

Running Head: LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS

LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS AND THEIR IMPACT ON EMPLOYEE RETENTION

by

Shaun Nichols

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Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

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Liberty University, School of Business

August 2020

### **Abstract**

This study analyzed the impact leadership behaviors had on employee retention in the Houston, Texas manufacturing sector. Many authors' work was reviewed with literature pertaining to leadership behaviors and employee retention. Multiple interviews were conducted with current leadership at Houston, Texas manufacturing organizations to gain a better understanding of the experience of these employees. The results of the leadership study have a profoundly positive impact on employee retention. Three emergent themes were developed based on data analysis, which included empathy, listening, and employee development.

*Keywords:* employee retention, leadership behaviors, empathy, leadership

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### **Dedication**

I dedicate this to my wife, Stephanie, and my three wonderful children, Jaden, Kalli, and Alba. Each of you motivate me to succeed in different ways and I am thankful for you all so very much.

### **Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank Dr. Rol Erickson for serving as the Chair for my dissertation committee and the time he took to read and re-read and offer suggestions to strengthen my dissertation. I thank Dr. Kim Anthony and Dr. Edward Moore for their works as part of my committee and their support and feedback in helping me complete this dissertation. I also thank Liberty University and all those at the College of Business who helped me along the way and provided me with the opportunity.

I would like to thank my family for encouraging me during the difficult times of this process through prayer and support. My children Jaden, Kalli, and Alba, continuously brightened my day and reminded me somehow that I would complete this journey.

Finally, I would like to thank Jesus Christ, my lord and savior, for guiding me through this dissertation.

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## **Section 1: Foundation of the Study**

This study is designed to examine the relationship between leadership behaviors and employee retention in the manufacturing industry. Mbah and Ikemefuna (2016) conducted a similar study that concluded ineffective leaders are a primary reason for decreased employee retention in the manufacturing industry. Hackman and Wageman (2015) suggested that effective leadership behavior can have an overall positive impact on employee retention. The goal of this study was to identify the specific leadership behaviors, styles, or theories that have the greatest impact on improving employee retention within the Houston, Texas manufacturing industry.

### **Background of the Problem**

Leadership behaviors have a significant impact on an employee's commitment to an organization, job satisfaction, and overall job performance (Hackman & Wageman, 2015; Hershey et al., 2016). Costs related to employee turnover can range from 30% to 500% of the employee's annual salary (Boushey & Glynn, 2016). Even though organizations strive to maximize employee retention, the issue of employee retention is still present in the manufacturing industry (Shi & Fang, 2017). Consequently, leadership behaviors ultimately play a significant role in the formation of a particular leadership style. A leadership style refers to the characteristics of a leader's behaviors when managing, directing, guiding, or motivating employees (Qu & Zhao, 2016). Some of the most common leadership styles and models practiced by leaders to facilitate employee retention are autocratic, charismatic, democratic, laissez-faire, transactional, transformational, situational, servant, and visionary (Northouse, 2013; Robbins & Judge, 2016; Weibo et al., 2015).

While some studies have focused on leadership behavior and employee retention in various industries, none of those studies appear to have focused on employee retention in the

manufacturing industry in Houston, Texas. The importance of this qualitative multiple case study was to close the gap in the current body of literature by exploring what leadership behaviors are of value in the manufacturing industry to increase employee retention. In addition, this study may help fill the gap in the literature by exploring employees' perceptions of leadership behaviors in the Houston, Texas manufacturing industry as it relates to employee retention.

### **Problem Statement**

The general problem to be addressed, in this qualitative study, is the lack of effective leadership relationships in organizations resulting in decreased employee retention. Studies have shown that organizational leaders play a significant role in employee retention, which impacts company revenue and ultimately affects financial sustainability (Armstrong, 2016; Vance, 2016). Mbah and Ikemefuna (2016) asserted that ineffective leadership styles are a primary reason why employees leave their jobs in the manufacturing industry. Yukl (2015) concluded that certain leadership styles caused employees to lose commitment and satisfaction with their jobs, which ultimately led to lower levels of employee retention in the manufacturing industry. Lower levels of employee retention often lead to negative impacts on employees and organizations (Batt & Colvin, 2016). Performance in organizations drops as employee retention decreases resulting in a reduction in revenue and profits (Qu & Zhao, 2016). Allen et al. (2017) offered that organizations can ultimately increase both the probability of retaining employees and overall sustainability by understanding the strengths and weaknesses of leadership. The specific problem to be addressed is the inability of some leaders in the Houston, Texas manufacturing industry to effectively develop relationships with employees to support employee retention.

## **Purpose Statement**

Leadership behaviors can have a significant impact on employee retention outcomes (Rose & Raja, 2016; Sawitri et al., 2016). In addition, the study includes an exploration of what leadership behaviors employees perceive as important for employee retention. The study addressed gaps in the literature that may provide insight as to which leadership behaviors are most effective for employee retention in the manufacturing industry. This larger problem was explored through an in-depth study of leadership behaviors and its effect on employee retention within the Houston, Texas manufacturing industry. The results of this study can potentially contribute to the overall body of knowledge relating to leadership behavior and employee retention within the manufacturing industry.

## **Nature of the Study**

Choosing the correct method and design is very critical when conducting research (Curtis et al., 2016). The researcher must understand that different research methods are compatible with different situations and it is important to know which method is suitable for use with a particular hypothesis or research question. If unsuitable research methods are chosen, it may render the research useless (Hammer & Pivo, 2017). The research design is also equally important. The research design carries an important influence on the reliability of the results attained and provides a solid base for the entire research (Mgeni & Nayak, 2016). The following sections will discuss the chosen method and design found to be most suitable for this research.

## ***Discussion of Method***

The chosen method for this research was qualitative. Creswell (2014) offered that qualitative research is an approach for understanding and examining the meaning individuals or groups attribute to behavioral phenomena. With the qualitative research method, a researcher can

use a purposeful selection of the intended participants (Bansal, 2018). The ability to select particular participants potentially results in the gathering of the most pertinent information to understand the problem or research question (Creswell, 2014). For example, if the research revolves around management, choosing participants that are not managers would not be beneficial (Bansal, 2018). Researchers using a qualitative method can potentially obtain details about personalities, human behaviors, and emotions that neither the quantitative or mixed-method research can match (Stake, 2010).

The quantitative method is also a method of consideration for research. With the quantitative method, the approach for testing research questions takes place by examining relationships among variables (Creswell, 2014). Measurement of these variables consists of an analysis of numerical data through the utilization of statistical procedures (Stake, 2010). Results from the quantitative method are numerical data (Easton, 2010). Consequently, data collection takes place in order to test the hypotheses (Barczak, 2015).

An additional method for consideration was the mix method design. With the mix method design, the researcher can also collect and analyze numerical data (Stake, 2010). Mixed method design includes characteristics of both quantitative and qualitative (Bansal, 2018). Even though the mixed methods approach may provide more credibility for the research triangulation, integrating the datasets through either convergent, explanatory, or exploratory design may be problematic as it relates to the resources available to complete this study.

When considering the possibility of the quantitative method and mixed methods, numerical data are not needed to address the research questions but rather the participant's specific feelings, opinions, and experiences. As a result, quantitative method and mixed methods are not the best choice. Therefore, the qualitative approach is the most suitable method for

examining the relationship between leadership behaviors and employee retention in the manufacturing industry.

### ***Discussion of Design***

The chosen design for this research was a multiple case study design. Case studies offer significant advantages and flexibility because of the opportunity of moving back and forth between the diverse stages of research projects (Easton, 2010). Yin (2014) offered that a case study design involves the utilization of semi-structured questions. Creswell (2014) commented that a multiple case study is of value as it includes two or more contexts of the same phenomenon that potentially increases the validity of the study. Due to the value of gathering input from multiple contexts within the Houston, Texas manufacturing industry, the multiple case study design has been chosen.

This section will discuss other designs taken into consideration for this research: phenomenological, ethnography, and narrative. These designs are all suitable for the qualitative method. However, the researcher must consider which design will be most applicable to their specific study (Bansal, 2018). Yin (2014) commented that phenomenological design tends to analyze groups of people who experience the same phenomenon. The phenomenological design is not a viable option because the expectation is that the selected participants will likely experience different phenomenon's regarding leadership experiences and responses to that leadership. Yin (2014) offered that the main focus of ethnography correlates with the culture of a group. Since the main focus of this research is not on the culture of a group, ethnography is not a viable option.

The final design for consideration is the narrative research design. Creswell (2014) commented that with narrative research, the researcher studies the lives of individuals and asks



those individuals to provide stories about their lives. Upon completion of the studies, a retelling of the information exists in a narrative chronology (Bansal, 2018). Since the research data being gathered from the manufacturing industry participants will strive for an objective perspective on a business problem and will not focus on personal subjective life experiences, the narrative research design is not the best option. After careful consideration of multiple possible designs, the multiple case study is the most appropriate choice to explore the employees' perspectives relating to leadership behaviors that could potentially contribute to employee retention.

### ***Summary of the Nature of the Study***

The method and design selected for this study was a qualitative approach and multiple case design. Qualitative research is an approach for understanding and examining the meaning individuals or groups attribute to behavioral phenomena (Creswell, 2014; Mgeni & Nayak, 2016). The purpose of this study was to explore the leadership behaviors that are effective in developing relationships with employees to support employee retention. The multiple case research design was most suitable for this study because adding an additional organizational context can potentially add data that would increase the validity of this study.

### **Research Questions**

*RQ1:* What leadership behaviors are effective in developing relationships with manufacturing employees in Houston, Texas to support employee retention?

*RQ2:* What leadership behaviors do manufacturing employees in Houston, Texas perceive as important for employee retention?

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework is an instrumental section of research (Ionescu & Bolcas, 2015). A conceptual framework illustrates key relationships between the key elements or ideas of

the literature (Hur, 2018). Hur continues to argue that the conceptual framework is the understanding of how the particular variables within the study connect to each other. Four theories were selected to support the framework for this study. Herzberg's Theory of Motivation (Two-Factor Theory), the Transformational Leadership Theory, and the Attribution Theory of Leadership support leadership style examination. Herzberg's Theory of Motivation (Two-Factor Theory), Maslow's Needs Hierarchy, and the Attribution Theory of Leadership support the exploration of job satisfaction.

### ***Herzberg's Theory of Motivation***

Herzberg's Theory of Motivation, which he developed in 1959, outlines the specific factors in the organization that either promote job satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). Herzberg's Theory of Motivation argues that motivators and hygiene factors are two factors that an organization can adjust to influence motivation in the workplace (Herzberg et al., 1959). Herzberg et al. (1959) commented that hygiene factors such as quality of leadership, relationships between supervisors, subordinates, and peers, job security, compensation, working conditions, and organizational politics are factors that can correlate with employee satisfaction or dissatisfaction in the workplace. The relationship between leaders and employees is a fundamental building block to which Transformational Leadership Theory and the Attribution Theory of Leadership are built. Lacey et al. (2015) commented that hygiene factors are the factors that characterize the environment or context of an individual's work. Hygiene factors are essential for the existence of motivation in the workplace (Hur, 2018). Although hygiene factors may not directly lead to long-term positive satisfaction, if these factors are absent, then dissatisfaction is likely to occur (Herzberg et al., 1959). Motivation and hygiene factors were the main constructs of this theory. As such, they were the main focus points for this research.

Motivators symbolize the psychological needs that employees perceive as an additional benefit (Herzberg et al., 1959). Motivators are factors that employees find rewarding (Lacey et al., 2015). Buble and Juras (2016) commented that motivators arise from the dependent conditions of the job itself. Factors for motivation include responsibility, job satisfaction, recognition, achievement, opportunities for growth, and advancement (Buble & Juras, 2016). Herzberg's Theory of Motivation will be beneficial when examining the motivational factors that promote employee retention. Utilization of Herzberg's Theory of Motivation may offer insights in determining which specific leadership behaviors positively promote employee retention.

### ***Transformational Leadership Theory***

James MacGregor Burns first introduced transformational leadership in 1978 (Burns, 1978). Burns was known as a leadership expert with a focus mainly on management procedures and principles (Dabke, 2016). Transformational leadership style motivates individuals by appealing to moral values and higher ideals, which can potentially inspire employees to increase performance, which would ultimately inspire the employee and cast a vision for the organization (Northouse, 2013). Ali et al. (2015) commented that transformational leaders strive to develop a positive relationship with their direct reports to strengthen the overall performance of subordinates, which can directly have an impact on the performance of an organization.

The transformational leadership theory was beneficial during research when examining the effect transformational leaders have on employee performance and retention. The specific constructs of transformational leadership include the idealized influence of leaders, inspirational motivation, and ability to inspire confidence, intellectual stimulation and creativity, and individualized consideration of group members (Mgeni & Nayak, 2016; Northouse, 2013). A review of these specific constructs took place to help to determine whether or not the

transformational leadership style is effective in developing relationships with employees to support employee retention.

### ***Attribution Theory of Leadership***

The Attribution Theory of Leadership includes factors that leadership personnel contributes to the work environment which influence employee performance and subsequent leadership judgment (Mitchell et al., 1981). These factors, which are the basis for this theory, include leader's attributions to employee performance and employee attributions as a reaction to leadership's reaction to their performance. The Attribution Theory deals with the formation of individual opinions about the reasons for particular events or observations (Hur, 2018; Mitchell et al., 1981). The basis of the Attribution Theory includes attributions of leaders to employee performance and employee ascriptions as a reaction to leadership's reaction to their performance (Mitchell et al., 1981). Distinctiveness, consensus, and consistency are three dimensions of behaviors leaders use to judge employee performance (Mitchell et al., 1981). As such, the Attribution Theory of Leadership provided support to this study by providing the potential evidence necessary to determine what if any leadership behavior supports the development of relationships with employees to support employee retention.

### ***Maslow's Needs Hierarchy***

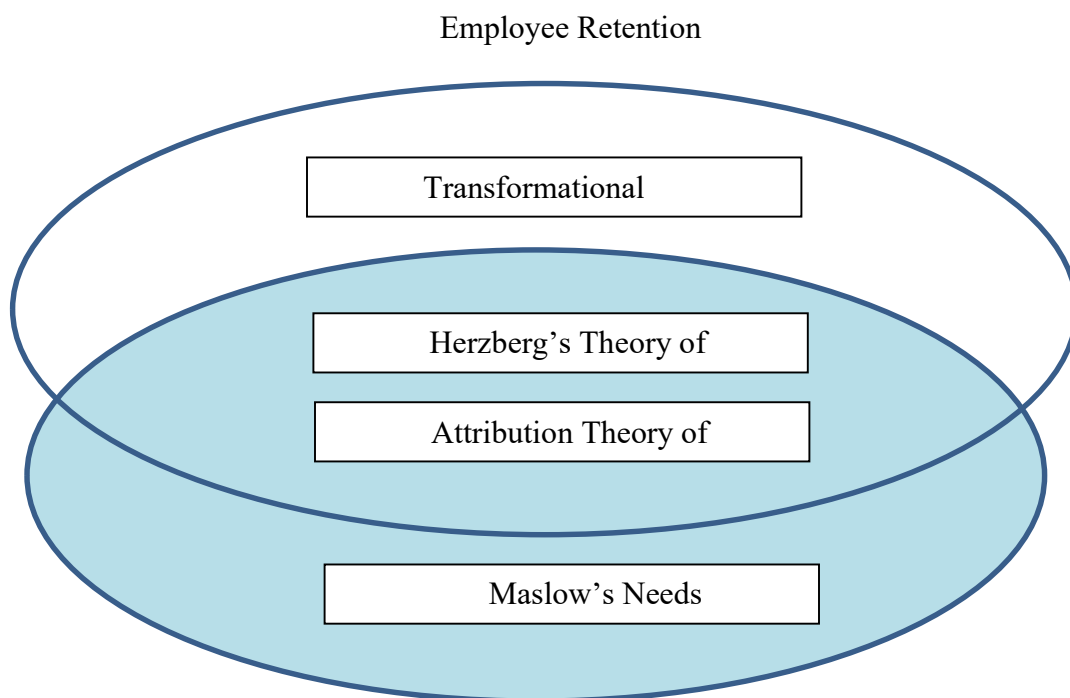
Maslow's Needs Hierarchy of needs is a motivational theory made up of a five-tier model of human needs developed in 1943 by Abraham Maslow (Maslow, 1943). The five levels, appearing as hierarchal levels within a pyramid, include psychological, safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization needs (Maier, 2017; Maslow, 1943). Maslow's Needs Hierarchy identifies the order of actions for human motivation. Maslow's theory (1943) suggests that humans could not pursue actions in an additional tier in the pyramid until meeting the previous

tier's requirements. Maslow (1943) commented that all individuals have the motivation to move up the hierarchy toward a level of self-actualization.

However, disruption of progress contributes to an individual's inability to meet lower-level needs (Lacey et al., 2015). In organizations, leaders can play a significant role in helping employees achieve their fullest potential (Maier, 2017). Employees stuck in one level of the hierarchy may often rely on a leader's ability to motivate and inspire. Therefore, Maslow's Needs Hierarchy Theory supports the argument that leadership behavior has a significant impact on job satisfaction factors and can help or hinder employee retention.

### Figure 1

#### *Relationships Between Concepts*



#### *Discussion of Relationships Between Concepts*

The following section highlights the potential themes and perceptions correlating with the leadership styles presented. Leadership style and quality of that specific style that is present in

the workplace can have an impact on the perception of employees and overall performance in the workplace (Doucet et al., 2015). Herzberg's Theory of Motivation, Maslow's Needs Hierarchy, and the Attribution Theory of Leadership support the exploration of job satisfaction. Leadership contribution in the work environment can help set the stage for employee participation, which can ultimately result in a work environment of increased employee productivity and retention (Doucet et al., 2015). Maslow's Needs Hierarchy, Transformational Leadership Theory, and the Attribution Theory of Leadership build upon the relationship between management and employees, which is a basic fundamental of Herzberg's Theory of Motivation (Allen, 2018; Lazaroiu, 2015; Vijayakumar & Saxena, 2015).

### ***Summary of the Conceptual Framework***

Herzberg's Motivation Theory, Transformational Leadership Theory, Attribution Theory of Leadership, and Maslow's Needs Hierarchy provided the framework that defines the need for this study. Organizations can ultimately increase both the probability of retaining employees and overall sustainability by understanding the strengths and weaknesses of leadership (Allen et al., 2017; Maier, 2017). Organizations in the manufacturing industry may benefit from the findings of this study based on these four previous foundational studies.

### **Definitions of Terms**

*Employee retention:* An effort by an organization to maintain a working environment that encourages employees to remain with the organization for a maximum period (Shi & Fang, 2017).

*Leadership style:* The characteristics of a leaders behaviors when managing, directing, guiding, or motivating employees (Qu & Zhao, 2016).

*Transformational Leadership:* The process whereby the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower is increased through engagement among the individuals (Northouse, 2013).

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

An assumption may be best described as an unexamined belief (Chatha & Butt, 2015). Research assumptions can often affect the way in which a research interprets data (Bakotica, 2016). Life experiences may affect the way people perceive the world and how they respond to certain situations within their environment (Kumar, 2016). Thus, previous life experiences of the researcher will dictate interpretation of the workplace environment for this study.

#### ***Assumptions***

This study utilized surveys as one method to collect data from participants. The first assumption was participants will answer the questions truthfully and accurately. The mitigation for this assumption was the criteria used for selecting questions and participants as well as utilizing supporting sources. An additional assumption is that participants want to participate in the study and be available to do so. If a participant feels forced to participate in a study, it could ultimately alter the results of the research (Allen, 2018; Younge & Marx, 2016).

The study was supported by theories that, in turn, reflect various leadership styles. An assumption exists that the chosen theories can provide insights to improve employee retention within the manufacturing industry. The mitigation for this assumption included synthesis in the literature review along with appropriate sources. The chosen literature demonstrates a possible connection between leadership style and employee retention. The study included the assumption that leaders who possess similar styles of leadership will promote employee retention within the manufacturing industry. Since the basis of research relies on theories behind accepted leadership

styles, the assumption exists that the chosen theories can provide insights to improve employee retention within the manufacturing industry. The mitigation for this assumption included an appropriate review of existing literature and data gathering.

### ***Limitations***

One limitation of this research was the relatively small sample size of participants. While some sources may agree with smaller sample sizes, others may argue the need for more (Bakotica, 2016; Lavigna, 2015). The research focused on the manufacturing industry. By choosing a single industry, limitations may exist because other industries might benefit from the same study. The study was limited only to the State of Texas. By limiting the research to a specific state, the data are not a true representative of all manufacturing locations within the industry. The research had a restrictive timeframe in which collection of data occurs. As such, participants had limited time to respond to interviews and surveys.

### ***Delimitations***

Delimitations are choices made by the researcher that set the boundaries for the study (Ionescu & Bolcas, 2015; Maier, 2017). The delimitations for this study included the industry and geographic location. The research questions focused on the importance of leadership behavior and the impact on employee retention. Other factors that contribute to employee retention could have been chosen. By choosing to focus on the above factors, there was a potential for missing other important contributors to employee retention. The research focused on the manufacturing industry. However, this research may prove to be beneficial and applicable to multiple industries where employees report directly to managers. The focus of this study was on manufacturing industries located in Houston, Texas. This study may have been beneficial to



many different cities and states, as well. While the research only included one city and state, other geographical locations may find the information to be of value.

### **Significance of the Study**

The manufacturing industry continues to face a decline in employee retention due to a lack of viable relationships between leaders and employees (Lee & Chen, 2018). Yahya and Tan (2015) explained that hiring and retaining high-performing employees is crucial to organizational success. As such, employee retention is a primary concern for the manufacturing sector (Yahya & Tan, 2015). The findings of this research may support organizations in maximizing employee retention in the manufacturing industry. Organizations may use this study to see which leadership behaviors lead to better relationships with employees and ultimately increase employee retention.

The findings from this research may help support the premise behind leadership theories such as Maslow's Needs Hierarchy, Transformational Leadership Theory, Attribution Theory of Leadership, and Herzberg's Theory of Motivation as they relate to employee retention in the manufacturing industry. As organizations look for opportunities to increase employee retention in the manufacturing industry, the findings from this research may support or vilify support for these theories. By validating support of these leadership theories, leadership may be able to implement programs for leaders in an attempt to increase employee retention within the manufacturing sector.

### ***Reduction of Gaps***

There is an extensive amount of peer-reviewed literature relating to leadership styles and their impact on employee retention (Covella et al., 2017; Lee & Chen, 2018). However, this study may potentially help to fill any existing gaps that explicitly pertain to the manufacturing

industry as it relates to leadership behavior and the impact on employee retention. The chosen sample population came from employees in the Houston, Texas manufacturing industry. The specific geographical sample is important as the research questions focus on leadership and employee relationships as they relate to employee retention in Houston, Texas. The researcher was able to find existing literature that examines this specific research topic utilizing participants from this specific city and state.

### ***Implications for Biblical Integration***

Philippians 2:4 instructs us to not look to our own interests but to look to the interests of others. Proverbs 29:2 offers that when the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked man rules, the people groan. This verse explains the importance of the leadership type that is instrumental in creating an atmosphere of increased job satisfaction, which can ultimately lead to increased employee retention. Understanding leadership to meet retention goals set by the organization is biblical and therefore, justifies the need for this study. 1 Peter 4:10 helps to explain this by commanding us to use whatever gift we have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. Understanding the specific leadership style that is needed to best lead and serve God's people can ultimately contribute to the advancement of God's kingdom by increasing performance within the organization (Dunn, 2015; Giltinane, 2016; Keller, 2012).

Van Duzer (2010) explained that God's greatest assignment is advancing His kingdom. 1 Peter 4:10 reminds believers to use whatever gift they have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. As such, organizational leaders should be good stewards of their talents in order to develop and serve their direct reports in a Biblical manner. This study should serve as an integral part of the knowledge base to be useful in the

advancement of God's kingdom for the manufacturing industry. Leadership within manufacturing industries should maximize employee retention to achieve optimal organizational performance (Yahya & Tan, 2015). Employee retention involves the creation of an organizational culture that promotes job satisfaction and commitment (Sawitri et al., 2016). Leadership style has a substantial impact on an organization's ability to maximize employee turnover (Daft, 2013; Keller, 2010). Therefore; this study is biblically supported as it aligns with God's plan for advancing His kingdom.

### ***Relationship to Field of Study***

The field of study is leadership in business. The study examined the relationship between leadership and employees in the manufacturing sector in an attempt to maximize employee retention. The manufacturing industry represents a substantial portion of the industry workforce (Chatha & Butt, 2015) and warrants further study. Leadership style does influence employee performance within the workforce (Allen et al., 2018; Diamantidis & Chatzoglou, 2019). This study may be essential to this field as it could increase the base knowledge of the manufacturing industry as it relates to leadership behavior and the effect on employee retention. This study may be useful in the development of more effective leadership styles in order to maximize employee retention.

### ***Summary of the Significance of the Study***

The manufacturing industry is experiencing issues with employee retention due to a lack of effective relationships between leaders and employees (Lee & Chen, 2018). Yahya and Tan (2015) explained that hiring and retaining high-performing employees is crucial to an organization's success and addressing employee retention is a primary concern for the manufacturing sector. Kim (2017) suggested that leadership support is a key factor in job

satisfaction and ultimately leads to increased employee retention. The information gained through this study can potentially provide a more in-depth framework to conclude the relationship between leadership style and employee retention in the manufacturing industry. The assessment of the chosen leadership theories may provide additional information and solutions for employee retention in the manufacturing industry of Houston, Texas.

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

The primary focus of this study was to examine the relationship between leadership behaviors and employee retention in the manufacturing industry. The purpose of this literature review was to assess and analyze scholarly sources and identify themes relating to leadership behaviors and their impact on employee retention. The review began with an analysis of the theories used to support the conceptual framework of this study including; Herzberg's theory of motivation, transformational leadership theory, attribution theory of leadership, and Maslow's needs hierarchy. This is followed by an assessment of complementary, supplementary, and opposing theories and specifically for the constructs from these theories that are relevant to the constructs of the theories from the conceptual framework. An assessment was also included discussing to what degree these theories are relevant to real-world business problems as well as biblical application.

Sources were gathered through searches conducted on Liberty University's databases and included Business Source Complete, North American Business Press, ProQuest, and Google Scholar. Research strategies included key terms that were related to the research questions. The key terms utilized during the research were employee retention, leadership behaviors, leadership behaviors that affect employee retention, employee retention affected by leadership behaviors, organizational leadership, effective leadership, Herzberg's theory of motivation, Maslow's needs

hierarchy, transformational leadership, attribution theory of leadership, and effective leadership behaviors.

The subsequent sections of this review will discuss leadership behaviors, styles, job retention, and leadership outcomes as the main factors explored in this study. Discussion of various theories supporting the key factors will include the following: Herzberg's theory of motivation, transformational leadership theory, attribution theory of leadership, and Maslow's needs hierarchy. This section then concludes with a summary of the literature.

The body of literature consisted of substantial research relating to the effect leadership behavior has on employee retention. However, this research concentrated on the behavioral theories as introduced in this study above. Mitchell et al. (1981), in support of their attribution theory of leadership, observed that leadership behavior influences employee performance and subsequent leadership judgment.

Taunton et al. (2017) noted that leadership behaviors directly affect staff retention. This research included the different types of behaviors and their effect on employee retention. Leadership behaviors that promote stress among employees, as well as dissatisfaction, contribute to a low retention rate while that which reduces job stress promote satisfaction and increase employee retention (Kantabutra, 2017; McCann & Sweet, 2016; Taunton et al., 2017). Wakabi (2016) confirmed that leadership behavior influences employees' performance and retention. Most behavioral researchers have pointed out two major leadership behaviors, which include the relationship leadership-focused conduct and task-focused conduct (Kantabutra, 2017; Schrempf-Stirling et al., 2016; Spain & Groysberg, 2016).

### ***Leadership Role***

The role of leadership plays a major part in employee retention (Aguenza & Som, 2018; Lashley, 2017). Having the right individual in a leadership role can have a major impact on employees within an organization (Bakotica, 2016; Hargreaves, 2017). The following section examines the benefits of how the leadership role can directly influence employee retention.

One of the key roles of leadership is creating a good working environment that takes into consideration employee needs. A good working environment may contribute to retaining employees in an organization regardless of the availability of many similar opportunities with other companies. Babalola et al. (2016) offered that the leadership role in an organization is fundamental for employee retention. They further reason that employees do not necessarily leave companies, but they leave managers who exhibit bad leadership behaviors. A study by Kim and Barak (2015) argued that organizations no longer can afford to leave the task of maintaining low performing as well as average performing workers in the hands of the Department of Human Resource Management. Instead, this responsibility, as well as accountability of retraining talent needs, are still left in the hands of innocent leaders who lack the knowledge of Human Resource Management. Noe et al. (2017) suggested that the responsibility, as well as accountability of retaining workers, should move out the hands of leaders and be left entirely to the Department of Human Resource Management. Cloutier et al. (2015) advised that leaders and their knowledge and skills in developing an environment of retention of workers, an organizational culture that communicates to the workers in a manner that motivates them to stay, will be the best defense against unwanted turnover in an organization.

Further literature suggests that employees are likely to stay with an organization if they trust their leaders have the employee's best interests in mind, if they know what the organization

expects of them, and if they receive regular feedback as well as recognition from their leaders (Asencio & Mujkic, 2016; Robinson et al., 2015; Shin & Zhou, 2016). In other words, the type of relationship that exists between the employees and their leaders may highly determine employee retention in the organization. Khalid et al. (2016) confirmed that low job satisfaction, low employee retention, low employee commitment in the job, the stress in the workplace, and general poor performance of many employees in an organization are consequences of incompetent leadership in an organization. The retention of employees in an organization for an extended timeframe is the result of good organizational and complementary leadership styles (Babalola et al., 2016; Cloutier et al., 2015). Cloutier et al. (2015) noted that transformational leadership is a significant factor in minimizing as well as extenuating turnover intention among employees.

Based on the above argument from various scholars, it is evident that leadership behavior is a key determining factor in employees' retention as leaders are playing a key role. The Transformational leadership style motivates individuals by appealing to moral values and higher ideals, which can potentially inspire employees to increase performance, which would ultimately inspire the employee and cast a vision for the organization (Northouse, 2013). Jacobson (2018) commented that transformational leaders strive to develop a positive relationship with their direct reports to strengthen the overall performance of subordinates, which can directly have an impact on the performance of an organization. According to a study by Ashikali and Groeneveld (2015) about management of diversity in an organization and its impact on overall commitment of employees in an organization, special reference to transformational leadership as well as the inclusiveness of the organizational culture. Transformational leadership plays a critical role in diversity management among employees and promote inclusiveness of effective organizational

culture. This evidence, coupled with evidence gathered from other scholars as described in the above literature under the role of leadership in employees' retention, solidifies that leadership style can have a major impact on employee retention in an organization.

The literature above examined the impact the leadership role can have on employee retention. Discussion included that it is the leader that employees often quit and not the organization. Having the right individual in a leadership role may contribute to overall employee retention. In the next section, research will include the impact organizational leadership may have on employee retention.

### ***Organizational Leadership***

Leadership concepts are very crucial to the work attitudes of the employees, which considerably influences the behavioral performance and effectiveness of the organization (Gini, 2014; Lydenberg, 2018; McCann & Sweet, 2016; Schrempf-Stirling et al., 2016). The decision and willingness of an employee to remain in a specific organization frequently correlate to the stability of the workforce and the effectiveness of the organization (Salahuddin, 2016). Some researchers stress that leadership is a crucial tool for the organization's management since it supports effective relationships among workers, raises service performance, positively affects the climate of the organization, and transforms behavioral results when utilized properly (Hargreaves, 2017; Joyce & Slocum, 2016; Lok & Crawford, 2015).

Even though improvement of the term leadership has taken place by combining it with adjectives such as "good" and "poor," recent researches have not fully given the overall definition of the term leadership (Asencio & Mujkic, 2016; Jacobson, 2018). Regardless of this assertion, Turunc et al. (2016) offered that leadership is the process of motivating and influencing other individuals to work harder to achieve and give support to the goals of the



organization. Zaccaro and Banks (2017) identified leadership as the act of inducing the followers to act for specific goals that stand for certain motivations and values, expectations, and aspirations of both the followers and the leaders.

Leadership originates from how leaders are elected to act on their behalf, and their followers' motivations and values (Hargreaves, 2017; Robinson et al., 2015; Shin & Zhou, 2016). Also, some research has shown that leadership is the process of influencing individuals to realize the desired outcomes (Kantabutra, 2017; Poff, 2016; Sung & Choi, 2016). Therefore, leaders contribute to encouraging, motivating, stimulating, and recognizing the behavior of their followers for them to get key performance outcomes (Gini, 2017; Lok & Crawford, 2015).

### **Leadership Styles**

According to their research, Lok and Crawford (2015) found that leaders should be able to support styles that promote interactions amongst them and their subordinates. Some researchers explain that leadership style is a pattern of interactions between leaders and their subordinates (Ramsey, 2015; Robinson et al., 2015; Schrempf-Stirling et al., 2016). According to these scholars, leadership styles should include directing, controlling, all methods and techniques used by these leaders to influence followers to abide by their instructions.

Many researchers identified various leadership styles frequently employed in managing the behavior of their followers. For example, Ng'ethe et al. (2017) performed a study relating to the activeness and participation of leaders on the behavior of the employees towards decision making and work. The three leadership styles examined in the study were laissez-faire, democratic, and autocratic. In the autocratic leadership style, the leader makes the overall decision without consultation of his followers and other colleagues. Ng'ethe et al. (2017) discovered that this caused a lot of displeasure among colleagues and followers. But later, they

observed that autocratic applies to some circumstances where there is no need for input from other people as it may not bring any difference to the overall decision.

Sung and Choi (2016) offered that in the behavior of democratic style leadership, leaders share decision-making responsibilities with other employees to promote the interests of group members. Then, at some point in the final decision, the leader may have the final say to facilitate consensus in the group the leader is leading. According to Salahuddin (2016), this kind of leadership style is always appreciated by employees, specifically if they have been subjected to autocratic decisions. However, he noted that the democratic leadership style does not apply in all situations. The third leadership style, Laissez-faire, is a style in which leaders are hands-off, and employees can make decisions. Laissez-faire leadership style works better when individuals are intrinsically motivated in making their individual decisions when there is no need for external controllers (Joyce & Slocum, 2016; Ramsey, 2015; Sung & Choi, 2016).

Employee retention is becoming increasingly significant as an organization strives for excellence and profit maximization (Schrempf-Stirling et al., 2016; Spain & Groysberg, 2016; Tan & Waheed, 2017). Employee retention in an organization requires motivation, which should come from leaders and is entirely dependent on leadership behavior. Employee performance is no just the culpability to perform a given task but the willingness to perform the task with enthusiasm matter. The following four theories that support the conceptual framework for this study were discussed to examine leadership behavior and the effect on staff retention.

### ***Herzberg's Theory of Motivation***

Fredrick Herzberg developed what is referred to Herzberg's theory of motivation, in 1959, and explains some factors in the work environment that cause job satisfaction while some other sets of factors cause dissatisfaction. Herzberg theorized that job satisfaction and job

dissatisfaction independently act on each other. For Herzberg's theory to be applied, any organization is required to adopt the two-motivational process to motivate the workers. Herzberg classified factors that cause employee dissatisfaction in the workplace as hygiene factors. Organizations can eliminate dissatisfaction by reconstructing obstructive and poor organization policies (Peterlin, 2016; Poff, 2016; Torok & Cordon, 2015). Also, leadership should give effective and non-intrusive supervision.

Additionally, organizations that adopt this theory frequently give competitive wages, provide job security, support, and create a culture of dignity to all employees. All the mentioned actions above may diminish job dissatisfaction in any working environment. However, a lack of dissatisfaction does not necessarily imply that employees are satisfied. It is equally important to consider the factors that constitute to job satisfaction.

Herzberg offers that organizations need to consider the motivating factors that align with daily job assignments to satisfy employees. Lundberg et al. (2018) proved Herzberg's two-factor theory to be true when he conducted research on a manufacturing company and found that for an employee to be satisfied, feedback for each task should be provided as well as possible ways to improve the task. Herzberg concluded that in providing this feedback, leaders can increase satisfaction to the individual performing the work. Feedback may include creating achievement opportunities, rewarding employees, creating opportunities for internal job promotions, giving development and training for employees to choose the positions they desire inside an organization.

Some researchers also found that the elements of the two-factor theory directly link to Maslow's theory of motivation (Alarcon & Lyons, 2015; Ramsey, 2015; Spain & Groysberg, 2016). Individuals do not often seek employment for the sole purpose of personal satisfaction.

Instead, individuals expect fair wages, as well as a pleasant and secure work environment (Anderson & Sun, 2017; Ramsey, 2015; Tan & Waheed, 2017). Employees desire satisfaction for psychological needs of a higher level that connects with responsibility, achievement, personal enhancement, recognition, and the characteristics of the task itself (Lundberg et al., 2018; Poff, 2016; Yusoff & Kain, 2016). This thought process is parallel to Maslow's needs hierarchy as both take human needs into consideration. Herzberg added a new measure to this theory by suggesting a two-factor theory of motivation, revolving on the concept the availability of one set of task features may lead to employee satisfaction in the workplace at the same time another set of job features may lead to job dissatisfaction. Therefore, either satisfaction or dissatisfaction can be the subject of the matter of one another where one will increase and the other reducing both are two independent occurrences.

In comparison to other theories on motivation, Herzberg's theory of motivation focuses primarily on motivators and hygiene factors. Stello (2018) argued that motivation consists of two unrelated dimensions, which include job-related motivation features that encourage development and growth and job-related hygiene factors that prevent dissatisfaction but not enhancing the development or growth of the employees. Stello appears to give identification of the factors that impact the retention of the employees by the application of Herzberg's theory of motivation.

Malik and Naeem (2017) assessed Fredrick Herzberg's theory and concluded it is closely connected with Maslow's theory, which helps substantiate the two-factor theory of motivation. They also asserted that certain factors need to be introduced into the organization so that employees can be directly motivated even through their leaders. However, they also noted that there are some factors like unclear expectations, not recognizing accomplishments, and making

unreasonable task demands that de-motivate employees from working harder. But in this case, hygiene factors are very crucial motivators that may often promote employee satisfaction.

For instance, even if the job is very interesting and supports additional opportunities for pay increases, the employee may seek extra responsibility, promotion, and recognition. Tan and Waheed (2017) offered that even though financial compensation may be a factor for continued employment, it does not force the employee to work any harder. Herzberg offers that financial compensation is one of the main contributing factors that provide employee satisfaction.

Herzberg et al. (1959) alleged that organizations are supposed to motivate their workers using a democratic approach to management and improve the environment and content of the real job by using certain techniques. Some of these methods include job enlargement, whereby workers prefer a variety of jobs that are not automatically more challenging but the ones that make the task more interesting (Malik & Naeem, 2017).

Employee motivation and job satisfaction often go hand in hand (Bakotica, 2016; Metcalf & Benn, 2016; Peterlin, 2016). A motivated employee is an employee who often seeks satisfaction through his or her work. Motivation is often thought of as the process of giving an individual a reason to do something (Soni & Soni, 2016). Motivation is one of the effective tools that leaders can use to give inspiration to their followers and build high confidence between them (Bakotica, 2016; Malik & Naeem, 2017; Peterlin, 2016). Some research shows that challenges of employee dissatisfaction are linked to negative attitudes and are spreading at an alarming rate across organizations (Lawton & Páez, 2015; Lourenço & Curto, 2017; Tan & Waheed, 2017). Therefore, it can be argued that a worker's motivation affects employee retention directly in many organizations. Since motivation often comes from the leaders, it is important for

organizations to identify the link between the factors of motivation and employee retention (Tan & Waheed, 2017).

### ***Maslow's Needs Hierarchy***

In 1943, Abraham Maslow published his needs hierarchy and utilized it to motivate his workers. In 1943, Abraham Maslow developed a motivational theory that presented a pyramid model of five human needs. The first level at the base of the pyramid is physiological needs and then moves up the hierarchy to safety needs, love and belongingness needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs (Maslow, 1943). This model defines the order of actions for human motivation. Maslow's theory (1943) suggests that humans could not pursue actions in an additional tier in the pyramid until the previous tier's requirements were met. In the workplace environment, Maslow's needs hierarchy could serve as guidance for leadership behavior to motivate individual performance in order to meet organizational goals.

**Physiological Needs.** Physiological needs are the first level of human requirement for motivation as defined in Maslow's needs hierarchy (Maslow, 1943). Examples of physiological needs are air to breathe, food to eat, and sleep. Aguenza and Som's (2018) study explored how stressors influenced job satisfaction for employees. The researcher examined factors such as physical work environment, supervisor support, and role overload. The results of the study showed a negative relationship between the physical environment and job satisfaction. There was a positive relationship between supervisor support and job satisfaction (Aguenza & Som, 2018). Based on the findings of this study, the researchers recommended leadership practices that influenced better addressing the physiological needs of the police officers to improve job satisfaction (Aguenza & Som, 2018). Increasing job satisfaction in this manner could positively impact employee turnover and overall organizational effectiveness (Asencio & Mujkic, 2016;

Joyce & Slocum, 2016). Similarly, the results of this study could be applied to other industries and organizational environments.

Azanza et al. (2015) conducted a study investigating Maslow's needs hierarchy and perceived and ideal leadership style in employees of a police school. The purpose of the study was to identify issues and determine effective solutions for managerial practices (Azanza et al., 2015). The results of this study showed a slight contradiction in the order of human motivation for the sample population versus Maslow's Needs Hierarchy. However, physiological needs proved to be generally more significant than the other four categories (Azanza et al., 2015). Furthermore, all groups in the sample population preferred a leadership style that leaned more towards transformational leadership practices (Azanza et al., 2015). This study by Azanza et al. supports the belief that physiological needs are the primary concern for human motivation and that leadership practices are heavily influential in organizational productivity regarding meeting employee physiological needs.

**Safety Needs.** When applied to the work environment, Maslow's pyramid offers a parallel for workplace job satisfaction. Level two in Maslow's pyramid model represents safety needs. The question of safety lies in the employees' perception of fear of losing the job if work productivity does not meet the transactional leader's requirements (King-Hill, 2015). If the employees cannot move to actions in subsequent tiers of the pyramid's motivators, then optimum motivation is unattainable (Maslow, 1943). The lack of safety in tier two will prohibit the employee from moving to actions in tier three: workplace interpersonal relationships. Soni and Soni (2016) asserted that high-quality interpersonal relationships correlate to an increase in employee commitment and contribute positively to organizational culture. The relationship between employee and leadership personnel counts as a workplace interpersonal relationship

(Kang et al., 2017). Therefore, organizational leaders have a paramount responsibility in creating a safe workspace for employees.

A study by Mokoka et al. (2016) attempted to identify influential factors to persuade employees to stay with their current employers to dissuade employee turnover. A total of 108 study participants completed a questionnaire instrument, of whom approximately 73% had considered or were considering leaving their current positions (Mokoka et al., 2016). The results of the study found that 90% of the study participants considered the most important factors to persuade turnover intention included job security and safety, finances, and management (Mokoka et al., 2016). The researchers in this study determined that Maslow's need hierarchy was proven accurate with this sample population, and the first tiers of Maslow's pyramid promoted job satisfaction with the participants of this survey (Mokoka et al., 2016).

**Love and Belongingness Needs.** Social needs represent the third level in the model. According to Maslow (1943), social needs include love and affection, friendship, sense of belonging, and other social activities. Soni and Soni (2016) observed that when employees seek additional training in an organization, then the other employees must be willing to show affection and appreciation to such members. However, Cohen et al. (2016) noted that this is only possible through good leadership behavior that exists under an effective and desired culture of the organization in question.

The need for acceptance and connectedness within a group contributes to organizational citizenship behavior and thus promotes productivity (Den Hartog et al., 2015; Sawitri et al., 2016). A study by Den Hartog et al. (2015) tested the effects of feelings of belongingness on compliant helping within manager-subordinate relationships. The results of the study indicated that managerial charisma impacted employees' feeling of connectedness to the organizational



group and determined their level of helping and compliance in accordance with achieving organizational goals (Den Hartog et al., 2015). Employees must be able to self-identify with contributions to the responsibilities of their work environment to move to the next level in Maslow's needs hierarchy (Maslow, 1943).

Hershcovis et al. (2017) completed two studies examining the extent to which workplace belongingness and embarrassment impact job insecurity. The researchers examined the mediating effect of incivility from one perpetrator versus two perpetrators. The study results indicated that no matter the number of perpetrators, workplace incivility created job insecurity and affected the employee's ability to connect to the work environment and establish a feeling of belongingness (Hershcovis et al., 2017). This study supports Maslow's needs hierarchy and the requirement of the tier's steps being completed in order. The participants in Hershcovis et al.'s study first needed to feel safe in an environment free from incivility before they can create and accept a feeling of belongingness. The leadership personnel in any organizational environment plays an essential role in maintaining a safe work environment (Bhasin, 2017).

**Esteem Needs.** After connecting to the workplace group, employees' next need for motivation is a positive self-view of their individual perceived contribution to the work environment (Maslow, 1943). This level includes the esteem to others as well as self-respect. In this context, self-respect includes being independent and self-confident, whereas esteem to others includes status and reputation. The needs of esteem include respect to oneself and others as individuals seek power and prestige in the society and workplace (Bhasin, 2017; Feldman, 2016). Soni and Soni (2016) further argued that employees can be retained for a long time in an organization when they feel respected by the organization leaders above them and to extend that respect to others within the organization.

Shu (2015) performed a study to evaluate the effects of leadership behavior on job satisfaction and leadership through the lens of an organization centered on self-esteem assessment. The outcome of the study indicates that leadership attains productivity by stressing on moral standards as well as addressing the universal needs of the workers, which in turn impact on the general performance of an organization. The study found that domestic leadership had a positive implication on job satisfaction of the workers with the mediating effect of the individual worker's self-esteem. In other words, self-esteem is an essential psychological need that may lead to improved job performance and productivity in an organization. Aguenza and Som (2018) found that workers with low self-esteem in an organization are often demotivated in work and decide to search for better employment where self-respect is the focal point of the organization.

**Self-Actualization Needs.** Self-actualization is at the top of Maslow's pyramid and occurs when a person can fully reach their potential within an organization (Maslow, 1943). Self-actualization is the product of proper motivation throughout the different tiers of the Maslow's needs pyramid. Li et al. (2017) referred to the needs of self-actualization as development where the individual can become oneself. In organizations, workers can have their challenges as well as achievements in their specific areas of specialization. However, most of them do not attain the level of self-actualization.

Leaders in various organizations must be able to identify ways to maintain the employees' quality in their organization such that they can realize their level of self-actualization. When employees can satisfy their fourth level of needs as described by Abraham Maslow (1943), then they can contribute positively toward improved performance of the organization. However, even though they are helped to meet their needs as described by

Maslow's model, to retain quality workers in an organization require much effort as well as high motivation from the leaders. Once an employee reaches the self-actualization stage of performance, the leader must diligently continue to motivate the outstanding employee by observing the employee, providing positive feedback to the employee, allowing the employee to initiate and delegate responsibilities to others, and creating an environment that is conducive to achieving (Atwood, 2018).

Organizational leaders must be able to retain quality employees to reach appropriate financial goals (Yahya & Tan, 2015). If an employee reaches the fourth tier of Maslow's pyramid, then it is safe to assume that they are a quality employee with the potential to contribute to the organization positively. Keeping a quality employee engaged requires consistent motivation from leadership (Atwood, 2018) even though the employee may be self-motivated. Business leaders still must maintain an environment that is conducive to achieving (Atwood, 2018).

### ***Transformational Leadership Theory***

The theory of transformational leadership was established in 1978 by James Burns (Burns, 1978). Burns explained that transformational leaders as those who work alongside their respective employees to identify and affect change according to the organization's mission and goals. Therefore, transformational leadership is the process in which followers and leaders enable each other to promote their morale and motivation to higher standard levels (Kantaburta, 2017; McCann & Sweet, 2016; Tan & Waheed, 2017). Gumusluoglu and Ilsev (2017) argued further that the intended motivation could only be attained by correctly defining the awareness levels regarding outcomes and outline the ways of attaining them. According to Gill and Mathur (2018), transformation leadership depends highly on the emulations the followers get from the

leader and how the followers opt to admire, trust, and respect the leader in transformation.

Transformational leadership puts more emphasis on change and gives the followers the morale and spirit to commit to shared goals and objectives of the organization or a unit of the organization.

Over the past decade, transformation leadership has been one of the serious discussion topics in leadership literature (Metcalf & Benn, 2016; Shin & Zhou, 2016; Sung & Choi, 2016). According to Price and Weiss (2018), inspirational individuals with vision and mission can achieve greater things from his or her followers. Transformational leaders elevate and widen the interests of their workers by promotion acceptance and awareness for the mission and purposes of the group (Lawton & Páez, 2015; Tan & Waheed, 2017). Similarly, Kyndt et al. (2016) argued that transformational leadership gives inspiration to the followers to believe in themselves by creating better projections and future for the organization while trusting and believing in the personality of the leader. Therefore, their research concluded that this kind of leader is supposed to give a clear mission, vision, gain trust, encourage self-esteem, and respect via personality. The transformational leader will also ask his or her followers to go the extra mile beyond self-interest for the interest of the organization, the team, and even the society (Shin & Zhou, 2016). Luthans (2017) argued that transformational leaders show various behaviors. They indicate that there are four elements of leadership transformational: individualized consideration, idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational motivation. Transformational leaders realize this by putting into practice the four behavioral elements which are like the practices in transformational leadership.

Many researchers have explored the relationship between staff retention and transformation leadership (Lambert, 2018; Shin & Zhou, 2016; Torok & Cordon, 2015). Their

studies have shown that transformational leadership helps in retaining employees and reducing the rate of turnover intentions. In the studies conducted by Price and Weiss (2018), transformational leadership was found to be contrary to the aspect of staff retention amongst the employees in profit-oriented and commercial based businesses manufacturing companies. Gill (2015) noted that transformational leadership behaviors directly correlates with lower rates of intention to quit the job. Also, additional research confirms that the main idea of transformational leaders is to get to their followers and extract the best in them for the growth of the organization (Lourenço & Curto, 2017; Schrempf-Stirling et al., 2016).

Research indicates that a transformational leader will take time to discuss how to make the job of his followers easier and help in formulating action plans that will develop the career of his or her followers (Gini, 2017; Lourenço & Curto, 2017; Tan & Waheed, 2017). They also note that personal attention that is offered by transformational leaders can create a strong relationship between organization managers and the workers that may ultimately increase employee retention within the organization. Kark and Shamir (2016) examined the relationship between transformation leadership and employee retention on 300 participants and found that there is a great negative relationship between staff retention and transformation leadership and similar to the correlation between intentions of voluntary organizational turnover and transformational leadership. A study by Gumusluoglu and Ilsev (2017) revealed the link between transformational leadership has shown a weak correlation between leadership behavior and employee retention.

A transformational leader can lead the team to even higher commitment and work together to complete organization tasks (Gumusluoglu & Ilsev, 2017; Lydenberg, 2018; Zaccaro & Banks, 2017). If a leader is transparent in his or her dealings with the employees, they will also emulate and open their minds (Ng'ethe et al., 2017). Additional research shows that a

transformational leader can build a good rapport with their followers, which can ultimately promote a healthy work environment (Alarcon & Lyons, 2015; Hargreaves, 2017; Lydenberg, 2018). An employee who feels of value in an organization may be less likely to leave the company. Transformational leaders should always aspire to build a good rapport with their followers and make them feel cherished for their effort (Kark & Shamir, 2016; Salahuddin, 2016). Other scholars have also found that it is the responsibility of the leader to understand the abilities and values of employees so that he or she can link their characters with the goals and objectives of the organization (Lamber, 2012; Poff, 2016; Ramsey, 2015). Transformational leaders often understand the roles of his or her followers to make them feel appreciated and to assure them that they are making a positive impact on the organization (Alarcon & Lyons, 2015; Kark & Shamir, 2016; Salahuddin, 2016). Through that, employees may have minimal thoughts on leaving their current job.

Transformational leaders allow the follower employees to speak out themselves and to be the voice of their ideas. When leaders give their followers the power to impart ideas to the team, this behavior can lead to a positive attitude amongst employees (Alarcon & Lyons, 2015; Jacobson, 2018). If a leader allows his or her followers a chance to communicate their thoughts and ideas with other colleagues, then there is an assurance of effective leadership. Research offers that transformational leaders are influential for the development of the organization and have been a key contributing factor in retaining the most important asset of the organization, and that is the employees (Salahuddin, 2016; Sung & Choi, 2016; Torok & Cordon, 2015).

A transformational leadership style positively impacts job satisfaction and employee retention (Ölçer, 2015). This style of leadership offers its greatest impact on employee attitudes commitment to both the leader and the organization (Rose & Raja, 2016; Salahuddin, 2016;

Torok & Cordon, 2015). Job satisfaction plays a significant role in employee retention outcomes (Rose & Raja, 2016). Moreover, to experience consistent organizational growth, businesses must recruit and retain quality employees (Yahya & Tan, 2015).

### ***Attribution Theory of Leadership***

The attribution theory of leadership includes factors that leadership personnel contributes to the work environment which influence employee performance and subsequent leadership judgment (Mitchell et al., 1981). These factors, which are the basis for this theory, include leader's attributions to employee performance and employee attributions as a reaction to leadership's reaction to their performance. The attribution theory deals with the formation of individual opinions about the reasons for events or observations (Mitchell et al., 1981). The basis of the attribution theory includes attributions of leaders to employee performance and employee ascriptions as a reaction to leadership's reaction to their performance (Mitchell et al., 1981). Distinctiveness, consensus, and consistency are three dimensions of behaviors leaders use to judge employee performance (Mitchell et al., 1981).

The attribution theory of leadership was built purposely to explain how leaders judge their employees differently depending on the definition leaderships attribute to a certain behavior (Alarcon & Lyons, 2015). When leaders attempt to find the origin or cause of behavior among employees, they find that employee behavior can be internally or externally formed (Lawton & Páez, 2015; Lourenço & Curto, 2017; Metcalf & Benn, 2016). While internally caused behaviors are those that are termed to be under the control of the individual employee, externally caused behaviors are termed as those behaviors that are caused by externality and the workers cannot afford to avoid them (Alarcon & Lyons, 2015; Peterlin, 2016; Torok & Cordon, 2015).

A study by Feldman (2016) regarding the cognitive process in performance appraisal suggests that in many organizations, employees' behaviors are many a time categorized by leaders in organizations without conscious monitoring unless the decisions involved are difficult. Hirst and Mann (2016) carried out a study that assessed the influence of variables, which include leadership theories and attribution styles on the sample population's options of the diverse leadership behavior. Their results indicate that there is no direct interactive effect of leadership attribution on leadership behavior. Attribution theory of leadership provides cognitive evidence that there is a great impact of leadership style as well as behavior on the performance as well as employee retention (Kantabutra, 2017; Peterlin, 2016; Tan & Waheed, 2017). Therefore, it is compelling that leaders in many organizations should look for a better way of motivating their employees.

### ***Relationship-Focused***

The relationship-focused style of leadership was utilized as a main construct for this research. The following section examines the effects that this style of leadership may have on the relationship between leadership style and employee retention in an organization. The section also includes linkage to applicable theories within the research.

Maslow's theory (1943) suggests that humans could not pursue actions in an additional tier in the pyramid until meeting the previous tier's requirements. Maslow (1943) declared that all individuals have the motivation to move up the hierarchy toward a level of self-actualization. However, before meeting the need for self-actualization, other needs must be attained first. One may offer that leaders should embrace a leadership style that will warrant the meeting of all human needs in the order described by Abraham Maslow.



The major concern of relationship-oriented leaders exists in the development and building of interpersonal relationships (Bakotica, 2016; Joyce & Slocum, 2016; Spain & Groysberg, 2016). Leaders who are relationship-focused prefer two-way methods of communication with their staff (Bakotica, 2016; Friedrich et al., 2016; Joyce & Slocum, 2016). Samad (2015) noted that the behavior of relationship-oriented leaders falls into three categories: developing, supporting, and recognizing behaviors. However, the success of a relationship-oriented style of leadership is highly dependent on the characteristics of the employee (Asencio & Mujkic, 2016; Bakotica, 2016). For example, if an employee falls in the classification described by Mitchell et al. (1981) in their theory of attribution leadership, then relationship-oriented behavior will not be of any value in this scenario.

A study by Mikkelsen et al. (2015) regarding communication competence, leadership behaviors, and employee outcomes in supervisor-employee relationships found that effective communication among employees is significant and links to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and motivation. Their research confirmed that effective and relationship-focused style were the best indicators of motivation among workers, organizational commitment as well as satisfaction in the job (Mikkelsen et al., 2015). The results show that a relationship-oriented style of leadership is one of the key factors that determines employee retention in an organization. In support of the statement, one may conclude that through relationship-focused style, leaders create themselves an opportunity to understand the needs of various employees.

Xi et al. (2017) examined the internal influencing mechanism and boundary conditions of the linkage between CEO relationship-oriented leadership style and organizational performance. The results indicate that relationship-oriented leadership has a positive impact on organizational performance. Xi et al. (2017) insisted that relationship-oriented leadership behavior is directly as

well as positively linked to employee performance in organizations through a chain mediating role of employees' attitude and employee relation environment. The attribution theory provides support for relationship-oriented behavior where the leaders support employees' opinions and accommodate them in the decision-making process (Hirst & Mann, 2016; Mitchell et al., 1981).

The literature above examined the relationship-oriented style of leadership as it relates to building relationships between leaders and employees in organizations. Research was included that linked relationship-oriented style of leadership to employee retention. The next section of the research will include an examination of task-oriented style of leadership as it relates to employee retention.

### ***Task-Oriented***

One major attribute that may prove to be instrumental in the leadership role is being task-oriented. Leaders may be more effective in their role if they are focused on achieving specific tasks throughout the day (Kantabutra, 2017; McCann & Sweet, 2016; Taunton et al., 2017). Employees often desire a leader that provides them with specific tasks as a sense of accomplishment is present once the task is completed (Bakotica, 2016; Friedrich et al., 2016). By including task-oriented as a research construct, this management style can be examined for relevance relating to real-world business applications.

The principal concern of task-oriented style of leadership is attaining defined goals and objectives of their organization effectively and in a timely manner. Task-oriented leaders can be influential with staff to attain their objectives by giving them the precise meaning of their roles, developing objectives and the standards of evaluation, laying down direction and instructions, setting time schedules, and identify how to achieve the set goals and standards (Joyce & Slocum, 2016; Lydenberg, 2018; Schrempf-Stirling et al., 2016). Task-oriented behavior regularly uses

one-way method to communicate with staff about their roles and responsibilities as well as how they are required to fulfill them, respectively (Hirst & Mann, 2016; Kantabutra, 2017; McCann & Sweet, 2016).

With task-oriented style, some tasks assigned by leaders to their subordinates include clarifying responsibilities and roles, defining goals, control performance measurements, as well as planning short term behavior periods as the main characteristics of task-oriented leaders (Anderson & Sun, 2017; Salahuddin, 2016). Important in this statement is the understanding of how these types of leaders can motivate their staff to retain them for a long time in their organization. In contrast, research shows that sometimes, task-oriented leaders' behavior can negatively affect employee retention (Kantabutra, 2017; Schrempf-Stirling et al., 2016; Spain & Groyberg, 2016). Therefore, they should adopt a mechanism relating to motivating staff retention. Mitchell et al. (1981) offered that effective task-oriented leadership style entirely depends on the personal characteristics of an individual leader. A meta-analytic study by Ceri-Booms et al. (2017), of the relationship between individual and task-oriented leadership behaviors, found that there is a strong relationship between organizational performance and task-oriented leadership behavior. The outcome of the study based on 89 independent samples indicate a moderate positive correlation between leadership behaviors and organization performance.

Burke et al. (2016) did a meta-analysis to assess the link between leadership behavior in teams as well as interactively centered team performance. Results of the analysis postulate that the use of task-oriented behavior is moderately related to team productivity and effectiveness. Task-oriented leaders help set the foundation of the organization by designing effective roles of employees based on their skillsets (Bakotica, 2016; Hargreaves, 2017; Lydenberg, 2018). These

effective roles can help promote job satisfaction and therefore, increase employee retention. (Ceri-Booms et al., 2017).

The section above examined the task-oriented style of leadership as it relates to employee retention. Research was included that give both a positive and negative insight as to whether or not employees are influenced to remain with an organization based solely on this type of style. The next section of the research will focus on employee retention and the areas that have the greatest impact.

### **Leadership Outcomes**

With the time and money put into training leaders, organizations strive to make sure the outcomes between leadership behavior and employee retention are positive. While there is no guarantee that a leader can produce specific outcomes, organizations may be able to focus on the specific factors that have the greatest impact. The following sections include discussion for the following outcomes: staff retention, significance, business benefits, and challenges.

#### ***Staff Retention***

Staff retention continues to be one of the most significant focuses in organizations today (Bakotica, 2016; Hargreaves, 2017). The need for staff retention in an organization is not only associated with the cost of replacement of new employees, but also the need to retain talented workers (Madan, 2017). In the manufacturing sector, job retention has become increasingly significant. Employee retention is an important part of this study as the research is focused on leadership styles and their impact on employee retention in the manufacturing industry. The research will also examine topics of employee retention such as the significance of employee retention, the role of leadership, company benefits, and challenges. This section will then examine leadership from a biblical perspective, followed by a summary of the literature review.

Aguenza and Som (2018) commented that employee retention is the process of substantially keeping organizational staff as one of the strategic principles for organizational achievement. In a globalized situation, employee retention is an enormous challenge which leaders in various organizations are facing, particularly in times of high turnover rate (Asencio & Mujkic, 2016; Bakotica, 2016; Spain & Groysberg, 2016). Aguenza and Som (2018) confirmed that motivational factors that are central in determining employee retention in an organization are; job design and characteristics, leadership behavior, financial rewards and incentives, career development, work-life balance, and the general management of the organization. Therefore, these factors should universally formulate an effective employee retention strategy to reduce the turnover rate in the organization (Cohen et al., 2016).

### *Significance*

Low retention rates may present a challenge for recruiting future employees (Jacobson, 2018; Kantabutra, 2017; Ramsey, 2015). When employee retention is low, organizations may find it difficult to obtain and keep new talent as employees seek stability within their careers (Lashley, 2017; Madan, 2017). The unspoken negative factors of contract termination finally spread throughout the entire organization. A study by Spain and Groysberg (2016) about whether the existing interview in many organizations indicate that skilled employees are the key asset that drives the destiny of organization success in the knowledge economy. The author further comments that it is good for leaders to undertake a comprehensive exit interview through informed HRM to determine the root cause of the existing. To some extent, this may promote staff engagement and enhance retention by signaling to the remaining employees that their feedback matters.

Regaining efficiency is another significance of employee retention (Morrow & McElroy, 2017). Sometimes, training alone cannot guarantee competency as the new employee still needs reasonable years of experience. A study by Sandhya and Kumar (2017) regarding employee retention through motivation, argued that retention of the employee in organizations is a significant factor that can help in promoting organizational performance. Employee retention is not only important in reducing turnover costs related to recruitment and training but also helps to retain talented workers in an organization (Spain & Groysberg, 2016).

### ***Business Benefits***

Satisfaction from benefits includes not only the levels and types of benefits received but also gratification on the operations of the benefits system (Gini, 2017; Lourenço & Curto, 2017; Sung & Choi, 2016). This kind of benefit gives protection to employees from risks that could have jeopardized their financial security and health. Also, organizations may provide facilities that most employees find valuable, therefore motivating them to stay with the company. Additionally, benefit plans that are made to appreciate over some time encourage employees to maximize their tenure with an organization (Salahuddin, 2016).

The advantages of employee benefits on the effectiveness of the organization come through screening, which enables the organization to bring and retain competent employees and give motivation by enabling them to stimulate greater performance (Weberg, 2018). Indeed, benefit plans promote job satisfaction, enhance service quality, and give discouragement to employees from leaving their organizations (Poff, 2016; Robinson et al., 2015; Torok & Cordon, 2015). Benefit plans have a monetary value for the organizations and employees, and the organization must realize the preferences and requirements of their workforce. An organization

must spend time explaining the overall value of benefits that they are providing to employees (Weberg, 2018).

### ***Challenges***

Issues regarding employee retention are emerging. In addition, they are becoming the highest critical workforce management issues even for the coming days. Research has shown the organizations that will be successful are those that will adopt the organizational behavior that conforms to the realities of the work conditions where success depends on creativity, flexibility, and innovation (Ramsey, 2015; Salahuddin, 2016). A thorough analysis of the trends in the workforce pinpoints to approaching skilled employees who can work at high levels (Lawton & Páez, 2015; Lourenço & Curto, 2017; Shin & Zhou, 2016). Therefore, those organizations that will fail to retain the top-performing employees will remain with less qualified, understaffed employees that will consequently hinder their organization's capability of remaining competitive (Gill & Mathur, 2018).

Employee retention has become a critical issue that is now facing many organizations' leadership due to a lack of skilled labor and employee turnover (Alarcon & Lyons, 2015; Lambert, 2018; Lawton & Páez, 2015). Employee retention involves an understanding of some intrinsic motivators whereby most of the organizations face challenges in identifying them (Peterlin, 2016). Retention does not only reduce the throughput costs but also reduces recruiting and training costs. Retention of workers involves logical efforts by the industry to have an environment that meets the needs of the employees, which consequently enables the employees to remain with the organization (Weberg, 2018). Therefore, employee retention is an effort that can be made by any organization to have a working cocoon that enables the available employees to remain working for the organization (Gill & Mathur, 2018).

Poor leadership selection during the recruitment process is another challenge that organizations may face. During an interview, recruits can misrepresent their qualifications to secure the open position. For instance, they may say they have certain leadership skills that were a requirement for employment consideration. If the organization is unable to verify such qualifications, they may find out later that the employee is unable to fulfill the duties of the position and may have to part ways with the employee.

### **Biblical Integration**

Leadership is important to any workplace (Northouse, 2015). Poor leadership is not conducive to a positive workspace and is demoralizing (Prov. 29:2). However, good leadership brings stability and security (Prov. 29:4). The Christian worldview acknowledges that leaders must put their trust in God as He promises to strengthen and uphold them with His righteous hand (Isa. 41:10). This means that leaders must trust God not only in the overarching big picture of His ultimate design for our lives but also in the seemingly minute details of everyday life. God is the author of leadership (Jer. 1:5) and leading in God's kingdom requires a focus on letting God use man to achieve his divine purpose (John 3:30).

Leadership style has a positive relationship with the retention of employees (Khalid et al., 2016; Wakabi, 2016). It is the leader who creates the environment of retention, which makes the employees realize that they are an important part of the organization, which encourages them to stay connected to the organization, then leaving it soon. Leadership style becomes effective in the case when leaders stay in touch with the employees and consider them and their decision in all the activities happening in an organization. It is how well the leader can communicate and understand the employees, their needs, and issues. A leader needs to be adaptive and should have the ability to inspire employees to foster employee retention. If employees are satisfied with the



organizational setup and how well they are being treated, they will remain committed for a longer period.

The spiritual aspect of this study related to the idea leaders should oversee their responsibilities much the same way the Lord demonstrated in Psalm 23:1-6 (New King James Version) with an emphasis on God's leadership and providing those material needs for effective leadership. In the book of John, Jesus said to his disciples, "You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you" (15:14-15 New International Version). This quote speaks directly to the idea leaders should train and develop their followers to know the leader's roles and responsibilities and function should the leader no longer be available.

Researchers can apply many of the points stressed in Christian leadership literature and Scripture to improving many aspects of job satisfaction, including workload, stress, relationships, personal development, and opportunities for advancement. The simple act of leading in a Christian manner, seeking God's will, praying for guidance, and using the Bible as the source of wisdom, will often lead followers to recognize the purity of a leader and thus to increase respect and commitment. Blackaby and Blackaby (2016) stressed it is important for leaders to pray to accomplish God's will, to work hard to influence organizational culture, to utilize servant leadership, and to maintain positive attitudes. Jesus demonstrated many of these aspects, as noted in Matthew.

When heading to Jerusalem, Jesus stressed to many they had missed key aspects of his leadership and should not be preoccupied with status but instead should focus on service, thus putting others first (Matt 14: 1-14). A focus on service and putting others first, likely are key

aspects of improving job satisfaction. Deborah, in her interactions with Barak and battles with the leaders of Canaan, demonstrated many similar aspects of leadership, including demonstrating competency, respect, exceeding the expectations of others, and developing people (Judges 4:1-16). As Scripture gives the reader many examples of strong servant leaders, these characteristics are also those likely to yield the most committed followers.

Employee retention is one of the critical issues faced by the management in organizations due to the shortage of skilled workforce and increasing employee turnover (Wakabi, 2016; Yin, 2014; Yukl, 2015). It has become necessary for the organizations to devise strategies to retain quality employees to the organization. The leadership behavior has its impact on staff motivation, performance, and organizational commitment, which in turn could influence employee's decision to stay with the organization. Employee retention is important for the success of the organization as employee turnover can lead to the disruption of the business.

How the functions of leadership are carried out and how the top management chooses to behave towards the employees is what matters a lot in retaining employees. Subordinates and employees keenly notice the behavior of the leader towards them. A slight swing in the behavior of the leader can leave either a positive or a negative impact on the employees. Leadership behavior can serve as a stressor leading to employee's discontentment and dissatisfaction towards the job and workplace becoming a reason for an employee leaving his job.

The Lord promises to instruct and teach us all in the way that we should go (Psalm 32:8). God's word applied to leadership situations is assurance that allowing Him to direct and guide decision-making insures His most favorable outcomes (Psalm 37:16-17). Business leaders must follow God and pay special attention to all their resources to be able to lead effectively (Isa. 41:10; Prov. 27:23-24). Paying attention and being aware of resource needs, including those of

the business's human resources, opens the door for operative decision-making that is the best fit for the situation. Although consistency in a certain leadership style may be favorable, seeking God in all decisions creates a space for optimal supervision and leadership. This creates a workspace that both serves God's kingdom in the moment and promotes business performance to continue serving God's kingdom in the future.

An effective leader interacts with the team by showing them the way as an imitation of Christ (1 Cor. 11:1). The Lord should lead all interactions with the organizational team through the leader with confidence (Heb. 13:5-6). In that confidence, leaders should also not forget that God calls leaders to be servants for their team members as they shepherd the flock (John 10:11). In this servanthood, leaders must also understand that they must contribute compassion and encouragement to their teams to help keep their teams on the right track just as God seeks the lost and strengthens the sick (Ezekiel 34:16). And when corrective actions are necessary, leaders must remember that even when correcting employee mistakes, the love of God is necessary without creating fear or anxiety for the employee (Prov. 3:12). Leadership contributions to the work environment must be purposeful and lead by Christ.

Philippians 2:4 instructs us to not look to our own interests but to look to the interests of others. Proverbs 29:2 offers that when the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked man rules, the people groan. This verse explains the importance of the leadership type that is instrumental in creating an atmosphere of increased job satisfaction, which can ultimately lead to increased employee retention. Understanding leadership to meet retention goals set by the organization is biblical and therefore, justifies the need for this study. 1 Peter 4:10 helps to explain this by commanding us to use whatever gift we have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. Understanding the specific

leadership style that is needed to best lead and serve God's people can ultimately contribute to the advancement of God's kingdom by increasing performance within the organization (Dunn, 2015; Giltinane, 2016; Keller, 2012).

Van Duzer (2010) reminded us that God's greatest assignment is advancing His kingdom. 1 Peter 4:10 reminds believers to use whatever gift they have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. As such, organizational leaders should be good stewards of their talents in order to develop and serve their direct reports in a Biblical manner. This study should serve as an integral part of the knowledge base to be useful in the advancement of God's kingdom for the manufacturing industry. Leadership within manufacturing industries should maximize employee retention to achieve optimal organizational performance (Yahya & Tan, 2015). Employee retention involves the creation of an organizational culture that promotes job satisfaction and commitment (Sawitri et al., 2016). Leadership style has a substantial impact on an organization's ability to maximize employee turnover (Daft, 2013; Keller, 2010). Therefore, this study is biblically supported as it aligns with God's plan for advancing His kingdom.

### ***Summary of the Literature Review***

The literature above indicated that there is a strong correlation between leadership behavior and employee retention as well as performance in an organization. The key discussion variable in the literature above included leadership behavior and their role in employee retention in an organization. Velu et al. (2017) explained leadership behavior as the way leadership functions such as directing, controlling, coordinating, and planning are being performed in an organization as well as how the leaders behave towards employees. From the review of the

literature, two main types of leadership behavior have been identified and discussed in detail. These include relationship-focused leadership and task-focused leadership behavior.

The major concern of leaders who are relationship-oriented is that of developing and building interpersonal relationships. Friedrich et al. (2016) suggested that leaders who are relationship-focused prefer two-way methods of communication with their direct report. Anderson and Sun (2017) suggested that the main characteristics of task-oriented leaders include clarifying responsibilities and roles, defining goals, performance measurement, and planning short term behavior periods. One important aspect of this statement is the understanding of how these types of leaders can motivate their staff and increase retention levels throughout the organization. Not limited to the above authors who have shed light to the two types of leadership behavior, much has been done to pinpoint various leadership behavior as experienced in many organizations today and how it affects employees' retention in an organization.

A key outcome reviewed above is staff retention. Aguenza and Som (2018) explained staff retention as the process of substantially keeping organizational staff as one of the strategic principles for organizational achievement. Olawale and Olanrewaju (2016) argued that financial rewards are the key determinant to employee turnover and retention rate. Aguenza and Som (2018) confirmed that motivational factors that are central in determining employee retention in an organization are job design and characteristics, leadership behavior, financial rewards and incentives, career development, work-life balance, and the general management of the organization. Cloutier et al. (2015) noted that transformational leadership is a significant factor in maximizing employee retention. Khalid et al. (2016) confirmed that low job satisfaction, low employee retention, low employee commitment in the job, the stress in the workplace, and

general poor performance of many employees in an organization are consequences of incompetent leadership in an organization.

Apart from the review of the key variables, the research adopted four major theories which form the basis of the research by supporting information obtained from the above-discussed variables. These include Herzberg's theory of motivation, transformational leadership theory, Maslow's hierarchy of needs model, and the attribution theory of leadership. Herzberg et al.'s theory of motivation (1959) explained some factors in the work environment that promote job satisfaction, while some other sets of factors cause dissatisfaction. Herzberg et al. concluded that job satisfaction and employee motivation are inseparable. Those factors that cause job satisfaction, consequently, allow employees to remain working for the organization for a long time. Factors like creating achievement opportunities, rewarding employees, creating opportunities for internal job promotions, providing development and training for employees to choose the positions they need inside an organization.

The personal attention that is offered by transformational leaders may create a strong relationship between organization managers and the workers hence promoting greater levels of employee retention. Maslow utilized his hierarchy of needs model to motivate his employees (Maslow, 1943). Maslow's model links to all human needs that human beings require for survival. Fallatah and Syed (2018) indicated that the basic needs of employees are the most motivating needs above others. The attribution theory deals with the formation of individual opinions about the reasons for events or observations (Mitchell et al., 1981).

Leadership behavior and staff retention is a highly significant issue of concern that requires attention in many organizations for improved organizational performance and staff retention. From the above literature review, it is evident that much research exists regarding

leadership behavior and organizational performance. It is equally notable that out of the many reviewed journals, articles, and books, few have tried to analyze the issue of staff retention in the organization, yet it is the key determining factor for organizational performance and staff retention. Despite the effort made, the literature indicates that there is still a challenge of staff retention in many organizations, which is attributed to the leadership behavior adopted by leaders in an organization.

### **Transition and Summary of Section 1**

In Section 1, a background to the problem of the lack of effective leadership relationships in organizations resulting in decreased employee retention was provided. A specific problem statement that identifies the potential issues that should be addressed was then discussed. The purpose of the research was presented along with the approved research questions which will be addressed. Within the conceptual framework, the specific leadership theories that will serve as the foundational theories for the study were introduced. The significance of the study and how it directly relates to the leadership behaviors and the impact on employee retention within the Houston, Texas manufacturing industry was examined. Biblical implications were offered, and the study included the relationship of the research to the field of leadership while providing an exhaustive review of leadership theories that support the study.

In moving forward to Section 2, a discussion of the applications of the literature review will take place. The development of a survey and interview questions will help maximize the collection of potential common themes. Within Section 2, the project, role of the research, participants, research method and design, collection, and analysis of data will all be addressed. Section 3 will include applications to professional practice, recommendations for action, recommendations for further study, reflections, and summary and study conclusions.

## **Section 2: The Project**

This section covers the different aspects of the study that examine the relationship between leadership behaviors and employee retention in the manufacturing industry in Houston, Texas. This section begins by discussing the role of the researcher and then defines the participants and sample population of the study. Following that, a discussion includes the research method and design and data collection process. The final section concludes with an analysis of the data and a discussion of reliability and validity.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore what leadership behaviors are effective in developing relationships with employees to support employee retention. Leadership behaviors can have a significant impact on employee retention outcomes (Rose & Raja, 2016; Sawitri et al., 2016). In addition, the study included an exploration of what leadership behaviors employees perceive as important for employee retention. The study addressed gaps in the literature that may provide insight as to which leadership behaviors are most effective for employee retention in the manufacturing industry. This larger problem was explored through an in-depth study of leadership behaviors and its effect on employee retention within the Houston, Texas manufacturing industry. The results of this study can potentially contribute to the overall body of knowledge relating to leadership behavior and employee retention within the manufacturing industry.

### **Role of the Researcher**

In multiple case studies, like other types of qualitative research, the researcher functions as the primary instrument for the purpose of data collection (Anney, 2017; Armstrong, 2016; Yin, 2014). Consequently, the researcher was the primary instrument for this study. First, the



researcher developed the questions for the interview process. Next, the researcher identified and contacted participants. The researcher also conducted interviews with participants. The researcher then coded the data from interviews in order to identify any themes that may be present. Finally, the researcher interpreted the results to determine to what degree the information correlated with the proposed research questions included in section one. In addition to these roles, the researcher has an obligation to conduct all research and data analysis in an ethical manner (Resnik, 2015). The researcher completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) to perform non-invasive research involving human subjects.

A relationship between the researcher and potential research participants can sometimes inadvertently place interpersonal relationships over objectivity in the research process and must be avoided to preserve research integrity (Payne & Payne, 2017). The researcher was not directly connected to the manufacturing industry in Houston, Texas, and did not have any prior relationship or contact with any potential members of the sample population. The researcher does have more than ten years in a managerial position. Even though the researcher has managerial experience, the research questions were crafted in a way that promotes open responses by participants and did not lead them towards any personal opinions or biases of the researcher. The researcher mitigated bias by member checking, transcript checking, interview protocol, and basing questions supported by sources in the literature review.

### **Participants**

The participants for this study included current managers from the Houston, Texas manufacturing industry. The criteria for selection included current managers, at least 21 years of age, that have successfully implemented successful strategies related to employee retention. Organizations were identified through local business publications and the Houston, Texas

chamber of commerce. The researcher utilized personal HR connections within the Houston, Texas manufacturing industry as an attempt to recruit participants. The HR connections were only contacted if they were in Houston, Texas, and were currently employed in the manufacturing industry. After initial contact was made and the HR rep agreed to move forward, a phone call was scheduled to discuss the details of the study. During the call, the researcher also explained that no identifying details of the organization or participants would be made known at any time during the research. During the survey portion, the researcher used a set of questions to confirm that the referral list does meet the eligible participant criteria.

Upon agreement from the HR manager, the researcher obtained an email list of potential participants from them, which served as the means for initial contact with the participants. The researcher utilized email communication and phone calls in order to establish a working relationship with survey participants. The researcher also met with the participants to explain the study and answer any questions. Participants' identifying information was kept confidential. The published study materials, reports, and notes did not include any information that would divulge the identity of participants. The researcher followed all ethical guidelines stipulated by Belmont. This included safeguarding the confidentiality of subjects via participant labeling and the collected data through password-protected files. No participants who are part of vulnerable populations such as children, military, or government employees were considered. The researcher also followed the core principles of respect for others, beneficence, and justice, as outlined by the Belmont Report.

Interviews were recorded and then transcribed. Transcripts were manually coded by the researcher to initially identify themes and facilitate data interpretation. NVivo software was utilized for coding purposes and theme identification. Interview transcripts and coding will be

maintained for three years on an IronKey H100 AES 256-bit encrypted industry-recognized password-protected hard drive. The hard drive is stored in a personal safe at the researcher's residence and is only accessible by the researcher. After three years, the researcher will destroy the files by utilizing HardWipe software, which prevents files from being recovered once deleted. In addition, participants were able to withdraw from the study at any time.

### **Research Method and Design**

Choosing the correct method and design is critical when conducting research (Curtis et al., 2016). The researcher must understand that different research methods are compatible with different situations, and it is important to know which method is suitable for use with a particular hypothesis or research question (Bansal, 2018; Mgeni & Nayak, 2016). If unsuitable research methods are chosen, it may render the research useless (Hammer & Pivo, 2017). The research design is also as equally important (Barczak, 2015). The research design carries an important influence on the reliability of the results attained and provides a solid base for the entire research (Mgeni & Nayak, 2016). The following sections will discuss the chosen method and design found to be most suitable for this research.

### ***Discussion of Method***

The chosen method for this research was qualitative. Creswell (2014) offered that qualitative research is an approach for understanding and examining the meaning individuals or groups attribute to behavioral phenomena. With the qualitative research method, a researcher can use a purposeful selection of the intended participants (Bansal, 2018). The ability to select particular participants potentially results in the gathering of the most pertinent information to understand the problem or research question (Creswell, 2014). For example, if the research revolves around management, choosing participants that are not managers would not be

beneficial (Bansal, 2018). Researchers using a qualitative method can potentially obtain details about personalities, human behaviors, and emotions that neither the quantitative or mixed-method research can match (Stake, 2010).

With the quantitative method, the approach for testing research questions takes place by examining relationships among variables (Creswell, 2014). Measurement of these variables consists of an analyzation of numerical data through the utilization of statistical procedures (Stake, 2010). Results from the quantitative method are numerical data (Easton, 2010). Consequently, data collection takes place in order to test the hypotheses (Barczak, 2015). Numerical data are not needed for this research, so consequently, the quantitative method is not needed.

With the mix method design, the researcher can also collect and analyze numerical data (Stake, 2010). Mixed method design includes characteristics of both quantitative and qualitative (Bansal, 2018). Even though the mixed methods approach may provide more credibility for the research triangulation, integrating the datasets through either convergent, explanatory, or exploratory design may be problematic as it relates to the resources available to complete this study.

When considering the possibility of the quantitative method and mixed methods, numerical data are not needed to address the research questions but rather the participant's specific feelings, opinions, and experiences. As a result, quantitative method and mixed methods are not the best choice. Therefore, the qualitative approach was the most suitable method for examining the relationship between leadership behaviors and employee retention in the manufacturing industry.

### *Discussion of Design*

The chosen design for this research was a multiple case study design. Case studies offer major advantages and flexibility because of the opportunity of moving back and forth between the diverse stages of research projects (Easton, 2010). Yin (2014) offered that a case study design involves the utilization of semi-structured questions. Creswell (2014) commented that a multiple case study is of value as it includes two or more contexts of the same phenomenon that potentially increases the validity of the study. Due to the value of gathering data from multiple contexts within the Houston, Texas manufacturing industry, the multiple case study design was selected.

A discussion is provided in this section regarding other designs taken into consideration for this research, such as phenomenological, ethnography, and narrative. These designs are all suitable for the qualitative method. However, the researcher must consider which design will be most applicable to their specific study (Bansal, 2018). Yin (2014) commented that phenomenological design tends to analyze groups of people who experience the same phenomenon. The phenomenological design is not a viable option because this approach is about opinion and subjective cultural lived experience of the participant instead of a subjective perspective. Yin (2014) offered that the main focus of ethnography correlates with the culture of a group. Since the main focus of this research is not on the culture of a group, ethnography is not a viable option.

The final design for consideration is the narrative research design. Creswell (2014) commented that with narrative research, the researcher studies the lives of individuals and asks those individuals to provide stories about their lives. Upon completion of the studies, a retelling of the information exists in a narrative chronology (Bansal, 2018). Since the focus of the

research data being gathered from manufacturing industry participants will be from an objective perspective on a business problem and will not focus on personal subjective life experiences, the narrative research design is not the best option. After careful consideration of multiple possible designs, the multiple case study was the most appropriate choice to explore the employees' perspectives relating to leadership behaviors that could potentially contribute to employee retention.

### ***Summary of Research Method and Design***

The method and design selected for this study was a qualitative approach and multiple case design. Qualitative research is an approach for understanding and examining the meaning individuals or groups attribute to behavioral phenomena (Creswell, 2014; Mgeni & Nayak, 2016). The purpose of this study was to explore the leadership behaviors that are effective in developing relationships with employees to support employee retention. The multiple case research design was most suitable for this study because adding an additional organizational context can potentially add data that would increase the validity of this study.

### **Population and Sampling**

For most research, being able to measure an entire population of interest is not realistic (Bansal, 2018; Boddy, 2016). Instead, researchers take a sampling of data from the total population of interest and apply analytical methods to that sample to generalize results back to the original, larger population. A purposive sample, selected for this study, is a non-probability sample that is selected based on characteristics of a population and the objective of the study (DeFeo, 2017). In the following sections, the population size, sampling method, sampling size, sampling frame, participant eligibility criteria, and relevance of characteristics for the selected sample will be discussed.

### ***Discussion of Population***

A population is the total set of information resources that are possibly relevant to addressing the research question or questions (Cleary et al., 2016). In this study, the criteria for participants were manufacturing industry managers in Houston, Texas, who are over the age of 21 and have been successful in employee retention. Purposive sampling is the best option for the necessary participants. A purposive sample is comprised of individuals that may contribute pertinent information to the subject of the study (DeFeo, 2017; Lewis, 2015). In a multiple case study, purposive sampling is found to be superior when compared to random sampling due to the increased quality of data (Barrat et al., 2017). Purposive sampling is recognized as appropriate for the selection of participants for qualitative studies that use interviews as the method of data collection (Cleary et al., 2016). With purposive sampling, researchers can choose the study participants that have first-hand knowledge about the research topic (DeFeo, 2017). It is for these reasons that the purpose sampling method was the most suitable for this study.

### ***Discussion of Sampling***

Purposive sampling was used for this research. With purposive sampling, participant selection is based on a predetermined set of attributes to qualify for being a part of the target population (Lewis, 2015). In general, qualitative studies require smaller sample sizes than their quantitative counterparts (Merriam, 2015). However, the researcher must make sure that enough participants have been chose to reach data saturation (Lewis, 2015). For this research, the researcher used purposeful sampling. The criteria for participants were manufacturing industry managers in Houston, Texas, who are over the age of 21 and were successful in supporting employee retention.

Many researchers recommend qualitative studies to include between 25 and 30 participants (Marshall et al., 2016). However, some suggest that data saturation may be reached with as few as five participants (Bansal, 2018; Boddy, 2016). According to Merriam (2015), data saturation can potentially be achieved with as few as five interviews. Creswell and Poth (2018) defined saturation as conducting interviews until no new data emerges. The underlying premise supporting saturation is the results of the study become generalizable to individuals that are outside the study population (Boddy, 2016). Based on these recommendations, the target sample of participants in this study was 25-30 and interviews were concluded once saturation was achieved.

### ***Summary of Population and Sampling***

In this study, the criteria for participants was manufacturing industry managers in Houston, Texas, who are over the age of 21 and were successful in employee retention. Purposive sampling was the best option for the necessary participants. The target number of participants in this study was 25-30. However, the researcher was aware that saturation may be reached with fewer interviews.

### **Data Collection**

Lewis (2015) stated data collection and analysis within qualitative research should persist until no new concepts or codes exist, demonstrating saturation. With qualitative data collection, the researcher can use interviews as a key role in the research gathered and present a narrative theme of leadership characteristics (Giltinane, 2016). Interviews for the study were conducted using a list of open-ended, semi-structured questions. If a response from a participant to a question elicits follow-up, a more in-depth question was posed that builds upon the initial



response by the interviewee to the open-ended question. The list of initial questions is available in Appendix B.

Interviews were used as the primary source of data collection for the study. Stake (2010) indicated interviews are used by qualitative researchers for a variety of purposes, including the acquisition of unique information possessed by the interviewee, accumulating an aggregation of information from multiple sources, and discovering a characteristic that previous researchers were unable to find earlier. Interviews were used as the primary source of data collection for the study.

### ***Instruments***

The researcher was the primary instrument for this research. Stake (2010) stated most qualitative researchers favor data or information that can be directly obtained by the researcher directly, in contrast to other types of data. Creswell and Poth (2018) indicated qualitative interviewing possesses challenges for the researcher by focusing on the mechanics of the interview itself. The questions administered to participants in a case study are oriented towards the support of the research question (Yin, 2014). The researcher used questions from the participant open-ended interview questions and, a copy is located in Appendix B.

According to Yin (2014), interviews consist of collecting data from verbal evidence obtained from case study participants. The researcher explored leadership styles and their impact on employee retention within the Houston, Texas manufacturing industry by utilizing the chosen interview questions. A list of seven preliminary questions were asked by the researcher with participants regarding leadership styles and their impact on employee retention.

An interview guide is a list of high-level topics that the researcher plans on covering in the interview along with specific research questions to be asked to participants (Giltinane, 2016).

When the researcher utilizes a research guide, they are helping to make sure that the same protocols and questions are being followed for each participant (Bansal, 2018). The interview guide contains the interview protocol, introductory statement, and consent form, located in Appendix A. A list of open-ended interview questions is also part of the interview guide and is located in Appendix B. Atwood (2018) suggested that the entire interview process is designed to take approximately 30-45 minutes for each participant. Creswell and Poth (2018) described interview questions in qualitative research data collection as sub-questions within the research that are meant to support the primary research questions. The interview questions were designed to support responses by the participants to explore the impact leadership styles have on employee retention in the Houston, Texas manufacturing industry.

### ***Data Collection Techniques***

The researcher collected data from participants utilizing open-ended semi-structured interview questions regarding leadership behaviors as they relate to employee retention. A recruitment letter containing prescreening identifiers, available in Appendix C, was emailed to the participating HR manager, and distributed to all managers within the company. Eligible candidates for the research were at least 21 years of age and employed in a leadership position which may potentially impact employee retention. The researcher utilized an email pre-screening process to certify potential participants meet the criteria of having leadership behavior that impacted employee retention. All participants who elected to take part in the survey read, signed, and dated the consent form located in Appendix A. As indicated in the form, participants were provided information which explains that they will not be compensated for their participation and they may voluntarily withdraw at any point of the process.

The data were collected through interviews conducted via email, video conferencing, or in person when possible. For interviews conducted in person, both the researcher and the participant utilized confidentiality by being unaccompanied during the interview. In qualitative research, reliability assures that other researchers will achieve the same results when duplicating the methods just as the original researcher has done (Bansal, 2018). To establish reliability, researchers employ methods such as member and transcript checking to make sure the transcribed narrative is consistent with intent of intent and experience of the participant (Sigstad, 2014). The researcher utilized transcript checking first to confirm the accuracy of what was recorded. Transcript checking is when a qualitative researcher sends a copy of the interview transcript to each respective participant, so they can review the document (Bansal, 2018). This is done to confirm participants have an opportunity to review what they said, add more information if they want to, and to edit what they said. Once initial questions were completed, the researcher followed up with a phone call to the participant to validate the accuracy of the transcript. During this phone call, the participants provided clarifying information and the researcher asked if participants have anything further to add. The researcher then conducted member checking. Member checking is the process in which the researcher verifies the recorded information accurately depicts the intentions of the participant (Lewis, 2015). Throughout the interviews, the researcher validated the information interpreted by the researcher is accurate by conducting member checking. If any new information was provided during interviews, the researcher then performed another round of member checking to confirm the new data are accurately transcribed and interpreted. This supported data saturation.

The researcher did not begin collecting data until given approval by IRB. Once approval was given, each interview lasted approximately 30-45 minutes and was recorded through an app

on a smartphone called 'TapeACall Pro,' which generated a digital file for each interview. All digital interviews were initially manually transcribed and coded. The researcher conducted interviews with participants until saturation was reached by following main interview questions and asking clarifying questions as needed.

### ***Data Organization Techniques***

The researcher has an obligation to conduct all research and data analysis in an ethical manner (Resnik, 2015). The researcher completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) to perform non-invasive research involving human subjects. Participants' identifying information was kept confidential as the researcher used a numbering system of P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5. Once the number system was completed, participant names were deleted leaving only the participant numbers. The published study materials, reports, and notes did not include any information that would divulge the identity of participants. The researcher followed all ethical guidelines stipulated by Belmont. This included safeguarding the confidentiality of subjects via participant labeling and the collected data through password-protected files. No participants who are part of protected populations identified by the Belmont Report such as children, military, or government employees were considered. The researcher also followed the core principles of respect for others, beneficence, and justice, as outlined by the Belmont Report along with complying with all ethical guidelines.

The researcher kept a journal for research notes. Resnik (2015) offered that the researcher can benefit by keeping a journal to later support analysis. The researcher was the only individual with access to the journal. The journal was kept in a safe when not being utilized by the researcher. The safe was kept in the researcher's residential closet and was locked at all times until accessed by the researcher. Only the researcher had the combination to the safe's lock

which helped provide confidentiality of participants and integrity of data. All digital files gathered from participants were stored on the researcher's hard drive in a password protected folder. Once transcribed, the researcher utilized Microsoft Word to organized and store notes. The researcher utilized a number and date system to organize notes. Any additional documents collected from websites or internal sources was kept in a password protected Microsoft Excel workbook. During the process, all participant identifiers were removed in advance of submission of the potential participants eliminating the chance of unintentional disclosure of sensitive data. Once an interview was completed, recorded digitally, and transcribed, each transcription was entered into NVivo software located on the researcher's computer. Researchers who are familiarized with digital storage of ongoing research should make their reports electronic (Stake, 2010). This qualitative analysis program processes large volumes of data, creating emerging themes and codes for research findings. The NVivo software and the computer terminal belonging to the researcher were both password-protected.

The researcher also kept paper logs consisting of hand-written notes and coding information for each participant. Stake (2010) recommended keeping a log as a hard copy backup to data storage. The completed notes were kept in a locked safe in the researcher's office. Interview transcripts and coding will then be maintained for three years using IronKey H100 AES 256-bit encryption password-protected hard drive. The hard drive is stored in a personal safe at the researcher's residence and is only accessible by the researcher. After three years, the researcher will destroy the files by utilizing HardWipe software which prevents files from being recovered once deleted. Confidentiality was maintained at all times by the researcher during the coding process.

### ***Summary of Data Collection***

Data were initially collected through interviews of participants via phone or video calls. Each call was recorded, digitalized into a file, and then transcribed. The transcribed data were then entered into a qualitative analysis computer program, NVivo, which generates codes and themes to create new research data. The researcher kept paper logs as well, as a supplement and back up to the digital files. All files, digital and non-digital, were created with complete confidentiality, using numbers as identifiers (i.e., Participant 1) to differentiate between the interviews. Finally, all data were securely stored. Digital data were kept in password-protected files on a password-protected computer hard drive, and paper logs were kept in a locked safe in the researcher's office.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis is the process of inspecting, cleansing, transforming and modeling data with the goal of discovering useful information, informing conclusion and supporting decision-making (Creswell & Poth, 2018). For any research, data analysis is important as it provides an explanation of various theories, concepts, methods and frameworks used (Stake, 2010). In the following data analysis section, the researcher discusses the software and process used for coding. In addition, the researcher discusses the process in which themes were identified.

### ***Coding Process***

The goal of this study was to identify the specific leadership behaviors and styles support employee retention within the Houston, Texas manufacturing industry. The researcher conducted the data analysis with a comprehensive process to categorize the data gathered. All data gathered from the interviews were entered into NVivo qualitative data software program. Yin (2014) cited NVivo as a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software tool, converting text and other

records into data that can be coded, creating an effective starting point in beginning an analytic strategy by searching for patterns, concepts, or insights that contribute to the study. The researcher used NVivo software to support the coding process. This process began with a manual analysis of all research field notes and transcripts in which words were initially coded and entered into NVivo by the researcher, with the understanding that the data will likely produce additional codes through the software not considered previously. Once analyzed, the original and new codes were compared to support validation. The next step was to group common codes and label them topically while noting frequencies of repeating terms. The completed data provided initial themes. According to Stake (2010), coding is a customary characteristic of qualitative analysis and research, sorting the data sets by theme, topic, and issues relevant to the study. The researcher focused on intercoder reliability. Campbell et al. (2018) explained that intercoder reliability is where the code schemes created for a specific study are reproducible by different coders highlighting interviews that are semi-structured.

The researcher ran all data collected from field notes, interviews, and member checks through NVivo. Once the data were coded and grouped topically, it was analyzed for any new emerging themes. The researcher utilized a triangulation method to analyze the data from all sources and further analyzed the themes that emerged. Triangulation, according to Stake (2010), helps to understand meanings, become more confident in the evidence itself, and provide an additional layer of checking of the research. After interpretations were made from the coded data and triangulated for credibility, the researcher then looked for viable themes as to the impact leadership behaviors had on employee retention. The researcher then compared the emerged themes with the constructs from the conceptual theories. Following that, an analysis was repeated with theories, models, and other content from the literature review.

### ***Summary of Data Analysis***

Data analysis is the process of inspecting, cleansing, transforming, and modeling data with the goal of discovering useful information, informing conclusion and supporting decision-making (Creswell & Poth, 2018). For any research, data analysis is important as it provides an explanation of various theories, concepts, methods, and frameworks used (Stake, 2010). The researcher will compile all data collected and input the data into NVivo qualitative data analysis software to triangulate data by comparing the identified themes from each source. Basic coding will also be entered into NVivo by the researcher, with the understanding that the data will likely produce additional codes through the software not considered previously.

### **Reliability and Validity**

The researcher utilized established procedures to support the reliability and validity of this case study. Creswell and Poth (2018) offered that researchers can utilize detailed field notes, use high-quality recording tools, meticulously transcribe all aspects of the files, and use computer-aided software to assist in data analyzation, as means for supporting reliability. The researcher utilized these suggestions throughout the study. Yin (2014) measured validity internally, where the strength of the correlations made by the case itself is determined by a lack of false relationships and a denial of a competing theory. The researcher incorporated member checking and interview protocol. The researcher did not use pilot test as it was not needed. Accordingly, the researcher developed the following strategic approaches in the case study to address both reliability and validity.

### ***Reliability***

The results of the case study were verified for reliability. Yin (2014) offered that reliability is the demonstration of the operations within the study, where results are duplicated.



Often, reliability refers to the constancy of responses to data sets encompassing multiple coders (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The process of coding is customary in research and qualitative analysis, which includes sorting data by topic, issues, and unique themes identified in the study (Stake, 2010). The researcher keyed the data, gathered through interviews, into NVivo software to identify reoccurring themes. The researcher looked for any additional codes and themes of employee retention, based on the results from the data processed by NVivo.

To further certify reliability within the study, the researcher created an interview protocol. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), interview guides within qualitative studies, should include between five and seven open-ended questions to ask and collect responses from the interview participants. The interview questions were carefully developed based on both the literature review included in this study and constructs from the conceptual framework. The researcher within the interview guide, also utilized field notes. Yin (2014) described field notes as the most commonly used tool of a researcher, used for interviews, observations, or documentation, and can be handwritten, typed, or electronically recorded. To establish consistency and reliability, the researcher asked all the participants of the study the same questions located in the interview guide in an identical manner and recorded the transcribed results in a single database. All handwritten field notes were kept in a separate log and stored exclusive of the digital results. The researcher keyed the data, gathered through interviews, into NVivo software to look for similarities through coding and looked for any additional codes and themes of employee retention, based on the results from the data processed by NVivo. Furthermore, the researcher utilized an interview protocol, field notes, and asked all participants of the study the same questions located in the interview guide in an identical manner and

recorded the transcribed results in a single database. All the steps mentioned within this section are supportive of reliability.

### *Validity*

Validity is the extent to which a concept, conclusion, or measurement is well-founded and likely corresponds accurately to the real world (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Further, validity is a representation of how accurate the data fits participants' experience with the studied phenomenon (Morse, 2015). To provide the maximum level of validity, the researcher must establish a rapport with participants and instill confidence that the outcome will accurately represent the statements gathered during the interview process (McGrane et al., 2018). The researcher built rapport with participants to help promote more accurate responses.

In qualitative research, the four elements that support validity are: dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability (Guzys et al., 2015). Member checking is one option a researcher can utilize to assure validity is supported (McGrane et al., 2018). Member checking involves having the research participants review the transcripts of their interview to validate accuracy is maintained with respect to their statements and experiences (Koelsch, 2013). Yin (2014) suggested repeating data analysis multiple times until all emergent themes are identified. Based on Yin's suggestion, the researcher will repeat data analysis until all emergent themes are identified. Triangulation is the process of analyzing research questions from multiple sources (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Tugwell & Knottnerus, 2015). According to Stake (2010), triangulation is used by researchers to understand meanings, become more confident in the evidence itself, and provide an additional layer of validating the research results. After interpretations were made from the coded data and triangulated for credibility, the researcher then analyzed the data for viable themes correlating with leadership behaviors and employee

retention. Stake (2010) outlined triangulation as substantiating evidential meanings, suggesting looking and look again at the results, and too look and listen from multiple vantage points. Participant feedback was solicited by the researcher from each of the participants as means of supporting validity through member checking. All documents and data obtained during the research were analyzed for common themes as a means of supporting triangulation.

One area supported by transferability that examines to what degree that data from the study of the same sample can be generalized to a larger population is known as external validity (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). To assure the overall transferability of research finding, the process is similar to that employed to assure internal validity. To make sure sufficient information is made available for other researchers to assess the generalization of study findings, a description of the phenomenon and study participants should be made available for review (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013).

The researcher continued to conduct follow-up questions during the interview process with participants until no new data emerged and saturation was reached. Creswell and Poth (2018) defined saturation as the point in which all categories being researched provide no new information as to the understanding within the group. The researcher supported data saturation with several rounds of member checking until no new data emerged. Once no new themes emerged from the data compiled from the interviews, the researcher concluded the interview process and began to present the findings of the research.

### ***Summary of Reliability and Validity***

To promote the reliability of the case study, the researcher formulated an interview protocol to maintain consistency within the interview segment. The data were then collected, and the files analyzed within the concepts outlined in the study, which include the literature review,

the research questions, and the conceptual framework. The researcher also used a triangulation strategy to substantiate the data accumulated during the study, to produce thick and rich descriptions of the researched matter. Once a saturation point was reached during the research process, the interviews were concluded, and the summaries of the data were prepared.

### **Transition and Summary of Section 2**

Section 2 of the study outlined how the research for the case study was to take place. The researcher summarized his role in conducting interviews, including who to interview, how they were chosen, what screening measures were to take place, and how the interviews were to transpire. The researcher discussed the method and design of the study, and why a qualitative method with a single-case study design was chosen. Data collection techniques were examined, and included the sampling practices, data collection tools, hardware and software used, and data analysis software utilized. Finally, the researcher reviewed the reliability and validity tests administered to reinforce the tenets of the study in an effort to maintain consistency and replication.

The researcher in Section 3 will provide an overview of the study, accompanied by a comprehensive presentation of the findings based on the analysis of the collected data. Once the themes are determined from the data analysis the researcher will then use Section 3 of the study to present the application of leadership behavior in the manufacturing industry to assist with employee retention. The researcher will then present recommendations for action based on the discoveries within the research and provide steps for actions to be taken. Finally, the researcher will offer suggestions for further exploration and provide conclusions of the study.

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

In Section 3, the researcher provides an overview of the study discussing how and why the study addressed leadership styles and their impact on employee retention. A key aspect of Section 3 includes the presentation of findings in which the researcher identified themes and their relevance to the conceptual framework and content discussed in the literature review. Next, the researcher assesses how and why the findings are relevant to addressing the research questions. The researcher then provides recommendations and on how leaders can potentially develop relationships with employees to support employee retention. Lastly, the researcher provides recommendations for future studies followed by the researcher's reflection on his personal experience while conducting this research.

#### **Overview of the Study**

This study was conducted to explore what impact leadership behaviors had on employee retention within the Houston, Texas manufacturing industry. The research involved collecting data pertaining to leadership styles from 20 managers in a leadership role of the selected Houston, Texas manufacturing organizations. The first research question the researcher utilized to guide the research was: What leadership behaviors are effective in developing relationships with manufacturing employees in Houston, Texas to support employee retention? The second question used was: What leadership behaviors do manufacturing employees in Houston, Texas perceive as important for employee retention?

Semi-structured interview questions and internal documents were used as the primary techniques for collecting data. These interviews were conducted between the researcher and each of the 20 study participants on a one-on-one basis. Interviews took place via video-chat and phone calls in a secluded area to ensure privacy. Each interview lasted approximately 15-20

minutes. Participants responded to a series of open-ended questions. Each question was asked in sequential order. The interview protocol consisted of asking question one, then two all the way through each question was followed for each interview.

The researcher performed member checking to validate the information collected by the researcher. Member checking involves having the research participants review the transcripts of their interview to validate accuracy is maintained with respect to their statements and experiences (Koelsch, 2016). The transcripts were manually coded as well as uploaded to NVivo 12 software. In order to maintain confidentiality, participants were assigned pseudonyms; P1 through P20. The researcher used the modified Van Kaam approach to collect and analyze the data to identify emergent themes. Using this process, words were coded, themes were then identified, analyzed, categorized, and then entered into nodes in the NVivo software. The process of categorizing themes into nodes, was conducive for the researcher to analyze the data in order to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of the participants.

The researcher also gathered data from internal documents from each organization. The documents consisted of performance reviews and exit interviews. Participants were available for any follow-up questions or clarification regarding the document data. Forty total documents were utilized for data collection with 20 being performance reviews and 20 being exit interviews. The internal documents were manually coded as well as uploaded to NVivo 12 software. In order to maintain confidentiality, documents were assigned pseudonyms; Document 1 through Document 40. The researcher used the modified Van Kaam approach to collect and analyze the data to identify emergent themes. Using this process, words were coded, themes were then identified, analyzed, categorized, and then entered into nodes in the NVivo software. The researcher was able to triangulate themes from interviews and internal documents for final results.

### **Themes/Perceptions**

The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study was to explore the leadership behaviors that are effective in developing relationships with employees to support employee retention. The researcher used semi-structured interviews to better understand the personal experiences of participants concerning leadership behaviors and the relationship to employee retention. The study was conducted by interviewing 20 leaders in the Houston, Texas manufacturing industry. Prior to beginning the interview, each participant granted consent by signing and returning to the researcher a consent form that included information about the study as well as steps to withdraw if so desired.

The researcher's role during the study was to conduct interviews, record, and transcribe each participant's response to the interview and open-ended questions, and then verify the findings by member checking. After each interview was transcribed from an audio recording, the researcher used the modified van Kaam method to provide an objective approach for the analysis of the data. Once the initial step of coding in the analysis was completed, the data were uploaded to NVivo 12 for further analysis.

To ensure accuracy of the data, the researcher compared the transcripts with handwritten notes. Member checking was also used to ensure accuracy of the interpretation of the findings. Using this approach, the researcher provided each participant with an account of the interpretations from each interview. Each of the 20 participants reviewed their respective transcripts and confirmed the data and interpretations for accuracy. The results addressed the research questions as they related to leadership behaviors and their impact on employee retention in the Houston, Texas manufacturing industry.

## **Presentation of the Findings**

The findings from the study were obtained from interviews with 20 managers in a leadership role of the selected Houston, Texas manufacturing organizations. The conceptual framework was the backbone of the analysis and the resulting themes supported answers for the primary research questions. The themes were analyzed as they related to constructs from the conceptual framework and other theories as discussed in the literature review.

## **Emergent Themes**

The emergent themes from this study include empathy, listening, and employee development and are relevant to the effects of leadership behavior in regard to employee retention. The findings of the study align with the conceptual framework outlined earlier in the paper and will be reflected in the emergent theme categories below. The participants in the study frequently mentioned terms positively associated with the Herzberg's theory of motivation, hygiene factors, and transformational leadership.

### ***Emergent Theme 1: Empathy***

Of the 20 interviews that were conducted, 16 participants indicated that when empathy was evident in their communication it was influential in employee retention. These participants also agreed that empathy helps drive changes within the organization. These findings align with the conclusion of Favour (2016) that empathy in leadership for one's direct employees serves to increase motivation and retention. P2 stated that those directly reporting to them appreciate genuine concern for their wellbeing and know they can count on them for guidance. P9 expressed that subordinates have identified empathy as a main reason for staying with the organization.



Herzberg's (1959) theory of motivation focuses primarily on motivators and hygiene factors including empathy towards subordinates that can impact employee satisfaction in the workplace. Herzberg's theory of motivation focuses primarily on motivators and hygiene factors. Liden et al. (2014) suggested that effective leaders show genuine empathy for their direct reports. Empirical evidence has found that empathy serves to build mutual trust between leaders and followers. Empathy compels employees to be more receptive to direction (Dinh et al., 2014). Multiple participants in this study have indicated that empathy towards their subordinates had an impact on the employee's decision to continue working for an organization.

Empathy shown by leaders is thought to produce work environments that are more enjoyable for employees (Rahman & Castelli, 2013). In facilities managed by empathetic leaders, employee perspectives are better understood (Muna & Zennie, 2011). Rahman and Castelli (2013) posited that empathy is essential for leaders as they strive to retain employees with diverse backgrounds and skills. It is imperative that leaders possess or gain empathy skills to promote behaviors that improve employee retention within organizations (Dabke, 2016).

When leaders employ genuine empathy, direct reports perceive them as more effective (Dunn, 2015). When leaders have empathy for others, they tend to be more flexible and willing to listen to the concerns of others. Further, leaders who possess empathy also have more positive attitudes towards change initiatives enhancing a greater buy-in from direct reports (Rahman & Castelli, 2013). As organizations increase in size and expand across borders, it is inevitable that leaders will continue to encounter individual that are dissimilar in culture and custom to their own inherent nature. Empathy is one way for leaders to connect with these employees. When this connection occurs, empathy influence motivation, inspiration, and loyalty (Feldman, 2016). Each of these characteristics has been found to positively impact employee retention.

The findings of this study suggest that managers in leadership roles that possess empathy are more pleasant to work for. These findings are consistent with Sarkus' (2014) conclusion that empathy compels employees to become more dedicated to their employers and are less likely to leave. In addition, Sarkus (2014) concluded that employees that work for empathetic leaders are more likely to buy in to initiatives proposed by their manager. Perhaps more interesting is the alignment with the findings of DeFeo (2017) which concludes that a lack of empathy amongst business leaders, results in disengagement, lack of trust, and lack of employee retention.

To reiterate, 16 of the 20 participants indicated that subordinates communicated empathy in a leader as a major influence on their retention. The findings also suggest that empathy helps drive changes within the organization. Multiple participants in this study have indicated that empathy towards their direct reports has had an impact on the employee's decision to continue working for an organization.

### ***Emergent Theme 2: Listening***

Of the 20 participants included in the study, 17 referenced listening as a key to employee retention. In line with empathy, effective leaders listen to input from employees at all levels of the hierarchy. Gill (2015) found that leaders that listen to their employees create enhanced employee engagement. P18 suggests that when employees know leaders promote open communication and listen to concerns, the employees feel more connected and willing to share ideas. P9 explains that employees have shared one main reason they continue to work for their current organization is having a leader who is willing to listen to their input. Transformational leadership puts more emphasis on listening and valuing the feedback from direct reports and gives the followers the morale and spirit to commit to shared goals and objectives of the organization or a unit of the organization (Lawton & Páez, 2015; Tan & Waheed, 2017).

In addition, leaders that actively seek input from employee's gain buy in from those individuals (Mishra et al., 2016). In situations where leaders listen to input from employees, the outcome is those employees are likely to stay with that company longer (Lloyd et al., 2015). Patterson (2016) opined that listening is the single most important skill that a leader can possess. Patterson (2016) continued by stating effective listening skills can compensate for leaders that are deficient in other areas.

When leaders listen to what their employees are saying, the engagement and retention within the organization increases (Roche, 2017). In addition, to develop enhanced listening skills training managers have been found to enhance understanding when in multicultural settings (Parks, 2015). In manufacturing environments, developing leaders to be better listeners has been found to enhance productivity and increase employee retention (Rao, 2014).

Consistent with the findings of van den Heuvel et al. (2017), study participants indicated that by taking the time to listen to their direct reports they have gained buy in and commitment at many levels of the organization. In addition, study participants indicated employee retention is enhanced when manufacturing leaders listen to their employees when determining how best to address opportunities and threats. Further, study participants indicated there are clear negative effects on employee retention when leaders fail to listen to employees. This indication is also consistent with previous study findings of Luthans (2017).

To reiterate, 17 of the 20 participants referenced listening as a key to employee retention. In line with empathy, effective leaders listen to input from employees at all levels of the hierarchy. Transformational leadership puts more emphasis on listening and valuing the feedback from direct reports and gives the followers the morale and spirit to commit to shared goals and objectives of the organization or a unit of the organization (Lawton & Páez, 2015; Tan &

Waheed, 2017). Study participants indicated employee retention is enhanced when manufacturing leaders listen to their employees when determining how best to address opportunities and threats and indicated there are clear negative effects on employee retention when leaders fail to listen to employees

### ***Emergent Theme 3: Employee Development***

Seventeen of the 20 participants referenced employee development as an important factor in employee retention. P1 explained that employees have expressed thankfulness for development opportunities. P10 offered that direct reports have communicated that they would have found another organization to work for if it were not for the development opportunities they have been offered. P14 offers that employee development is very high on the list when considering retention within the organization. Stello (2018) argued that motivation consists of two unrelated dimensions, which include job-related motivation features that encourage development and growth and job-related hygiene factors that prevent dissatisfaction but not enhancing the development or growth of the employees. Over the past decade, transformation leadership has been one of the serious discussion topics in leadership literature (Metcalf & Benn, 2016; Shin & Zhou, 2016; Sung & Choi, 2016). According to Price and Weiss (2018), inspirational individuals with vision and mission can achieve greater things from his or her followers.

When looking to maximize employee retention, it is important for leaders to ensure employees have the necessary skills to implement and sustain the desired state of the organization (Luthans, 2017). However, employee development severs to accomplish more than just the development of new skills. According to Diamantidis and Chatzoglou (2019), employee development programs signal to employees the level of commitment an organization has for the

individual. Leaders can have a positive impact on employee retention through formal training programs and informal, everyday interactions (Akdol & Arikboga, 2017).

Training and development programs also increase job enrichment for employees (Gill, 2015). Job enrichment can often increase the fulfillment employees receive. This fulfillment is done by enhancing the level of autonomy, an increase in skill variety, and redesigning job assignments (Lam et al., 2016). Through the use of employee development programs, employees become more motivated, committed, and more likely to stay with the organization (Gill, 2015). Employers that are engaged with the development of employees are less likely to lose those employees to organizations where employee development is not as important (Akdol & Arikboga, 2017).

The concept that employee development leads to increased employee retention as the employees are more committed and motivated is consistent with the findings of Keevy and Perumal (2014). Employees with well thought out career development plans seek organizations that encourage employee development (Keevy & Perumal, 2014). This fact relates back to Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory as employee development programs enhance motivation (Gupta et al., 2014).

To reiterate, 17 of the 20 participants cited employee development as an important factor in employee retention. When looking to maximize employee retention, it is important for leaders to ensure employees have the necessary skills to implement and sustain the desired state of the organization (Luthans, 2017). Through the use of employee development programs, employees become more motivated, committed, and more likely to stay with the organization (Gill, 2015). Employers that are engaged with the development of employees are less likely to lose those

employees to organizations where employee development is not as important (Akdol & Arikboga, 2017).

### ***Relationship of Themes to Research Questions***

The findings suggest that the themes of empathy, listening, and employee development could potentially have a significant role in how leadership behaviors impact employee retention in the Houston, Texas manufacturing sector. Every interview participant expressed a desire to remain with their current employer because of the relationships with direct reports and the organizational culture. Furthermore, all of the themes identified were analyzed in the literature review and also suggested to some degree a correlation in supporting employee retention. The themes identified also correlated with Herzberg's theory of motivation. Herzberg's (1959) theory of motivation focuses primarily on motivators and hygiene factors including empathy towards subordinates that can impact employee satisfaction in the workplace. Herzberg's theory of motivation focuses primarily on motivators and hygiene factors. Liden et al. (2014) suggested that effective leaders show genuine empathy for their direct reports. Transformational leadership includes behavior such as listening which is applicable in regard to valuing feedback from direct reports and supports the inclusion of followers in shared goals and objectives of the organization (Lawton & Páez, 2015; Tan & Waheed, 2017). Patterson (2016) opined that listening is the single most important skill that a leader can possess. Consistent with the findings of van den Heuvel et al. (2017), the findings of this study indicated that the leaders should take time to listen to their direct reports to support buy in and commitment at many levels of the organization. The concept that employee development leads to increased employee retention as the employees are more committed and motivated is consistent with the findings of Keevy and Perumal (2014). They suggest that employees with well thought out career development plans seek organizations

that encourage employee development (Keevy & Perumal, 2014). Career development also relates to Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory as employee development programs enhance motivation (Gupta et al., 2014).

### ***Summary of the Findings***

Three themes emerged from this study that correlate with the impact of leadership styles and behaviors. The themes are as follow: empathy, listening, and employee development. When considered together, these themes suggest that specific leadership behaviors have an effect on employee retention in the Houston, Texas manufacturing industry. Of the 20 interviews that were conducted, 16 participants indicated that when empathy was evident in their communication it was influential in employee retention. The findings of this study suggest that managers in leadership roles that possess empathy are more pleasant to work for. Of the 20 participants included in the study, 17 referenced listening as a key to employee retention. Participants also indicated there are clear negative effects on employee retention when leaders fail to listen to employees. Seventeen of the 20 participants referenced employee development as an important factor in employee retention. The concept that employee development leads to increased employee retention as the employees are more committed and motivated is consistent with the findings of Keevy and Perumal (2014). This assessment of findings comes from cross-referencing the themes of this study with leadership behaviors that have been shown by other studies to be effective at facilitating employee retention.

### **Applications to Professional Practice**

The findings of this study could be used by leaders to improve the understanding of leadership behaviors and their impact on employee retention which in turn could be used to develop improved employee retention support. Determining the best leadership behaviors to

positively impact employee retention is a highly desirable topic for organizations and leaders (Patterson, 2016). The type of leadership behavior embraced has a direct impact on employee retention (Mauri, 2017). Conversely, when organizations employ leaders with behaviors that are not a good fit for the company or subordinates, these leaders have the capacity to negatively impact employee retention (Panaccio et al., 2015). The findings from this study suggest there is evidence of the efficacy of leadership behavior and its effect on employee retention in the manufacturing industry.

Nenonen et al. (2017) explained that organizations can benefit from incorporating findings of academic research. The themes in the previous section provide organizations and leaders in the manufacturing sector could provide insight on leadership behaviors which can have a positive impact on employee retention. Understanding these themes could potentially be used by leadership to determine which behaviors are more effective regarding employee retention. In addition, these findings potentially increase the existing body of knowledge on past research performed on leadership behaviors and employee retention. Organizational leaders have the ability to choose the types of leaders they want (Linden et al., 2014). As corporate leaders in the manufacturing sector gain knowledge of the efficacy of leadership behaviors and their impact on employee retention, they can begin to recruit and develop leaders that embrace these types of behaviors (Tschohl, 2017). The results of this study and themes that emerged are potentially relevant to leadership behaviors and their impact on employee retention.

### **Recommendations for Action**

The study focused on the leadership behaviors and their impact on employee retention. Understanding the leadership behaviors that have a positive impact on employee retention involves considering a multitude of factors. The findings of this study could help organizations



that are faced with such a challenge. The researcher recommends that leaders in the manufacturing industry use these study findings to strengthen their approach to employee retention as it relates to leadership behaviors. Organizations should consider the relevance of these findings and help develop behaviors that support employee retention.

The findings of this study impacts, employees, managers, and leaders in the manufacturing sector. As leaders in the manufacturing sector embrace specific leadership behaviors, it will become evident that certain behaviors have a greater impact on employee retention than others (Suwaryo et al., 2015). Leaders should consider the application of empathy, listening, and employee development when looking to make a positive impact on employee retention. Empirical evidence has found that empathy serves to build mutual trust between leaders and followers. Empathy compels employees to be more receptive to direction (Dinh et al., 2014). Empathy shown by leaders is thought to produce work environments that are more enjoyable for employees (Rahman & Castelli, 2013). Leaders should consider practicing empathy towards their direct reports frequently. Transformational leadership puts more emphasis on listening and valuing the feedback from subordinates and gives the followers the morale and spirit to commit to shared goals and objectives of the organization or a unit of the organization (Lawton & Páez, 2015; Tan & Waheed, 2017). When leaders listen to what their employees are saying, the engagement and retention within the organization increases (Roche, 2017). It is recommended that leaders take time to listen and encourage open communication from those that report directly to them. Stello (2018) argued that motivation consists of two unrelated dimensions, which include job-related motivation features that encourage development and growth and job-related hygiene factors that prevent dissatisfaction but not enhancing the development or growth of the employees. According to Diamantidis and Chatzoglou (2019),

employee development programs signal to employees the level of commitment an organization has for the individual. Organizations should promote employee development programs when looking to make a positive impact on employee retention. In addition, the findings of this study can assist leaders when assessing the applicability of leadership behaviors when dealing with employee retention. Further, leaders can use these findings to develop behaviors that instill a culture that promotes employee retention. In order to disseminate these findings, organizations and leaders can use industry journals, workshops, and academic research journals.

### **Recommendations for Further Study**

An examination of the literature suggests there is a gap relating to leadership behavior and their impact on employee retention in the Houston, Texas manufacturing industry. This study used a small sample size and a small geographic area. It is possible that vast differences exist when comparing manufacturing managers in other parts of the United States. For example, this study focused on local leadership in the Houston, Texas area. Future study could focus on corporate leadership behaviors. In addition, this study was limited to manufacturing leaders in the Houston, Texas manufacturing industry. Further research could be done using other leadership theories and constructs to further explore the relationship of leadership behavior and employee retention.

Further researchers could employ a quantitative or mixed methods approach to this problem. Such a study would seek to rank factors from this study and could allow organizational leaders in the manufacturing industry to develop an optimal solution to determining which leadership behaviors can impact employee retention. Additional findings arrived at through studies such as these would increase the overall body of information allowing for greater insight to employee retention in the manufacturing sector.

**Reflections**

During the process, the researcher had an opportunity to interact with the study participants and participate in insightful conversation via phone calls or web-conference. The majority of participants were eager to participate in the study and were happy to contribute their experiences. There were a few that declined the opportunity to let their perceptions be known. Perspective participants that chose not to participate expressed concerns of the possibility of retribution.

The researcher does have more than ten years in a managerial position. Even though the researcher has managerial experience, the research questions were crafted in a way that promoted open responses by participants and did not lead them towards any personal opinions or biases of the researcher. The researcher was surprised by the three emergent themes. While empathy, listening, and employee development have always been considered important, the researcher never realized the potential impact these leadership behaviors could have on employee retention. The researcher has direct interaction with many leaders on a daily basis and plans to stress these themes during trainings. The researcher also feels that the results from this study may help foster employee retention throughout the remainder of his career.

**Summary and Study Conclusions**

The finding of this doctoral project addressed the gap in the current body of literature regarding the efficacy of leadership behaviors and their impact on employee retention. Prior studies completed on similar topics were focused on other industries, other sectors of manufacturing, or failed to examine leadership behaviors and their impact on employee retention. The consensus from the participants is that leadership behavior had the ability to create an atmosphere that is conducive to employee retention.

The findings also suggest that organizational leaders would benefit by understanding that all forms of leadership behaviors are not equally effective in all situations. Certain types of leadership behaviors are better suited than others when dealing with employee retention (Graham et al., 2015). Finally, the findings of this study could be useful to leaders that seek to understand which leadership behaviors have an impact employee retention.

The findings suggest that the themes of empathy, listening, and employee development could potentially have a significant role in how leadership behaviors impact employee retention in the Houston, Texas manufacturing sector. Furthermore, all of the themes identified were analyzed in the literature review and also suggested to some degree a correlation in supporting employee retention. The themes identified also correlated with Herzberg's theory of motivation. Herzberg's (1959) theory of motivation focuses primarily on motivators and hygiene factors including empathy towards subordinates that can impact employee satisfaction in the workplace. Herzberg's theory of motivation focuses primarily on motivators and hygiene factors. Liden et al. (2014) suggested that effective leaders show genuine empathy for their direct reports. Transformational leadership includes behavior such as listening which is applicable in regard to valuing feedback from direct reports and supports the inclusion of followers in shared goals and objectives of the organization (Lawton & Páez, 2015; Tan & Waheed, 2017). Patterson (2016) opined that listening is the single most important skill that a leader can possess. van den Heuvel et al. (2017) found that the leaders should take time to listen to their direct reports to support buy in and commitment at many levels of the organization. The concept that employee development leads to increased employee retention as the employees are more committed and motivated is consistent with the findings of Keevy and Perumal (2014). They suggest that employees with well thought out career development plans seek organizations that encourage employee

development (Keevy & Perumal, 2014). Career development also relates to Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory as employee development programs enhance motivation (Gupta et al., 2014). When considered together, the study themes suggest that specific leadership behaviors have an effect on employee retention in the Houston, Texas manufacturing industry.

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## **Appendix A: Informed Consent Letter**

**Title of the Project:** Leadership Behaviors and Their Impact on Employee Retention

**Principal Investigator:** Shaun Nichols, Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University

### **Invitation to be Part of a Research Study**

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be at least 21 years old, have been employed full-time in the manufacturing industry for 6 months, in a leadership role as a manager, and have effectively developed relationships with employees to support employee retention which is self-reported by the organization and is based on individual organization assessment as to whether or not it meets or exceeds their expectations. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

### **What is the study about and why is it being done?**

The purpose of the study is to explore what leadership behaviors are effective in developing relationships with employees to support employee retention. Understanding the specific manufacturing organization leadership style that is needed to best lead and serve employees can ultimately contribute to increased employee retention within the organization.

### **What will happen if you take part in this study?**

If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

1. Initial Interview - Complete phone, web-conference, or face-to-face interview. During the initial interview, audio-recording will be utilized to help ensure accuracy. The initial interview process should take approximately 20 minutes.
2. Follow-up Interview – A follow-up interview may be needed for clarification of initial interview questions. The follow-up interview will place via phone, web-conference, or face-to-face. During the follow-up interview, audio-recording will be utilized to help ensure accuracy. The follow-up interview process should take approximately 10 minutes.

### **How could you or others benefit from this study?**

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include organizations within the manufacturing industry may gain better awareness as to how specific leadership styles directly impact employee retention.

### **What risks might you experience from being in this study?**

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

**How will personal information be protected?**

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject or organization. Researcher data will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the data.

- The name of the organization will not be stated at any time during the research or after. Participant names will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms/codes (numbering system of P1, P2, etc.). Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer. Individual files will also be password-protected and only the researcher will know the password. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recording will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

**How will you be compensated for being part of the study?**

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

**Is study participation voluntary?**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

**What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?**

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

**Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?**

The researcher conducting this study is Shaun Nichols. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [REDACTED] and/or [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Rol Erickson, at [REDACTED].

**Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?**

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu)

**Your Consent**

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

*I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.*

The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

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Printed Subject Name

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Signature & Date

### **Appendix B: Participant Open-Ended Interview Questions**

1. Please explain what strategies, processes, or decision-making techniques you use to support employee retention.
2. How do you measure leadership support regarding employee retention?
3. What motivational techniques do you utilize to impact employee retention?
4. What communication techniques do you utilize to impact employee retention?
5. What type of working conditions do you promote and what impact do they have on employee retention?
6. Do you have any additional comments to make about the entire retention process and leadership styles?
7. How do you promote employee growth and advancement?
8. How do you show employee recognition?
9. How do you inspire motivation in employees?
10. What strategies do you use to promote intellectual stimulation and creativity?
11. What methods or techniques do you utilize to form a personal relationship with employees to impact employee retention?
12. How do you ensure the safety of employees in the workplace?

### Appendix C: Recruitment Letter

Dear Employee,

As a graduate student in the School of Business at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to determine the impact of leadership styles on employee retention in the Houston, Texas manufacturing industry, and I am writing to invite you to participate in my study.

If you are 21 years of age or older, a full-time employee with at least 6 months of experience in the manufacturing industry, in a leadership positions as a manager, and from your perspective as self-reported by your organization have developed relationships with employees to support employee retention, and are willing to participate, you will be asked several questions pertaining to your responsibilities in supporting employee retention in a phone, web-conference, or face-to-face interview. It should take approximately 20 minutes for you to complete the procedures listed. A second contact may be needed via phone, web-conference, or face-to-face in order to clarify any information from the initial interview. This process should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Your name and other identifying information will be collected as part of your participation, but this information will remain confidential. By participating in this research, you could potentially help organizations determine which leadership behaviors are most important when trying to improve employee retention.

If you are interested in participating, please email me at [REDACTED] to schedule your interview or ask any questions you may have.

A consent document is attached to this letter. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you are selected to participate, you will be asked to sign the consent document and return it to me via email prior to your scheduled interview.

I thank you in advance for your consideration and the potential impact you could have on future organizations, leaders, and employees as it pertains to employee retention.

Sincerely,

Shaun Nichols  
Doctoral Candidate



### **Appendix D: Pre-Survey Screening**

1. Can you confirm that you have been employed full-time for at least six months within the manufacturing industry?
2. Can you confirm that you are currently employed as a manager in a leadership role within your current organization and are directly responsible for employee retention?
3. Can you confirm that you are at least 21 years of age or older?
4. Can you confirm that you are currently employed as a manager in a leadership role and effectively developed relationships with employees to support employee retention?