

RETENTION AS A CHALLENGE FOR HEALTHCARE MANAGERS:
A LOOK INTO THE FIELD OF APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS

by

Gertrude Asante

Dissertation

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

Liberty University, School of Business

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Abstract

Turnover and retention are issues within the healthcare field that continuously need attention from organization executives and healthcare managers. With the landscape of the workforce ever-evolving, employee satisfaction and how it is related to retention and turnover continue to be pivotal in assessing long-term success for an organization. This rings true especially for the field of applied behavior analysis and their skilled clinicians, as the field over the years has battled with attrition of their Board-Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA) and Registered Behavior Technicians (RBT).

Key words: turnover, retention, applied behavior analysis, healthcare management

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to all those who have chosen to work with Autistic children and adults, to help impact their lives in the best way possible. Working in a field that can be high stress but also high reward, the appreciation for Board-Certified Behavior Analysts and Behavior Technicians is greater than what words can express. As a mother who has an autistic child, I want to thank every individual who continues to put their patients first, even when the day gets challenging.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

In today's healthcare climate, employee turnover can be quite costly to an organization. Even for the most tenured healthcare manager, the words "employee turnover" can make managers feel uneasy and apprehensive regarding efficiently running a business. Those successful healthcare organizations place an emphasis on attracting the best candidates they can by utilizing human resources to not only recruit but to aggressively resolve and prevent issues around employee turnover. When efforts are done correctly, understanding key components driving turnover, assessing the effects on patients and care, and coming to terms with what is needed to retain quality employees are the forefront objectives of organizations and managers. Yingling et al. (2022) has identified that the challenges in recruitment and retention are significant and complex. In the field of behavioral health, especially in applied behavioral analysis, there is an immense need to attract and retain individuals. In the field where direct care is crucial to the success of the client, at the provider level, managerial, supervisory and all leadership positions. According to previous research in the field, there is an imbalance of supply of services and demand of services in the field. With challenges such as compensation, burnout, and caseload, healthcare managers are consistently dealing with the revolving door of healthcare professionals which has led to several operational challenges.

This study sought to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the factors related to turnover in the behavioral healthcare industry, particularly as it relates to the field of applied behavioral analysis. With a field that has become increasingly demanding in the last few decades, measuring employee turnover is fundamental to the success of organizations in this segment of healthcare. With the current climate heavily centered around meeting certain government and payor standards, providing quality services heavily relies on the understanding

of turnover and implementing the correct retention initiatives, especially as the work force becomes increasingly more difficult to retain employees. This qualitative study provided its readers with a better understanding of issues surrounding retention in behavioral healthcare. Section I of the study presented important background information on the topic at hand followed by identifying the specific research questions that were explored in the study. These research questions helped lead into the research framework section provided information on those relative concepts and theories associated with understanding the study and how those concepts, theories and actors involved connect. In addition, the study addressed those limitations that were evident while providing some guidance for future researchers on how they may proceed with future studies on the topic. Lastly, an identification of the relevance of the study to business practices, a biblical integration and an in-depth literature review was included.

Section II of the study focused on the participants for the study and how these participants are appropriate to understanding the phenomenon at hand. This section of the study first focused on the role of the researcher and how this role contributed to reliability and validity of the data that was presented in Section III. In addition, a comprehensive explanation of the population that was studied was examined alongside how sampling from this was conducted with specifics on sampling methods used. In addition, a discussion on the methods in which data collection and organization occurred, including the qualitative instruments used to collect data and a presentation of data organization using Nvivo qualitative system was discussed. The data collection methods helped set the path for an explanation on how themes were coded, including new emergent themes, and connecting both expected and new themes to the current research. Lastly this section looked at how triangulation will occur while discussing methods to ensure reliability and validity.

The last section of this study, Section III, presented the findings of this study and how these findings are similar or different than what previous studies present. These findings were then categorized into specific themes, in which each theme was analyzed for similarities or differences to current research as well as how these themes are relevant to the phenomena through interpretation. In addition, these themes were analyzed alongside the original research questions of the study and conceptual framework discussed in Section I. Section III of this study also focused on the applied aspect of the themes found and how business managers in the field can apply these findings to resolve practical solutions of turnover. Therefore, this section included components of real-life applications from the findings of these studies in addition to a biblical integration of how Christian managers can better enhance their business and leadership practices in order to help with retention within their organization.

Background of the Problem

Turnover, or the rate at which employees decide to depart from an organization, often has a significant effect on how an organization can run its business and has effects both on the remaining employees and its customers (Mia et al., 2022). Many human resource professionals have described turnover as a major issue for organizations. Losing employees can often cost organizations a significant sum of money, as training and replacing employees can be costly. In addition, the time it takes to recruit, train, and acclimate a new hire into an organization often slows down productivity, which can be detrimental to the quality of care for many healthcare organizations. In the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) field, staff work mainly with those individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and other similar developmental disorders; therefore, the knowledge gained by tenured staff when retention is not maintained can be costly. Individuals with ASD or similar developmental disorders benefit from having a stable and

consistent environment, including caretakers, therapists, and routine, therefore turnover disrupts the care needed to be provided to this population (Hodgson et al., 2022). In addition, those employees who remain in organizations that serve this population often experience burnout due to turnover because of the sheer increase in workload. For healthcare managers in this field, turnover often leads to various complications, including scheduling difficulty, loss of patient progress, overall quality of service, frustration from families of patients, and culture shift within the organization.

In applied behavior analysis, the average tenure of Registered Behavior Technicians (RBT) is about one year, whereas the average duration of time a patient will receive ABA therapy is about two years (Yingling et al., 2022). Unlike RBTs, Board-Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA), who are a major part of any ABA organization, are generally in shortage compared to the patient demand in the healthcare segment and go through a rigorous amount of schooling and testing before receiving their credentials. Many ABA organizations can help with the certification progress of RBTs, which typically consist of in-house training of approximately 2-4 weeks and competency testing. For both Registered Behavior Technicians and Board-Certified Behavior Analyst, when turnover occurs within an organization, the knowledge gained also goes with them, especially for those seasoned staff. Like many healthcare segments, tenured employees encompass a lot of knowledge, and in a field where experience is highly favorable to effective treatment, managing through retention challenges has posed a significant difficulty for healthcare managers.

Problem Statement

The general problem addressed is how issues with retention in healthcare have resulted in operational challenges for healthcare managers such as ineffective services, decreased

productivity, and a decrease in job satisfaction for employees. According to Shufutinsky and Cox (2019), who conducted a research study on retention in behavioral healthcare, more than 50% of the respondents in this study concluded that their clinical departments were understaffed.

Furthermore, previous research has shown that staff density and consistency have had a strong impact on patient outcomes, as well as implications for the operational departments (Qian et al., 2024). Losing skilled professionals is not only costly for organizations but also creates a loss of knowledgeable professionals when turnover is prevalent (Mia et al., 2022; Qian et al., 2024).

Therefore, the specific problem addressed is the potential retention issues within behavioral healthcare resulting in possible operational challenges for healthcare manager such as ineffective services, decreased productivity, and a decrease in job satisfaction for employees.

Purpose Statement

This flexible design single-case study explored the challenges faced by some healthcare managers when the retention of skilled healthcare workers becomes a barrier to operational success. More specifically, the study dived into behavioral health and examined what operational challenges have resulted from high turnover, in addition to reviewing factors that may cause turnover and how turnover may be avoided in the future. The use of the flexible qualitative research method allowed for greater spontaneity and adaptation of interaction with the participants of this study (Moore et al., 2021). Furthermore, the participants had an opportunity to respond more elaborately and in detail, which helped explore the overall problem to be addressed. This study used a total of twenty human participants, who comprised of Registered Behavioral Technicians and Board-Certified Behavior Analysts. The study was conducted in five clinic locations in different geographical areas within the state of Georgia. The study sought to provide healthcare managers and organizations in the behavioral health arena with tools to

navigate staff engagement, culture, and perceived leadership, which can influence employee retention and turnover (Slowiak & DeLongchamp, 2022;2021). Employee retention is defined as an organization's ability to prevent employee turnover or the number of employees who have left the organization within a specified period (Aman-Ullah et al.,2021).

Research Questions

From previous research in the field, it seems that an examination of factors that result in high turnover has found several possible reasons why retention in healthcare generally may become an issue. However, previous studies have failed to isolate subsegments of the healthcare industry, where the primary focus has solely been on specific skilled professionals such as nurses and physicians. Therefore, the primary goal of this study was to look at the behavioral healthcare field and examine the turnover of those skilled professionals to examine how healthcare managers may overcome issues with retention in the future. To do so, several research questions were explored, which include the following:

RQ1. What are some challenges that healthcare leaders may encounter when trying to maintain their staff?

- RQ1a. What leadership qualities may help contribute to staff retention?
- RQ1b. What leadership qualities may contribute to staff turnover?

RQ2. What strategies are used by healthcare leaders to offset retention challenges?

- RQ2a. In what ways do retention issues in behavioral health look similar to other healthcare settings?
- RQ2b. In what ways do retention issues in behavioral health look different than other healthcare settings?

RQ3. What organizational elements are present across different healthcare settings that help position an organization for successful retention initiatives?

When examining the purpose of each research question and how it was applicable to the problem and its viable solutions, research question 1 and its subsequent questions sought to determine if healthcare leaders and their leadership styles help or hinder retention efforts. By examining this perspective, it allowed for an understanding of the distinct types of leadership styles, which styles are most preferred by employees in this segment of healthcare and help healthcare leaders assess which styles are needed to effectively manage in the applied behavioral analysis field. Research question 2 was important to explore as it sought to examine the strategies that may be helpful to managers in the field of ABA on retention efforts and how those efforts match up in other healthcare settings that may have similar challenges. Lastly, research question 3 looked at the specific elements present within an organization that help with retention, in which this question looked specifically at those constructs that have been discussed in previous research, in hopes of applying to the field of ABA and their retention challenges.

Together all the research questions helped guide the study in a deep analysis of why turnover continues to be such a huge issue in the field of applied behavior analysis and if healthcare managers can mitigate this challenge in any way. Although each research question focused on various aspects of the challenges related to turnover, together the questions were able to create building blocks on addressing the overarching issue. The second research question built on the first one by exploring strategies for retention whereas the first research question is concentrated on the challenges healthcare managers face and if leadership styles positively or negatively affect retention. The third research question built upon the second one by exploring retention from the organizational level and assessing if the initiatives asked about in the second

research question is applicable when certain elements are present or absent within the organization itself. Nonetheless, all the research questions together helped facilitate a thorough analysis on the challenges of retention in behavioral healthcare by pinpointing extremely specific components that must be present in the field.

Nature of the Study

When conducting a research study, several different research approaches are available for researchers to choose from, however the approach chosen decided the path the research takes. It was important that the selected approach could be applied to answer the research questions presented. For example, it is imperative to understand a researcher's worldview as it affects how the various components such as how the research questions were presented, the type of research design that was chosen, and what overall methods were employed to arrive at a conclusion (Brown & Dueñas, 2020). In addition to a researcher's paradigm, the methods used to collect data, how validity was created, and accessing what limitations persisted afterwards are all important components in a research study. Understanding the different selections within each and why one choice over another helped provide a better overview of the research study's path. For the following study, the research was guided by the pragmatism paradigm while using a flexible research design. This selected research design and method were appropriate for the research as it allowed for the most comprehensive understanding of the turnover phenomena in the behavioral health field. These selected components not only allowed for a detailed analysis but also set the premise for future studies on the same topic if needed. The following section will discuss the different paradigms, research designs, research methods, the selected approaches for this study, and why the other options were not suitable for the study.

Discussion of Research Paradigms

According to Voon et al. (2020), a research paradigm is an approach to research associated with a set of commonly held assumptions within a particular research community. When conducting research, paradigms are used to focus on the purpose and how the study will be conducted based on the worldview of that specific researcher. There are several differing paradigms, including positivism, constructivism, and pragmatism. For this research study, the pragmatism worldview guided the overall direction of the study. This section will discuss not only the pragmatic worldview but the other popular research paradigms.

Positivism. According to Park et al. (2020), the positivist approach focuses on reasons and observation to understand behavior amongst humans. This paradigm's central premise concludes that observation and experiment help create true knowledge, which can only be obtained using senses. The observation that helps verify data is referred to as empirical evidence, which is used to prove or disprove a proposed hypothesis. The primary goal of researchers who align themselves with the positivist approach is to generate explanatory associations or casual relationships, which in turn leads to predictions of a particular phenomenon (Ryan, 2018). For researchers with this worldview, the goal of science usually focuses on the discovery of laws that help with explanation and predictions. The positivism approach is often associated with a research methodology based on the hypothetic-deductive model, according to Park et al. (2020). In addition, researchers who align with this worldview often need to have large sample sizes when conducting their research to reveal generalizable tendencies.

Post-positivism. According to Ryan (2019), the post-positivism era evolved from researchers exploring areas that positivist researchers did not. This worldview aligns with the ideas of seeking out what is unique rather than searching for broad patterns and general

principles. Ryan (2019) explains that post-positivist researchers seek to expand their understanding through specifying the differences. Unlike the positivist researchers, post-positivist researchers do not attempt to generalize their data but instead, seek to expand our experiences through complexity and diversification. The primary premise of this paradigm is founded on deductive logic, as knowledge is believed to be conjectural (Young & Ryan, 2020). Overall, post-positivism allows for a more comprehensive criterion for data acceptance which is often seen being used in research where an abundant amount of qualitative data is arranged to produce quantitative data that can be analyzed using statistics.

Constructivism. The research paradigm, known as constructivism, assumes that knowledge is constructed, focusing on analyzing a single function or process (Pande & Bharathi, 2020). Researchers who adopt this paradigm believe that knowledge is created by those who are actively in the research process; therefore, the assumption is that an understanding should arise from those who live it. Essentially, this paradigm believes that researchers cannot be independent of the research itself as they are a part of the end of the product. In terms of the core specification of this paradigm, it follows that qualitative research methods are dominant in this paradigm, using techniques such as interviews, observations, and document reviews. Voon et al. (2020) detailed that these qualitative methods are used in conjunction with the social construction created between the interaction of the researcher and their respondents. Because the constructivism paradigm focuses on obtaining multiple perspectives to yield greater interpretations results, this paradigm is often described as dialectical and hermeneutical.

Pragmatism. According to Powell (2020), the pragmatism paradigm looks at the world in which problems exist, yet one seeks to understand them. This research was guided by this paradigm as the primary purpose of this study would be to understand why the issue of turnover

is occurring in this specified area of healthcare and seek practical solutions. Researchers who align themselves with the pragmatic paradigm agree that it allows for a series of meaningful articulations and thoughts for exploring and solving problems within a selected research design (Leonardi & Treem, 2020). The pragmatist paradigm believes that people are independent beings who shape their reality with intellect and action, and things are just not the way they are. This paradigm sees things as dynamic and ever-changing, allowing for a more objective stance when tackling the proposed research, according to Powell (2020), as nothing in the world is static from a pragmatist viewpoint. For this research study, this paradigm guided the research topic as the healthcare system is constantly changing due to the continuous interactions between patients, workers, and the environment. An ever-changing system comes with challenges, such as retention; therefore, pragmatist framework seeks to explore so that the researcher is inquiring on ways to alter the circumstances in which one finds oneself.

Discussion of Design

Richards et al. (2019) describe research design as the well-organized and methodical procedure implemented in a research study. The research design consists of comprehensive and identifiable elements that result in data that can be used to conclude a good result to the study at hand. There are a few differing research designs, and each of them must follow a cohesive methodology that aligns with a specific research type to produce accurate conclusions, free of errors.

Fixed Design. A fixed research design, or quantitative research, is described as a formal and systematic process of data collection, where numerical data is used to obtain information. This type of research analyzes variable relationships and uses statistical strategies to review and conclude findings. Kleih et al. (2021) detailed that fixed, quantitative designs are used to

quantify attitudes, behaviors, and other variables in which a generalization of results is applied to a larger population. The primary purpose of the research designs is to uncover patterns and use data collection methods such as surveys, interviews, longitudinal studies, and other systematic observations to make conclusions on a certain phenomenon (Charli et al., 2022).

Flexible Design. According to Richards et al. (2019), flexible research design, or qualitative research, is an inquiry process of understanding a phenomenon based on exploring social and human problems. This research method seeks to create a detailed picture of phenomena by analyzing reports, gaining clear views of informants, using natural settings to conduct research, which results in a complex and holistic picture. Furthermore, this research design seeks to answer 'what' and 'how' through various exploration techniques. Flexible, qualitative research designs vary using semi-structured or sometimes unstructured methods, such as focus groups, interviews, and observation, often consisting of small sample sizes (Kluge et al., 2019).

Mixed-Method Design. A mixed-method design uses both quantitative and qualitative processes. It is often used when both quantitative and qualitative data together would provide a better understanding of one's research compared to by itself. Essentially, the mixed-method design helps address a research question when either a flexible or fixed method cannot provide for a conclusive outcome singularity. In addition, Kleih et al. (2021) suggest that researchers may often use a mixed-method design when building upon previous research studies and moving the investigation into a different phase or trying to incorporate different components that may have been omitted in previous studies. A mixed-method design may utilize methods such as a questionnaire followed by a focus group or initiating a performance test then using observational

methods (Pérez Bentancur & Tiscornia, 2022). Since the mixed method design combines both qualitative and quantitative methods, data collection should be both numerical and text.

Selected Design Method. For this study, a flexible design single-case study was used as the premise of the study is to gain an understanding of how retention issues continue to be problematic in behavioral health, the consequences of turnover for healthcare managers, and ways in which organizations can seek to mitigate future retention issues. To properly conduct this study, the research design must be exploratory. The participants provided an in-depth analysis of their experiences rather than giving limited answers that may be constrained to a "yes" or "no." In addition, due to the sample size for this study, a flexible, qualitative design was the most appropriate, as the intent of this study was not to generalize the findings to the population at large. Furthermore, initially deploying a flexible design for this study could help lead to subsequent studies that could either be more quantitative in nature or use a mixed-method design.

Discussion of Method

This study was conducted with a flexible design using qualitative methods specifically, a single case study design was used. According to Anderson (2017), a compelling research study assesses how that study will be designed and conducted, and which research method and tools will be the most appropriate for answering the questions sought out by the study. Unlike quantitative research designs, qualitative designs, which were employed in this study, look to focus on the depth of an issue rather than breadth. To reach these depths, qualitative research designs have several different methods that can be used, including case studies, ethnographies, and ground theory (Denny & Weckesser, 2022). For this research study, a single case study was

used, and the components of a case study were discussed in the following section, along with other qualitative research methods.

Case Studies. One of the popular qualitative research methods is case studies. Çakar and Aykol (2021) described the case study approach as an in-depth and multi-faceted exploration of a phenomenon in their real-life setting. Case studies are usually seen in law, policy, and business and may also be seen in some areas of healthcare (Ababacar Sy Diop, & Liu, 2020). Although case studies can be highly beneficial in data collection and analysis, Çakar and Aykol (2021) suggest that many researchers, especially in management research, have limited scope on appropriately conducting a case study. In fact, due to the long-lasting significance of many quantitative methods, researchers are often trained extensively in these types of methods rather than qualitative methods like case studies. With the advantages that case studies provide, including integrating qualitative and quantitative analysis (Ababacar Sy Diop & Liu, 2020), there are some limitations, including having little basis for generalization and a possible lack of rigor.

Ethnographies. Another qualitative design method is ethnographies, which Hayre et al. (2021) details became popular by anthropologists. This research method is done by a researcher observing and interacting with the participants of the study within their natural environment (Andreassen et al., 2020). The use of ethnographies helps support a researcher's design problem by allowing a deeper understanding of the phenomena in terms of usefulness. Hayre et al. (2021) details that researchers should most likely use ethnographies during the initial stages of a user-centered study. The reasoning behind this is that ethnographies are focused on developing an understanding of a problem; therefore, conducting it in the preliminary stages of a phenomenon allows for ethnographies to support future research decisions on a particular issue (Andreassen et al., 2020). For this specific research study, ethnography was not a suitable research method as

there has been previous research on retention issues in healthcare. However, limited research is specified in the behavioral healthcare industry. Due to ethnographies being most suitable for new phenomena and understanding the initial stages of the existing problems, the study at hand did not require the level of depth that an ethnography study would require.

Grounded Theory. Lassig (2022) details another qualitative research method, grounded theory, as a cluster of systematic inductive methods that intend to develop a theory. Essentially, the grounded theory looks to discover theories from data, both quantitative and qualitative in nature, by using comparative analysis (Timonen et al., 2018). In terms of use, grounded theory is designed to be able to answer an array of research questions by looking at the relationships between ideas and categories. Unlike qualitative approaches that use statistical analysis, grounded theory focuses on patterns (Lassig, 2022). In addition, this grounded theory has its application to a range of textual materials, including interview transcripts and documents, and can be applied when doing a comparative study on records that pre-date the research itself (Timonen et al., 2018). For this study, grounded theory was not the best choice of qualitative method, as this method focuses on developing a construct. The individual constructs that play into retention or turnover, such as burnout, job satisfaction, and leadership management, are not new theories. These constructs have been applied across many disciplines, in or out of the healthcare field.

Discussion of Triangulation

Yang et al. (2022) suggests that researchers often use triangulation for three primary purposes: creating a more in-depth view of the research problem, enhancing validity, and interrogating other ways of understanding a research problem. Essentially triangulation refers to taking a different perspective of a question to obtain answers that may not have been previously

apparent. Farquhar et al. (2020) discusses that there are several forms of triangulation, including methodological, investigator, data, and theory triangulation. Data triangulation occurs when the study employs using multiple data sources, such as varying data collection over time and across differing people (Natow, 2020). For example, when trying to answer the question about why turnover over occurs, data triangulation could take place by analyzing data with a group of participants in one region of the country over a course of time then repeating the same method in a different region of the country. Another form of triangulation is investigator triangulation which takes place when the study uses multiple researchers to analyze the same data separately (Natow, 2020). This form of triangulation is helpful in reducing researcher bias that may threaten the validity of the study.

For this study, to create validity and gain a better understanding of the research question, data triangulation techniques were used. Data triangulation refers to using multiple data collection methods in the same research study (Rooshenas et al.,2019). For this study, data was collected from differing regions to ensure that trends shown are not exclusive to a single set of individuals. With the core research tool for this study being participant interviews, including samples from differing geographical regions limited research biases, such as observation bias, interview bias, and social-desirability bias. Doing this allowed for the data collected from the employed research tools to hold better reliability and enable the research to be more valid.

Summary of the Nature of the Study.

Researcher paradigms, research methods, and research designs help guide the research study. Paradigms allow the researcher to frame what questions they seek to be answered in a specific way to yield the best results. Research methods and designs enable the researchers to decide how they will conduct their study, their population, the possible limitations they will

encounter, and how they will apply validity and reliability depending on their chosen method and design. Each of the components is important for creating the initial framework of a research study. It allowed the researcher to decide what overall path they will take and if changes need to be made before conducting the research.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework in the qualitative research study is those existing concepts that come together to help understand the exploration of the research topic at hand. The conceptual framework section intended to provide the readers with an understanding of how different elements helped navigate the research. For the researcher, this section helped introduce the study and how it can advance the field of practice that the study relates to. For this study, the framework section looked to align the concepts related to retention in healthcare and the applied behavior analysis field specifically. These concepts looked to set the foundation between elements that correlate and concepts that need to be understood to understand retention challenges truly. Figure 1 shows the flow of how these concepts are interconnected.

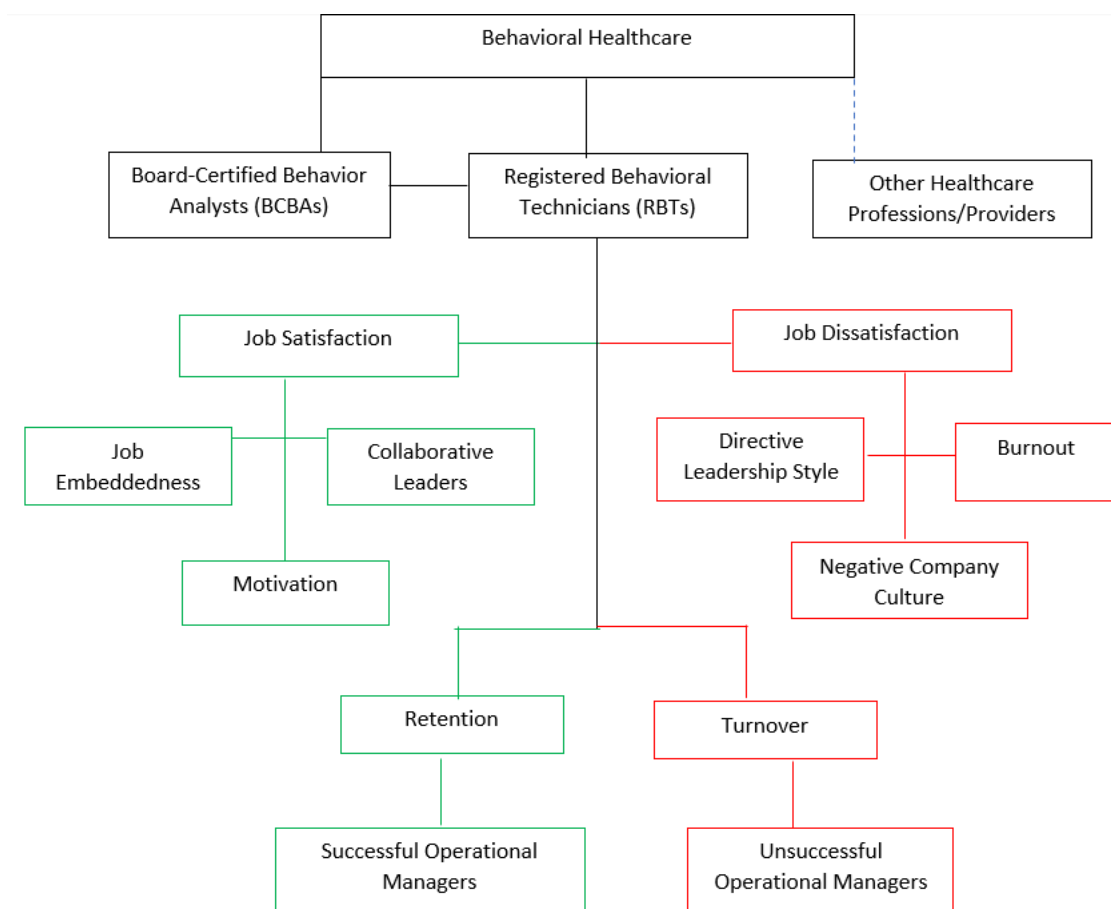


Figure 1. Relationships Between Concepts

Concepts

In the following study, there were several key concepts that were pivotal to the formulation of the overall foundation. The concept section will detail those theoretical components that help anchor the study together by exploring known and previously explored ideas. Figure 1 helped link the connections between specific concepts such as job satisfaction and leadership style effects on retention.

Job Satisfaction and Retention. A good indicator of employee retention is job satisfaction (Aruldoss et al., 2022). Job satisfaction is essentially a measurement of an employee's contentment and satisfaction in their current role and the organization as a whole. Where there is engagement in the workplace that supports a good working relationship,

improvements in job satisfaction become evident, in that employees tend to believe the company is utilizing their skills appropriately while appreciating their service to commitment. In Figure 1, Relationship between concepts, job satisfaction is linked to employees being more embedded in the organization they work for. Overall, improving job satisfaction results in higher productivity, profitability, and an overall boost in retention rates for an organization. According to Leaf et. al (2017), when employees are satisfied, they no longer think of work as work but seek opportunities to contribute to the organization's overall success. Previous studies have shown that when employers must replace employees, it can easily result in a cost of thirty to fifty percent of an annual salary, resulting in costly expenditures for a company.

Job satisfaction and its correlation to retention are paramount in applied behavior analysis. In this field, most of the services are a 1:1 ratio with patients to employees; therefore, losing staff based on their lack of contentment with the job or organization can drastically affect both the quality of care and the amount of care that is able to be provided. As it relates to career tenure for Registered Behavior Technicians, the average tenured for these employees is about one year before burnout or change in job interest occurs (Leaf et al.,2017). For Board-Certified Behavior Analyst, the average is about three years before burnout becomes harder to reverse. Although there may be several reasons why the averages for these employees are held currently, it is evident across different ABA settings, and ultimately translates to job satisfaction level.

Companies that identify ways to increase job satisfaction tend to be more successful overall. Perreira et al., (2018) details that satisfaction surveys have proven successful for an organization when done correctly. Originally, satisfaction surveys were introduced to low combat morale and negative company culture while increasing loyalty. Today, these surveys are still used for the same purpose while also being a means to gauge retention rates, increase

motivation, and help with creating a plan for desired outcomes in terms of growth projections. Therefore, it is imperative that when deploying surveys, specific issues should be addressed by these surveys, including compensation, interpersonal relationships with co-workers, managerial support, morale, and training and development.

Leadership Styles Effects Retention. How managers manage their teams can be seen within an organization by an array of differing leadership styles in which leadership styles can significantly impact retention (Erdal & Altindag, 2020). For example, previous research has shown that leaders who collaborate with their teams and emphasize leading by example tend to fare much better in retention than those who do not. In addition, it has been noted that certain leadership styles can be detrimental to organizational culture and cause staff to be unsatisfied with their job. Erdal and Altindag (2020), there are a few different leadership styles overall, and each one has specific components that may or may not affect the rate of turnover. In addition, the researchers mention that effective leadership is a massive component of how successful an organization is, and retention plays a foundational part in success.

Theories

The intent of the theories section is to draw upon existing observations and knowledge to draw a connection to the current study. The detailed theories discussed in this research helped form the study by exploring how the studied theories relate to the current topic at hand. Figure 1 also assisted in breaking down the components of the specific theories discussed and how they relate to retention and turnover in ABA.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, also known as the Motivation Theory model, has been used by organizations to influence motivation in the workplace (Lee et al., 2020). This theory argues that there are two main components to motivation:

motivators and hygiene factors. Motivators, according to theory, are those things that encourage employees to work hard and stay committed to what they do. On the other hand, hygiene factors do not encourage employees to work harder; however, if these factors are not present, it could cause employees to become unmotivated. In Figure 1, it can be seen that such factors such as preferred leadership styles are related to motivation and job satisfaction whereas factors such as negative company culture are related to job dissatisfaction.

Motivating factors included achievement, recognition, the job itself, delegation of responsibilities, advancement, and growth. Each one of these factors is essential to employee retention, in addition to organizational culture (Aruldoss et al.,2022). In terms of achievement, an organization must provide its employees with a sense of accomplishment, as employees need to know they are doing their job well. In addition, the type of recognition employees receive from their achievements has been listed as critical. Prior research on recognition, feedback, and retention lists those employees who often receive praise for their success from their supervisors and managers often feel more connected to their work and the organization they have chosen to be with.

In addition, employees who are passionate about their work tend to stay motivated to do their best at work. Often, employees who are genuinely passionate about their work can transcend past certain hardships at work if they feel the work they do and the organization they work for is worth it. Shufutinsky and Cox (2019), who discusses the effect of micromanaging versus work autonomy, detailed that the responsibility and the perception of work autonomy considerably impact motivating employees in the workplace. The Two-Factor theory echoes the same sentiment but emphasizes motivation being correlated with employees feeling as though they own their work by holding themselves accountable. Lastly, the motivating factors of

advancement and growth are noted as important as employees often want to learn new things and feel they can grow into new roles within an organization.

Hygiene factors that may negatively affect motivation and retention include job security, salary, work conditions, and company policies. Organizations who fail to make their employees feel as though their jobs are secure can often have waves of turnover, especially during markets when a recession is in play, downsizing, outsourcing, innovative technology, and globalization (Coetzee & Bester, 2021). Employees who feel their job is at risk, regardless of the underlying factors, tend to be less motivated, affecting performance and retention overall. In addition to job security, work conditions are among the highest risk factors for low motivation and turnover. Employees who feel as though the organization does not consider the environment their employees are working in, especially their safety, can significantly impact the attitudes employees produce about the organization. Company policies and salary are noted as hygiene factors as employees look for these items to be fair and transparent for every employee. For compensation, employees look for a pay structure to be competitive with other organizations, whereas company policies are expected to be equivalent to an organization's competitors.

Job Embeddedness Theory. Rubenstein et al. (2019), details the job embeddedness theory to measure potential turnover. This theory suggests that the more embedded an employee is to the organization, the less likely they are to quit. The theory focuses on three specific aspects of the relationship between employees and organizations to make these determinations. The first key component is the interconnections between employees, others within the organizations, and those more extensive networks in the organization. The more interconnected employees are to others within the spectrum of the organization, the more unlikely they are to quit. The second component is how well-suited employees are to their role. Employees who are hired for a

particular position and seem to fit well to their assigned role may often flourish and become successful within the organization. This can sometimes lead to more growth and promotional opportunities (Rubenstein et al., 2019). Lastly, sacrifice is the last concept described in the Job Embeddedness Theory, in which it asks the question of how difficult it would be for the employee to leave and how much they would lose by doing so. Overall, this concept details that employees who are more invested in their employment, whether for financial reasons, job security, growth potential, or any other factors, are more likely to think significantly harder before leaving a job. In all, the more on-the-job links an employee has and the links they have in the community or organization, the more likely they are to stay committed, be positive, and remain engaged to the organization (Shufutinsky & Cox, 2019).

Servant Leadership Theory. The Servant Leadership Theory is a revolutionary way of leading groups of people (Farrington & Lilah, 2019). Leadership is founded on how someone serves those they lead, rather than the typical managerial premise of being an overseer. In this theory, the leader is a servant first, which has been noted as being significantly different from the leader-first mentality of many modern leadership styles (Farrington & Lilah, 2019). Leaders who are servants first have a natural need to serve others, leading to a conscious choice to use this servant mentality to lead others. The servant-leader has a significant focus on the well-being and growth of the people, and the community in which they serve are a part of. Due to this, the theory suggests that those who are servant-leaders tend to share power, allowing those who lead to contribute significantly to the organization's overall success due to a more relaxed power dynamic between the leader and their subordinates (Hill, 2020). Researchers who have studied this theory suggest that servant leadership's overall success comes from the idea that employees under a servant leader seek development, resulting in high performance. Hills (2020) indicated

that for servant leaders to exist within an organization, the organization itself has to create an environment where these leaders can thrive. For those organizations that do, however, turnover has been noted as being less of an issue than those organizations that are less people-focused due to the dynamic relationship between the managers and the employees in the organization.

Actors

In Figure 1, actors are those individuals who are either affected by the problem surrounding retention challenges or those who are apart of facilitating the causal effect of turnover or retention occurring. For this study, the highlighted actors were healthcare managers, Board-Certified Behavior Analysts, and Registered Behavior Technicians. In addition, other healthcare professions, such as nurses, were also important actors to associate with the study as they served as a comparison point.

Healthcare Managers. Healthcare managers are those individuals who are employed to help run the operational aspect of a healthcare facility (Krank, 2022). Their job encompasses everything from financials, human resource components, talent acquisition, employee development, facility maintenance, and operational growth, to name a few. These individuals are pivotal in the healthcare segment as they provide the foundation for others to do their job efficiently in terms of patient treatment. For this study, it was essential to understand the role of healthcare managers as retention and recruiting fall heavily on those in these roles in the behavioral healthcare industry.

Clinical Professionals in ABA. Registered Behavior Technicians (RBT) and Board-Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA) are a part of the applied behavior analysis (ABA) field as those who seek to treat those individuals who need ABA therapy (Leaf et al., 2017). Both roles in this field are very distinct and require collaboration to treat those individuals who need

therapy successfully. Registered Behavior Technicians, or RBTs, serve as those who implement direct care to patients with autism, primarily in a one-to-one environment and within groups. These individuals are responsible for ensuring that the plan of care for individuals needing ABA is carried out in a way to efficiently see progress within patients. Board-Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA), on the other hand, are those who are responsible for creating the plan of care for patients (Krank, 2022). Their jobs entail assessing those with Autism and deciding what treatment plans will be necessary based on observation. In addition, BCBAs are the supervisors of RBTs; therefore, it is their responsibility to groom and develop the skills needed to become successful as an RBT.

Registered Nurse (RN). Nurses for this study are not directly correlated with the field of ABA; however, they are an important actor in the study as they serve as a comparison point for another profession in the healthcare industry where retention has been problematic. Nurses work in various healthcare settings, from hospitals, clinics, assisted living facilities, and private facilities (Labrague et al., 2020). In the decade or so, the demand for nurses and issues coupled with retention issues has made those with nursing degrees lucrative, in that the demand outweighs the availability of nurses. Like RBTs and BCBAs, the recruiting and retention of nurses over several years has become increasingly difficult as the baby boomer decade starts to retire thousands of nurses during a time when demand is at its highest. In addition, nurses face similar working conditions such as burnout, long hours, challenges with patients, and organizational challenges, much like those professionals in the ABA healthcare sector.

Constructs

For support and validity within the research, certain constructs are discussed as important themes. These constructs are depicted in Figure 1 showing how each can be positively or

negatively related to turnover and retention. These themes were related to research questions and the problem and laid the foundation for what important topics would be discussed in relation to the specific problem in the study.

Leadership Styles. According to Erdal and Altindag (2020), leadership style has been noted as having a significant impact on retention. Figure 1 depicts that leadership styles that are more collaborative are related to better retention whereas as directive leadership may have a negative impact on retention. Previous research studies have pointed out a variety of leadership styles, including directive, laissez-faire, and participatory leadership (Alrubaysh et al., 2022). These leadership styles can be helpful in specific settings; however, their effect on retention may be determined by how specific types of leadership styles were used, those being managed, and the overall environment. Directive leaders, for instance, are more commonly seen in the military settings as this style is categorized as being extremely strict with limited openness to feedback (Saeed et al., 2023). In today's business settings where collaboration, receptiveness to employee feedback, and a strong emphasis on organizational culture, this type of leadership can often negatively affect employee retention. Laissez-Faire leaders, on the other hand, are those leaders who are seen as allowing their subordinates to make decisions for themselves (Alrubaysh et al., 2022). This type of leadership, also known as delegation leadership, essentially has a hands-off approach and requires a great deal of trust to be successful. Because accountability still falls on the leader, those managers who employ this leadership style must have a strong foundation in their team, providing them with adequate training for them to be able to make their own decision. Participatory leaders emphasize having a democratic approach to decision-making (Erdal & Altindag, 2020). These leaders allow their employees to freely express their opinions, make suggestions, and tackle situations. Healthcare managers with this leadership style are often

successful in terms of employee engagement, which can lead to solid retention rates. However, they may have some challenges with being assertive when needed.

Turnover and Retention. According to Labrague et al. (2020), the rate at which employees stay at an organization is referred to as retention, whereas the rate employees leave is called turnover. Both rates are affected by many things, and organizations generally strive to have a high retention rate. When turnover occurs in many organizations, it can cause a downward decline in employee productivity, often reducing service quality. For this study, turnover and retention were the primary focus of interest for the behavioral healthcare field, as the methods employed by healthcare managers to tackle challenges of retention can either decrease or increase turnover.

Organization Culture and Burnout. The culture within an organization and how it relates to job satisfaction are two critical constructs to understand to assess retention and issues with retention in healthcare. Perreira et al. (2018) detailed how a company structure's organization, the community or lack of organization community, policies, and overall work environment play a huge part in job satisfaction. In addition, Kearney et al. (2020) discussed the role of burnout in job satisfaction and implies that employees who experience burnout in their roles tend to rate dissatisfaction with the organization higher than those who are not faced with burnout. In terms of definition, burnout is defined as the state of physical and emotional exhaustion that is accompanied by the feeling of reduced accomplishment. In addition, burnout in the workplace has also been linked to a loss of professional identity and may exhibit itself in the form of declining work performance, irritability, and attendance inconsistencies.

Relationships Between Concepts, Theories, Actors, and Constructs

The relationship between the concepts, theories, actors, and constructs in this study were important to tie together to conceptualize the study. Specific concepts such as job satisfaction and its relationship to higher retention can be connected to the theories and constructs such as organizational structure. Because job satisfaction is the overarching concept that is related to many of the theories discussed, understanding how it relates to each of the other concepts, theories and even some of the constructs allows for a precise understanding of the conceptual framework section overall. Each of the actors discussed in this section played a significant role in the concepts and construct sections. All the actors listed, outside of healthcare managers, are discussed in a way that laid the foundation on how the specific constructs and concepts discussed are related. Although a few of the constructs such as burnout could show relationship to healthcare managers, the foundation of the study is to focus instead on how healthcare managers can either contribute to turnover or retention and the effects it may have on them effectively running an organization.

When looking at the concepts and the constructs that are discussed, the relationship between these two components helped set the foundation for the discussions in the theory section. The theories discussed, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, Job Embeddedness Theory and Servant Leadership Theory, discuss the components related to the concepts and constructs presented in the study. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory that focuses on the factors that must be present for an employee to stay retained in an organization relates to both the overall concept of job satisfaction and higher retention but also the construct of burnout. In addition, the Servant Leadership Theory relates to the construct of leadership style and helps explain the research question on the effects these styles may have on retention challenges. Lastly, the Job

Embeddedness Theory relates heavily to the organizational culture construct, as it helps detail the relationship between employees and the organization they belong to.

Summary of the Research Framework.

The purpose of the research framework was to help implement the steps that were taken throughout the research study to assist in addressing the specific problem. The following framework was used as a guide to help focus the scope of the research by discussing constructs, concepts, theories, and actors who are pivotal to the research. Each component discussed played a particular role in both understanding the specific problem, assisting in answering the research questions and connecting relationships between constructs and concepts. With retention challenges being the focal point of the research study, the research framework section helped guide the path in which the research headed towards by tying together theories from previous research studies combined with overarching concepts that were relevant to both this study and those like it.

Definition of Terms

Throughout the study, a few terms were used repeatedly that needed to be defined to comprehend fully the discussed points in the study. These terms include the following:

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). Defined as a therapy-based treatment grounded on the science of learned behavior. The goal of ABA is to increase those behaviors that are deemed helpful while decreasing those behaviors that are labeled as either harmful or negatively affecting learning (Krank, 2022).

Board-Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). Individuals licensed practitioners who provide behavior-analytic services (Brown, 2021). These professionals are often the supervisors

of an RBT and provide the behavior modification plans associated with the patient needing ABA services.

Registered Behavior Technician (RBT). Defined as those individuals who provide ABA therapy to patients (Carr et al., 2017). These are the individuals who work directly with the patients consistently and are tasked with the implementation of the plan of care provided for each patient.

Assumptions, Limitations, Delimitations

Like any other study, the following research presented assumptions based on previous research and some limitations and delimitations that persist due to the overall scope. With previous research done in both business and human resources fields pertaining to retention, the following study drew upon some of these studies to form cohesive research. With that, some assumptions had been able to be concluded even before implementing the study. Nonetheless, the limitations and delimitations that persisted in this study were assessed for any future studies in this field of interest.

Assumptions

Like all studies, there are certain assumptions that can be made based on past studies or the layout of the current study. Assumptions can be defined as those facts that have considered be true but will not be verified in the current study (Wolter & Diekmann, 2021). For instance, there was an assumption that for the current study, all participants would answer truthfully all survey questions provided (Rose & Johnson, 2020). In addition, the study held the assumption that the results provided based on the methodology used will be understood both by the researcher and its readers. Previous research on retention and turnover in business predicted that certain constructs listed in the study would yield negative retention rates, boosting turnover

(Matsumoto & Gopal, 2019). These constructs included employee turnover, dissatisfaction with the job due to lack of communication, unfavorable leadership style, and negative organization perception will also be a factor in high turnover. Because the behavioral healthcare field follows a lot of similar cadences as many of the other healthcare sectors, the assumption that those experiences are considered harmful for employees in other healthcare arenas will have the same as in the behavioral health field (Krebs et al., 2021). In addition, due to an array of previous findings, turnover in the behavioral healthcare field is relatively high compared to other areas of healthcare due to the nature of the environment (Weikel & Fisher, 2021;2022); however, there are things that can be put in place by healthcare managers to mitigate the abundance of turnover and increase general retention of their employees for more extended periods.

While there may be certain assumptions projected, mitigation of the risk associated with these assumptions are important to note. For instance, while the research assumed that all participants will answer the survey questions truthfully (Roehl & Harland, 2022), in order to mitigate the risk that some participants would not do so, the survey questions will be presented as open ended instead of using a Likert-Scale survey where participants could easily select random answers without giving much thought to the question (Gossou et al., 2022). By using the open-ended method, it required the respondents to take time to think about the question before generating an answer since they were not given multiple choice options to select from. In terms of mitigating the risk that the results of the study would not be fully understood by the study's readers, the findings of this study were depicted in a way to ensure that the concluded results are organized in a way that is easy to comprehend (Hall et al., 2023). Unlike quantitative studies that would usually yield numerical results, the results from this study had extremely limited statistical analysis due to the research tool used. Therefore, it was important to organize the results in a

way that the reader would be able to decipher how the results were analyzed and how conclusions were drawn from it.

Limitations

Although the current study had provided insight into the factors related to turnover, specifically in the field of applied behavior analysis, there were still a few limitations presented in the study that may need to be addressed in future studies on the same topic. When assessing the study's limitations, one must understand that limitations are defined as those potential weaknesses of the study that may be present due to certain limiting factors. One of these limitations is not identifying the differences between ABA centers that use more of a discrete trial teaching (DTT) versus natural environmental teaching (NET) and if the use of one over the other procedure over the other creates burnout for their Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs). DTT is described as teacher-led teaching that occurs in a more structured environment, often requiring the RBT to run specific trials that have been programmed by the Board-Certified Behavior Analyst (Alanazi et al.,2022). On the other hand, Natural Environment Teaching (NET) promotes teaching during play, where the RBT allows the child to engage in social and pretend play while creating an environment where teaching trials can be done (Pisman & Luczynski, 2020). Although both teaching styles promote learning, discrete trials (DTT) can often create faster rates of burnout due to the repetitive nature of the programming. On the other hand, natural environment teaching (NET) promotes more creativity and allows for both the patient and RBT to engage in a more fun way of learning.

In addition to the types of teaching programs, this study was limited to center-based therapy and does not consider how in-home ABA therapy affects turnover. Whereas center-based therapy is done at a specific site, in-home therapy consists of staff going into patients' homes and

providing direct treatment, usually for shorter hours. Turnover and retention may be affected by the difference in the environment due to lack of hours provided to staff, burnout from driving to multiple locations, lack of in-person support, and pressures of giving therapy to patients while in the presence of caregivers. Future studies on retention and turnover in this field may want to assess if turnover rates differ based on settings and if the reasoning for turnover differs across settings. Due to this study solely focusing on in-center therapy, it did not allow for this analysis; however, there is importance to the knowledge that can be gained by looking at different ABA settings and what retention and turnover rates look like for those managers and organizations.

The first limitation that is presented in this study could be addressed by using multiple organizations that differ in ABA methods to address possible burnout differentials of RBTs who primarily conduct discrete trial training or natural environment teaching. Although the type of ABA therapy conducted is usually BCBA specific, some organizations prioritize DTT over NET or vice versa. Therefore, by using multiple organizations in the study, the sample population is more likely to consist of a variation of clinicians who practice therapy differently, which could allow for a more cohesive understanding of burnout in the field. In terms of the second limitation discussed, distinguishing between clinicians who work in an in-home setting and an in-center setting and presenting specific questions for each setting would help with a comprehensive assessment of turnover in the field. By differentiating the sample population between the two environments, it would allow for the data to show if certain components that lead to turnover occurring in one setting over the next, which could help with specified retention initiatives in the different environment.

Delimitations

For the scope of the study, there were some boundaries that were set in place to achieve cohesive research that would allow for a detailed understanding of the phenomena at hand. In this study, the delimitations were seen in the selected sample pool of participants in this study. Due to the nature of the study and what was hoped to be gained from it, the study only used RBT participants who have been in their role for at least six months and only use BCBA participants who have been in their current role for the same length of time. Although participants outside of these parameters can provide some meaningful insight into retention issues in this arena of healthcare, by focusing on semi-seasoned professionals, the study hoped to have a more cohesive understanding of the current issues for healthcare managers. RBTs who have worked in their role less than six months may not have enough insight on some of the components, such as burnout, that this study will need to provide. The same limitation was attributed to those BCBAs that have not been in the field for at least eight months. In addition, depending on previous employment history, these less seasoned professionals may underestimate how much of their previous history may affect how they answer questions, which may skew some data if these individuals were included.

Significance of the Study

The current study allowed for insight into an issue within the behavioral healthcare field that has become a hindrance for both growth and quality of care for many years. Like many healthcare fields, the applied behavior analysis field has a turn cycle of turnover and recruiting, which has led to difficulties with the quality of care provided and being able to operationally expand an organization's business. In an industry where retention is needed to provide service due to the 1:1 patient to staff ratio needed, when turnover occurs, the business suffers. This in

turn can make it exceedingly difficult to obtain revenue goals needed to successfully run the business as well as growth opportunities. According to Erdal and Altindag (2020), who discussed the increasing need for behavioral health professionals, understanding the issues around turnover in the field is necessary to combat the current issues with burnout and low retention. Outside of identifying the issue that leads to turnover, this study sought to propose solutions that may benefit healthcare organizations and managers on ways to take proactive strategies with both retention and employee satisfaction. Therefore, this section of the study not only dove into those components that may attribute to turnover and reduce retention but also examined how the specific design methodology could allow for a more cohesive understanding of the research problem in general. Furthermore, the research allowed its readers to connect with how the pragmatism paradigm coupled with the use of a qualitative design method can be beneficial for this type of study.

Reduction of Gaps in the Literature

The following study added to the current literature by providing an overview of a specific healthcare segment struggling with retention. The existing literature on retention rates and turnover in healthcare usually focuses on public and private hospitals with the core focus on nurses. Although the current literature allowed for an understanding of why retention issues persist in healthcare, there is a lack of focus on segments that pertain to other healthcare professionals aside from nurses primarily (O'Connor et al., 2018). In addition, due to the area of focus for this study, retention is key in both initial and overall success; therefore, this study provided a more cohesive look at the struggles of retention and its possible factors.

In addition to providing a look at retention efforts from a different healthcare segment, this study helped address the factors affecting retention and help look at what managers and

organizations can do to reduce turnover within their organization. Previous literature on the factors that can drive turnover has often concluded certain factors without mentioning initiatives that could be in place to help navigate better retention efforts (O'Connor et al., 2018). By looking at the previous studies to derive the current study, the result of this study was able to provide additional resources for healthcare managers in developing strategies to help with retention rates.

Lastly, this research study helped bridge the gap on how caseload size and job satisfaction are related in the field of ABA, as it relates to the how the field is currently. Older research in the field neglects to discuss how large caseloads and the type of caseloads that professionals in the field deal with may have a strong correlation to job satisfaction (O'Connor et al., 2018). As the landscape of applied behavior analysis continues to evolve with clinical professionals stressing the balance of work, home life, mental health and other factors, job satisfaction is directly affected by how much work individuals in this field consider to be too much or overwhelming.

Implications for Biblical Integration

The practice of recruiting for any organization usually boils down to an assessment of an individual's skills, knowledge, and abilities, which traditionally has been the norm for many decades. However, organizations with a core foundation in biblical principles should investigate hiring individuals based on the values they hold towards the job, the attitudes they present, their interest in the field, and what social and interpersonal skills they have that aligns with the company's vision (Kim et al., 2009). When looking at what the Bible shows us about person-job fit, God shows us what it means for an individual to have a calling towards a specific job or task. For instance, in the Old Testament, individuals such as Joseph, Moses, Ezra, and Ezekiel are

called for very specific jobs based on their qualities, even when they themselves did not believe in their abilities to complete the task at hand (Genesis 50:20; Exodus 3:11; Ezekiel 3:1-3:11). In the behavioral healthcare field, the call for healthcare professionals who are not only talented but also have a true passion for the field and its patients is needed.

According to Krank (2022), who discussed burnout as one of the causes of turnover in the field, confidence in one's abilities plays a role in how employees feel about their job and their decision to stay. In the Bible, God depicts several instances of people whose confidence was lost but had to be regained to complete their specific calling. For instance, that can be seen with Elijah during his battle at Baal (1 King 17:1-19:21). Erdal and Altindag (2020) mentioned that success in a business increase as confidence is built. This is extremely true in applied behavior analysis, where professionals often measure their success and value by their patients' progress. Therefore, like many people in the Bible who were selected for specific tasks or missions due to their individual qualities, employers in healthcare looking to retain employees should seek employees who encompass the four Cs of person-to-organization fit: calling, competence, confidence, and character (Herkes et al., 2020). Successful organizations in the field of ABA, not only focus on these four Cs, but also encompass adequate support and growth opportunities for their staff. These organizations are more likely to see a positive increase in their retention rates.

Benefit to Business Practice and Relationship to Cognate

Having turnover in healthcare practices tends to result in decreased quality of care and operational challenges (Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, 2017). This is especially true for the applied behavior analysis field, as retention directly affects the consistency and quality of care provided to its patients. By exploring those factors that can either help increase retention or result in turnover, healthcare businesses in the behavioral healthcare field can better plan to implement

employee engagement strategies that may be beneficial to reducing turnover and increasing employee satisfaction overall. Healthcare managers have a challenging job balancing business growth, hitting goals, and maintaining employee retention, but challenges associated with satisfaction and its varying components and overall success of the business can be stressful, especially when there are issues with talent acquisition (Qian et al, 2024). This study sought to pinpoint the areas in behavioral health that could be changed to help mitigate some of the turnover, retention, and talent acquisition challenges for those managers in this field.

Retention and turnover issues typically fall on both human resource professionals and healthcare managers to decipher what strategies can be implemented (Mia et al., 2022). Although human resource professionals have a large part to play in most organizations when it comes to retention, turnover, and recruiting, healthcare managers bear the burden of running an inefficient business when solid retention strategies are not in play. Therefore, this study is related to the healthcare management cognate as it focuses on one of the biggest challenges for the healthcare segment today, recruiting and retention. The healthcare management cognate focuses on several different areas that healthcare managers will have to master, including ethics, business financials, marketing, business law, talent acquisition, and employer-employee relationships. With this study focusing on retention efforts in healthcare management, there is a direct relationship to the cognate as this is one of the core areas discussed in healthcare management studies.

Summary of the Significance of the Study

Although the following study was conducted to give an in-depth look into the issues faced by healthcare managers in ABA, there are some limitations and areas that future research could explore. Due to the overall framework of the study, limitations and delimitations will be essential to explore in future studies for a more cohesive overview of turnover and retention in

this area of healthcare. This study provided a good foundation on the topic for future researchers to explore further and replicate to achieve comparable results. With healthcare managers currently facing issues with retention, the applicability of this study to real-life business situations in the healthcare field, regardless of its current limitations, can be beneficial.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative, single-case study was to gain a comprehensive understanding of the factors that plague the healthcare industry, especially the field of applied behavior analysis, with turnover and how healthcare managers can use proactive strategies to increase retention rates. With turnover plaguing the healthcare industry and retention strategies being highlighted to ensure better and longer tenure of skilled workers, this review sought to examine the factors related to turnover in healthcare along with strategies that managers could employ to improve upon retention. The literature review outlined what the current literature around turnover in healthcare has deciphered as priority risk factors for high turnover, focusing specifically on the behavioral healthcare industry. In addition, the literature review pinpoints those essential concepts related to the study while determining where the gaps were in the current literature and how this study could help reduce those gaps. Understanding where the gaps are in the literature could help with future studies, such as areas that have not been explored could become the focus in the future. Nonetheless, those anticipated and discovered themes based on the existing literature were outlined and discussed on how they were related to the study and why they provided a benefit for conducting this study. Whereas the anticipated themes were more likely to fall in line with current studies and built upon explaining the problem of persistent turnover, the discovered themes helped shed light on areas that may not have been heavily focused on.

Business Practices

Retention and turnover are significant parts of running a successful business.

Organizations struggling with retention will ultimately suffer in other areas, such as revenue, overhead, customer satisfaction, and quality of service (Coetzee & Bester, 2021). Healthcare managers who can appropriately staff their facilities with quality employees tend to have better long-term success operationally, as retention is one of the key performance indicators of success for a business. Therefore, controlling retention and turnover rates will be pivotal for desirable results, especially for hitting revenue goals. In many segments of behavioral health, particularly in applied behavior analysis, there is a direct 1:1 patient-to-staff ratio, making retention a highly focused area for the business.

Organizations must be aware of a significant amount of competition in the current healthcare industry, including the field of ABA. To continue to be in business and grow, ABA companies must focus on the aspects of running the business that will help them in this process. Retention, which has been a big mishap in the field of ABA, is part of the business aspect that requires a huge focus. However, to do so, businesses in this field must tackle the issues that either lead to turnover or help with retention while still finding ways to focus on the quality of care provided. To be a top-performing ABA company in healthcare, business-related initiatives must be adopted that focus on the tactics and strategies needed to help retain vital staff in the field.

Successful businesses realize that the outlook or perception formed around their organization plays a pivotal part in the long-term success of that organization. In healthcare, companies that regularly identify the differences between patient care and their values continue to grow due to their willingness to center their business around their patients. These types of

values, as well as others, can have a lasting effect on those who choose to join an organization and remain with the organization to continue to push the mission at hand. These practices in the field of ABA play a part in why clinicians and other vital employees may choose to stay or leave an organization. In addition, the overall mission versus what is being executed can play a part in burnout, leadership styles, and how or who an organization recruits.

The Problem

The healthcare field has seen significant shifts in retention, with specific segments such as behavioral healthcare having several challenges. According to Kloutsiniotis and Mihail (2017), when turnover occurs in behavioral health, the quality of care tends to decrease, decreasing other areas such as overall patient progress and satisfaction. In addition, healthcare managers in this field can often have difficulty keeping up with behavioral health retention needs due to the challenging level of work the field requires (Zada et al., 2021). Healthcare managers in applied behavior analysis can often feel overwhelmed by the need for constant recruiting when turnover occurs, primarily due to factors they may not have control over. As retention becomes increasingly significant to operate in the ABA field effectively, healthcare managers are tasked with the challenges of balancing employee satisfaction, appropriate leadership styles, and retention strategies.

Background

Turnover is problematic in an organization as it disrupts an organization's production while causing an increase in overhead in training new employees (Perreira et al., 2018). Managers who have ongoing issues with retention often end up with an array of operational challenges including, financial challenges, issues with organizational culture, scheduling issues, and problems in effective leadership strategies (Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, 2017). Retention

challenges have often left many managers short-staffed, which has led to a decrease in quality of care (Shufutinsky & Cox, 2019). The general problem to be addressed is how issues with retention in healthcare has resulted in operational challenges for healthcare managers such as ineffective services, decreased productivity, and a decrease in job satisfaction for employees.

Understaffing of clinicians in the healthcare sector has increased tremendously (Shufutinsky & Cox, 2019). The increase of turnover in healthcare has made a massive impact on the consistency of patient care and outcomes (Qian et al, 2024). The loss of skilled clinicians has a heavy impact on an organization both operationally and clinically (Mia et al., 2022; Qian et al., 2024). The specific problem to be addressed is the potential retention issues within behavioral healthcare resulting in potential operational challenges for healthcare manager such as ineffective services, decreased productivity, and a decrease in job satisfaction for employees.

Concepts

Job Satisfaction is a Crucial Indicator of Higher Retention. Employee satisfaction can be affected by a multitude of combined factors, according to Bowens et al. (2021), including learning opportunities and support, workplace conditions, management styles of upper leadership, job requirements, pay, and opportunities for advancement. Together, these elements represent a set of norms and behaviors that can either encourage employee job satisfaction or lead to staff turnover.

Working Conditions. Employees tend to have a more positive outlook on their organization if their work environment is conducive to their needs. According to Aman-Ullah et al. (2021), unpleasant working conditions will likely lead to employee dissatisfaction. Young et al. (2021), mentions that employees are often prone to work better when favorable conditions create a sense of safety, inspiration, and convenience. On the other hand, poor working

conditions instill a sense of dread in employees, often causing apprehension or fear of coming to work. Studies that have investigated job satisfaction amongst employees conclude that employees benefit from environments that foster a sense of connectedness, and safe and appropriate working environments help create a connected culture (Young et al.,2021).

Pay and Promotion. According to Rowan et al. (2022), the ability for upward movement within an organization is pivotal to many employees to create job satisfaction. In addition, opportunities to increase wages and receive fair working compensation are essential for an employee's overall satisfaction. Rowan et al. (2022) notes that pay is significant as it impacts employees' feeling valued and appreciated. Employees who are paid fair wages typically have higher job satisfaction ratings than those who feel underpaid and undervalued (Rowan et al., 2022). On the other hand, opportunities for advancement show employees that their work performance is being rewarded. Promotions are associated with greater responsibility, power, independence, higher pay, and higher prestige, which often can lead to feelings of satisfaction.

Training and Development. According to Vidal and Olley (2021) training can occur in two different forms, differential and development. The purpose of differential training is to ensure that the employee has the skills necessary to do their current job, therefore this type of training focuses on what aspects of their current expectations need to be addressed by new or reoccurring training initiatives. On the other hand, development refers to teaching more comprehensive abilities required for both the present and future potential roles. Vidal and Olley (2021) describe training and development as an educational process that helps with sharpening up skills, changing attitudes, learning better techniques, and the additional information given to employees to help them improve their performance. According to previous research (Vidal & Olley, 2021), having efficient training programs within an organization has been identified as a

motivating driver for job satisfaction, with a significant link between training and development and employee retention.

Job Security. Aman-Ullah et al. (2021), defines job security as the certainty given to an employee that they will maintain with their current job. Employment characteristics such as job security led to intense dedication, work satisfaction, and employee engagement in a firm. Therefore, employee work happiness becomes a byproduct of having job stability. While specific jobs may have better potential to have improved job security, regardless of the industry, Aman-Ullah et al. (2021), depicts that job satisfaction is related to high levels of job security.

Relationship with Co-workers. According to Rowan et al. (2022), humans have an innate tendency to communicate with others. As a result, the existence of a group within the organization is widely known, resulting in isolated workers feeling dissatisfied with their jobs. A positive working connection with colleagues enhances employee participation, which impacts employee productivity and, as a result, job happiness.

Employee Engagement Strategies Lead to Retention Strategies

Tyagi (2021) details that employee retention is instrumental to an organization's success and continuity. Retention refers to the ability to retain, and in the human resource context, it relates to a company's ability to maintain its workforce (Boyd & Larson, 2023). Studies have shown that retention is influenced by a firm's set of policies and practices and if these policies and procedures are tailored towards preventing the loss of valued employees. Retention and retention strategies emphasize the importance of taking the appropriate measures to influence employees to remain within an organization for the maximum period of time possible. Retention efforts are geared towards ensuring that skilled and experienced employees stay a part of an

organization, as these individuals are instrumental to the level of efficiency and productivity a company will have (Tyagi, 2021).

Studies on retention and turnover have noted that turnover is a critical factor that adversely affects an organization due to the cost involved. According to De Armond Hillard (2021), turnover cost may be experienced through the time required for talent acquisition teams to recruit and select a new employee, the time it takes for the new employee to get accustomed to the organization, and the associated cost of learning the company's systems and policies. Therefore, the company loses time and resources training the employee to replace the outgoing individual. The challenge presented by employee turnover emphasizes the importance of companies adopting measures and processes to promote employee retention in the organization (Tyagi, 2021). Retention initiatives such as employee engagement are essential in helping an organization maintain retention rates. Tyagi (2022) mentions that the human resource departments often help the organization adopt company processes tailored towards promoting the provision of a work environment through company policies geared towards improving the level of employee retention experienced in the company.

Arslan and Roudaki (2019) present that promoting an organizational environment that fosters employee retention is integral to the company's success. Employee retention contributes to a company's innovative capacity, efficiency, and productivity and its competitive position in the market. Tyagi (2021) details that creating an environment with a prominent level of employee engagement and retention involves having structures catering to employee needs, culminating in high levels of employee motivation and retention in the organization.

Boyd and Larson (2023) developed the argument that setting organizational structures and processes that understand factors that motivate employees is instrumental in influencing the

level of employee retention experienced at the organization. Boyd and Larson (2023) highlighted the relationship between employee motivation and retention in this case. Understanding such factors influencing the level of employee retention is instrumental to an organization as it aids in assessing the internal organizational measures and possible changes that may be adopted to enhance employee retention in the organization.

Overall, employee turnover remains high across companies with poor working conditions and those organizations whose salaries and benefits packages do not meet the extrinsic needs of employees in the organizational environment (De Armond Hillard, 2021). Managers who understand the importance of creating a favorable work environment for employees tend to have positive results in the company benefiting from elevated levels of employee engagement. Employee engagement is successful when employees develop an emotional attachment to their work, whereby the employee garners satisfaction from the proper execution of the assigned work roles and processes (Arslan & Roudaki, 2019).

Retention has been adopted as a critical area of research as managers continually seek to identify factors that may be taken in the organizational environment to promote employee retention in the firm (Tyagi, 2021). The importance is derived from the benefits accrued to a company with a high employee retention rate through ease of operations and high efficiency levels, resulting in increased productivity and company growth. Factors contributing to employee retention may be influenced by needs presented in the work environment and personal employee needs.

Burnout as a Factor for Turnover

In healthcare, the daily interaction between clinicians and patients can be linked to burnout and voluntary turnover. Lee (2019) has defined burnout as a concept having three

dimensions: emotional exhaustion, reduction in professional efficacy, and cynicism. Studies on the theory of Conservation of Resources note that employees work essentially to obtain, retain, and foster valued resources. Therefore, when burnout occurs, employees cannot conserve their resources but instead go into a state of physical, mental, and emotional stress. Larner et al. (2017) explains that workplace stress occurs when critical resources needed in the workplace are threatened with loss or when there is a failure to gain essential resources required. Stressors, according to Barthauer et al. (2020), contribute to burnout. When stressors exceed an employee's available resources for coping, employees often feel emotionally exhausted, and the strain of meeting certain job expectations becomes tiring.

According to Weikel and Fisher (2021;2022), managers must examine what specific workplace resources contribute to stress and burnout. Lee (2019) mentions that humans have initiated the desire to maintain and form social bonds and self-esteem. Therefore, when burnout triggers occur, they can often affect how employees view themselves and their connections with others. Barthauer et al. (2020) mentions the term constituent attachments, which refers to the critical social interactions and relationships made valuable from peer to peer in a workplace. Workplaces that require a large amount of physical and mental fortitude often require solid social connections as a coping mechanism for their employees. Research across the healthcare industry has shown that when employees have a strong presence of social network in the workplace, voluntary turnover often decreases, and acquiring help to mediate workplace stressors often increase.

Velando-Soriano et al. (2020) speaks about social support having one of two components, emotional or instrumental. Instrumental support was characterized as practical support, such as assistance with help solving a problem, providing knowledge, or advice to help with task

completion. On the other hand, emotional support was described as support in the form of offering understanding and care, which could include active listening to another person in a sympathetic way. Understanding these types of support can be essential in helping mitigate the adverse effects of stressors in the workplace that can often lead to burnout. In addition, these types of support are relevant to understanding overall job satisfaction. Velando-Soriano et al. (2020) mentions that having the appropriate social support in a workplace is an essential resource for employees to feel comfortable in the workplace environment. Those employees who do not get social support at work tend to have high levels of emotional exhaustion, which may lead to turnover.

Retention Related to Employee Morale

Morale refers to an employee's attitude towards their job, colleagues, and employer. According to Skelton et al. (2019;2020), productivity is related to employee morale. Employees with high morale are associated with job satisfaction, are more likely to put in the effort, be creative, take the initiative, are committed to the organization, and focus on achieving organizational goals. High morale helps to contribute to high levels of productivity, high returns to stakeholders, and employee loyalty. According to Hultman (2020), morale is defined as the depiction of emotions, satisfaction, and overall attitude towards the organization in which they work.

Low morale also can have a significant impact on an organization. Verma and Kesari (2020) describe low morale as promoting high turnover and unsolved complaints, thereby restraining an organization's performance. Employee morale can increase through respect, involvement, appreciation, adequate compensation, promotions, a pleasant work environment, and a positive organizational culture. Obeng et al. (2021), says that managers who understand the

importance of employee morale are those who have made the connection between engagement, morale, and retention issues. In the healthcare industry today, many organizations wish to maintain positive morale among their employees because employees with positive morale perform better, reveal a low rate of absenteeism, low wastage, high productivity, and tend to behave loyally (Obeng et al.,2021).

Factors affecting employee morale. Employee morale has become a crucial role in examining an organization's performance. Therefore, managers are being tested daily on their capabilities to keep employees engaged while also implementing the policies defined by the organization. This has seen several factors being enlisted as significant factors affecting the morale of employees.

According to Lee et al. (2022), communication within an organization is pivotal to the level of morale in the workplace. For many companies, there are many levels of information—from management to employees, between departments, management groups, and individual employees. Communication channels need to remain open to maintain morale, and relevant information must be tackled promptly. This will help in doing away with rumors in the organization and ensuring that facts are being relayed amongst its employees (Skelton et al., 2019;2020). According to Obeng et al. (2021), job security is listed as having a significant impact on ongoing morale for employees. Employees who fear retrenchment often show low productivity, which can negatively affect the overall workplace environment. In addition, Lee et al. (2022) notes that employees who feel their leaders are competent and aware of organizational changes can determine the workplace's morale. Whenever the management operates in quality service delivery, it promotes employee trust in the organization. When management proves to be

incompetent, then the entire system can suffer from a drop in morale that can be counterproductive (Skelton et al., 2019;2020).

Similarly, morale can be negatively increased if employees feel that the organization allows no career path with advancement and if the company does not offer some reward for employee loyalty and dedication. Obeng et al. (2021) mentions that employees should feel that their companies' values are clear and unambiguous to generate higher engagement. Whenever there are organizational politics, then this impacts the employee's engagement negatively. This could directly impact work engagement, resulting in adverse job outcomes, lower organizational commitment, and greater turnover intentions.

Once good morale has been established, keeping positive morale within the workplace is critical for long-term success (Skelton et al., 2019;2020). To help with this long-term success, Obeng et al. (2021) suggest that team building has had a long-term positive relationship between employee morale and employee retention. Team performance, individual contribution, team evaluation, and coordination have a long-term positive relationship between employee morale and employee retention (Hultman, 2020). In addition, studies have revealed that there is a relationship between leadership and morale, and those leadership competencies such as communication, fostering trust, and team building set a clear direction for the collective impact on morale. Many studies have noted the importance of managers taking surveys in the workplace to gauge the impact of their leadership on morale to foster an environment where employees want to remain (Verma & Kesari, 2020).

In conclusion, an organization's employee morale directly impacts its customers' satisfaction level and the company's ultimate success. Leaders who are relationship based tend to promote core competency development of their employees throughout the organization. In

addition, they create an opportunity to ensure high employee morale and customer satisfaction, increase employee and customer retention rates, and create a positive long-term outlook for the company's successful performance (Lee et al., 2022). Obeng et al. (2021) explained that the behaviors depicted in the workplace significantly impact the output of that organization's employees. Across multiple studies, it has been concluded that employee engagement from managers and corporate executives was perceived to affect belongingness and long-term morale within an organization positively.

Theories

The intent of the theories section is to draw upon existing observations and knowledge to draw a connection to the current study. The detailed theories discussed in this research will help form the study by exploring how the studied theories relate to the current topic at hand.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, Job Embeddedness Theory and Servant Leadership Theory are three theories that are crucial to understanding the nature of turnover in the current climate of healthcare. Each of these theories help bring forth an understanding of why employees leave or stay within an organization, what underlining factors are important to retention and job satisfaction, and how can healthcare leaders be a part of the retention effort in healthcare.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory was created to understand better what factors affected how employees felt about their job and their employer overall, what motivated them, and what factors contributed to employees being satisfied or dissatisfied with their job (Thant & Chang, 2020;2021). Frederick Herzberg, the psychologist, and founder of theory in the 1950s and 60s, realized that there was a vast difference in responses between those who felt good and bad about their job (Lee et al, 2022). Herzberg noticed that there was a repetition of characteristics that were related to satisfied and dissatisfied employees.

Factors of satisfaction were components surrounding recognition, achievement, advancement, growth, responsibility, and the mission associated with the job itself. On the other hand, dissatisfaction had the repeating components of ill working conditions, lack of job security, discontent with salary, negative relationships with supervisors and peers, and dissatisfaction with company policies.

According to the theory (Ramdhani, & Bakri, 2020), the factors are related to job satisfaction and are a separate entity and very distinct from those related to job dissatisfaction. The factors pertaining to dissatisfaction are referred to as hygiene, whereas motivating factors are those related to job satisfaction. Because these two factors are distinct from each other, the theory suggests that if one sets out to eliminate the dissatisfying factors by adding those factors that are related to satisfaction, one may create momentary peace but will not necessarily increase performance or increase satisfaction (Lee et al, 2022). For instance, if an employee is dissatisfied with their working environment due to toxic relationships with peers and supervisors, giving that employee a promotion does not eliminate the dissatisfaction. Furthermore, addressing the factors related to job dissatisfaction also will not automatically make employees satisfied. According to Lee et al. (2022), an employer must look at each the motivating and hygiene factors separately, addressing the components individually to decrease feelings of job dissatisfaction, increase job satisfaction, and maintain satisfaction when it is achieved.

When assessing hygiene factors and how to eliminate them, Herzberg's theory suggests the elimination or correction of a few components. One of these components is fixing obstructive and poor company policies (Koncar et al., 2021;2022). A company that focuses on policies that create fair yet structured protocols for their employees is more likely to have satisfied staff. Policies that are set that tend to only show benefits for the organization without considering

benefits and fairness for its employees will more than likely end in dissatisfied employees.

Another component is eliminating intrusive supervision by replacing it with productive and effective management (Koncar et al., 2021;2022). When employees feel that they are being micromanaged and their supervisors are more concerned with overseeing all aspects of their work but do not provide supportive and effective supervision, dissatisfaction is likely to occur. This helps facilitate aspects of another component, creating a supportive culture of respect, trust, and dignity. Other essential details listed as hygiene factors that need to be fixed include making wages competitive, ensuring job security, and providing meaningful work for all positions.

Job Embeddedness Theory. Tenured managers know that there is no secret ingredient to ensure that employees stay engaged and productive long-term. Instead, these leaders are aware that they must implement strategies that help ensure that their employees remain embedded in the job they are expected to do. The cost of replacing an employee can be higher than the salary of the individual leaving; therefore, creating an environment where employees are embedded in where they work is crucial for retention (Ampofo et al., 2017). Embeddedness starts with meaningful work that aligns with the organization's mission. When people seek employment, they often choose companies where they feel the job they will be doing is valuable (Lee & Lee, 2022). In addition, individuals will look for the overall mission of the organization portrayed to see if it aligns with their belief systems and if they feel compelled to work for that organization based on the mission and vision. In addition, the social relationships employees form inside and outside the organization will determine how embedded they are (Ampofo et al., 2017). The overall theory of Job Embeddedness says an organization has three crucial components of employee embeddedness (Aman-Ullah, Azizet al., 2021). The first component looks at how to what extent the employee links to others within the organization. The second component looks at

the links the employee has to the job, the community, and how the job may relate to other aspects of that individual's life. The last components look at how the ease of breaking those links, essentially inspecting what they would be giving up by leaving the organization. According to Labrague et al. (2020), the question of why people leave an organization versus why they stay with an organization may be explained by how much they are embedded within their current organization.

Servant Leadership Theory. The term servant leadership was coined by Robert Greenleaf around 1970, even though the concept itself had been practiced before the origin of the word (Standish et al., 2020). The premise behind servant leadership comes from the idea that leaders are to serve first, applying a great deal of effort to focus on the needs of the people they lead before considering their own. Leaders who follow servant leadership principles tend to acknowledge the perspectives of others, provide precise and individualized support, and care about being involved in helping their team members achieve goals. Furthermore, this type of leadership results in higher levels of engagement, a more trusting environment, and stronger bonds between team members and managers (Song et al., 2021).

Afsar and Umrani (2020) mention that servant leadership is more of a description of how a leader behaves than a technique. This leadership behavior is usually adopted over time and tends to remain long-term embedded within a leader. Components of servant leadership include some similarities to other leadership styles like transformational leadership (Afsar & Umrani, 2020), where a democratic approach is often taken when it comes to decision-making. This is partly due to the central focus on other people's needs. Nonetheless, it is important to differentiate that although servant leaders focus on unique needs, they should not avoid making unpopular decisions due to people's feelings. In addition, Sendjaya et al. (2020) explains that

servant leadership is best used in conjunction with other styles of leadership, allowing for the development of a solid team through leadership that encompasses the motivation of others and implementation of the vision.

Kauppila et al. (2022) proposes an opposing view, detailing that although leadership style is crucial to cultivating a good work environment, servant leadership is not necessarily the best form. In fact, Kauppila et al. (2022) mentions that in some industries, this type of leadership does not work and can cause low production levels. Although the author agrees that in today's workforce, employees are more likely to leave their position due to the work environment created by their employer, the type of leadership style needed is dependent on the industry, the demographics of one's employees, and how decisions are ultimately made. In healthcare, where decisions can often be made quickly and require immediate implementation, Kauppila et al. (2022) suggest that managers must have a balance of being authoritative while encompassing some of the traits of servant leaders. This balance allows for efficiency to take precedence in ensuring adequate care is being given to patients while displaying to employee that's managers can put themselves in the shoes of their employees and work cohesively at task.

Constructs

For support and validity within the research, certain constructs are discussed as important themes. These themes are related to the research questions and problems and lay the foundation for what important topics will be discussed in relation to specific problem in the study. Leadership style, organizational culture, burnout, and turnover are important constructs to understand as each of them build upon the foundation of what the problem is and why it is occurring. Burnout, leadership style, and organizational culture all play a part in addressing the problem at hand whereas turnover is a part of the problem and continues to be the end result due

to specific factors of the discussed themes. Each construct discussed will be defined and described in relation to the problem based on what the current research proposes.

Leadership style. Leadership and motivation significantly impact employee retention rates in an organization (Peng et al., 2021). To maximize profitability and productivity, business entities should focus their efforts on implementing an effective employee retention strategy (De Armond Hillard, 2021). While many elements can impact employee retention rate, an organization's leadership style and approach have a tremendous influence. Strong and effective leadership not only engages the workforce and improves the organizational culture but also inspires and motivates employees, thereby increasing retention. According to Peng et al. (2021), effective leadership is essential in attracting skilled employees, properly inducting them into the organizational culture, and ensuring low employee turnover rates. Therefore, the role of leadership in the motivation and retention of employees cannot be ignored by organizations.

Employee motivation is one of the most important results of effective leadership. It is noteworthy that employee motivation refers to the internal and intrinsic drive, such as commitment, creativity, and energy level, to employ the necessary action and effort to undertake work-related activities. It is hypothesized that successful leaders are also successful managers partly due to their ability to influence employees to help accomplish the goals of an entity (De Armond Hillard, 2021). However, it is vital to understand that employees are not only motivated by inspiring them to achieve organizational goals but also by helping them to achieve career and personal goals. Leadership and motivation are interactive, considering that the effectiveness of leadership is critically contingent on the leaders' ability to motivate followers toward collective goals or a collective mission or vision (Afsar & Umrani, 2020).

Leadership style is considered to play a significant part in job employee retention (Metaferia et al., 2023). It is noted that leadership has the capacity to increase and decrease the degree of retention in any organization. The overall success of an organization, including the ability for growth, relies upon the nature of leadership (De Armond Hillard, 2021). Therefore, organizations need an increasingly dedicated leadership style that includes development, provides better service, and makes the employees committed to the organization to retain them. Practical leadership abilities and techniques can improve job fulfillment and advance employee retention in associations. However, employees' retention and execution in the organization can be enhanced by embracing the fitting leadership and administrative styles, which are steady with the business methodologies to improve the employees' inspiration and spirit (Afsar & Umrani, 2020).

Peng et al. (2021) discusses that there are several distinct types of leadership styles that can have an overall impact on an organization. For example, the bureaucratic leadership style requires complete devotion to rules and strategies even though the manager organizes things (Metaferia et al., 2023). This implies that leaders or administrators with this leadership style hold tight to the guidelines and standards that are spread out by the organization's approaches. This leadership style involves the manager is incredibly dedicated to the techniques and processes of the organization instead of focusing on their employees. This, in turn, results in rules and the organization's methodology having significantly more significance than the employees utilized to work (Afsar & Umrani, 2020). In today's workforce, bureaucratic leadership is associated with using employees in vantage to support an organization's overall goal, often making it difficult for employees under this type of leader to build trust with their manager. Over time, this may cause turnover of employees in organizations where this leadership is being used, as in today's

workforce, it is not considered a method for empowering employee retention (Metaferia et al., 2023).

The Laissez-faire leadership style is one in which the leader has no confidence in their own capacity to manage (Saeed et al., 2023). Managers with this style often have little unmistakable set objectives for how they may function. In addition, they often do not help their employees settle on choices, leaving them an excessive amount of obligation. Organizations with employee managers with this style are not operational since both the manager and their employees contribute to the dynamic procedure to guarantee the organization's development.

Charismatic leadership is considered one of the most generally esteemed leadership styles in the current workplace (Saeed et al., 2023). The charismatic manager is often characterized as possessing the ability to drive and inspire employees to make the organization's goals come to life. The charismatic leadership style is said to be recognized with the transformational leadership style since the two work at spurring employees to attain results (Saeed et al., 2023). The expectancy of the transformational leader is intensive for the contentment and accomplishment of the organization and group objectives, whereas charismatic managers may have an increasing fixation on themselves. Due to this, they are more likely to have less impact on organizational changes than transformational leaders.

Metaferia et al. (2023), detailed transformational leaders as being concerned about the advancement of the total capability of people and their inspiration toward more prominent benefits versus their matters within a value-based framework. This leadership style improved organization efficiency by inspiring employee execution of organizational goals through various components. This includes being a good role model for employees that moves them and captivates them, provoking them to take more notable proprietorship for their work, and

considering the qualities and deficiencies of employees. Leaders with this style can encourage employees with activities that enhance their abilities (Metaferia et al., 2023). In the healthcare field, transformational leadership is the best for employee retention as employees are permitted to give thoughts on how an organization ought to accomplish objectives. This is perhaps the ideal approach to win the trust and keep employees faithful to the organization. In addition, this helps create a successful correspondence framework that permits a two-route flow of data; managers should not just focus on giving data and feedback but also look for input from their employees (Peng et al., 2021).

Organizational culture. Organizational culture is defined as a collective of values, practices, and expectations that help guide a team's actions (Pasricha et al., 2018;2017). Essentially, organizational culture is the traits that make up a company and how it may be viewed. Companies that exemplify great culture are those that have the positive traits to lead to improvements in performance, which in turn help with the overall success of the organization (Shufutinsky & Cox, 2019). Any business leader understands that organizational culture affects all aspects of a business, positively or negatively. An organization's culture determines how serious and invested team members are, affecting everything from the team's punctuality to the follow-through of the organization's mission. When the organization's culture and the team members are in alignment, there is more likely to be comfortability with the organization as well as feelings of value and support (Hills, 2020).

Culture is critical in recruiting new talent and maintaining retention within an organization. According to Krauss and Vanhove (2022), about three-fourths of job seekers consider a company's culture before deciding to apply, and about 50% of current employees would leave their current job for one with lower pay but a better work culture. In addition, work

culture is one of the top indicators of whether an employee would consider themselves satisfied or dissatisfied with their job. With that every culture is different, and therefore it is pivotal that a company tries to retain what makes them unique (Sahoo, 2022). Nonetheless, some consistencies in qualities help cultivate a positive and rewarding work culture. Some of the qualities include alignment, trust, teamwork, psychological safety, and integrity.

When looking at workplace qualities, alignment in terms of organizational culture looks at the company's objectives and motivations of its employees to determine if they are similar and moving in the same direction. Companies with great alignment are about to continuously build on their mission and goals by ensuring their employees have similar plans for their work. Organizations with no foundation of trust with their employees tend to foster negative and toxic work environments (Devlin et al., 2020). Trust is vital to the organization's success, especially during times of change or newness with procedures or policies in an organization. Companies need to foster an environment where employees trust those who they work with and work for. Like trust, integrity is another vital component of organizational culture. Integrity is needed to help build a strong team dynamic, foster an environment of transparency and honesty, and is critical to unifying teams within an organization (Krauss & Vanhove, 2022). One of the last qualities mentioned, psychological safety, describes the support employees get for being able to give honest feedback and feeling safe expressing themselves in the work environment. Psychological safety starts at the top, with managers having to cultivate an environment where employees have the sensibility of security and being comfortable (Sahoo, 2022).

In relating organizational culture to the retention of staff, human resource departments for a long time have been connecting the importance of corporate culture being a selling point to both attract and retain employees (Miller et al., 2020). Therefore, healthcare managers must

constantly assess whether their organization's culture has affected retention efforts. Managers who are willing to work towards creating a positive work environment tend to have better retention efforts than those managers who do not.

Burnout. The workplace can sometimes become highly exhausting in many organizations, especially in healthcare. Often this is due to the demands required in the workplace and the time and sacrifices needed to complete large workload cases. These workload cases, however, can become quite detrimental to an employee's physical and mental health and cause burnout. Workplace burnout is characterized by psychological and physical fatigue that develops from long-term stress, being overworked, and dealing with extreme working conditions (Kearney et al., 2020). Burnout arises when specific demands are placed on an employee that tends to surpass the individual's abilities. This can often be seen in healthcare organizations, with clinicians and healthcare workers being given expectations that require a lot from the employee to be attained, including long work hours, extra workload requirements, and working in unsafe environments. Lee (2019) specifically describes burnout as emotional exhaustion caused by the depletion of energy and emotional resources. In addition, depersonalization influences burnout, which refers to the continuous demonstration of negative insouciances, mood, and lack of concern towards service beneficiaries. In addition, burnout can also happen when there is a lack of individual accomplishments in the workplace, which can result in a negative evaluation of one's work (Barthauer et al., 2020).

Weikel and Fisher (2021;2022) details that burnout is often an employee's response to protracted instances of stress, which can have long-term adverse effects on a person's job satisfaction, lower job satisfaction, and derail an employee's productivity. Due to the high-stress nature of the healthcare field overall, healthcare workers are more vulnerable to burnout due to

the experiences that can strain their emotions, a challenging patient population, and stressful working conditions. This is remarkably accurate for clinicians in behavioral healthcare, as the employees are subjected to high emotional and physical stressors daily. High levels of burnout for healthcare workers like those who work in behavioral health are often attributed to the consistent direct contact and interactions of patients who require an abundance amount of attention and care. Due to this, burnout amongst these individuals often leads to emotional exhaustion, decreases empathy over time, and results in low achievement. According to Maresca et al. (2022), many healthcare workers in behavioral healthcare suffer from depression due to the high-stress levels in the workplace. Nonetheless, burnout for these clinicians can often occur due to a poor relationship between patients, unavailability of professional motivational rewards, poor leadership styles from superiors, and unclear feedback on job performance.

Mahmod and Rosari (2020) details that organizational policies or practices can contribute to healthcare worker burnout, such as unpredictable and uncontrollable schedules, insufficient staffing, and extra workload. In behavioral healthcare, clinicians are tasked with providing therapy in hopes of changing patient behavior for the best. This task, however, can become complicated when certain workplace practices are missing, such as adequate staff. Like many healthcare industries, employees in behavioral health often must increase their caseload when staffing is insufficient. In turn, this can increase the rate of burnout in a field that is already challenging on its own. Similarly, when unpredictable scheduling occurs, the burden it can place on clinicians in this field can create anxiety and a lack of confidence in its clinicians. Because the field of applied behavior analysis relies heavily on the pairing process between clinicians and patients, when clinicians are often given differing schedules of patients that they are not used to, it can cause employees to burn out rapidly.

Turnover. Turnover is a construct that significantly impacts the overall job satisfaction of employees, motivation in the work environment, and burnout. Sirili and Simba (2021) explain how an organization is run, and other factors such as pay, organizational connectedness, and training and development can decipher if an organization experiences high or low levels of turnover. According to Shufutinsky and Cox (2019), when turnover is incredibly high, the working environment usually has a deficit in appropriate leadership, the environment may be highly stressed, complacency is present, and overall job satisfaction is low. Sirili and Simba (2021) suggests that workplaces that require their employees to have unrealistic caseloads while working like machines will experience high turnover due to a lack of work-life balance. According to Larner et al. (2017), work-life balance is balancing professional duties while still maintaining the ability to enjoy personal pleasures or attend to personal needs outside of the workplace. In specific workplace environments like those in healthcare, work-life balance is usually interrupted due to employees working long hours and maintaining large caseloads that typically result in burnout. When burnout occurs and work-life balance is not prioritized, employees become less efficient, which could diminish the quality of care for the patients they are responsible for.

On the other hand, low turnover is associated with job satisfaction due to high levels of job motivation, employees working in an environment where their needs are attended to, and employee engagement is high (Hills, 2020). Larner et al. (2017) mentions that when proper workplace engagement is done strategically, it can help motivate employees to be more efficient and participate in solution-oriented decision-making processes. When employees are engaged continuously, the likelihood that they will leave an organization diminishes as they are more likely to have feelings of job satisfaction in their current roles. Young et al. (2021) also suggests

that turnover is low when employees feel they are adequately equipped to do their job functions. Organizations that ensure that employees are appropriately trained and developed are more likely to experience job satisfaction and low turnover rates. Proper training and development are essential to the organization and related to low turnover as it helps prepare an employee for the work task they are expected to be able to complete. When there is a lack of proper training and development, employees can often feel stressed, leading to early signs of burnout (Lee, 2019).

Financial Cost of Turnover. Studies have shown that the most sizable portion of operational expenditure comes from the salaries and benefits associated with staffing (Perreira, Berta & Herbert, 2018). For many healthcare industries, a large concentration on increasing retention while improving budgeting costs has been at the forefront of the operational procedures. In the field of applied behavior analysis, several factors can affect the budgeting of its clinical staff, including but not limited to the general goals of the organization, policies, and overall objectives. Each of these components helps decipher what budgeting may look like moving forward for ABA companies; therefore, when turnover occurs, it can significantly impact the projected budgeting that an organization may have had in place.

When companies lose employees, there are often two different ways this can occur. The first way is involuntary resignation, where the organization has determined that a particular employee is no longer a fit for the organization. This can be due to several reasons, such as performance issues and excessive issues regarding one's absences in the workplace. The other type of loss can occur when an employee decides that they no longer want to work for an organization. This type of loss is voluntary resignation and can be the costliest for an organization. Where involuntary resignation usually gives an organization some time to plan for vacant position backfill, voluntary resignation does not. This, in turn, can lead to losses in

revenue, an uptick in recruiting costs, and more expenditure on training costs that were not planned for.

According to Shaukat and Khurshid (2022), the cost of losing an employee can range from 25 to 200 percent of that worker's pay. The range in loss is mainly due to the disturbance in revenue gained when having a vacant opening for apposition. In addition, the burnout caused by other employees having to pick up extra workload and the overall expenses needed to employ a new employee can also contribute to the varying ranges in a loss for an organization (Sirili & Simba, 2021). Healthcare companies consistently facing retention issues are often in danger of losing profitability over the long term, which can impede the overall mission of the organization and the type of care they provide. Regardless of how much budgeting a company may assess for turnover, frequent issues with turnover will not be favorable for any organization in the healthcare field. With inflation and other increases in expenditures occurring, it is more important than ever for healthcare organizations to pay attention to how costly turnover can be and implement retention initiatives that can help mediate turnover (Sirili & Simba, 2021).

Loss of Knowledge. Turnover's impact on an organization is a persisting problem across many organizations including healthcare. One of the problems with turnover is the loss of qualified and tenured employees who understand the operations of tasks needed to be done to make a company successful. When turnover occurs in an organization, it means the possibility of another organization gaining specialized knowledge from the loss of that employee, which in turn can result in a competitive advantage for that organization. Therefore, the loss of knowledge is a threat to the company's undergoing retention difficulty. Loss of knowledge can occur in one of two ways regarding turnover (Mia et al.,2022). The first way is the loss of resources from human capital when retirement occurs. Employees who have been with an organization for a

long time harbor an astonishing amount of knowledge and are often seen as specialists in their field. Employees who have been with an organization for many years are often used as a resource in training and developing new employees to ensure that knowledge is passed down appropriately. Although losing tenured staff due to retirement may be something an organization is well aware of before it occurs, this loss nonetheless affects the company's productivity. The second way knowledge is lost in turnover is when employees unexpectedly leave an organization. This type of loss is the most detrimental of the two as not only is knowledge lost from the employee, but the company may not have enough time to equip themselves with regaining some of that knowledge that the employee has. Depending on the pretenses in which that employee has decided to leave, whether they help pass down some of the knowledge is in the hands of that employee (Mia et al., 2022). For instance, those employees who decide to leave due to unfavorable working environments are less inclined to help the organization before they leave. On the other hand, an employee who may have found a better job opportunity but is not leaving on any ill terms may ensure that the knowledge they have about their job is effectively passed down before their departure.

Related Studies

The following section of the literature review will draw upon those studies that will help build upon not only the problem, but possible solutions to the problem at hand. Each one of the related studies helps better define the problem and how it relates to either one of the constructs or theories or proposes a solution to the problem.

Employee Voice and Job Satisfaction: Exploration of Herzberg Two-Factor Theory.

The article by Lee et al. (2020) discussed employees' factors when deciding whether they will remain employed with an organization. According to this theory, this decision has two

components: motivation and hygiene factors. Where one component directly affects the retention of an employee, the other factor is correlated more so with their job satisfaction. This article is related to the study as it helps gain a broad overview of what employees find the most important when deciding to stay with an organization, which can be beneficial when implementing retention initiatives. The article also focuses on employees being vocal about their needs and how organizations can use the feedback given by employees to combat better any turnover issues they may have.

The Effects of Ethical Leadership. The article by Erdal and Altindag (2020) looks at specific leadership styles and how they can affect the overall performance of the employees within an organization. The authors in this article look at the different leadership styles and how it correlates with performance among their teams. According to the research, some leadership styles are more favorable to employees, especially in the healthcare industry, where collaborative environments are needed to provide efficient patient care. This article is related to the study as it will provide insight not only on the different leadership styles seen as more favorable but also on how healthcare managers can use this information to help guide their team in work performance.

Job Satisfaction and Servant Leadership. Farrington and Lillah (2019) dive into the servant leadership style of management and how it relates to job satisfaction. This article specifically looks at the healthcare industry and how leadership style in this business area can be affected by how employees feel their leaders lead the team. In addition, the authors look at the positives of this leadership style regarding healthcare professionals and why it may be more conducive to other leadership styles. This article is significant to the research study as it will give an in-depth look into a specific leadership style that has been noted as being successful in helping retain staff in healthcare. In addition, this article will serve as a comparison point to

another article that goes over different leadership styles and their pros and cons to employee retention.

Burnout Amongst Healthcare Managers. The article by Kearney et al. (2020) looks at the concept of burnout in the healthcare industry. The authors in this article specifically focus on burnout for healthcare professionals and the factors related to burnout. In addition, this article draws on comparisons of the different factors that have been noted in other studies regarding turnover and correlates those factors with what employees have discussed as reasons for leaving an employer. This article is related to the study as burnout has been noted as one of the most significant factors for turnover in ABA. Burnout for those professionals in the field of ABA can be displayed in various ways; therefore, this article will help align what employees have mentioned as burnout factors and how that relates to what has been described generally for healthcare professionals.

Human Resource Practices and its Relationship to Employee Intent to Leave. Kloutsiniotis and Mihail (2017) explore employee attitudes and how the practices of an organization can either negatively or positively affect those attitudes. Organizational culture across many business industries has been studied and mentioned as a low or high retention factor. This article is essential to the current study as the different practices associated with how an organization runs its business and treats its employees will significantly affect intentions regarding leaving or staying with an organization. In addition, this article touches on some of the fundamental principles discussed in Herzberg's Two-Factor theory.

Anticipated and Discovered Themes

Throughout the research study, there were themes that were previously anticipated while others were discovered after data collection and analysis processes took place. Each one of these

themes helped with the overall understanding of the phenomena at hand, while correlating back to the research questions. Those anticipated and discovered themes are derived from previous research studies on related topics, in which helped forge possible conclusions that may be presented once the study had been analyzed fully. The first theme which surrounded leadership style was presumed to be evident during the coding processes as previous studies on retention in the healthcare sector have correlated leadership style of managers and retention together. Although unknown the type of leadership style that is specifically preferred in the field of applied behavior analysis (ABA), previous studies have shown an overwhelming correlation between those leadership styles that present collaboration as the focal point for managers. Therefore, it was anticipated that leadership styles such as servant leadership and transformational leadership will produce better retention than those leadership styles that do not. On the other hand, discovered themes such as burnout and employee value propositions were expected to emerge after the analysis phase of the research due to the lack of previous research on these components as it pertains to clinicians in the field of ABA.

Retention associated with collaborative leadership. Managers with leadership styles that implement collaboration tend to encourage, inspire, and motivate their employees to embrace creativity and innovation to be the drivers of change in the workplace environment (Peng et al., 2021). Leaders who embody this collaborative leadership style are referred to as transformational leaders (Metaferia et al., 2023). These leaders encourage their employees to bring forth ideas and suggestions that could help an organization grow, shape its future, and advance in performance standards. Because the leadership that is implemented in an organization is the job of management, organizations that are more likely to implement this transformational approach to management tend to have better retention rates than those that do not. In addition,

enhanced work performance results from transformational leadership as it demonstrates trust and encourages employees to take the initiative around their work without the necessity to micromanage. Therefore, previous studies have correlated the collaborative style of transformational leaders and higher retention rates.

In healthcare, where the workload can be extraneous, transformational leaderships help address some of the critical issues that employees may face in the workplace that can lead to burnout. By allowing employees to be a part of some aspects of change and decisions, factors leading to burnout and voluntary turnover are more likely to be addressed. This is in part due to employees being able to present ideas that they feel may work for themselves and their colleagues when it comes to burnout. Nonetheless, this approach can only be successful when employees are given a safe platform to express their concerns and managers are open enough to be transparent with the employees they manage (Standish et al., 2020). Collaborative leaders, like those transformational ones, are able to get their employees to play a mediator in the role of burnout and job dissatisfaction due to employees having the ability to make change suggestions and help create an environment where employees want to perform their best. As a result of collaboration between leaders and their subordinates, performance standards are more prone to increase, making it easier for managers to achieve performance standards, and employees feel heard and validated, increasing job satisfaction as well. Therefore, leaders who implement a collaborative approach in their leadership style are perceived to have longer lasting and positive impacts on work behavior and outcomes for their employee base, using intrinsic mediators to help motivate their workforce (Afsar & Umrani, 2020).

When assessing the retention rate and how collaborative leadership plays a part, leaders who employ collaboration tend to have higher success in keeping their employees committed and

engaged in the organization and the work they do. This level of organizational commitment an employee has depends on the leadership type provided by their management team (Afsar & Umrani, 2020). Good leadership has the ability to enhance employee satisfaction, increase retention rates, and create an overall positive organizational culture. Controlling retention rates can promote overall enhanced productivity by hitting production goals, which is vital to the long-term success of an organization. Collaborative leadership positively affects employee morale, workplace culture, and job satisfaction. In fact, employees who are fully dedicated to achieving the goals in their workplace ultimately decrease voluntary turnover, which is the most prominent effect of collaborative leadership styles (Pasricha et al., 2018;2017).

High correlation of burnout and turnover related to lack of support. Clinicians in the field of ABA often experience high levels of burnout, resulting in a field with incredibly high turnover levels. Burnout in the field can result from many factors, but having the appropriate support needed to do one's job has been listed as one of the reasons for the amount of turnover that may occur (Kim et al., 2018). Clinicians in this field experience burnout when the adequate support needed by their superiors is not provided, which can come in the form of not adequately addressing concerns or complaints, lack of leadership support, prioritizing business objectives over employees, and so forth (Brown, 2021).

Concerns and Complaints. Clinicians who practice applied behavior analysis are often tugged in many ways due to the populations they serve. Providing therapy for children and adults with autism can create a physical, mental, and emotional toll on those who offer these services. Therefore, when issues arise and are not dealt with within a reasonable amount of time, this can create burnout for clinicians. Concerns like caseload size or makeup are one concern that can be seen often in the field (Leaf et al., 2017). Different types of clinicians, such as Registered

Behavior Technicians (RBT) and Board-Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA), may experience burnout from caseload, but both require solution management. RBTs are more likely to bring up concerns regarding the number of hours they are working with a specific client, the behaviors they may be facing with a client, or not feeling confident in their own skills to provide adequate therapy. Supervisors and managers dealing with these concerns from their RBT employee base may require immediate attention to mitigate burnout and turnover. Due to the physical and mental demands of the job, the average tenure for these clinicians in the field is less than two years. Many RBTs cite leaving the position due to unresolved concerns, the tediousness of the field, and lack of adequate pay for the type of job they endure (Leaf et al., 2017). Other clinicians in the field, like BCBAs, often have concerns regarding the size of their caseloads and not being able to adequately provide the support they need to both their client base and the technicians they supervise (Brown, 2021).

Lack of Leadership. The type of leadership available for staff in the field of applied behavior analysis is essential when addressing turnover factors. Clinicians and middle managers need the availability of leaders who will address their needs, facilitate avenues for improvement and growth, and present themselves on having a solid foundation to lead a team. Employees in this field often require leaders who will not only advocate for their staff but are knowledgeable about the business and its best practices (Kearney et al., 2020). In a field where direct care is given to patients, clinicians require leaders who understand ethical practices and make these practices forefront of how the business is run. Lack of leadership in this field often leads to burnout, which may have catastrophic results in the long run (Brown, 2021). BCBAs have cited leaving specific ABA organizations due to feelings of not being provided the leadership and mentorship needed to grow in the field (Kearney et al., 2020). RBTs have also seen this in the

field but have been primarily centered around BCBAs. Leadership in ABA can come in many forms, however the most cited forms that are necessary for employees to refrain from early burnout if giving constructive feedback in conjunction with mentorship, having a leader who will work alongside clinicians to advocate for clients, and leaders who present as being open and transparent with communication.

Business Over Employees. Like many businesses, ABA is not excluded from the possibilities of managers and executives prioritizing business over employees. However, when it occurs, it often leads to high levels of turnover as employees start to feel a lack of value in their job role. Prioritizing profits over people can often lead to unethical business practices, unreasonable responsibilities and caseload for employees, overworked staff, and a decline in quality of care for clients (Pasricha et al., 2018;2017). Like in many healthcare fields, clinicians in ABA can often get overwhelmed with the work demands when the operational side of the business pushes down agendas that may not be in line with the clinic segment (Kearney et al., 2020). When this occurs, it can create a gap between operational and clinical perspectives, causing employees to feel unhappy about the organization they work for. A continuous cycle of the operational and clinical gap often results in a loss of talented employees who may seek to be a part of an organization that places clinical objectives and employees over operational and monetary agendas. Companies that identify issues between clinical and operational agendas and work to align the two often have better long-term outcomes. However, those who continue to negate the problems of pushing solely business agendas without assessing its effect on their clinicians will most likely continue to lose employees and have issues with retention in the short and long term (Brown, 2021).

Employee Value Proposition. When assessing retention and turnover, one key component that is essential is employee value proposition or EVP. This is essentially the benefits that an employer offers an employee in exchange for their skills and talents. In the field of Applied Behavior Analysis, where burnout and turnover are relatively high, EVP can help managers and organizations deter turnover. Some components of employee value proposition are compensation, work environment, company culture, work-life balance, career advancement and company benefit package. EVP is not only important for attracting new talent, but also retaining current talent, especially in competitive markets. With the field of ABA having numerous opportunities for RBTs and BCBAs, how an organization's position's themselves by evaluating their employee value proposition may be the different between higher or lower turnover.

Compensation. One of the most discussed value propositions for most organizations is compensation for their employees (Hartono et al., 2021). Although compensation is one of the first value propositions that come to mind, it is not a lone determinant of whether an employee and stay with an organization. The same can be said for new talent looking for an organization, as compensation may be a large factor for some, the combination of compensation with other factors is usually the most important for many employees. When assessing compensation, employees and new talent look for a company to pay fair wages. Many times, these fair wages are assessed by market analysis to obtain what the average pay scale for that particular role is within a similar work setting (Ashraf, 2020). Employees are more likely to leave a company due to compensation if they feel that they are not being paid fairly compared to others with similar title and tenure. Therefore, although compensation may not be a sole factor in an employee's willingness to leave, it does have some influence. This is particularly true in the field of ABA

where pay ranges from BCBAs and RBTs can vary in large ranges, dependent on the size of the organization and the setting.

Career Advancement. For many employees, career advancement is one of the most important determinants of long-term tenure within an organization (Abu-Tineh et al.,2023). This is due to most employees having the intrinsic desire to advance their career, whether it is in the field they are currently in or in a new field. This theory holds true to those in the field of ABA, with both RBTs and BCBAs often looking for ways to advance their knowledge in the field as well as their career (Brown, 2021). For BCBAs, this could look like clinical leadership roles, which would allow for their caseload sizes to decrease and reduce burnout, while for RBTs this may have a variety of career path advancements that may be clinical. Nonetheless, career advancement opportunities as way to retain staff is an important element that organizations and managers must provide for long-term retention strategies (Chang & Hassali, 2021) Employees who view their organization as not having development opportunities are more likely to leave to find an organization that does. Therefore, when managers and organizations are assessing turnover and retention, it becomes important to evaluate the type of advancement opportunities one currently provides or those that could be provided in the future.

Work Culture. The environment in which an employee works is probably the most significant employee value proposition and employer can have (Lin et al.,2022). In fact, employees are more likely to leave an organization for negative work environment, even if they are compensated well and have overall good growth opportunity. Therefore, organizations that foster positive work environments through collaborative teamwork and engagement are more likely to have lower levels of turnover (Pinandita et al., 2024) This is extremely important for roles that may be considered tiring or have higher levels of burnout, due to the workload itself.

Employees who work in behavioral healthcare typically experience higher levels of stress than some other healthcare roles, therefore having a positive work culture is significantly important to the retention of staff. When employees experience positive work culture, productivity tends to increase, as employees enjoy being in their work environment (Lin et al.,2022). With work culture being one of the most important factors to retention, how managers and organizations leverage positive work culture can have a lasting effect on their overall retention of skilled labor.

Ongoing training and support necessary for staff success in ABA. Training and employee development within an organization is a significant part of how much a company will truly be able to succeed both in the short-term and long-term. Training and development is a part of human resources management that focuses on fulfilling gaps between the present and envisioned performance (Smyth et al., 2019). When organizations implement training, they are essentially coming up with organized, strategic ways of implementing certain activities to advance their employees' knowledge, competency, and skill levels. When training occurs, there are specific skills and behaviors that organizations are targeting that employers feel are crucial for employees to be able to complete in order for task accomplishment and efficiency to occur (Leaf et al., 2017;2018). For organizational goals to be accomplished, good training and development must be ingrained into the organizational policies. This will broaden employee skill sets and knowledge base, resulting in more efficient employees and opportunities for internal selection when advancement opportunities present themselves. Training and development allow employers to identify areas where weaknesses and improvements can be made for both the employee and the organization (Leaf et al.,2017;2018). For instance, changes in areas like technology require organizations to stay in line or ahead of the changes to serve their client base

better. Therefore, organizations need to implement ongoing training for new developments to ensure that their employees have the tools to perform their duties most effectively.

In the field of ABA, how training and development are designed and implemented is partly decided by the organization's size and what that organization wants to accomplish in the future. There are some ABA companies whose goal is to grow in size, expand their client's age demographic or move into different avenues of providing care. Regardless of the goal or mission of the company, proper training and development of its current and new employees will determine if they can attain the goal they have in place. For ABA companies looking to grow, training and development may entail expanding more roles that will allow the company to have a bigger team to help with growth. Therefore, the organization may implement development programs to help groom current employees for advancement roles. Another hand, an ABA company that is looking to expand the type of clients they currently provide services to may help train new and current employees on the differences that may exist from one client base to another and how to provide services adequately to both. Because the field of ABA can serve a wide range of ages, a company whose initial focus was on early intervention ages who is seeking to expand to adults would need to be able to train and develop its employees on the different therapy methods that may be appropriate for one group over another. Lastly, an ABA organization that may focus on expanding into different settings would need to focus its training and development on how therapy should look in different environments. Companies that started out as in-home primarily looking to expand into a clinical setting would require development programs on how therapy should be navigated in a more structured in-patient versus in the home. Nonetheless, a company must identify the need for training and decide how much of it will be needed to produce the results they are looking for.

In addition, companies looking to invest in training and development programs also have to decide how to deliver training to their employees. The delivery method is vital as an organization wants to ensure that the information they provide to their employees is beneficial and provides the best opportunity for skill acquisition. Managers and trainers should analyze the training delivery to assess the best method for training accurately. Training can be delivered in several different methods, including role-playing, lectures, e-learning, on-the-job training, and stimulation games (Smyth et al., 2019). Depending on the type of trainees and why the training is being conducted in the first place, managers and trainers should decide what method would be the most conducive to the targeted audience. The method chosen in some cases can be combined if it provides the most effective way of learning.

Summary of the Literature Review

The overarching purpose of this literature review was to provide a comprehensive overview of the previous research on retention challenges in healthcare. This research review allows for a more accessible venue to the knowledge of what is both known on the topic and what conclusion may arise from it. Currently, there is much research on healthcare and retention challenges, and this review sought to bring light to what those studies have concluded and how it will relate to the specific healthcare segment of applied behavior analysis. With the topics discussed throughout this review, it has allowed for an in-depth look at where the research on retention in healthcare and ABA has been and areas that should be focused on the future. Nonetheless, for a holistic understanding of the specific challenge of retention ABA and its impact on healthcare managers, this review sought to highlight those theories, concepts, and constructs that will play a role in comprehending the specific problem and the purpose of this study.

Summary of Section 1 and Transition

Several factors related to both retention and turnover rate have been studied in several other research that has concluded in theories that can help a business reduce turnover (Perreira et al., 2018). The healthcare industry has a unique situation, especially behavioral health, regarding retention and turnover due to the quality of care that can be affected when retention is not handled delicately. Therefore, managers in this field can reduce turnover by implementing different tactics that have been proven to help with retention rates. With that, organizations and managers who take the time to honestly assess their deficits in being able to retain employees have a better chance of having better retention rates in the future. Joseph et al. (2022) mentioned that the implementation of effective retention initiatives can be the difference between an organization being able to rise from the challenges of turnover. In all, retention plays a significant role in effectively running an ABA company while providing its patients with the type of care they are expecting to receive. Due to that, healthcare managers must ensure that they are intoned with the needs of their employees, including but not limited to their well-being, concerns they may have, support from their team and management, as well as producing an environment where staff enjoys working. When assessing concepts and theories, the correlation between the components of job satisfaction or dissatisfaction significantly impacts the rate of retention or turnover in the field of ABA. The relationship between the actors, concepts, and theories for this study sought to connect the challenges healthcare managers may face with retention and those factors that are either associated with employee retention or employee turnover. Each of one these components played a significant role in understanding the problem at hand and required an understanding to properly assess what changes are needed to address the problem and produce favorable results.

The next section of this study addressed the research methodology taken and the specific tool used to conduct the research. In addition, a look into researcher bias, if present, and what the role of the researcher was in the study will be analyzed to discuss the reliability of the study. Furthermore, an analysis of the actual sample size used for the study, specifically who the participants were and how they were selected was discussed in order to address the concern of validity and generalizability. Lastly, the next section looked at how data was collected and what methods were used to organize and translate the data provided. Whereas Section I examined the problem and the concepts or theories related to the problem, Section II focused on how the researcher will arrive at the desired results.

Section 2: The Project

This qualitative single-case study aimed to dive into those aspects of retention and turnover that have riddled the behavioral health industry and how understanding those components may help with future solutions. Section I of this study provided a detailed overview of the study in addition to providing a discussion on the concepts and theories that will be used to investigate retention challenges in the field of applied behavior analysis. Section II provides an in-depth description on how the sample participants will be selected, in what way the participants will be used in research, how data will be collected and organized, and the method for data analysis. In addition, Section II of the study focused on the components of the research process. These components include the role of the researcher, defining the sample framework, sample size, the intended population for the study in addition to introducing the instruments that were used to conduct the study. In a research study, especially those qualitative in nature, understanding the role of the researcher in the study help sets the foundation for implementing the appropriate research tools (Pohran, 2022). Furthermore, it will help with understanding the analysis that is derived from conducting the study and shed light on any shortcomings the study had that may need to be addressed in future studies. In addition to detailing the actual methodology used for the study, Section II investigated how validity and reliability will be obtained in the research, triangulation methods to help with validity and reliability, as well as bracketing techniques to ensure that researcher biases have not skewed the study. In addition, this section of the study looked at those discovered themes that were found by conducting the study and how these themes can be beneficial to future studies on the subject.

Section II of the study is essential as it allowed readers to see what type of instruments were used to come to the overarching conclusion of the study. In addition, this section explored

those limitations and delimitations discussed in the first section and while setting the foundation for similar studies in the field. A proper understanding of this section comes from understanding the research instruments and how the researcher and the participants play a crucial role in the results. In addition, Section II helped build upon the foundation laid out in Section I by exploring the causes of retention of clinical staff in behavioral health and how these causes could be further explored to bring forth retention initiatives in applied behavior analysis.

The use of qualitative research design helps identify why people have certain thoughts or feelings about a specific phenomenon and how those thoughts or feelings affect their behavior (Alpi & Evans, 2019). Therefore, how this is studied may occur in several differing contexts, but for the study at hand, the focus is on behavioral healthcare, particularly the field of applied behavior analysis and the way clinicians in this field may be inclined to leave. An essential aspect of qualitative research is that there is no attempt to generalize the findings to a broader population but instead, understand those concepts that are related to the phenomena in question and how further studies can be used to further the research (Alph & Evans, 2019). Qualitative research is used to help gain insight, which can help provide a basis for a future qualitative study or provide guidance on how researchers can prepare instruments for quantitative studies for the same phenomena (Love et al., 2023). Therefore, the role of the researcher in qualitative research places heavy weight on accessing the feelings and thoughts of its' participants. Additionally, the researcher's role in a qualitative study is challenging, as it involves asking participants to discuss topics that may foster mixed emotions (Love et al., 2023). This can sometimes be more prevalent when topics hit on experiences fresh in the participant's mind.

On the other hand, some experiences may be challenging to recollect for some participants due to the time that has passed. Nonetheless, researchers in qualitative studies play a

pivotal role in collecting accurate data and safeguarding the study to data or biases that may render the study unreliable. The next section of the study will explore the appropriateness of using a qualitative single-case study for the phenomena of turnover and the role of the researcher in the study.

Purpose Statement

This flexible design single-case study explored the challenges faced by some healthcare managers when the retention of skilled healthcare workers becomes a barrier to operational success. More specifically, the study dived into behavioral health and examined what operational challenges have resulted from high turnover, in addition to reviewing factors that may cause a turnover and how turnover may be avoided in the future. The use of the flexible qualitative research method allowed for greater spontaneity and adaptation of interaction with the participants of this study (Moore et al., 2021). Furthermore, the participants had an opportunity to respond more elaborately and in detail, which helped explore the overall problem to be addressed. This study used a total of twenty human participants, who comprised of Registered Behavior Technicians and Board-Certified Behavior Analysts. The study was conducted in five clinic locations in different geographical areas within the state of Georgia. The study sought to provide healthcare managers and organizations in the behavioral health arena with tools to navigate staff engagement, culture, and perceived leadership, which can influence employee retention and turnover (Slowiak & DeLongchamp, 2022;2021). Employee retention is defined as an organization's ability to prevent employee turnover or the number of employees who have left the organization within a specified period of time (Aman-Ullah et al.,2021).

Role of the Researcher

For the study to be conducted appropriately, research on the organization in which the participants will come from plays a significant role. With the study focusing on retention challenges, research into the current organization's retention and turnover rates within the last year is a fundamental part that must be assessed first. In addition, an initial intake on how recruiting occurs for the organization, how involved the managers are in recruiting, and retention, understanding from both company-wide and individual on-site clinics the effects of turnover, and assessing average staffing size are all actions that had to be understood before conducting the study. Therefore, data from all these components was pivotal to make an accurate conclusion on the factors related to turnover in the field of applied behavior analysis (ABA). In addition, due to the instruments used to collect data for the study, the researchers were pivotal in employing the research instruments correctly while trying to mitigate any influence that may be posed onto participants.

Bracketing, which is crucial to the qualitative process (Dörfler & Stierand, 2021), is a method used to avoid the adverse effects that occur in research due to preconceptions. Bracketing is a pivotal part of the process for studies where interviews and observations are used. Bracketing, also called mind-mapping, is an approach where the researcher would try to develop a non-judgmental approach or research team where objectivity is used to avoid errors in data collection due to impeding preconceived notions. In qualitative studies, there are times when the relationship between the researcher and the topic at hand may become close which can trigger biases within the researcher (Pohran, 2022). Therefore, according to Yang et al. (2022), the bracketing process requires the researcher to suspend their presuppositions, assumptions, biases, theories, or previous experiences. To effectively bracket, the researcher must be fully honest and

vigilant about their own pre-existing thoughts and beliefs and engage in self-reflection to adequately put aside their assumptions (Dörfler & Stierand, 2021). With a goal of being able to attend to participants with an open mind, bracketing must occur for reliability to be present in the research.

For the current research study, the method of bracketing that was employed consisted of bracketing interviews. Bracketing interviews includes using outside resources to uncover awareness of preconceptions or biases that may pre-exist (Yang et al., 2022). To properly conduct these types of interviews, they are often done by a non-managerial and non-clinical individual who understands the purpose of the research but can be used as a supportive relationship. This individual would be entrusted as being an interface between the research and the data that has been collected. Furthermore, bracketing can be beneficial as these interviews can be done prior to the start of the research, during, and after to ensure that methods used, and translation of the data are done without bias or any manipulation from the researcher (Pohran, 2022). In addition, bracketing interviews done during multiple stages of the research process can help uncover any biases that may hinder the researcher from genuinely exploring the data collected from participants (Dörfler & Stierand, 2021). The bracketing interviews help increase clarity and engagement with participants while helping develop the researcher's capacity to understand the phenomena at hand.

As the primary purpose of a researcher in a study is to seek knowledge, the researcher in the study plays a significant role. It is vital that any conclusion drawn by the researcher by the end of the study is founded in evidence; results are objective, honest, and are scientifically proven. Yang et al. (2022) mentions that in a qualitative study, for the researcher to play their role appropriately, the researchers need to describe all relevant aspects of themselves, which may

include any assumptions, experiences that qualifies the researcher to conduct the study and any expectations one may have. In addition, researchers in a qualitative study should discuss whether they have an emic or etic role (Dörfler & Stierand, 2021). Researchers who have an emic role in the phenomenon in question may have less objectivity compared to those who are etic.

Research Methodology

Regardless of the topic of study, selecting the correct research design for a study will help address the research problem effectively and analyze the data (Alpi & Evans, 2019). For the current study, a flexible design was selected to better understand the phenomena of turnover in the behavioral healthcare industry. In order to deduce the most accurate and reach maximum levels of reliability, the flexible research design was the most appropriate design for the study in question. The flexible design for the topic at hand allows for a more in-depth analysis of why turnover is occurring in the behavioral healthcare field, which this analysis would not be possible using a fixed research method (Chhabra, 2021). To help with an appropriate analysis of the phenomena, the flexible design allows for specific questions to be asked and answered that would be hard to quantify using a fixed research design. The current study focused on survey and interview questions, allowing participants to provide answers past the surface-level responses, which will be useful in the analysis stage.

Discussion of Flexible Design

The current study used a flexible design method to investigate the phenomenon of turnover behavioral healthcare. In addition to using a flexible design, the current study employed a single-case study method that can be repeated in the future if further research is needed. The use of the single-case method will help with the overall focus to understand the depth of why turnover occurs in the behavioral healthcare field (Charli et al., 2022). In addition, due to the

research having a small sample size, using this method would be best to depict the phenomenon of interest accurately. Previous studies have cited single case studies as being used in the field of management for years, with scholars using this methodology to examine and advance the field of management across varying industries (Love et al., 2023). For instance, single-case studies have been employed to examine complex organizational processes, organizational change responses, corporate venturing, organizational identity, and the emergence of new markets. Alpi and Evans (2019) mention that in the field of management, single case studies are often used to satisfy one of three conditions: (1) examine an unusual phenomenon, (2) access a case that has previously not been accessible to researchers before or (3) examine a case that can be observed longitudinally. For the following study, examining the phenomenon of extremely high turnover rates in behavioral healthcare within the last decade was the focus that satisfies the first condition of using single case studies.

Discussion of Method(s) for Triangulation

Triangulation refers to the use of multiple methods or data resources to help test the validity of the research (Yang et al., 2022). For the current study, data triangulation was the selected form of use. This form of triangulation will help increase validity by using the results from one geographical location to validate the results from another (Natow, 2020). Doing this will help ensure that the study minimizes biases or incorrect data collection. The primary data collection method for the study is participant interviews, which will help with the bulk collection of data on retention. To ensure that the answers from the interviews are free from biases, such as response bias, confirmation bias, and demand characteristic bias, a follow-up interview was done with participants. Follow-up interviews allowed for a check on validity, assessing the overall response collected from the interviews, and comparing them to those collected across

participants in different geographical locations during the interview process (Roehl & Harland, 2022).

Summary of Research Methodology

In any research study, selecting the appropriate research methodology is a crucial component of the overall success of the study. Although the selection processes can be difficult and even confusing at times, understanding the overall intended outcome of one's study helps dictate the right methodology, in which the selected methodology should help underpin the type of data collection that will be employed. Therefore, researchers should always understand the differing research methods available for use and the strengths and weaknesses of each method. More importantly, research methods should always have an applicability to the topic or phenomenon that is intended to be studied, as this will help with ensuring the most informed and best decision is made for a research project. Nonetheless, regardless of what method a researcher selects, the techniques used to collect the data must provide adequate data to be able to accomplish the overall goal of the study. Therefore, with all considerations weighed, the current study employed the flexible design method and used method triangulation as these methods were best suited to study the phenomenon on turnover in the field of applied behavior analysis.

Participants

For the current research, the participants eligible to participate are Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs) and Board-Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA) who have been practicing in the field for at least eight months. Those qualified RBTs must have worked in the clinic setting for at least six months within their minimum eight-month tenure. In addition, for BCBAs to be qualified, they must have worked in a clinic environment for at least six months of their minimum eight-month tenure. To get a proper understanding of why the turnover of these

clinicians happens so frequently in the field of ABA, participants in this field must be in it for a particular duration of time to speak to some of the concepts surrounding turnovers, such as burnout and job satisfaction. RBTs must have worked in the field cumulatively for at least six months, as according to Rosales et al. (2022), the average tenure for registered behavior technicians is a little over one year. Due to this, the research hoped to capture those technicians who have worked in the field long enough but are also close to reaching the average tenured mark. In addition, the qualification of having six months in the clinic setting is vital as RBTs work in an array of settings; however, a large amount of these clinicians work in the in-center setting, which is the primary focal point of the research and allows for the most accessible participant sampling. For the qualifications for the BCBA participants, having at least eight months in the field would allow for the most accurate data, as the average tenure for BCBAs is much longer than those of Registered Behavior Technicians. Previous research has cited that BCBAs tend to stay in their field of choice for at least three years before they may consider a career switch or decide to use their credentials in another way (Rosales et al., 2022).

Selecting participants who fit the specific criteria outlined provided a more cohesive analysis of the factors that may lead to turnover in the field of Behavior Analysis. To get the most accurate information, these guidelines were selected based on the data from the area in the last five years regarding retention duration for clinicians. More specifically, the specifications for participant selection focused on what previous research highlights about the clinical setting in this field and what the clinician makeup looks like. For instance, Rosales et al. (2022) discussed burnout amongst RBTs and specify that this usually starts to be evident around six to eight months.

Population and Sampling

The primary objective of sampling is to be able to appropriately use the data collected from a sample and generalize it to the population of which the data is representative (Vasileiou et al., 2019). Therefore, in research, how sampling occurs is essential for the study to not only show reliability by validity as well. External validity is the approximate truth of conclusions that involve generalizations. In other words, it is the degree to which the findings in a study hold for other people at different times. Therefore, to increase external validity, random selection is used. With that, the sampling method, sample frame, and sample size are pertinent to the success of the research. A poorly specified sampling frame may significantly affect the research being carried out (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). The strategy of participant selection in qualitative research rests on the multiple purposes of illuminating, interpreting, and understanding-and on the researcher's imagination and judgment. Several sampling techniques can be employed in qualitative studies for selection purposes.

Discussion of Population

For the current study, it was imperative that the sample population fell into a few specific characteristics. These characteristics included working in the field of applied behavior analysis for a particular duration of time, depending on their title, either holding an active certification of Registered Behavior Technician or Board-Certified Behavior Analyst, and being actively employed at an in-center ABA establishment. Each of these characteristics is necessary to obtain the best data possible and explore the challenges of retention within the field of ABA.

The initial requirement of holding an active certification allowed for filtering clinicians who have not been in the field for a prolonged period. Because the research focused on retention in the current climate of ABA, the selected participants must be actively practicing to provide

present insight. In the last five years, retention in ABA has shifted from that of previous years for multiple reasons, including clinician burnout due to large and challenging caseloads (Rosales et al., 2022). Due to this, the use of participants who were actively practicing allowed for insight into the current landscape of retention. In addition, qualified participants would have worked in the in-center setting as those issues with retention for in-home and in-center may have some differences. However, several aligned similarities exist between the two ABA settings (Rosales et al., 2022). For the current study, the concepts focused on diving into, turnover and retention, were more associated with an in-center setting than those of an in-home setting; therefore, those qualified for the research would need to be working currently in-center setting. Nonetheless, participants could have previous experience working in the in-home setting, as it may bring in additional perspectives not explored; however, they needed to meet the qualifications of in-center employment.

According to the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) database, the field of ABA has over 150,000 clinicians making up of RBTs and BCBAs across several areas of the world but with a large concentration in the United States. With this, many clinicians are concentrated in in-center, in-home, or in the school setting (Yingling et al., 2022), having various differing caseloads depending on the environment they work. Therefore, the research retrieved data valid for a substantial population in the field. In addition, healthcare managers in the field are plentiful with various responsibilities but frequently have a few central commonality, managing, recruiting, and retaining staff. With an overall population so large, it is essential to associate those keys factors or components that have surrounded the challenges of retention in this field in hopes of (1) finding root causes, (2) introducing systems that could help relieve those

challenges, and (3) continuing to further the research on the topic as the landscape of the field continues to evolve.

Discussion of Sampling

For this qualitative single-case study, the method employed was the purposive sampling method. This method falls under the four most used qualitative sampling methods, in which sample participants are selected or rejected based on fitting a specific participant criterion (Gill, 2020). The purposive sampling method is a non-probability sampling method that is particularly useful in qualitative studies when attempting to abstract the most amount of information possible from the participant group to investigate a particular phenomenon (Denieffe, 2020). For the study, because there was a criterion of tenure for the clinicians, using this sampling method allowed for any clinicians who did not fit the specific tenured age to be disqualified. This was important for the study as identifying trends regarding turnover in the field of applied behavior analysis requires the participants to have a baseline of similar attributes.

Nonetheless, using this method for the current research was beneficial due to the population's size and the purposive sampling method requiring very little to initiate the process if the targeted demographic has been identified. To ensure that the sample size was representative of the population, using this method to select clinicians gave the most accurate representation of the data collected. In the field of applied behavior analysis, there are varying opinions and experiences regarding the challenges of the field for clinicians, and often they depend on several factors, including how long they have been in the field, the different environments they have experienced, and level of support and leadership provided (Slowiak & DeLongchamp, 2022;2021). To capture an array of experiences regarding factors that lead to clinicians leaving the field or an organization, it was essential to have a systematic way of ensuring that general

levels of experiences are a part of the data collection. Therefore, the purposive sampling method provided the best opportunity to do so where it could be challenging to use other techniques like stratified or cluster sampling.

In addition to ensuring the population was representative, qualitative research such as this required an assessment of internal validity to help determine how dependable the research is as well as provide a foundation for future recommendations and overall conclusion of the study. Internal validity occurs although other aspects in the inquiry have been considered, and the researchers are confident in their ability to compare the relationships between variables (Jones & Donmoyer, 2021). In addition, internal validity refers to confirming whether there is a causal relationship from one variable, the extent with which the relationships between the variables were measured and may have been manipulated (Sidani & O'Rourke, 2022). In the current qualitative study, the rate of overall job satisfaction and the likelihood of retention were closely monitored to decipher how much of an impact the two variables have on each other. In addition, the same was analyzed for turnover and concepts such as burnout.

Sample Framework

A sampling frame can be described as a database or a list from which a sample can be employed (Berndt, 2020). A sampling frame is a list of all subjects in populations and in which it becomes accessible to the researcher to use to collect data (Cash et al., 2022). In addition, it can be defined as the list of respondents willing to participate in a particular research project. To appropriately use a sampling method, the sample frame tends to consist of vital information such as demographics, occupation, educational background, and so forth, as it allows for the researcher to use the information to access if they are (1) appropriate for the research at hand and (2) have the necessary information to reach out to those selected to participate. In both

qualitative and quantitative studies sampling frames can be provided to researchers in different ways, including by a client or a third-party resource (Subramaniam, 2022).

Sampling frame is a crucial element of a sampling plan for various reasons, including the fact that the research sample will be derived from the sampling frame (Can, 2020). In addition, the sampling frame helps provide information about the units of the target population. Furthermore, the sampling framework gives the demographic characteristics of a specific population, and this information is vital during the sampling process. With the data from the sampling frame, it is possible to create a sample representing the whole population. A researcher should know how a sample was obtained and how the sampling frame may have failed to cover the entire target population. This information is vital for the researcher to make reasonable statistical estimates and valuable inferences. A sampling frame determines the quality of the sample selected and thus has a direct influence on the forecast to be concluded about the whole population. It forms the basis of research. With the list of all those within a population, including institutions and individuals, it is possible to create a viable sample, according to Berndt (2020).

For the current research, using an online database called Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) and employee files from a large ABA Company helped create the sampling frame. The sample frame consisted of 780 Registered Behavior Technicians and 80 Board Certified Behavior Analysts from specific geographical regions, from which a random selection was pulled for the current research. With over a hundred thousand clinicians in the field with an array of backgrounds, educational levels, experiences, and expertise, this sampling frame was appropriate to pull various types of individuals who work in the field. All clinicians working in the field of ABA must be registered through the BACB, which allowed easy access to check credentials and find registered clinicians within a given area.

Sample Size

The desired sample size for the current research was a total participant count of twenty clinicians currently working in the field of ABA. More specifically, the desired sample size consisted of 14 Registered Behavior Technicians and 6 Board Certified Behavior Analysts. To get several data points from the initial interviews, the sample size needed to be large enough to have various data points but small enough to allow for data triangulation. With an overall population so large, it was essential to use the desired sample size of twenty participants effectively to capture the general population it relates to. For instance, a large majority of clinicians in the field of ABA are women (Rosales et al., 2022), therefore it will be necessary for the sample participants to be representative of the actual population. In addition, the sample size needed to consider other factors such as years of tenure for the participants, to ensure it is as representative of the population as possible.

Access to the sample was gained by utilizing an active database of over 6,000 registered clinicians in the field from a single ABA company. Within the database, a selection of twenty was drawn from the total available participant pool using particular markers to ensure that participants qualify for the research. Once all unqualified participants were removed from the possible sampling pull, potential participants were labeled with unique identification numbers. Four participants from each differing region were selected to conduct the interview until the targeted goal of twenty participants has been reached with approximately 30% of them coming from BCBAs and the other 70% of participants being RBTs. By ensuring that this ratio of BCBAs to RBT questionnaire completion occurs, the population of clinicians in ABA will then be more representative. Data triangulation was employed to ensure validity occurred by conducting the same interviews in a different geographical region. By doing so, the data

collected from the initial surveys should match those collected from the subsequent ones, ensuring that the research has reached saturation. Saturation is the phenomenon of data collection where it is so great that no new information is found, and data is consistently the same (Saunders et al., 2018;2017).

Summary of Population and Sampling

The sample size in qualitative research is essential, although its importance may differ from that of quantitative research (Guest et al., 2020). Whereas sample size in quantitative research is the driver of several statistical analyses such as factor analysis or linear structural equation that help in the generalization of the sample to the population in question, in qualitative research, sample size helps with understanding a phenomenon more in-depth, thus allowing for better reliability of the study (Weller et al., 2018). According to Hennink and Kaiser (2022), when qualitative research uses a sample to study a phenomenon, whether it be the behaviors of individuals or opinions regarding a specific topic, the sample collection allows for extensive detail about each study. Therefore, for this qualitative single-case study, an accurate sample size was selected for proper analysis to occur and reach saturation. An appropriate sample helps ensure the research is more efficient (Vasileiou et al., 2018). Therefore, the power of a study gives relevance to the sample size in obtaining replicable objective results.

Data Collection & Organization

In any research, for an effective and appropriate method for data collection, the researcher must always first identify and establish the scope of the study and the overall intent of the research (Alam, 2021). In qualitative research, the purpose and the scope are determined by varying factors such as the availability of resources, the time span of the research, and any constraints that may occur that may be critical for engaging in an in-depth analysis (Chhabra,

2021). The determined questions in a qualitative study should guide the research in obtaining appropriate data collection that will result in a concise conclusion. Therefore, once the measurements have been taken and the point of discovery found through interpretation, analysis based on norms or standards, and correlations or relationships of variables are made, results can be shared within the qualitative research standards. With that, the appropriate data collection method will help ensure the validity of the research. The validity of a measurement instrument is the extent to which it measures what it is intended to measure or the ability to measure variables accurately (Hall et al., 2023). On the other hand, reliability looks at how consistent the measuring instrument is with yielding a particular result. Nonetheless, appropriately identifying the purpose of the research and formulating the appropriate data collection method and study questions will help attain the over research goal, as the data collection method should yield valid and measurable results.

Data Collection Plan

For the study, data was collected through short interviews with participants. Participants were asked a series of questions, in which each question overlapped with the overarching phenomenon of discovering those underlined factors of turnover for clinicians in the field of applied behavior analysis. Each of these questions were tailored directly to the research questions and particular concepts and theories discussed in the research. Each participant was required to answer each of the questions, in which then all participant answers were gathered and grouped into responding categories. These categories would then provide an overview of what the data says regarding turnover and retention factors. Each participant's answers to the questions were documented and transcribed to investigate any trends that may be discovered and discussed during the analysis phase.

For the current study, to best organize and analyze data, Nvivo, which is a software to help qualitative researchers organize and analyze unstructured data such as surveys, interviews, and group observations, was used. The use of Nvivo helped ensure that all the data was in one central location that can be easily accessed. In addition, Nvivo is a well-known data collection software used by qualitative researchers, therefore making it a reliable resource to use. In addition to using Nvivo to organize the data, each participant was given a unique identifier to keep their identity confidential but also to help with the analysis component. Because the research looked at two very distinct roles in the ABA field, each participant depending on their role had an identifier starting with the letter “B” or “R.” The letter “B” correlated with anyone whose role was a Board-Certified Behavior Analysis while the letter “R” correlated with anyone whose role was identified as a Registered Behavior Technician. Each letter was followed by either a “0” or “1” indicating if the participant had been in their current role for either less than a year (“0”) or a year or more (“1”). The years of tenure were then followed by either the letter “m” or “f” which indicated their gender. Both the duration of tenure and gender identification would help in the analysis component later during the study. After the gender identification, there was a three-digit numerical sequence which indicated the order in which they were interviewed. Therefore, a sample identification for a participant may be listed as “B0F032” or “R1M018”.

According to Moore et al. (2021), interviews are often conducted in qualitative research to find out the things that cannot be easily observed. The primary purpose of the interview is to gain access to an individual's attitudes and thoughts about a particular topic, which interviews have been relied on for use in qualitative research for extended periods (Subramaniam, 2022). Therefore, the following plan was appropriate for the research project as the focal point is to get

an in-depth look at specific factors of turnover in the ABA industry. Conducting interviews will allow the researcher to specifically gear questions to the participants, hoping to gather the most information. In addition, a large amount of the discussion on turnover in healthcare, regardless of the specific segment in healthcare, has shown a pattern of issues with retention. Rather than using these concepts solely to make the argument, a one-on-one interview with participants using specific questions geared towards specific concepts related to retention and turnover helped ensure that the research is reliable.

Instruments

For the current study, several interview questions were asked of participants. All the questions asked required participants to provide complete detailed responses. Participants were encouraged to provide as much detail as available for all questions, including using personal examples if necessary. The following interview questions, entitled "Participant Interview Questions," are listed in the Appendix of this study. Each question is related to a particular research question and concepts explored regarding employee retention.

The first research question asked what challenges healthcare leaders face when maintaining staff and which leadership qualities positively or negatively affect retention. To help gain insight into these questions, the following interview questions are asked:

- 1) What type of clinical support is needed for employee satisfaction to remain consistent?
- 2) What type of middle or upper management support is needed within an organization for satisfaction to be prevalent?
- 3) Describe the type of leadership style you think is most effective for employees in this field.

Each of these questions is asked in a different format to gain perspective into what type of leader employees deem necessary in the field for them to be satisfied with their employer. Whereas the first two questions look to gain an understanding of the need for support in the field, the last question seeks to understand if managerial styles are needed in the field of ABA. The third question is a continuation of question two, asking participants to describe the effective leadership type. Because the third research question sought to understand how managerial styles help in navigating challenges with retention, the three questions asked helped determine the leadership styles that are the most favorable for employees in the field. Doing so could provide perspective on the type of managers needed in the field or development opportunities for ABA organizations regarding employer-employee relationships.

The second research question, which sought to gain knowledge on retention challenges effected by burnout in healthcare in general, asked if retention challenges in the field of ABA have differences and similarities to other healthcare settings.

- 1) What type of negative impact is caused by burnout on job satisfaction?
- 2) Have you seen burnout be a prevalent cause of turnover in the field of ABA?
- 3) What impact does caseload play on burnout in the field?
- 4) What effect does turnover have on the employees who stay?
- 5) Have you worked in any other healthcare setting? If so, what challenges did you face there (if any)? Do you feel those challenges are similar or different to those in the field of ABA (if applicable)?
- 6) What does burnout look like to you? Are there root causes in your opinion?
- 7) Do you think there are things that should be incorporated in the field of ABA to help with burnout?

The first two questions sought to look specifically at a reoccurring factor that has led to retention in the field of ABA. Like many healthcare fields (Chhabra, 2021), turnover and burnout have been linked together as the root cause. The following three questions sought to address how (1) turnover can lead to further burnout for employees, (2) find out if burnout is as prevalent in the field of ABA as much as it has been linked, and (3) discover if the caseload requirements given to those in the field result in burnout leading to retention challenges. The last two questions sought to gain perspective on the second half of the research question of what retention challenges look like in other healthcare segments. According to Chhabra (2021), clinicians and employees in many healthcare segments have faced tremendous retention challenges as managers continue to look for solutions. To understand what those challenges genuinely look like and if they have similar qualities or differences from those retention challenges in the ABA field. The last questions specifically targeted the factors that lead to burnout, and participants were encouraged to express if they have felt it in their current or previous roles.

The last research question seeks to understand what components from the organizational level could help with retention. To collect data for this question, the following interview questions were asked:

- 1) What aspects of the working environment contribute to either negative or positive employee morale?
- 2) How do you think a negative working environment affects an employee's level of satisfaction with their job?
- 3) How do you think satisfaction and employee retention are connected in the field of ABA?
- 4) What effect does paid wages have on job satisfaction in the field of ABA?

- 5) What are the factors that would need to be present for you to leave your job? To stay with an organization?
- 6) Do you think there are things that should be incorporated in the field of ABA to help with burnout?

Each of these questions targeted different components of employee job satisfaction and the elements needed for successful retention from an organizational standpoint. More so, these questions were asked to help clarify those essential elements needed by managers to facilitate work environments where high turnover is not prevalent. Questions 1,2, and 5 address work culture specifically, as Bowens et al. (2021) mentions that the environment in which employees work can significantly affect their satisfaction. By asking these questions related to culture specifically, data was collected on how frequently participants align workplace environment and job satisfaction. Questions 3 and 5 seek to understand what contributes to job satisfaction and how it relates to turnover or retention. Question 5 explicitly asked participants to describe what components must be available to stay with an organization. This question allowed for data to be analyzed against questions 1 through 4 to see if the three are similar or different responses regarding satisfaction. Lastly, question 6 asked participants to provide suggestions of what they want to see within the ABA field to help with burnout, in which satisfaction and burnout have been linked.

Data Organization Plan

Once all responses have been collected from participants, each participant's responses were organized to articulate and transcript the data (Chhabra, 2021). All interviews for participants in this research were recorded to access the data at any time quickly. During the data collection stage of the research, each participant's answers was analyzed and categorized on the

trends shown. For instance, questions that ask about satisfaction and paid wages was analyzed to see if there are similarities on how the question is answered to categorize paid wages as related or unrelated to job satisfaction. With a total of fifteen questions, there should be a total of 300 participant answers to transcribe, in which answers were grouped into categories such as “related to job satisfaction”, “unrelated to job satisfaction”, “managerial support related to satisfaction” and so forth. To ensure that all participant responses have been collected, each participant would have been assigned a unique identification number during the interview process in which the data they provide was transcribed in order of their participant number. Once all the answers had been appropriately categorized, trends across job satisfaction, burnout and leadership style were analyzed and summarized to understand the phenomenon of turnover in the field of ABA. With the data collection tools for this research being one-on-one interviews, it was essential that participant answers were recorded (Natow, 2020). Doing so allowed the interviews to be revisited time and time to ensure that the written data matches what the interviewees answered. Because this research tool solely relied on the answers the researcher had written down, unlike other research tools where the participants record their answers, such as surveys, it was pivotal to have a point of reference for the data collection.

Summary of Data Collection & Organization

Data collection and organization plays an overall crucial part in the research process. Not only the type of data collected but the way it is organized can determine how beneficial the results of a study can truly be. When data is collected and appropriately organized it allows for accuracy, reproducibility, efficiency for the researcher, and easy interpretation. Depending on the research method selected, data can be organized in several different ways but should always allow for ease of use for the research during the coding and analysis phase of the research study.

For the current study, the instrument used to collect the data was selected with the intention of allowing an in-depth perspective of the research topic at hand. In addition, the processes used to organize data helped with differentiating the types of respondents, which would be used in the interpretation section of the analysis processes. Nonetheless, the entire data collection and organization process helped with engineering those emergent themes that were important for the overall understanding of turnover in the field of applied behavior analysis.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in a qualitative study can be one of the most complex processes during the research study process. The data analysis in a qualitative study is the systematic searching and arranging of data that may come in the form of observational notes, interview transcripts, or other non-textual materials that a researcher has collected to help with the understanding of a particular phenomenon (Corrales-Garay et al., 2019). For findings to transform from raw data into new knowledge, the data analysis process requires active engagement and demanding analytics to occur through the data collection and analysis process. Unlike quantitative studies, qualitative studies yield primarily unstructured text-based data or sometimes audio, pictorial, and video data. Therefore, the data analysis phase of the qualitative study, rather than being technical, is the more dynamic and creative process of inductive reasoning and theorizing (Onwuegbuzie, 2021). Therefore, the analysis will conclude and focus on exploring values, beliefs, experiences, and thoughts regarding turnover and retention in the applied analysis field.

Emergent Ideas

In qualitative and quantitative research, emergent ideas refer to adapting new ideas, concepts, and findings as they arise during the research process (Onwuegbuzie, 2021). As new ideas and concepts arise, researchers must approach these unanticipated ideas to add richness to

the research data. Although emergent ideas are often seen more in the research analysis and interpretation stage, it is not limited only to this stage (Corrales-Garay et al.,2019). Furthermore, emergent ideas can be seen in every stage of the research study, making it imperative that researchers pay attention and analyze all stages of the research to ensure that the incorporation of discoveries is discussed within the research. Therefore, researchers should always take cues from varying stages in the research process, including data collection and incorporating those emergent ideas to compile a cohesive research study (Onwuegbuzie, 2021).

Coding Themes

Qualitative studies use codes and categories to help organize and interpret data (Onwuegbuzie, 2021). When a researcher begins to code data, the process requires them first to identify the items in the data that will be analyzed. This allows for a basis on what is essential to code versus what is supplement information that helps translate the data. In addition, the coding process helps with the organization of data, which is pivotal to research during the interpretation process for ease of translation. In the coding process, categorization can occur as there may be trends seen during the coding process (Corrales-Garay et al.,2019). Categorizing the codes helps with gaining an overview of trends that may be occurring in the data and noticing emerging themes that may be emerging and may need to be focal points during the interpretation process. Overall, coding requires the researcher to pay close attention to the collected data, as it is possible to skip some critical data if not careful. Because codes are the basis for categories and themes to be formulated, the concentration given to the coding process is pivotal for studies to be successful.

For the current study, the coding process was manually derived from decoding the open-ended questions into corresponding categories. These categories consisted of coding what

participants said regarding different leadership styles, specifically preferences, categorizing factors that have led to burnout and how burnout plays in satisfaction and retention. In addition, burnout was coded into how participants currently felt about their current burnout level. The last coded category was motivating and hygiene factors that have led to participant job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Each participant's response was then placed in one of the coded categories to assess trends. These trends included, what leadership styles were the most preferred compared to those that were not, how influential burnout was to overall turnover for clinicians, and what components were most needed for clinicians to remain employed with their current organization. Categorization was originally derived from the interview questions and the overall trends that needed to be assessed to understand turnover in the ABA field. Depending on responses from participants, their unique participant identifier was placed under specific categories then later reviewed for trends amongst participant tenure, clinician roles, and gender, to decipher any underlining trends that may have been beneficial to discuss later in the interpretation section.

Interpretations

When interpreting the data collected during the study, Rose, and Johnson, (2020) defines the interpretations as the process of reviewing collected data and formulating relevant conclusions based on the analytical methods in the study. During the processes, a complete analysis of and revision of data should be done to gain insight, recognize those emerging patterns, and review anticipated themes and behaviors. The practical use of the interpretation stage allows both the researchers on those who will use the research to get ahead of specific trends and use the interpreted data to help in their specified field. For the study at hand, the conclusions can help managers in the field of behavior analysis make better assessments regarding turnover in their organization by looking at the trends presented in the discovery phase

of the study. Like many qualitative as well as quantitative studies, how the research is finalized and interpreted can help decipher its applicability to further studies in similar fields as well as how it can be applied in its specific field to help bring forth new insight, ideas, or processes (Edwards et al., 2021). Therefore, for the current study, both anticipated and emergent discoveries were assessed to decipher if there were juxtapositions between previous study findings, specifically as it related to the anticipated themes. Differences were important to be noted as it would help to decipher if the specific instrument used for this qualitative study was truly effective for the study, as well as to determine if there were any areas where misinterpretation of the data could have occurred due to sampling errors. Because the anticipated themes were in line with the data collected from this study, errors in sampling and instruments were able to be ruled out, which contributed to the reliability of the study (Rose & Jonhson, 2020). In addition, interpretation of the data occurred by applying what was coded from the data analysis stage, comparing previous findings, and decoding emergent themes into easily interpreted conclusions of the findings. This included incorporating the coding book found in Appendix B to easily interpret the data that was found as well as using the coded book and visuals as a method to help with explanations given during in the summary of findings section.

Data Representation

After data analysis, representing the data in an easily visualized, cohesive way is essential in the data collection process. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods can be represented through visuals, although they may differ in which method may be best suited for the study. Qualitative studies often use pie charts, flow charts, and bar graphs to help visualize data (Parmentier-Cajaiba & Cajaiba-Santana, 2020). For the current study, a pie graph was used to represent and visualize the data once appropriate coding and categorization have occurred. Using

a pie chart can be helpful in qualitative studies when comparisons are needed between specific categories (Parmentier-Cajaiba & Cajaiba-Santana, 2020). For the current qualitative study, particular categories related to retention and turnover were compared by asking participants specific questions. Therefore, a pie chart was the best representation method for the current study to display these responses while comparing them against certain factors related to retention or lack thereof.

Analysis for Triangulation

Farquhar et al. (2020) mentioned that triangulation is an important part of the qualitative method to improve the validity of a study. When a study employs triangulation, it allows for several different approaches to be aligned, whether in the form of the data method, the data collected, or even using multiple researchers. Triangulating data sets the path for a more detailed understanding of a phenomenon while creating a more valid study overall. Triangulation is used as a verification process during the data collection stage, resulting in a more comprehensive analysis than what would be concluded without triangulation (Natow, 2020). In fact, triangulation is a dialectic process that helps explain any contradictions that may arise in a study while ensuring that the study is also comprehensive in nature (Renz et al., 2018). Both quantitative and qualitative research can use any of the forms of triangulation to strengthen a research study. The types of triangulations often seen in many qualitative and quantitative studies include method, data, investigator, and theory triangulation (Natow, 2020). For the current study, data triangulation was used, which is defined as the use of various data sources, which may include time, space, and persons within a study. For both qualitative and quantitative studies, data triangulation can result in findings that can help corroborate original findings or also help

strengthen any weaknesses found in previous data collection, helping to increase the reliability and validity of the study.

For the current study, data triangulation was employed to ensure that the study's validity was present and to help strengthen the anticipated themes. This type of triangulation was done by using another set of participants from a differing region to ensure that the data collected from the original sample group is not only dynamic to that group. For the triangulation sample group, the same questions were asked in the same order to analyze if there were variations between the original participant group, and one used for triangulation purposes. Because the study consisted of twenty participants, four of participants were used for triangulation purposes, consisting of participants solely from a rural area in the state of Georgia. All other participants were pulled from dense city locations across vary regions in the same state. In addition, there were no differences in sampling methods for the triangulation group, as the same interview questions were asked. The same consistency of research procedures occurred for the coding process, which ensured that the same categories are used with the triangulation sample. In terms of selecting participants for the triangulation group, there were no changes in the selection method. Once the data was pulled from the triangulation group, an interpretation from this sample was made separately from the original sample and used for comparison basis. For the primary triangulation region, Macon region participants, participants showed similar trends of responses to those that lived in more dense population locations, such as Atlanta, Georgia. In fact, across comparison and trends between the rural location and the city locations, no noticeable variations occurred between responses of leadership style, burnout, or factors leading to job satisfaction.

Summary of Data Analysis

There are several stages to data analysis, and when each component is done correctly, it helps to formulate a well-rounded study (Onwuegbuzie, 2021). The primary stage requires the researcher to refer to the research question and ensure that the data they have collected aligns with the research questions that framed the study's premise. After that, researchers must collect and assess the data for the study and ensure that one has appropriately employed all intended methods to obtain appropriate data. Once the data has been collected, it becomes imperative to build a structure for the data, coding them in appropriate categories when necessary. With that, an analysis of both emerging and anticipated ideas should be interpreted to help formulate the overall conclusion and get a well-rounded view of the data collected. Lastly, interpretation of the data is needed, which can come in many forms, such as diagnostic and predictive analysis. Predictive data interpretation helps conclude historical trends, whereas predictive analysis focuses on why something occurs (Edwards et al., 2021). Regardless of the analysis category, the interpretation stage should give an in-depth overview of the data and how it correlates to the research question and the overall scope and purpose of the study.

Reliability and Validity

Both reliability and validity are essential in a well-rounded qualitative study. The primary purpose of qualitative studies is to make sense of recognized trends to formulate an overall meaningful picture regarding a particular phenomenon without compromising the dimensionality, trustworthiness, and credibility of a study while still ensuring it can reach saturation and is replicable. With that, researchers conducting a qualitative study must ensure that there are several components in a study to ensure that both reliability and validity can be met. These components include appropriate triangulation methods when appropriate, ensuring

any researcher biases have been discussed, mitigated, and applying appropriate methodological procedures to both collect and analyze data. The following study employed several techniques to incorporate validity and reliability.

Reliability

In qualitative research, the concepts of reliability and validity are more inclusive than in quantitative studies (Coleman, 2021). Because qualitative studies are frequently criticized for lack of methodological rigor due to their more naturalistic and human-centered approach to understanding a phenomenon, ensuring that the study is reliable and valid becomes imperative. In fact, reliability and validity in qualitative studies can be more complex than that of quantitative research studies (Rose & Johnson, 2020). However, it remains a necessary process for researchers to attempt to ensure that their studies are reliable, which can be done by employing a few methods. A researcher's ability to not only test but demonstrate the trustworthiness and credibility of a study through robustness within the instrument used to collect data helps ensure that reliability and validity occur in their study.

This study's reliability was ensured by using appropriate data collection methods. Because the critical research instrument used interviews, it was necessary to ensure that data is transcribed appropriately to make accurate conclusions. This study employed Nvivo software to help with transcripts and align those transcriptions with what is manually written during the interview process. Confirmability can also be established by using data software like Nvivo, which can transcribe recorded interviews. In addition, the data collected for this study was compared with similar research in the healthcare field regarding turnover and retention to see if the trends in the study align with previous studies. Credibility in the research was established by thoroughly explaining all anticipated themes and trends before conducting the research. This

allowed preconceived results to be discussed and supported with relevant previous findings. In addition, any emerging discoveries that do not align with or enhance anticipated themes was documented and explained in the discovery section and the future recommendations section for future studies that may arise from the current one.

Validity

Data triangulation was employed in the study to ensure that validity has occurred for the study. This method allowed for data points to be compared across multiple sets of sample groups to ensure that trends discovered are not unique to only a particular sample. By collecting sample answers from differing locations and regions, coupled with the use of validation techniques such as member-checking the study should be able to discover saturation due to the same questions being probed for both multiple sample participants. Hayashi et al. (2021) describes saturation as a point in which no new data points are discovered, and the researcher repeatedly sees the same instances of responses. Furthermore, validation techniques, such as member-checking was employed to ensure the findings are accurate, which in a qualitative study is imperative to ensure that the reliability has been present. For this study, member-checking was done by summarizing the answers that participants give to the questions and ensuring what has been transcribed is true and in line with their responses (Motulsky, 2019). With that, if any deviation from what has been summarized to the participant differs from the participant's actual answers, appropriate clarifying questions may be asked to ensure that the participant understands the question in full. In addition to member-checking, 10-minute follow-up interviews were done with each participant to allow for new emerging ideas. Unlike the initial interview, follow-up interviews were unstructured, and the primary purpose of these follow-ups is to ensure that initial responses were truthful and free

of simplistic, biased, or dogmatic responses. These interviews occurred approximately 2-3 days after the initial interview to allow participants time to reflect on their initial responses given.

Bracketing

Bracketing is a methodological device that requires researchers to set aside their beliefs, thoughts, and preconceived notions regarding a particular phenomenon of interest that one plans to investigate (Dörfler & Stierand, 2021). With qualitative research requiring a significant amount of human contact with the primary instrument for data collection mediated through human instruments, researchers must be aware of their preconceptions so as not to affect the bracketing process negatively. For this study, bracketing occurred in several stages. The first stage included reflexivity on the phenomenon under investigation and journaling all thoughts, feelings, and perceptions about the phenomenon prior to investigation. The next step was to ensure that the chosen research instrument allows participants to freely express their thoughts regarding the phenomenon without any influence from the researcher. This also included having an open mind to the responses received and not leading any participant's responses in any way. Lastly, during the analysis process, all data collected will be represented regardless of if it aligned with the anticipated themes of the study. This ensured that the study was trustworthy regarding the results and that all conclusions come from a reliable source.

Summary of Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are two critical and fundamental components in the evaluation process of any measurement tool and a study at large (Jones & Donmoyer, 2021). For a study to be concise, reliability and validity must be present in the research methodology. Reliability emphasizes the stability of findings, but the trustworthiness of study findings represents validity. Both reliability and validity help increase transparency and help with decreasing the possibility

for researchers to use their own bias and preconceived ideas in the study findings. Assessing a study's validity and reliability is necessary to describe the actual effects of measurement errors that may be present in theoretical relationships (Coleman, 2021). Therefore, there are several factors can create a risk to both the validity and reliability of research findings; therefore, researchers must be careful to look for errors in implementing methodological instruments, data collection, and data analysis to obtain good research (Hayashi et al.,2021).

Summary of Section 2 and Transition

The second part of this study provided an overview of how the study was conducted. Understanding this section of the study is imperative to get the entire grasp of what instruments were used, in what way participants are needed and how information from the research was organized and interpreted. Each component of Section II played a pivotal role in the overall success of the research. In the first segments of Section II, the discussion on how the researcher plays a part and how the researcher's part in the study is significant to the overall analysis section that will be discussed after data has been collected. In addition, the first segment outlined why the use of the flexible design was appropriate for the study at hand and compared the flexible methodology against a fixed research method. The middle part of the section discussed the use of Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs) and Board-Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) as participants in the research, the qualifications for participant selection and how the sample size needed for the study. In addition, the population in which the sample size represented and how to reach saturation with the use of the participants was outlined. The last section detailed how the participants were used in the study through the type of research instrument selected by the researcher. In addition, it allowed for an understanding of how the role of researcher and the participants would align together to collect data for the study. For this

study, it was discussed that interviews would be the sole method to collect data, in which the participants had significant amount of interaction with the researcher. In addition to research instruments, the last section discussed how new discovered themes would be incorporated into the analysis segment, how validity and reliability would be secured, how data triangulation would be used to help with reliability and why bracketing would be beneficial to assist with validity. Overall, Section II of the study built upon Section I while preparing to help with analysis of Section III, which will outline the significance of the study for professional practice.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Employee retention is a major challenge in the behavioral health industry and the cost of turning over employees can be severely costly. Understanding why turnover occurs through research studies can allow organizations such as those in applied behavior analysis to determine the root cause of why their employees are choosing to leave. However, although research can help determine the root cause, how managers and organization executives use the information to build retention initiatives is the sole determinant if studies on retention and turnover are vital to the actual business practice. The use of data from studies can help organizations build an infrastructure of policies and procedures that can help alleviate turnover while ensuring that their employees are the center of focus on building a successful organization. Although these initiatives may look different depending on the business model and type of organization, those in the applied behavior analysis field regardless of the setting have enough similarities, that studies such as this one can help with long-term benefits of applications of change initiatives to produce higher retention rates. Section III of this study will present the findings and discuss real-life applications of how the findings can be used in business practices.

Overview of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative, flexible study was to examine the phenomenon of turnover in the field of applied behavior analysis (ABA). The main objectives of the study were to (1) understand why turnover is so persistent in the field, (2) what are the contributing factors of clinician turnover in the field and (3) how this turnover affects healthcare managers in the field and what strategies could be applied by those managers to combat turnover. To examine this phenomenon, the study sought to interview twenty clinicians in the field, comprising two differing disciplines, to understand these clinicians' turnover better. All participants came from

the in-center ABA (applied behavior analysis) setting, with several participants having either previous healthcare experience or previous ABA experience in a different field. In addition, participants selected for the study came from differing regions, including North Georgia, the Metro Atlanta area, South Georgia, and the West Georgia. Participants from these areas comprised 16 Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs) and 4 Board-Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA). Each of these selected participants met a specific criterion regarding the time they had their certification and the amount of time they had worked in an ABA center.

Once participant selection was completed, each participant was interviewed separately and asked an array of open-ended questions that covered specific topics surrounding managers' leadership styles, employee support, burnout, workplace culture and environment, organizational responsibilities, job satisfaction, and employment in non-ABA settings. Per participants, answers were recorded and transcribed to categorize answers and decipher emerging trends. Once trends were found in the data, those data points were grouped to analyze what was found and connect it back to literature and anticipated themes. NVivo, the qualitative software used for data analysis, uncovered two anticipated themes and one new theme. Both anticipated themes and newly discovered themes were then used to analyze gaps in the literature and what future studies may want to focus on. In addition, group data points also allowed a visual representation to understand the study's analysis better. With the study having a specific objective, data points collected were then connected back to the research questions to draw certain conclusions regarding the turnover phenomenon in applied behavior analysis.

Presentation of the Findings

The discovery stage of the study consisted of a few differing parts. To start, participants underwent an interview process in which each participant was asked a series of questions. These

questions ranged from differing topics to understanding why turnover in the applied behavior analysis field was so prevalent. Each of the questions asked was derived based on what the literature about turnover in healthcare had already discussed about the phenomenon of turnover. During the interview, each participant's answers were transcribed to code them and review for trends that may have occurred. This section of the study will review what trends were discovered and how these trends were coded into specific categories. Data in this section will also be aggregated into easily deciphered visualization through pie graphs to understand the themes discovered in the study. In addition, a look into those anticipated and newly discovered themes will be discussed and compared against what the current literature discusses on the topic of turnover.

In addition, a review of the conceptual framework will be addressed, as findings from the study will be assessed on the relationship with the conceptual framework. With an understanding of the findings and their relationship to the conceptual framework, the data collected from the study will then be compared against the research questions presented to show how the findings collected from the study answer the research questions. Lastly, findings will then be discussed from the overall perspective of the background of the problem and how the findings relate to understanding both the problem and practical solutions. The overall findings from the study should present themes that allow conclusions from the study to be made that can be used to decipher possible retention initiatives that may be pertinent to the current phenomenon of turnover in the field of applied behavior analysis.

Themes Discovered

When assessing the discovered themes presented during the data collection and analysis, looking at the respective trends and how those trends work to depict a cohesive understanding of

the data is pivotal (Subramaniam, 2022). The specific data collected in this study were able to show trends that help answer the research questions. During the study, three discovered themes were found once the data had been accurately deciphered. Each one of these themes was significant to the analysis process as it helped streamline what was collected during the data collection process to understand categories and trends more quickly. For this study, the three trends discovered were the leadership style of managers influencing the work environment, burnout as a significant influence on tenure longevity, and employee value proposition impacting job satisfaction. After interviewing twenty participants for the study, these specific themes were identified when organizing participant answers and comparing responses between participants.

Table 1. Code Book

Research Question (s)	Theme (s)	Subtheme (s)	Participants
What challenges may healthcare leaders encounter when trying to maintain staff? (a) what leadership qualities may contribute to staff retention? (b) what leadership qualities may contribute to staff turnover?	Servant Leadership	Employee-Centered	B1F02, R0F05, R1F07, B1M08, R1F09, R0M10, R0F11
		Servitude	R1F01, R0F03, R0F04, B1F13, R1F14, B0F20
	Transformational Leadership	Compassion	B1F06, B0M12, R1F14, R0M16, R1F19, B0F20
		Growth Promotion	R0F03, B1F06, R0F11, R1M14, R0M16, R1F17, R1F19
	Authoritative Leadership	Commanding	R1F01, R0F05, B1F06, R0M10, B0M12, B1F13, R1F19
		Lacks team dynamic	B1F02, R0F03, R0F04, B1F06, R0M10, R0F11, R1F15, R0M16
		Delegates Primarily	R1F01, R0F04, R1F09, R0F11, B1F13, R1F15, R0M16
What strategies are used by healthcare leaders to offset retention challenges? (a) how do retention issues in behavioral health look similar to other healthcare	Burnout in Behavioral Health	Stress as a factor of turnover	R1F01, R0F03, R0F04, B1F06, R1F09, R0M10, R0F11, B0M12
	Burnout in Other Settings		B1F02, R0F05, R1F07, B1F13, R1F15, R1F18, R1F19
	Caseload in Behavioral Health	Work expectations as a factor of turnover	B1F02, R0F03, B1F06, B1M08, R1F09, R0M10, R0F13, R1F17
	Caseload in Other Settings		B1M08, R0F11, R1M14, R0M16, R1F18, B0F20
	Organizational Structure in		

settings? (b) how does retention issues in behavioral health look different than other healthcare settings?	Behavioral Healthcare	Workplace dynamics as a factor of turnover	R1F01, R0F03, R0F04, R1F07, B1M08, R0M10, B0M12, R1M14, R1F15, R0M16, R1F17, R1F18, R1F19, B0F20 B1F02, R0F03, R0F04, B1F06, B1M08, R0M10, R0F11, R1M14, B0F20
	Organizational Structure in Other Healthcare Settings		
What organizational elements are present across different healthcare settings that help position an organization for successful retention initiatives?	Motivating Factors	Recognition	R1F09, R0F11, R1F14
		Career Advancement	R0F04, B1M08, R0M16, R1F18, B0F20
	Hygiene Factors	Fair Compensation	R1F01, R0F03, R1F07, R0M10, R0F13, R1F15, R1F17
		Work-life Balance	B1F02, B0M12
		Workplace Relationships	R0F05, B1F06, R1F19,

The first theme discovered was that participants related different leadership styles of their managers and supervisors to differing work environments. Additionally, 18 out of 20 (90%) participants labeled leadership styles such as servant leadership and transformational leadership as highly favorable, creating inviting and warm work environments. Participant B1F02 stated “how our manager leads our team makes such a difference in how we do our job on the daily basis.” In addition, Participant R0F11 mentions “as employees, I feel as though how we feel about our manager makes a significant impact in our own work ethic and our desire to come to work every single day.” In addition, those same participants allocated leadership styles such as authoritative and delegative leadership as creating an unpleasant work environment. Participant R0M10 mentioned “the field of ABA is so dynamic and demanding that having a leader who believes in an employee-centric methodology is so important for clinicians to thrive in the field. Managers who are overly authoritative doesn’t seem to mesh well with employees.” The respondents with this viewpoint also deciphered that the level of support their managers or supervisors provide in the work setting helps decide how they feel about the organization they

work for. This can be depicted by statement made by B0F20, in which it was mentioned that “in the field of applied behavior analysis, constant support from a supervisor is necessary to do my job efficiently. The work can be very taxing, and sometimes support can just come from someone giving a listening ear.”

These participants explained that their managers' and supervisors' leadership styles can often paint a picture of what the organization deems essential. These findings are similar to those studies on the topic as the link between styles of leadership and retention levels has been seen in a number of research (Sendjaya, 2020). Similarity, studies on the topic have shown that when employees are in favor of not only their manager's leadership style but the overall leadership of the organization, retention in the organization is more likely to be higher (Ozturk, Karatepe, & Okumus, 2021). Understanding how leadership styles drive retention and initiatives around retention in the field of ABA is imperative to accurately assess how organizational leaders can better provide necessary training or resources around leadership styles.

Table 2. Leadership Style and Retention Factors

Theme 1: Leadership style of managers as a factor of retention or turnover

Theme	Participants	Excerpt
Servant Leadership	B1F02, R0F05, R1F07, B1M08, R1F09, R0M10, R0F11, R1F01, R0F03, R0F04, B1F13, R1F14, B0F20	“When managers in the clinic are willing to do what we do, it makes me feel more supported because they understand our challenges better” (R1F14).
Transformational Leadership	B1F06, B0M12, R1F14, R0M16, R0F19, B0F20, R0F03, R0F11, R1M14, R1F17,	“I want to work for someone who cares about my career growth and is willing to push me to help me achieve them” (B0M12).
Authoritative Leadership	R1F01, R0F05, B1F06, R0M10, B0M12, B1F13, R1F19, B1F02, R0F03, R0F04, R0F11, R1F15, R0M16	“Working for someone who just tells me what to do and only delegates make me feel as though they do understand what my workload is like” (R1F15).

Those with managers or supervisors whose leadership style did not create an inviting atmosphere often had negative feelings about the organization they worked for and were less likely to see their employment with the organization as long-term. The remaining two participants who did not correlate management leadership and satisfaction with their job environment also did not associate leadership style and their perspective of the organization (R1F15 & R1F01). Instead, these individuals mentioned that they viewed their work as separate from the influence of management. Both participants said they had more intrinsic reasoning for work and were not significantly influenced by their work environment's overall culture. However, both participants did acknowledge how leadership style could play a significant role in how employees view their work and the organization. Although this finding was very minimal among participants, this viewpoint differs from findings from previous studies such as Miller (2020), in which all participants equated style of leadership as a contributing factor employee satisfaction and engagement.

Research on employee perception of an organization and retention shows that when employees have a negative connotation of their employer, the longevity of their employment significantly decreases (Tyagi, 2021). For this study, understanding how organizational perception relates to leadership style and workplace culture plays a significant part in building the relationship between employee satisfaction and their direct supervisor (Miller, 2020). In addition, participant R1F19 from the triangulation sample group mentioned that “managing systems and managing people are different. Supervisors and managers in the field should understand our challenges in our work. Having a manager who only throws orders or task at you is not productive.” With similar trends regarding authoritative leadership styles across other

participants, participants from the triangulation sample showed no variation from the majority responses across the leadership theme.

The next theme focused on the effects of burnout and its correlation to how long employees stayed or planned to stay with the organization. When interviewing participants, 95% expressed feeling burnout at some point or another, with 68% of participants expressing that they are currently feeling burnout. Those participants who expressed actively feeling burnout mentioned feeling burnout for several differing reasons. For example, six participants mentioned feeling burnout due to the expectations they felt were placed of them by the organizations (B1F02, R0F13, R1F18, B0M12, B1F06, & B0F20). Of these six participants, four of them consisted of Board-Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA) (B1F02, B0M12, B1F06, & B0F20), with the other two respondents being Registered Behavior Technicians (RBT) (R0F13 & R1F18). These respondents expressed that they felt that meeting their ethical and clinical responsibilities to their patients while also meeting organizational expectations is complex, often causing burnout.

In addition, all participants acknowledge that burnout in the field of applied behavior analysis is prevalent with 90% of the respondents mentioning that the jobs of clinicians in the area can be extremely taxing mentally and physically. Participant R0F13 shared that “burnout is very prevalent in ABA and most clinicians have felt it at some point or another.” When asked if participants felt that burnout was the cause of turnover in the field, 80% of participants connected the two. In addition, of the remaining four participants (B1M08, R1M14, R0M16 & B0M12) three of them mentioned burnout as having an impact on turnover; however, they also listed other more significant factors, such as unreasonable clinicians' expectations, wages, and struggles with work-life balance (B1M08, R1M14 & B0M12). When assessing the trends, those

BCBA clinicians tied turnover to having multiple contributing factors, while Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs) focused on turnover being attributed solely to burnout (Brown, 2021). The findings related to burnout are important aspects of ABA organizations understanding why employees leave and how to combat high turnover over rates.

Table 3. Burnout and Turnover

Theme 2: Factors of Burnout Leading to Turnover		
Theme	Participants	Excerpts
Stress	R1F01, R0F03, R0F04, B1F06, R1F09, R0M10, R0F11, B0M12, B1F02, R0F05, R1F07, B1F13, R1F15, R1F18, R1F19	“I often times feel burnout when the stressors of the job get too much, and I cannot figure out how to decompress on a daily basis” (R0F04).
Workplace Expectations	B1F02, R0F03, B1F06, B1M08, R1F09, R0M10, R0F13, R1F17, R0F11, R1M14, R0M16, R1F18, B0F20	“This job has a lot of expectations and sometimes I feel as though I cannot keep them all together, making it hard to believe that I am doing my job correctly” (B1M08).
Workplace Dynamics	R1F01, R0F03, R0F04, R1F07, B1M08, R0M10, B0M12, R1M14, R1F15, R0M16, R1F17, R1F18, R1F19, B0F20, B1F02, B1F06, R0F11,	“If I come to work and feel as though the environment has toxic components, it becomes hard to deal with it day end and day out and I feel burnt out job coming to work and having to be a part of the environment” (R1F07).

Burnout caused by workplace stress. When participants were asked how burnout induced from stress affects job satisfaction, several participants mentioned it negatively impacted employee job satisfaction with 75% of participants listing stress as a primary reason clinician in the field are often unhappy. BCBA's were more likely to compound multiple reasoning on why burnout occurs and how it leads to job dissatisfaction (Kranak, 2022), while those participants identified as RBTs focused more on the stresses related to their caseload. Participant B1M08 mentioned “stress is inevitable when dealing with high behavior patients daily. No matter how much you enjoy what you do, being stressed out daily leads to feeling unhappy quickly in the

field.” Studies on burnout, specifically as it relates to RBTs, show comparable results as these clinicians tend to have higher rates of burnout due to demanding caseload (Brown, 2021).

Burnout caused by workplace expectation. Lastly, when asked about what burnout encompasses from their own individual perspective, respondents listed items such as a challenging caseload without proper support, unbalanced work hours, physically challenging patients, and mental exhaustion. When asked if and what are the root causes of symptoms of burnout, several participants mentioned communication from all entities of the company. Participants described that when there is a lack of communication, or proper items are not communicated fully transparently, it creates a feeling of distrust, often leading to unpleasant work environments that develop symptoms of burnout. Participant B1F02 noted that “the job is already stressful with the expectations required, it becomes worse when communication is not streamlined or nonexistent.” Furthermore 65% of participants mentioned that their signs of burnout were rooted in unrealistic expectations from direct supervisors and managers (Maresca et al., 2022).

Burnout caused by workplace dynamics. When describing workplace dynamics, many respondents acknowledged that the environment in which they work can have a negative impact on their level of burnout. In fact, 85% of the participants said that when overall culture of their workplace, including having to deal with working in unpleasant work environments or with challenging coworkers has a significant impact on their level of burnout. Participants mentioned that the interpersonal dynamics between coworkers is more likely to cause burnout than working in an unpleasant workspace merely due to the mental stress that can be caused when toxic interpersonal relationships in the workplace exist (B0M12, R1M14, R1F15, R1F17, R1F18, & R1F19). Participant R1F15 mentioned “having a good relationship with my coworkers makes a

difference in how committed I am to my workplace, especially when the job becomes challenging.”

The last theme discovered from participants' interviews was the connection between a company and their employee value proposition (Wallace & Coughlan, 2023). When participants were asked questions regarding how they view the organization in relation to employee value passed from top down, most of the participants felt as though when employees have a negative connotation of the organization and how they treat or think about their lower-level employees, job satisfaction significantly decreases (Tyagi, 2021). For example, Participant R1F07 shared that “it is important to me that the company I work for values the things I value. If not, I will not commit to working with the company for a long time. Our values must align, or it just will not work”. All participants agreed that how they personally feel about the company directly reflects how they perceive employees are treated and tend to have dissatisfaction when changes occur from the top level that typically negatively affect lower-level employees.

When discussing what components of top-level decisions significantly impact job satisfaction, participants mentioned pay and benefits and work hours as the top two components. “When executives and upper managements make decisions, they should always consider the lasting effects it has on those in the frontlines of treating patients,” was said by Participant B0F20. Studies on clinicians feeling towards organizational changes reflect similar viewpoints, as BCBAs in a study by Kranak (2020) relates to change communication within an organization being imperative when decisions are being made. Other components included reasonable workload, growth and development, and recognition and appreciation.

Table 4. Views on Employee Value Proposition Related to Turnover

Theme 3: Views on Employee Value Proposition Related to Turnover

Theme	Participants	Excerpts
Recognition	R1F09, R0F11, R1F14	“When my manager acknowledges the hard work I put into my work every day, whether its verbal or written recognition, this makes me feel seen for the work I do” (R0F11).
Career Advancements	R0F04, B1M08, R0M16, R1F18, B0F20	“I want to work for a place that cares about my growth and wants to provide opportunities for growth. If I cannot grow in the company, I do not have an incentive to stay long-term” (R1F18).
Fair Compensation	R1F01, R0F03, R1F07, R0M10, R0F13, R1F15, R1F17	“This job is hard and those who work in the field should be paid appropriately for their workload. When the pay does not correlate with the job and expectations, I tend to start looking elsewhere” (R0F03).
Work-life Balance	B1F02, B0M12	“I know in my job that sometimes work goes home with you, but not having steady boundaries between work and home-life is not favorable” (B0M12).
Workplace Relationships	R0F05, B1F06, R1F19	“When I enjoy the people, I work with, it makes it easier to come to work, even when the job is challenging” (R1F19).

Recognition. Several participants (R1F09, R0F11, & R1F14) mentioned how acknowledgment from their supervisors and managers is important to their overall job satisfaction, with 35% of participants listing it as an important motivating factor. Participants described receiving workplace recognition, regardless of how it was presented (verbal or tangible items) was important to receive in order to feel as though the work they do matters and is acknowledged (Lewis et al. 2020). Participant R1F09 mentions that “sometimes supervisors tend to forget to recognize clinicians for their work. Although it may not be intentional it does matter to know that the work we do is valued.” Employees wanted more recognition, especially those who receive recognition less than monthly. When recognition is apparent in the workplace, it not only helps with motivation, but also helps create a work environment where employees feel good

about the work they do. Managers who make recognition apart of the dynamics in their workplace tend to have higher performing teams than those who do not, which can translate into low retention.

Compensation. When discussing salary and benefits, 35% of participants mentioned this as the most significant factor influencing job satisfaction. Participants said that job dissatisfaction rises when decisions on pay and benefits are made without an appropriate assessment of the long-term effect of those lower-level employees (Aman-Ullah et al., 2021). Of those seven respondents, all of them consisted of RBTs, in which they further detailed that pay more than benefits are top factors for their satisfaction with employment (R1F01, R0F03, R1F07, R0M10, R0F13, R1F15 & R1F17). In addition, they mentioned that they would leave or find another company that pays more due to the difficulty of their job, without adequate pay, regardless of their intent to want to stay in the field. One comment from Participant R0F03, who was from the triangulation sample group, depicts how important wages are for clinicians in the field, which stated that “the work clinicians do it valuable, therefore upper management should always consider fair and competitive wages. In this field, clinicians are high in demand, therefore when competitive wages do not seem to be a priority within an organization, clinicians tend to leave for another company who will.” This perspective on wages in the field aligns with previous research, in which a study conducted by Lee and Lee (2022), showed that companies must be competitive in their wages to reduce turnover, especially if employees have several alternative options.

Career Advancement. When discussing opportunities for growth within a company, 25% of the participants mentioned this motivating factor as a crucial factor for job satisfaction and retention. Participants mentioned that when opportunities for advancement are not only

available but also internal advancement is important to the company they work for, they are more likely to stay with the company (Arthur et al. 2020). Additionally, five of the participants mentioned that regardless of being satisfied with other aspects of the job, if growth opportunities are not available within the company, they are more likely to find employment somewhere that does have present those opportunities (R0F04, B1M08, R0M16, R1F18, B0F20). Participant B0F20 states that “I think most people want to advance in their careers, therefore working in an organization that cares about development and growth is probably one of the most valuable traits a company can have”. Managers incorporating development and growth for their employees was not only important, but necessary for employees to feel as though they would want to work with an organization longer term. Unlike other research, the result of this study differs slightly from other studies results, such as the one conducted by Alrawahi et al. (2020), in which career advancement had a little more significance.

Work-life Balance. When it came to hygiene factors such as work-life balance, participants mentioned that when they feel as though work impedes their ability to enjoy life, including family and friends, the more dissatisfied with their employment they become. Additionally, participants mentioned that employers who do not acknowledge outside factors or only place a value on employees based on their work without understanding their outside lives also are significant are more likely to see more turnover (B1F02 & B0M12). When assessing how significant work-life balance is to retention, 10% of participants cited it as being necessary for them to stay within an organization (Aruldoss et al. 2022). Participant B0M12 deciphers the difference between clinicians in the field by mentioning that “BCBAs are not often afforded the luxury of leaving work at work, unlike RBTs. The job of a Behavior Analysts is so multi-layered so when we do find an organization that puts an emphasis on creating a reasonable balance, I

think the retention of BCBAs are higher.” In addition, participants mentioned work-life balance as being an important part of their overall mental health in the workplace.

Workplace Relationships. Participants also mentioned that the connections they have in the workplace can be important to one’s job satisfaction, as 15% of participants mentioned the need to have workplace connections to have job satisfaction. “It is very important to have some kind of relationship with your colleagues. This helps create a sense of belonging when you get to work every day but also helps with the overall team dynamic. If there is no relationship or a negative one with my coworkers, the chance of leaving significantly increases – more so if the relationships become negative,” was stated by Participant R1F19. In addition, participants listed workplace connections providing a feeling of belonging to the community they work in as well as helping to create bonds that can transcend the workplace. The findings are similar to other studies as results from Aman-Ullah et al., (2021), depicted that job embeddedness is essential to retention rates. In addition, participants mentioned that the bonds created at the workplace help create more engaging environments, making it easier to want to continue to work for an employer, especially when there may be other components missing in the workplace (Coetzee & Bester, 2021). The connections that participants had to their fellow employees was mentioned as being important, especially during times of struggle in the workplace.

Interpretation of the Themes

After organizing data points into groups and discovering the related themes across participant answers, a few interpretations can be concluded. These interpretations can be concluded due to the reoccurring trends across differing participants during the data collection stage. First, it can be concluded that participants contributed a high correlation between how they were managed and their level of job satisfaction. Managerial styles such as authoritative in the

field were frowned upon, while participants disclosed that managers who were more democratic or servant were more favorable. For instance, two participants disclosed moving from one location to another due to the management style of their supervisor. Studies about leadership styles, especially as they pertain to the recent needs of the working force, mention that leadership styles that are portrayed as dismissive of feelings or thoughts of subordinates often see more resignations than those leaders who are considered more emotionally intelligent and empathetic (Sendjaya et al., 2022).

In addition, employees in the mental health sector show a tremendous need for superiors who demonstrate empathy, support, and servitude. Due to the nature of those who work in this field, employees mention that leaders who demonstrate actions of care for their entire team are more favorable than those leaders who are solely concerned with running a business or implementing policies (Rahal et al., 2022). With the overwhelming number of participants who mentioned the leadership style of a manager or supervisor impacting their want to remain employed with an organization, it can be interpreted that how managers present their leadership style to their teams will negatively or positively affect their retention rates. This aligns with several research studies regarding managerial and leadership styles, where certain leadership styles, such as servant and transformational leadership, tend to be the most successful in this current workforce population. Both transformational and servant leadership are employee-centric styles, in which the leader places a great emphasis on the well-being of their employees (Sendjaya et al., 2022).

The next theme, which surrounds the concept of burnout, can be interpreted as having a negative effect on employee retention. When participants answered the questions on how burnout affected job satisfaction and their employment status, the data shown concludes that (1)

burnout in the field of applied behavior analysis is vast and (2) its overall effects cause high turnover rates. Several data points showed that burnout, specifically in the field, is the top reason why employees leave. With that, employees, however, pinpointed burnout as having several different leading factors, although the symptoms were similar across many participants. For instance, some participants listed the caseload size as the leading contributor to burnout, while others listed the severity of their caseload as their core burnout contributor.

Nonetheless, participants described their burnout as having symptoms of fatigue, workplace drifting, and overall job dissatisfaction (Brown, 2021). Therefore, when interpreting the data points, it can be concluded that burnout is a significant issue for clinicians in the field of applied behavior analysis, regardless of whether they are Board-Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA) or Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs). In addition, when burnout occurs for these technicians, their willingness or desire to stay employed within the organization or in the field altogether is negatively affected.

When looking at BCBAs specifically, participant data points can be deciphered as burnout being linked overall to caseload size and difficulty managing expectations from their role (Kranak, 2022). With that, it can be concluded that burnout was more likely to ensue when BCBA participants felt they did not have support in managing expectations and mitigating caseload size challenges. On the other hand, RBTs linked their burnout primarily to their caseload difficulties, specifically with their clients' behavior management. When these clinicians experienced burnout, they were more likely to cease employment with their current company and in the field altogether. With data points concluding burnout as having such as being so prevalent in the field, conclusions on its adverse effects on retention can be drawn conclusively. Research

on burnout mentions that those in healthcare often have overwhelming effects of burnout due to the strenuous and demanding expectations of their role (Brown, 2021).

Lastly, employee value proposition and organizational empathy, which surrounds how employees feel the organization feels about their employees, showed several correlational data points. Overall, participants had stronger feelings of job satisfaction when they felt that the organization they worked for took a true interest in the well-being of their employees. The different employee value propositions discussed included fair assessment of pay and benefits, mental health resources, career advancement opportunities, and work-life balance. When these interests were met, and job satisfaction was high, participants mentioned they were more likely to stay within the organization compared to when they were not. Furthermore, many of the participants rated overall job satisfaction as being linked to organizational empathy, as participants stated that when the organization, they work for truly cares about their employees, there is a presence of strong managers and a decrease in burnout, which leads to higher retention rates overall (Wallace & Coughlan, 2023).

With organizational empathy encompassing aspects of the previous themes, burnout, and leadership styles, participants felt strongly about the need for an organization to make an employee a central focus. When assessing certain factors that align with employee value propositions, pay, and benefits were rated higher than other components such as career development. Several of the participants listed pay and benefits as factors that could lead to job dissatisfaction and turnover within clinical staff (Coetzee & Bester, 2021). This was very apparent with RBT clinicians, who are paid hourly compared to that of BCBAs, who are salaried clinicians. Of those RBT clinicians who rated pay and benefits as a top priority also mentioned that they felt the work they do is both mentally and physically taxing, leaving very little energy

for other task outside of work, including secondary employment; therefore, how and organization viewed fair benefits and pay could directly affect their own satisfaction. On the other hand, BCBA's are less likely to place pay and benefits as the most essential priority due to the wage range of these clinicians, even though variable ranges exist. BCBA participants identified opportunities for career advancement and learning opportunities as one the most impactful components an organization could provide to demonstrate the value of their employees.

Representation and Visualization of the Data

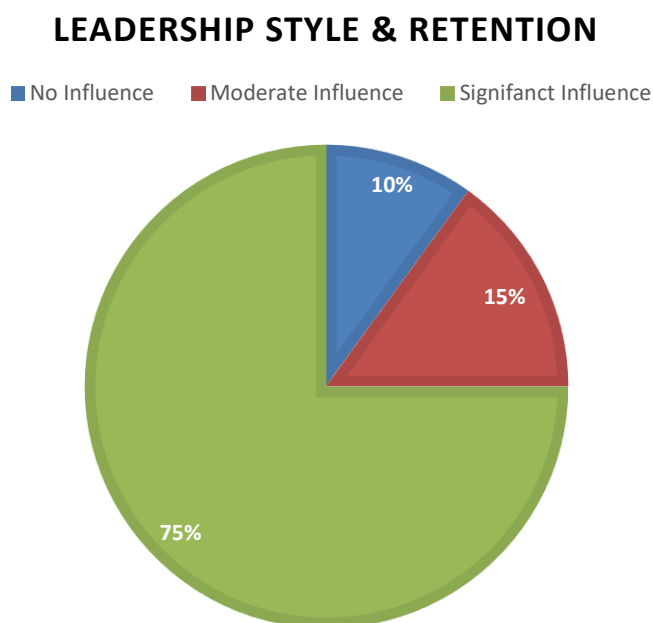


Figure 2. Relationship Between Leadership Style and Retention in ABA

Figure 2 displays data points from participants regarding the relationship between leadership style and retention. During participant interviews, participants were asked questions to identify if leadership style was essential in retaining clinicians in the field. As shown, an overwhelming majority of the participants identified some influence of leadership style on organizational retention. With very few participants identifying no influence between leadership style and retention, the data shown can conclude the relevance of managers encompassing

specific leadership styles to influence retention. This depiction of how leadership style can positively or negatively affect employee job satisfaction and retention is similar to what previous studies have shown (Ozturk et al., 2021; Sendjaya et al., 2020). In a study conducted (Ozturk et al. (2021), the following was concluded:

Leadership has a significant influence on psychological capital and climate, resulting in a positive impact on organizational commitment and talent retention. Six leadership behaviors were found to be statistically significant predictors of talent retention. These leadership behaviors are ‘acknowledges my background and experience’, ‘finds out and understands the things that motivate me as an employee’, ‘respects his or her employees’, ‘takes responsibility’, ‘treats me as an individual’ and ‘provides me with stimulation to maintain my interest at work’ (p.7).

With employer-employee relationship being so vital to overall culture of the workplace, how managers and supervisors chose to lead their team members has a direct impact on not only employee job performance, but also the longevity of the employees in the workplace. With this depiction of how much leadership impacts retention and the similarities from other studies alike, a correlation between employee retention in the field of ABA and leadership style can be concluded (Tian et al., 2020).

Employee Preferred Management Style

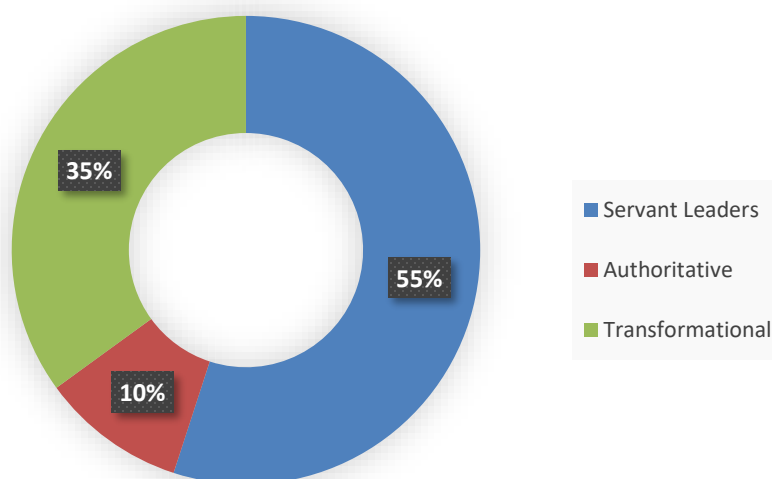


Figure 3. Preferred Management Style of Managers/Supervisors

Figure 3 takes data points from participants regarding what type of leadership style mentioned by the participants was most preferred. Participants during the interviews were asked what type of style is most preferred for their work environment. The three mentioned styles were servant leadership, authoritative, and transformational. A count of which leadership styles preferred by each participant was then tallied up and displayed by percentages on the pie graph shown. Servant leadership and transformational leadership encompassed the majority of the preferred styles by participants, while the autocratic style was the least preferred of the four mentioned styles. Findings depicted have some similarities and differences from other studies on leadership styles. Studies surrounding healthcare workers who may have similar workloads and responsibilities like those in the field of the ABA, show that servant leadership is a preferred leadership style (Hills, 2020; Farrington & Lillah, 2020; Rahal et al., 2022). In a study conducted by Farrington & Lillah (2020), the authors stated that “findings show that the more healthcare

practitioners are perceived by their employees as caring for others, the more their employees will experience their own involvement in the healthcare practice as satisfying” (p.161). This is primarily due to servant leaders placing a huge emphasis on serving and helping their team before their own needs, which is pivotal in many healthcare fields that involve patient care. Other fields healthcare or otherwise that do not involve direct patient care showed transformational leadership as one of the most preferred styles, due to transformational leaders focus on creating change within those who they lead in hopes of creating future leaders (Afsar & Umrani, 2020).

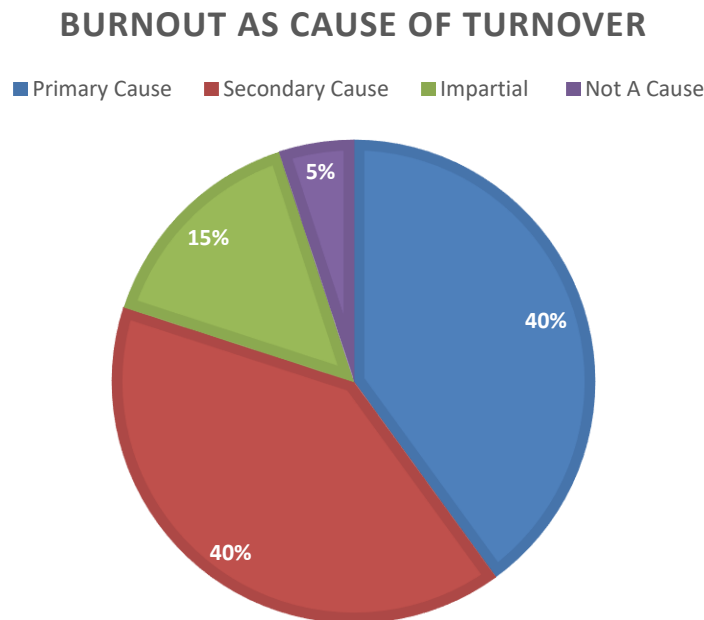


Figure 4. Relationship Between Burnout and Turnover in ABA

Figure 4 represents the second discovered theme from the data collected, which is related to burnout and how it plays a role in the overall turnover within an ABA organization. This chart displays data points on how participants related burnout with turnover as a cause of turnover. Based on participants' answers during the interview, they either rated burnout as a primary cause, secondary cause, or impartial on whether it was a cause or not a cause at all. Data presented on

the graph shows that more than half of the participants relate burnout as a primary or secondary cause of turnover in the field of applied behavior analysis, with about a quarter of the participants either impartial if burnout is a cause or having no association. The findings depicted were similar to what has been discussed in previous studies (Brown, 2021; Maresca et al., 2022), where both Board-Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) and Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs) have linked burnout to the reasons why they either leave an organization or the field all together. In a study conducted by Maresca et al. (2022), the authors stated, “this study showed that the level of burnout is inversely related to their level of self-compassion, work engagement, and overall performance and attitude about their work and organization” (p.6). With there being several factors that may differ between roles that cause burnout, the findings show that a vast majority of clinicians in the field correlate burnout and turnover.

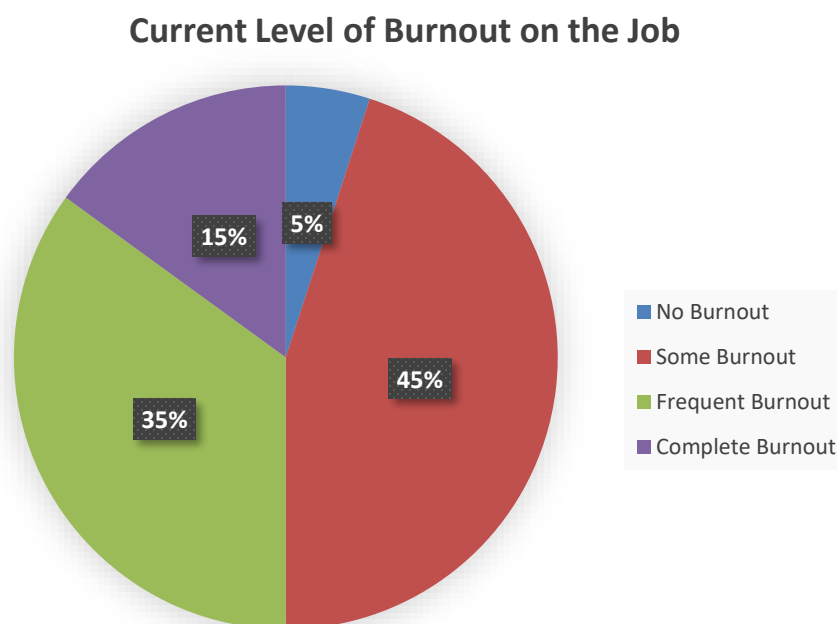


Figure 5. Levels of Burnout on the Job

When looking at Figure 5, a tally of participant responses regarding the current stages of burnout was computed. In the study, participants were asked explicitly about their current stage

of burnout, in which participants were directed to choose from four differing answers. Each of these answers specified the level of burnout participants were currently feeling in their current job roles, with almost half of the participants acknowledging that they currently are feeling some burnout. The graph displays participants' varying levels of burnout, which, from studies, have been shown to have a major impact on the longevity of employment among employees working in healthcare (Maresca et al.,2022; Brown, 2021). A study conducted by Brown (2021), concluded that:

Higher levels of reported total burnout were significantly related to lower levels of reported life and job satisfaction. The same pattern of correlations was found between reported disengagement and reported life and job satisfaction as well as between reported exhaustion and reported life and job satisfaction. There were also significant relations between reported total burnout and intention to turnover (p.372).

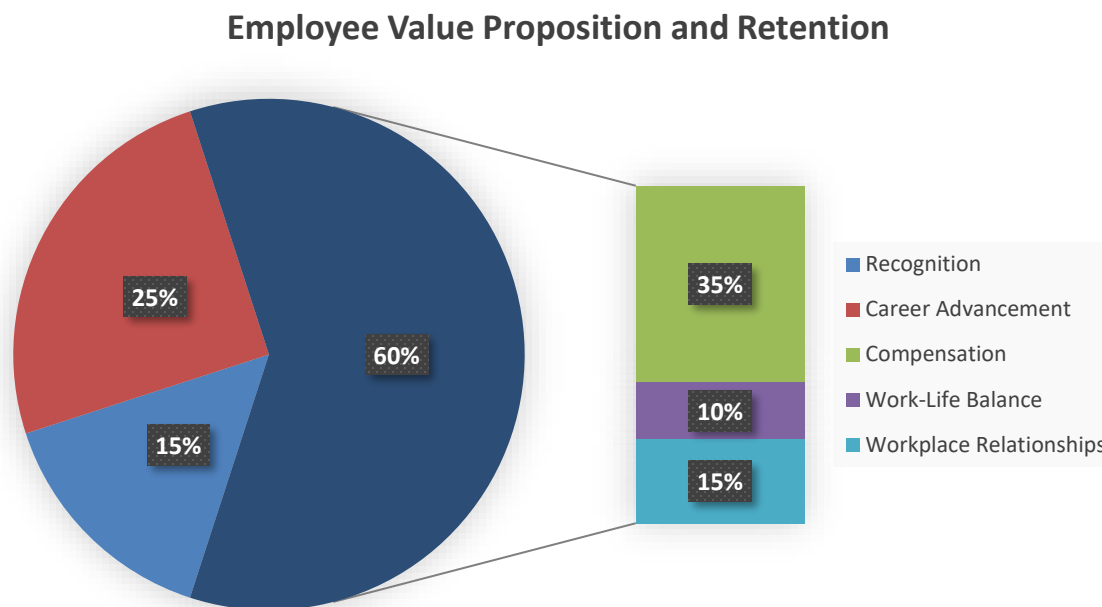


Figure 6. Relationship Between Employee Value Proposition and Retention in ABA

In Figure 6, participant responses are shown as they relate to how retention in the field of applied behavior analysis is related to specific components such as career advancement, compensation, work-life balance, and caseload management (Coetzee & Bester, 2021). Participants were asked to decide if retention in the field is due to any specific component of organizational responsibility and, if so, what components were the most influential to retention initiatives. From the data collected, all participants felt that certain core factors led to retention in the field. Of these factors, career advancement, work-life balance, and workplace relationships each had 20% or more of respondents associating those factors with retention with recognition and compensation evenly distributed. The findings depicted are similar to those studies that discuss the importance of hygiene and motivating factors (Ramdhani & Bakri, 2020). With both factors being an important contributor to retention, clinicians in the ABA field seek a variety of motivating and hygiene factors that help with retention, many of which are resemble factors seen in other fields of healthcare (Lee & Lee, 2022; Aruldoss et al., 2022; Miller et al., 2020). In a study conducted by Lee and Lee (2022), it was concluded that:

In the work satisfaction of small- to mid-sized hospital nurses resulted in calling, resilience, workplace bullying and nursing work environment, with the nursing work environment having the greatest impact on work satisfaction. The internal motivation of value and satisfaction about work has a similar impact on work satisfaction of external motivations such as salary, compensation, etc. (p.10).

Relationship of the Findings

When assessing the research findings, it becomes evident that organizational retention and turnover have some reoccurring trends that will decipher an employee's willingness to stay

employed at any given time. Moreover, there are some noticeable patterns when connecting the research questions to the findings. When assessing the first research question, which asks “What challenges may healthcare leaders encounter when trying to maintain their staff?”

- RQ1a. What leadership qualities may help contribute to staff retention?
- RQ1b. What leadership qualities may contribute to staff turnover?

The findings collected from the research show that three main components may become challenges for healthcare leaders in the field of ABA when it comes to retention. The first challenge surrounds how employees view the leadership styles of their managers and supervisors as being conducive to how they want to be led (Ozturk et al., 2021). From the data collected, it would be concluded that healthcare leaders will have challenges retaining staff when those who supervise employees have certain leadership characteristics, such as empathetic supervisors and managers who are dictators.

On the other hand, when answering the research question of what leadership qualities may contribute to staff retention, supervisors, and managers with qualities such as empathy, humility, and accountability were listed as the most favorable (Mey et al., 2021). In addition to managers' leadership styles, the data points also show that healthcare leaders will encounter challenges regarding employee burnout and how employees view the organization. With burnout being listed as such a prevalent occurrence in the field, healthcare leaders will have to find a way to mitigate burnout amongst their clinicians to save ABA organizations from high turnover rates. Lastly, according to the data, leaders may have challenges retaining staff if employees do not have a favorable view of the organization. Employees have a less than favorable depiction of the organization based on factors such as pay rate, benefits, career advancement opportunities, and organizational structure. The data collected from the study shows that leaders are more likely to

retain clinicians in the field when clinicians feel as though the organization cares about not only the quality of work provided but also the quality of care given to its employees.

The second research question for the study focused on strategies to combat retention, in which the question follows:

“What strategies are used by healthcare leaders to offset retention challenges?”

- RQ2a. In what ways do retention issues in behavioral health look similar to other healthcare settings?
- RQ2b. In what ways do retention issues in behavioral health look different than other healthcare settings?

When deciphering the data, a few key points can be concluded on appropriate strategies needed by healthcare leaders in the field. The first strategy encompasses the type of managers and supervisors that are hired for leadership roles within the company. As the data shows, leadership style is heavily associated with the retention or turnover of staff in the ABA field. Therefore, organizational leaders placing an emphasis on the type of managers and supervisors they employ or providing proper leadership training may be essential to retention strategies (Tian et al., 2020).

When assessing how retention issues in the field of ABA look similar to other healthcare settings, data from those participants who had worked in other healthcare settings report some similarities. These similarities include job dissatisfaction due to pay and benefits among employees and large turnover. Data collected concluded that other healthcare settings have similar issues to those of the behavioral healthcare field, with participants listing settings such as certified nursing assistant jobs, healthcare call center jobs, and dentistry positions. In addition, some participants also listed turnover issues within non-healthcare agencies. On the other hand,

participants' data showed some differences in retention issues between behavioral health and other healthcare settings such as burnout. Unlike the field of ABA, participants who worked in other healthcare settings during previous employment did not report having such high burnout compared to their current role. More specifically, the data showed that burnout in behavioral healthcare was more prevalent than other fields listed by participants and had an onset at a faster rate than in other healthcare fields. Therefore, this can be interpreted as healthcare leaders in the field of ABA needing to focus not only on the causes of burnout but at what points during an employee's tenure it tends to start having effects.

The last research question, which focuses on essential elements needed to help with retention, asks, "What organizational elements are present across different healthcare settings that help position an organization for successful retention initiatives?" When looking at the data, participants mentioned that some key factors play an essential role in helping maintain staff regardless of their industry. Those key factors included fair compensation, work-life balance, a positive work environment, and career advancement opportunities (Miller et al., 2020). Therefore, healthcare organizations, including those in the ABA field, are more likely to succeed with staff retention when initiatives geared toward these critical factors are present. For the field of ABA specifically, organizations may want to focus their efforts on these initiatives and ensure that they are only effective but promoted to clinicians due to the high turnover associated with the field.

Data from participants in this study show that clinicians need more opportunities to increase their compensation due to the challenges related to their caseload. Some participants mentioned that there are very few opportunities for compensation increases for Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs) in the field across ABA companies. Of the participants who were

RBTs, they mentioned that the typically annual increases occur, which is typical for several industries; however, the average tenure of an RBT due to extreme burnout in the field often does not allow RBTs to gain access to annual merit increases. Therefore, participants mentioned that ABA companies should streamline their compensation initiatives for RBTs to encourage higher retention in the field. Those BCBA clinicians, however, when it came to compensation, did not have the same sentiment, which is more likely due to the differences in pay between the two. Instead, BCBA participants focused on career advancement programs and work-life balance as the main factors they felt an organization should surround initiatives. BCBAs were mainly concerned with the requirements organizations place on them, which often cause an imbalance of work-life balance. They felt that companies who understood and prioritized making it possible for BCBAs to leave work at work had better retention of those BCBA clinicians.

Data Relationship to Conceptual Framework. The data collected during the study shows strong associations between the conceptual framework for this study. Figure 1, Conceptual Framework, which displays the relationship between concepts and retention challenges for the field of ABA, was verified by the data findings of the study. The conceptual framework's core focus is on what factors are related to job satisfaction and retention amongst clinicians in the field, emphasizing concepts that influence retention negatively or positively.

Job Satisfaction and Retention. When looking at the concept of job satisfaction and how it relates to retention, the concept focuses on the elements contributing to satisfaction and dissatisfaction. In the conceptual framework model, job satisfaction and retention were correlated with specific components such as servant leadership and job embeddedness. When employees are satisfied with their job, organizations tend to see a higher rate of retention (Aman-Ullah et al.,2021). However, understanding what components are necessary for job satisfaction to

occur is important to note for long-term retention to take place (Rownan et al., 2022). The data collected in the study shows the relationship between what constitutes employee satisfaction and whether that translates to retention within a company. With the data having an emphasis on varying components related to job satisfaction, retention for this study is a by-product of those components and the level of importance an employee places on each of those satisfaction components.

Leadership Effects on Retention. During the study, participant data showed a connection between job satisfaction and how they felt about the leadership style of their supervisors and managers they worked for. The points suggested that although retention was not directly connected with leadership style for these participants, it did affect the overall satisfaction employees felt for the job environment they were working in. Employees who are satisfied with their overall working environment, including the employer-employee relationship they have with their direct supervisor can influence the likelihood of an employee maintain employment with the organization they work for (Mey et al., 2021). This relationship between employer and employee can have several elements such as levels of support, open-door policies, reasonable expectations of employees, empathetic leadership qualities, and communication styles (Sendjaya et al., 2020). Participants in this study mentioned several differing leadership styles and how those leadership styles were beneficial or not beneficial for their overall job satisfaction. Responses from participants connected a few leadership styles that have similarities around employee-centric management as leading to higher satisfaction with the working environment compared to other leadership styles. Due to this, connections between preferred leadership styles and retention could be made.

Job Embeddedness. In the conceptual framework, job embeddedness is connected to employee job satisfaction, which in turn leads to retention. In theory, job embeddedness relates to how connected employees are to those they work with, the jobs they perform, and the organization they work for (Aman-Ullah et al., 2021). The data collected in this study showed that employees were more likely to be embedded when they felt the organization they worked for cared about its employees and what employees considered high value needs from an organization. In addition, data showed that embeddedness was also more likely when employees felt as though their direct supervisor and manager provided them with adequate support to perform their jobs appropriately.

Herzberg's Factor Theory. The two-factor theory in the conceptual framework suggests that two components must be evaluated for both job satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Alrawahi et al., 2020). To increase job satisfaction, employees must have an increase in motivating factors such as personal growth, recognition, and responsibility. The data collected in the study showed that participants who felt that the organization they worked for allowed for career advancement opportunities led to greater job satisfaction than when the organization did not. In addition, the leadership styles preferred by participants also displayed that autonomy in the job setting led to job satisfaction.

Hygiene factors are another component in the Two-Factor Theory needing evaluation to decipher job satisfaction. When these factors are not improved, they lead to job dissatisfaction (Ramdhani & Bakri, 2020). For example, data points in the study showed that when base wages were low, participants were dissatisfied with the organization. These feelings of dissatisfaction also were evident in other hygiene factors listed by participants, including relationships with coworkers, supervisor quality, and overall workload. While certain hygiene factors, such as

workload expectations, were described as more essential than others, such as relationships with coworkers, many of the hygiene factors related by participants contributed to the overall effects of turnover in the field.

Servant Leadership Theory. When assessing leadership styles with participants to determine their influence on overall workplace satisfaction or dissatisfaction, servant leadership was one of the most preferred leadership styles by those participants in the study. The conceptual framework connects this form of leadership style to job satisfaction and was evident from the data points collected. Participants associated the empathetic and employee-centered leadership style as a positive contributor to the workplace. In addition, participants in the study gravitated towards this leadership style as being preferred by their supervisors and managers compared to other leadership styles. Studies on servant leadership associate this form of leadership style as having higher success rates with retention compared to other more authoritative forms of leadership primarily due to the difference in employee support (Rahal et al., 2022). The amount of support provided by leaders in the field to employees is an essential factor in trusting the leaders within the organization they work for, which may play a factor in retention (Ozturk et al., 2021).

Anticipated Themes

Prior to the conduction of the study, there were several anticipated themes that were projected to be seen. These themes were based on previous research studies on turnover and retention, and the underlying factors are connected to retention strategies. A few anticipated themes for this study were (1) that leadership styles played a significant impact on employee satisfaction and retention (Erdal & Altindag, 2020), (2) that burnout in the field increased turnover (Brown, 2021), and (3) that ongoing training for clinicians in the field is crucial to

maintaining retention (Tyagi, 2021). When assessing the findings from the study, the anticipated theme of leadership styles playing a significant role in overall employee satisfaction is indeed evident. Several of the participants mentioned collaborative leadership styles as influencing their employee experience and concluded that certain leadership styles are not only preferred but needed over others in the field of ABA. This anticipated theme has been seen across several studies that focus on how leadership styles and retention are connected, in which the overall conclusion focuses on leadership styles such as servant leaders in the healthcare field (Zhang et al., 2021).

The second anticipated theme, which focused on burnout, much like the first theme, had been mentioned in several healthcare studies on the retention of specialist clinicians. Findings from the study suggest that when clinicians are feeling prominent levels of burnout, turnover tends to increase compared to when burnout is low or can be mitigated by an organization (Wallace & Coughlan, 2023). In addition, findings also show that organizations prioritizing strategies to decrease burnout for clinicians will tend to have lower turnover than those who do not. The third anticipated theme of ongoing training being necessary for clinicians to maintain retention was not easily seen as a connection based on the data findings. Although participants in the study mentioned the need for adequate training for new clinicians and ongoing training for current employees, this theme needed to be more readily seen and connected to retention and turnover for this study. This primarily resulted from training being a non-primary factor in retention, although the need for it by clinicians was mentioned as being important.

Although the study had several anticipated themes derived from previous studies on the same or similar topic, some unanticipated themes emerged from the study. One of these themes was the level of support and supervision provided to clinicians as a factor in their overall

satisfaction with their employment. This theme was seen by RBT and BCBA clinicians, with both positions emphasizing the need for continuous support from their supervisors. Although it was anticipated that the type of leadership style presented by managers and supervisors impacted retention, the amount of support and supervision was not previously anticipated as having a cause to retention strategies. Participants in the study mentioned that due to the nature of the field, senior clinicians whose primary role is to oversee clinicians during their practice, play a huge role in their level of satisfaction. Participants mentioned that because the field can be subjective in many ways, the need to know if they are performing proper practices on their patient base is readily needed from senior clinicians. In addition, participants mentioned the need for guidance, especially for those clinicians who are newer in their role, who may need senior clinicians as a mentor to ensure they are (1) on the right track with their clinical practices and (2) help with time management and destressing strategies to ensure burnout does not ensue.

The Literature

When assessing previous research on the phenomenon of retention in the healthcare setting, the literature has discovered several factors associated both with retention and turnover. Some of these discoveries have also been proven to be seen in the current study, especially regarding leadership style, burnout, and organizational environment. When comparing what has been discussed in those previous studies to the current one, specific recurring themes and concepts are brought to the forefront.

Leadership Style. In previous studies, various leadership styles have been said to impact the way employees engage in their work setting, the type of motivation present in employee work, and the overall environment of the workplace; each one of these resulting impacts essentially influences the general feeling employees have about an organization, which can, in

turn, have a significant influence on retention within an organization as well as obtaining new employment (Hills, 2020). This study, like previous literature, shows that understanding how different leadership styles affect recruitment and attrition can be crucial for retaining new and tenured employees. According to Mey et al. (2021) both executive leadership and mid-level management can jeopardize retention initiatives when outstanding leadership is not at the forefront of being practiced by leaders. With that, previous studies have shown that administration can affect retention in diverse ways. Some of these differing effects were also seen in the current study while others have been discussed in previous studies but needed to be more evident during the data collection phase of the present study.

Structure and Clarity. As noted in the literature (Sendjaya et al., 2020), clear structures are needed for a workplace to function effectively, which is the leader's responsibility. Leadership styles that ensure that structure within the work setting is evident are more likely to have engaged employees driven to achieve the organization's mission and feel more appreciated (Hill, 2020). Data obtained from the current study showed participants were more involved and embedded in their workplace when they felt as though their supervisor or manager cared about fostering a workplace where the environment was pleasant, and support was present. Similarly, the literature shows that employees offered clear guidance and given obtainable goals and the tools they need to obtain those goals generally have higher retention rates. Data points for the study align with this concept as participants discussed the importance of leaders who provide support in numerous ways.

Managing and Recruiting Talent. Research on managing talent has shown that leadership styles can play a significant part in the success of management (Mey et al., 2021). This also includes cultivating the strengths of employees, understanding the weaknesses of one's

employees, and assigning their roles appropriately based on their strengths and weaknesses. Research done previously on managing talent discusses the importance of leaders acknowledging this in both tenure and new employees and establishing leadership styles and techniques around enforcing a more employee-centric management style to see higher retention. In the current study, participants' leadership style preferences by participants were geared more towards those leadership styles that had a central focus on employees; however, there were other components that participants tended to focus on even more. Some of these included leaders who were readily available for support, nurtured overall growth within the workplace, leaders who had a lead-by-example mentality, and reliability.

Building Trust and Dependability. Participants in this study acknowledged how vital trust is for there to be a successful employer-employee relationship. For this to occur, employees must ensure that they foster an atmosphere where employees feel as though they are safe to explore their strengths and weaknesses and learn from their mistakes. Participants in the study mentioned that leaders who can do these things successfully tend to have better confidence when they go to work and have more confidence in their ability to do their job successfully. Similar studies, such as the one conducted in Hill (2020), list dependability and trust as one of the most significant components of being an effective leader. Leadership styles showing employees that leaders need to be more dependable, knowledgeable, or nonsuppurative tend to result in trust barriers between employers and employees. Trust combined with communication for many participants resulted in psychological safety (Mey et al., 2021), which participants connected to better retention in their workplace.

Growth, Development, and Promoting Well-being. Studies have noted that employees tend to stay with organizations where they feel their managers and supervisors are concerned

with their growth and development. In addition, leaders who continuously challenge their employees to foster growth tend to have higher satisfaction levels in their workplace (Aruldoss et al., 2022). The current study showed that participants whose managers cared about their career growth were more satisfied with their employers. When managers also set forth other core leadership characteristics such as empathy, job satisfaction also increased. In addition to growth and development, this study showed that participants were concerned with their well-being, especially regarding work-life balance. Participants mentioned that they were more satisfied when their managers considered their work-life balance essential to employee well-being, specifically regarding mental health.

Although previous studies have discussed the importance of work-life balance as a contributor to an employee's overall well-being (Aruldoss et al., 2022), the topic of mental health as it relates to job satisfaction and management style was previously not evident prior to conducting the study. Participants discussed explicitly in the current study that management playing a part in the overall mental health of an employee can be a contributing factor for either retention or turnover. This may be present in several forms, such as leaders who implement mental health awareness into their own leadership style, how managers deal with employees when mental health becomes a factor in the overall success of their role, and how managers either contribute or remove triggers that can foster mental health issues.

Burnout. Studies on burnout and how it relates to healthcare workers have shown that the overall system of healthcare has driven many workers to burnout. This has resulted in an increase in mental health challenges for healthcare workers as well as an increase in turnover (Kranak, 2022). The current study showed that most of the participants currently or previously have felt burnout in some form, putting burnout as one of the most contributing factors to

turnover in the field of applied behavior analysis. The work of clinicians in the field of higher rates of mental, physical, and emotional stress and fatigue causes rates of burnout to increase. Studies on the subject show that causes of burnout can range from not having the proper support from managers and supervisors, unmanageable caseload, administrative burdens, underinvestment of employees, and feelings of inferiority due to the inability to provide patients adequate care (Brown, 2021).

Participants in the current study noted similar reasons for burnout and noted that burnout for clinicians in the field often has an early onset due to the nature of the field. One key factor of burnout that has been discussed in previous studies on the subject that should have been noted with participants in this study is burnout due to loss of connection or motivation for the mission of the role. Studies have shown that when burnout occurs, a part of the occurrence can often result from employees losing focus on the overall mission and mindset they initially entered the field with (Barthauer et al., 2020). Due to this, burnout can easily ensue, coupled with other contributors, when the goal of why they pursued their role is essentially lost. Although the current study did not dive into this reason for burnout, answers surrounding burnout overall from participants suggest that a loss in motivation typically is a component of burnout.

One aspect of burnout seen from the study's data that differed from the previous study was how much technology and administrative burdens can play in burnout with clinicians. When participants were asked some of the contributing factors of burnout in their workplace, surprisingly, several mentioned that the administrative component of that is entailed in their role. Some participants mentioned the lack of ease of some of the technologies used to do their job, while others mentioned the amount of administrative work that is required on top of the clinical

components. Nonetheless, participants' responses in the current study overall confirmed what previous studies have discussed on burnout with healthcare workers.

Workplace Environment and Culture. When comparing how participants felt about the workplace environment and its relationship to retention and turnover, many participants expressed similar sentiments when compared to what has been discussed in previous studies. These sentiments included toxic work environments leading to turnover, unfavorable employee-employee and employer-employee relationships, lack of structure, communication barriers, favoritism, and organizational politics. Participants in this study acknowledged that when certain negative components about the work environment are present, it becomes easier to leave due to low job embeddedness levels. As a result, this results in a lack of motivation, absenteeism, and an overall disconnect from the workplace. Research on workplace environment mentions that when employees have elevated levels of disconnection, regardless of the reason, an organization is likely to see a swift increase in turnover (Rowan et al., 2022). When this occurs, companies can often have difficulty recruiting new talent due to the overall workplace culture needing an inviting feeling for current and prospective employees.

In the present study, participants were asked to describe the effects on a workplace when turnover starts to become prevalent, especially concerning employees who stay. Many participants acknowledge that when turnover is high in a workplace, it tends to cause high-stress levels for employees that stay. This stress can come from several reasons mentioned by participants, such as the burden of taking on higher caseloads and lack of adequate breaks due to being understaffed. When assessing what has been discussed in previous literature, employees who are usually left to pick up the burdens of those employees who leave tend to have negative feelings about a workplace, especially regarding the effects of being understaffed. In addition,

when turnover becomes prevalent in a workplace, employees who may have previously felt satisfied with their employment often have a shift in mindset due to the change in workplace culture after turnover occurs. Nonetheless, participants' responses from the current study showed that the data collected aligns with the literature regarding employee satisfaction, workplace culture, and retention.

Gaps in Literature. When analyzing the current research on the phenomenon of turnover in healthcare, most of the literature focuses on the leadership styles of managers as well as organizational culture and environment. Several studies have connected to retention initiatives surrounding improvements in corporate responsibilities to their employees, such as competitive rates, work-life balance, implementation of training seminars for their leaders, and assessing strategies to mitigate burnout (Brown, 2021). However, with the focus being on those components, the current literature, as it pertains to applied behavior analysis, needs to focus on the specific stressors that lead to turnover in the in-center model of ABA. In addition, the present literature needs to discuss how employees are supervised and how the amount of supervision, both from the BCBA and RBT perspective, can lead to turnover. Currently, literature on RBTs and BCBA turnover focuses heavily on burnout (Brown, 2021) and stressors that may contribute to an imbalance of work-life, especially concerning the in-home model of ABA. However, there are present gaps both in in-center research as well as the connection between supervisor and turnover.

This study, however, allows for an in-depth analysis specifically of the in-center model of ABA and how turnover looks explicitly for those clinicians within this model of applied behavior analysis. In addition, the interview questions presented to participants in this study not only looked to assess what the current literature said about turnover but also produced new findings.

The current study discovered how much of a role supervisors played in the retention initiatives in the field of ABA, specifically as it related to the amount of supervision and type of supervision employees received as well as the unique stressors that the in-center model of ABA may have on retention in the field. Understanding these current gaps in the literature is essential (1) because the differing models of ABA will have their unique challenges with retention and (2) with the in-center model having more supervision than the in-home model, understanding the role supervisors play is pivotal. With the differing models of ABA having their unique turnover challenges, studies such as the current one are essential to understand what those unique challenges are and how supervisor experiences differ and contribute to turnover.

Findings Related to the Problem

When assessing the findings from this study and the overall problem, the field of applied behavior analysis needs help with employee turnover, which in turn continues to add to the excessive cost of running the business. From the data collected from participants, turnover in the industry is vast with a multifaceted layer of reasoning behind the why of prevalence of turnover. Nonetheless, the reality of these high turnover rates with registered behavior technicians and board-certified behavior analysts begs the question of what managers and organizations in this field do to mitigate turnover and what retention strategies are the most effective for reduction. With employees in the field feeling overwhelmed, undervalued, and under-compensated, the solution for mitigation lies within the organization and those who manage employees within the center, according to the data collected from participants. Managers in the field have as much stake in improvement retention as the organization does; however, the components needed from higher- and mid-level management may differ. Therefore, the findings of this study show that one of the best ways to mitigate turnover in the field is for upper and mid-level managers to pay

closer attention to the concerns and goals expressed by their employees. This will result in management across an organization not only reevaluating their employees but also reevaluating the company overall to set higher expectations for the organization as a whole.

One of the key findings from the study is understanding why employees quit in the applied behavior analysis field. Managers across the ABA field have acknowledged that turnover is an issue; however, understanding the key components that lead to employee turnover in the field is crucial. Data from the study show that although the problem of turnover seems to be persistent, managers' effort to understand what is leading to the problem is most important for the industry. With the ABA field having similar issues with turnover like many other healthcare settings, such as nursing, understanding that several differences may make turnover prevalent in the field is also crucial to acknowledge. With participants in this study providing an array of data on the different causes of turnover, comparing those causes to other healthcare settings enables better retention strategies. For example, burnout, which is one of the major contributors to turnover in the field listed by participants, varies on how onset occurs between differing clinicians in the field. As the problem of burnout is evident within the field, understanding how burnout looks between different clinicians is essential information brought to light by participants in the field.

Nonetheless, one of the problems introduced was the cause of turnover in the organization itself. The effects of turnover in the field can often be seen in the quality of care, actual sustainability of the organization, and recruitment efforts. Although findings from the study did not specifically touch on the patient's quality of care, it did highlight that when turnover is prevalent within an organization, it becomes hard to get employees who remain with the company to be motivated to do their best in their roles. This can evidentially lead to quality

of care for those patients who are seeking services to decline. In addition, the findings revealed that organizational structure tends to be negatively affected when high turnover rates are also prevalent. Due to this, organizations may need help to grow and sustain the current business, affecting the patients in need the most. Therefore, turnover within the field affects the organization and the community overall, that the organization helps to serve.

Summary of the findings

The findings from the study revealed that what was discovered in the current study aligned with what has been discussed in several studies on the phenomenon of turnover and retention in the healthcare industry. Although most of the literature surrounds other healthcare professionals, such as nurses and physicians, many of the findings from the current study showed that causes of turnover within the healthcare industry, regardless of specialty, have several similarities. With knowledge of these similarities and the differences that may be present, solutions on retention initiatives can then be made a focal point by companies in the field of applied behavior analysis to make changes to the current retention challenges that plague the industry. Findings from the study have helped in understanding why employees leave the companies they work for and what components organizations can focus on to promote better retention.

In the study, there was a significant emphasis on leadership style of management, components of burnout, and organizational responsibilities that can be further investigated to understand what retention strategies should look like moving forward. In all, several of the anticipated themes expected to be relevant to the study were seen, which related back to the overall conceptual framework of retention challenges in the field. The overall problem of the effects of turnover in the field, as it relates to those patients, families, and the community in

which the applied behavior analysis field serves, can easily be detected from the collective data from the study. Nonetheless, the findings can be used in further research studies to make a meaningful impact on solution-oriented initiatives to change the scope of turnover in the ABA field.

Application to Professional Practice

As turnover and retention continue to be a highlighted topic within the healthcare industry, how organizations decide to utilize the strategies to mitigate this phenomenon could be the difference between a successful business and one that continues to have challenges. The needs of employees in the current work environment continue to change, which also requires organizations to stay on top of what components are needed in an organization to have successful retention. An organization taking the time to assess the needs of its employees in the current work environment and implementing practical strategies can significantly impact overall retention. Findings from this study can be helpful in both improving the general business practice surrounding turnover and laying the foundation for application strategies that could be implemented to combat turnover in the field of applied behavior analysis.

Improving General Business Practice

For the current study, many real-life practical applications can be deduced for improving general business practice. For one, data analytics is beneficial for improving decision-making, analyzing risk and challenges, and overall efficiency in all operational senses. This study, which looked to understand turnover in the field of applied behavior analysis, can use what has been learned to (1) understand the cost of turnover for healthcare managers, (2) implement better strategical plans for increasing retention, and (3) use the data to improve corporate

responsibilities as it relates to turnover in the field in hopes of adjusting policies for better outcomes.

As mentioned in many business studies (Zada et al., 2021), recruiting, onboarding, and training new hires can be expensive. In addition, loss of talent and skill and a decrease in employee engagement and morale can also be a costly effect of turnover in a business. Therefore, what companies do with data analytics from turnover results can be pivotal to helping a business grow and retain staff. This study shows key factors in turnover in the field of ABA, such as leadership style, burnout, corporate responsibility, and environment. Using predictive analytics to help approximate what turnover or retention may look like for a business can be essential to understanding what methods businesses in the field of ABA need to implement. Suppose a business is worried about future attrition rates. In that case, it may be better suited to address the problem ahead of time and be on the offensive end of deciding on solutions or preventions.

Just as important as it is for employers to understand what is causing attrition in their organization, focusing on why employees stay should also be a key factor. This study showed what components, if present, can lead to turnover and what factors may be more likely to lead to retention rates. This study and others (Rowan et al., 2022) show that employees who are embedded in their jobs and the community they serve develop a web of connections and relationships that help retain them as employees. Why an employee may become embedded in their employment can hinge on several factors, such as the overall environment they work in, the type of development opportunities presented, the type and amount of supervision they receive, as well as factors such as pay and overall employee satisfaction they have. Therefore, the more embedded employees are within their organization, the more likely they are to stay. When

assessing employee engagement, companies can increase embeddedness by implementing engagement strategies that promote job embeddedness, like fostering team cohesiveness, centering projects around teamwork, encouraging employee referrals, providing communication about company values that are clear and concise, implementing retention incentives, and encouraging peer mentors.

One critical issue organizations face regarding retention is understanding how to retain employees they want to keep and anticipating staff shortages. Healthcare organizations that do this well employ strategies that can help managers better understand the triggers that may lead to shortfalls in staff retention. Results from this study can be used to help engage more streamlined processes in terms of managers' approaches to understanding why turnover in their facilities occurs and what strategies can be implemented to help with retention. For instance, if an organization is facing attrition, understanding the core indicators that lead to turnover can help the organization understand if it is occurring at certain levels while identifying the root cause. For this study, participants discussed components such as compensation and professional growth are highly significant factors to their willingness to stay with a company. In fact, these factors as well as others like work-life balance and supervisory support were so significant that large percentages of participants attributed it to work satisfaction. Therefore, if factors such as compensation and professional development are crucial factors, understanding how they can play a role in retention strategies for all departments within an organization may be vital to mitigation turnover. For example, if a healthcare executive notices attrition across mid-level management, they should analyze specific characteristics, such as tenure, and compare them to hygiene factors, such as pay or career development and growth, to see trends. In order for there to be a reduction

in turnover within an organization, there has to be a core understanding of trends in attrition before applicable strategies can be implemented.

Potential Application Strategies

When companies manage employee retention using strategic actions, the long-term success of retaining staff is more likely. Findings from this study show that there can be several factors related to retention and turnover in the field of ABA. These factors included leadership style of middle and upper management, burnout, and compensation, just to name a few. Those organizations that can assess the challenges that plague the field may see significant increases in staff tenure across multiple clinician disciplines. One way to leverage these findings is by implementing a comprehensive employee retention program to attract and retain key employees while reducing turnover costs. This can include monthly employee satisfaction surveys that organizations can use to pinpoint areas that challenge clinician retention. In addition, ABA companies can employ predictive analytics to help determine the tenure span for their employees and then use other retention strategies to help combat lower-tenured departments. Other initiatives may include retention bonuses and systematic job leveling to promote growth and pay increases. Regardless of the method employed, results from this study show that leveraging a comprehensive employee retention program can help attract and retain employees, contributing to the business's overall productivity.

One factor of retention that this study has shown to play a significant role in managing employee retention is employee supervision. Participants in the study connected the level of support they received from their supervisor to their own overall job satisfaction. Therefore, the role of a supervisor or manager plays a crucial component in an employee's job experience due to supervisors being significant in the degree of structure, the type of culture that is experienced,

and managing the conflict or challenges in the work itself. Supervisors and managers help provide formal and informal feedback to employees that can be pivotal in employee growth and control the type of reward system for employees. ABA businesses looking to leverage employee retention programs must also factor in how much turnover can be controlled through supervisory intervention. These interventions can include group or individual meetings to discuss the needs of employees as well as mitigating complaints and troubleshooting issues. Focusing on the behaviors of managers and supervisors' organizations can manipulate turnover due to focusing on the interpersonal aspect of employee needs and satisfaction.

Furthermore, ABA companies that decide to put supervisor behavior at the forefront of their retention initiatives must equip their managers and supervisors with the tools to embrace leadership styles most effectively motivating diverse work groups. By doing so, managers can increase employee satisfaction while reducing retention and increasing overall job performance. To decipher what type of leadership style most applies to the field, the organization must assess the specific impacts particular leadership styles have on staff and retention. Organizations that understand how significant leadership styles are to their overall success, develop sound strategies and structures that allow for employee support while rewarding commitment and reducing overall turnover. This becomes particularly important in fields like ABA practices, where the general turnover of clinicians is high due to job demands. Findings from this study demonstrate that even in fields where turnover may be high due to several mitigating circumstances, organizations and managers can identify areas of improvement that could be used to implement retention initiatives.

Lastly, the findings surrounding burnout could be used in many ways. First, organizations could use these findings to identify if varying components within the job description led to

burnout more often and implement effective solution strategies. For example, the findings identified that burnout for BCBA clinicians can usually be rooted in improper work-life balance. With these findings, an organization could revisit the workload that BCBAs may have or introduce additional job positions that could help mitigate some of the workload that is not allowing for work-life balance. In addition, the findings around burnout could help an organization revisit its resources for employees, such as assistance programs that could focus on employee mental health. Implementing more employee resources would allow employees within the organization to take advantage of resources they may not have, such as counseling services, which could be beneficial for mitigating burnout that occurs due to mental stress.

Summary of Application to Professional Practice

Businesses that are successful can use research in their field, including market research that is both qualitative and quantitative in nature, to better understand where there may be areas for growth. By doing so, this not only allows an organization to have a competitive advantage in their respective business space, but also helps the organization grow and be better sustainable for the long-term. With that, understanding how retention and turnover plays a role in the longevity of a business is important for organizations whose field is not only competitive, but also is significant. The applied behavior analysis field (ABA) is a unique field in which the demand for practitioners in this space outweighs the availability of specialized clinicians available, making the market extremely competitive in terms of retaining staff. With this, organizations in this space have a significant challenge with retention that is often designated to their healthcare managers to find solutions. Strategies used by healthcare managers can help with combatting attrition of clinical staff in ABA, if the right core practices align with what components constitute job satisfaction for employees. Therefore, it is imperative that healthcare managers

understand what aspects of the organization help promote job satisfaction and retention, just as much as what may insinuate turnover.

Recommendations for Further Study

In terms of the scope of the study, which focused on the overall challenges of healthcare managers as they relate to turnover, the findings from this study can be further investigated to get a more robust analysis of turnover in ABA. Future studies should focus on two critical areas to understand the field's turnover. The first focus area should be on the tenure of the clinicians in the field and the time frame in which turnover occurs. This study used a qualitative approach to focus on the reasons behind turnover, as future studies should focus on the timeframe of when turnover occurs. To better address turnover in the field, understanding the timeframe in which turnover is most likely to impact an organization depending on the tenure demographics of clinicians can be a pivotal part of retention strategies. Although this study implemented coding of participants that looked at their tenure in the field, results did not place a heavy focus on tenure during the research or analysis phase of the study. Future studies in the field may use a quantitative method to decipher how long clinicians are staying before moving into other similar or differing fields.

The second area of focus for future studies should include investigating retention in different ABA settings, such as in-home and in-school settings. This study solely focused on the in-center model, which could yield different results in terms of turnover compared to other settings. These areas should be focused primarily on comparing the various settings to see if turnover is more concentrated in one setting. If it is focused on one setting, understanding what components of the differing settings result in the concentration could benefit the ABA field. In

addition, this could also allow for components of one field to be assessed to see if they could be emulated in another field to reduce turnover.

Reflections

It has been an unprecedented experience to conduct a study that has real-life applications to the industry I am currently in but also reflects on what many healthcare industries are now challenged with. By using a qualitative research method, I have engaged in a practical experience of what it takes to employ this methodology through administering interview-style questionnaires. In addition, conducting this study has allowed me to understand both the advantages and disadvantages of alternative data collection methods and the importance of general sampling and selecting the most appropriate sampling method. An appreciation for understanding the importance of various stages in a study, such as the sampling methods, has allowed me to gain a better in-depth knowledge of how to critically analyze all components of conducting a study, specifically how particular choices may affect the analysis stage.

Personal & Professional Growth

During the conduction of this study, my professional views on how to maintain stability in terms of turnover in a field that is essentially known to have high turnover have shifted. While working in the field of applied behavior analysis for five years now, turnover has been one of those topic areas that I have felt personally could not indeed be remedied due to the nature of the field in general as well as the high demand for clinicians due to the overwhelming increase in ASD diagnosis. However, while conducting this study, how I have professionally looked at turnover in this field has changed, especially as someone whose role as a director is to lead managers to have strong business acumen. Therefore, I can now better acknowledge that how turnover in the field of ABA is addressed is a huge factor in how my role can better assist

managers who may need help deciphering the best courses of action when dealing with turnover. Nonetheless, I still acknowledge that the field has a long way to go in terms of systematic approaches that could be taken to start to combat turnover on a broader scale base; however, on a micro level, how both turnover and retention strategies are implemented from a supervisory point of view can have a significant impact.

As someone who has been in management for over a decade in differing healthcare settings, conducting this study has also allowed me to look at my style of leadership as well as how my style may have translated down to other managers that I have supervised. Although differing settings may require specific leadership dynamics, as what may work in the applied behavior analysis field may not translate to other fields, this study has challenged me to take a more dynamic approach to equating leadership style and leadership training in general to managers in my field. The changing landscape of employment has brought forth changes in not only what employees value from their supervisors but also what is required as a basic need for employees to have levels of satisfaction within the organization they work for. Due to this ever-evolving change in work dynamics, this study has challenged me to assess what I may have perceived as valuable to employees compared to what is currently, resulting in an assessment of my values, which may need to be updated or more balanced. Nonetheless, the lessons learned from conducting this study are not only valuable but transferable to my level of current practice.

From personal experience, conducting this research has benefited my overall experience in terms of time management, as the research process required extensive preparation, planning, and timely execution throughout each stage. In addition, the research process has indirectly allowed me to navigate challenges with patience, as the process had several areas that took longer than anticipated. This challenge was first evident in the literature review stage and then

again in the analysis stage. Overall, the research experience has added value to improving time-management skills, which continues to provide benefits on both personal and professional levels.

Biblical Perspective

Religion, especially Christianity, can significantly affect the behaviors of individuals in the workplace, including interactions and how one deals with challenges. How individuals in the workplace, employees, and employers use their faith to help navigate and cope with different work experiences can play a lasting role in the overall outcome of the work environment. For instance, managers who align with the Christian worldview can use their faith as a supporting force during challenging times such as high turnover seasons. These managers can look at turnover more objectively, which can help translate into better retention initiatives. For example, Christian managers may look inward to assess if turnover occurs due to aspects of their management style. Roman 12:3 gives us insight into self-reflection when it says, "For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned." Self-reflection, specifically regarding management style, can be pivotal for Christian managers to grasp better issues leading to staff turnover. This self-reflection starts with accepting one's faults and the willingness to move towards change for better outcomes.

Another connection from the findings to Christianity is discovered in the relationship between employer and employees and the type of support provided within that relationship dynamic. The scripture from Galatians 6:2 says, "carry each other's burdens, and so you will fulfill the law of Christ." Although this scripture, for most translations, speaks to helping others in times of need and challenges, it can also make a connection on how supervisors support their direct reports. In all forms of employment, healthcare, or other entities, employees will need

support and development from their supervisors and managers at some point in their careers. This may come when employees struggle with their work performance or when they are new to employment and may be adjusting. Regardless of the situation, how supervisors and managers care for and support their employees through these times can have lasting effects throughout the tenure of that employee. Managers who implement a Christian worldview into how they manage understand that the help they provide their employees during challenging times in their employment and for growth is embedded in the Christian practice. Philippians 2:4 reiterates this concept: "Instead of each person watching out for their good, watch out for what is better for others." Managers and supervisors who impact employee retention understand that the good of their team is most important. In fact, those who are servant leaders put their teams above themselves, practicing this type of management ideology daily.

In addition to employer-employee relationships, managers and supervisors who lead within the Christian worldview can better interact more efficiently with their staff and weather challenging periods in the workplace. Studies on the connection between people's behaviors and interactions in the workplace and religion show a significant impact when an individual is firmly rooted in their spirituality (Otaye-Ebede et al., 2020). When assessing the array of challenges that managers and supervisors may have to deal with daily, those who pertain to the Christian worldview are able to cope with stress better. These coping mechanisms and the ability to use spirituality to challenge obstacles as they arise also help translate care and compassion as it relates to staff treatment. Studies on religion and the workplace show that when there is a connection between the two, there tends to be a positive effect on the behavior of people in the workplace and the work environment. Findings from this study showed that burnout for many employees can be a result of turnover, and how burnout is dealt with can have a lasting impact

on an organization. Similarly, coping strategies for stress-induced situations for employees and managers that align with Christianity can benefit the workplace environment. Proverbs 3:5-6 proclaims that there should be "trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight."

Summary of Reflections

Healthcare managers and organizations that take the time to understand the changes to the workforce and apply the appropriate strategies to align with these changes are more likely to be successful not only in retention but in the overall business practice. Two of the most important challenges that healthcare managers and organizations face are patient outcomes and employee satisfaction. For managers to have better outcomes, there are several steps that organizations have to take, which ultimately starts with retention. Although many other operational factors are important for a successful business, such as budgeting, how an organization retains their staff will decide the longevity of the business as well as clinical outcomes. Therefore, effective managers help promote change policies and procedures that can improve the overall satisfaction of employees to reduce attrition. Organizations and managers who do this well also monitor and reflect on the policies they put in place and continuously adjust and learn as needed to promote higher retention.

Summary of Section 3

As healthcare managers, it is important that the ability to develop professionally as the landscape of employment evolves. This growth may consist of expansion of the lens one may have viewed their own management style in and pivoting to a style that is more progressive for the landscape of employees or better understanding how research can benefit professional growth. Regardless of the type of growth healthcare leaders encounter, the application of tools

gained along the way is important for growth to truly manifest in a way that can be beneficial to the organization in which they work. Healthcare managers who can do this successfully while implanting key components into what drives employee satisfaction will tend to be more successful overall compared to those who do not. In addition, those managers who make practicing ethical, compassionate, and collaborative styles of leadership, especially in the healthcare field are more likely to see better results of initiatives they may have put in place, whether these initiatives are surrounding retention or any other component that is necessary to run a successful business.

Results from this study conveyed that the current research around retention and turnover in the healthcare field also has significance to the field of applied behavior analysis (ABA). More so, the specific components of leadership styles, burnout, and how organizations assess employee value proposition were able to be studied to understand how they relate to turnover in ABA. Furthermore, this study allowed for insight on how future studies could be conducted to get a better scope of turnover in the field of ABA overall which could help better assist healthcare manager in formulating better retention strategies for RBTs and BCBAs. With several ABA companies mimicking similar models as far as the demographics of employees as well as job description, findings from this study with consideration of its limitation could help in not only understanding the turnover phenomena while influencing actions towards resolutions. Nonetheless, with healthcare managers facing high turnover in the field as the demand for clinicians becomes greater, those organizations and managers who put retention initiatives on the forefront are more likely to see changes in their turnover.

Summary and Study Conclusions

The field of applied behavior analysis is plagued with understaffed centers resulting in a high demand of clinicians in the field to serve the autism community. High turnover coupled with high demands and limited clinical resources for those needing ABA services has resulted in organizations having to better equip themselves to tackle the challenges related to turnover. Due to this, studies such as this one are important to not only better understanding why turnover happens but to bring awareness and actions to important retention initiatives that are needed to retain staff in this ever-changing workforce. This means for many organizations and managers, adjusting their perspectives on what it means to retain, and employee has shifted over the years as what employees value in their work has continuously evolved. Given the specialized skillset of those clinicians in the applied behavior analysis (ABA) field, retention is key in retaining institutional knowledge. Therefore, as the demand for clinicians in ABA continuous to grow, organizations looking to fulfill those demands must also value to the knowledge that tenured employees bring to fulfilling that goal, making retention important for both the current and future of the field. In addition, with planning for the future of an organization, understanding what factors contribute both to employee retention and voluntary turnover can help lay the foundation of for what short-term and long-term initiatives can look like for an organization. Nonetheless, this study sought to answer the explore the phenomenon of turnover in ABA while providing groundwork to future studies in the field. As the landscape of the field continues to change overtime, studies such as this will help serve as an underlying discovery of what components are needed to reduce attrition in applied behavior analysis as well as contribute to the vast research on employee satisfaction and retention.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. What aspects of the working environment contribute to either negative or positive employee morale?
2. How do you think a negative working environment affects an employee's level of satisfaction with their job?
3. How do you think satisfaction and employee retention are connected in the field of ABA?
4. What type of clinical support is needed for employee satisfaction to remain consistent?
5. What type of middle or upper management support is needed within an organization for satisfaction to be prevalent?
6. What type of negative impact is caused by burnout on job satisfaction?
7. Have you seen burnout be a prevalent cause of turnover in the field of ABA?
8. What effect does paid wages have on job satisfaction in the field of ABA?
9. What impact does caseload play on burnout in the field?
10. What effect does turnover have on the employees who stay?
11. Have you worked in any other healthcare setting? If so, what challenges did you face there (if any)? Do you feel those challenges are similar or different to those in the field of ABA (if applicable)?
12. Describe the type of leadership style you think is most effective for employees in this field?
13. What are the factors that would need to be present for you to leave your job? To stay with an organization?
14. What does burnout look like to you? Are there root causes in your opinion?
15. Do you think there are things that should be incorporated in the field of ABA to help with burnout?

Appendix B: Coding Book – Data Collection

Research Question (s)	Theme (s)	Subtheme (s)	Participants
What challenges may healthcare leaders encounter when trying to maintain staff? (a) what leadership qualities may contribute to staff retention? (b) what leadership qualities may contribute to staff turnover?	Servant Leadership	Employee-Centered	B1F02, ROF05, R1F07, B1M08, R1F09, ROM10, ROF11 R1F01, ROF03, ROF04, B1F13, R1F14, BOF20
		Servitude	
	Transformational Leadership	Compassion	B1F06, BOM12, R1F14, ROM16, R1F19, BOF20
		Growth Promotion	ROF03, B1F06, ROF11, R1M14, ROM16, R1F17, R1F19
	Authoritative Leadership	Commanding	R1F01, ROF05, B1F06, ROM10, BOM12, B1F13, R1F19
		Lacks team dynamic	B1F02, ROF03, ROF04, B1F06, ROM10, ROF11, R1F15, ROM16
		Delegates Primarily	R1F01, ROF04, R1F09, ROF11, B1F13, R1F15, ROM16
What strategies are used by healthcare leaders to offset retention challenges? (a) how do retention issues in behavioral health look similar to other healthcare settings? (b) how does retention issues in behavioral health look different than other healthcare settings?	Burnout in Behavioral Health	Stress as a factor of turnover	R1F01, ROF03, ROF04, B1F06, R1F09, ROM10, ROF11, BOM12
	Burnout in Other Settings		B1F02, ROF05, R1F07, B1F13, R1F15, R1F18, R1F19
	Caseload in Behavioral Health	Work expectations as a factor of turnover	B1F02, ROF03, B1F06, B1M08, R1F09, ROM10, ROF13, R1F17
	Caseload in Other Settings		B1M08, ROF11, R1M14, ROM16, R1F18, BOF20
	Organizational Structure in Behavioral Healthcare	Workplace dynamics as a factor of turnover	R1F01, ROF03, ROF04, R1F07, B1M08, ROM10, BOM12, R1M14, R1F15, ROM16, R1F17, R1F18, R1F19, BOF20
	Organizational Structure in Other Healthcare Settings		B1F02, ROF03, ROF04, B1F06, B1M08, ROM10, ROF11, R1M14, BOF20
What organizational elements are present across different healthcare settings that help position an organization for successful retention initiatives?	Motivating Factors	Recognition	R1F09, ROF11, R1F14
		Career Advancement	ROF04, B1M08, ROM16, R1F18, BOF20
	Hygiene Factors	Fair Compensation	R1F01, ROF03, R1F07, ROM10, ROF13, R1F15, R1F17
		Work-life Balance	B1F02, BOM12
		Workplace Relationships	ROF05, B1F06, R1F19,

Appendix C: Relationship to Concepts

