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Employee Retention Strategies for Executive Operation Leaders in an Academic Nursing Environment

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Polly Castro Ramos

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Walden University
2019

Abstract

Employee Retention Strategies for Executive Operation Leaders in an Academic Nursing
Environment

by

Polly Castro Ramos

MBA, University of Phoenix, 2008

BSBM, University of Phoenix, 2003

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

June 2019

Abstract

Employee attrition affects organizations in the form of lower productivity, decreased profitability, and reduced sustainability. In 2014, business owners lost over \$11 billion in tangible and intangible assets due to the inability to retain employees. Using the social exchange theory as the conceptual framework, the purpose of this multiple case study was to explore effective employee retention strategies used by business leaders in an academic nursing environment. The study encompassed participants from 3 of the United States: Texas, Kentucky, and Florida. Participants were purposefully selected because of their experience in implementing effective employee retention strategies. Data were collected via semistructured interviews with 4 business leaders. Data were analyzed using inductive coding of phrases, word frequency searches, and theme interpretation. Three themes emerged from the analysis of data: supportive leadership assisted in the retention of employees, growth and development opportunities for employees continued their commitment with the organization, and a robust and focused onboarding process was a critical component of creating the culture and commitment from the employee from the onset of their employment. This study might contribute to social change by providing business leaders in academic nursing environments with valuable insights related to employee retention that can lead to enhanced sustainability, improved organizational growth, and increased profitability, which might promote prosperity for local families and the community.

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Dedication

I dedicate the ability to complete this process to my Mother, Rita Castro. No greater love that have I known or felt, than that love I have for her. She never gave up on me and stood by me as I continued each of my educational journeys. Her passing was significant in so many ways, and her presence and support were felt throughout the writing of this study. To my sister Cipriana Salazar, was significant in my personal growth and through her challenges, I learned so much. I will see you and Mom in heaven! To my brothers Lee Ramos, Esequiel Ramos, and Wally Ramos – thank you for putting up with my constant “I’m studying” response. While you may not have written one word in this dissertation, I thought of each of you as I worked diligently to finish and wanted to make each of you proud!

I also thank my two children, Teresa Hope Williams and Desiree Marie Escobedo. Their presence in my life has been a blessing. The challenges and joys of raising children on your own gives you a perspective of what is needed to accept your shortfalls and get back up to finish what I started. I am blessed to have my four grandchildren, Tristian Keith Clendenen, Mathew Scott Clendenen, Isabella Hope Williams, and Austin Charles Genzer. You are all so very special to me. No matter what your dreams, you can achieve them!

Finally, and not least, to my future husband, Brian Lee Archer. The significance of you coming into my life as I finish this chapter of my study and finally finding you are both dreams I thought could not be mine. Thank you for your love and support – here’s to an amazing journey that awaits us!

Acknowledgments

My mother was with me through each education graduation. This doctorate is dedicated to her. As I embarked on this journey, her spirit was with me. I am blessed to have had you as a mother and friend. You changed my life in more ways than I understood. You blessed our family, my brothers, my sister, my children and my grandchildren with so much love. Your quiet ways and gentle spirit carry me forward even now. I love you, Mom, and miss you more than I can ever say.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Businesses must develop long-term strategies to compete for qualified employees while retaining trained staff in a complex and competitive marketplace (Kossivi, Zu, & Kalgora, 2016). To remain viable and sustainable, employers must effectively motivate and manage employees for long-term commitment while developing competencies essential to the overall growth of the organization. Without qualified employees, leaders will be unable to implement strategies to meet current and future goals of the organization. In this study, I explored the effects employee retention may have on an organization's stability and future growth. Pengqian, Xiangli, Lingxiao, Xiaoyam, and Zi (2014) demonstrated that retention strategies are becoming one of the leading reasons organizations are successful. Leaders in an academic nursing operation must have the ability to strategically retain employees and position the academic environment to graduate nursing students as well as reduce costly employee turnover.

The concern over employee retention in an academic nursing operation will ultimately affect the ability of healthcare organizations to address healthcare concerns of an aging population. Skilled employees are a critical aspect of an organization's success. Kossivi et al. (2016) discussed the importance of business leaders developing long-term strategies to compete for qualified workers and retaining trained staff in a competitive workforce. Leaders will be unable to implement strategic goals without qualified staff.

Background of the Problem

Employee replacement costs to an organization vary according to the salary and the position the employee has within the organization (Merhar, 2013). Business owners

recognize that an organization's most valuable assets are its employees (Mullins & Schoar, 2016). Merhar (2013) found employee replacement for lower-paying jobs (around \$30,000 a year) will cost an organization 16% of the employee's annual salary. The problem facing business leaders is the retention of employees and voluntary turnover (Kryscynski & Ulrich, 2015). The annual resignation rate in the United States is approximately 25%, which corporate America cannot afford (Allen, Bryant, & Vardaman, 2010).

Successful leaders listen to the feedback of employees and work towards meeting employees' needs and expectations (Johnson, 2017). The company that does not focus on meeting employee expectations may risk losing the employee to the competition. Palanski, Avey, and Jiraporn (2014) posited when an employee leaves the company, the result depletes recruiting budgets. Understanding the expectations of employees opens the opportunity for a fair and diverse environment, opportunities, and employee retention. Employees with work-life balance typically have better performance at work (Demerouti, Peeters, & van der Heijden, 2014). Campione (2014) posited that employees with higher work satisfaction resulted in increased retention and stronger employee commitment. A successful organizational unit involves employees and leadership working together to meet the goals of the company (Scott & Davis, 2015). The inability to retain employees may negatively influence employee morale and organizational effectiveness.

Problem Statement

Bhattacharyya, Mahajan, Ghosdal, Yadav, and Rai (2015) suggested that employee turnover costs an organization between 90% and 200% of the annual salary for

replacement of that position. According to the Center for American Progress, loss of an employee can cost an organization 16% of a lower-paid employee's salary and as much as 213% of the salary of an employee in a management level position (Schulman, 2017). The general business problem is that employee retention directly affects an organization's profits and sustainability. The specific business problem is that some business leaders in an academic nursing environment lack strategies to retain employees.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore strategies business leaders use to retain employees in an academic nursing environment. The participants included four business leaders who successfully used employee retention strategies in academic nursing environments in Texas, Kentucky, and Florida. The information from this case study may lead to social benefits in that the results may improve the quality of nursing students graduating and ultimately improve a patient's life through superior patient care.

Nature of the Study

The focus of this study was to explore strategies business leaders use to retain employees in an academic nursing environment. McCusker and Gunavdin (2015) emphasized three main research methodologies: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. Qualitative researchers seek to arrive at an understanding of an occurrence from the perspective of those experiencing the event (Corbin, Strauss, & Strauss, 2014). The qualitative method was the most appropriate method for this study to obtain answers for the research question, which asks *what* and *why* for the strategies business leaders use to

retain employees. Researchers employing quantitative methodologies seek to explain the relationship and differences among variables (Ritchie & Ormstrom, 2014). Since I was not testing a hypothesis or theory nor gathering data for inferential statistics, the quantitative approach was not appropriate for this study. Researchers use the mixed method to combine both qualitative and quantitative methods to understand the cause of an issue and not to find a solution to the problem (Goldman et al., 2015). The mixed methods approach was not appropriate for this study because my research focused on life experiences and quantitative and mixed methods both use mathematical data.

Ethnography, phenomenology, narrative, and case studies research are basic qualitative designs. An ethnographic design focuses on exploring an entire grouping of individuals to gain an understanding of their culture (Eika, Dale, Espies, & Valmik, 2015). An ethnographic design was not appropriate for this study because I did not concentrate on exploring an entire grouping of individuals to gain an understanding of their culture. Marshall and Rossman (2014) defined a phenomenological study as an inquiry used by a researcher to identify the meanings of common human experiences or phenomena (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). I did not seek to discover the meanings of participants' lived experiences; therefore, a phenomenological study was not an appropriate design for this study. Wolgemuth (2014) described the narrative design as an author's description of a phenomenon and the researcher could miss details and themes from the participants. The narrative design was not appropriate for my study because I did not collect data through a series of stories and individual experiences. Case studies are an inquiry where the researcher targets an in-depth examination of an individual, a

program, activity, or a process (Yin, 2014). The research design for this study was a qualitative case study. The case study design was most appropriate because I sought to explore real-life experiences by collecting information, analyzing the data, and uncovering the relevant themes to address the specific business problem.

Research Question

The following research question guided this study:

RQ: What strategies do business leaders use to retain employees in an academic nursing environment?

Interview Questions

1. What strategies do you use for employee retention?
2. How does your interpersonal relationship with employees affect your ability to manage employee retention?
3. How has onboarding impacted employee retention?
4. What barriers do you experience with implementing employee retention strategies?
5. How does your leadership style impact employee retention?
6. What additional information would you like to share on this topic?

Theoretical Framework

I used the social exchange theory (SET) as the theoretical framework for this study. In 1961, Homans introduced SET (Treviño & Tilly, 2015). In his theory, Homans used a psychological approach and attempted to explain individual perceptions regarding power, status, conformity, and how leadership shapes human interactions (Thibaut,

2017). Homan's theory posited individuals are likely to repeat their behaviors if they predict positive results (Treviño & Tilly, 2015). Under SET, the more value of the action an individual predicts, the more likely an individual will perform it, which in turn may predict employee retention and satisfaction (Judge & Zapata, 2015). Business researchers may find SET useful to explore the function a leader fulfills in promoting a sense of employee obligation and positive work attitude (Judge & Zapata, 2015).

High-performing companies with investments in technology will require employees with greater technical and professional skills. Asiedu (2015) described three drivers that tend to influence employee loyalty: fairness, care, and concern for employees. High levels of trust between employee and employers led to more dedicated employees, thereby driving retention (Asiedu, 2015). Investing in professional development will yield employees with confidence and commitment to the organization. Banks et al. (2014) indicated perceived organizational support and leader-member exchange, which are both tenets of SET, are two valuable assessments in the investigation and understanding of worker interactions. Employees who receive positive feedback from their leaders will have a positive attitude, thereby increasing retention. Conversely, receiving negative feedback will bring job dissatisfaction, decreased motivation, and desire to leave the organization. SET was a useful framework for this study as business leaders must understand all key factors that may lead to the retention of employees.

Operational Definitions

Change management: Change management is the process of promoting change by creating a vision through clear understanding of the strategic objectives the organization wants to achieve and identifying the necessary actions to reach those objectives (Belias & Koustelios, 2014).

Context-emergent turnover theory (CET): CET is a theory that conceptualizes human resources capital as collective turnover of the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics of employee turnover (Call, Nyberg, Ployhart, & Weekley, 2015).

Job characteristics theory (JCT): Hackman, Lawler, and Oldham (2015) designed the job characteristics model and identified the JCT as the specific task that motivates an employee, i.e., monotonous job stifles motivation, whereas a challenging job motivates the employee.

Social exchange theory (SET): SET states that training contributes to positive attributes in the workplace increasing employee retention due to perceived organizational support, employer development, job satisfaction, and psychological contract fulfillment (King, 2016).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are conditions we accept as true or plausible (Grant, 2014). In this study, I assumed that the participants would understand the open-ended interview questions and would respond with information-rich and honest answers. Leedy and Ormond (2013) suggested that assumptions are self-evident conditions taken for granted

by researchers. I also assumed the participants would respond to the open-ended interview questions without the fear of experiencing coercion in any way. I assumed the participants would offer an opportunity to explore common themes involving retention strategies that may reflect similar experiences other business leaders have encountered when addressing employee retention concerns.

Limitations

Limitations are threats to the study's internal validity and may coincide with the researcher's intention and results (Becton, Gilstrap, & Forsyth, 2017). One limitation was the participants may have had a bias. Another limitation was restricting the data collected to the participant's experience and not from a reflection or interpretation of the organization's management team. A final limitation was the data relied on personal opinions that are subjective in nature.

Delimitations

Delimitations define a study's boundaries and propositions (Yin, 2014). Schwarzfeld and Sperling (2014) indicated that delimitations are the boundaries of the study set by the researcher so that their goals do not become difficult to accomplish. The first delimitation was the sample size. I interviewed a small sample of four business leaders. A larger sample size would have added additional time and cost. The second delimitation was the geographical location of the population, which only included Kentucky, Texas, and Florida. The data for a specific geographic area may not be representative of other geographic regions. Another delimitation of this study was the

narrow focus was on strategies business leaders used to retain employees in an academic nursing environment and did not include employees in other academic settings.

Significance of the Study

The participants in this study provided personal views of their experiences and challenges related to improving employee retention. Employee attrition is costly because it is expensive to recruit and develop new employees (Pengqian et al., 2014). The employee retention strategies incorporated by business leaders may lead to increased employee commitment, operational efficiencies and future growth opportunities.

Contribution to Business Practice

The results of this study may contribute to an organization's success by helping it incorporate best practices for the retention of employees. This study focused on the changing business and healthcare environment to better serve future generations with the nurses needed to care for the communities in which they reside. Further, the findings may provide insight to business leaders interested in developing skills that are useful in employee retention. This, in turn, may enhance organizational growth and employee satisfaction. Adopting best practices in the retention of employees may eliminate organizational disruption and reduce employee dissatisfaction due to turnover. The business ramifications of this study may be realized through the development of strategies to retain employees and reduce the cost of hiring new employees. Moreover, employee retention may contribute to business profitability and sustainability.

Implications for Social Change

Saha (2014) suggested social change begins with community leaders, business owners, and the people who live in the community and who share their success, inspire others, and change together for a better future. The results of my study may impact social change and influence a community because higher retention creates more stability for employee income that can provide support for businesses. Further, maximizing the workforce capabilities by retaining employees might increase tax revenues to support local and state governments.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative study was to provide business managers with strategies to deter discrimination complaints and develop programs and policies that will promote compliance with discrimination laws. In this literature review, I demonstrated that an effective strategic basis for the retention of employees occurred when business leaders listened to their staff, provided support, created a focused onboarding process, and promoted growth and development opportunities. The majority of the literature review emanates from the critical analysis and synthesis of previous research on strategies for the retention of employees.

The literature review consists of peer-reviewed articles, books, government reports, and other scholarly resources. *Ulrich's Periodical Directory* was the means for verifying articles are from recognized peer-reviewed journals. Of the 255 sources in this literature review, 135 were peer-reviewed articles, which represent 53% of the sources; 226 had a publication date less than five years old, which is 87% of the total sources.

I used the following databases searching for peer-reviewed articles applicable for this study: Google Scholar, Insight databases from the Walden University Library, Science Direct, Emerald Management Journals, Management and Organizational Studies, Lexis Nexis Academic, EBSCOhost, and ProQuest. To locate articles with precise information, I used literature relating to leadership and its effect on employee retention and its impact on an organization including reviewing data regarding employee commitment, change management, succession planning, and culture.

Social Exchange Theory

SET is the major foundational framework for organization research (Choi, Lotz, & Kim, 2014). SET provides a theoretical basis for human behavior and whether monetary considerations motivate that behavior. Homan (1961) was the first sociological theorist to focus on interpersonal exchanges in an organization (Treviño & Tilly, 2015). A basis for the evaluation of concepts relating to distributive justice, balance, status, and solidarity within organizations and leadership was due to the Homan's work on dyadic exchange (Treviño & Tilly, 2015). SET centers on the premise that interactions between a supervisor and subordinate could bring forth positive relationships based on reciprocity (Chughtai, Byrne, & Flood, 2015). When leadership and employees work in a harmonious state, the organization will thrive. Leadership and employees who feel they received care and matter in the organization will work hard for the common goal (Chughtai et al., 2015). Blau (2017) posited two types of exchanges could occur in human relationships; social and economic. The social aspect of the relationship is dependent on trust and feelings of obligation or belonging. The economic agreements in

place emphasized pay, performance, and other tangible items. The challenge for management is identifying those employees who are motivated by advancement through means other than hard work and task accomplishment (Blau, 2017).

Information communicated between a supervisor and subordinate can be exchanged in a variety of methods and using different tools. Performance appraisals are one of the more popular tools for exchanging information between a supervisor and subordinate on their contribution to an organization. The social connection between the supervisor and subordinate has a bearing on how the subordinate will respond and will provide context for the quality of the relationship moving forward (Pichler, 2012). If the subordinate views the ratings as negative, it may affect the employee's beliefs regarding fairness in the organization. A positive working relationship between the employee and the supervisor can moderate the reactions and lead to the employee's greater commitment to the organization (Pichler, 2012).

Sahu and Parthardikar (2014) posited that the SET follows the dyadic linkages in human behavior. Vahlhaus and Simon (2014) suggested that the working environment relationships between members of an organization could influence how an organization performs. Vahlhaus and Simon (2014) argued that SET has roots in working relationships research. Moreover, Zivnuska, Kacmar, and Valle (2017) understood the behavioral relationships of leaders through social behaviors as exchanges and indicated that tasks and performance are part of the ability to retain high-potential employees.

Job Characteristics Theory

JCT is one of the first theories regarding research into job satisfaction and originated by Hackman and Oldham in 1975. Schultz and Schultz (2010) posited that JCT is one of the most cited theories in job satisfaction research. The premises of JCT are that job characteristics (implying the design and implementation of workplace tasks) influence the attitudes of employees, level of motivation, and job satisfaction (Guerrero & Singh, 2013; Shultz & Shultz, 2010). Schultz and Schultz further suggested that because workers' personal characteristics vary among employees, the relationships between job characteristics and work-related outcomes do not influence the attitudes of all employees in the same way. The propositions of JCT have implied that a correlation should exist between job characteristics and employee job satisfaction (Nahrgang, Morgeson, & Hofmann, 2011).

JCT researchers have proposed that employees are more motivated to work and more satisfied if their jobs include certain core characteristics. These core job characteristics create a working climate that allows employees to experience beneficial personal and work-related outcomes (Nahrgang et al., 2011). There are five core job characteristics in JCT: skill variety, task identification, task significance, autonomy, and feedback (Shultz & Shultz, 2010). Schultz and Schultz (2010) further proposed that employees are more motivated to work and more satisfied if their jobs include certain core characteristics. These core job characteristics create a working climate where employees experience beneficial personal and work-related outcomes (Nahrgang et al.,

2011). Schultz and Shultz described the characteristics as the diverse talents, abilities, and competencies that an employee may require to perform their job.

The importance the employee places on their growth and development on the job may outline the strength of the relationship between the job characteristics and the personal and work-related outcomes (Schultz & Schultz, 2010). Hackman et al. (2015) identified action principles such as task identity and task significance to increase job satisfaction and employee motivation. Hackman et al. (2015) based the JCT on the idea that the task motivates employees when it is challenging and not boring or monotonous (Ali et al., 2014). Ali et al. (2014) posited that job characteristic theorists have put forth that the five critical job characteristics influence four personal and work-related outcomes: high internal work motivation, high quality work performance, high satisfaction with the work, and low turnover and absenteeism. The five job characteristics do not influence all employees in the same way. The relationships between the job dimensions and the personal and work-related outcomes can vary with the experiential states of individual employees (Hackman et al., 2015). Examples of experiential states include the workers' experienced meaningfulness of the work, experienced responsibility for work outcomes, knowledge of the results of work activities, and the intensities of the employee's need for continued growth (Shultz & Shultz, 2010).

Stengard, Bernhard-Oettel, Bernston, and Leinweber (2017) posited that the changing competitive marketplace has created the necessity for employees to take a more committed approach to their careers. Lack of reciprocal relationships at work creates an environment in which an employee feels locked-in to their current position (Stengard et

al., 2017). Unfortunately, some employees are not confident in their ability to obtain other employment and stay in their current position (Stengard et al., 2017). Researchers recently shifted their focus on why employees stay versus why employees choose to leave an organization (Peltokorpi, Allen, & Froese, 2015).

Holtom and Burch (2016) identified organizational embeddedness as consisting of three interrelated dimensions to include links, fit, and sacrifice. Peltokorpi et al. (2015) identified three key areas of job embeddedness that determine why employees stay with an organization: job-person fit, connection to colleagues, and work activities. Peltokorpi et al. (2015) posited that employees with a high level of embeddedness are less likely to leave an organization. Consequently, an employee who feels deeply embedded will have strong connections with other employees. Finally, Stengard et al. (2017) posited that employees who feel locked-in or at risk of becoming locked-in relates to their well-being (subjective health and symptoms of depression). Consequently, employees who feel locked-in may ultimately affect retention of not only the affected employee, but the feelings may spread to other employees as well (Stengard et al., 2017). Therefore, it is important for leadership to recognize the situation and commence preventative interventions (Stengard et al., 2017).

Person-Organization Fit

Memon, Salleh, Baharom, and Harun (2014) described person-organization fit theory as the psychological attachment of an employee to an organization, which creates the bond that factors in the decision to continue employment or voluntarily leave the organization. Employees are less likely to voluntarily leave an organization if they feel

their personal values connect to the company and its vision (Memon et al., 2014). Swider, Zimmerman, and Barrick (2015) researched person-organization fit that included three stages to generating suitable applicants for an organization. The three stages incorporated into the decision-making process were the generation of suitable applicants, maintaining the interest of the applicants, and influencing key applicants to accept a position with the organization (Swider et al., 2015). The recruitment phase of candidates is a critical process in which the focus is the confirmation of an applicant's connection to the organization. McDermott, Conway, Rousseau, and Flood (2013) agreed that leadership's ability to affect an employee is largely dependent on the fit of the employee with the organization's missions and values. Arbour, Kwantes, Kraft, and Boglarsky (2014) indicated that management could reduce voluntary employee turnover by assessing job satisfaction and organizational culture. There are criticisms in using individual and organizational values to conceptualize fit as the values that represent the organizations underlying culture (Arbour et al., 2014). Hauff, Richter, and Tressin (2015) discovered that the most important drivers of job satisfaction included an interesting job, good relations with management, and good relations with colleagues.

Organizational culture is difficult to measure, and the values affect perceptions of an organization and its leaders. Behavior norms may directly relate to job satisfaction, stress, and intentions to stay, but person-organization fit is focused on behavioral norms and is better suited to predict occupational outcomes (Arbour et al., 2014). Consequently, attitudes and behaviors may validate occupational outcomes and demonstrate how an employee fits in with the organization's culture and environment (Arbour et al., 2014).

Corporate Social Responsibility and Social Exchange Theory

Blau (2017) suggested that SET interactions are interdependent and contingent on the actions or inactions of employees. These interactions may generate strong internal relationships that will affect retention or the desire to stay with the organization (Blau, 2017). Wombacher and Felfe (2017) suggested that effective team and organizational commitment are important employee attachments in the workplace. Person-centered strategy studies seek to identify commitment mindsets such as affective, normative, and continuance, or to focus on target groups such as the organization or supervisors (Meyer, Morin, and Vandenberghe, 2015). Meyer et al. (2015) suggested a person-centered approach encompasses a holistic perspective versus a traditional variable-centered approach and may incorporate complex interactions among commitment mindsets or targets.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is part of overall business activity with recruitment and retention as part of the commitment businesses should strive to have in the community (Corlett & Morris, 2015). Bode, Singh, and Rogan (2015) posited that organizations are focusing on social mandate initiatives through critical aspects of employee retention. The link between the social initiatives and employee retention relates to motivation and identification. Corlett and Morris (2015) suggested that poor communication, lack of employee alignment, and low visibility of CSR culture in the organization are implications of an eroding social contract between the employee and the organization. Social structures in an organization support social exchange (Blau, 2017). From the perspective of SET, personal and organizational CSR fulfill certain social

activity opportunities between the organization and the employee (Corlett & Morris, 2015). Corlett and Morris (2015) posited that personal CSR does not necessarily reflect the employee's commitment to the organization. Finally, reciprocity is the basis of social exchange, and an employee's social commitment directly relates to the exchange and commitment from the organization. Carnahan, Kryscynski, and Olson (2017) suggested employees engaging in meaningful CSR activities at work may assist the organization in the retention of employees who may otherwise pursue career opportunities elsewhere.

Huang, Cheng, Fan-Huang, and Teng (2018) researched personality traits and how those personality traits relate to interdependence and network convergence. Huang et al. (2018) posited that extraversion and openness relate positively to interdependence and network convergence. Huang et al. (2018) suggested that interdependence and network convergence relate to continuance intention. Teng (2015) discussed interdependence as the degree an employee depends on other employees when making a decision and network convergence is introducing the employee with their core group from outside of work, such as family. Porter and Woo (2015) posited that SET is also applicable to the reasons why employees make networking decisions and seek work advice from other employees. Yan and Chen (2016) explained that the desire for an employee to share their knowledge regarding the organization and its practices directly relates to their perception of their self-worth and reputation. Consistent with the SET, Yan and Chen (2016) posited that the information shared by the employee are a direct correlation of the relationship between the employee and employer.

Leadership

Northouse (2018) defined effective leadership behavior as the method leaders use to guide the activities of employees to keep a balance between the achievement of organizational service goals and the functionality of the workplace. Yahaya and Ebrahim (2016) described effective leadership behavior as an antecedent for organizational sustainability, profitability, and competitiveness because it signals how well leadership is engaging and communicating with employees (Oshagbemi & Ocholi, 2013). Wong, Lui, and Tjosvold (2015) suggested that effective leadership promotes a workplace culture that embraces employee engagement as a strategy for improved service quality. Effective leadership behavior is essential to engaging employees in the achievement of organizational service goals (Sarti, 2014). Consequently, it creates an environment in which employees enthusiastically work hard to advance the organization's effectiveness and its delivery of service quality (Yoo & Arnold, 2014). Dinh et al. (2014) posited that 66 different leadership theories have emerged over the decades. Despite an increased interest in the field of leadership, there is no clear leadership style that stands out to be the best suitable style for the challenges business leaders may face in the future. This issue becomes critical due to the worldwide shortage of talent and the ability for business leaders to recruit future leaders for their organization (Oseghale, Mulyata, & Debrah, 2018).

Guillén, Ferrero, and Hoffman (2015) stressed that the dynamic and chaotic nature of the 21st century demands a flexible and adaptive leadership style in an organization. Guillén et al. (2015) further explained that the changing economic times

will require adaptive leadership skills to recognize new opportunities and adjust accordingly.

Business leaders may face extraordinary situations in which success is a function of their ability to develop innovative ways to meet the needs of the organization (Dibrell, Craig, & Neubaum, 2014). Shifts in technology, business, and the changing economic environment present a variety of opportunities (Zdanyte & Neverauskas, 2014). Leadership comprises a variety of traits that include charisma, behaviors, and skills. Leadership is a process whereby one person influences a group to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2018). People are the greatest assets of an organization, and the investment in these assets may influence retention of employees (Beynon, Jones, Pickernell, & Packham, 2015).

A strong organizational structure can help maintain the organizational behavior of accountability. A leader's competent behavior and efficient communication will enhance trust and motivate the staff to meet the objectives of the organization (Northouse, 2018). Assumptions, values, beliefs, and life experiences are all part of what each employee and leader bring to an organization (Hatch, 2018). Storey (2016) posited that smaller organizations relied heavily on leadership for change, employee focus, and innovation and assessed that organizational size alters the effect leadership contributes to organizational change. McDermott et al. (2013) challenged contemporary thinking regarding management styles, specifically transformational visionary leadership. The value of any leadership style was dependent on the ability to maintain psychological contracts. Pfeffer (2013) addressed why theories of organizational behavior were likely to

be valid over time and across settings, even as many aspects of the work environment and the people in it have changed. Three distinct elements are important for employees to identify with, including belief in the goals and values of the company, dedication to meet the goals, and a desire to be a part of the organization (Keskes, 2014).

Transformational Leadership

Yang, Huang, and Hsu (2014) posited that transformational leaders focus on changing the ethical ethos of their society and promoting intellectual stimulation through inspirational methods. Transformational leadership includes four basic dimensions: intellectual stimulation, idealized influence, individualized consideration, and inspirational motivation (Moriano, Molero, Topa, & Mangin, 2014). Intellectual stimulation commences when leaders encourage an employee's creativity when they develop and nurture independent thinking (Moriano et al., 2014.). Demonstrating ethical behaviors and attitudes that cause followers to emulate the behavior occurs when transformational leaders use idealized influence (Mariano et al., 2014). LePine, Zhang, Crawford, and Rich (2016) described these traits as inspirational motivation that occurs when leadership articulates a vision which motivates the employee to accomplish the goals of the organization. LePine et al. also described a transformational leader as instilling confidence in an employee that creates respect and trust, which will increase the employee's productivity and dedication to work. Workers in a transformative environment are encouraged to seek innovative solutions, create opportunities for shared learning, and ask questions to collectively reach a common goal (Jha, 2014).

The study of various leadership styles is important in providing mentorship on leader values and subordinate perceptions (Gonos & Gallo, 2013). Bottomly, Burgess, and Fox (2014) proposed a framework identifying five behaviors for effective leaders: (a) visionary, (b) builder, (c) developer, (d) standard-bearer, and (e) integrator. Bottomly et al. (2014) posited that the most useful measurement of a leader was in the leader's success and organization sustainability. The ability to drive sustainability in an organization requires leadership to incorporate innovative thinking in their business model (McPhee, 2014). MCPhee also believed that implementing a successful business model incorporates change management as it relates to employee motivation and CSR. Leaders promote the vision and goals of an organization which must establish the willingness and engagement of the employees (Gonos & Gallo, 2013).

Business leaders must have the skills to assess the changing business environment and reinventing the value chain may play a key role in the organization's sustainability, thereby driving performance (McPhee, 2014). Transformational leadership styles tended to yield positive benefits in the form of improved performance (Yang, Huang, & Hsu, 2014). Economic, social, political, and technological innovations are the forces which drive organizational changes that accomplished transformational leaders successfully implement (McPhee, 2014). Asset reconfiguration is dependent on a senior leadership's ability to persuade employees to assess different courses of action and willingly adopt different states of mind in response to changes (Winn, Hall, & Erskine, 2017).

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture relates to satisfaction, effectiveness, and overall success in an organization; therefore, having an undesired organizational culture may result in decreased employee satisfaction, effectiveness, and performance (Huang, Li, Meschke, & Guthrie, 2015). Communication, trust, vision, and culture are a few of the qualities a leader must embrace to align with the culture of the organization and the vision of the company (Chiloane-Tsoka, 2013). Schein (2010) defined culture as a shared group experience in which basic assumptions develop as members interact together to resolve a problem that resulted from external and internal factors, forming a basis as to how members may think or feel about those problems. Understanding culture can be on a continuum from observable to unobservable which Schein (2010) divided into three levels that relate to one another: artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and basic underlying assumptions. Lester (2013) described artifact as group structures and processes that are visible such as language. Basic underlying assumptions form over time as things become commonplace among group members (Lester, 2013). Schein (2010) posited that the assumptions formed will suggest very little difference between members.

Senge (2014) defined an organization as a group of individuals who interact together with a common goal through their distributed tasks and are part of the larger social context. Employees within an organization not only interact within that organization's social context but also in the external social environment (Senge, 2014). Understanding the effects of employee retention to an organizational culture will assist leaders in creating and sustaining a positive organizational culture which will influence

positive social change. The underlying culture of the organization, sustainability, and the organization's financial performance are all key components to sustainability (Caganova, Cambal, Weidlochova, & Luptakova, 2015). An organization's mission and policies may forge a stronger culture of sustainability by making explicit the values and beliefs the organization holds itself out to be in the community and to its employees (Eccles, Ioannou, & Serafeim, 2014).

Although scholars have studied organizational culture, management struggles to comprehend fully the effects culture has on employee morale and productivity (Chiloane-Tsoka, 2013). Additionally, the effective leader can assess their leadership skills by the influence it has on the employee (Chiloane-Tsoka, 2013). Rather, a better measure of effective leadership is the success and sustainability of the organization (Bottomley et al., 2014). Shipp, Furst-Holloway, Harris, and Rosen (2014) studied boomerang employees as those employees who voluntarily leave the organization as not a permanent separation, but as employees who may return to the organization in the future. Employees who decide to return to their previous employer are comfortable with the knowledge of the culture of the organization and have a deeper loyalty and connection, limiting the desire to voluntarily leave the organization again (Shipp et al., 2014). Leaders must communicate the vision to subordinates and effectively change attitudes and behaviors (Yafang, 2011). Organizational culture and leadership play a definitive role in the success or failure of a company (Yafang, 2011). Gohen, Blake, and Goodman (2016) described organizational commitment as the employee's identification and involvement with the organization, its leaders, and collective vision. Kuo (2013) posited that organizational

commitment has certain characteristics (i.e., the behavior of staff and socio-cultural behaviors of the organization). Keskes (2014) found that organizational commitment includes a strong emotional component of values, principals, and goals for the employee. Consequently, Kuo (2013) posited that organizational commitment is highly influential in connecting the employee with the organization. Gohen et al. (2016) found that organizational commitment relates to employee job satisfaction and performance and negatively correlated to voluntary turnover. Bhalla, Sidhu, and Kaur (2017) found that a positive relationship between organizational commitment and retention practices might bind employees to the organization.

Succession Planning

Succession planning is a process business leader's use to cultivate future leaders for key positions within the organization (Gray, 2014). Gray (2014) indicated that the most popular purposes of succession planning are to increase employee engagement and foster employee retention to support career aspirations with employees who are top performers. Jain and Jain (2014) identified that some business challenges leadership face is due to their inability to select appropriate candidates and properly forecast attrition. The lack of focus on succession planning could have an adverse impact on an organization's talent pipeline for key leadership positions. The goal of succession planning is to have a transition of leadership and management power from the existing leader to the successor (Gray, 2014). An organization's internal leadership should focus on developing talent for future positions. Marbury and Mayer (2013) suggested that business leaders that do not incorporate succession planning strategies may experience an

increased cost of labor and decreased performance. Business leaders should continuously assess the business needs of the organization and mitigate the gaps in the talent pipeline. Succession management strategies are inevitable for the development of future leaders and successors (Gray, 2014).

Marbury and Mayer (2013) described the process of succession planning as an exchange period to transfer knowledge that assists in developing the skills and knowledge of the employee. Leadership is responsible for the management of their employees and assessing competencies and skills to achieve the organization's objectives (Marbury & Mayer, 2013). Leadership must also incorporate identifying those employees within the organization that will backfill key positions and prepare them for leadership roles. The lack of succession planning will affect the organization's profit and loss as well as the ability to sustain and capture the market segment (Mitroff, 2016). An organization with a smaller workforce has a 70% higher rate of failing versus an organization that prepares for and integrates succession planning in the business model (McKee & Froelich, 2016). Therefore, leadership may want to alter on-boarding, career planning, and leadership development to assist employees in building internal networks for future growth and succession in the organization.

Succession planning is a fundamental component of talent management across all industry sectors (Church, 2014; Claussen, Grohsjean, Luger, & Probst, 2014). Succession planning could influence business performance and employees' attitudes toward longevity with the organization due to future growth opportunities. The business practice of succession planning provides business leaders with the resources to establish and

prepare the prospective talent pool of employee's ready to fill vacant positions. A sense of urgency in identifying the next generation of leaders due to the significant shift in the United States demographic workforce as the baby boomer generation exit to retirement is known as the silver tsunami (Boveda & Metz, 2016). McCauley-Smith, Williams, Gillon, Braganza, and Ward (2013) suggested that leaders may need to replace traditional succession planning with robust leadership succession strategies and aggressively prepare employees for multiple job levels within the organization. The leadership development programs for succession planning are usually formal with leadership coaching and job assignments. Workforce trends are influencing the timeliness of succession planning for the development and training of the succession talent pool (McCauley-Smith et al., 2016).

Business organizations do not commonly practice understanding the importance of succession planning (Hawkeye, 2017). Management may consider reviewing their internal succession planning and assess how their internal processes may affect the organization's growth opportunities. Jain and Jain (2014) argued that business leaders focus more on business strategies and less on succession planning. Simoneaux and Stroud (2014) indicated that succession management is a critical business task leadership must be fully engaged in advancing succession planning initiatives. Succession planning fosters collaboration and creates a working environment where employees can identify their leadership characteristics and be encouraged to develop as leaders (Parris & Peachey, 2013). Jain and Jain (2014) posited that this approach could reduce the costly sourcing of external candidates, strengthen the internal employee-employer relationships,

and ultimately balance the workplace culture. Moreover, this type of organizational change may impact employee morale, retention, and organizational stability (Jain & Jain, 2014). Trust in a team dynamic reinforces a competitive business advantage and indirectly incorporates succession planning when sharing information within the team dynamics (Xi, Kraus, Filser, & Kellermanns, 2015). Pritchard and Whiting (2014) suggested that the baby boomer retirees may cause a gap in leadership and this anomaly has influenced retention behaviors among generational cohorts. This behavior influences how leaders manage multigenerational work teams with varying worldviews and workplace values, which may ultimately impact how organizations deliver business results (Na Ayudhya, 2015). Stark (2015) argued that generational diversity effects some common business areas such as communication, cooperation, perception, and knowledge sharing. Further, employees with a clear reporting structure, roles, and responsibilities will bring about a stronger workforce, which correlates to consistent productivity (Zarei, Chaghoeue, & Ghapanchi, 2014).

Employee Retention

Tiffan (2014) suggested that effective leaders could foster team trust to a level that will enable an organization to engage in unfiltered, passionate debate without conflict. Involving employees in the decision-making process and promoting values that align with the employees will bring about a greater commitment to the organization and create an environment with increased employee retention (Keskes, 2014). Working through organizational challenges, communicating, and recognizing and appreciating the different needs of each employee will bring forth a stronger commitment to the

organization (Keske, 2014). Zheng et al. (2015) posited that employee job satisfaction where morale is high and positive interactions exist with coworkers and the employee's family may increase employee retention.

Employee retention can be a challenging issue for most organizations. Leaders addressing retention of employees face challenges that require immediate attention (Northouse, 2018). Consequently, organizational culture and employee engagement are necessary to maintain a healthy working environment (Northouse, 2018). Contemporary leaders' ability to develop and execute strategies to retain employees and reduce employee turnover rates contributes to an organization's success (Dibrell et al., 2014). Perrot (2015) posited the importance of leadership to incorporate long-term sustainability initiatives in their organizations and employee retention and motivation are all critical areas of focus. Perrot believed pursuing sustainability principles involved collaborating with employees and stakeholders to discuss and implement innovative ideas thereby driving employee retention and trust. Maletic, Dahlgaard, Dahlgaard-Park, and Gomiscek (2015) argued that leaders who adopt sustainability concepts in their business models are more successful in creating a sustainable business organization.

Paillé (2013) conducted two surveys to examine the relationship between an employee's intention to search for other employment and perceived job alternatives and conducted their research around organization citizenship behavior (OCB). The definition of OCB involves an individual's behavior that is discretionary and does not directly relate to a formal reward system (Paillé, 2013). Organization citizenship behavior studied the direct correlation between leaders who openly communicate with employees during a

reorganization or personal struggles will directly reflect the motivation of the employee to meet the expectations of the organization (Paille, 2013). Organization citizenship behavior can assist leaders in assessing the early withdrawal stages of an employee (Paille, 2013).

Lees (2013) posited that management must communicate to employees that their contribution is valued and guide them through a career path with the organization. Career mapping and organizational goals are conversations leaders should have with employees at various intervals in the employee's career (Lees, 2013). Choi-Sang and Perumal's (2014) study was to understand and overcome an employee's intention to leave or resign and address HRM's challenge of a shrinking entry-level employee pool. Choi-Sang and Perumal's (2014) research encompassed the psychological dimension, organizational significance, and economic dimensions as to why employees voluntarily leave. Gialuisi and Coetzer (2013) concluded various themes as to why the employee voluntarily left the organization and categorized themes for the following reasons: (a) the desire to leave a dysfunctional employee/employer relationship, (b) career opportunity or growth, and (c) work distribution and overload. The study also assessed that HRM could limit voluntary employee turnover by focusing on ensuring the new employee fit into the current working environment, provide opportunities for growth and progression and assure remuneration packages fit the employee's needs and desires (Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013).

Zargar, Vandenberghe, Marchand, and Ayed (2014) examined the relationship between actual turnover and commitment. Moreover, job satisfaction and employee motivation were two key points in assessing the challenge employees with high growth

opportunities face in the workforce. Also outlined was the importance of HRM creating a learning environment for those employees who were not high growth employees. Zargar et al. (2014) concluded that high growth employees must stay engaged and feel challenged; whereas, the employee who is not a high growth employee will grow and stay with an organization that is willing to create a slower environment for learning. Kuo, Lin, and Li (2014) suggested that turnover is not necessarily detrimental to an organization. Zhao, Zhou, He, Cai, and Fu (2014) indicated there are some benefits to turnover that may be positive over the cost. Kuo et al. (2014) suggested that one of the benefits of turnover is the possibility of paying the replacement worker lower wages than the employee who left the organization. Leadership must embrace and appreciate that not all employees are high achievers, and the importance of *worker bees* is critical to all organizations (Zargar et al., 2014).

Zargar et al. (2014) study further offered guidance to enhance employee commitment and reduce voluntary turnover. Leaders that recognize employees with strong growth needs will reduce an employee's intent to quit when they believe an organization acknowledges their talent and growth potential (Zargar et al., 2014). It is equally important for leadership and HRM to provide coaching and training to those employees who display low growth, those that have needs that will encourage growth and self-development, as well as show genuine interest and foster a social exchange relationship and commitment to the organization (Zargar et al., 2014). Vardaman, Allen, Otondo, Hancock, Shore, and Rogers (2016) agreed that the retention of employees is

important to the organization as the loss of valuable skills, knowledge, and abilities can hinder the organization's sustainability and growth.

Voluntary Turnover

Naca, Rempel, Imada, Alexandre, and Janowitz (2016) discussed the drastic changes in the workplace brought forth by disruptive technology. Employees must develop different skillsets to sustain an organization's growth as well as the ability to compete in the marketplace (Naca et al., 2016). Ballinger, Cross, and Holtom (2016) asserted that employees with strong connections and relationships at work would stay due to the attachment to the organization. Consequently, investing in team building within a group dynamic will create a strong connection in which communication can flow with a greater potential benefit to the success of the team and the project. Kuo, Lin, and Li (2014) suggested that turnover may not always be detrimental to an organization's profitability, sustainability, and performance. Zhao et al. (2014) suggested that some benefits of turnover may provide greater opportunities for employees to bring new ideas and knowledge to the organization. Turnover among low performing professionals does not constitute voluntary turnover (van Duijn & Bonten, 2014). Employees may decide to voluntarily leave their employment with an organization due to personal or professional issues. However, the cost of employee turnover may play a role in the success and growth of the company. Turnover not only creates a loss of production, but turnover is expensive due to the cost to pay and replace the employee (Cosar, Kerem, & Tybout, 2016). Meyer-Rath et al. (2015) suggested that turnover and employee disengagement are costly to an organization and can negatively impact the effectiveness of the business. Departing

professionals take with them knowledge and experience when leaving the organization (Cosar et al., 2016). Leadership concerns themselves with the direct and indirect cost of internal processes and functions (Meyer-Rath et al., 2015). Direct costs may represent costs associated with the processes employees use within the organization to achieve a task and indirect costs are those costs consisting of employee replacement, turnover rates, and the reduction in productivity (Meyer-Rath et al., 2015). Leaders may need to understand and address employee turnover to assist them in improving employee retention. The relationship an employee has with the leadership and the organization may build job embeddedness that can also assist in the retention of employees. Ballinger, Cross, and Holtom (2016) asserted that the more connections an employee has with other individuals, the more likely they will decide to stay with an organization when challenges arise. Karatepe and Shahriari (2014) posited that perceived negative effects of unfair or unjust treatment of employees would cause disruption in the team dynamics and affect retention of the employee base. Finally, Allen, Pelkotorpi, and Rubenstein (2016) analyzed job embeddedness as the employee's internal mobility opportunities, job satisfaction, age, gender, and educational background.

In addition to the overall financial costs to the organization, turnover is disruptive to the company's operations. Four out of five business leaders rank employee retention as an urgent or important concern facing their organization (Cook, 2016). McAuliffe et al. (2013) noted that the cost of turnovers expands beyond the costs associated with hiring policies and procedures. The cost of replacing an employee is approximately one-fifth of the employee's salary (Christie, 2014). Organizations experiencing high employee

turnover may experience a negative impact on their profitability due to the cost of replacing the employee.

Strojilova and Rafferty (2013) posited that it is important for leadership to understand the motivation of its employees when they chose to leave their employment voluntarily. Leadership must focus on bridging the relationships within the organization through a variety of methods including job rotation to encourage diverse networks (Byerly, 2012). In doing so, this may improve the relationship and assist employees in investing time and effort with co-workers, thereby building a stronger foundation. Further, Strojilova and Rafferty (2013) posited that employees experiencing stronger social relationships at work will increase the employee's odds of staying with the organization long term. Byerly (2012) described employee voluntary turnover to include regrettable and non-regrettable turnover. Strojilova and Rafferty (2013) asserted that the decision to leave an organization is either functional or dysfunctional. Dysfunctional turnover is detrimental to an organization as it entails the loss of a key employee (Strojilova & Rafferty, 2013).

Dhar (2015) found that an employee who receives poor training and development is not only important to the sustainability and growth of the organization, but enhances the employees desire to stay. Training enhances the employees understanding of change in the workplace. Prediscan and Roiban (2014) suggested that change occurs if managers acknowledge the importance of the change forces. The success of the change process will depend on the employee support and understanding the importance and need for change (Prediscan & Roiban, 2014). The internal forces that drive change are employees and

managers as well as the strength of the organization's culture and structure (Predișcan & Roiban, 2014). Fink, Frank, Gundolf, and Kailer (2014) posited that some organizations lack the understanding and capacity necessary to reflect on their change experiences which, in turn, limits the opportunity to learn from the change. Finally, Prediscan and Roiban (2014) concluded that change management of an organization is for leadership to understand what drives change and then the skills to implement the change. Tschopp, Grote, and Gerber (2014) posited that self-determination, advancement, mobility, and security represented the basis of preferences toward a possible career path within an organization. Lees (2013) indicated that an employee's reputation is essential in the employee's development and career goals. Employees that do not feel they are a fit or valued will take those skills and talents to an organization that will fulfill their needs (Tschopp et al., 2014).

Lyness and Judiesch (2001) found that female voluntary turnover rates tend to be than their male counterparts. Demographics, gender, culture, and organizational embeddedness all play a role in voluntary turnover (Lyness & Judiesch, 2001). Ng and Feldman (2014) inferred that older employees may develop stronger links to co-workers, and leaving may only create difficult financial sacrifices. Older employees may feel that they have a higher risk aversion that may influence the desire to stay because of the pension and medical benefits, as opposed to younger employees who believe they will build new relationships in a new venture and are not concerned with benefits (Ng & Feldman, 2014). Peltokorpi et al. (2015) emphasized that management cannot assume older employees will not leave an organization due to job embeddedness. The age of the

employee withstanding, leaders must focus on the knowledge and significant role the employee has in the organization when considering the possibility of retaining the employee or succumb to voluntary turnover intentions (Ng & Feldman, 2014).

Work-related stress may also influence employee retention. For-profit employees have a long-term employee relationship with an organization and feel a connection to the company's mission and branding (Newton & Teo, 2014). If the organization is a non-profit, the employee may feel a moral connection and loyalty that creates the desire to stay (Newton & Teo, 2014). Graham, Murray, and Amuso (2002) examined the role that stock-related rewards and social identity theory (SIT) have in fulfilling employee expectations. Stock related rewards include the development of the employee's skills, additional training, and opportunity to advance within the organization. Newton and Teo (2014) identified SIT as a person not having only one personal self, but several connections to other groups or individuals. These variables and stressors are not limited to employer-employee relationships, but the boundaries fall within the social and family relationships as well. Newton and Teo (2014) identified three different types of higher order identifications including organization, humanistic identification, and corporation identification.

Communication regarding opportunities and expectations builds a psychological contract that in turn will promote employee retention (Graham et al., 2002).

Communication, professional, social, and personal levels of interaction can also foster loyalty, trust, and respect from the members of the organization and management.

Employees who feel relaxed, valued, and content at work will sense a connection to the

organization (Graham et al., 2002). Graham et al. (2002) posited that building a strong culture and fostering employee engagement in a wide variety of tasks might assist the organization in retention of its employees. Shuck, Twyford, Reio, and Shuck (2014) defined employee engagement as cognitive, emotional, and positive energy the employee projects towards employee engagement and the organization. Development opportunities in organizations are perceived equally across all levels and departments (Shuck et al., 2014). Shuck et al. (2014) identified this perception as having possible implications on the development of the employee, performance, and turnover intention.

McClellan, Burris, and Detert (2013) focused their research on employees who may feel powerless when voicing concerns or push back but continue to stay with the organization with no desire to exit. Not all change is necessary, but employees must feel the leader has the skills and ability to listen and decipher whether change is necessary (McClellan et al., 2013). Leadership that does not communicate with employees will ultimately cause voluntary employee turnover (McClellan et al., 2013). A high level of voice from both management and employees indicate growth and expression, thereby bringing growth and creativity to the organization that allows sustained growth to stay competitive in the market (McClellan et al., 2013). Once employees have expressed creativity or concerns, they must see action from leadership. Without this, there may be a reverse effect on the employees and cause employees to voluntarily leave the organization (McClellan et al., 2013). Leaders must assist their constituencies to unlearn outmoded or habituated methods of construing opportunities or challenges and move

them toward innovation pushing against beliefs or culturally embedded assumptions (Nicolaidis & McCallum, 2013).

Most employees want to have pride in the organization for which they work. If the organization becomes the focus of negative attention, it will affect employee voluntary turnover (Helm, 2013). Management must focus on external factors to align with pride and favorable reputation of the community. Helm (2013) focused this study on perceived external reputation (PER) and pride in management (PIM) to focus on how these two elements affect employee voluntary turnover. The workplace arena has identified two forms of pride. There is the personal pride you take in your work from which you derive your self-respect and value. Helm (2013) focused on the other element of pride, and that is collective pride. Collective pride is the connection associated with being an employee of an organization. Helm (2013) concluded that the employee's overall satisfaction with an organization directly relates to the perception of the company. Society and organizations, through the increased complexity and diversity of the organizations, provoke either a general sense of confusion and uncertainty or a situation whereby individuals are typically unable to tell whether something is this or that (Michela & Vena, 2012). Adaptation is the process of achieving a fit between an individual's behavior and the new demands produced by unique problems resulting from change (Tims, Derks, & Bakker, 2016). The fear of ambiguity comes from the perceived loss employees feel due to change (Nicolaidis & Callum, 2013). Ambiguity and ambivalence may cause organizations to postpone or implement necessary changes for

organizational sustainability. Leading change requires leadership to know when and to what extent to be assertive (O’Kane & Cunningham, 2014).

Training and Development

Ryu and Lee (2013) stressed that the retention of mediocre employees is equally as devastating to an organization as employee voluntary turnover. Therefore, not all turnover costs are unnecessary (Ryu & Lee, 2013). Human resource management (HRM) is turning to coaching, not as a remedial practice, but rather as a part of the proactive leadership development tool necessary to drive a sustainable organization with growth and innovation (Bozer, Sarros, & Santora, 2014). Continuous training and developing of employees can play an important role in increasing organizational productivity, performance, and profitability (Zampetakis, 2014). Al-Emadi and Schwabenland (2015) suggested that HRM can influence whether the employee stays with an organization through training and development, performance appraisals, recognition, and promotion opportunities. Receiving feedback and understanding what motivates the employee will play a key role in retention (Strojilova & Rafferty, 2013). Memon et al. (2014) posited that employees develop a sense of obligation to the organization to stay longer when the organization promotes career opportunities through training and learning new competencies.

Rubeiro and Semedo (2014) discussed the importance of HRM’s ability to reduce organizational turnover, attract high-level candidates, and develop and maintain strong, effective levels in the organization. Watty-Benjamin and Udechukwu (2014) examined HRM practices that highlight employee’s intentions to leave a job. While the perception

of the trustworthiness and fairness drive employees' perceptions and behaviors, HRM best practices add exceptional value to human capital (Rubeiro & Semedo, 2014).

Employees will derive perceptions as to whether HRM is trustworthy or effective by the actions they implement and the investment in the organization's employees (Rubeiro & Semedo, 2014). Shuck et al. (2014) focused on the perception employees have in the participation of human resource development (HRD) and the underrepresentation of turnover intent. Shuck et al. (2014) suggested the link between HRD practices and employee engagement to turnover intentions and concluded that engagement partially mediated the HRD practices and turnover intent. Research studies include effective hiring and selection of employees, a favorable working environment, management support, positive reinforcement to include training of employees, and benefits to meet the needs of a diverse employee base (Byerly, 2012). Trained employees are more satisfied with their career than those employees who receive little to no training (Tabvuma, Georgellis, & Lange, 2015). Byerly (2012) assessed the importance of focusing on not only recruiting and hiring, but also the importance of retaining valuable employees before they choose other employment. Byerly (2012) described the importance of leadership as assessing whether employee voluntary turnover and retention reflect the organizational culture of the company.

A skilled workforce and the retention of employees is a challenge facing leaders of organizations, irrespective of the industry (Byerly, 2012). Managing talent and understanding what motivates an employee will be an essential component in retaining a skilled workforce to meet the demands of the organization. Call et al. (2015) examined

the elements of turnover rates, which included the changing quality/quantity of human resources that depart, change and turnover dispersion, and replacement hires. The study encompassed the context-emergent turnover theory (CET), which conceptualizes human resources capital and defines collective turnover as the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics of employee turnover (Call et al., 2015). The authors incorporated static and dynamic rates of employee turnover and CET and concluded that both could affect your organization and employee performance. Static turnover rates and turnover rate changes are distinct and capture different employee turnover causes that may contribute to employee retention, employee voluntary turnover or dissatisfaction (Call et al., 2015).

Coetzee and Stoltz (2015) asserted that training and development are key practices for retaining staff. Coetzee and Stoltz (2015) posited that while it is important for leaders to be accountable to train and develop staff, the employee is accountable to control their development through discussions with direct reports. Choi-Sang and Perumal (2014) outlined considerations as to fair pay, treatment, and the ability to rotate into other positions as incentives HRM can use when addressing employee voluntary turnover. Discussion regarding fair treatment and pay would be an area of focus to change employee voluntary turnover (Choi-Sang & Perumal, 2014). Finally, fair remuneration practices are important to match the roles and responsibilities placed on the employee and performance (Coetzee & Stoltz, 2015).

Benefits and Compensation

Employees want the opportunity to grow in an organization. Valuing employee loyalty by opening opportunities for growth, as well as fair pay and treatment, is key (Choi-Sang & Perumal, 2014). Gialuisi and Coetzer (2013) agreed that pay and benefits are important, but unity and positive social connections and the feeling of a family unit may be equally vital as job satisfiers for employees. The root causes of employee voluntary turnover, according to He, Zhang, and Zhang (2014), include salary, benefits, training, job rotation, and career opportunities. Gialuisi and Coetzer (2013) focused their research on what factors influenced employee voluntary turnover and how managers can retain key employees. Research found that relationship conflict, career opportunities, and additional work responsibilities as the primary reasons for employee voluntary turnover (Gialuisi & Coetzer, 2013).

Frazis and Loewenstein (2013) argued the importance of incorporating fringe benefits in the retention of employees and reduce employee turnover. Meeting the needs of the employee, both monetarily and professionally, are strategies to enhance organizational performance by reducing employee voluntary turnover and retention of productive employees (Frazis & Loewenstein, 2013). Benefits and wages are two key components for retention of key employees (Ryu & Lee, 2013). Ryu and Lee (2013) suggested there are two areas of fringe benefits that bring about most of the attention: pensions and health care insurance. Frazis and Lowenstein (2013) discussed the need to assess the two fringe benefits and what impact it may have on your workforce. Agyapong, Osei, Farren, and McAuliffe (2015) indicated that pay and reward, as well as

employee engagement, are all strategies that recognize the importance of work-life balance and promote retention among professionals in the workplace environment. Regardless of the business environment, retention strategies are critical for an organization in maintaining an advantage over its competition.

Transition

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to identify strategies business leaders use to retain employees in an academic nursing organization. Section 1 included the background, problem and purpose statements, nature of the study, research question, and interview questions. Section 1 also examined the conceptual framework, operational definitions, assumptions, limitations, delimitations, the significance of the study, implications for social change, and review of the literature. This study contains the methodology and design selected for the study. The section provides the purpose, role of the researcher, study participants, and ethical considerations. Section 2 also contains the research design, population and sampling methods, data collection instruments, data organization and analysis techniques, finishing with reliability and validity of the study. I provide the findings of the study and potential implications for social change. In Section 3, I will analyze data that was useful for ascertaining the findings of the study. This section will include an overview of the study, presentation of the findings, application to professional practice, implications for social change, recommendations for action and future studies, reflections, and conclusion of the study. Using the analyzed data, I will explain the outcomes of the study thoroughly.

Section 2: The Project

In Section 2, I present information on the research method and design used to address the business problem guided by the research question: What strategies do business leaders use to retain employees in an academic nursing environment? I also discuss the role of the researcher, the participants, and the justification of the selected methodology and design. This section includes data related to population and sampling techniques, ethical concerns, data collection instruments, and strategies to assure the reliability and validity of this study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to identify strategies that business leaders use to retain employees in an academic nursing organization. The participants included four business leaders who successfully used employee retention strategies. The population included business leaders working in academic nursing environments in Texas, Kentucky, and Florida. The information from this case study may lead to social benefits, as the results may improve the quality of nursing students graduating and ultimately improve a patient's life through superior patient care. Retaining employees in an academic learning environment will assist students with familiarity and trust in the organization. If a student continues to see turnover, they will be less likely to constantly work with different employees, and it will lower their comfort and trust levels. A more experienced and qualified nurse workforce may provide optimal care to patients. Nurses who are more experienced may assess the care necessary to treat the patient and limit the

time and care the patient may otherwise need. Additional outcomes may include decreased healthcare costs and increased positive patient outcomes.

Role of the Researcher

In a qualitative study, the researcher assumes the role of the data collection instrument (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). My role as the researcher was to complete an interpretive case study to gain a better understanding of the strategies business leaders use to retain employees. The role of the researcher included defining the research concept and designing, interviewing, transcribing, analyzing, authenticating, and recording the study's data to develop themes (Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Fomani, Sho-ghi, & Cheraghi, 2014). Additionally, the role of the researcher in a qualitative multiple case study is to investigate, collect the data, and prepare the data for analysis. In qualitative studies, the researcher uses varying data collection techniques to evaluate organizational procedures (Abildgaard, Saksvic, & Nielsen, 2016).

I secured institutional review and permission to complete the research and obtained the requisite documentation from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB). I verified that I am a current student who is conducting this study in partial fulfillment of the requirements to complete the Doctor of Business Administration course. I bring over 25 years of executive and management experience at all levels of leadership within an organization. My research interest in this study directly related to my experience in a senior leadership capacity in which I was responsible for employee retention. In the execution of my routine duties, I coached, hired, trained, and focused on bridging relationships across academic and operational areas. I followed strict guidelines

and adhered to a well-planned interview protocol with data collection guidelines and techniques.

The interview protocol consisted of the established topic for the study, opening statements and instructions to the interviewer, the key research questions, probes to follow key questions, and transition messages for the interviewer. The researcher should not interview participants with whom they have had a role in providing direct or indirect services (Yin, 2014). Because I conducted the interview in the environment of the participants, I insured my openness to contrary evidence and diminished any bias.

Hernandez-Hernandez and Sancho-Gil (2015) posited that qualitative researchers and the role they play in the research process are interconnected in a meaningful way. It is important that the researcher, during the research process, create an atmosphere of trust that allows participants to provide their individual descriptions of organizational experiences (Henriques, 2014). As the researcher, I adhered to ethical, principled guidelines for the protection of humans as outlined in the *Belmont Report* (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). I followed the guidelines of the *Belmont Report*, which are respecting confidentiality and opinions of the participants and accurately reporting the information they provided. Finally, the *Belmont Report* (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979) also provided comprehension and safety guidelines for research conducted on individuals without their consent or understanding. Novak (2014) discussed the role that researchers should follow when conducting scholarly work with the level of ethical requirements outlined in the

Belmont Report (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979) to protect human subjects who are participating in their study. A primary role of the researcher is to gather information about institutional conditions under which real people coexist and share their experiences in social and professional contexts (Hernandez-Hernandez & Sancho-Gil, 2015). Further, scholars have the responsibility to avoid exploiting all participants and ensure participants confirm that they have received, understood, and signed an informed consent document (Nicolaidis & McCallum, 2013).

To mitigate researcher bias, I observed the outline of the interview protocol (Appendix A) for all participants. I did not seek alternate interpretation for information collected from participants during the interview process. Onwuegbuzie and Byers (2014) indicated that scholars should ensure the data is accurate, transparent, and not fabricated to influence an aspect of their study. I adhered to member checking principles for verification purposes. Excluding business leaders with a perceived or acknowledged relationship mitigates any undue influence. Cho and Lee (2014) believed that scholars who authenticate the information in their study can increase the credibility, dependability, and transferability of their findings and eliminate the possibility of misrepresenting data.

As part of the bracketing process, I asked each participant the same open-ended questions in the same order. In a qualitative case study, the scholar creates institutional relationships to explore all contextual elements to the phenomenon under review with careful consideration that is focused on how to eliminate bias and establish validity (Hyett, Kenny, & Dickson-Swift, 2014). As a business leader, I understand the

fundamental role that employee retention can have on the sustainability, costs, and growth of an organization. Percy, Kostere, and Kostere (2015) found that a scholar uses their preknowledge and preunderstandings of the phenomenon in conjunction with participants' perspectives to format their own analyses. Schneider (2015) discussed the importance of researchers reflecting on their personal thought processes during research and understanding that the procedures they use may ultimately influence participants in their study. On-going negotiation and recruitment skills by the researcher can be effective in managing a participant's reactions and responses during the data collection process (Chiumento, Rahman, Frith, Snider, & Tol, 2017). Further, Chiumento et al. (2017) identified the persuasiveness of the research content, demographics, and general department as factors that potential participants may review prior to allowing the researcher access to the participants' knowledge and data.

As the researcher, I used different negotiation skills to recruit participants based on my knowledge of their professional experiences and achievements. Sanjari et al. (2014) stated that in a qualitative study, the scholar is involved in all aspects of the study. In this regard, and prior to the research commencing, scholars should establish clear protocols to maintain the integrity of the objectives and findings of their study. I addressed and mitigated my personal lens and disclosed my previous position as a business leader. I have previously managed personnel as a business leader, and I was open-minded and mitigated my biases. I alleviated these biases, in part, by ensuring that I had no close personal relationships or authority over any of the participants in this study, their employment, or employment status. Corti and Van den Eynden (2015) stated that

researchers must execute a responsible approach to produce the highest quality investigative data. Upon the completion of the study, scholars may seek to invite leaders to discuss the findings and recommendations to lead change processes and outcomes, and to promote strategic objectives (Zhang, Levenson, & Crossley, 2015).

Participants

The participants included business leaders in an academic nursing environment who had successfully implemented employee retention strategies. The population included four business leaders in Texas, Kentucky, and Florida. Yin (2014) suggested that thoroughness, as used in the criterion of research validity, refers to the adequacy of the data and is dependent on sound sampling and data saturation. Feerasta (2016) found participants who have recent business management experience about a researcher's study topic are desirable candidates for the researcher to interview. These managers had a minimum of 5 years' experience in a leadership role that included a focus on employee retention. Becton et al. (2017) found participants who have several years' experience and have implemented successful employee retention strategies are appropriate for a researcher's study on this topic. Feldman and Kricheli-Katz (2015) explained that participants must possess significant expertise in their field. The participants for this study had sufficient experience and knowledge to respond to this study's research question, which was: What strategies do business leaders use to retain employees in an academic nursing environment?

My first strategy for gaining access to the participants for this study was to contact each department director and discuss the nature of this study. Establishing a

working relationship can assist the researcher in engaging the participants and improve the quality of the data collection (Jack, DiCenso, & Lohfeld, 2016; Kivlighan, Hill, Gelso, & Baumann, 2016; Wilson, Dashielle-Aje, Anatchkova, Haraeendran, Leidy, & Wyrwich, 2017). I fostered the working relationship with the participants by introducing myself and gave each participant a summary of the goal of the study. Gaining access to potential participants includes conducting a purposeful sampling of business leaders (Kastner, Antony, Soobiah, Straus, & Tricco, 2016). I established a rapport by contacting the potential participants via telephone and transmitted e-mails confirming our conversation. I continued the dialogue regarding the nature of this study and the protocol that would be incorporated as we moved forward.

Carden and Boyd (2014) explained that developing a rapport with participants is essential for a meaningful exploration of the phenomenon. When I received the e-mail confirmation, I discussed the nature of the study, protocols, and the data collection methods I would follow during the course of this study with the participant. My strategies for building a professional working relationship with participants was to contact the participants on the phone and request a face-to-face meeting. Carden and Boyd (2014) suggested that personal contact, such as a phone conversation can help establish a working relationship with participants and develop their interest in participating in a study.

If the participant was interested in participating in the study, we scheduled a mutually agreed upon date, time, and place that was convenient to the participant for an interview. I outlined the purpose of the study to the participant during my initial

telephone conversation and followed-up with an email reconfirming our conversation. I strived to continue developing a working relationship with the participants by explaining the purpose of the study, the research procedures, and answered any questions they had. Parker (2014) found developing a rapport with participants is an essential component to obtain sufficient data for a researcher's study. The participants for this study had sufficient experience and knowledge to respond to this study's research question, which is: "What strategies do business leaders use to retain employees in an academic nursing environment?" White and Hind (2015) shared the view of the importance for all parties to have a mutual understanding to generate a productive qualitative study. When closing out the interview, I once again reiterated to the participants that the information will always remain confidential.

Research Method and Design

I used a qualitative case study involving four business leaders and explored what strategies they used to retain employees successfully. Lindlof and Taylor (2017) discussed the importance of the qualitative paradigm as an appropriate research method to gain an understanding of this complex phenomena. The research design and method are the blueprints that connect the elements of research into the process of exploring questions and drawing conclusions from a study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). The research design will serve as a logical plan in the process of collecting and analyzing data relevant to the research question by strengthening the study's accuracy and validity.

Research Method

A researcher will use the qualitative research method to arrive at an understanding of an occurrence from the perspective of those experiencing the occurrence (Corbin et al., 2014). Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2016) suggested that the use of a qualitative approach has been useful in uncovering new phenomena, creating, testing new hypotheses, and generating new research methodologies for managing change. A qualitative approach was appropriate for this study since the feedback from the four business leaders outlining their employee retention strategies was the basis for data collection. Lindlof and Taylor (2017) posited that quantitative methodology is useful in providing a snapshot of a group or institution; however, it does not offer an in-depth understanding of the feelings and opinions of a group or their intentions. The quantitative method was not appropriate for this study as these measurements would not describe the human experience of my participants. McKim (2015) and Morse (2016) argued that there is substantial rationale in performing a mixed methods study because the use of multiple methods can make the research more comprehensive than a single method. Since I did not intend to perform statistical or computational analyses, the mixed method approach was not used in this study.

Research Design

Pavlovich, Sinah, and Rodrigues (2016) posited that there are five designs in qualitative research which are case study, phenomenological, ethnography, grounded theory, and narrative research. I used the case study design to explore business managers' strategies for retaining employees. Raeburn, Schmied, Hungerford, and Cleary (2015)

posited that researchers conducting case studies will strive to represent multiple realities described by the participants and interpret the data collected from observations and interviews to construct descriptions of the phenomena. In this study, a case study was appropriate because I explored and interpreted data on retention strategies by gathering information from four participants. Creswell and Creswell (2017) posited that using the phenomenological research design assists the researcher to ask a group of people about their perceptions, opinions, and beliefs about a particular phenomenon. I did not ask a group of people about their perceptions or beliefs about a particular phenomenon; therefore, the phenomenological design was not appropriate for this study. Kastner et al. (2016) described the use of ethnographic researcher study as assessing cultural groups in their natural environment over a prolonged period (Kastner et al., 2016). I did not study cultural groups; therefore, the ethnographic design was not suitable for this study. Bennett, Hill, and Daddario (2015) concluded that a narrative research design consists of written or spoken words or visual representation of individuals. This study relied on face-to-face interviews rather than a visual representation of individuals; therefore, a narrative research design was not appropriate. Grounded theory research is discovering emerging patterns in data (Yin, 2014). The focus of my study was not discovering emerging patterns; therefore, the grounded theory was not appropriate for this study. After each interview, I recorded the data and compared it to previous data collected, which guided data saturation by determining when participants ceased providing new information. Data saturation occurs when the researcher determines that the participants are not providing

new or different information; therefore, the data collection process is no longer necessary (Viet-Thi, Raphael, Bruno, & Ravaud, 2017).

Population and Sampling

Elo et al. (2014) referred to sampling types to include convenience, purposive, theoretical, selective, and snowballing. I solicited and secured interviewees via purposeful sampling from four diverse participants knowledgeable about employee retention. Purposeful sampling involves selecting individuals that are knowledgeable or experienced with a phenomenon of interest, as well as insure the participants' willingness to participate (Benoot, Hannes, & Bilsen, 2016; Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Palinkas et al., 2015). Purposive sampling is suitable for qualitative studies when a participant's knowledge is important in gaining an in-depth understanding of the question under study (Elo et al., 2014).

I identified participants using purposive sampling. Baur et al. (2015) described purposive sampling as a nonprobability sampling technique that is most effective when the researcher is seeking to understand the participant's perspective. Purposeful sampling allows researchers to sample a group of people who have the best information about the problem under investigation (Palinkas et al., 2015). Marais and Van Wyk (2014) posited that purposeful sampling allows a researcher to maximize the data collected for analysis. Barratt, Ferris, and Lenton (2015) suggested that purposeful sampling is the most appropriate sampling method when selecting participants that have knowledge and experience with the topic under study.

A specific set of criteria for this study was used to ensure participants have the knowledge to give meaningful data. The population for the study was limited to business leaders in an academic nursing environment who directly affect the retention of employees. The study included four business leaders in an academic nursing environment in three different states, Texas, Kentucky, and Florida. Mason (2017) indicated that the sampling should reflect a logical process of choosing an appropriate sample size in response to the research question

Wei, Dengsheng, Yanlan, and Jixian (2015) indicated that an appropriate sample size is one that will adequately address the research question, but that the information will not be so large that the data will not allow an in-depth analysis. Estimating the number of participants to achieve saturation depends on factors, such as the background of the problem, research method, the design, nature of the study, the study's conceptual framework, and the participants' eligibility criteria (Hennick, Kaiser, & Marconi, 2017). Elo et al. (2014) supported the notion that there is no commonly acceptable size for qualitative studies, but the sample depends on the quality of data, goals of the study, and the research question.

Elo et al. (2014) postulated that data saturation could indicate the optimal sample size. Elo et al. emphasized that data saturation ensured replication of themes, which helps form a comprehensive and complete study. If data saturation were incomplete, it could cause problems in data analysis (Elo et al., 2014). Data saturation determines the purposeful sample size. Shahgholian and Yousefi (2015) suggested the number of participants required to achieve saturation in a qualitative study could range from five to

fifty. A researcher attains data saturation when no new information surfaces, no new themes emerge, and there is enough information to replicate the study (Wei et al., 2015). As I interviewed participants, I assessed when no new themes emerged, and data saturation had been met. I compared the information to previous data collected, which guided the data saturation by determining when participants ceased to provide new information to the research question of this study. I designed interview questions and interviewed the participants until no new data emerges. Praus and Mujtaba (2015) found data saturation occurs when there are no new data, themes and coding, and the ability to replicate the study is possible.

I interviewed participants who had experience, knowledge, were available, and were well versed in organizational policies and retention planning efforts. This study took place in a location chosen by the participant. Purposeful sampling comprises specific selection criteria that will target participants with specialized and specific professional and intellectual characteristics (Apostolopoulos & Liargovas, 2016). Under purposeful sampling techniques, the participants selected should have the inherent ability to disclose their professional and individual work experiences by using articulate, expressive, and reflective communication skills (Alonso, Moscoso, & Salgado, 2017). Successful implementation strategies used by business leaders was the criteria in the selection of the participants for this study.

Ethical Research

Researchers have a moral obligation to be honest, accurate, and complete in the presentation of their findings, as well as transparency to articulate how they analyzed and

modified their data to establish their disclosures and conclusions (Jordan, 2014). Disruptive technology and the ever-changing business environment present new challenges for scholars on how to manage ethical issues in their research activities (Yallop & Mowatt, 2016). Wallace and Sheldon (2015) believed the ethical approval processes in business research must involve the integrity of both the administrative and academic gatekeeping and minimize negative repercussions of participants or researchers' self-interest.

Scholars are responsible for disclosing and exercising their ethical intent, judgment, behavior, and awareness during the research process (Hersch & Shinall, 2015). Prior to commencing the data collection process, I obtained permission from the Walden University IRB. I gathered information from four business leaders about the strategies they used to retain employees. I commenced recruiting participants and advised them of their rights and obligations as outlined in the informed consent document. I contacted the participants by phone and reiterated that their participation was voluntary and they could withdraw at any time by contacting me by phone or email. I followed up and confirmed the conversation via email regarding the opportunity to withdraw from this study. I asked the participants to sign a consent form that they agreed to voluntarily be interviewed. Karatuna (2015) suggested using informed consent forms as an additional procedure in verifying the willingness of the participants to provide an interview. Lynn and Brewster (2015) cited that the interview process is for participants willfully disclosing information about a researcher's phenomenon. Upon the execution of the consent form and under the protocols of the Belmont Report, I ensured that all participants had a full understanding

of their part in this study. I outlined in the Consent Form that no monetary compensation would be given to any participant for their participation in this study. Kloek, Peter, and Wagner (2015) explained that the researcher has the responsibility to assure participants understand the consent form and that no any monetary compensation and incentives will be given for their participation.

I provided ethical protection for the participants in this study under the 1979 Belmont Report. The Belmont Report protects participants under three principles: beneficence, justice, and respect. The Multicase Study Protocol (Appendix A) and the Confidentiality Agreement (Appendix B) documents are attached and outlined in the table of contents. The final doctoral manuscript includes the Walden IRB Approval Number 02-06-19-0552731. Laperrière, Messing, and Bourbonnais (2016) discussed the ethical obligations regarding securing and protecting data for five years, the timeline to destroy data, and maintaining the confidentiality of the participants. The names of the participants and companies were assigned pseudonyms to ensure participant confidentiality (Appendix B). The participants' data will remain on a password-protected flash drive locked in a safe in my home office for 5 years. After the 5-year period, I will destroy all raw data, delete the files from the flash drive, and shred all paperwork, to protect the confidentiality of the participants and the organization.

Data Collection Instruments

I was the principal data collection instrument for this case study. The primary data collection instrument was semistructured face-to-face interviews. The secondary collection instrument was business documents outlining human resource policies and best

practices for the retention of employees. Appendix A through C as outlined in the Table of Contents will have the data collection instruments, which included interview protocol, interview questions, direct observation protocols, and recoding mechanisms.

I conducted semistructured face-to-face interviews, which included six open-ended questions that collected information on participants' strategies used to retain employees. Doring and Wansink (2015) found that a face-to-face interview is the primary data collection method qualitative researchers use to accumulate information about the phenomenon under study. I used semistructured face-to-face interview questions (Appendix C) to manage the discussions and listened to the human-side of professional experiences. Semistructured interviews have a distinct structure that allows the participants to impart information relative to the research subject in which the participant has years of experience (Finkelstein, King, & Voyles, 2014). In a semistructured interview, the interviewer can develop a purposeful venue to manage the discussion and retrieve the interviewee's experiences, which secures rich data on the participant's opinions, and professional employment practices (Pauly & Buzzanell, 2016).

I remained impartial during the interview process as I reviewed the recordings to assess any themes. Durrani and Rajagopal (2016a) found that scholars occasionally fail to separate themselves from the research during the interview process and collection of the data. Completing the data collection process necessitates the qualitative scholar to engage participants in spoken and non-spoken interactions and collect documents that will support the participants' responses to interview questions (Butt, Dahling & Hansel, 2016). Alonso et al. (2017) found distinctive interpersonal skills and self-awareness are

characteristics that perceptive scholars display to obtain an in-depth understanding of their participants and manage their emotions.

During the interviews, I observed and followed the outline of the interview protocol (Appendix A). I documented personal notes and recorded participants' responses to interview questions by using the recoding mechanisms of the SONY ICD PX333 digital audio recorder. Katsos and Fort (2016) posited that an interviewer maintains control of the session and refrains from using personal or professional experiences to influence specific answers. Laperrière et al. (2016) emphasized the primary objective of the qualitative researcher is capturing new concepts about the phenomenon under study as they relate human experiences in the interviewee's organization. To achieve the researcher's objective, scholars observe the paradigm of their interview protocol that provides relevant subjects to cover during the interview in a systematic format (Parker, 2014).

I used member checking processes to encapsulate the information and allow the participants to verify the accuracy of the collected data. Collins (2016) cited that member checking provides the interviewees the opportunity to acknowledge and verify the data collected, and then confirm whether it reflects their lived experiences. For scholars to endorse the credibility, reliability, accuracy, and validity of the data reviewed, they use member checking as a quality control process in any phase of the interview procedures (Griffin, Piers, & Hesketh, 2016). Cerne, Nerstad, Dysvik, and Škerlavaj (2014) found proponents of member checking are confident that the process verifies that the participants' descriptions are reliable and valid.

Data Collection Technique

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies business leaders use to retain employees. I scheduled interviews on a day and time convenient to each participant. I used the interview protocol for conducting semistructured face-to-face interviews with pre-established questions (Appendix C) at a mutually agreed upon location. The interview questions aligned with this study's research question: What strategies do business leaders use to retain employees in an academic nursing environment? I observed the participants and listened to their experiences on retaining employees. A semistructured interview protocol is useful for discovering factual data about the subject matter that provides an understanding of the examiner's research questions while applying probing questions that stem from a prepared interview (Cerne et al., 2014). Face-to-face interviews are also advantageous because they will give insight and perception of the study. Guchait, Ruetzlerb, Taylor, and Toldi (2014) found face-to-face interviews enhance the researcher's comprehension of his study. I gained permission from the participants to audio-record the interviews using a SONY ICD PX333 digital audio tape recorder. I anticipated the duration of the interviews would be 45-60 minutes, which was sufficient time for obtaining the participants' experiences. Upon the completion of the interview, I asked the interviewee for pertinent company documents that will support this study's research question. Documentation consisted of internal processes regarding onboarding of the prospective applicant. Interview questions for a specific applicant and organizational hierarchy required prior to extending an offer were

also reviewed. Feerasta (2016) found gathering documents would support and help verify the participants' testimonies.

Member checking is useful for furthering the credibility, transferability, accuracy, and completeness of the recorded data during the interview process (Pauly & Buzzanell, 2016). Member checking improved the accuracy, credibility, and validity of this study. I summarized the information and allowed the participants to verify the accuracy of the data captured in my notes. Using the member checking process, I focused on reviewing the integrity and credibility of information, which relied on the participants' confirming the accuracy of the data. Becton et al. (2017) suggested member checking enhances the credibility of a study. The member checking process facilitates the researcher with verifying the participants' data without including the researcher's personal biases (Cerne et al., 2014). Yin (2014) posited that the disadvantages of observations include the participants modifying their actions because they are being observed; additionally, observations can also be time-consuming (Yin, 2014). Despite any potential disadvantages, I included formal and informal methods for observation activities.

Data Organization Technique

I identified and classified developing patterns and trends and analyzed contradictory participant interpretations and evaluations. Data organization technique is a process that identifies and catalogs trends, patterns, conflicts in participants' interpretations, and alternative perspectives (Becton et al., 2017). Researcher's initial data analyses may result in an overwhelming number of emerging codes, but the analysis will strengthen throughout the process as multiple concepts emerge (Becton et al., 2017).

Further, Durrani and Rajagopal (2016a) posited that codes would develop as researchers analyze the data for themes. I organized and compiled this study's data by using ATLAS.ti data analysis for coding, theme and data interpretation. ATLAS.ti data analysis is a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis that facilitates the coding procedure to be meaningful and assists the researchers to focus on specific codes and themes (Campbell, Boese, & Tham, 2016).

I ensured the safety, security, confidentiality, and accessibility of data as the primary objective in the storage of the data. Campbell et al. (2016) posited that for scholars accurate and efficient storage of digital and non-digital information is essential to represent the data and participants' user profiles, to enhance the retrieval process, and to add new information. I used passwords to secure the data stored on electronic devices and assign a pseudonym to each participant to protect their identities. Griffin et al. (2016) suggested that using data archiving as a procedure may ensure the availability of data and resources for review by future scholars. All paper and electronic copies used in this study will remain in a secured fireproof safe in my home for no less than five years per IRB requirements. Upon the completion of the 5-year time period, all raw data and documents will be shredded or deleted.

Data Analysis

When I analyzed the collected data, I ensured the data provided the framework for this study, which is identifying, classifying, examining, and analyzing strategies that business leaders use to retain employees. Cerne et al. (2014) posited that data analysis is a technique that researchers use when they assess information, which will discover

themes and patterns that directly relate to the study's primary research question. I analyzed the data and used methodological triangulation to assist me in maintaining consistency. Campbell et al. (2016), Miller (2017), and Thaler (2017) posited that methodological triangulation is a technique researcher's use to analyze similar data discovered in various data collection sources. Harvey (2015) posited the belief that member checking is a quality control process that allows the participant to review the interview summation to ensure the accuracy, validity, and credibility of the study. I validated the accuracy of the themes by involving each participant in the process. Cope (2014) suggested that scholars should ensure the credibility and dependability of the data collected by allowing the participants to confirm the themes, validity codes, and the findings of the study through member checking. Harvey (2015) agreed that the use of member checking to validate the accuracy of participant interview responses and study findings can ensure credibility and dependability.

During the data assessment process, I organized the data and identified themes. I used a Microsoft Excel software program that assisted me in organizing the data collected. The use of software programs decreased the potential for bias that may arise from the researcher's professional background and personal experiences (Sipe, Larson, McKay, & Moss, 2016). Collins (2016) posited using Microsoft Excel for coding themes helps prevent a researcher's bias. Finally, coding is a useful strategy when identifying and categorizing the most important data in the researcher's documented answers from the interview questions (Delcourt, Gremier, van Riel, & van Birgelen, 2015).

I input the unstructured information in the ATLAS.ti computer software programs and use its functions and features, which enhanced the data analysis process. Delcourt et al. (2015) posited scholars use qualitative data analysis software (QDAS), such as ATLAS.ti™ that support the coding and analysis of significant amounts of unsorted audio, text and image data. Scholars use the mechanisms of the ATLAS.ti software package to code audio and video data and connect transcripts of field notes for ease of interpretation (Harvey, 2015). Pavlovich et al. (2016) posited that the ATLAS.ti software contains a self-organizing component that scholars can program to produce tables and identify themes, patterns, and concepts to form one unit of analysis. Brady (2016) found that users of the ATLAS.ti software could manipulate standard features to display comparisons among patterns and themes, to form additional analytical conclusions. I used ATLAS.ti computer software to support the data analysis process. Computer-assisted tools are relevant to my study to aid in efficiently managing codes and categorizing data. St. Pierre and Jackson (2014) agreed that the use of ATLAS.ti computer software is suitable for coding and categorizing data. According to Percy et al. (2015), thematic analysis is the process used to conduct data analysis of qualitative data. Finally, Starr (2014) posited that open coding incorporates reading through data, sometimes, creating data and recording samples of participant's words. Scholars use qualitative data analysis software (QDAS) like NVivo, MAXDAQ, or ATLAS.ti to support the coding and analysis of enormous amounts of unsorted audio, image data, text, and video (Starr, 2014).

Prior to writing a conclusion and establishing the findings of this study, I assessed alternative theories from the documents and interviews collected during the interview process. I compared data from the member checking follow-up interviews, observations, and documents to confirm the credibility of the collected data. Griffin et al. (2016) posited that comparing data and assessing alternate theories from interview questions will assist the researcher's theme and conclusion. Feerasta (2016) found member checking is an essential analytical process in supporting the researcher's analysis of the data collected. Cerne et al. (2014) posited that comparing data retrieved from participants helps confirm the study's credibility.

Reliability and Validity

Demonstrating reliability and validity confirms that a study has suitable rigor (Morse, 2015). A qualitative researcher uses various strategies to achieve reliability and validity (Acaster et al., 2015). Research has identified a range of relevant data quality dimensions, including accuracy, objectivity, believability, reputation, interpretability, and ease of understanding, concise and consistent representation, and relevancy (Baškarada, 2014).

Reliability

I used member checking and transcript review to check for dependability and ensure that I captured the meaning of what the participants stated. Member checking allowed me to ensure the transcript was a representation of the participants expressed experiences and perceptions. Cleary, Horsfall, and Hayter (2014) suggested that researchers often use member checking to enhance the validity and reliability of a study.

Member checking and transcript review are the most valuable methods to confirm the dependability of this study (Munn, Porritt, Lockwood, Aromataris, & Pearson, 2014). Hazavehei, Moonaghi, Moeini, Moghimbeigi, and Emadzadeh (2015) suggested that member checking consists of conducting initial interviews, interpreting what the participants shared, and sharing the interpretation with the participant for validation. I reviewed and interpreted the transcript, synthesized each question, and provided a copy of the transcript to each participant to ensure it represents their response, and there was no new data to collect. Yin (2014) posited that reliability referred to the consistency and transferability of the research procedures used in a case study.

Cypress (2017) suggested a thorough description of the entire research process that incorporates inter-subjectivity will produce quality in a qualitative research study. I confirmed the reliability of my study by applying consistency and care in the application of research practices. Assessing the reliability and integrity of research findings is the basis for validating the credibility of a study's research design and methodology (Noble & Smith, 2015). A researcher must have a certain familiarity with the participating institution and demonstrate a comfortable approach in the recruitment of the participants so that the sampling process is random and unbiased (Bernard, Wutich, & Ryan (2016). Finally, it is important that the participants' input is honest, and an accurate presentation is documented (Bernard et al., 2016).

Validity

I assured this study had validity by conducting member checking, reaching data saturation, and assuring the findings are credible, transferable, and confirmable. I

incorporated a chain of evidence, transparency, and maintain impartiality. Durani and Rajagopal (2016b) posited that in a qualitative study, validity represents the credibility, transferability, and confirmability of the researcher's conclusions and findings. Harvey (2015) suggested that using multiple sources of evidence and maintaining a chain of evidence will help support the validity of the researcher's study (Harvey, 2015). Finally, scholars can strengthen the validity of their study by maintaining transparency and objectivity in their sample size and strategy (Luchenitser, 2016). To improve validity of my case study, I used multiple sources of evidence, had key informants review and maintain a chain of evidence. To enhance the dependability of my case study, I followed Stake's (1995) four triangulations strategies: data source, investigator, theory, and methodology. Research validity and reliability are common concepts in quantitative research but also applicable in qualitative research since both researchers must establish credibility using either method (Olsen, McAllister, Grinnell, Walters, & Appunn, 2016). To maintain credibility, or authenticity, White, Oelke, and Friesen (2012) recognized that researchers must adhere to methods accepted as scientifically sound in the qualitative and informational sciences. The use of methodological and data source triangulation increased the internal validity and creditability of my case study.

The credibility of a research study refers to the trustworthiness of the data and quality of the combined processes of data collection and data analysis (Priyanko, Ruetzlerb, Taylor, & Toldi, 2014). I enhanced the credibility of the research findings and conclusions of this study by employing methodological triangulation as well as incorporating a reflexivity process. I incorporated the reflexivity process by removing

bias I may bring to the findings of this study. Folta, Glenn, and Kynskey (2017) found a reflexivity process enhances the trustworthiness and credibility of qualitative studies. Pauly and Buzzanell (2016) posited that credibility helps support the trustworthiness of data when there is triangulation, peer debriefing, persistent observations, reflexivity, and prolonged engagements.

I ensured data saturation when I conducted the interviews and reviewed audio recordings and direct observations. I asked the interviewee for pertinent company documents that will support this study's research question. Documentation consisted of internal processes regarding onboarding of the prospective applicant. Interview questions for a specific applicant and organizational hierarchy required prior to extending an offer were also reviewed. Data saturation occurred when new data did not surface. Data saturation will also be secured when the researcher conducts interviews that do not include new themes, new data, new coding and by having the ability to replicate the study (Folta et al., 2017).

Transition and Summary

Section 2 is the project, where I described the research process. I collected data using semistructured interviews and secure pertinent documents that support this study's research question. Semistructured interviews consisted of six open-ended questions focusing on employee retention strategies that result in improving the organizations' retention of employees. I asked for company documents that provided additional relevant data, such as policies and procedures business leaders use to retain employees. I ensured credibility, dependability, transferability, and conformability processes through

methodological triangulation, semistructured interviews, document analysis, follow-up member checking interviews, acknowledging bias, and continuous contributions and feedback from participants.

In Section 3, I will analyze data that was useful for ascertaining the findings of the study. This section will include an overview of the study, presentation of the findings, application to professional practice, implications for social change, recommendations for action and future studies, reflections, and conclusion of the study. Using the analyzed data, I will explain the outcomes of the study thoroughly.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the strategies business leaders use to retain employees in an academic nursing environment. Section 3 consists of an introduction of the study and the presentation of the findings. Section 3 also encompasses the application to professional practice and the implications for social change. In addition, I discuss recommendations for actions for business leaders as well as further research on employee retention. In the reflections, I discuss my experience during the doctoral study journey. I conclude with an overview addressing the importance of implementing effective strategies for the retention of employees.

Presentation of the Findings

During my data collection process, I conducted my research with four business leaders in an academic nursing environment from three different regions: Texas, Kentucky, and Florida. For this study, I chose participants who are leaders in an academic nursing environment and have implemented successful strategies for the retention of employees. Feerasta (2016) found that participants who have effective proactive business management experience about a researcher's study are desirable candidates for the researcher to interview.

In this study, I addressed my central research question: What strategies do business leaders use to retain employees in an academic nursing environment? I conducted four interviews, which formed the essential information for this project and

answered my research question. Using my interview protocol, I asked each participant six questions:

1. What strategies do you use for employee retention?
2. How does your interpersonal relationship with employees affect your ability to manage employee retention?
3. How has onboarding impacted employee retention?
4. What barriers do you experience with implementing employee retention strategies?
5. How does your leadership style impact employee retention?
6. What additional information would you like to share on this topic?

After completing the interviews, I member checked, then analyzed the data collected using Microsoft Excel and ATLAS.ti computer software programs. From my analyses, I developed themes that supported my theoretical framework. My themes are (a) onboarding processes, (b) valued employees, (c) employee growth and advancement, and (d) communication and trust. My theoretical framework was Homan's SET, which used a psychological approach to explain individual perceptions and how leadership shapes human interactions (Thibaut, 2017). To protect the participants' identities, I labeled the transcriptions as P1 through P4 (where P1 means Participant 1). I completed data triangulation when I reviewed pertinent company documents that supported this study's research question. Documentation consisted of internal processes regarding onboarding of the prospective applicant; I also reviewed organizational hierarchy required prior to extending an offer.

Table 1

Participants' Responses that Support Themes

Participants	Onboarding process	Valued employee	Growth and advancement	Communication and trust
P1	Structured orientation process	Listening to employee – what is important to them	Training	Relationship built on trust and team approach
P2	Structured onboarding process Onboarding	Recognizing employee contribution	Training and development; opportunities for employee to lead	Regular honest communication and transparency
P3	Critical to employee retention	Employee believes you care about them	Leadership that allows development is critical to employee retention	Open door policy to discuss concerns without retribution
P4	Immerse in culture	Act as advocate or champion for the employee	Leadership that is collaborative, approachable and friendly	Remove barriers so employee can be successful

Onboarding Process

The participants in this study focused their employee retention success on the organization's onboarding process. Carter (2015) posited that onboarding is the most overlooked opportunity for promoting employee retention, and arranging a mentor/buddy system for the new employee assists the leader in successfully retaining the employee. P1 stated that "this is the most important tool leaders have to positively impact retention." P2 further qualified the importance of a structured onboarding process along a strong corporate culture assists in overall employee retention. If the culture does not fit with the employee's beliefs, the retention process will fail. Pritchard (2007) confirmed that the leader should focus on making the employee feel welcome by encouraging staff to introduce themselves and have the employee's work area ready to receive them. P3 concurred, further stating that "when a new hire is here, there is never too much attention that can be given to them. Getting them off on the right foot is a huge factor in having them stay." Further, Caldwell et al. (2018) agreed that understanding the ethical issues in the onboarding process will assist the leaders in improving the overall relationship between the employer and employee. P4 stated that "immersing them in the culture, you are more likely to retain them."

P1, P2 and P3 shared internal onboarding documentation with the researcher. The documentation was reviewed for this study consisted of internal processes regarding onboarding of the prospective applicant. P1 and P2 confirmed the importance of a structured onboarding process and the importance of employee retention. P3 confirmed the importance of immersing the employee into the culture of the organization. Keskes

(2014) posited that three distinct elements are important for employees to identify with, including belief in the goals and values of the company, dedication to meet the goals, and a desire to be a part of the organization. The working environment relationships between members of an organization could influence how an organization performs (Vahlhaus & Simon, 2014). Transformational leaders focus on changing the ethical ethos of their organization and promoting intellectual stimulation through inspirational methods (Yang et al., 2014).

Valued Employees

The participants each stated that listening skills, acknowledging, and recognizing an employee's contribution are all key factors for employee retention. Chen et al. (2014) found that servant leaders' behaviors promoted a positive culture where leaders focused on the personal and professional well-being of the employee. P2 stated "I am a firm believer in being a servant leader; it is my intent is to have them be better for having worked at the organization. Ideally, this will create trust, they will feel valued, they will be committed, successful, and productive." Kalidass and Bahron (2015) and Sun and Wang (2016) found that supportive leadership that valued their employees reduced turnover and increased employee retention. P1 stated it is important to identify those activities, work and non-work related, that make employees feel valued. "Valued employees remain loyal to a leader or organization more so than those that do not feel valued or included."

Choi et al. (2014) posited that SET is the major foundational framework for organization research. There are two types of exchanges that could occur in human

relationships (Blau, 2017), social and economic. The social aspect of the relationship relates to trust and the human feelings of belonging. The economic factor focusses on pay, performance, and other tangible items. The response to the semistructured interviews outlined the importance of the leader listening to the employee, the employee feeling the leader cares about them as a person, the leader being a champion for the employee, and recognition of the value the employee brings to the workplace. The documentation reviewed relating to the onboarding process and the various stages that followed directly correlate to the importance of inclusion and trust. Pichler (2012) suggested that the social connection between the supervisor and subordinate has a bearing on how the subordinate will respond and will provide context for the quality of the relationship moving forward. The employee who feels valued will believe they are contributing to the mission of the leadership and be likely to stay with the organization.

Growth and Advancement

Mandhanya (2015) recommended that leaders offer developmental training opportunities for their subordinates, which are another factor for long-term employee retention. P1 stated, “It is imperative to consider future growth and a pathway for advancement. Creating development plans provides a means for both the employee and manager to direct learning opportunities that support continued growth for the employee who then feels valued and is retained.” Leaders who create an environment of growth and opportunity will foster a loyalty and commitment from the employee. Zhang, Long, and Zhang (2015) posited that employee retention consists of examinations of predictors, including compensation packages, advancement opportunities, and developmental

training. P2 stated, “Another area of vital importance is training and development. I believe all employees are emerging leaders. We must educate them and give them opportunities to lead.” Fisher (2015) posited that developmental training challenged top performers and kept productive employees engaged, thereby improving retention.

Hackman and Oldham (1975) originated the first theories regarding job satisfaction as outlined in the JCT. Schultz and Schultz (2010) posited that JCT is one of the most cited theories in job satisfaction research. Shultz and Schultz suggested that the importance the employee places on their advancement and growth opportunity on the job may outline the strength of the relationship between the job characteristics and the personal and work-related outcomes. Judge and Zapata (2015) suggested that business researchers may find SET useful to explore in the function a leader fulfills in promoting a sense of employee obligation and positive work attitude (Judge & Zapata, 2015). Investing in professional development will yield employees with confidence and commitment to the organization. The documentation collected outlining the onboarding structure process used by the leaders in the organization supported the importance of the onboarding process in employee retention.

Communication and Trust

Brewster and Bauer (2016) posited that communication concentrated on the talent to transmit the written or spoken word. All four leaders in this study placed emphasis on communication and trust between the employee and the leader. P2 stated that “regular, honest communication builds trust and increases transparency.” The participant further stated that understanding their personal emotional intelligence assisted them in

understanding the needs of the employee. P1 stated that her ability to listen to her employees and understand what is important to them built trust and open communication with her employees. Northouse (2013) believed that when a leader's behavior is in alignment with an employee's belief, then the leader's behavior will have a positive influence on the employee and deepen that employees respect and trust for the leader. P1 through P4 also stated that gaining an employee's trust through genuine and transparent communication will increase employee retention. Paladan (2015) posited that leaders who motivate their employees by promoting teamwork, will build trust and increase the employee's commitment to the organization. P4 went on to state that "I try to be very approachable and friendly with all my employees and I think that has a positive effect on retention of employees."

SET focused on the idea that interactions between a supervisor and subordinate could bring forth a positive relationship based on reciprocity (Chughtai et al., 2015). The semistructured interview process further confirmed SET in the themes that evolved. The participants concluded that relationships built on trust, transparency, and removing barriers that may affect the relationship between the supervisor and employee are a critical component to employee retention. When leadership and employees work together in a trusting and transparent environment, the harmonious state will allow for growth and sustainability. Chughtai et al. (2015) posited that leadership and employees who feel they received care and matter in the organization will work hard for the common goal.

Applications to Professional Practice

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore strategies business leaders use to retain employees in an academic nursing environment. The participants included four business leaders who have successfully used employee retention strategies in academic nursing environments in Texas, Kentucky, and Florida. Ertürk and Vurgun (2015) suggested that perceived organizational support will mediate the relationship between empowerment and retention for employees. The effects of a poor workforce retention may compromise an organization's ability to deliver quality customer service (Humphreys, Wakerman, Pashen, & Buykx, 2017). Organizational trust will create the environment necessary for employee commitment and retention (Ertürk & Vurgun, 2015).

Business leaders may use the information from this study by understanding the needs of their employees and a mutual understanding of the job expectations. Creating a work environment of commitment, understanding and expectations will minimize the risk of losing employees. Business leaders and their organization invest money from the initial recruiting and training of the employee. The loss of an employee is an additional business loss which business leaders seek to limit so that the organization may increase productivity and sustained growth. I have identified relational and transactional dimensions of meeting job expectations that an employer might provide which in turn will assist in the overall retention of an employee.

The U.S. Department of Labor Statistics (2015) data indicated that 2.7 million workers quit their jobs in March 2015. Some turnover is unavoidable, especially if the

employee must leave employment due to relocation, health issues, or the desire to return to school. Business leaders may use the results of this study to create a workplace environment with policies that attract employees as well as retain its current employees with opportunities that avoid turnover and improve retention.

The information in this study may also provide business leaders with the information necessary to grow professionally and use the knowledge and skills to assist them in the retention of employees. Employee retention is important to the success of an organization because retaining top performers will increase profit margins (Alshanbri et al., 2015). Steiner and Atterton (2014) posited that successful business leaders create opportunities that bring positive social change for the communities they serve. Odumeru and Ogbonna (2013) posited that leadership behaviors associated with individualized consideration would stimulate motivation, improve morale, increase performance and promote teamwork, which are all predictors of employee retention and turnover.

Employee retention affects a wide array of social and environmental factors that impact workforce retention. Retention strategies created by business leaders should be flexible to meet the specific needs of the workforce and incorporate evaluation strategies to assess the effectiveness of best practices (Humphreys, Wakerman, Pashen, & Buykx, 2017). Business leaders seeking to grow their organization and continue the company's sustainability will require focusing on the retention of their best employees for continued growth. Organizational buy-in acted as a buffer between job satisfaction and intent to stay (Hsai, 2018). Further, Hsai (2018) posited that an employee's buy-in to the organization's mission and strategy could be a competitive advantage for retaining talent. Business

leaders who retain talent in a community will stimulate a stronger economic growth in the community and continued sustainability and expansion of the organization.

The SET used a psychological approach to explain individual perceptions regarding power, status, conformity, and how leadership shapes human interactions (Thibaut, 2017). Treviño and Tilly (2015) confirmed Homan's theory focused on the major concept that individuals are likely to repeat their behaviors if they predict positive results. The SET suggests that the more the value of the action an individual predicts, the more likely an individual will perform, which in turn may predict employee retention and satisfaction (Judge & Zapata, 2015). Judge and Zapata (2015) further posited that business researchers may use SET to explore how the leader can promote a sense of employee obligation and positive work attitude. Furthermore, Asiedu (2015) suggested that high levels of trust between employee and employers led to more dedicated employees thereby driving retention. The investment of the leadership in professional development for their employees will bring about an employee with confidence and commitment to the organization. Perceived organizational support and leader-member exchange, which are both tenets of SET, are two valuable assessments in the investigation and understanding of worker interactions (Banks et al., 2014). SET was a useful framework for this study as business leaders must understand all key factors that may assist in the retention of employees.

Implications for Social Change

This study supplements the existing body of knowledge to develop strategies and provide additional avenues for business leaders to retain employees and improve

professional business practices. Upon analyzing strategies for the retention of employees, an assessment is that there are potential implications in terms of tangible improvements for individuals, communities, organizations, institutions, and societies. The study of strategies that business leaders implement for the retention of employees has implications for social change. In qualitative analysis, prior research, and newly acquired knowledge point toward a worldview for social change (Trochim, Donnelly, & Arora, 2015). Banks, Vera, Pathak, & Ballard (2016) posited that positive social change occurs when people change their behavior to benefit society.

Retention of employees may promote the self-worth and dignity for those who may lack the skills and talent in their present position but may be a better fit in another position within the organization. I found a primary strategy for retention of employees is to incorporate Homans SET theory on how leadership can shape human interaction. Homans assessed that employees are more than likely to repeat a behavior if they found it successful in previous situations. Understanding the employee's motivation and creating a positive work environment may assist in employee retention. The business leaders who participated in this study did not state they incorporated SET in their process; however, as they explained their management style, they used the SET theory. As a result, the participants promoted the importance of listening to their staff, creating a positive work environment, and how their leadership style influenced the workplace and retention of the employees. Business leaders might use the information from the findings of this study to gain insight on job expectations and contribute to social change through improved work environments. Understanding job expectations of all employees allows for a fair and

diverse environment that provides equal opportunities for all employees which can impact retention.

Recommendations for Action

I recommend leaders implement policies and environments to retain employees. Addressing the identified themes might positively influence employees' satisfaction and influence the employee to stay with the organization. This, in turn, will have a positive impact on the time and cost spent to recruit and replace employees. Job satisfaction may lead to a better work-life balance. Business leaders who solicit employee input may also enhance job satisfaction as the employee may feel that you care about their concerns and value their input. Business leaders from all sectors of the business environment could work alongside their Human Resource professionals and develop strategies to incorporate in their onboarding process and beyond for the retention of employees.

Recommendations for Further Research

Delimitations are research constraints applied to the study to keep it manageable. One delimitation was restricting the data collected to the participant's experience and not from a reflection or interpretation of the organization's management team which may limit this study's results. Additional research on whether themes would vary from a different sample is appropriate. This study focused on three geographical areas, Texas, Kentucky, and Florida. The results of this study may have varied if the researcher examined the problem in other states. Another delimitation is the restriction in the design of this study. I explored employee retention strategies leaders use in an academic nursing environment. The leaders chosen are leaders who are responsible for retaining employees

and are in a management position. There were no other criteria for choosing of the participants for this study. If I chose a different set of parameters, the results may vary.

There are sufficient grounds for further research. As the workforce and changing business and healthcare environment evolves to serve future generations, so too will the need to have qualified nurses to meet the demands of the future. Further research may continue to focus on strategies leaders use in other business sectors to retain employees. Working with future leaders to develop leadership skills to focus on retention of employees will continue to enhance organization growth and focus on employee satisfaction. The adoption of best practices in the area of employee retention may assist business leaders in the reduction of employee turnover.

Although this study addresses retention concerns within an academic nursing environment and how this affects the healthcare field, a future researcher may examine the effectiveness of the prevention strategies used by business leaders to retain employees in other business environments. Further research may include whether the existing strategies managing retention in the new workforce such as millennials and Y generations. A future researcher may analyze the weaknesses and strengths of existing strategies to determine whether different styles of leadership may be necessary to assist with the skills needed to address this different demographic of workers.

Reflections

The process of interviewing and listening to the responses from the participants was enlightening. The scheduling and participation in the interview process were smooth and easy to schedule. The participants gave their consent to be audio-recorded and

appeared comfortable in the recording of the interview. The interviews were consistent with their structure, and I used the same set of interview questions with each participant. I transcribed the interview and gave the participant the opportunity to add or change any portion of the transcript review to assure reliability and validity respectively. The participants were passionate about sharing their expectations and opportunities with the retention of employees and placed emphasis on what they value. The participants appeared comfortable when sharing their perspectives.

Since I was an executive director within higher education, it was crucial to avoid biases, and I took care not to create interview questions that would be partial to any personal biases. Participants did not have a personal or professional work connection to me. Additionally, no participant in this study was a direct report to me which avoids any influence of the responses. I waited until I gathered all my data before starting the analysis to avoid early assumptions and swaying participants based on early interviews.

Conclusion

The findings from this case study revealed that leaders in an academic nursing environment can increase their employee retention by focusing on their onboarding process, creating an opportunity for growth and development. Based on the participants' experiences, leaders must first focus on the initial stages of the employee hire and the structure of the onboarding process. Once the decision is made to hire an employee, the first and foremost is to bring the employee onboard, making them feel at home, and creating an environment of acceptance. The initial 90 days of the new employee's time will form the relationships and trust necessary to connect with the employee and his/her

commitment. The findings of this study also indicated that by applying the strategies that emerged from the participants' responses, organizational leaders can increase productivity and organizational commitment. Most importantly, the cost of implementing the strategies is relatively inexpensive. Leaders should integrate these recommendations into the overall organizational retention strategy.

Retention of employees is critical to the growth and sustainability of an organization. The cost to replace employees can be substantial depending on the position, knowledge, and the experience the employee has in the organization. Company leaders may use the findings to create attractive job offerings to increase job satisfaction, and reduce recruiting, hiring, and turnover costs. Social change implications of business leaders include understanding the needs of its workforce to bring about job expectations and growth opportunities for the employee. Continued training and job opportunities may increase morale and might benefit employees' relationships with coworkers, families, and their communities. Overall satisfaction within the workplace will increase employee retention and improve sustainability and growth of the organization.

Since increasing retention of employees will improve productivity and profitability, the implementation of effective employee retention strategies is critical to the survival of organizations in today's competitive marketplace. When organizations are unable to retain employees, the future of the organization is at risk because employee turnover can lead to reduced profits as the result of loss of productivity and loss of knowledge. I recommend leaders in not only an academic nursing environment, but in

any business, large or small, use the findings and recommendations of this study to gain new insight on employee retention strategies to improve business practices.

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Appendix A: Multicase Study Protocol

Employee Retention Strategies for Executive Operation Leaders in an Academic Nursing Environment

A. Overview of the Case Study

1. Mission and goals of case study are the gain an understanding of what strategies executive operation leaders use to retain employees in an academic nursing environment.
2. The purpose of this qualitative case study is to identify strategies business leaders use to retain employees in an academic nursing environment. The participants will include business leaders in the academic nursing environment who have successfully developed employee retention strategies. The population will include executive business leaders working in academic nursing environments in Texas, Kentucky, and Florida. The information from this case study may lead to social benefits as the results may improve the quality of nursing students graduating and ultimately improve a patient's life through superior patient care. A more experienced and qualified nurse workforce may provide optimal care to the community in which the nurses reside. Additional outcomes may include decreased healthcare costs and increased positive patient outcomes.
3. The nature of the investigation of a business leader's ability to retain employees and adapt to changes in the business environment necessitates a

qualitative approach and case study design. A case study design enables a researcher to frame and debate one or more cases in real-life settings to holistically explore a problem (Yin, 2014). Morse and McEvoy (2014) posited that a case study design allows a researcher to explore, examine, and contextualize varied participants' knowledge and experience into a single problem. Bryman and Bell (2015) suggested that a case study design allows a researcher to explore or examine a problem within a realistic setting.

B. Data Collection Procedures

1. Data collection will conform to the interviewees' schedules and availability
2. Open-ended semistructured questions will allow follow-up questions.
3. Real-world observations made at the participants' place of business require field procedure coping behaviors to:
 - a. Gain access to key organizations or interviewees
 - b. Have resources to conduct field work, viz., recording device and notes
 - c. Develop call for assistance
 - d. Make a clear schedule of data collection activities
 - e. Provide for unanticipated events.

C. The general orientation of the protocol questions are toward the researcher. The questions can occur at various levels including questions asked of specific interviewees, of the individual case, of the pattern of findings across multiple cases, of an entire study, and normative questions about policy recommendations and conclusions.

1. Define the process of retention of employees.
2. Collect data related to the factors involved in retention processes including:
 - a. Recruitment and interviewing protocol;
 - b. Upon offer to employee, what are the onboarding processes.
3. Cite evidence supporting (or not) the initial logic model in explaining how and why the practice led to success.

D. Guide for the Case Study Report

1. The outline and format of this case study follows Walden University's doctoral study rubric and research handbook.
2. The intended audience of this content of this case study are business leaders in Texas, Kentucky and Florida, with a specific niche market of the academic nursing environment arena, regulators, state and federal policy makers, and academia.

Appendix B: Confidentiality Agreement

Name of Signer:

During the course of my activity in collecting data for this research: “Employee Retention Strategies for Executive Operation Leaders in an Academic Nursing Environment”, I will have access to information, which is confidential and should not be disclosed. I acknowledge that the information must remain confidential, and that improper disclosure of confidential information can be damaging to the participant.

By signing this Confidentiality Agreement, I acknowledge and agree that:

1. I will not disclose or discuss any confidential information with others, including friends or family.
2. I will not in any way divulge, copy, release, sell, loan, alter or destroy any confidential information except as properly authorized.
3. I will not discuss confidential information where others can overhear the conversation. I understand that it is not acceptable to discuss confidential information even if the participant’s name is not used.
4. I will not make any unauthorized transmissions, inquiries, modification or purging of confidential information.
5. I agree that my obligations under this agreement will continue after termination of the job that I will perform.
6. I understand that violation of this agreement will have legal implications.

7. I will only access or use systems or devices I'm officially authorized to access and I will not demonstrate the operation or function of systems or devices to unauthorized individuals.

Signing this document, I acknowledge that I have read the agreement and I agree to comply with all the terms and conditions stated above.

Signature:

Date:

Appendix C: Interview Questions

1. What strategies do you use for employee retention?
 2. How does your interpersonal relationship with employees affect your ability to manage employee retention?
 3. How has onboarding impacted employee retention?
 4. What barriers do you experience with implementing employee retention strategies?
 5. How does your leadership style impact employee retention?
- What additional information would you like to share on this to