had some loyalty to the employees" (Personal Communication, June 26, 2018).

Another aspect that participants felt could reduce turnover was if the upper management looked into why the contract loss occurred. The upper management needs to find out if the loss occurred because of pricing or because of lack of performance. Participant 1A stated that turnover might reduce if "more research into why a contract is rebid. Ask why the lower price is important and work with the managers to fix the issue not just can them" (Personal Communication, June 20 2018).

Non-competes and the role they play in turnover

Non-compete agreements were stated as a factor in influencing turnover. All of the participants had a non-compete currently, or at one point, during employment. When asked if the non-compete ever directly affected the decision to leave a current unhappy position the data were split. The data provided were dependent on whether the participant lived in a right to work state.

In right to work states the participant is allowed to continue working in the industry for competitors as long as they do not directly take contracts or employees from a past employer. In other states, a non-compete can potentially restrict a past employee for working for any competitor. This would restrict the employee from continuing in the current industry. When asked if a non-compete would restrict leaving a position, Participant 3A stated "I was always reminded of it and that I could not go to work outside of this company doing what I have a college degree in" (Personal Communication, June

15, 2018).

Discrepant Cases

During this research no discrepant cases existed. All information provided by the participants were similar. No information given was outside of the interview questions or were cause for any concern.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility was achieved in this study through the use of consistent, proper coding and consistent documentation of the data. All data were broken in three cases which were coded 1,2, and 3. The participants were from these three cases and were first coded by the 1, 2, and 3. The participants in each case and they were coded as A, B, C, D and E. Alpha codes were assigned based on when the interviews took place. The first ones were A and so on till all interviews were complete or data saturation occurred.

All data were collected in the same way. Questions were asked and the answers written down. Data triangulation was achieved by gathering data from the interviews, company 10K and company web page. This gave three sources to look at the turnover and what might be causing it. Lastly, the participants reviewed and confirmed the answers before the interviews concluded.

Transferability

Transferability allows a reader to apply research results to other settings (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). In this study transferability was achieved by utilizing the interview protocol with each interview. Using the same protocol for all interviews and data collection lead to better transferability as the research could be replicated in other areas or industries.

Data collection was all coded clearly with cases and participants. Clear coding can lead to an ease of replication or transferability to another industry or setting. Lastly using 3 cases and a variation of samples lead to a better opportunity. Everything performed in this study helps transferability but the actual transferability of findings is left to the reader (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Dependability

In this study an interview protocol was followed and not deviated from. The same interview questions were asked of all the participants and in the same order. Those steps increased the dependability of this study. All coding was the same for all of the cases and participants as well. I created an audit trial by keeping records and data organized and detailed throughout the interview process.

Confirmability

During this study I used bracketing to help ensure confirmability. This was achieved by me, the researcher, not mentioning or speaking about my own past personal experiences. In doing that I reduced any influence that my own personal experiences might have had on the answer given by the participants.

Member checking and reflectivity can be used to enhance confirmability (Goldblatt et al., 2011). In this study member checking was originally to occur by the participants physically reviewing answers at the conclusion of the interview. This needed to be changed due to the way the participants requested to conduct the interviews.

The participants requested interview to be phone interviews. This eliminated the possibility for them to physically see the answer at the end of the interview. The process was changed and after each question was asked the answer was repeated to the participant to verify the answer given. Again at the end of the interview all answers were repeated and reviewed to make sure that all answers where correct. The answer given were reviewed to see if any other information would like to be provided or added.

Study Results

This study produced results that were very interesting and solely based on the perceptions of the middle managers within the industry. The results are from the interviews and the secondary data. The secondary data were from the companies 10K and company webpages. The interviews and data answered the research question, why does high turnover of landscape industry middle managers occur and what strategies might prevent high turnover of middle managers in the landscape industry?

This research found that middle managers turnover because of stress and pressure of sales and loss of contracts. The retribution for the lack of sales or loss of contract often is termination or voluntary leaving a position because of the stress. The research found, that currently, there does not exist any strategies to deal with or reduce the turnover.

Factors that lead to middle manager turnover

One of the biggest questions in this study is why do the middle managers turnover. In this study the perception of the middle manager themselves was looked at and not the perception of the upper managers or corporate representatives. Potentially many reasons exist, but the ones that were the most common in the interviews were pressure to meet or exceed all sales numbers each month, pressure to meet or exceed budget each month, and the loss of contracts.

Sales. One of the biggest drivers of the landscape industry is the ability to sell new work and grow the business. It is one of the tasks that every middle manager is responsible for. The amount that each manager has to sell or the cumulative total of the entire branch can change from month to month and is dependent on external factors, like time of year and overall monthly budget.

Participants stated that the pressure to sell and the sometimes lack of sales caused turnover within the position. One of the findings in this study were the middle manager's perception of how the upper managers looked at the sales. An expressed feeling that reoccurred from participants was that the upper management did not look at or take into consideration the past sales.

"One month you could beat sales budget by double or triple, but if the next month you fall short, there was reprimand and potential termination if the budget was missed by a wide enough margin" (3C, Personal Communication, June 17, 2018) Another participant put it as "There was a very big what have you done for me today mentality." (2C, Personal Communication, June 25, 2018)

Budget. One other popular response for the cause of turnover is the inability to stay within budget. More so than not being able to stay within budget but not being able to stay within budget while being told that equipment, or personal can be replaced. "It was really tough to hit budget when I was short guys, mowers or trucks and had to work overtime to complete all of the contracted work." (2D, Personal Communication, June 21, 2018)

Broken equipment was a topic that was common in the responses. Some of the responses were that the equipment was old and needed to be replaced, it took too long to get equipment repaired and no backups existed, and no foreseen plan to replace any equipment. “We had old equipment that was constantly breaking and it took forever to get it repaired. We were told we could not replace it. We were told there was no plan in the future to replace it” (1A, Personal Communication, June 20, 2018).

Middle managers felt that the concerns they had were not being listened to. This led to either being directly terminated for one not hitting budget or sales goals but lead to loss of motivation and the idea to look for employment elsewhere. “I was so frustrated that I was thinking about leaving to go somewhere else” (2B, Personal Communication, June 17, 2018)

Loss of Contracts. The most popular and response that I received was that turnover was caused by loss of contract. Sometimes the contracts were lost because of manager oversight but it was felt that sometimes the circumstances were out of the control of the middle managers. These were lack of equipment, time, and the contract going out for rebidding. “I was let go because a contract was rebid for a lower price and we could not meet the lowest price. I was let go because of that loss” (1D, Personal Communication, June 18, 2018).

A budget can restrict how much equipment that can be replaced or repaired or can restrict the amount of overtime that is allowed. When this sometimes occurs a middle manager cannot get all of the contracted work completed at the scheduled time. The loss of contract under these circumstances is directly the fault of the manager and termination is common. The perception is that with hands tied and restriction in place that the middle managers were set up to fail. “When a truck is broken all of the work cannot get done without overtime. Then I am told no overtime. So contracts get lost, I get blamed and let go” (2B, Personal Communication, June 17, 2018)

Contracts are lost because of rebidding. This is the contract holder shopping around for a lower price or more services for the same price. This was something that the middle manager in this study felt was very unfair to them. “I have no control over what other companies can bid or what I can bid. If I lose a contract to a lower price how is that my fault?” (1C, Personal Communication, June 16, 2018).

Leaving a Position and Why

The next interview questions gathered information on if and why the middle managers left or were terminated from the current position. Factors that lead to middle manager turnover was based on middle manager perception where if a manager was let go or left a position and why is based on fact. Out of the 15 participants in the study 14 out of them have been terminated or quit a position within the industry (Table 1). Only in case 3 did one middle manager not experience personal turnover. Eight of the 15 participants have voluntary left a position for another within the industry and 3 of the 15 left the industry entirely (Table 1).

Table 1

Turnover of Middle Managers

Outcome	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
Terminated*	5	5	4
Quit*	3	3	2
Left the industry*	0	2	1

Note: *The total number adds to more than 15 because some of the respondents had been terminated or quit a middle management job in the landscape industry at different times. Likewise, some who were terminated, ultimately left the industry.

When participants were asked why they were let go from a position, the reason all participants noted a loss of contract. The loss of contract was deemed the fault of the middle manager and was caused directly by the middle manager. “When we lost the contract I was blamed for the loss and was terminated” (2A, Personal Communication, June 20, 2018) Sometimes when a contract is lost, a big loss in revenue exists. Companies let the middle managers go for money savings. “When we lost a large contract the company decided to consolidate and in the process I was terminated” (3D, Personal Communication, June 23, 2018)

In this study, 8 of the participant’s voluntary left at least one positions for a different position with a different company. The stress that can come with the position can lead to middle managers looking elsewhere to find a position with lower stress or a better opportunity. “I received a better offer to work for another company so I took it. The current position was stress full and I felt underappreciated” (1E, Personal Communication, June 18, 2018).

Three of the participants felt that the landscape industry was not for them, and after being terminated or voluntary leaving a position, left the industry to work in another unrelated industry. The stress and pressure of the industry was enough. It was felt that a change needed to be made. Participant 1A stated that they left the industry because “I took over a $1,000,000 property that the company was losing to try to save it. After 2 months of work and trying to recover the relationship the client canceled and I was let go” (Personal Communication, June 20, 2018). Sometimes the need to alleviate oneself from a perceived bad environment outweighs the benefits of that position.

Factors Companies Could Use to Reduce Turnover

Perceived and actual factors lead to turnover in the middle management position. Participants were asked what they perceived were ways that these companies could reduce the turnover in the middle manager position. The common responses were to incorporate some sort of turnover plan, reduced the stress of sales, better planed replacement of equipment, and look more closely into why contract loss occurs.

During the interview process and secondary data search no mention of an employee turnover plan or how a company deals with turnover existed (Table 2). If a multiple turnover event occurs, no set of plans to deal with it or try to stop it existed. Research found that as single turnover occurs the increased probability of collective turnover exists (Nyberg & Ployhart, 2013). If collective turnover were to occur and a plan put into place, companies might better deal with the event rather than dealing with the actual loss of employees.

Table 2

Existence of Turnover Plan or Acknowledgement of Turnover

Outcome	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
Turnover plan exists according to managers	0	0	0
Acknowledgement of Turnover on webpage	0	0	0
Acknowledgement of Turnover in 10K	0	0	0

The reduction of pressure on the middle manager could reduce the turnover in the position. The perception was that regardless of past sales performance, managers were terminated if current sales budgets were not met. If the company had a plan or a matrix, conformity in the actions the company takes could be the outcome.

A document or chart is needed that explains sales in relation to termination. “I missed my sales and was let go even with doing great the past three weekly goals.” (3A, Personal Communication, June 15, 2018) “I wish that in the beginning there as a chart or something explaining what or why you would get terminated as I felt it was miss one week and your gone” (2B, Personal Communication, June 17, 2018)

Contract loss is another common way that positions are lost. The company loses the contract and the middle manager is either directly blamed for that loss or the effects of that loss lead to the dissolving of the position due to budget constraints. When a company loses a contract, more time looking into the events or reasons why that contract was lost needs to exist.

If a contract is lost to rebidding, or the contract holder looking for a lower price, the middle manager should not be blamed for the loss. Budgets and financials are handed down from corporate to the middle manager. The middle manager uses those numbers to make the yearly budget. Pricing exists that branches cannot go below. When a rebid occurs only so much room in pricing exists.

Lastly, contracts are sometimes lost as a direct cause of poor performance. The poor performance can be caused by lack of equipment, unavailable overtime, and lack of employees. When a manager has loss of working equipment such as a mower or truck, the time to complete the weekly schedule gets increased. If the budget does not allow for overtime or new equipment what is a manager to do? Participant A3 noted that turnover could be reduced by "Better upkeep on equipment and factoring in a percentage of overtime. Let us use it so we are not so short all the time" (Personal Communication, June 15, 2018).

Non-Compete Agreements

In this study the 15 people were current middle managers or have been in middle management positions within the landscape industry. Every participant had a non-compete agreement within the company they worked for (Table 3). Nine of the 15 participants stated in some way that the non-compete agreement kept them from voluntary leaving a position sometime during employment (Table 3). Lastly 6 of the participants were from right to work states where non competes are not allowed to keep people from continuing to work in a similar position for a similar company (Table 3).

Table 3

Effect of Non-Compete Agreement

Outcome	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
Non-compete	5	5	5
Did it keep them from leaving?	3	2	4
From right to work states	2	4	0

Having a non-compete agreement did affect the way that participants decided if they were to voluntary leave a position or not. Some non-compete agreements were harsh and very favorable for the company. Participant 1C stated that the non-compete agreement was “For two years after voluntary or involuntary leaving of a position I was not allowed to work for any competitor in a 50-mile radius of one of the branches of my past employer. The non-compete basically told me I could not work in the industry I was trained and educated in” (Personal Communication, June 16, 2018).

In the right to work states the non-compete agreements were different. Employees were able to find other employment without restriction as long as they did not take past contracts or other employees with them. Participant 3C when asked if a non-compete agreement affected decisions and stated that “Yes as I own a home and have a family. It would make it hard to live even in a right to work state" (Personal Communication, June 17, 2018).

In this study after all of the themes were flushed out the individual cases were explored. The cases were explored individually and compared to each other. No notable difference in the responses from the participants existed among the cases. All of the participant's responses were almost identical regardless of case/company they worked for. This showed that the feelings of middle managers are more industry wide and not specific to one company.

Summary

This research helped answer the questions, why does high turnover of landscape industry middle managers occur and what strategies might prevent high turnover of middle managers in the landscape industry? This research was conducted in 3 cases and 5 interviews in each case for a total of 15 interviews.

Data were collected at the location and way that the participants felt the most comfortable. In his study that was by personal phone call and one Skype interview. All of the participants in this study were male. The ethnicity ranged from Caucasian, Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander. They all worked for one of the three companies/ cases in the study.

All of the answers were written down and member checking was used to ensure credibility. All answers were read back to the participant to assure that the answers written down were the ones they gave. This occurred at each question as well as the end of the interview. The interview protocol was followed to ensure reliability and transferability.

All of the participants answered similar answers regardless of case they were in. Pressure of sales and loss of contract were the two most common reasons middle managers were terminated or quit. Middle managers felt that If upper management took more time to look into contract loss and looked into past sales, turnover could be reduced. No plan to reduce turnover or deal with turnover existed in any of the cases.

In chapter 5 the findings are interpreted as well as recommendations for future research based on the findings in this study. Limitations of this study are discussed in chapter 5. Lastly the implications of this study and who or how it might help as well as the implications for social change are discussed.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

My purpose in this qualitative multiple case study was to understand why high turnover of landscape industry middle managers occurs and explore possible strategies to prevent high turnover of middle managers in the landscape industry. The landscape industry is currently a $73-billion industry (IBIS World, 2014). Not only is it a multibillion dollar industry, but employs over 87,8000 people, and has an expected growth of 3.7 percent per year (IBIS World, 2014).

The landscape industry suffers from a turnover rate of 30% or more each year and, has been shown to have poor retention of middle and upper managers (IBIS World, 2014). Research needed to be conducted to find out why turnover exists at such a high rate within the landscape industry. Research was conducted as an exploratory case study and data were collected in semi structured interviews and archival publicly available company data.

The results of this research were based on the answer to the interview questions and they represent the perceptions of the middle managers. The key findings were that the most turnover occurred because of loss of contracts or because of pressure associated with sales. Contract loss was a major factor in turnover because often managers were blamed, and they were often terminated due to contract loss. Sales were also looked at monthly, and if sales goals were not met, it could lead to termination regardless of past sales performance.

Interpretation of Findings

The themes that tie directly to past research were, factors that lead to middle manager turnover, leaving a position and why, and factors companies could use to reduce turnover. Chapter 2 consisted of peer-revived research that has to do with turnover and factors causing turnover. This section looks at comparing these results to that research.

Factors that Led to Middle Manager Turnover

Research in hospitals showed that stress can be so bad that motivation decreases and the intent to quit increases (Saleem et al., 2015). That same research found that even the perception of stress in others caused reduction on motivation and increase of stress in the nurses (Saleem et al., 2015). Stress is not just induced in a stressful environment but the thought of stress caused stress (Saleem et al., 2015).

In this research stress of sales lead to turnover. The stress and pressure of sales and the need to constantly hit the sales goals lead to turnover. These findings are similar to the research that was in chapter 2. Participants stated that the pressure to sell and the sometimes lack of sales caused turnover within the position. One of the findings in this study were the middle manager's perception of how the upper managers looked at the sales. An expressed feeling that reoccurred from participants was that the upper management did not look at or take into consideration the past sales.

"One month you could beat sales budget by double or triple, but if the next month you fall short, there was reprimand and potential termination if the budget was missed by a wide enough margin" (3C, personal communication, June 17, 2018). Another participant stated, "There was a very big what have you done for me today mentality"

(2C, Personal Communication, June 25, 2018). Another reason for turnover in this study was loss of contract and revenue. Sometimes the contract was lost for poor performance and sometimes because of the rebidding process. "I was let go because a contract was rebid for a lower price and we could not meet the lowest price. I was let go because of that loss" (1D, Personal Communication, June 18, 2018). As turnover increased the revenue decreased and the reduced revenue lead to new turnover.

These results are similar to the research in Chapter 2. In Chapter 2, a problem with turnover, besides the loss of production and revenue, is that turnover adds costs (Call et al., 2015). When costs increase because of turnover, blame gets added to the existing managers that cannot manage the situation. This added blame can lead to eventual turnover of those managers, which in turn starts the cycle over again (Qazi et al., 2015).

In the oil industry, a direct correlation between the profits and turnover of the employees exists (Harhara et al., 2015). In a retail chain as turnover increased the profitability of the branch was directly correlated to the turnover (de Mesquita Ferreira & de Aquino Almeida, 2015). Like in the oil industry as turnover increased the profits decreased (de Mesquita Ferreira & de Aquino Almeida, 2015).

Leaving a Position and Why

In this research when the participants were asked why they were let go from a position the reason that was given from all 14 that were terminated at one point during employment stated it was a loss of contract. The loss of contract was deemed the fault of the middle manager and was caused directly by the middle manager. "When we lost the contract I was blamed for the loss and was terminated" (2A, personal communication, June 20, 2018)

In peer-reviewed research, most turnover occurred because of stress or abuse from management. In the current research the findings show that a perception of potential abuse of upper management exists. The result is the loss of contrast and the lack of looking into why the contract was lost.

Studies have shown that abuse of subordinates is a leading reason for loss of motivation and employee turnover (Tost et al., 2013). When employees feel loss of motivation and abuse, they increase the likelihood of leaving the position to look for a new one (Tost el al., 2013). Managers that are seen as bullies are a very negative aspect of an organization and can affect other areas of the organization (Parker, 2014).

Factors Companies Could Use to Reduce Turnover

In this current research study, the perception of the participants was that the reduction of pressure on the middle manager could reduce the turnover in the position. The perception was that regardless of past sales performance, managers were terminated if current sales budgets were not met. The companies need to have a plan or clearly laid out document on what sales goals are and then a set consequence for not meeting those goals. Performance should be based on more than 1 month. When no such documents exist it puts the current managers in a negative light.

It was stated that a document or chart is needed that explains sales in relation to termination. "I missed my sales and was let go even with doing great the past 3 weekly goals" (3A, personal communication, June 15, 2018). "I wish that in the beginning there as a chart or something explaining what or why you would get terminated as I felt it was miss one week and your gone" (2B, Personal Communication, June 17, 2018).

Studies have shown that the perception of a manager is generally seen as negative in the work force (Jones, Donaldson, Freeman, et al., 2016). Steps need to be taken by the management team to make sure that the negative perception is changed to a positive one (Jones et al., 2016).

In Saudi Arabia, proper relationships and perception of the management led to great gain and growth within the contracting industry (Saud Alotaibi, 2014). Alotaibi, (2014) stated that perception of a manager's ability to motivate is as important as the perception of the ability to manage. In South African hospitality industry, the perception of the manager's ability to motivate was seen valuable in keeping employees happy as the perception of the manager's overall ability (Scheers & Botha, 2014).

Theory

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory states that 5 different levels of needs exist that people travel through (Maslow, 1943; McLeod, 2007). Maslow's hierarchy of needs is based on needs of employees that managers can fulfill to motivate them to perform a task that the employee otherwise might not have completed (McLeod, 2007). Managers could find and use what motivates the employees within the landscape industry. Managers could fulfill the needs of the employees and increase middle manager retention and reduce the stress. The reduction in middle manager turnover would help stop revenue loss.

Herzberg two-factor theory (1959) is useful in understanding why the organizational and psychological factors associated with turnover through an exploration of factors that influence retention, turnover, workplace satisfaction and dissatisfaction. (Gupta & Shaw, 2014; Herzberg, 1959). Other studies have utilized Herzberg two-factor theory to show that employee retention correlated with increased productivity (Fareed & Jan, 2016; Hyun & Oh, 2011; Schaffner et al., 2013).

In all the cases, and with all participants factors existed that were perceived to cause the turnover. Upper management should find and research these factors to reduce the turnover. These factors could lead to creating programs within an organization that motivated and increased middle manager retention.

In this study, the results showed that two perceived factors that increased turnover were the stress of sales and the pressure to perform. Out of all of the interviews, it was always these two factors that were expressed by the middle managers. Herzberg also looks at how dissatisfactory or negative factors can be as or more important than the positive ones. This research showed that a great fear or retaliation or retribution existed. Upper management could address these fears in order to decrease turnover. These results reinforce and show support for the credibility of Herzberg two-factor theory.

Vroom’s expectancy theory (1964) explored motivation in the context of why employees chose one behavior over another. Based on the results, Vrooms expectancy theory would be beneficial for management to use to reduce turnover. The perception was that the increased stress and pressure of sales, mixed with contract loss, led to voluntary as well as involuntary turnover. Upper management should explore ways to reduce stress and explore contract loss. Doing so could reduce the middle manager turnover.

Adams equity theory (1963) explored the relationship between the perception of the distribution of resources equally between two parties. For this research, the two parties are the employee and the employer. This theory was appropriate for this study because research indicated that people who are treated fairly in the workplace tend to show an increase of motivation (Adams, 1963). In this study, contract loss was attributed to not having the equipment to perform the task. It was perceived that equity of equipment was not distributed evenly or fairly. A better plan to replace equipment or deal with shortages is needed. If the upper management and middle managers could come up with a plan the reduction of turnover could exist.

In situational theory, no one management style that is best but it's the situation that the manager is in that should determine the management style (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). Based on the findings situational leadership would be appropriate for managers in the landscape industry. Stress and pressure exists to sell and perform within the industry. Based on the answer to the interviews a manager needs to assess the situation causes the turnover and manage accordingly.

Contingency theory is a leadership theory in which the leadership style is based on the life experiences of the manager and, because of this, the management style is hard to change (Fiedler, 1964). Based on the responses of the participants, contingency theory is another theory upper management could use to reduce turnover. The responses indicated that the stress of sales and loss of contracts were the two largest drivers of turnover. Upper management should assign managers who have dealt with the pressure of sales or contract loss. Past experiences that the managers possess could help in reducing the stress and contract loss. This could also help to reduce turnover.

Limitations of the Study

A limitation of researcher bias existed. As the researcher, who worked in the landscape industry, a potential existed for my past experience to bias interviews. Some of my experiences as a manager in this industry were positive and some negative. During the interviews, my past experiences were not brought up or the fact that I once worked in the industry. I never discussed my feelings on this subject during any of the interviews.

Another limitation was participant bias. A potential existed that the bias of experiences could skew the results. At the conclusion of the data analysis, no data were out the ordinary, nor were there any discrepant cases. Any potential bias had no impact on the outcome of this research.

The largest limitation was the fear or retaliation. No names of the participants or the companies they worked for were written down. Fear of retaliation existed. Also, some participants who were initially approached for this study, backed out once they learned of the study’s objectives, noting the fear of retaliation for potentially stating anything negative about their employer that could be traced back to them. Another issue that existed during this research was not being able to record any of the interviews. The participants all had the option to not be recorded and all of them choose not to be recorded in fear of retaliation. The lack of recording had no effect on the results of the study due to extensive member checking.

Recommendations

All research has the potential to build new research. As research is conducted it is common for other ideas to continue the research or build off the current research exist. As this research is concluded opportunities exist to build on it or use this research to conduct other research based on this design.

In the current research, 5 participants existed in each of the 3cases; a total of 15 participants were interviewed in the current study. Data saturation was achieved and similar answers were given by all 15 participants regardless of case. A potential question is whether the information be different if the sample were used.

This same research could be conducted with a sample size of double or triple. A question then arises as to whether the information obtained would stay the same or would variation in the perceptions of the reasons for turnover exist. Research with a larger sample size has the potential to confirm these findings and make this research stronger. More cases could be another way to expand on this research. This research had three cases consisting of companies that had over 100 employees and made over 250 million a year in revenue. Increasing the cases might provide a variation in results and it would be interesting to see what more cases bring.

In this study, no differences in the responses from the participants in different cases existed. All participants said almost identical answers and had very similar issues and perceptions. If the cases were increased to more than three, it possible that a case might have different answers or perceptions. In the current study, the cases were defined as a company that made over 250 million dollars in a year revenue and has more than 100 employees. The current research could be built upon with changing the yearly revenue; a study with higher revenue and different study with lower revenue could be performed to assess any similarities and differences in results.

This study was conducted in the landscape industry. This is a service industry with its own set of challenges and perception from the management. This study could be used as a template to use in a different industry, perhaps even outside of the service sector. The goal could be to see if turnover and manager perceptions were similar across different industries and sectors of employment. Industries such as hospitality, healthcare, and finance could be explored. Turnover and manager perception could also be compared. If the turnover and manager perceptions are different across industries, research could be performed to see why or what is making them different.

This study looked at middle managers who had at least 3 direct reports to them. They were they managers that dealt with both low level employees, lower managers, and upper managers. This study could be replicated but change middle managers to upper managers. Upper managers usually only work, or have contact with, other upper managers or middle managers but often do not work with lower managers or field employees. Upper managers do not deal with the day to day operations of one area, but instead work on companywide management. It would be interesting to see if the perception of the turnover is different among the upper management compared to the middle management and why.

This study could also be replicated using lower managers and field employees. These are the employees that are out in the field performing the day to day work. Most have little to no formal education. The perception might be different among this group. It would be interesting to explore if it is similar to the middle managers or if being removed from management would change some of the turnover perceptions. These perceptions then could be compared to upper management as well to see how they compare.

Implications

Positive social change can provide opportunity for improve personal life as well as professional life. Company performance and stability can be improved based on results of this study. The potential for more stability and better work environment exists. The betterment of theory used and the management field exist because of this research.

Stress. Stress is a different reason for turnover. Stress is common in many positions and different industries. When long hours are expected and the demand to perform is constant stress can increase (Burnett & Pettijohn, 2015). Stress can lead to the eventual need to leave a position for less stress position elsewhere (Burnett & Pettijohn, 2015). Stress can cause similar problems turnover can cause such as loss of production, lack of engagement and lack of work satisfaction (Burnett & Pettijohn, 2015). These problems can all lead too turnover when employees look to reduce stress and its issues by going to a different organization (Burnett & Pettijohn, 2015).

The findings in this study have the potential to reduce the stress that the middle managers feel. Middle managers felt stress and pressure in sales and maintain the current contracts. If the perceptions of the middle managers were further explored by the upper management, policies could be established and stress would be reduced.

Stress is sometimes added by management to increase production. Managers have a tendency to push employees to work harder and be more productive, but this same push can lead to demotivation and increased stress (Dubey et al., 2017). The increase pressure to constantly sell is seen as a major stressor in the work place. The results if implemented into policies could reduce this stress as well.

If workplace stress was reduced a potential for a better work life balance exist. If the stress and pressure of sales were to reduce the employees would not bring as much work stress into other aspects of life. Work would become more enjoyable and home life should become more enjoyable as well.

Implications for Companies. Social change exists for the companies as well. A potential for a reduction in turnover, a creation of a more stable company and better revenue exist. Based on the findings in this study adjustments could be made to help with these aspects of company culture. Turnover is a problem in the landscape industry as it is in many different industries. One of the problems associated with turnover is the potential loss of revenue (de Mesquita Ferreira & de Aquino Almeida, 2015). Loss of revenue is possible because as people quit a slowdown of production occurs (de Mesquita Ferreira & de Aquino Almeida, 2015).

If turnover were reduced, loss of revenue would be reduced. The loss of revenue and contracts were found to lead to increased turnover. A cycle exists or loss of revenue and turnover. Turnover causes loss of revenue and the loss of revenue increases the turnover. This research could possibly help in providing insight to help to break this cycle.

The reduction of turnover in the middle manager may increase company stability. Stability reduced turnover of other employees within the organization. When managers turn over an increase of intent to quit and loss of motivation within the organization occurs (Guha & Chakrabarti, 2016).) More senior experienced manager has the potential to handle situations better and have better situational management experience.

A company with poor employee and fiscal performance, poor management, and high turnover can have a poor public image (Tortosa-Edo, López-Navarro, Llorens-Monzonís, & Rodríguez-Artola, 2014). This can affect the entire community if the company or organization is the stale of that community (Tortosa-Edo et al., 2014). In small locations and larger locations, negative attitudes of employees can affect the image of the organization within the community (Tortosa-Edo et al., 2014). Increasing company stability can increase company perception in society.

Management Field. This study has implications for the management field as well. This study fills a lack of research on this topic in the management field. A study of turnover has yet to be conducted in the landscape industry. This study can be used to better the management field as this study can be used as a template for other industries. This study will also add to the overall knowledge on the topic of turnover.

Conclusions

The green industry is currently a 73-billion-dollar industry (IBIS World, 2014). Not only is it a multibillion dollar industry, but employs over 87,8000 people and has an expected growth of 3.7 percent per year (IBIS World, 2014). The landscape industry suffers from a turnover rate of 30% or more each year and, has been shown to have poor retention of middle and upper managers (IBIS World, 2014).

The general problem was turnover occurs among middle managers at a higher rate than other levels of management within the landscape industry (IBIS World, 2014). The specific problem was that some landscape industry upper managers do not understand why high turnover of landscape industry middle managers occurs and lack strategies to prevent turnover of middle managers in the landscape industry.

This study consisted of a qualitative, exploratory case study. This study had 3 cases and 5 participants in semi structured interviews per case. The cases consisted of landscape companies that had more than 100 employees and made over 250 million a year each. The participants were middle managers defined as a manager with at least three people as direct reports.

The perception of the middle managers was that most turnover is caused by loss of contracts and the pressure to sell. The managers felt that the upper managers did not look into the loss of contracts and blamed the middle managers for the loss even if the middle manager had nothing to do with it. The missing of sales on a given month, despite the past sales, could result in termination.

This research, if used by current managers, has the potential to reduce turnover within the landscape industry. The reduction in turnover can increase revenue and decrease costs. This can result in a more stable company and less stress on the employees within the industry.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

The data collection for this study was use an interview questionnaire and analysis of company data obtained from the companies 10K. Data were collected using the following interview protocol:

1. The potential participants were first be contacted via personal email, personal phone call or personal text message. Personal communication was used to reduce the chance of any retribution from the companies they work for.
2. Participants were asked to answer the following questionnaire.

   Interview Questions

   1. Why do you think are the factors that lead to middle manager's turnover in the landscape industry?
   2. Have you ever quit or have been let go from a middle management position within the landscape industry?
   3. If you have quit or been let go from a middle management position within the landscape industry, why?
   4. What factors do you think companies could use to decrease turnover among middle managers?
   5. Does your company have any specific turnover reduction plan that you are aware of? Is it successful?
   6. Do you currently have a non-compete agreement?
   7. If yes, has a non-compete ever impacted your decision to leave or stay in a position.

3. I used member checking to achieve data saturation. All information was checked to ensure that all possible information is correct and what the participant meant to say. The member checking and data collection continued until saturation is reached.
4. Additional Data were collected from company web pages and company 10K report

Appendix B: Field Test Protocol

A field test consisting of experts in the field enhances validity of the data collection instrument (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). The field test consists of experts in the field to review the questions for validity before they are used for data collection (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012).

Field Test Protocol

1) Reviewers are experts in the fields of management, landscape industry, or qualitative research. Experts are defined as holding a doctoral degree in the appropriate field, or 10 years' experience in the related field.
2) Experts were asked to review the following interview questions.

   Interview Questions

   1) Why do you think middle manager's turnover in the landscape industry?
   2) Have you ever lost motivation in the landscape industry?
      a) If yes, what made you lose motivation?
      b) If no, what kept you motivated?
   3) Have you ever wanted to quit a position or been let go?
      a) If yes, what made you decide to quit or why did you get let go?
      b) If no, what kept you from wanting to quit?
   4) What do you think companies could do to increase motivation among the middle managers?

    5) What do you think companies could do to decrease turnover among middle managers?

3) Experts were asked the following questions about the above interview questions

    1) Do you think that the questions were understood by the participants in the study?

    2) Do you think that the questions gathered data to answer the research question- why does high turnover of landscape industry middle managers occur and what strategies might prevent high turnover of middle managers in the landscape industry? If no, please answer sub question a. and/or b.

        a. If not, how would you change the interview questions and why?

        b. If not, what new interview questions would you add and why?

4) All recommendations were used to create effective interview questions to collect the required data to answer the research question.