

2020

Strategies to Reduce Employee Turnover in Childcare Centers

Tara Jones
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Tara Jones

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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Walden University
2020

Abstract

Strategies to Reduce Employee Turnover in Childcare Centers

by

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MBA, TUI University, 2011

BSOE, Wayland Baptist University, 2007

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

March 2020

Abstract

Organizations across the United States pay billions of dollars annually to combat employee turnover. Organizations may pay over 250% of a departing employee's salary. As high employee turnover negatively impacts the profitability of organizations, it is vital childcare center directors have strategies to reduce employee turnover. This qualitative multiple case study explored strategies childcare center directors have used to reduce employee turnover. The research participants consisted of 4 purposefully selected childcare center directors of nonfranchised childcare centers in Houston, Texas, with more than 5 years of experience who implemented strategies to reduce employee turnover. The conceptual framework for this study was the job embeddedness theory. Data were collected from semistructured interviews and organizational documents. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis that resulted in the emergence of 4 main themes: the importance of compensation, effective managerial communication, a strong organizational culture, and a rewards and recognition program. Implications for positive social change include the potential for improved employment stability and community development. Sustained employment provides employees with a consistent source of income that gives families disposable funds to spend throughout a community. Additionally, when a greater number of people are employed within a community a larger tax base may be created for local municipalities to invest back into initiatives to improve communities.

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Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral study to my three children, Janiah, Jason Jr., and Jarai. Your unconditional love and support carried me through the doctoral process. I thank you from the very bottom of my heart for the unspoken, but not unnoticed, sacrifices you made to allow me to devote the time and attention necessary to reach this point. You all are the reasons I started this journey; more importantly, you all are the reasons I was able to complete it. Thank you for having faith in me, and never doubting that one day I would become “Dr. Mom”. I would also like to dedicate this study to my parents, Herbert and Cordella Steptoe, as well as my sister, Terell Woodard, and my niece, Gemmia Williams. You all have stood in my stead on multiple fronts and on numerous occasions without complaint or hesitation. I appreciate you all more than you will ever know. Last but definitely not least, I dedicate this study to my cousins, Latoya Singleton and Zoe’ Green, who have shown me the true meaning of tenacity and steadfastness. This accomplishment is all of ours together; I love you all always!

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Employee turnover is costly to organizations in terms of direct expenditures required to replace leaving personnel, as well as hidden costs associated with degraded morale and a loss of corporate knowledge (Rubenstein, Eberly, Lee, & Mitchell, 2017). The success of an organization depends on its performance levels and profitability potential; therefore, it is beneficial for organizational leaders to understand antecedents to employee turnover as they ultimately impact an organization's sustainability (Abell, Arsiwalla, Putnam, & Miller, 2014). Understanding the determinants of employee turnover may result in direct and indirect financial saving to organizations (Dale-Olsen, 2014). In this study, I explored perceptions and experiences of childcare center directors regarding strategies to reduce employee turnover in nonfranchised childcare centers in Houston, Texas.

Background of the Problem

Turnover among child welfare workers exceeds 90% per year in some U.S. cities (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). Employee turnover disrupts an organization's performance and degrades productivity (Park & Shaw, 2013). It is imperative for childcare center directors to understand the implications of employee turnover, and its direct effect on organizational functionality and profitability. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to determine strategies childcare center directors utilize to reduce employee turnover.

Problem Statement

Childcare center administrators throughout the United States replace nearly 40% of their workforce annually (Kim & Yang, 2016). To replace each employee who leaves, organizations may pay in excess of 250% of a departing employee's salary (Hammon, 2017). The general business problem was that high employee turnover negatively impacts profitability of organizations. The specific business problem was some childcare center directors lack strategies to reduce employee turnover.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies some childcare center directors used to reduce employee turnover. The target population consisted of four directors of nonfranchised childcare centers in Houston, Texas with more than 5 years of experience who have implemented strategies to reduce employee turnover. These childcare center directors were the appropriate population to participate in the study due to their lived experiences and success with strategies to reduce employee turnover. The implications of this study for positive social change include the potential to contribute to the prosperity of employees and communities. Personnel with sustained employment may be able to live more financially secure lives. Additionally, local government officials may use tax revenues generated from employed personnel to enhance community facilities and services.

Nature of the Study

The qualitative methodology was the research method for this study. Researchers may use the qualitative research approach to facilitate an understanding of an occurrence or set of occurrences based on individuals' experiences (Goldberg & Allen, 2015). The qualitative research method is the most suitable methodology for exploring turnover from participants' experiences.

Researchers use the quantitative methodology to test hypotheses and determine possible relationships or differences among variables based on numerical data (Breen, Holm, & Karlson, 2014). The quantitative method was not fitting for this study as I did not collect numerical data to test hypotheses and I did not seek to examine relationships or differences among variables. Researchers who use the mixed method utilize elements of both qualitative and quantitative research methods (Mayoh & Onwuegbuzie, 2015). By extension, the mixed method approach was not appropriate due to the quantitative component.

I chose the qualitative multiple case study design for this study. Researchers use the qualitative case study design to explore, describe, and explain occurrences based on an internal perspective of those with first-hand knowledge (Pacho, 2015). The case study design was most appropriate for my study, as I explored the research topic using firsthand experiences and knowledge of leaders with successful strategies to reduce employee turnover. Researchers use the phenomenology design to detail the origin of a phenomena based on the participants' lived experiences (Gill, 2014). The phenomenological research

approach was not applicable to this study, as I do not seek to explore the meanings of participants' lived experiences related to a particular phenomenon. The ethnographic design is appropriate when a researcher seeks to provide a cultural context of a phenomena (Elmusharaf, Byrne, Manandhar, Hemmings, & O'Donovan, 2016). The ethnographic design was not applicable to this study because I did not explore cultural aspects of the research topic.

Research Question

What strategies do childcare center directors use to reduce employee turnover?

Interview Questions

1. What strategies have you used to reduce employee turnover?
2. What strategies have you found worked best to reduce employee turnover?
3. What challenges have you encountered when implementing strategies to reduce employee turnover?
4. How have you addressed the key challenges to implementing the strategies for reducing employee turnover?
5. How do you measure the effectiveness of the strategies used to reduce employee turnover?
6. What other information would you like to add regarding this topic?

Conceptual Framework

The job embeddedness theory was the framework for this research study. Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablinski, and Erez (2001) introduced the theory of job

embeddedness to describe the combination of personal and organizational factors that promote employees feeling bound to their jobs. The three domains of job embeddedness are links, fit, and sacrifice (Mitchell et al., 2001). Links are connections between personnel and activities in the organization (Mitchell et al., 2001). Fit is an individual's perceived compatibility with a job, organization, and community (Mitchell et al., 2001). Sacrifices are an individual's perceived psychosocial or material costs of breaking links (Mitchell et al., 2001). As applied in this study, I expected the job embeddedness theory would enable me to understand the strategies childcare directors use to reduce employee turnover.

Operational Definitions

Job embeddedness. The degree employees feel connected to their job that influences them to remain in a position (Marasi, Cox, & Bennett, 2016).

Provider. An individual who provides childcare services (Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, 2016).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are introspective beliefs a researcher maintains that influence research (Wolgemuth, Hicks, & Agosto, 2017). Researchers provide assumptions to inform readers of perceptions that influenced data collection and interpretation (O'Brien, Harris, Beckman, Reed, & Cook, 2014). This study included four assumptions. Given the nature of the study, I assumed at least four suitable participants would be available to

participate in interviews. In addition, I assumed study participants would voluntarily provide truthful responses. I assumed that data collection instruments would be sufficient to allow me to capture childcare center directors' perceptions regarding the impact of strategies on retention. Finally, I assumed the information I obtain through interviews would be useful to examine themes concerning retention strategies childcare center directors utilized.

Limitations

Study limitations are attributes, beyond a researcher's control, that the researcher identifies as potential weaknesses of a study (Aguinis & Edwards, 2014). The basis of this study included two limitations. The principal limitation of the study was the degree of respondent honesty and experiences when answering interview questions is unknown. Additionally, restricting the sample population to a single geographic location limited the generalizability of the study.

Delimitations

Researchers use delimitations to specify the scope of the research (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The following delimitations defined the boundaries of this study. The first delimitation was that I limited the study to childcare centers located in Houston, Texas. The second delimitation was that the study only included participants who satisfied the following eligibility criteria: (a) a director position at a childcare center for at least 5 years, (b) an employment situation at a childcare center that is nonfranchised and

not in-home, (c) a supervisory role for a minimum of three employees, and (d) a previous use of strategies that reduced employee turnover.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

High occurrences of employee turnover impede organizations from reaching optimum productivity levels (Hassan et al., 2014). Childcare center directors who harness strategies to reduce employee turnover may use the information to prevent direct and indirect costs of employee turnover. The results of this study may contribute to business practices by providing childcare center directors practices they may utilize to reduce employee turnover and avoid excess organizational expenses related to recruiting, onboarding, and training new personnel. Consequently, childcare center directors may use findings from this study to decrease employee turnover in childcare centers and positively impact organizations' profitability and productivity levels.

Implications for Social Change

The strength and vitality of a community depend on the existence of organizations within the community that provide employment and income opportunities (Shetty & Reid, 2013). Implications for positive social change include the potential for improved employment stability and community development. Sustained employment provides employees a consistent source of income that gives families disposable funds to spend throughout a community. Additionally, the greater number of personnel employed within

a community may create a larger tax base for local municipalities to invest in initiatives to improve communities.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

Researchers conduct literature reviews to evaluate information relevant to the research questions to draw conclusions from the body of studies and uncover gaps in existent research (Ramdhani, Ramdhani, & Amin, 2014). The purpose of this literature review was to identify pertinent literature pertaining to strategies to reduce employee turnover in childcare centers. I analyzed and synthesized a broad range of theoretical and empirical literature relevant to assist in my exploration of the central research question regarding the strategies childcare center directors use to reduce employee turnover.

The focus of this qualitative case study was to explore strategies of childcare center directors who have reduced employee turnover. The conceptual framework for this study was Mitchell et al. (2001) job embeddedness theory. I chose this theory as the framework for this research study to determine strategies childcare center directors may use to reduce employee turnover. Reducing employee turnover is a significant factor that affects an organization's ability to gain and maintain a competitive advantage (Deery & Jago, 2015). A discussion of the search strategies I utilized to investigate this topic using the previously identified conceptual framework follows.

I conducted a review of the literature on employee turnover and retention strategies, which included peer-reviewed articles and journals, dissertations, websites, and books. My review included sources from the following databases: ABI/INFORM

Complete, Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, Emerald Management Journals, ProQuest Central, PsycINFO, SAGE Premier, Google Scholar, and ScienceDirect. An aggregation of key terms and phrases included: *employee turnover, employee retention, job embeddedness, employee engagement, person-organization fit, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and employee development*. These categories enabled an expansive understanding of the factors that contribute to employees remaining in or leaving jobs.

I organized this literature review to first discuss my literature search strategy. Next, I provide details on the job embeddedness conceptual framework followed by a critical analysis and synthesis of the literature related to the conceptual framework and employee turnover. I conclude the literature review with information regarding strategies leaders may use to reduce employee turnover. In accordance with Walden DBA requirements, in this review of the professional and academic literature, I included peer-reviewed articles published from 1925 to 2017.

Job Embeddedness Theory

Job embeddedness theory is an organizational attachment theory used to examine the accumulation of forces that influence an employee's decision about whether to remain in his or her job (Mitchell et al., 2001). The job embeddedness theory is composed of three factors from both an internal and external perspective to explain people's connections to organizations that influence employee retention (Rajappan, Nair, Priyadarshini, & Sivakumar, 2017). Mitchell et al (2001) outlined the dimensions as: (a)

the extent to which a job, organization, or community are compatible with an individual's personal values and objectives (fit); (b) the extent to which an individual has connections with other individuals and job-related activities (links); and (c) the ease with which links break (sacrifices).

The concept of job embeddedness stems from Lewin's (1951) psychological field theory. The field theory is a psychological construct in which the psychologist Kurt Lewin examined patterns of interactions between an individual and the field or environment in which the individual exists (Lewin, 1951). In the field theory, Lewin proposed that figures in the foreground of pictures and surroundings images are so closely connected that it is difficult to separate the foreground from the background (Kiazad, Holtom, Hom, & Newman, 2015). Lewin argued that both personal and situational characteristics influence ones' behavior. Mitchell et al. (2001) applied principles of the field theory in an organizational context to examine interactions between an employee and an organization as they relate to employees' decisions to remain in or leave a job.

Applying the principles of Lewin's field theory, Mitchell et al. (2001) investigated the relationship between employees' turnover intentions and actual instances of turnover by examining job satisfaction and organizational commitment, as well as job search activities, using a sample of 177 grocery store employees and 208 hospital employees. Mitchell et al. found that a relationship exists between an individual's job embeddedness level, their intent to leave a job, and their propensity to leave a job.

Mitchell et al. further asserted that once an individual becomes highly embedded in a job or community, they become less likely to wish to leave that job or community and are therefore less likely to leave. Based on their findings, Mitchell et al. developed the job embeddedness theory to explain how various factors influence employees' decisions about whether to stay in their jobs.

The key underlying principle of the job embeddedness theory is that employees remain in an organization because they become intertwined in a social web at a job or in a community and are therefore less likely to leave a job or community (Mitchell et al., 2001). The crux of the theory is the stronger the embedding forces between an individual and an organization or community, the less likely those employees will be to leave their jobs (Mitchell et al., 2001). Mitchell et al.'s job embeddedness theory is intended to help individuals and organizations understand the reasons employees remain in a job, vice reasons employees leave. Mitchell et al. argued that voluntary employee turnover occurs through a cognitive decision-making process that culminates in an individual developing a desire or intention to leave. Mitchell et al. asserted that highly embedded employees are less likely to leave compared to less embedded individuals. Mitchell et al. coined job embeddedness as a broad set of influences that affect employees' intention to remain in their jobs. Such influences may exist or occur within the organization in which individuals work or in the community in which they reside (Reitz, 2014). Regardless of location, these factors have psychological, social, and/or financial significance to employees, and thus influence their employment decisions (Ryan & Harden, 2014). An

additional factor that Mitchell et al. considered when they developed the job embeddedness theory is the concept that factors relating to where people work (on-the-job) as well as factors associated with where they reside off-the-job (community) impact employees' decisions to remain in a job. The job embeddedness theory is comprised of six dimensions, on-the-job links, off-the-job (community) links, on-the-job fit, off-the-job (community) fit, on-the-job sacrifices and off-the-job (community) sacrifices (Mitchell et al., 2001).

Links. Links are the ties employees have with other people or activities (Chen & Chang, 2013). Organizational links are relationships that individuals have with the organization or other individuals associated with the organization (Mitchell et al., 2001). Moreover, links may be social, psychological, or financial, and may include on-the-job and off-the-job (community) elements (Anand, 2017). The relationships employees have within an organization influences the individual's intention to leave a job (Anand, 2017). Highly embedded individuals have a high degree of interconnectedness, which they would forfeit if they left an organization or community (Mitchell et al., 2001). Employees establish embedded links when they create bonds with others (Mitchell et al., 2001). Asfar (2016) classified links as informal or formal connections between an individual and an institution, activities, or other individuals. On-the-job links may be formal or informal. Formal organizational links include membership of work groups, professional organizations, and professional contacts (Ferreira, 2017). Informal links include relationships with coworkers, friends, and acquaintances (Takawira, Coetzee, &

Schreuder, 2014). Off-the-job (community) links are extra-organizational ties, activities, and relationships that an individual has within a geographical area such as ties to family, friends, and community associations (Ryan & Harden, 2014). The number and strength of employees' connections translate into different levels of embeddedness. The more abundant the links between an individual and an organization or community, the more embedded the individual is there, and therefore the more likely to stay (Mitchell et al., 2001). Ryan and Harden (2014) found that community links, such as church-related activities and hobbies, influence employees' commitment to their jobs. Achieving findings complementary with Ryan and Harden, Cheng and Chang (2016) reported community links can be as influential as organizational links in relation to employee retention. Although community links do not involve the workplace, members may remain in their jobs to remain in a particular community (Chambel, Lorente, Carvalho, & Martinez, 2016).

Fit. The second dimension of job embeddedness is fit. Fit is an individual's perceived level of comfort and compatibility with an organization or environment (Cheng & Chang, 2016). Nafei (2014) described fit as the degree of alignment between individual's personal goals, views, and values and those of an organization and community. Rajappan et al. (2017) reported that the better the fit between an employee and an organization, the greater the likelihood that an employee will feel professionally and personally tied to the organization. Off-the-job (community) fit is the degree that an individual feels he or she fits in within the community in which he or she resides (Kiazad

et al., 2015). The greater the congruence between what an individual's desires of his or her community and what that community offers, the more likely it is that the individual will become embedded in the community and stay in a job to continue to reap the benefits of residing in that community (Lee, Burch, & Mitchell, 2014). Off-the-job (community) elements of the fit dimension of job embeddedness include factors such as geographical location, weather, available amenities, entertainment opportunities, community culture, and the presence of individuals who share similar interests and personal views. Components of community links may be of intrinsic value to personnel; for instance, an individual may view the sense of safety they get from living in a neighborhood or community as a community link, one which may, in turn, influence their decision to stay in a job (Afsar & Badir, 2016).

The fit component of job embeddedness aligns with Chatman's (1989) person-organization (P-O) fit construct. The central tenet of P-O fit is the perceived compatibility between employees' individual characteristics and the conditions of their work environment (Wojrtczuk-Turek & Turek, 2016). Employees who experience a sense of belonging within an organization are less likely to want to leave the organization; hence, the better the P-O fit, the more likely it is that an employee will feel tied to an organization (Saraç, Efil, & Eryilmaz, 2014). Employees with a poor P-O fit are likely to leave the organization (Rajappan et al., 2017). Conversely, employees with a good P-O for are less likely to leave an organization (Wei, 2015).

Sacrifice. Sacrifice is the perceived cost of psychological or material benefits that may prevent an employee from leaving an organization (Mitchell et al., 2001). Lee et al. (2014) described sacrifice as the cost associated with breaking links. The principle behind the sacrifice dimension of job embeddedness is that an employee will remain in an organization to avoid sacrificing valued job-related incentives as well as community connections and social relationships (Nafei, 2014). The more an individual must give up if they leave an organization or community, the lower the likelihood that he or she will do so (Tews, Michel, Xu, & Drost, 2015). On-the-job-related sacrifices may include the loss of highly sought-after office space, seniority benefits, retirement benefits, health insurance, job security, and trusted leaders or coworkers (Kiazad et al., 2015). Off-the-job (community) sacrifice is the perceived loss one would suffer by relocating from one's residential community (Mitchell et al., 2001). Keeping in line with the tenets of the job embeddedness theory, community sacrifice plays an important role in an employee's decision to leave or remain in a job (Lee et al., 2014). Examples of off-the-job (community) related sacrifices include proximity to family members and friends, homeownership, and availability of preferred pastimes (Mitchell et al., 2001). If employees value aspects of the community in which they reside, they will be reluctant to give up their job (Kiazad et al., 2015). Returning to the scenario where an individual perceives the security of their neighborhood as a link, having to relocate to accommodate new employment arrangements may constitute a sacrifice for that person, and therefore influence the person's decision to stay in a job.

Since Mitchell et al. (2001) developed the job embeddedness theory, multiple researchers have provided empirical support for the applicability of the construct in various contexts. Lee et al. (2004) extended Mitchell et al.'s (2001) findings regarding the relationship between job embeddedness and voluntary turnover. Using a sample of 621 employees from a financial institution, Lee et al. reported that both on-the-job and off-the-job (community) embeddedness factors decreased turnover and absenteeism. Lee et al. further submitted evidence that showed that employees' job embeddedness levels also impacted their performance and organizational citizenship levels. Crossley, Bennett, Jex, and Burnfield (2007) extended this line of research with an examination of the integration of job embeddedness with traditional voluntary turnover models. Using a sample of 306 participants who represented a cross-section of employees from a mid-sized organization in the midwestern United States that provides assisted living for older adults and disabled youths, Crossley et al. identified a direct relationship between embeddedness and turnover. Crossley et al. supported Mitchell et al. and Lee et al. Crossley et al. contended that organizational leaders may apply the job embeddedness theory to predict employees' intent to leave and voluntary turnover behaviors. Leaders may thus seek to improve their understanding of job embeddedness to reduce employee turnover and the negative organizations associated with high turnover (Tian, Cordery, & Gamble, 2016).

Choi and Kim (2015) examined the effect of job embeddedness turnover intention of infection control nurses. Choi and Kim (2015) found a correlation between turnover

intention and job embeddedness and found that the extent managers provide resources that embed individuals in the community as well as in the organization, creating a strong fit, and influences employees' decisions to stay in their jobs. Summarizing Choi and Kim's findings, managers may strengthen the fit between an individual and the organization by providing realistic information to candidates during the hiring process and beyond.

Subsequently, Robinson, Kralj, Solnet, Goh, and Callan (2014) found that the job embeddedness aspects are positively related to organizational commitment. Leaders may use organization-sponsored programs designed to allow employees to network and build relationships as embedding activities to strengthen employees' attachment and commitment to an organization and those associated with it (Anand, 2017). Kiazad et al. (2015) reported that organizations can increase employees' embeddedness levels by implementing skill-enhancing practices, such as training and high-potential employee development programs, as well as providing paid professional organization membership to allow personnel to expand their organizational networks. Additionally, organizational leaders may also increase employees' job embeddedness levels through building community building activities and activities designed to help employees developing a sense of belonging (Robinson et al., 2014). Managers may strengthen job embeddedness by offering unique benefits that are hard for other companies to replicate, and thus that the employee will not want to sacrifice, such as pay and reward incentives (Halvorsen, Treuren, & Kulik, 2015). Implementing policies and programs designed to increase

employees' embeddedness levels are strategies organizational leaders may use to reduce employee turnover (Lee et al., 2017).

Empirical evidence exists that supports the predictive ability of the job embeddedness theory regarding employee turnover in various organizational contexts, evidence also exists that support the applicability construct across multiple countries and cultures (Hom et al., 2009; Lang, Kern, & Zapf, 2016; Ramesh & Gelfand, 2010). Hom et al. (2009) demonstrated the utility of job embeddedness theory to predict employee turnover in organizations outside of the U.S. Using a sample of 500 Chinese middle managers across 41 firms to investigate the relationship between organizational relationships and job embeddedness, Hom et al. confirmed a negative relationship between job embeddedness and employees' intentions to leave their jobs in China. Hom et al. provided further empirical support for the predictive ability of job embeddedness in relation to employee turnover. In line with Hom et al., Ramesh and Gelfand (2010) investigated the cross-cultural generalizability of job embeddedness by studying three call centers in the U.S. ($n = 323$), and three call centers in India ($n = 474$) to examine the applicability of job embeddedness in India compared to in the United States. Ramesh and Gelfand aimed to test the effectiveness of job embeddedness outside the United States. Ramesh and Gelfand demonstrated the cross-national utility of the job embeddedness theory as a viable model to understand why personnel remain in a job. Consistent with Hom et al. and Ramesh and Gelfand's research on job embeddedness, Lang et al. (2016) examined the mediating effects of job embeddedness on voluntary

turnover using a sample of 507 employed personnel in Germany. Lang et al. demonstrated that highly-embedded employees are less likely to actively search for new employment opportunities. Taken together, Hom et al., Ramesh and Gelfand, and Lang et al. all provided empirical support for the applicability of the job embeddedness in various organizational and cultural contexts.

Criticisms of the job embeddedness theory. In addition to support for the job embeddedness theory, there is empirical opposition to the construct. Allen, Peltokorpi, and Rubenstein (2016) argued that employee embeddedness is not always associated with positive results. Allen et al. contended that employee embeddedness may leave an employee disoriented or feeling as though he or she is stuck in an organization against his or her will. In such cases, employees demonstrated lower levels of engagement, as well as exhaustion, and were more susceptible to burnout (Allen et al., 2016). In a study similar to Allen et al.'s research, Marasi et al. (2016) provided evidence that job embeddedness is not always beneficial. Using a sample of 353 nurses, Marasi et al. investigated the relationship between job embeddedness, organizational trust, and workplace deviance. Marasi et al. demonstrated that employees who lacked organizational trust and were highly embedded in their jobs demonstrated higher levels of workplace deviance than those with high levels of organizational trust and either high or low levels of job embeddedness. Marasi et al. also found that some highly embedded personnel felt hopelessly confined to their jobs. In this context, these employees may feel trapped in their jobs will not leave even when they have a strong desire to do so.

Employees who perceive that they have little control or choice with regard to terminating their employment are likely to engage in workplace deviance (Chambel et al., 2016). In these cases, highly embedded employees threaten organizational efficiency with complacency and destructive acts; therefore, highly embedded employees that are deviant or disgruntled are liabilities and inhibit organizational productivity levels (Chambel et al., 2016). Despite the limitations of Mitchell et al.'s theory, I am using the theory because it is the best fit for the current study's purpose, which is to identify strategies childcare center directors use to reduce employee turnover. The use of the theory can assist in uncovering the strategies childcare center directors use to retain employees in a childcare centers in Houston, Texas.

Employee Turnover

Turnover is the process of employees separating from an organization or employment (Heritage, Gilbert, & Roberts, 2016). Business leaders consider employee turnover a significant expense to an organization in terms of financial and productivity measures (Bankert, Coberley, Pope, & Wells, 2015). Employee turnover has both evident and hidden consequences to an organization (George, 2015). Visible turnover consequences include recruitment costs, relocation costs, and costs to train new employees (Alkahtani, 2015). Hidden cost of turnover involves the loss of productivity, loss of organizational knowledge, impaired relationships with clients, degraded morale, decreased job satisfaction, and diminished organizational commitment in remaining

employees (Alkahtani, 2015). Employee turnover is a critical link between macro strategies and micro behavior within an organization (Deery & Jago, 2015).

Employee turnover is one of the most researched subjects in the human resource management (HRM) field (Deery & Jago, 2015). From as early as 1920s, scholars have conducted empirical studies to investigate the causes and consequences of employee turnover (Adkins, 2016). Bills (1925) published the first empirical study on turnover. Bills demonstrated that clerical workers who were children of unskilled workers were more likely to quit their jobs than children of skilled workers.

Turnover is categorized as voluntary or involuntary (Hesford, Malina, & Pizzini, 2016). Voluntary turnover occurs when an employee willingly chooses to discontinue their employment with an organization (Hesford et al., 2016). Employees' decisions to voluntarily terminate their employment with an organization varies based on each individual employee's circumstances. Commonly cited reasons for voluntary turnover include the availability of alternative employment opportunities, job satisfaction levels, interpersonal conflict, an unproductive work environment, work-life balance challenges, or other personal reasons (Parker & Gerbasi, 2016).

Involuntary turnover occurs when an employer terminates a worker's employment with an organization (Hesford et al., 2016). Employers may involuntarily terminate employees for reasons such as poor performance or violating workplace policies (Hesford et al., 2016). Employees may also be involuntarily terminated for reasons beyond their

control such as corporate downsizing or organizational restructuring (Parker & Gerbasi, 2016).

Wang, Zhao, and Thornhill (2015) argued that while both forms of turnover result in an organization having to acquire new employees, voluntary turnover is more detrimental to an organization than involuntary turnover. Hesford et al. (2016) opposed Wang et al. and reported that neither form of turnover is completely good or bad in all instances. Although many HRMs consider voluntary turnover as destructive and recommend organizations attempt to minimize voluntary turnover, there are occasions when organizations benefit from when employees voluntarily leave (Wang et al., 2015).

Turnover models. March and Simon (1952) presented the first official turnover model, the theory of organizational equilibrium. In the theory of organizational equilibrium, March and Simon theorized that employees who are happy with their jobs are more likely to remain productive members of an organization. March and Simon underscored the need for organizations to balance employee expectations with organizational inducements to reduce employee turnover. Since March and Simon's (1952) development of the theory, researchers have consistently reported job satisfaction and organizational commitment as reoccurring themes in turnover research (Deery & Jago, 2015). Mobley, Horner, and Hollingsworth (1978) proposed that employee turnover occurs through a withdrawal process in which employees become less satisfied and less committed to an organization and therefore gradually or abruptly withdraw psychologically and behaviorally from an organization before they actually leave.

Job satisfaction is the degree to which an employee likes or dislikes his or her occupational experiences (Fu & Deshpande, 2014). Employees' job satisfaction levels influence their turnover intentions (Kim, Wehbi, Delli Fraine, & Brannon 2014). This is in agreement with the central tenet of the job satisfaction theory where individuals who are satisfied with their jobs are less likely to leave their jobs than their less satisfied or dissatisfied counterparts (Fu & Deshpande, 2014). Mobley et al. (1978) also posited dissatisfied employees are more likely to quit their jobs than satisfied employees.

Personnel also make employment decisions based on organizational commitment levels (Halvorsen et al., 2015). Organizational commitment is the psychological attachment between an employee and organization (Garg & Dhar, 2014). Employees' organizational commitment levels represent their feelings regarding their organization as a whole (Alkahtani, 2015). Alkahtani (2015) asserted that highly committed employees perform at higher levels than their less committed counterparts, which results in higher productivity levels and fewer instances of employee turnover. The crux of the organizational commitment model is that highly committed employees will affirm their commitment to an organization by remaining in the organization (Garg & Dhar, 2014). Employees who have a low commitment level, are more likely to leave an organization than those who have higher commitment levels (Halvorsen et al., 2015).

The job embeddedness theory is an alternative lens through which to view employee turnover. Job satisfaction and organizational commitment are turnover models researchers developed from the perspective of understanding why employees leave an

organization (Mitchell et al., 2001). The job embeddedness theory differs from these turnover models because the foundation of the job embeddedness theory is on examining reasons people remain in jobs (Crossley et al., 2007). Moreover, Crossley et al. (2007) reported job satisfaction and organizational commitment levels exclusively entail on job-related elements; whereas, the job embeddedness theory includes off-the-job factors in addition to job-related issues. Holtom, Mitchell, Lee, and Eberly (2008) recommended researchers study turnover through the perspective of interpersonal relationships in addition to an individual's personal thoughts and feelings.

Heeding Holtom et al.'s (2008) recommendation for researchers to examine employee turnover from a holistic perspective, I selected the job embeddedness theory as the conceptual framework for this study. I used the theory to form the basis of my understanding of employee turnover using both job-related and non-job-related factors. Mitchell et al. (2001) reported job embeddedness consistently explained variance in turnover beyond control variables such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment; therefore, the job embeddedness theory is the most suitable employee turnover model for me to examine employee turnover in childcare centers. I did not select the job satisfaction nor organizational commitment turnover models as the conceptual framework for this study as they lack the multidimensional aspect of employee turnover the embeddedness theory includes.

Demographic characteristics. There are demographic variables that are significant predictors of employee turnover (Schubert & Anderson, 2015). Antecedents

to employee turnover are strongly associated various socio-demographic characteristics such as age, gender, marital status, ethnicity, length of service, and educational levels (Agyeman & Ponniah, 2014). In the following sections, I examined what research indicates regarding the impact of employees' age and tenure as they relate to employee turnover.

Age. An employee's age is the most studied demographic attribute associated with employee turnover (Agyeman & Ponniah, 2014). Younger workers are more likely to quit their jobs than more senior employees (Schubert & Anderson, 2015). Lu and Gursoy (2016) examined the possible moderating effects of generational differences between Baby Boomers (born from 1946 to 1964), Generation X employees (born from 1965 to 1980), and Millennials (born from 1981 to 1999) with respect to burnout, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. Lu and Gursoy found a generational identity in Millennials and Baby Boomers had a significant moderating effect on the relationship between emotional exhaustion and turnover intention, as well as on the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention. There are significant differences between Millennials and older generations who are still present in the workforce, in terms of their characteristics, working styles and employment expectations (Lu & Gursoy, 2016; Özçelik, 2015; Tews et al., 2015). Baby Boomers are employees who are service-oriented, good team players, good at socializing, and value good work ethics, job security, and stability. When compared with Generation X employees and Millennials, Baby Boomers are loyal and are easily attached to their organizations, and they believe

that hard work will pay off (Lu & Gursoy, 2016). Generation X employees are adaptable, individualistic, creative employees who value autonomy, freedom, and extrinsic rewards (Lu & Gursoy, 2016). Compared with Boomers, Gen-Xers are less work-centric and value a work-life balance and leisure (Lu & Gursoy, 2016). Similar to Baby Boomers, Millennial employees are characterized as driven and demanding of the work environment; they show confidence, voice their opinions, enjoy collective action, skills development, and enjoy looking for new opportunities and challenges (Lu & Gursoy, 2016). Millennials generally have high levels of self-confidence and self-reliance; they are independent, individualistic, and socially active and like to work in teams; they tend to emphasize self-development by searching for opportunities to learn and grow (Özçelik, 2015). Millennials reported significantly lower job satisfaction and higher turnover intention than Boomers when exhausted (Lu & Gursoy, 2016). Millennials have high expectations of rapid promotions, pay raises, instant feedback, and praise (Lu & Gursoy, 2016). Additionally, Millennials will quickly leave jobs where they feel their needs are not met (Tews et al., 2015). Individuals born in different generational time periods have employment needs and expectations that impact their decisions to remain in or leave a job. Similar to Özçelik (2015) and Lu and Gursoy, Mencl and Lester (2014) examined generational differences as they relate to work attitudes, job satisfaction, and turnover intention, and found that individuals from the various generations exhibited more similarities than differences for job satisfaction turnover intentions.

Tenure. Tenure is the length of time an employee spends in a given occupation (Butler, Brennan-Ing, Wardamasky, & Ashley, 2014). The number of years an employee has in a job also influences their decisions to remain in or leave a job (Butler et al., 2014). With respect to tenure, employees with higher years of tenure are less likely to quit a job than their less tenured counterparts (Hausknecht, 2014). Higher tenured employees who have reached higher levels of career attainment are more likely to exhibit higher levels of organizational commitment and are therefore more likely to remain in a job (Hausknecht, 2014). Kabungaidze, Mahlatshana, and Ngirande (2013) found a statistically significant relationship exists between an employee's tenure and turnover intentions amongst teachers from disadvantaged schools in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. Specifically, the greater the number of years an employee has on a job, the lesser their turnover intentions (Kabungaidze et al., 2013).

Job-related factors. In addition to demographic variables that contribute to employee turnover, job-related factors may also contribute to employee turnover. Employee retention levels depend greatly on the personnel organizations hire and how they are managed (Agyeman & Ponniah, 2014). The battle to retain the most talented workforce begins during the hiring process and continues with deliberate retention strategies (Saraç et al., 2014). Saraç et al. (2014) suggested that employee engagement efforts may begin during the recruitment process. Managers can also assess candidates' fit with the organization's culture during the selection and recruitment process (Chatman, 1989). Recognizing the benefits of the P-O fit, leaders should include considerations

related to P-O fit and embedding factors when making hiring decisions (Agyeman & Ponniah, 2014). Wei (2015) examined how high-performance HR practices and P-O fit affect general human capital and turnover intention using a sample of 456 engineers and their immediate supervisors in 31 Taiwanese high-technology companies. Wei found that employees with higher P-O fits stayed in their jobs longer than those with lesser fit levels. The extent that organizations can influence employees' perceived level of fit within an organization, impacts the likelihood individuals desire to remain within the organization (Wei, 2015).

Efficient compensation and reward systems are important components of HRM (Pentareddy & Suganthi, 2015). An organization's compensation system is an influential mechanism that impacts employees' commitment levels and their desires to remain in or leave a job (Terera & Ngirande, 2014). An organization may offer a compensation package as enticing as, or more enticing than incentives offered by competitors to retain its workforce is to (Pentareddy & Suganthi, 2015). Ertas (2015) found that professional development and merit-based promotions have a considerable impact on employees' turnover intentions. Organizational leaders may also use reward systems to attract and retain personnel (Terera & Ngirande, 2017). Supervisors may provide rewards and incentives to encourage employees to make the maximum effort to achieve organizational objectives (Scott, Sewell, & Odom, 2015). Timms et al. (2015) suggested that employees are likely to stay in organizations where they believe their efforts are appreciated, and contrarily employees are likely to leave an organization where they feel undervalued or

unappreciated. Rewards programs should include monetary and nonmonetary incentives (Timms et al., 2015). Monetary rewards shown to increase employee retention include performance bonuses (Timms et al., 2015). Non-monetary rewards included promotions, childcare facilities, flexible work arrangements and extended leave programs (Timms et al., 2015).

Leadership

Minimizing employee turnover is a strategic necessity for organizations to gain and maintain a sustainable competitive advantage (George, 2015). Leadership is one's ability to influence others to commit to the leader's desired objectives (McCleskey, 2014). Leadership involvement and effective leadership practices impact employee turnover levels (Ashraf, Farooq, & Din, 2014). Leaders have an important role in motivating, developing, and engaging employees, which could potentially promote positive outcomes for achieving to the organization's mission and strategic objectives (Zhang, Avery, Bergsteiner, & More, 2014).

Rafiee, Bahrami, and Entezarian (2015) reported committed HRMs are integral for an organization to gain a competitive advantage. As principle elements of an organization's foundation, HRMs are responsible for reinforcing organizational commitment by identifying organizational barriers, supporting employees, modeling expected behaviors, and making strategic decisions (Rafiee et al., 2015). Managerial communication efforts could lead to higher job commitment from employees and subsequently lower the rate of the employees' turnover intentions (Kim et al., 2014). The

way leaders communicate with employees impacts their inability to motivate employees (Barrick, Mount, & Li, 2013). Voinea, Bush, Opran, and Vladutescu (2015) asserted that managerial communication is a mechanism for organizational leaders to help employees understand the flow of information in its desired form throughout an organization to ensure an understanding and unity of effort in meeting organizational objectives. Effective communication programs allow leaders at all levels to build relationships between employees, customers, and the organization (Murshed, Uddin, & Hossain, 2015). Leaders who promote consistent communication relationships establish a channel within the organization that supports employee engagement (Murshed et al., 2013).

To gain a better understanding of the causes and consequences of employee turnover, I conducted a review of and analyzed literature relevant to employee job embeddedness and employee turnover theories and models. My specific focus areas included employee turnover, job satisfaction, and retention strategies. Retaining employees is central to the success of any organization (Terera & Ngurande, 2014). Understanding the determinants of employee turnover may result in direct and indirect financial saving to organizations (Dale-Olsen, 2014). As discussed in this review of the professional and academic literature, a guiding element of retention through the lens of job embeddedness is the notion that employees will remain in a job when a combination of on-the-job and off-the-job (community) influences make leaving disadvantageous (Choi & Kim, 2015).

Leaders may also enhance employee engagement incentives by establishing formal socialization processes and mentoring programs (Roberts, 2014). Employee needs are essential elements of employee engagement initiatives (Saratun, 2016). Qazi, Khalid, and Shafique (2015) suggested organizational leaders may increase employee retention by implementing work engagement policies to engage and support employees.

Organizational leaders may host social events, which create networking opportunities that may result in some personnel expanding their social networks (Anitha, 2014). These social connections may then constitute links to bind employees to their jobs. Porter, Woo, and Campion (2016) investigated the separate effects of internal networking and external networking on job embeddedness and employee turnover. Ferreira (2017) found that leaders use employee engagement efforts to facilitate a psychological attachment to an organization. Ferreira examined the relationship between ethical leadership and job embeddedness using a sample of 343 employees from 40 different private and public Portuguese institutions and found that perceived supervisor support mediated the influence of ethical leadership on job embeddedness. Specifically, Ferreira proposed leaders at all levels should focus on employees' needs and support, train, and subordinates according to their needs.

As organizations become increasingly dynamic as older members of the workforce approach retirement and younger members start their careers, HR professionals should incorporate internal employee engagement and employee support strategies to meet the needs of employees in various generational segments (Lu &

Gursoy, 2016). When developing employee engagement strategies, the values and preferences employees from each of the generations should be considered (Fishman, 2016). In line with Lu and Gursoy's (2016) study on the organizational impacts of employees' generational differences, Özçelik (2015) presented evidence regarding the significance of internal branding in engaging millennial employees. Leaders should understand employees' specific needs and develop strategies that enable employees from all generational sectors to be engaged in their organization (Fishman, 2016). Members of each generational sector have distinct work values, preferences, and expectations (Lyons, Schweitzer, & Ng, 2015). These differences are likely to result in different levels of job satisfaction and turnover intention across the three generations (Fishman, 2016).

Employee Development

Employee development occurs when employers provide opportunities for and facilitate the refinement of employees' skills, capacities, and capabilities to meet or surpass standard performance levels (Abbas, Raja, Darr, & Bouckenooghe, 2014). Organizational leaders may use employee development initiatives to improve employee efficiency, which may translate into increased profitability and improved employee retention levels (Fu & Deshpande, 2014). Jehanzeb and Bashir (2013) reported that an investment of \$1,575 per employee towards development activities may yield a 24% growth in gross profit. Employee development is likely to improve employee retention because personnel generally value continuous development opportunities (Ferreira, 2017). The efforts of a company towards retaining employees, often represented by

endeavors such as development programs may increase the degree of employees' embeddedness and organizational commitment levels (Park & Shaw, 2013). George (2015) posited that well-structured personnel development programs have a positive impact on employee retention efforts. Organizations can develop employees through a variety of methods which include training, compensation, and reward programs (Rajappan et al., 2017).

Training. Providing training opportunities is an intrinsic motivator that organizational leaders may offer employees. In companies that provide training and development opportunities to their employees, the turnover is, on average, 45% lower than in organizations with similar programs or services but without development programs (Jehanzeb & Bashir, 2013). Kim et al. (2014) asserted that HRM may use human resource practices such as training to lower the employee turnover rates. Organizations can provide training and allow for alternative duties to enhance organizational trust to improve employee retention (Kim et al., 2014). Hernandez, Stanley, and Miller (2014) found that employees who received skills development training were more committed to their organization and more likely to support the firm's strategic objectives. Consistent with Hernandez et al. (2014), Shuck, Twyford, Reio, and Shuck (2014) examined possible linkages between human resource development (HRD) practices and employee engagement and turnover intentions using a sample population of 207 healthcare facility employees. Shuck et al. presented evidence that a causal connection exists between training opportunities organization provide employees and the

effectiveness of the organization. In this way, organizations can use HRD to improve employee engagement and reduce turnover intent. Accommodating employees' desire for professional development may act as a mechanism to create or strengthen on-the-job links and increase the level of sacrifice one may perceive when considering whether to leave or remain in a job (Jehanzeb & Bashir, 2013). George (2015) echoed Park and Shaw (2013) that creating opportunities for employees to develop new competencies is a mechanism to embed and retain personnel. Employee training and development are symbolically valuable to some employees, as they demonstrate the level of importance an organization assigns to its employees (George, 2015). In addition to intrinsic rewards such as training opportunities, companies may also offer employee extrinsic incentives in the form of financial compensation.

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is the commitment and involvement of employees towards their organization and its values (Anitha, 2014). Employee engagement occurs when employees understand the organization's expectations, have sufficient resources to meet those expectations, participate in opportunities for growth and feedback, and feel valued by the organization (Hernandez et al., 2014). Treating employees as valued contributors to the organization is a recognized best practice for retaining employees (Terera & Ngirande, 2014). Organizational leaders may implement engagement strategies to engage, motivate, and ultimately retain employees (Anitha, 2014). Memon, Salleh, Baharom, and Harun (2014) presented evidence that a higher level of employee

engagement leads to decreased instances of employee turnover. Furthermore, Nafei (2014) suggested that leaders may use employee engagement techniques to adopt positive workplace behavioral practices that enhance employees' enthusiasm and psychological attachment to their jobs. Complementary with Nafei's findings, Hernandez et al. (2014) asserted that the benefits of employee engagement manifest as organizational competitiveness. Employees who are engaged are more likely to remain committed to their organization, and those who are not engaged will have a negative impact on an organization's performance by way of increased absenteeism, turnover, and decreased productivity (Albdour & Altarawneh, 2015). The more engaged employees are, the greater the likelihood that they will establish links and perceive sacrifices, which further embeds them in the organization (Hernandez et al., 2014).

Organizational Culture

Organizations may benefit the most from talented employees when organizational leaders recruit and retain personnel who fit into their culture (Memon et al., 2014). Organizational culture consists of a firm's collective assumptions, beliefs, norms, and values (Dhar, 2015). An organization's culture shapes employees' behavior patterns (Wen, 2014). The fit between an individual and an organization can create a perception of a meaningful workplace environment, which in turn may dissuade employees from leaving the organization (Memon et al., 2014). Employees' perceptions of how well they fit with an organization may be just as influential as job design and duties in terms of their effect on intention to quit (Ghosh & Gurunathan, 2015). Inabinett and Ballaro

(2014) conducted a correlational study to determine the relationship between an organization's corporate culture and employees' individual values as they related to employee job satisfaction. Inabinett and Ballaro confirmed the correlation between corporate culture, individual values, and employee retention and provide evidence that retention rates are higher when employees' values matched to an organization's culture. Similarly, Marasi et al. (2016) asserted personnel tend to remain in an organization when their skills match their jobs and when a cultural similarity exists between them and the organization. Matching an individual's values with an organization's principles is thus mutually beneficial for the employee and the organization (Inabinett & Ballaro, 2014). The extent to which a job's requirements and demands match an employee's skills and allow them to utilize their talents affects the level of fit between the employee and organization influences employees' employment decisions (Inabinett & Ballaro, 2014). Additionally, employees' personal plans, career goals, and personal values affect their desires to remain in or leave a job (Inabinett & Ballaro, 2014).

Transition and Summary

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore-strategies some childcare center directors used to reduce employee turnover. In Section 1, I proposed Mitchell et al.'s (2001) job embeddedness theory to enhance an understanding of the strategies childcare center directors may use to reduce employee turnover and improve organizational effectiveness. I also provided the research question and interview questions that align with the general and specific business problems in the problem

statement. Mitchell et al.'s (2001) job embeddedness theory serves as the conceptual framework for this study. Section 1 also includes a description of the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations. To conclude this section, I introduced the significance of the study and the review of the literature published within the last 5 years of the study.

In Section 2, I included additional information on the purpose of the study, research method and design, and details regarding data collection and analysis. Additionally, I discussed reliability and validity as they related to the study. In Section 3, I present findings of this study within the bounds of the conceptual framework and central research question. Additionally, I provide a discussion of the application to professional practice as well as implications for social change. I conclude Section 3 by providing: (a) recommendations for action, (b) recommendations for further research, and (c) my personal reflections.

Section 2: The Project

The focus of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies some childcare center directors used to reduce employee turnover. In Section 1, I presented information on the job embeddedness theory as the conceptual framework and information pertinent to my research topic. I also detailed valuable information about my role as the researcher, the purpose of the study, and the criteria for selecting prospective participants. Additionally, I provided a detailed description of information regarding the population for the study, ethical research guidelines, and reliability and validity standards. I conclude this section with a summary and transition into Section 3, where I presented the application to professional practice and implications for change.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore-strategies some childcare center directors used to reduce employee turnover. The target population consisted of four directors of nonfranchised childcare centers in Houston, Texas with more than 5 years of experience who have implemented strategies to reduce employee turnover. These childcare center directors were the appropriate population to participate in the study due to their lived experiences and success with strategies to reduce employee turnover. The implications of this study for positive social change included the potential to contribute to the prosperity of employees and communities. Personnel with sustained employment may be able to live more financially secure lives. Additionally, local

government officials may use tax revenues generated from employed personnel to enhance community facilities and services.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher includes planning, preparing, designing, collecting, analyzing, and reporting findings (Baškarada, 2015). My primary roles as the researcher were as the data collection instrument and to present a credible representation of findings. My specific responsibilities included collecting, analyzing, and objectively reporting data in accordance with Walden University's guidelines and ethical research principles.

Researchers are responsible to abide by ethical standards (Myers & Venable, 2014). Participants have a right to protection from undue harm, as well as respectful and equitable treatment while participating in research (The United States Department of Health and Human Services, 1978). In the *Belmont Report*, the United States Department of Health and Human Services (1978) established the three basic ethical principles for research with human subjects: (a) respect for persons, (b) beneficence, and (c) justice. I openly communicated with participants regarding the study to comply with standards outlined in the *Belmont Report*. I ensured participants' consent is voluntary and free of undue influence or coercion. I also explicitly informed participants of their rights as well as any risks associated with participating in the study.

Qualitative researchers have a responsibility to exercise due diligence to mitigate bias and avoid viewing data through a personal lens (Yin, 2017). With respect to the current study, I did not have any detailed knowledge of childcare center management, nor

do I have a relationship with any of the participants. I was familiar with employee turnover in childcare centers, as I worked as a childcare provider at a childcare center in 1999. Although I do not believe my limited experiential background caused me to have bias, I mitigated any potential bias by relying on the participants' responses rather than my own experiences and perspectives. An interview protocol is a script that researchers use to guide personal interviews (Doody & Noonan, 2013). I utilized an interview protocol to guide the interview process to ensure I asked each participant the same questions using the same procedures. Furthermore, I used an interview protocol to help me separate any opinions from respondents' answers regarding the research topic. I carefully constructed interview questions with neutral wording to avoid influencing the participants' responses. The interview questions (Appendix C) were relevant questions about strategies to decrease employee turnover.

Participants

Participant selection is central to research projects, as the researcher and participant collectively influence the outcome of the study (Vohra, 2014). Cleary, Horsfall, and Hayter (2014) suggested researchers select participants who are a good fit to the researcher's eligibility criteria. I applied the purposeful sampling technique to locate participants for this research study. Researchers use the purposeful sampling method to target those members of a population who meet certain established criteria (Elo et al., 2014). I selected participants based on their lived experiences and success with strategies to reduce employee turnover. Eligibility criteria are a set of shared

characteristics researchers wish to find in the participants (Cleary et al., 2014). I interviewed personnel who fit the following eligibility criteria: (a) a director position at a childcare center for at least 5 years, (b) an employment situation at a childcare center that is nonfranchised and not in-home, (c) a supervisory role for a minimum of three employees, and (d) a previous use of strategies that reduced employee turnover. Using purposeful sampling, to focus my research topic of employee turnover in childcare centers, my initial sample included four childcare center directors in Houston, Texas. I gained access to potential participants through a search of social media and business websites. I contacted potential participants who meet the eligibility criteria via email. I conducted semistructured telephone interviews.

Fletcher (2014) recommended interviewers deliberately take steps to establish working relationships with interviewees. The extent a researcher can establish rapport, foster trust, and demonstrate mutual respect has an impact on the richness of the data the researcher may obtain (Berger, 2015). Brett, O'Neill, and O'Gorman (2014) asserted that the consent process may serve as a mechanism to establish a rapport between researchers and participants. I used the consent process to enhance the researcher-participant relationship by communicating the significance of the study, as well as reassuring participants of their rights to ethical protection and confidentiality. During the pre-interview email correspondence, I endeavored to establish a working relationship with each participant to build gradually a rapport of trust and confidence. First, I communicated openly to establish an avenue of openness and two-way communication. I

addressed any questions or concerns regarding the study. Second, I asked participants to select an interview setting and location of their choice that was be comfortable and nonthreatening to them.

Research Method and Design

Research Method

The three research methods available are the quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods methodologies. I applied the qualitative research method in this study. The quantitative method is a mathematics-based research method used to test the relationships between variables (Ingham-Broomfield, 2014). Quantitative measures are useful to measure and quantify relationships, but they are not effective in capturing interactions between people (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The quantitative method failed to meet the needs of this study, as I did not intend to investigate the relationship between a set of variables. In mixed methods research, the researcher conducts the study utilizing a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques (Maxwell, 2015). Researchers use the mixed methods approach to develop a deep understanding of a phenomenon by integrating elements of quantitative and qualitative methods (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). The mixed methods approach was not appropriate for this research study due to the quantitative components inherent to the design of mixed methods.

Qualitative researchers explore participants' behaviors and perceptions to gain a deeper understanding of a contemporary phenomenon from a contextual standpoint (Heyvaert, Maes, & Onghena, 2013). The qualitative research method was ideal for this

study because it is a way for me to explore in-depth information regarding employee turnover in childcare centers.

Research Design

The three most commonly used qualitative designs are ethnography, phenomenology, and case study (Smith, 2015). I utilized the case study design in this study. Researchers use the ethnographic design to understand a phenomenon in the context of a specific culture (Baskerville & Myers, 2015). Researchers who use the ethnographic research design immerse themselves in the natural setting of the participants to learn their cultural norms and characteristics (Vesa & Vaara, 2014). The ethnographic research design was not suitable for this study, as I did not examine a group's cultural norms. Studying a group's cultural norms is not useful in understanding the business problem under study. Researchers use the phenomenological design to perform an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences surrounding an event or object (Smith, 2015). The phenomenological design is used when a researcher seeks to generate detailed descriptions of how individuals experience a phenomenon under investigation (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Phenomenological research generally involves a small number of subjects observed over a prolonged period using interviews and observations (Moustakas, 1994). I did not select this design because I intended to explore the research topic using multiple data sources. With the case study design, researchers examine single or multiple cases bounded by time and place (Yin, 2017). Researchers use the case study design to uncover how various issues occur in their natural settings from an internal

perspective from participants with experiences related to a subject (Robinson, 2014). Hoon (2013) reported researchers may use the case study design to explore a phenomenon with data collected by methods such as: (a) interviews, (b) archival data, (c) audiovisual materials, and (d) physical artifacts. The case study design was most appropriate for this study because I explored the turnover in childcare centers from the internal perspectives of participants with firsthand knowledge and experience using multiple data sources. Additionally, the design was most suitable for me to build a rich conceptual description of the study topic using multiple cases.

Population and Sampling

The population of this multiple case study consisted of four childcare center directors in Houston, Texas who have implemented strategies that reduced employee turnover. There was no predetermined sample size for qualitative studies (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Fusch and Ness (2015) suggested researchers choose a sample size that has the best opportunity to achieve data saturation. I planned to recruit four participants for the study, but I remained cognizant that I may have to adjust my sample size to achieve data saturation. I determined the actual number of participants once I obtain sufficient data to reach data saturation.

Researchers conduct population sampling because, in most cases, it is impossible and impracticable to study an entire population (Robinson, 2014). Researchers employ sampling strategies to identify and select a target population. Siedlecki, Butler, and Burchill (2015) described purposeful sampling as the non-random selection of

participants from sampling cases representative of a larger population. Elo et al. (2014) suggested purposeful sampling is suitable when a researcher has an interest in participants who have the best knowledge concerning a research topic. I used the purposeful sampling method to select at least four childcare center directors. For this study, the participants met the following eligibility criteria: (a) a director position at a childcare center for at least 5 years, (b) an employment situation at a childcare center that is nonfranchised and not in-home, (c) a supervisory role for a minimum of three employees, and (d) a previous use of strategies that reduced employee turnover.

I emailed participants who met the eligibility criteria an invitation to participate in the study. I sent a follow-up email to participants who agree to participate in the study. Upon participant confirmation, I emailed participants a consent form for them to sign and return to me recordkeeping purposes. Once I received approval from the Walden Institutional Review Board (IRB), I conducted separate semistructured interviews via Skype or telephone with participants. I scheduled interviews to last no longer than one hour. Furthermore, I used an audio recorder to record interviews and maintain a journal to record observations I made during the interviews to include notes on participants' verbal and nonverbal responses.

Ethical Research

Ethical considerations were imperative in this study because it involved human subjects. Researchers who conduct studies with human subjects must ensure they take measures to protect participants from maltreatment and the abuse of their rights

throughout their involvement in the research (Myers & Venable, 2014). I exercised care to ensure I afforded participants the maximum ethical protection, by strictly adhering to Walden University's IRB guidelines, in addition to the principles outlined in the United States Department of Health and Human Services (1978) *Belmont Report*. Prior to inviting respondents to participate in my research study, I obtained Walden University's IRB approval. The Walden University IRB approval number for this study is 12-21-18-0566827 and it expires on December 20, 2019.

Researchers obtain participants' informed consent to attain and document an individual's agreement to participate in a study (Schrems, 2014). The informed consent process is in place to ensure prospective participants willingly agree to participate in the research project (Vesa & Vaara, 2014). I emailed potential participants a letter of introduction (Appendix A) and informed consent form before participants decide to participate in the study. The informed consent form included (a) the background information on the reason for the study, (b) my obligations and responsibilities to participants, (c) the risks and benefits of participating in the study, and (d) a privacy disclosure statement. I also notified participants of their right to withdraw their consent to participate in the study at any time before, during, or after data collection without consequence. Furthermore, participants retained the right to remove their responses from the final research report. I notified participants that their involvement in the study is strictly voluntary; therefore, they would not receive any compensation or incentives for contributing to the study. Additionally, I obtained written consent from participants to

record the interviews using a recording device during the data collection process in accordance with Walden's IRB protocols. I instructed participants who agree to participate in the study respond via email with the words 'I Consent.'

I exercised the utmost care in terms of participants' and organizations' confidentially and ethical rights by excluding participants' names or other personal identifiable information from interview audio recordings and interview notes. I did not record information that would enable the identification of childcare facilities and participants, and I identified participants using generic alphanumeric codes, e.g. Participant 1. I maintained a copy of electronic files on a password-protected flash drive stored in a locked desk drawer in my home office. I stored hardcopy material related to the study in a locked desk drawer in my home office. The naming convention for hardcopy files corresponded to the naming convention used for electronic files. I scanned and uploaded any written correspondence into the appropriate folders on my laptop. I stored a copy of electronic data on a password-protected flash drive in a locked desk drawer in my home office. I will retain the study data in a secure place for 5 years and afterwards destroy the data by shredding hardcopy documents via a paper shredder, deleting files stored on the laptop, and wiping, crushing, and burning the password protected flash drive.

Data Collection Instruments

Researchers are the primary data collection tools in qualitative research (Antwi, & Hamza, 2015). I was the primary data collection instrument for this qualitative case

study. I collected data utilizing semistructured interviews using open-ended questions and archival documentation for analysis. The purpose of semistructured interviews is to obtain participants' perspectives as their experiences relate to a topic (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). Case study researchers may explore a social problem using data collected in archival records (Hyett, Kenny, & Dickinson-Swift, 2014). Organizations capture, maintain, and transmit information pertaining to the business using some form of documentation (David, Dube, & Ngulube, 2013). Archived records are correspondences created by an organization that provides reliable information regarding the organization (Yu, Abdullah, & Saat, 2014). I asked participants if they have any additional records related to my research question.

Researchers may adhere to interview protocols to help mitigate researcher bias (Jørgensen, Dybå, Liestøl, & Sjøberg, 2016). An interview protocol may serve as a tool for researchers to organize the interview process as well as keep interviews focused and on topic (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). I adhered to an interview protocol (Appendix B) to enhance my study's dependability and minimize the effect of any potential bias. Following the interview protocol, I began the interview sessions with questions to engage the participants, establish a rapport, and facilitate a level of comfort. I conducted member checking to enrich the validity of the data by ensuring I accurately captured the participant intended responses.

Data Collection Technique

The central research question that guided this study is what strategies do childcare center directors use to reduce employee turnover? Yilmaz (2013) asserted the goal of qualitative research is to discover as much about a subject as possible, as the richness of the data is contingent upon the exchange between researchers and respondents. I gathered detailed data regarding employee turnover in childcare centers from interviews with childcare center directors who use strategies to reduce employee turnover. I gathered data from archival records and semistructured interviews (Appendix C).

The semistructured interview is an effective way to collect qualitative data because it enables researchers to tailor questions to address specific issues (Khan, 2014). In semistructured interviews, interviewers ask open-ended questions and allow participants the freedom to respond to the questions as they wish; during which, the interviewer asks additional questions to obtain further data or clarification (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). An advantage of semistructured interviews is the tool's utility as a mechanism for participants to provide explanations to *how*, *what*, or *why* question regarding a phenomenon (Yin, 2017). A disadvantage of semistructured interviews is that the effectiveness of the data collection technique depends on the researcher's interpersonal and communication skills. During semistructured interviews, researchers engage interviewees in a dialogue. The success of the interview hinges on the interviewer's ability to question, listen, and respond to information respondents provide (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).

Researchers may enhance the trustworthiness of their research findings by incorporating data from multiple sources (Baškarada, 2014). In addition to collecting data via semistructured interviews, I requested participants provide archived organizational documents. I utilized data from multiple sources to validate my data via methodological triangulation. Methodological triangulation is the use of multiple external sources to collect and analyze data to substantiate a finding to improve the validity and reliability of the research results (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013). Yin (2017) suggested qualitative researchers use interviews in conjunction with secondary data sources, such as archived record analysis, and observations to collect data.

Member checking is the process in which researchers give participants the opportunity to review research findings for accuracy and validity (Cho & Lee, 2014). Member checking enhances research creditability and dependability (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). Morse (2015) outlined a 3-step process to conduct member checking: (a) researcher interviews participant, (b) researcher interprets participant responses, and (c) participants validate researcher's interpretation of their responses. I used member checking to confirm my interpretation of the data was appropriate. I continued to conduct semistructured interviews until I attained data saturation, at which time participants' answers became repetitive and interviews fail to yield new data or themes.

Data Organization Techniques

Researchers organize data by tracking, sorting, and securing information in preparation for data analysis (Yin, 2017). I kept a journal to track and organize participants' responses as well as to record observations I make during the interviews to include notes on participants' nonverbal cues. Data organization is necessary to maintain the integrity of data (Anyan, 2013). Gibson and Brand (2013) reported that researchers should ensure participant confidentiality by identifying participants using generic codes. I identified participants by a generic alphanumeric code beginning with Participant 1 to ensure respondent anonymity. I maintained a copy of electronic files on a password-protected flash drive stored in a locked desk drawer in my home office. I named the main folder Childcare Center Turnover. I used subfolders to track participant-related information; names of the subfolders matched the generic name used to identify the corresponding participant. I stored hardcopy material related to the study in a locked desk drawer in my home office. The naming convention for hardcopy files corresponded to the naming convention used for electronic files. I scanned and uploaded any written correspondence into the appropriate folders on my laptop. I stored a copy of electronic data on a password-protected flash drive in a locked desk drawer in my home office. I will securely store data for 5 years. I wiped, crushed, and burned the password protected flash drive after the 5th year. I destroyed interview notes, informed consent forms, and other hardcopies by shredding the documents using a paper shredder.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is the conversion of raw data into a message that conveys the researcher's conclusion, interpretation, or understanding of a topic (Lewis, 2015). The purpose of data analysis is to make sense of collected data (Palinkas et al., 2015). Researchers use triangulation to reduce both researcher bias and the likelihood of data misinterpretation (Cho & Lee, 2014). To triangulate data, researchers use multiple sources of data and analysis to explore the multiple levels and dimensions of a phenomenon (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Methodological triangulation is the use of multiple external sources to collect and analyze data to substantiate a finding to improve the validity and reliability of the research results (Ritchie et al., 2013). To triangulate data, I collected data from two sources. I obtained data from semistructured interviews as well as organizational documentation relevant to the research topic. Additionally, I analyzed data to link information from the literature review, themes from the interview data, and data drawn from company documentation to demonstrate methodological triangulation.

Researchers enhance the thoroughness of their qualitative data analysis by utilizing computer software (Male, 2016). NVivo is a computer software program with the capability to store data; researchers also use the software to aid with data coding and categorizing data according to emerging themes and data similarities (QSR International Pty Ltd, 2017). I utilized NVivo to organize, sort, code, and subsequently analyze data. Coding is the process of reducing data into elements and classifying information into clusters based on its relation to the entire data set (Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen, &

Snelgrove, 2016). A code is a label used to denote something of interest about the data (Clarke & Braun, 2014). After systematically reviewing transcribed interview data and company documents data, I used NVivo to create a list of codes based on repetitive words or phrases that relate to the research question and conceptual framework. After I generated a list of codes based on repetitive keywords and phrases, I used the axial coding technique to identify connections between categories and subcategories. Axial coding is the process of developing major categories and sub-categories (Homburg, Wilczek, & Hahn, 2014).

Researchers use themes in qualitative data analysis to methodically sort data and search for patterns helpful to the generation of full descriptions of the phenomenon under study (Cho & Lee, 2014). A theme identifies a meaning patterned across the dataset, which is important for illuminating the research question (Clarke & Braun, 2014). Clarke and Braun (2014) posited a good theme is distinct and may stand alone, but the themes should fit jointly together to form a comprehensible analytic picture. Once I categorized the data by themes, I analyzed the data to construct a thematic map for further thematic analysis. I continued thematic analysis to ensure themes connect in a logical and meaningful manner to frame the data interpretation and final conclusions. I used thematic analysis to focus on and uncover information related to the research question and conceptual framework as I detailed in the literature review. Furthermore, I used an iterative data analysis process to continually seek out scholarly research relevant to the study. On a continuing basis, I tracked keywords and themes to remain within the

bounds of the conceptual framework and to correlate findings from the study with those of other scholars.

Reliability and Validity

Study methodology, design, data collection, analysis, and reporting techniques all impact a study's reliability and validity and affect the practical application of a researcher's findings. Measures of reliability and validity in qualitative research differ from those in quantitative research (Cope, 2014). Validity and reliability of qualitative research are not quantifiable; rather they are based on subjective data that include individuals' beliefs, experience, and perspectives (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The criteria for assessing the reliability and validity of qualitative studies are dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability (McIntosh & Morse, 2015).

Dependability

The concept of reliability in quantitative studies is known as dependability in qualitative studies (Munn, Porritt, Lockwood, Aromataris, & Pearson, 2014). Baillie (2015) posited that a study is dependable when the research is replicable, and another researcher could conduct a similar study using like procedures and achieve comparable results. I used an interview protocol to make certain I do not to introduce new questions or skip any question to any participant. The interview protocol also served as a tool for future researchers to conduct a similar study using like procedures. Additionally, researchers may enhance dependability by leaving an audit trail that includes notes on their methodological and procedural decisions, as well as documents produced and

corrected during the research procedure (Cho & Lee, 2014). Another method I used to enhance the reliability of my study is to triangulate data by utilizing multiple data collection methods. My study included data obtained from interviews and archival documental analysis to demonstrate methodological triangulation.

Credibility

Credibility is the degree of participants' confidence in the study results (Elo et al., 2014). The credibility of a study reflects the level of accuracy and confidence in a researcher's findings (Anney, 2014). To improve credibility, I ensured the interview questions directly align with the research question. I also asked probing questions to obtain clarification on any responses that are not clear. I continued with the interviews until no new themes or data emerge. I used member checking to enhance the credibility of my study. Member checking is the process in which researchers allow participants to verify the accuracy of the analyzed data and confirm information presented in the study is a truthful representation of the participants' experiences and views (Birt et al., 2016). After I conducted data analysis, I shared the final draft of the analyzed data with the participants and gave them an opportunity to confirm my interpretation.

Transferability

Transferability is the extent to which a researcher's findings are applicable in other contexts (Elo et al., 2014). Marshall and Rossman (2016) posited the burden to demonstrate a researcher's findings are applicable in another setting belongs to future researchers. The determination of the study's transferability is the responsibility of those

who read and apply the concepts provided within the study (Cope, 2014). I cannot guarantee transferability; however, I maximized transferability by meticulously documenting the entire research process as a guide for future researchers. I enhanced transferability by providing detailed descriptions regarding my rationale for the selection of the population and sample size.

Confirmability

Confirmability is the potential for others to confirm the data presented accurately reflects the intentions of the participants and not those of the researcher (Elo et al., 2014). Researchers enhance confirmability by ensuring the objectivity of the data (Cope, 2014). I made every effort to mitigate any bias by basing my findings on credible, defensible data collected throughout the course of the research project, rather than my personal beliefs or experiences. Through member checking, participants verified that study information represents their true intentions. Member checking enhances a study's confirmability, as it ensures the views presented in the research reflect those of the participants and not those of the researcher (Elo et al., 2014). Researchers may also enhance the validity of research findings when they triangulate data as well as achieve data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I achieved methodological triangulation in this study by capturing data from interviews as well from archival documents.

Researchers reach data saturation when they no longer receive additional information useful to address the research question (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016). Reaching data saturation ensured the findings are confirmable and transferable

through the selection of the best suited participants to participate in the research process. Obtaining data saturation allows researchers to demonstrate that the research has an adequate sample to establish reliability and validity (Morse, Lowery, & Steury, 2014). A sample size is justifiable when a researcher reaches the point of saturation (Morse, 2015). Data saturation relates to the quality of data obtained from participants, and not the numerical quantity of the sample size (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I did not have a predetermined quantitative sample size for the study. I determined the sample size based on my ability to achieve data saturation.

Transition and Summary

Section 2 included an overview and restatement of the purpose statement as well as an explanation of my role as the researcher and justification of the selected research method and design. The section also included information used to address ethical considerations, participant selection methods, and a discussion of the data analysis used to address the reliability and validity of the study. I used methodological triangulation, through semistructured interviews, member checking, and a review of company documents to enhance the reliability and validity of the research findings. In Section 3, I provide a presentation of my findings, which includes a description of the study's application to professional practice in addition to implications for social change. Section 3 also includes recommendations for future action and further research as well as the researcher's reflections.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies some childcare center directors use to reduce employee turnover. I interviewed four purposefully selected childcare center directors in Houston, Texas. I triangulated data collected using information gathered from two data sources: semistructured interviews and archival documents for the final analysis. My data analysis indicated childcare center directors may reduce employee turnover by incorporating strategies that include compensation, managerial communication, organizational culture, and rewards and recognition programs. In Section 3, I include the presentation of my findings, application to professional practice, recommendations for action, recommendations for further research, and implications for social change. I conclude Section 3 with my personal reflections and research study conclusions.

Presentation of the Findings

The central research question for this study was: What strategies do childcare center directors use to reduce employee turnover? Four participants who met the study's eligibility requirements volunteered data for the study after completing the informed consent process. I interviewed four childcare center directors in Houston, Texas who: (a) were in a director position at a childcare center for at least 5 years, (b) employed at a childcare center that is nonfranchised and not in-home, (c) supervise a minimum of three employees, and (d) used successful strategies to reduce employee turnover. I conducted

semistructured interviews with open-ended questions to allow participants to answer interview questions on strategies they used to reduce employee turnover. Participants answered six questions pertaining to the research question. The semistructured interviews lasted no longer than 1 hour. In the presentation of the findings, I replaced the names of the participants with generic labels, i.e., Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3, and Participant 4, to maintain the participants' confidentiality. In order to gain a better understanding of strategies some childcare center directors use to reduce employee turnover, I framed the study using Mitchell et al.'s (2001) job embeddedness theory. Based on qualitative research and data analysis I identified four major themes: (a) compensation, (b) managerial communication, (c) organizational culture, and (d) rewards and recognition.

Theme 1: Compensation

Compensation measures are an essential element of an employee retention strategy (Patil & Sharma, 2014). Compensation is as important in retaining employees as it is in recruiting employees (Syahreza, Lumbanraja, Dalimunthe, & Absah, 2017). All of the participants (Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3, and Participant 4) noted financial compensation is generally a factor in voluntary turnover. Participant 2 highlighted that duties of childcare providers may be physically and emotionally demanding at times. Participant 2 cited "while the wages I pay my employees are comparable with those within the childcare industry, they are lower than those offered for less stressful duties or positions requiring the same level of education." Participant 2

further reported that as it relates to pay, she believes could never pay employees their true worth, because she does not believe there is a dollar amount that can fully compensate someone for caring for children, but she makes every effort to do what she can with the resources she has. Participant 4 conducts exit interviews with departing employees to learn first-hand why employee leave her childcare center. Based on the exit interviews, Participant 4 shared that she found that more than half of the interviewees cited low wages as a major factor that led to their decision to leave the organization. Participant 4 further noted,

I recognize the influence pay has on employees' decisions to stay or leave a job.

The reality of the childcare industry is that it is generally not a high paying line of work, so I find ways other than offering financial compensation to boost my employee retention. I utilize methods I am able to offer to counterbalance my inability to offer substantial financial incentives. I try to learn what motivates individual employees and offer incentives tailored to meet their individual needs.

Findings indicated employee dissatisfaction with compensation influences employee turnover. Although pay was mentioned as a reason that employees leave an organization by all participants, all participants also reported that solely increasing employees' pay was not the most desired strategy to reduce employee turnover. All participants cited that they implemented multifaceted approaches that include but are not limited to providing financial incentives to retain employees. To this end, childcare

center directors with the financial ability may utilize compensation strategies to reduce employee turnover.

The theme of compensation aligns with Mitchell et al. (2001)'s job embeddedness theory; whereby, the perceived compatibility between employees' individual characteristics and the conditions of their work environment affects employees' willingness to remain in an organization. Most people maintain employment for the income generated to meet their financial needs. Some employees leave a job based on financial reasons because they must, and not because they want to. Employees who are unable to meet their basic financial obligations are likely to leave an organization (Kossivi, Xu, & Kalgora, 2016).

Theme 2: Managerial Communication

Managerial communication is of the utmost importance to organizational success (Al Mehrzi & Singh, 2016). The purpose of communicating with employees is not solely to gain tactical-level insight from within the organization. Communicating with employees is also an opportunity to uncover alternative perspectives that could warn of factors that may lead to instances of employee turnover (Vladutescu, 2015). All participants stressed the importance of encouraging and maintaining open dialogue channels. Participant 1 shared experiences resulting from the lack of effective communication. In Participant 1's experience, ineffective communication created a contagious feeling of secrecy, hidden agendas, and general feelings of tension. Participant 1 explained, "I have found that we communicate continually, whether we

intend to or not. We communicate with our actions as well as our inactions; by in large, everything we do communicates some type of message.”

In line with Kim and Timmerman’s (2018) recommendation for managers to use face-to-face communication to clarify tasks and expectations, Participant 2 noted that providing clear guidance and direction to employees could help to make employees feel like valued members of the organization. Participant 2’s policy is to communicate face-to-face as much as possible and communicate electronically or in writing when necessary. Participant 2 stated “I utilize face-to-face communication to build trust relationships.” Participant 3 found that involving employees in decision-making is an effective tactic to influence some employees to remain in the organization. Participant 3 provided details on the benefits of having an open-door communication policy, where employees can come into the director’s office as needed and speak freely. Participant 3 shared, “I have an open door policy so employees know I’m available to talk or just listen.” Participant 3 further explained the objective of the open-door policy is to remove barriers to communication, which allows her to not only gauge employee performance, but also establish and nurture relationships with employees on a personal level. Participant 3 places great value on ensuring employees know their ideas, questions, and concerns are welcome and valued. This is also a means for childcare directors to learn about things happening at various levels within the organization. Participant 4 shared that, in her experience, when one employee perceives a problem, chances are high that the affected employee has shared their concerns with others. To get ahead of rumors and

impending negative communication, Participant 4 created a system to solicit feedback. Participant 4's organization implemented a quarterly anonymous online survey, which enables the organization to gain insight at a tactical level on items of interest. In a group setting, the organization then talks about the items noted in the survey. Participant 4 makes it a habit to share policies and lessons learned from positive and negative experiences to increase organizational learning and avoid repeating the same mistakes. Furthermore, Participant 4 shared that she lives by the mantra "documentation beats conversions." She went on to explain that while she recognizes the value of verbal conversations, she believes the adage that if something is not in writing, the opportunity exists for someone to say it did not actually happen. She ensures the company's policies are written and available to employees in writing, and employees are expected to acknowledge the policies in writing as well to communicate expectations, facilitate understanding, and ensure compliance.

Clear communication is essential to maximize knowledge sharing, provide clarity to organizational tasks, as well as instill mutual trust between employees. Based on participants' responses, findings suggest communication is inevitable, taking the time to deliberately craft a message and control a narrative is a worthy investment of time and effort. Results of the study suggest effective communication, or the lack thereof, influences employee turnover; therefore, childcare center directors may use communication managerial communication strategies to reduce employee turnover.

The theme of managerial communication and feedback aligns with the fit, link, and sacrifice components of the job embeddedness theory. Qazi et al. (2015) found that organizational communication and feedback systems are embedding mechanisms organizations may utilize to reduce employee turnover. Managers may enhance organizational trust and transparency by providing frequent feedback (Qazi et al., 2015). Ineffective communication results in the perception of office politics and diminished organizational trust, which were precursors to instances of employee turnover (Marasi's et al., 2016). Managers who communicate effectively may build a strong network of individuals and the organization (Murshed, Uddin, & Hossain, 2015). Employees with established links and networks within an organization are embedded in an organization, and they are likely to remain in the organization depending of the strength of their links.

Theme 3: Organizational Culture

The way an organization is structured and led impacts employee turnover rates (Al Mamun & Hasan, 2017). Belias and Koustelios (2014) defined organizational culture as shared beliefs and values which guide the employees' behavior. An organization's operating environment and culture are instrumental in retaining employees (Gallus & Frey, 2016). Participant 1 discussed the effect of an organization's emotional environment on employees' decisions to remain in a job. Participant 1 also noted that employees are an organization's greatest assets and they should feel as such. As such, Participant 1 makes a concerted effort to maintain a conducive work environment where employees feel they belong, supported, appreciated, and have a sense of purpose.

Participant 4 shared her practice of integrating elements of the organization's mission and vision into job announcements for vacant positions, new hire interviews, as well as employee performance evaluations. Participant 4 stressed the importance of putting employees first, while focusing on accomplishing the mission. Participant 4 ensures employees know their individual roles and contributions fit into the organization's greater goals. Participant 4 also explained that her organization's mission, vision, and values are the foundation of their culture and reinforce organizational objectives through various human resource management processes; therefore, she posts the organization's mission, vision, and values in multiple places throughout the organization as subtle reminders to employees and customers what the organization stands for.

Participant 2 deliberately attempts to indoctrinate new employees into the organization by pairing them with more seasoned members during the first 30 days of employment. Participant 2 explained that the benefits of assigning mentors to new employees makes employees feel welcomed and apart of the team; it also reduces the time it takes for personnel to become aware of the norms and expectations within the organization. The faster employees feel like they are a part of the team, the faster they can actually perform as a team. Similarly, Participant 3 proclaimed constructing a strong organizational culture through efforts to build camaraderie, institute mentorship programs, foster teamwork, and promote team celebrations. Her goal is to develop relationships among employees and foster teamwork and camaraderie. Participant 3 aims to create a close-knit family-type working environment. Participant 3 shared,

Families are our business. There is no better way demonstrate the value we place on families and taking care of families than creating a family-like atmosphere, where the staff feels like they are a part of a work family. I schedule activities for the staff to do as a group monthly. Sharing lunch or dinner together and weekend outings with all of our immediate families are the events the staff seem to enjoy. It is important that my staff know that not only do I expect them to care for other families, but also that I value them as a part of our greater organizational family.

An organization's culture influences employee performance and is necessary to obtain organizational success (Fatima, 2016). Belias and Koustelios (2014) reported that managerial behaviors shape the culture within an organization. Findings from this study indicate childcare center directors may implement a strategy centered on developing a strong organizational culture to reduce employee turnover.

This theme supports the three dimensions of job embeddedness. Inabinett and Ballaro (2014) concluded that a correlation exists between an organization's culture, individual values, and employee retention, and provided evidence to support the notion that retention rates are higher when employees' values match an organization's culture. Employees' perceptions of how well their values align with the values of their employers affects employees' intentions to quit (Ghosh & Gurunathan, 2015). Managers may implement mentoring programs to engage and embed employees in an organization to keep employees focused on the organization's mission and objectives (Gallus & Frey, 2016). The battle to retain employees begins during the hiring process and continues

with deliberate strategies to reduce turnover, as employees who experience a sense of belonging within an organization are less likely to want to leave the organization (Saraç, Efil, & Eryilmaz, 2014).

Theme 4: Rewards and Recognition

Formal and informal recognition programs are instruments leaders may use to reduce employee turnover (Gallus & Frey, 2016). Managers may use monetary and non-monetary rewards to show employees that their skills and contributions are valued (Wang et al., 2015). Participant 1 views her role in recognizing employees as one of her core leadership responsibilities. Participant 1 implemented an “employee of the month” recognition program, where she presents certificates at staff meetings to the employee or team of employees selected for the month. Participant 1 found this reward system to be an effective means to motivate and engage employees. Participant 1 selects an employee of the month to have their photo displayed where it is visible by other employees as well as customers for the remainder of the month. Participant 1 also noted that while some of her employees report they are in the childcare industry because they have a passion for taking care of children, she emphasized the importance of both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards to engage and inspire employees. Participant 2 highlighted the importance of ensuring employees feel appreciated. Participant 2 stated “I recognize my employees to acknowledge their hard work and encourage them to do their best.” She acknowledged that working in the childcare industry may be stressful and emphasized the importance of making it a habit of thanking employees. Participant 1 stated

Working in a childcare center can sometimes feel like a thankless job. My goal is to exercise the power of two simple words *thank you*. Telling someone “*thank you*” is a cost-effective way to express gratitude and making people feel appreciated. Thanking someone can sometimes achieve an affect, I do not think money can buy.

Participant 4 highlighted the significance of implementing a peer-to-peer recognition program where employees vote for the employee of the month. Participant 4 touted success with peer recognition programs, as she found employees responded to accolades from peers differently than those received from supervisors. Participant 4 explained, “employees expect to be recognized and rewarded by their bosses; it is a common belief that recognition is inherent to leadership and management positions. Peer recognition, on the other hand, is often well because it is unexpected.” Abdulsalam et al. (2015) reported that employees are less likely to leave a job when an organization offers a combination of, pay, promotion potential, and rewards. Managers should understand factors that motivate their staff and establish a reward system to appropriately acknowledge desired behaviors. Childcare centers directors may reduce employee turnover by develop strategies that involve rewarding employees for their performance and achievements.

This theme supports the three dimensions of job embeddedness. Managers may use employee recognition programs to create a positive, productive organizational climate, where employees may feel appreciated and are therefore more likely to want to

remain in the organization. The more valued employees feel, the greater the likelihood that they will establish links and perceive sacrifices, which further embeds them within the organization (Kossivi & Kalgora, 2016).

Applications to Professional Practice

A leader's ability to effectively manage employee turnover is a significant determining factor in an organization's sustainability outlook (Ugoami, 2016). Findings from this study add to the existing body of knowledge detailing the significance of effective policies and practices related to reducing employee turnover. In line with Akunda, Chen, and Gikiri's (2018) proposal, findings from this study reveal strategies that are deliberately planned and carefully crafted are most effective in reducing employee turnover. Furthermore, consistent with Antoni, Baeten, Perkins, Shaw & Vartiainen's (2017) research, findings from this study show employee recognition and appreciation programs that include both financial compensation and nonfinancial incentives are key components of strategies that may be effectively to reduce employee turnover. Similarly to findings presented in this study, De Vito, Brown, Bannister, Cianci, and Mujtaba (2018) found that communication flow within an organization had a direct effect on employee's perception of the institution and also a factor in employees' decision remain in a job; therefore an organization's employee retention strategy should include initiatives regarding direct, clear, two-way communication. Although this study focused on a small number of childcare center directors in Houston, Texas, findings related to strategies to reduce employee turnover in childcare centers may be transferable

to a larger setting. The professional implication of this study is to provide childcare center directors with strategies they may use to develop actionable solutions and standard business practices to reduce employee turnover as well as increase productivity and profitability.

Implications for Social Change

Managing employee turnover is a fundamental HRM component that affects an organization's profitability and sustainability. This qualitative multiple case study is meaningful to childcare center directors who aim to develop and adopt strategies to decrease employee turnover. The implications of this study for positive social change include the potential to contribute to the prosperity of employees and communities. Benefits to communities extend from the stability childcare centers provide as places of employment for individuals. Personnel with sustained employment may be able to live more financially secure. Additionally, continued operation of childcare centers generates revenue that contributes to growth of the local economy. Local government officials may use tax revenues received from employed personnel and businesses to enhance community facilities and services.

Recommendations for Action

Findings from this study provide childcare center directors who are experiencing high employee turnover with knowledge and strategies to reduce employee turnover. By implementing the strategies shared by participants, other childcare center directors may be able to decrease employee turnover, which might help improve productivity,

sustainability, and financial viability. I recommend childcare center directors review the findings of this study and implement strategies applicable to their organization. Based upon the results of this study, I have three recommendations for actions from which childcare center directors may benefit; (a) design recognition initiatives to reward employees, (b) anchor the organization's culture on the organization's priorities, and (c) maximize communication flow.

Design Recognition Initiatives to Reward Employees

Childcare center directors should implement an employee reward and recognition program. Showing employees that they are appreciated and valued using intrinsic and extrinsic means is an investment in the morale and well-being of employees, which may yield a return in the form of high employee retention and employee productivity levels. Rewarding employees for exceptional performance may lead to increased organizational commitment and productivity, which may in turn result in a reduction in employee turnover. There is universally no accepted method to recognize or reward employees. Organizations should offer an expanded reward system, as employees regard motivation and reward differently (Terera & Ngirande, 2017). Participants in this study utilized various reward techniques based on factors unique to their staff and organizations, with the ultimate objective of ensuring employees feel valued. Managers should analyze the employees' needs, as well as, the means available to within organization and reward as they find appropriate.

Anchor the Organization's Culture on the Organization's Priorities

Childcare center managers should take steps to deliberately create an organizational culture founded on the organization's values, where employees are engaged and feel valued. Managers should define, reinforce, and reward behaviors and practices consistent with the organization's culture. Organizational culture consists of a widely accepted standards, norms, and values, which are demonstrated and reinforced by management (Corner, 2016). As an organization's culture is based on expected practices and behavior, expectations should be codified in a policy and reinforce with actions and behaviors. A strategically crafted culture, aligned with the organization's core competencies, is a means to build a strong team of employees with a shared set of values who have a common understanding of the organization's priorities.

Maximize Communication Flow

Brewster and Brauer (2016) reported effective communication hinges on a person's ability to communicate both verbally and non-verbally. Childcare center directors should implement managerial communication practices to maximize communication flow to reduce employee turnover. Soliciting, and accepting, and providing feedback is a crucial part of communication, and impacts employee turnover (Tanius, Pheng, Kasim, & Yulia, 2017). Managerial communication practices designed to exploit information sharing are key to achieving a healthy workplace. Effective communication allows leaders to provide guidance relative to the organization's strategic goals, set expectations, enforce standards, as well as understand the pulse of frontline employees.

To promote distribution of the findings of this study, dissemination of this research will occur through numerous methods. Leaders from the partner organization and all participants received a 2-page summary of the findings to disseminate among peers and other business managers and leaders. This study will also be published and available through the ProQuest/UMI dissertation database for future scholars and other organizations. I will share the findings of this study with others at business related forums, organizational training, and leadership conferences as I have the opportunity.

Recommendations for Further Research

The findings of this study provide a foundation for further research in the areas of employee turnover. The basis of this study included two limitations. The principle limitation of the study was the degree of respondent honesty regarding their experiences when answering interview questions was unknown. Additionally, restricting the sample population to a single geographic location limited the generalizability of the study. This study's participants were childcare center directors in Houston, Texas.

Recommendations for further research are to expand the research to include other geographic locations. By expanding research to other geographic locations, researchers may help leaders better understand effective strategies to reduce employee turnover. Future research may also be extended to larger organizations. Larger organizations may encounter conditions and challenges not experienced in smaller organizations; therefore, examining larger firms may reveal additional insight on strategies for reducing employee turnover. Minimizing employee turnover is critical to the success of an organization;

therefore, future qualitative researchers should explore effective strategies by interviewing subordinates and understanding what strategies they perceive as effective. Additionally, quantitative researchers may examine the relationship between employee turnover and other variables such as profit margin, costs of onboarding, and training expenses.

Reflections

The Walden University Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program has been a challenging yet rewarding experience. This journey tested my will and determination. The process pushed me to and beyond limits I did not know I had. My initial driving force for beginning this doctoral program was to be an example to my children; ultimately, the completion of this program allowed me to prove to myself that I can finish anything I set my mind to. I chose to research strategies to reduce employee turnover based on my future objective to own and operate a childcare center. Participants of this qualitative multiple case study provided knowledge and understanding of strategies to reduce employee turnover. I appreciated the participants' willingness to share their experiences. I gained valuable information on implementing strategies to reduce employee turnover.

Conclusion

An organization plagued by constant employee turnover will likely struggle to meet its corporate mission and vision objectives (Evans, Thomas, & MacDonnell, 2018). The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to determine strategies that

childcare center directors utilize to reduce employee turnover. Using the job embeddedness theory as a guide, I developed theoretical arguments that explored reasons employees remain in an organization. I uncovered strategies childcare center directors used to decrease employee turnover. As the childcare industry is a people-centric field of employment, findings from this study confirmed the need for managers to implement policies and practices that balance the needs of the staff with the organization's priorities. The results of this study demonstrated the importance of a diversified approach to reducing employee turnover with the use effective managerial communication, a deliberately crafted organizational culture, rewards and recognition programs, and financial compensation. Employee turnover is inevitable, but leaders should seek to understand the causes of turnover in their respective organizations and implement measures to reduce the rate of employee turnover to protect the organization's longevity.

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Appendix A: Participant Invitation Email

[MONTH, DATE, 2019]
[NAME]
[COMPANY NAME]
[ADDRESS] Tel: [xxx-xxx-xxxx]
[CITY, STATE, ZIP]
E-mail: [EMAIL-ADDRESS]

Re: Invitation to Participate in a Research Study

Dear [Recipient]:

My name is Tara Jones, and I am a doctoral student at Walden University conducting my doctoral study on strategies to reduce employee turnover in childcare centers. The title of my study is “Strategies to Reduce Employee Turnover in Childcare Centers.” I would like to interview childcare center directors who meet the following criteria:

- In a director position at a childcare center for at least 5 years
- Employed at a childcare center that is nonfranchised and not in-home
- Supervising a minimum of three employees
- Has used strategies to reduce employee turnover.

Semistructured interviews with childcare center directors may provide helpful insight and understanding for the research study. Upon completion of the study, I will share my research findings with study participants and scholars. Individuals who meet the participant criteria and would like to express interest in the study may contact me by phone.

Sincerely,

Tara J. Jones
Walden University Doctorate (DBA) Candidate

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

The objective of this interview is to explore strategies to employee turnover on childcare centers. The participants in the interview process will consist of childcare center directors in Houston, Texas. I will ask each participant the same set of questions based on the following interview protocol.

1. I will introduce myself to participants as a doctoral student of Walden University and give a brief overview of the purpose and time required for the interview based on the following script. Introduction script “Hello and thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview process. My name is Tara Jones, and I am a doctoral student at Walden University conducting my doctoral study on strategies to reduce employee turnover in childcare centers. The conclusion of the doctoral study is in partial fulfillment of the requirements to complete the Doctor of Business Administration (with a specialization in Human Resource Management) degree. Before I begin the interview process, I would like first to take this opportunity seek your permission to digitally record this interview, which will allow for the creation of a transcript of our conversation. All responses will be kept confidential, and you will have the opportunity to ask for me to repeat any question or seek further clarification of the questions. I will use your responses to develop a better understanding of your views and experiences on strategies that could help reduce employee turnover. As the responsible investigator, I would also like to remind you of your written consent to participate

in this study. For your information purposes, I will keep the original version of the consent form and any other hardcopy paperwork related to the study in a locked desk drawer, for 5 years, after which time I will destroy by placing in a paper shredder and I will wipe, crush, and burn the password protected flash drive. Your participation in this interview process is voluntary and at any time during the interview process should you wish for me to stop recording or take a break please feel free to notify me immediately. Furthermore, you may withdraw your participation at any time without consequence. At the conclusion of the interview, I will schedule an appointment for member checking purposes based on your availability. Do you have any questions or concerns at this time? If there are no other questions, and with your permission, we will begin the interview.”

2. After introductions, I will begin the interview process and speak into the recorder first announcing the date and time to denote the beginning of the participants’ interview sessions.

3. I will begin the interview session by asking each question in a sequential order based on the research instrument and recording the participant’s answers. The anticipated time of completion for each interview session is no more than one hour. To conclude the interview session, I will extend my appreciation and gratitude to the participant for taking the time to assist in the doctoral study. Each participant will receive information regarding the possibility of a follow-up interview to clarify his or her responses further. Finally, the participant will also

receive information about the member checking process. Following the concluding remarks, I will stop the audio recording and end the appointment.

Appendix C: Interview Questions

The interview questions are:

1. What strategies have you used to reduce employee turnover?
2. What strategies have you found worked best to reduce employee turnover?
3. What challenges have you encountered when implementing strategies to reduce employee turnover?
4. How have you addressed the key challenges to implementing the strategies for reducing employee turnover?
5. How do you measure the effectiveness of the strategies used to reduce employee turnover?
6. What other information would you like to add regarding this topic?

Appendix D: Member-Checking (E-mail Option)

[MONTH, DATE, 2019]
[NAME]
[COMPANY NAME]
[ADDRESS] Tel: [xxx-xxx-xxxx]
[CITY, STATE, ZIP]
E-mail: [EMAIL-ADDRESS]

Re: Member Checking

Dear [PARTICIPANT NAME],

I am contacting you for your review and evaluation of the summary of the initial interpretations of findings from the data collected, including your contributions. An evaluation form is attached for you to record your comments regarding these initial interpretations. I will review your comments to help with the completion of my study, so your constructive and candid comments are appreciated. Your thoroughness and detail will both assist me in improving and revising my analysis and ultimately lead to a publication of the highest quality. I would kindly request you please return your completed member checking form to me by no later than (insert date). Please let me know if you will be able to review these final interpretations of the data at this time.

Please contact me if you have any questions. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Respectfully,

Tara Jones
Walden University Doctorate (DBA) Candidate