THE GAGGLE EFFECT: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF EMPLOYEE WALKOUTS IN THE SALON INDUSTRY

by

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ABSTRACT

Salons have a long and rich history. The purpose of this interpretive phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of salon owners, employees, and independent booth renters (IBRs) regarding mass employee walkouts (gaggles). The central problem for the study is salon owners fear gaggles because they can bankrupt salons. Prior to the current study, research had not been conducted to examine why salon walkouts occur. This study is unique because the research was conducted from the perspective that salon personnel and owners are knowledge workers (KWs). Unlike most KWs, stylists who walk out often take their clients with them. The overarching research question was the following: What are the lived experiences and perceptions of salon owners, employees, and IBRs before, during, and after a salon employee gaggle? The purposeful sample for the study consisted of salon owners, employees, and IBRs in the Dallas and Fort Worth, Texas, metropolitan area who had experienced gaggle walkouts in salons. Ten stylists, who had experienced a total of 26 gaggles, completed telephone interviews. Using an iterative four-step analysis method with NVivo 10 software, 17 themes and seven subthemes were identified. The overall lived experience was pain. The findings regarding the gaggle phenomenon were discussed in terms of chaos and systems complexity theory. Leaders may use the findings of the study to better understand the lived experiences of salon owners, employees and IBRs during walkouts throughout the salon industry. Additional research is needed to determine whether the findings are applicable to KWs in other service industries.

DEDICATION

Something as monumental as writing a dissertation in pursuit of a doctoral degree requires energy. Entropy is the end of life. So I dedicate this dissertation to all those who provided me with energy to start and eventually finish.

I dedicate this dissertation to those who showered me with positive words of encouragement. My father was the first boy in his family to graduate from high school, and I am the first family member to receive a doctorate. The line is clear, direct, and unbreakable, even with his passing. I equally dedicate this dissertation to my mother. She has been the constant force in my life, from starting kindergarten 1 year early to helping me get into the USAF Academy to overcoming my present trials and tribulations. She has always understood my desire and need to grow in knowledge.

My brother, Homer has been the academic inspiration in my life. The way he looks at the present and the not present helped expand my horizons. My sister's unspoken love has also inspired me.

Most importantly, I dedicate this work to the person most inconvenienced by my pursuit: my wife Victoria. She helped in so many ways, most prominently by being my soul mate and partner. She allowed me to take the time from *us* to pursue *my* goal. I can still see her taking care of everything while I am holed up in my office, pounding away. Her positive, warm energy has always overshadowed any doubts or concerns. To our seven children and eight grandchildren, I dedicate more free time. I love you all.

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Introduction

Humans have practiced cosmetology—the art of working with hair, skin, and nails to enhance beauty (Cosmetic, 2013)—since antiquity. Hairstyling has been connected with power, politics, stature, religion, and social status (Hair Dressing Authority, 2011; Ravilious, 2010; Sherrow, 2006). Modern Western salons solidified and stored tacit knowledge with learning, thus beginning the transformation of stylists into knowledge workers (KWs). This transformation began in Paris, France, with the establishment of the first known salon, named Champagne, and the first-known book detailing hairstyling techniques, written by French stylist Rumigny in 1765 (Sherrow, 2006). In the United States of America, cosmetology was first practiced on porches, in kitchens, and in bathrooms (Scanlon, 2007). The socialization of hairstyling began when African American entrepreneurs developed special procedures and sent sales women around the country teaching the proper use of their products (Willett, 2010).

From these humble beginnings, hair salons have grown to over 800,000 hair care professionals (Professional Beauty Association, 2011; U.S. Census Bureau). Beauty salons have changed from individuals doing hair at home to social organizations including owners, hourly workers, and independent stylist who rent a space in a salon. Salons are social organizations in which employees develop strong relationships with their clients. Because of clients' devotion to their hair care stylists, if the stylists move to different salons, their clients often follow the stylists to the new salons (Kirby, 2009). Salon owners consequently live in fear of mass employee walkouts (Sarfati, 2011). These mass employee walkouts are leaderless or shared-leadership walkouts that leave a

salon owner without employees and their respective clients. Salon walkouts resemble a gaggle of geese more than the typical and well-studied organized labor strikes and student walkouts. The gaggle appears to occur without much warning but may destroy the salon owner's business overnight (Kirby, 2011; Sarfati, 2011).

The factors influencing salon walkouts are unclear. The purpose of this qualitative, interpretive phenomenological study was to explore and interpret the lived experiences of salon owners, employees, and independent booth renters (IBR) regarding gaggle walkouts. The results of this study show how the gaggle affects the lives of the principal participants: the owner, stylist employees, and IBRs. The study also resulted in a rich understanding of the gaggle phenomenon. The salon owners may use the findings to implement strategies that will decrease the occurrence of walkouts.

Chapter 1 contains an introduction to the study. The background of the problem and the problem statement are presented, followed by the purpose statement. The significance of the study, the nature of the study, and the research questions are also discussed. The chapter also includes a description of the theoretical framework; definitions of important terms; the assumptions of the study; and the scope, delimitations, and limitations of the study.

Background of the Problem

Hair care salons and the activities that take place in them have a rich and long-lived history. The earliest recorded use of cosmetics dates back to 4000 BCE in Egypt (Hair Dressing Authority, 2011; Ravilious, 2010). Cosmetology was also part of ancient Chinese, Arab, Japanese, Roman, and African cultures (Ravilious, 2010). In the period preceding the French Revolution, salons were considered enlightenment zones in which

the women of society could discuss politics without interference from their husbands (Kale, 2002). By the end of the 19th century, women in the United States had turned their porches, bathrooms, and kitchens into mini-salons, bustling with entrepreneurial spirit (Scanlon, 2007). Once stylists form a salon, their futures become intertwined (Sarfati, 2011).

Salon employees and their clients also have unique relationships (Kirby, 2009). Employees must understand the personalities of their clients and develop intimate relationships with them. Because of these relationships, when a salon employee moves to a new salon, the client often moves with the employee (Kirby, 2011; Sarfati, 2011). Remaining at the current salon and establishing an intimate relationship with a new hair care specialist may require more effort for the client than moving to the current hair care specialist's new salon (Bove & Johnson, 2006).

Salon owners often fear mass employee walkouts and the resulting loss of clients who follow their stylists (Kirby, 2011; Sarfati, 2011). Salon walkouts are often leaderless, which results in the descriptive term *gaggle effect*. Such walkouts can happen quickly and have devastating consequences. According to Ford (2012), 19.4% of salons have only a 10% profit margin. With a 10% profit, if 50% of the salon's stylists gaggle and their clientele follow, the profit margin will vanish and debt will replace the profit. The salon's fixed costs will remain, but revenue will have dropped instantaneously at least 50%.

Whereas retention is a concern in all industries, retention of salon employees is especially problematic because the employees are KWs, not typical hourly workers. According to Šajeva (2007), KWs are identified by their professional specialties, their

specialized activities, and their high level of creativity. Effective and successful salon employees may be considered KWs because they are relentlessly learning new techniques; they are continually training; and their knowledge is constantly combined with their colleagues' knowledge, experiences, and techniques to create new knowledge. Salon employees merge precise knowledge of human anatomy and chemistry with the subjective and intuitive understanding of current styles, future trends, and fashion (Ford, 2012).

Stylist as KWs are unique and not easily replaced (Jain & Benyoucef, 2008; Mládková, 2011). In Texas, for example, a student stylist must complete 1,500 hours of practical instruction before beginning his or her career (Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation [TDLR], 2012). Each cosmetologist requires additional yearly training to maintain his or her license. Because cosmetology is as much an art as a science, stylists need years of experience with a variety of types of hair, faces, and styles (Ford, 2012).

Salon employees and IBRs may participate in walkouts for several reasons. Factors may include ineffective management and clients' willingness to follow the employees to new salons. Other factors may include social contagion, emotional contagion, and disinhibitory contagion factors. These factors may be more influential on salon employees than on employees in other industries when deciding whether to leave their jobs (Adams, Jackson, & Ekelund, 2002; Bagby, 2010; Bowler, Dahlstrom, Seevers, & Skinner, 2011).

Social contagion occurs when a group of employees adopt the attitudes and behaviors of similar individuals (Barsade, 2002; Bowler et al., 2011; Levy & Nail, 1993). Salon employees are similar to each other because of their training and governmental

licensing requirements (Adams et al., 2002). Salons are also social in nature, and the socializing that occurs in the salon is extended through the additional socializing that occurs via online social networks, such as Facebook and Twitter. When some salon employees decide to engage in a walkout, other employees may follow suit. Likewise, if employees discourage walkouts, other employees may decide not to participate in a walkout.

Disinhibitory contagion is a reduction in restraint in consequence of watching others' behaviors (Levy & Nail, 1993). If salon workers are unsatisfied with aspects of their jobs but are reticent to leave, they may overcome their reluctance if they see other employees walking out. Emotional contagion involves employees sharing moods and attitudes (Ali, Amialchuk, & Dwyer, 2011; Barsade, 2002; Papachristos, 2006) through communicating and interacting with each other (Darling & Beebe, 2007; Levy & Nail, 1993). As the moods and attitudes of some salon employees become more negative, these feelings and perspectives may transfer to other employees, leading most or all employees to believe the salon is a miserable place to work.

Statement of the Problem

The general problem is that salon owners fear mass leaderless walkouts, or gaggles, of their employees and often clients, leaving owners without KWs (Sarfati, 2011). The specific problem is that when the gaggle effect occurs, salon owners are left without valuable salon employees, as well as many of their clients. Further, a salon owner who experiences a gaggle may find it difficult to recruit experienced stylists as word of the walkout spreads (Kirby, 2011). The lack of employees and clients may destroy the salon owner's business.

The purpose of this interpretive phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of salon owners, employees, and IBRs regarding gaggle walkouts. Purposeful sampling was used to recruit salon owners, employees, and IBRs for the study. Exploring the perceptions of these three groups of individuals resulted in a greater overall understanding of the issue. Owners provided a top-down view of the gaggle effect. Employees of the salon and independent contractors provided bottom-up views of the gaggle effect. Although three classes of participants are listed, most salon owners continue to work as stylist in their salons and were employees or booth renters before becoming owners. Understanding and interpreting the lived experiences of salon owners, employees, and IBRs regarding walkouts may provide the foundation for additional research on the causes of walkouts. This insight may enable salon owners to implement strategies to protect their businesses against walkouts.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative interpretive phenomenological study was to explore and interpret the lived experiences of salon owners, employees, and IBRs regarding gaggle walkouts. The qualitative method was suitable for the study because the purpose was to collect textual data about a phenomenon not well understood and not previously studied (Rusinova, Pochard, Kentish-Barnes, Chaize, & Azoulay, 2009).

To explore the participants' perceptions and experiences, rich and detailed data were collected through one-on-one, semistructured interviews with open-ended questions. Semistructured interviews helped neutralize researcher and contextual bias by allowing the flexibility to follow themes that uncovered the participants' journeys through gaggle walkouts (Hale, Treharne, & Kitas, 2007; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Moustakas, 1994).

A short demographic questionnaire was also used to obtain a better understanding of the participants. The study sample consisted of 10 salon owners, employees, and IBRs who had experienced a gaggle walkout in a salon. The participants' data were analyzed to identify themes that answer the research questions and uncover the essences of the participants' experiences (Creswell, 2008) regarding mass walkouts.

Significance of the Study

Researchers often study why employees leave; however, researchers seem to be less interested in why employees stay (Hausknect, Rodda, & Howard, 2009). This study involved exploring reasons for engaging in mass walkouts (leaving) as well as reasons for not engaging in walkouts (staying). This study is also significant because it involved pioneering research on mass leaderless walkouts, or gaggles, in an entrepreneurial setting, not the previously studied labor union and school settings. A gaggle has the potential to ruin a salon business because the customers of a salon are often loyal to the salon employees, not the salon itself. If a salon owner or manager does not recognize the signs of an impending gaggle, the company may lose the majority of its stylist and by extension the majority of its customers (Sarfati, 2011). Consequently, motivating the salon workforce to stay is critical.

According to Hausknect et al. (2009), "organizations that fail to retain high performers will be left with an understaffed, less qualified workforce that ultimately will hinder their ability to remain competitive" (p. 269). The salon industry is unique in that customers may remain loyal to their salon stylist, not the salon, meaning stylists can move to new salons without fearing a reduction in income (Sarfati, 2001). This characteristic reduces stylists' motivation to remain at a salon with which they are

unsatisfied. Therefore, retaining high-quality salon employees with large clienteles is vital for company success and competitive advantage (Hausknect et al., 2009). The intent of this study was to understand and interpret the lived experiences of the owners, employee hairstylists, and IBRs before, during, and after a gaggle. A gaggle disrupts the economic and social fiber of the salon, often leading to bankruptcy for the salon owner and emotional devastation for the employees and IBRs (Kirby, 2011). Salon owners may use the findings of the study to implement strategies to reduce mass walkouts, which will increase the likelihood of salons remaining and profitable and decrease the disruptions that mass walkouts cause for clients and employees.

The findings of the study are also significant because the experiences and perceptions of three groups were explored: salon owners, employees, and IBRs. The findings of this study indicate how gaggle-walkout experiences differ according to salon owners, employees, and IBRs. Leaders in the salon industry may also use the findings to develop and communicate best practices throughout the industry, such as through conferences, training, and journal and magazine articles. Leaders of cosmetology programs could also incorporate course work on how to address workplace issues through methods that do not include walkouts.

The findings of this study may be used as the starting point for studying the gaggle effect in other KW industries. Understanding the gaggle-walkout effect in the salon industry may help employers in other knowledge-based industries understand the motivations and experiences of KWs. This understanding may help employers to identify and implement strategies that effectively reduce mass walkouts in their companies.

Nature of the Study

The purpose of this interpretive phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of salon owners, employees, and IBRs regarding gaggle walkouts. The intent was to develop a deep understanding of what salon owners, employees, and IBRs were experiencing from their unique worldviews before, during, and after the walkout. The qualitative method was the most appropriate research method for the study. As Polkinghorne (2005) stated, the focus of qualitative research "is on describing, understanding, and clarifying a human experience" (p. 139). The qualitative method is appropriate when examining the complexities and intricacies of an event or phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010; Newman, 2006; Rubin, 2007).

Qualitative research is appropriate when the problem is exploratory and theoretical (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Qualitative research is also proper if little information is known about a phenomenon and when attempting to determine causes by exploring individuals' descriptive experiences (Rusinova et al., 2009). This study was exploratory because little was known about why gaggles occur in the salon industry. In addition, treating stylists as KWs was unique.

In contrast to the qualitative method, the quantitative method is used to collect numeric data. The data are analyzed to test hypotheses and to determine whether relationships exist between dependent and independent variables (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). The current study did not involve testing hypotheses or examining relationships between variables, making the quantitative method unsuitable for the study.

Of the various qualitative designs, the phenomenological design was the most appropriate the study. Phenomenological research is conducted to obtain rich and

detailed data about individuals' perceptions and experiences (A. Giorgi, 2006; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Prior to the current study, little was known about why gaggles occur in the salon industry or the lived experiences of the principle participants. Phenomenological research is well suited for situations in which little research exists (Groenewald, 2004; Moustakas, 1994; Shank, 2006). Using the phenomenological design in this study led to an in-depth understanding of the participants' unique perceptions and experiences regarding the phenomenon (Creswell, 2008; van Manen, 1990).

The two main types of phenomenology are descriptive and interpretive (A. Giorgi, 2006). Descriptive phenomenologists, such as Husserl, assert that the researcher's biases and presuppositions must be bracketed so that they do not influence the results of the study (Connelly, 2010; A. Giorgi, 2012; B. Giorgi, 2006; MacDonald, 2006). Interpretive phenomenologists, including Heidegger, believe that a researcher's biases and presuppositions cannot be set aside; consequently, the researcher can only acknowledge them and how they might influence the study (Finlay, 2012; Hamill & Sinclair, 2010; Lopez & Willis, 2004). Interpretive phenomenologists believe the presuppositions and expert knowledge *help* the researcher understand the meaning of the lived experience (Lopez & Willis, 2004).

The interpretive phenomenological approach was used in the current study because the objective of the study was to describe, understand, and interpret the owners', stylists', and booth renters' experiences being in the world of the salon during an employee walkout (Christ & Tanner, 2003; Kleiman, 2004; Tuohy, Dowling, Murphy, & Sixsmith, 2013). In addition, interpretive phenomenology allowed the researcher and

participants to use their knowledge to better understand and interpret the experiences more fully (Rapport & Wainwright, 2006).

Descriptive phenomenology was not selected for the study because it involves applying bracketing, in which the researcher sets aside perceptions, opinions, and experiences, perhaps limiting the understanding. By contrast, in interpretive phenomenology the researcher reflects, usually via a reflexive journal or log, on his or her worldview and ontological biases to ensure the phenomenon is understood from the participants' points of view (Brenner, 1994; Connelly, 2010; Miles, Chapman, Francis, & Taylor, 2013).

Interpretive and descriptive phenomenology have been discussed intensely since Heidegger veered from Husserl and introduced interpretive phenomenology. A. Giorgi (2010, 2012) suggested that strict descriptive phenomenology is the design closest to scientific analysis. Those who favor descriptive phenomenology argue that if participants' experiences regarding a phenomenon are interpreted, different researchers will interpret the phenomenon differently; these differences in interpretation would lead to chaos (Finlay, 2012; Rapport & Wainwright, 2006). Interpretive phenomenologists counter that researchers cannot bracket their knowledge and prior experiences; therefore, true bracketing is impossible and the study findings will still be influenced by the researcher's knowledge and experiences (Rapport & Wainwright).

The overall goal of both types of phenomenology is to capture participants' lived experiences in the moment and in context (Aspers, 2004; A. Giorgi, 2012; B. Giorgi, 2006). Because this study was pioneering, either method might have been suitable. However, the interpretive method was selected because using this approach brought "to

light hidden features of an experience that would have been overlooked in a purely descriptive approach" (Lopez & Willis, 2004, p. 734). The interpretive phenomenological design provided the greatest opportunity to fully understand the gaggle effect in salons. A further benefit of using this design was that, unlike descriptive phenomenology, interpretive phenomenology is more generalizable "by being present to the general in the data (eidetically determined)" (Englander, 2012, p. 34).

Other qualitative designs, such as ethnography, grounded theory, and case study, were not as suitable for accomplishing the purpose of the study. The intent of ethnography is to examine a specific cultural group to understand their experiences and behaviors (Aldiabat & Le Navenec, 2011). The study sample was not limited to one cultural group and phenomena specific to the culture; therefore ethnography was not appropriate for this study. The grounded theory design was not selected for the study because the purpose of this design is to develop a theory to explain a phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). The current study did not involve developing a theory regarding mass walkouts in salons.

The case study design was not suitable for the study because in case study research, a single event or circumstance in a bounded system is examined, which leads to a description or explanation of the topic under study (Polit & Beck, 2008). If the subjects were from the same salon and had recently experienced a walkout, a case study might have been appropriate. The intent of this groundbreaking study was to experience the emotions and lived experience of a diverse group of participants from different salons in the Dallas Fort Worth metropolitan area, with the goal of developing themes about the experiences from the participants' viewpoints. Additionally, salons were not the focus of

the study; the salon was merely where the gaggles occurred. Unlike in a case study, in which the focus would be on the individual bounded by a salon or series of salons in a contextual manner, this study was focused on participants working at many unrelated salons.

The study sample consisted of 10 salon owners, employees, and IBRs in the Dallas and Fort Worth, Texas, metropolitan area who had experienced gaggle walkouts. Data collection involved a short demographic questionnaire, followed by one-on-one, semistructured interviews with open-ended questions. The semistructured format and open-ended questions were appropriate for collecting rich and detailed data from the participants (Creswell, 2008). The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. The participants were given the opportunity to review their transcripts and provide and clarifications and corrections as appropriate. The data were analyzed with the assistance of NVivo 10 (qualitative analysis software) to identify themes and to uncover the essences of the participants' experiences (Moustakas, 1994). The findings of the data also provided answers to the research questions for the study (Creswell, 2008).

Research Questions

In qualitative research, a central research question is used to guide the study. Research subquestions may be used to provide further direction and focus (Creswell, 2008).

- Central research question: What are the meanings of the lived experiences of salon owners, employees, and IBRs before, during, and after salon gaggle walkouts?

- RQ1: What are the lived experiences and perceptions of gaggle walkouts soon before the walkouts occur?
- RQ2: What are the lived experiences and perceptions of gaggle walkouts as the walkouts occur?
- RQ3: What are the lived experiences and perceptions of gaggle walkouts after the walkouts occur?

Theoretical Framework

The focus of the study was on gaggle walkouts in the salon industry. The majority of salons employ 10 or fewer stylists (Ford, 2012), who may be considered KWs (Šajeva, 2007). The high degree of social interaction between stylists may make them particularly susceptible to emotional influences (Ali et al., 2011), which may facilitate gaggle walkouts. To fully address these various factors, the framework for the study was based on theories regarding small-group interaction and performance, KWs, and emotional components and influences.

Small-group theories. According to Ford (2012), 76% of salons have 10 or fewer employees and IBRs; consequently, small-group theories may be relevant in examining why stylists leave their salons. The similarity-attraction theory is one of the small-group theories pertinent to the study. Horwitz (2005) and Mason (2006) explained that according to this theory, relatively small groups tend to be more productive, potentially because of greater team cohesion (Haughton, 2009). Similarity attraction theorists argue that group members are attracted to each other's perceptions, which increases homogeneity, group members' influences on each other, and the likelihood that members will remain in the group (Horwitz, 2005; Mason, 2006).

Another relevant small-group theory was the cognitive resource diversity theory. According to this theory, group members' diverse cognitive resources lead to increased creativity, innovation, and decision-making capabilities (Auer-Rizzi & Berry, 2000; Egan, 2005; Miura & Hida, 2004). Therefore, when group members pool their diverse resources, they contribute to the group's overall success (Simons & Rowland, 2011). Haughton (2009) reported that "displays of diversity and cohesion often appear closely intertwined in complex moments of interactions" (p. 62), requiring a focus on communication between members.

Similar to Haughton (2009), Fisher and Hawes (1971) recommended that small groups apply an interactive systems model. This model is appropriate for salons because owners and employees have common goals and interact with each other and clients on a deep level. Fisher and Hawes emphasized the importance of free interaction for small groups to be effective. Fisher and Hawes' focus on open groups that interact to generate knowledge, combined with Haughton's (2009) holistic approach to diversity, suggests small groups consisting of salon owners and employees may be KWs.

KWs. Central to the focus of this study was the perspective of salon stylists as KWs rather than general laborers. KWs are identified as such because of their professional specialties, their specialized activities, and their high degree of creativity (Šajeva, 2007). Upon first thought, salon stylists might be considered only general laborers because stylists provide services for compensation. Entry-level employees at salons may in fact be general laborers, without the characteristics that define KWs; however, with time and experience, salon workers transition to KWs. In essence, they

are paid a premium for their knowledge of styles, trends, products, and emerging technologies (Ford, 2012).

KWs quickly discover the value of new knowledge and use this knowledge to advance their skills (Nonaka, Toyama, & Konno, 2000; Yang, Moon, & Rowley, 2009). According to Porter-O'Grady and Malloch (2010), KWs own their knowledge, have strong self-appreciation, need to know others value their contributions, and view their knowledge as portable.

As KWs, salon employees should be led differently than general laborers. Stylists do not respond to typical management tools such as incentives, gimmicks, coercion, power plays, punishment, and standard pay and benefits. KWs thrive in learning organizations (Carleton, 2011; Drucker & Maciarello, 2004; Porter-O'Grady & Malloch, 2010; Šebestová & Rylková, 2011). Porter-O'Grady and Malloch (2010) suggested that KWs respond best to a work environment that allows them to learn, advance in the company, develop strong relationships, and control their lives.

Salons are clearly learning organizations; on average, 68% of salons employees participate in some form of training every year (Ford, 2012). Many salon owners intuitively understand their businesses are learning organizations and their stylists are KWs. However, if salon managers treat employees as laborers instead of KWs, salon employees may not have the motivation to stay at their jobs, perhaps explaining why half of stylists will gaggle away from multimillion-dollar salons (Carleton, 2011; Mládková, 2011; Šebestová & Rylková, 2011). Knowledge-worker retention in any organization is important, but knowledge-worker retention in salons is critical because when stylists

leave, they take their knowledge with them. Sometimes, this knowledge cannot be replaced (Chen, 2010; Drucker, 1999).

Because of salon stylists' KW status and their ability to take their clients with them to new salons, stylists may have little motivation to remain at salons with unideal work environments. As Allen, Bryant, and Vardaman (2010) explained, employees tend to measure their work environments against higher standards and are thus harder to keep satisfied if other employment opportunities are plentiful and employees can easily move from salon to salon without financial penalties. KWs' high standards regarding the workplace environment place an extra burden on leaders in learning organizations (Carleton, 2011; Chen, 2010; Šebestová & Rylková, 2011). The issue of turnover may become particularly severe when the employees are socially and emotionally connected and therefore have a significant influence on each other's attitudes and behaviors. Job dissatisfaction can spread like a contagion and lead to a mass leaderless walkout (Allen et al., 2010; Shaw, Gupta, & Delery, 2005).

Emotional considerations. This study included consideration of the perspectives and emotions of salon owners as well as of salon employees and IBRs. Emotions and the understanding of emotional contexts have significant influences in personal as well as professional life (Darabi, 2012; Lopez-Zafra, Martes, Martos, & Augusto-Landa, 2012; Nowack, 2012). The concepts of emotional intelligence (EI) and emotional quotient (EQ) have existed for centuries but have only recently received scientific attention (Nazari & Emami, 2012). Because salon owners are often stylists and work in team environments, EI and EQ are important considerations in salon management.

Team EI consists of understanding the emotional interactions between team members (Mote, 2012), and the effects of EI on team performance are complex (Farh, Seo, & Tesluk, 2012; Feyerherm & Rice, 2002; Nowack, 2012). For instance, researchers have found that teams whose members rate higher in EI perform better than teams whose members rate lower in EI (Jordan & Troth, 2004). Research does not, however explain *how* EI at the team level is related to team outcomes (Chang et al., 2012; Ghosh, Shuck, & Petrosko, 2012). Barczak, Lassk, and Mulki (2010) and Chang et al. (2012) found that high EI among team members promotes interteam trust. Perhaps once interteam trust is established, emotional contagion can bind the team (Nowack, 2012).

Contagion has many meanings, but in this study the term was defined as an influence that spreads rapidly. This study was primarily concerned with emotional contagion, social contagion, and disinhibitory contagion. Hatfield, Cacioppo, and Rapson (1994) explained that emotional contagion is an unconscious mimicking and synchronizing of postures and vocal and facial expressions, resulting in emotional convergence within a group.

Social contagion is an influence that spreads from one person to another person without the influenced individual perceiving intentional manipulation or leadership from the influencing individual (Levy & Nail, 1993). Disinhibitory contagion involves a reduction in feelings of restraint as a consequence of observing others' actions (Levy & Nail, 1993). The concepts of emotional, social, and disinhibitory contagion often overlap (Barsade, 2002; Levy, 1993; Sullins, 1991).

An emotional contagion may spread within a communal setting, with the emotions of one stylist influencing the emotions of other stylists present (social

contagion). When the first few stylists gaggle because of emotional and social contagion, other stylists may perceive the constraint to leave has been removed (disinhibitory contagion) and join the gaggle.

Definitions of Terms

Cosmetology: The treatment of hair, skin, and nails for visual appeal ("Cosmetic," 2013; "Cosmetology," 2013).

Disinhibitory contagion: "A case of social contagion in which a recipient, who is in an approach-avoidance conflict, experiences a reduction in restraints as a consequence of observing an initiator perform the desired act" (Levy & Nail, 1993, p. 270).

Emotional contagion: The sharing and transfer of attitudes and moods among a group of people, which influences the dynamics of the work group (Barsade, 2002).

Gaggle: A mass leaderless or shared-leadership walkout.

Independent booth renter (IBR): An independent contractor who rents a station or booth at a salon or in a building of independent salon suites (Willett, 2010).

Knowledge workers (KWs): Workers identified by their professional specialties, specialized activities, and high level of creativity (Šajeva, 2007).

Salon employee: A stylist who works at the salon and receives an hourly wage, commission only, or a combination of commission and salary (Willett, 2010).

Salon owner: The person responsible for paying employees and managing the day-to-day operations of a salon (Willett, 2010).

Salon: An establishment "primarily engaged in one or more of the following: (1) cutting, trimming, shampooing, weaving, coloring, waving, or styling hair; (2) providing

facials; and (3) applying makeup (except permanent makeup)" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012, para. 1) and not considered a barber shop or a men's hairstyling business.

Social contagion: spreads from one person to another person without the influenced individual perceiving intentional manipulation or leadership from the influencing individual (Levy & Nail, 1993).

Stylist/hair dresser: An individual trained and licensed through the state to (a) cut, trim, shampoo, weave, color, wave, and style hair; (b) provide facials; and (c) apply nonpermanent makeup (Willett, 2010).

Assumptions

This study was based on several assumptions. It was assumed that the participants would be able and willing to explain their experiences and perceptions regarding salon walkouts. To encourage the participants to share their experiences and perceptions, each interview began with casual conversation in order to put the participants at ease (Berry, 1999). Similarly, it was assumed the participants would answer the interview questions honestly and in detail; as is appropriate in interpretive phenomenological research, openness was encouraged and probing questions were used to obtain detailed data regarding the participants' worldviews (Tuohy et al., 2013).

Another assumption was that interviewing salon owners, employees, and IBRs would lead to a more comprehensive understanding of gaggle walkouts in salons. A further assumption was that though bracketing would not be used during the data collection and analysis processes, the researcher's reflection on prior experiences and knowledge would mitigate the potential for research bias. It was also assumed that

analyzing the data would result in themes regarding the central phenomenon and that the themes would indicate answers to the research questions.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this study consisted of exploring the experiences and perceptions of salon owners, employees, and booth renters regarding gaggle walkouts. The study was delimited to selecting participants from the Dallas and Fort Worth metropolitan area who had experienced walkouts. The study sample was small, which is appropriate in qualitative research (Englander, 2012; Finlay, 2013; Tuohy et al., 2013). Data collection was delimited to a short demographic questionnaire and one-on-one, semistructured interviews with open-ended questions. The data were phenomenologically analyzed to identify themes related to the essences of the participants' experiences (Moustakas, 1994).

Limitations

The potential limitations in this study related to the qualitative nature of the study. For example, researcher bias could have skewed the results of the study. To mitigate the risk of this limitation, the researcher reflexively analyzed prior knowledge of the gaggle effect to understand prejudgments and opinions regarding the topic so that the focus remained on the participants' perspectives and lived experiences (Connelly, 2010). As another limitation, the small sample size and the subjective data regarding the participants' subjective perspectives limited the generalizability of the study.

Trochim (2006), however, reported that qualitative research findings can sometimes be appropriately transferred, or applied, to other groups and settings. Englander (2012) noted interpretive phenomenology is more generalizable because

interpretive phenomenology is receptive to the general in the data. To enhance transferability in this study, the research framework and the study population were described clearly and in detail, enabling other researchers to determine whether transferring the results is appropriate (Trochim, 2006).

The findings of this study may be transferable to other populations of salon owners, employees, and booth renters in the United States because these individuals are a relatively homogeneous group. Cohen (2010) noted that stylists across the nation have completed comparable training but have not completed traditional higher education. All stylists are credentialed through the state, and each state has similar requirements (Cohen, 2010). Further, 95% of stylists are female and all stylists perform similar work (Professional Beauty Association, 2011).

Summary

Stylists have existed since the early Egyptian civilization (Hair Dressing Authority, 2011; Ravilious, 2010). However, not until more recently have mass employee walkouts become a great concern for salon owners (Sarfati, 2011). These walkouts resemble a gaggle of geese more than a typical walkout since the salon walkouts are leaderless or the leadership is shared. The gaggle may be started by emotional contagion that moves from stylist to stylist in a social setting. When one stylist decides to leave the salon, disinhibitory contagion may encourage a significant number of other remaining stylists to join the walkout, resulting in a gaggle. When a gaggle occurs, the salon owner loses valuable KWs and clients, which can destroy the business (Kirby, 2011).

The purpose of this qualitative, interpretive phenomenological study was to explore and interpret the lived experiences of salon owners, employees, and IBRs regarding gaggle walkouts. The study sample consisted of salon owners, employees, and booth renters in the Dallas and Fort Worth metropolitan area. The participants completed a short demographic survey and one-on-one, semistructured interviews with open-ended questions. The data were analyzed to identify themes regarding the participants' experiences and perceptions, which led to an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon and answered the research questions for the study (Creswell, 2008).

The study is significant because it involved pioneering research on mass walkouts of KWs in an entrepreneurial setting. The findings indicate which factors the participants believed contributed to walkouts. Salon owners and industry leaders may use the findings to develop strategies to prevent gaggles. Through reducing the occurrence of gaggles, salon owners will be more successful in retaining their workers and clientele, which will help the owners' salons remain competitive and profitable (Hausknect et al., 2009).

Chapter 2 contains a review of the literature related to the topic of the study. The chapter includes an overview of the salon industry, both historical and modern, as well as the characteristics of stylists and their unique relationships with their clients. Also discussed are walkouts, contagions that may influence walkouts, and EI and EQ. Chapter 2 also contains discussion of gaps in the literature, highlighting the need for the current study.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

The purpose of this qualitative, interpretive phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of salon owners, employees, and IBRs regarding gaggle walkouts. Chapter 2 contains a review of the literature related to the topic of the study. Historical and current perspectives of the salon industry are presented, followed by discussion of the characteristics of salon owners, employees, and booth renters. The unique relationship between stylists and their clients is also addressed. Chapter 2 also contains a synthesis of literature on walkouts, KWs, and theories and factors that might partly explain why gaggle walkouts occur in salons.

Search Terms, Databases, and Documents Used for the Literature Review

To obtain literature for this review, searches were conducted in the University of Phoenix online library, which includes the databases Thomson Gale PowerSearch, Emerald, ProQuest, and EBSCOhost. The following search terms were used to find relevant sources: *salons*, *stylists*, *knowledge*, *KW*, *KW management*, *retention*, *small-group theory*, *motivation*, *mass walkout*, *emotional intelligence*, *emotional quotient*, *emotions*, *interpersonal relations*, *social networking*, *contagion*, *phenomenology*, *hairdresser*, *hairstylist*, and *cosmetology*. The sources resulting from the keyword searches include peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and dissertations. A limited amount of literature was also obtained from government and salon-industry websites.

Salon Industry: Historical and Modern Perspectives

Cosmetology, and hairstyling in particular, has existed since antiquity. From the Stone Age to the modern era, hairstyling and the salon industry have centered on a

knowledge-based approach, but the details have changed. During Egyptian and Roman times, slaves labored as barbers; in contrast, today's salons—whether high-end or more modest—employ thousands of educated stylists (Willett, 2010). Table 1 contains a chronological summary of the history of cosmetology.

Table 1

A Brief Chronology of Cosmetology

Timeline	Events
2 million–30,000 BCE	Boxwood combs are made.
30,000 BCE	Statues and pottery that depict hairstyling are made; haircutting tools are used.
c. 40,000–3500 BCE	Egyptians use eye makeup and exotic beauty/health regimens.
c. 2000 BCE	Recipes are created for hair gels and for baldness cures.
c. 600 BCE	First rhinoplasty (nose job) for cosmetic purposes is completed in India.
296 BCE	Greeks introduce barbering to Romans.
c. 100 CE	Hair dyes and makeup for eyes and cheeks become common in Rome.
1635	Champagne Salon opens in Paris, France.
1765	Rumigny, the first professional hairstylist, publishes the book *Art de la Coiffure des Dames*.
1875	Grateau perfects the curling iron and invents the Marcel wave hairstyle in Paris.
1891	The first beauty school, Harper Method Shop, opens in New York.
1901	The first face-lift is performed in Berlin.
1904	Walker, an African American beauty industry leader, produces her own line of products. The first barbers' association is formed.
1906	German Nessler patents an electric permanent-wave machine.
1907	French chemist Schuller develops the first commercial hair color product.
1918	Malone, an African-American entrepreneur, opens the first African American beauty school.
1933	Animal testing for cosmetic safety begins in the United States.
1957	Ultra Sheen, a chemical relaxer, revolutionizes the African American hair care industry.
2009	The European Union bans animal testing for cosmetics.

Note. Adapted from (a) *The American Beauty Industry Encyclopedia*, by J. Willett (Ed.). Copyright 2010 by J. Willett. (b) *Encyclopedia of Hair: A Cultural History*, by V. Sherrow. Copyright 2006 by V. Sherrow.

Historical perspective. Evidence of deliberate hairstyling has been traced back to the Stone Age. For instance, archaeologists have discovered combs made over 40,000 years ago (Sherrow, 2006). Other artifacts date back to 30,000 BCE (Sherrow, 2006).

Egyptians living around 4,000 BCE routinely used cosmetics to display their status and connections, as well as to reflect times of mourning (Hair Dressing Authority, 2011; Ravilious, 2010). Art and pottery circa 2000 BCE favorably depict hairstylists. During this era, recipes ranging from simple hair gels to cures for baldness were also developed (Sherrow, 2006). Because of the importance of hairstyling in the Roman and Egyptian cultures, wealthy Romans and Egyptians had slaves trained to serve as personal barbers (Sherrow, 2006). Archeologist discovered evidence of cosmetology in ancient Chinese, Arab, Japanese, Roman, and African cultures (Ravilious, 2010).

Throughout history, hairstyling has been connected with attracting individuals of the opposite sex, protecting against evil spirits, intimidating enemies in battle, indicating social status, and displaying political affiliations (Sherrow, 2006). Just prior to the French Revolution, for example, salons were havens for women to discuss politics, free from the influences of their husbands (Kale, 2002).

Modern salons. Though hairdressing has existed since antiquity, historians consider the Champagne Salon, which opened in Paris in 1635, to be the first official salon (Sherrow, 2006). Similarly, Rumigny, a hairdresser for the French court in the mid-1700s, is considered the first professional hairstylist (Sherrow, 2006). Rumigny's 1765 work *Art de la Coiffure des Dames* was the first published book on hairdressing and included several pictures of his unique hairstyles (Sherrow, 2006). By the end of the next century, women in the United States were turning their porches, bathrooms, and kitchens into mini-salons (Scanlon, 2007). The first beauty college in the United States opened in the late 1890s (Sherrow, 2006).

In the early 1900s, because of segregation, beauty schools were generally unavailable to African Americans (Willett, 2010). Because of the unique qualities of African American hair, African American entrepreneurs such as Walker and Malone developed special procedures, equipment, and hair care products for this hair type (Johnson, 2011; Willett, 2010). Walker and Malone educated sales agents and hairdressers about the unique processes and sent the agents and hairdressers around the country to train and educate other stylists. Eventually leaders of the Poro Company established beauty colleges in cities with significant concentrations of African Americans. The emphasis of these colleges was on African American hair (Willett, 2010).

In the early 1900s, hairstylists and barbers had been licensed as working in the same profession. However, as the beauty industry expanded, it became clear that hairstylists should be licensed separately (Sherrow, 2006). By 2008, the U.S. salon industry contained more than 800,000 hair care professionals (Professional Beauty Association, 2011; U.S. Census Bureau. 2012). The state with the largest number is Texas, with a total of 25,570 stylists. That number is projected to increase 100% in 10 years (Ford, 2012; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012).

Eighty-eight percent of salons are nonemployee establishments (i.e., the owner personally provides all services). Of the remaining 12% of salons with employees, 76% have 10 or fewer employees. In 42% of these salons, employees are salaried. The other 58% of salons contain a combination of salaried, commissioned, and independent contractors (booth renters) (Ford, 2012).

Ninety-five percent of salon employees and booth renters are female (Ford, 2012; PayScale, 2012; U.S. Census Bureau 2012). In contrast, 76% of owners are female (Professional Beauty Association, 2011); this percentage may seem low, but it is four times the national average for women-owned businesses across all industries (Professional Beauty Association, 2011). Members of the salon industry are diverse in age and experience, from recent high school graduates to salon veterans, but all stylists have similar training backgrounds. Stylists certified in Texas have finished high school and possibly higher education, have completed a minimum of 1,500 hours of practical training, and have passed the certification tests established by the TDLR (2012b).

It is important to note that the 12% of salons with employees generate 53% of the total revenue in the industry, which was $46 billion in 2012 (IBISWorld, 2012). This 12% of the industry, which represents $24.4 billion, is also where gaggles occur. The gaggles are most prominent in the salons with 10 or fewer employees (Grossman & Evans, 2001). As Grossman and Evans (2001) contended, gaggles are negligible at franchised salons, which represent less than 0.2% of the industry (Professional Beauty Association, 2011).

Stylist Training and Certification

Before the 20th century, hairdressing was unregulated, which allowed early entrepreneurs, such as Walker and Malone, to rapidly innovate. The increasing complexity of hair care innovation eventually necessitated licensing and regulation (Brooks and Smith, 2009). Currently, every state and most modern countries have licensing requirements for hair care specialists (Straughan, 2010). Licensing is not only important for the safety of clients and stylists but also benefits certified stylists

financially. Because licensing decreases the available labor pool, certified stylists are in greater demand and can charge higher wages (Adams et al., 2002).

Before an individual can be licensed as a cosmetologist in Texas, he or she must earn a high school diploma and enroll in a certified cosmetology academy. Once at the academy, the student must complete at least 1,500 hours of academic study (explicit knowledge) and work with paying clients (tacit knowledge) for on-the-job training and mentoring (Straughan, 2010; TDLR, 2012b). The candidate must also demonstrate mastery of explicit and tacit knowledge by passing a written and practical examination (TDLR, 2012c). The timed written exam, which is difficult and has a first-time pass rate of 64.47%, includes questions on the following topics (TDLR, 2012c):

- Booth sanitation/disinfection and general safety (24 questions)
- Hair shampooing and conditioning (3 questions)
- Haircutting and hair styling (15 questions)
- Braids and braid extensions (5 questions)
- Chemical texturing (13 questions)
- Hair coloring (17 questions)
- Skin care (7 questions)
- Nail care (8 questions)
- Licensing and regulations (8 questions)

The timed practical exam has a higher pass rate—95.23% (TDLR, 2012b). During the practical exam, the candidate must demonstrate proficiency on a model for manicures and facials and on a mannequin for hair. The practical exam is even more in depth than the written exam and includes the following components (TDLR, 2012c):

- Set up and disinfection
- Manicure
- Facial
- Chemical services
- Preparation for chemical application for a virgin relaxer, virgin tint, and bleach retouch
- Virgin tint to darker
- No-base virgin relaxer
- Bleach retouch
- Shampoo
- Hair shaping
- Permanent wave
- Curl demonstration and roller placement
- Blow dry and thermal curling
- End-of exam disinfection

During the practical exam, the only instruction a candidate receives is to complete a certain task, such as to perform a basic manicure on five nails (TDLR, 2012c). The candidate graded on all individual components associated with that task. In completing a basic manicure, the candidate would receive 1 point for successfully completing each of the following components (TDLR, 2012c):

- Sanitizing own and model's hands using hand sanitizer
- Removing polish from nails

- Filing nails from outside edges to centers and avoiding filing tops of nails
- Immersing model's hand in a finger bowl and applying cuticle remover
- Gently pushing back cuticles with a cuticle pusher or an orangewood stick with a cotton tip
- Cleaning under the edges of each nail with a cuticle pusher or orangewood stick
- Massaging fingers and hand with lotion
- Removing residue from the nail plates with alcohol, polish remover, or a dehydrator
- Applying a base coat
- Smoothly and evenly applying two coats of polish
- Applying a topcoat
- Removing all traces of polish from cuticles with a cuticle pusher or orangewood stick, if necessary
- Disposing of waste material in a trash bag
- Ensuring the work area remains sanitary by using presanitized materials, removing products from containers without contaminating the products, replacing contaminated items, keeping all containers closed when not in use, cleaning up spills, and changing towels when soiled.

As the beauty industry has become more global, so have cosmetology academies. These academies are also including artistic and business education in their instruction (Grossman & Evans, 2001). One company, Toni & Guy, which started in Dallas, Texas,

operates 28 academies and 402 salons in 41 countries, training nearly 100,000 hairstylists a year (Willett, 2010).

Safety is extremely important for stylists because of the hazardous materials the stylists handle. Ronda, Hollun, and Moen (2009) reported that stylists are exposed to small amounts of many chemicals, some of which may cause allergies, cancer, or reproductive problems. Further, hairdressing has been associated with asthma, rhinitis, dermatitis, and musculoskeletal problems (Harris-Roberts, Bowen, Sumner, & Fishwick, 2013). Because of these dangers, newly certified stylists are often hired as assistants to experienced stylists.

Special Relationship Between Stylists and Clients

Stylists axiomatically develop relationships with their clients, as a short visit to any salon in the United States would demonstrate. However, the reasons for these relationships are not documented in peer reviewed literature, perhaps because the reasons seem self-evident. An underlying assumption of salon-related books (Sherrow, 2006; Willett, 2000), peer reviewed articles (Bax, 2012; Cohen, 2010; Grossman & Evans, 2001; Gutek, Cherry, Bhappu, Schneider, & Woolf, 2000; LaGuana, 2011; Scanlon, 2007; Seiter & Dutson, 2007; Straughan, 2010; Ward & Hilland, 2011), and industry articles (Bagby, 2010; Baker, 2010; Baxton, 2001; Hathaway, 1997; Kirby, 2009; Kirby, 2011; Landau, 1995; Nikolas, 2010; Sarfati, 2011) is that the reader understands a special relationship exists between clients and stylists.

Perhaps because of this assumption, most researchers examine the effects of the relationship or how this relationship compares to worker-client relationships in other industries. Gutek et al. (2000), for example, examined the relationship between stylists

and their clients, mechanics and their clients, and physicians and their clients. The study sample consisted of general residents in the southwestern United States, undergraduate students at a college in the southwestern United States, and general residents and college students in a large Australian city (Gutek et al., 2000).

The findings of the study indicate that physicians and hairstylists have similar relationship scores, with relationships 5% greater for stylists (Gutek et al., 2000). Though Gutek et al. (2000) did not explore why the relationships developed or why stylists and physicians have similar relationship scores, one factor could be that stylists' jobs involve touching clients' hair and bodies, similar to the job of physicians. Once this hurdle of physical contact is overcome, clients may easily develop strong and intimate relationships with their stylists (Bax, 2012). Once a stylist and client establish this intimate relationship, the client looks to the stylist for artistic advice that will improve the client's self-image (Bax, 2012). This relationship, like most positive relationships, requires effective listening skills, which may also contribute to a strong relationship ("Cosmetology on the Cutting Edge," 1998).

Stylists may have a powerful financial incentive to establish intimate relationships with their clients. Seiter and Dutson (2007) found when stylists have intimate relationships with their clients and give their clients tailored compliments during appointments, the stylists receive thousands more dollars in tips each year than other stylists do. Cohen (2010) noted that stylists may attempt to create followings to achieve stable incomes. Because salaried salon employees are not as dependent on their clientele for stable income, these employees are less motivated than commission-only employees and booth renters to develop intimate relationships with clients (Cohen, 2010).

A salon owner, hoping to preempt a gaggle, might be tempted to hinder relationships between stylists and their clients, thereby neutralizing the power advantage client/stylist relationships give to stylists (Bove & Johnson, 2000). Bove and Johnson (2000) noted that in some salons, stylists are assigned different hairstyling tasks (e.g., styling or coloring hair) for a client to reduce a client's loyalty to one stylist and increase the client's loyalty to the salon. For example, if the employee who colored the client's hair left, the client would only need to develop a relationship with another colorist, not a stylist, and would likely still feel loyalty to the salon (Bove & Johnson, 2000).

However, attempts to weaken the client/stylist bond may not be in the best interest of the salon in the long-term (Bove & Johnson, 2006; Yim, Chan, & Hung, 2007). Bove and Johnson (2006) reported that a client's loyalty to a stylist is a significant predictor of the client's loyalty to the salon. Yim et al. (2007) similarly found that the client/stylist relationship is important to the salon as well as the stylist because without developing a relationship with a stylist at the salon, the client may try different salons.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012) predicted that by 2014, individuals would have almost one million U.S. stylists to choose from. When clients identify with and are satisfied with their salons, because of strong client-stylist relationships, the clients have a favorable opinion of the salon as well as the stylist and are more likely to continue patronizing the salon (Yim et al., 2007). Yim et al. (2007) reported that even when clients are faced with an attractive alternative to the salon they typically patronize, the clients will remain committed to the salon—and perhaps even unconsciously increase their loyalty to the salon as a way to maintain satisfaction with the past and current

behavior. Therefore, when owners encourage client/stylist relationships, the owners are also increasing the likelihood the salons will have business.

Bove and Johnson (2006) identified additional benefits of the client/stylist relationship. Developing relationships with clients enhances stylists' job satisfaction and consequently their commitment to the salon. Stylists are also more likely to provide high-quality service when their clients are loyal to the stylists (Bove & Johnson, 2006). Bove and Johnson also reported that some clients seek out intimate, long-term relationships with stylists and that these clients will not be attracted to salons in which client-stylist relationships are discouraged. Additionally, clients are more likely to provide word-of-mouth referrals about the salon and to demonstrate other positive customer behavior when the clients feel personal bonds with his or her stylists (Bove & Johnson, 2006).

In addition to discussing the benefits of client-stylist relationships, Bove and Johnson (2006) addressed some risks of these relationships and customer loyalty. In salons with few employees, if a stylist leaves and his or her clients follow, the salon will experience financial stress. Bove and Johnson noted that even if a client does not immediately follow the stylist to another salon, losing a preferred stylist is a catalyst for considering other salons in the area. Though Bove and Johnson concluded that the benefits outweigh the risks, the risks are significant for salons. If a few stylists leave simultaneously (gaggle), the salon owner faces two challenges: replacing talented KWs and procuring new clients. If a significant number of stylists gaggle and their clients follow, the salon may fail financially before replacements can be acquired (Kirby, 2011; Minifie & Otto, 2011; Sarfati, 2011).

Walkouts

Walkouts in the salon industry are different from traditional walkouts. For example, labor union walkouts and strikes are often preplanned and scripted to achieve a specific effect (Devereux & Hart, 2011; Fiester, 2004; Rascher & DeSchriver. 2012; Shelton, 1968). Student walkouts are protests against perceived unfair policies (Barberena, Jimenez, & Young, 2008; Franklin, 2004; Yang, 2007; Yosso & García, 2008). The biggest difference between traditional walkouts and walkouts in the salon industry is the intent to return. Union strikers and students want to affect change and return to their companies or schools. Stylists who walk out rarely return, because they can take their clients, and therefore income, to another salon in the area (Kirby, 2011; Sarfati, 2011). Consequently, a salon walkout may leave the salon financially weakened and unable to continue operating (Kirby, 2011). Therefore, whereas a walkout will disrupt a school or company in another industry for a short time, rarely is the school or company destroyed. Although different from salon walkouts, traditional labor walkouts can offer perspective.

General labor walkouts. Before government regulations were established concerning organized labor, walkouts were dangerous for employees; employees who refused to work for any reason were often fired. Because there were no protections against unfair labor practices, the first walkouts and strikes were often spontaneous. Most strikes in the early stages of the labor movement regarded conditions and wages, and few were successful (Shelton, 1968). The first U.S. strike occurred in 1824 in a Pawtucket, Rhode Island, factory; where male and female employees engaged in the strike to protest new work rules that increased work hours and decreased hourly wages

(Iowa Federation of Labor, American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations [IFL, AFL-CIO], 2013). In 1834, 899 female workers spontaneously walked out of a mill in Lowell, Massachusetts, after the owner fired a mill agent. These women were also protesting wage cuts but ultimately had to accept the decreased wages to retain their jobs (IFL AFL-CIO, 2013).

Few of the early strikes during the labor movement were successful (Shelton, 1968). A notable exception is the Buffalo, New York, grain shovelers' strike of 1899. After a tumultuous four week strike in response to wage cuts, the shovelers succeeded in maintaining their wages. Shelton (1968) suggested the strike was successful because the union convinced the public that the shovelers' grievances were just. Currently, it is common practice for union members and activists to appeal for the public's sympathy (Long & Walker, 2011).

Though labor laws have changed, strikes and walkouts still occur in the United States. In April 2013, activists from the group Fast Food Forward organized a walkout at fast food restaurants in the New York City, New York, area. Of the 50,000 fast food workers in the New York City area, only 400 workers (or 0.8%) from Wendy's, Burger King, McDonald's, Dominos, Pizza Hut, and KFC participated in the walkout (Rugh, 2013). Even though only 0.8% of the workforce participated in the strike, it was covered by most national news organizations and was prominently featured by United Press International. According to United Press International (2013), Fast Food Forward's members organized the strike to honor the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on the anniversary of his assassination.

As part of the strike, the workers were asking for a 100% raise. Though the workers did not expect to receive the requested raise, Fast Food Forward (n.d.) members said the strike would show support for minimum-wage workers and their right to earn more money and to form a union. Despite the small number of workers who walked out, as of April 7, 2013, Fast Food Forward's Facebook page had 122,809 online signatures supporting a petition for a union (and presumably support for the organization's overall position). Whereas the Lowell strike in 1834 may have initially only been known to the local community and the 899 strikers, the unsuccessful walkout of 400 fast food workers in 2013 is known worldwide, thanks to globalization and social media.

Student walkouts. Similar to labor unrest and walkouts, student walkouts are designed to bring attention to locally perceived injustices, with the ultimate intent of returning to school. Student walkouts are relatively rare and are largely a modern phenomenon. The two early famous walkouts are the 1966 high student walkout in Detroit, Michigan and the 1968 walkout in a school district in Los Angeles, California. The next school walkout occurred in 2006 and was a demonstration of Latino rights.

In the Detroit walkout, approximately 2,300 high school students spontaneously left Detroit's African American campus on the morning of April 7, 1966. The cause of the walkout was parental dissatisfaction with the school policies established by a mostly Caucasian school board and low achievement among the students. As Franklin (2004) explained, African American parents were dissatisfied "with the education that their children were receiving in the city's schools and evidence of the growing divisions between blacks and the largely white corps of teacher and administrators that ran Detroit's schools" (p. 158).

As with the Detroit walkout, the 1968 Los Angeles walkout regarded school conditions and education for a minority group, this time Latinos. In March 1968, more than 10,000 students walked out of at least five major Los Angeles high schools, protesting "unequal educational conditions, poor treatment, and the lack of a culturally relevant curriculum" (Yosso & García, 2008, p. 177). Though the Detroit and Los Angeles walkouts were similar in some ways, the walkouts differed in other ways. First, Detroit's walkout was spontaneously accomplished by the students, who joined parents already protesting (Franklin, 2004); the students were supporting their parents.

The Los Angeles walkout involved students at several high schools, meaning it could not have been accomplished spontaneously. The Los Angeles walkout required coordination and help from activists in the community (Yosso & García, 2008). Second, the Los Angeles walkout also addressed policies perceived to degrade students, such as punishment for speaking Spanish, locked bathrooms, and a lack of Mexican cultural history in textbooks (Franklin, 2004; Yosso & García, 2008).

Despite the differences, both walkouts brought the surrounding communities together (Yosso & García, 2008). Yosso and García (2008) contended that the Los Angeles walkout in particular generated a historical community culture. In 2006 an HBO movie was made about the Los Angeles walkout, emphasizing the historic nature of the event. Yosso and García asserted that the movie, which included elements of social justice as well as activism, was a catalyst for the 2006 student walkouts, during which students in several states advocated for immigrant rights.

Throughout the United States, hundreds of thousands of students walked out during the seven day period beginning March 27, 2006 (Barberena et al., 2008; Yang

2007). The large, widespread walkout was possible because technology had changed in the years between the 1968 walkout in Los Angeles and the 2006 walkouts. This technology in turn changed the way walkouts were organized. Planning for walkouts in the 1960s was generally limited to word-of-mouth communication.

To involve students in multiple high schools across many locations required organization and leadership. These requirements were readily achieved by 2006, with the use of MySpace, pagers, and cell phones. As Yang (2007) asserted, fast organizing became possible with "the advent of new media, particularly instantaneous text messaging and virtual communities formed in cyberspace" (p. 10).

In discussing how modern technology facilitates walkouts, Yang (2007) addressed simultaneity, spontaneity, and space. Simultaneity requires instantaneous communication, such as text messaging among multiple students to achieve a common goal (Yang, 2007). In regard to spontaneity, Yang asserted the 2006 walkouts were not spontaneous, fast organizing has the illusion of spontaneity as walkouts suddenly break out around the country. Space refers to physical places, such as California, and virtual spaces, such as MySpace and more recently Facebook (Yang, 2007).

Barberena, Jimenez, and Young (2008) studied the 2006 walkout in Texas, concentrating on its collective nature. In contrast to Yang's (2007) assertion that recent current walkouts were quickly organized because of simultaneity, spontaneity, and space, Barberena et al. concluded that collective mood shaping and rule breaking were the instigating factors. For example, MySpace conversations and text messages that called for student walkouts spread across the United States like a contagion (Barberena et al., 2008). Whether the student walkouts resulted from collective mood and rule breaking or

from simultaneity, spontaneity, and space, it is clear that technology made the difference between the walkouts of the 1960s and the walkouts of 2006.

These three student walkouts are representative of larger student walkouts but may differ from small walkouts (Barberena et al., 2008; Yosso & García, 2008), which do not normally receive the same attention as walkouts of 100,000 students might. Salon walkouts are small walkouts that only affect a small number of individuals but may be debilitating to the salons where the walkouts occur.

Salon walkouts. Whereas general labor walkouts and student walkouts have been studied, peer reviewed literature on salon walkouts is not available. One possible reason for the lack of literature on salon walkouts is the small scale of an individual salon walkout, which often involves fewer than 10 people (Ford, 2012). Unlike general labor walkouts, salon walkouts are typically leaderless or shared-leader walkouts that resemble a gaggle of geese (Kirby, 2011; Sarfati, 2011). Further, the walkouts often occur without overt warning signs (Kirby, 2011). Salon walkouts also differ from general labor walkouts in that the clients often gaggle with their stylists (Sarfati, 2011).

Although the walkouts are small, the consequences can be devastating (Kirby, 2011). For the salon owner, the walkout can herald the end of his or her business and livelihood. Even if the salon has enough remaining workers and clients to continue operating, the owner will face the costs of recruiting, hiring, and training new stylists. The costs are often greater than a stylist's annual salary (Allen et al., 2010). Further, because stylists are KWs, it can be difficult or impossible to replace stylists' unique knowledge and skills (Frick & Drucker, 2011). Under these circumstances, it is understandable that Kirby (2011) asserted, "Ask any group of salon owners to describe

their worst nightmare and chances are good that a majority will include some variation on the 'staff walkout' theme" (para. 1).

Kirby (2011) suggested walkouts are numerous. Though some industry writers believe walkouts have been controlled in the major retail salons (Grossman and Evans, 2001), the majority of salons are small businesses rather than big retail chains (Ford, 2012), and small-salon owners know walkouts are a reality they might experience (Kirby, 2011). Devereux and Hart (2011) wrote that any strike or walkout includes at least three parties: "management, the union leadership, and the rank-and-file union membership" (p. 72), which in salons may equate to the salon owner, the first disgruntled stylist, and other stylists.

The large number of cosmetologists in the United States may lead an outsider to believe replacing individual stylists is an easy task. However, as salon owners recognize, stylists are not general workers but rather KWs not replaced easily after a gaggle. To establish why KWs are difficult to replace, the following section contains discussion of knowledge and KWs, as well as considerations in managing KWs.

Knowledge, KWs, and Management of KWs

Before one can classify hairdressers or stylists as KWs, one must understand knowledge. An epistemological discussion of knowledge is outside the scope of this study; however, general concepts of knowledge are important in understanding KWs and how to manage KWs.

Philosophy of knowledge. The theory and study of knowledge was first formally recorded by Plato during the classical Greek period. Plato, Socrates (his teacher), and Aristotle (his student) laid the foundation for modern philosophy and knowledge

exploration (Butler, 2007). Knowledge, however, is useless unless directed (Drucker, 1999). Knowledge without human action is only data (Becerra-Fernandez, Gonzalez, & Sabherwal, 2004; Caddy, 2007; Evans & McKinley, 2011; Nonaka, Konno, & Toyama, 2001; Paton, 2013).

Philosophers generally separate knowledge into empirical knowledge, nonempirical knowledge, knowledge by acquaintance, and knowledge to complete an action (Moser & vander Nat, 2003). Nonempirical (a posteriori) knowledge is based on reason; empirical (a priori) knowledge requires experiencing a phenomenon. Knowledge by acquaintance involves familiarity with a piece of knowledge not necessarily associated with a universal truth (Moser & vander Nat, 2003).

Knowledge requires belief that the information is true, but belief does not require knowledge (Moser & vander Nat, 2003). To understand knowledge in the context of business, the knowledge must have a pragmatic value. According to Lewis (1926), truth and knowledge "must always be relative to our chosen conceptual systems in terms of which they are expressed" (p. 268).

Evans and McKinley (2011) wrote that knowledge without wisdom can be dangerous and ineffective. Evans and McKinley further explained, "Wisdom guides knowledgeable actions in the basis of moral and ethical values. . . . [that is,] wisdom is knowledge with an ethical outlook" (p. 69). Moser and vander Nat (2003) contended that the following 10 propositions have a privileged epistemological status:

- Every event has a cause.
- The shortest distance between two points is a straight line.
- Every line has one line parallel to it through a given point.

- Between every two points is spatial separation.
- An object cannot be in two places at the same time.
- Two objects cannot be in the exact same place at the exact same time.
- Nothing comes from nothing.
- Nothing can be completely annihilated.
- There is something permanent in every change.
- Space and the objects in it extend in width, height, and breadth.

Knowledge in the business sense. Whereas traditional Western epistemologists grapple with how one knows what one knows and concepts such as justified true beliefs, knowledge in business is context specific and relational (Nonaka et al., 2001). The meaning of *knowledg*e in the business sense, however, is not well defined because it is dynamic and constantly evolving (Acsente, 2010; Caddy, 2007; Reinhardt, Schmidt, Sloep, & Drachsler, 2011; Seyed Danesh, Noroozi, Seyed Danesh, & Seyed Saadat, 2012).

In the business sense, the concept of knowledge encompasses ideas about what knowledge is as well as what knowledge is not. Knowledge in the business context can be created and lost (von Krogh, Ichijo, & Nonaka, 2000). Likewise, knowledge also can be "omitted or withheld, suppressed, amplified or exaggerated, diminished, or distorted" (Evans & McKinley, 2011, p. 62). These characteristics make knowledge fragile (Nonaka et al., 2001; von Krogh et al., 2000).

Other aspects of knowledge are that it can be transferred, shared, managed, and combined (Carleton, 2011; Evans & McKinley, 2011; Kin, 2001; Liu & Zhao, 2008; Nonaka et al., 2001; Ramezan, 2012). According to Drucker (2002), knowledge must be

specialized to be effective. Toit, Staden, and Steyn (2011) wrote that innovation is one process to create new knowledge. Toit et al. considered knowledge and innovation complementary concepts because combining pieces of knowledge often results in innovation. Most experts concede that knowledge is a main source of competitive business advantage (Evans & McKinley, 2011; Hollman, Hayes, & Abbasi, 2011; Ramezan, 2012; Toit et al., 2011).

Knowledge creation in the salon industry is a major tenet and begins with the first day of cosmetology school (Grossman & Evans, 2001; Jui-Min, Jen-Shou, & Hsin-Hsi, 2008). The process of creating knowledge in the business context requires more than just gathering data. Knowledge is not data (Evans & McKinley, 2011; Svobodová & Koudelková, 2011) because data consist of reports, perceptions, and culturally and socially embedded ideas that may not be accurate (Becerra-Fernandez, Gonzalez, & Sabherwal, 2004; Evans & McKinley, 2011). Data are the building blocks of information, but for information to become knowledge, the information must be acted upon by humans. Individuals and organizations direct and act on knowledge for their mutual benefit (Caddy, 2007; Nonaka et al., 2001; Paton, 2013).

Becerra-Fernandez et al. (2011) attempted to bridge the gap between classical and business knowledge by defining *knowledge* as rationale beliefs about how concepts regarding a certain topic relate to each other. As several other scholars have explained, knowledge is human capital owned by the individual (Acsente, 2010; Chen, 2010; Drucker, 1999). Individuals and companies use knowledge as a raw material to create or enhance value (Carleton, 2011). To Hollman et al. (2011), knowledge includes not only intellectual expertise but also the ability to learn new skills and knowledge. "Individual

knowledge emerges from individual observations, movements, actions, and communications in the world, and it is closely linked to the senses, ranging from smelling and hearing to watching and touching" (Nonaka et al., 2001, p. 32).

Knowledge in the business sense can be separated into two categories: explicit and tacit knowledge (Nonaka et al., 2001; Pfaff & Hasan, 2011; Reinhardt et al., 2011). Explicit knowledge can be expressed through formulas, numbers, manuals, and total quality management processes (Pfaff & Hasan, 2011). Tacit, or experiential, knowledge is undocumented because it consists of a person's subjective, personal knowledge learned through experience and intuition (Cloutier, Ledoux, & Fournier, 2012; Pfaff & Hasan, 2011). Whereas explicit knowledge is stagnant and easy to communicate and share, tacit knowledge is difficult to share because the knowledge may be idiosyncratic and highly personal (Cloutier et al., 2012). "Understanding the reciprocal relationship between explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge is the key to understanding the knowledge-creating process" (Nonaka et al., 2001, p. 14).

Without a method, whether formal or informal, of sharing knowledge, knowledge necessarily would be limited to one's own experiences, time, and location (Robertson, Gockel, & Brauner, 2013). Sharing and codifying knowledge is one of the first steps in effectively using an organization's accumulated individual knowledge (Caddy, 2007; Nonaka et al., 2001; Robertson et al., 2013). Von Krogh et al. (2000) noted that knowledge sharing is a personal decision ideally accomplished in a caring organization. Individuals in an organization must trust the management before they are willing to share (Evans & McKinley, 2011; Lin & Joe, 2012; Šebestová & Rylková, 2011; Walumbwa, Christensen, & Hailey, 2011).

Knowledge sharing is also important because "most, if not all knowledge is created not by a single individual but through an iterative process of experimentation and dialogue involving several individuals" (Nonaka & Nishiguchi, 2001, p. 287). For example, knowledge sharing among stylists could consist of the transfer of tacit knowledge about hairstyling techniques the stylists discovered or were taught (Evans & McKinley, 2011). Some employees who have knowledge may hoard rather than share their knowledge. The hoarding is intentional when the knowledge is withheld to achieve or maintain control or power (Caddy, 2007). Unintentional knowledge hoarding may occur when the employee relies mainly on tacit knowledge or has difficulty changing tacit into explicit knowledge (Caddy, 2007).

One of the first formal methods of sharing and creating knowledge is the socialization, externalization, combination, and internalization (SECI) process, which was developed by Nonaka et al. (2001). The SECI process is a continual, self-transcending method of moving knowledge from tacit to explicit and from explicit back to tacit (see Figure 1). During socialization, tacit knowledge is gathered from inside and outside the organization. Externalization is the process of creating concepts to develop new explicit knowledge from the gathered tacit knowledge (Nonaka et al., 2001). Combination requires the new explicit knowledge to be codified into corporate culture and manuals. During the final step, internalization, personal experiences and experimentation that occurred during the combination phase are used to develop new tacit knowledge.

The process begins anew with the socialization phase. In total quality management terms, this process represents continuously improving available knowledge

(Nonaka et al., 2001). Knowledge creation is affected by the rapidly increasing rate of change. Kenney (2001) commented on the temporal dynamics of knowledge creation, suggesting that the time needed to create knowledge (e.g., using the SECI process) is becoming shorter.

The SECI process resulted in a paradigm shift around how knowledge is created, but the theory is not without critics. The primary concerns about SECI are twofold. First, critics question whether tacit knowledge can be completely converted to explicit knowledge (Tsoukas, 2003). As Gourlay (2006) noted, some researchers have argued that tacit knowledge "may be at least partially if not wholly inherently tacit" (p. 1430). Second, some researchers have contended that SECI is a Japanese cultural model, not well suited for global knowledge creation (Collinson & Wilson, 2006; Teece, 2008). Hong (2011) countered that the SECI process is relevant globally if one understands the situational dynamics, or localness, of tacit knowledge and adapts the SECI model for specific situations and cultures.

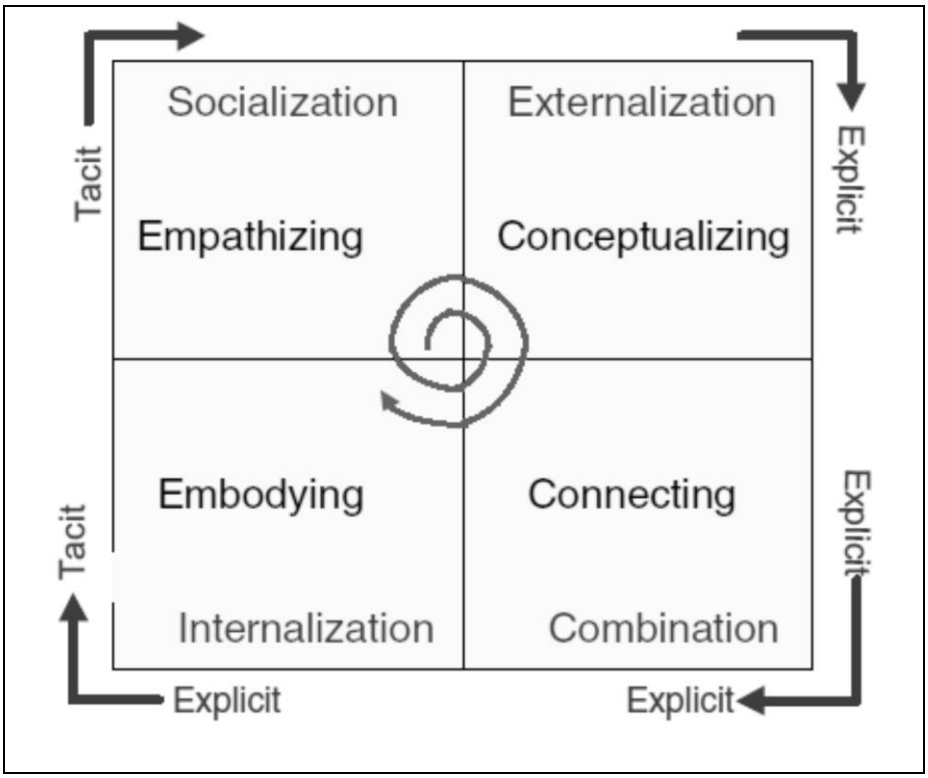

Figure 1. The SECI process. The SECI process is a formal system of creating, sharing, and applying knowledge. The process involves continuously moving knowledge from tacit to explicit and back to tacit. Adapted from "Emergence of 'Ba,'" by I. Nonaka, N. Konno, and R. Toyama, 2001, in I. Nonaka and T. I. Nishiguchi (Eds.), *Knowledge emergence*, p. 20. Copyright Oxford University Press 2001.

KWs. Just as *knowledge* is a difficult term to define precisely, providing a definitive definition of *KW* is challenging. Since Drucker (1959) coined the term, the definition of *KW* has expanded as more research has been conducted (Chen, 2010; Drucker, 1988, 1999; 2002, 2006; Huang, 2011; Mustapa & Daud, 2012; Paton, 2013). Generally, *KW* has been defined as a worker whose job primarily deals with knowledge,

but this definition is broadly inclusive (Caddy, 2007; Chen, 2010; Erne, 2011; Huang, 2011; Šajeva, 2007).

According to Paton (2013), the definition of *KWs* previously was limited to scientists, software engineers, and similar professionals, but the definition has expanded because many companies require knowledge specialists rather than drone-like production workers (Freidson, 2001; Frick & Drucker, 2011). A central tenet of KW philosophy is that KWs are capital, not labor (Acsente, 2010; Caddy, 2007; Carter & Scarbrough, 2001; Šajeva, 2007; Toit et al., 2011).

Researchers assert that KWs are characterized by requiring initial training and continual professional development throughout their careers (Acsente, 2010; Caddy, 2007; Davenport, 2011; Huang, 2011; Mustapa & Daud, 2012; Reinhardt et al., 2011; Šajeva, 2007). Hollman et al. (2011) reported that organizational leaders who value knowledge must also value the organization's KWs and continually invest in initiatives and training that enhance knowledge. Other common attributes of KWs are innovation and creativity (Acsente, 2010; Šebestová & Rylková, 2011; Toit et al., 2011). Morgeson and Humphrey (2006) reported that KWs are characterized as completing specialized and complex tasks, processing information, solving problems, and applying a variety of skills.

KWs also tend to work independently and value autonomy (Acsente, 2010; Davenport, 2011; Hara, 2009). These characteristics may be related to one of the most defining characteristics of KWs: they own their knowledge, storing it in their memories (Acsente, 2010; Carter & Scarbrough, 2001; Chen, 2010; Drucker, 1999; Mustapa & Daud, 2012). Because the knowledge is stored in the individual, KWs tend to be highly mobile (Acsente, 2010; Carter & Scarbrough, 2001; Drucker, 1999; Huang, 2011;

Sutherland & Wocke, 2011). According to Mustapa and Daud (2012), high turnover rates are normal for KWs.

Minifie and Otto (2011), for example, reported a 34% turnover rate in the service industry. Often the KW knows more about the product or service than the manager of the KW (Frick & Drucker, 2011; Hara, 2009). KWs are sometimes considered difficult employees to manage because they constantly challenge policies and procedures. Managers may also view KWs as mavericks and rebels who are unpredictable and uncontrollable and who are not team players (Caddy, 2007).

Hairstylists as KWs. Rumigny, a hairdresser for the French court in the 1700s, is credited with turning hairdressing into a profession. Rumigny turned his tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge by publishing *Art de la Coiffure des Dames*, the first book on hairdressing (Sherrow, 2006). Centuries later in the United States, African American beauty entrepreneurs were pioneer KWs.

Women such as Walker and Malone trained others on how to care for and style African Americans' hair (Willett, 2010). Later, cosmetology schools were opened in areas with large African American populations. The teachers and students in these schools combined tacit knowledge with explicit knowledge to develop new knowledge. From these humble beginnings, hairdressing has evolved into a highly technical set of skills requiring constant education and training (Willett, 2010).

Stylists are KWs because they own their knowledge, some of which is tacit and some of which is explicit. Stylists can also transfer their knowledge to different salons, providing a significant amount of mobility, particularly because clients often follow the stylists when they switch salons (Acsente, 2010; Bax, 2012; Carter & Scarbrough, 2001;

Chen, 2010; Drucker, 1999). Successful stylists, as with all KWs, must develop diverse skills.

For stylists, these skills include coloring, cutting, styling, straightening finishing, braiding, and weaving (Baxton, 2001; Willett, 2010). To becoming certified, student stylists must acquire knowledge in these skills. However, cosmetology-school training is not sufficient; stylists must continue acquiring new knowledge and skills after becoming certified, particularly because of fashion trends, techniques, and technology change (Brooks & Smith, 2009; Chapman, 2013). As Baxton (2001) noted:

> Hairdressing consists of more than just standing behind the chair to cut, curl, and color. New technology is constantly being introduced, and cosmetologists use space-age equipment to activate and accelerate chemical services. New products are being developed every day to make hair, skin, and nails healthier and more beautiful. Continuing education is essential for successful students and professionals to stay abreast of all the advancements. (p. 5)

Because of stylists' need for continual training, many salon owners provide on-the-job training and mentoring opportunities for their employees, particularly new graduates (Grossman & Evans, 2001). In addition to formal and informal training at the salon, Texas stylists must complete four hours of state-approved continuing education every year; one hour must be in sanitation (TDLR, 2012c). This continual learning is consistent with the literature that indicates KWs must update their knowledge for sustained high performance (Cheng, 2012).

Continual training may be particularly needed in this era of globalism; in the salon industry, this globalization has increased innovation and artistic creativity. Acsente

(2010) noted that innovation and creativity are common attributes of KWs. Caddy (2007) and Hollman et al. (2011) similarly reported that knowledge and creativity are closely related.

Davenport's (2005) discussed five categories of KWs, all of which can apply to stylists, often simultaneously. The five categories are knowledge finders, knowledge packagers, knowledge creators, knowledge distributors, and knowledge appliers (Davenport, 2005). A knowledge creator, as the name implies, is a person who creates new knowledge from existing knowledge (Davenport, 2005), and stylists must create new styles continually. Additionally, as new hair products are introduced, stylists must find creative ways to use the products to differentiate themselves from other stylists (Brooks & Smith, 2009; Straughan, 2010).

Davenport (2005) described a knowledge applier as a person who combines new knowledge, such as acquired during training, with previous knowledge tasks. When a stylist, for example, returns from training and mixes the new knowledge and skills with old knowledge and skills to style a client's hair, the stylist is creating and applying new knowledge. According to Caddy (2007), if this stylist shares the new combined knowledge with others in the salon, the stylist is a knowledge packager and distributer.

An important concept regarding KWs in the salon industry is that KWs are not equally valuable (Caddy, 2007). According to Hollman et al. (2011), managers must be ready to fire underperforming KWs to keep the organization lean. Further, not all stylists may be KWs; some stylists may want to be only laborers who do not continuously learn by applying explicit knowledge to new situations (Grossman & Evans, 2001). These stylists may apply existing knowledge to situations in which the knowledge does not fit.

This situation is similar to a computer programmer who refuses to learn a new computer language and continues to use old code until the code becomes obsolete.

KW management. A major tenet of KW philosophy is that KWs must be managed differently from other types of workers (Carleton, 2011; Frick & Drucker, 2011; Huang, 2011; Walumbwa et al., 2011). KW management should not be confused with knowledge management. Knowledge management is a term used to encompass the many practices of creating, storing, and using organizational or personal knowledge in the workforce (Analoui, Doloriert, & Sambrook, 2013, Cady, 2011; Carter & Scarbrough, 2001) and is not directly germane to the discussion of why salons face gaggle walkouts. KW management is germane because effective management is often cited as a motivator for KWs (Cloutier et al., 2012).

According to Carleton (2011), optimizing KWs' performance is the key to achieving organizational success in modern organizations. To manage and optimize the performance of KWs, they must first be identified. As previously noted, not all members of KW profession are KWs. Further, some KWs contribute more than others (Caddy, 2007). Therefore, managers must use caution when selecting individuals to hire (Sutherland & Wocke, 2011).

Once a manager selects and hires a high-quality KW, the manager must appropriately manage and motivate the KW (Frick & Drucker, 2011; Huang, 2011; Yu, 2010). The manager-employee relationship is critical to retain KWs (Frick & Drucker, 2011; Yukl & Kanuk, 1979). Managers can motivate KWs by providing opportunities for autonomy, continual learning, challenging and meaningful work, and personal growth (Huang, 2011; Jain; 2012; Jui-Min et al., 2008; Šajeva, 2007; Toit et al., 2011; Yu, 2012).

Research shows that managers should also concentrate on removing negative factors from the workplace (Hollman et al., 2011). Research also indicates that KWs have difficulty working under managers who do not deal well with substandard performance, refuse to supply needed resources, or rescind control from the KWs (Frick & Drucker, 2011; Hollman et al., 2011; Yu, 2012; Yukl & Kanuk, 1979). In this regard, KWs seem to work better with transactional or transformational leaders because KWs are self-motivated (Analoui et al., 2013).

Because the loss of KWs and their intellectual capital can debilitate a company, retaining KWs is critical (Huang, 2011). According to Hausknect et al. (2009), many researchers have examined why KWs and other high performers quit, but less is known about why these employees stay. One indicator of an impending loss of KWs is the KWs' career commitment. According to Mustapa and Daud (2012):

> Career commitment refers to one's behavior toward one's profession or vocation, where it involves one's personal attachment or identification with one's career, one's persistent willingness to maintain one's career as well as exert continuous pressure in support of one's career development and goals. (p. 162).

Managers can estimate a KW's commitment by examining the worker's job satisfaction (Mustapa & Daud, 2012). Hausknect et al. (2009) discovered that more than half of high performers mention job satisfaction as a motivation to remain in their jobs. Job satisfaction is particularly affected by whether the worker has opportunities for continual learning and skills development (Allen et al., 2010; Hausknect et al., 2009; Huang, 2011; Mustapa & Daud, 2012). Job satisfaction also relates to job fit and perceived support (Chen, 2010). Chen (2010) found that job fit and perceived

organizational support contribute to career success. However, though most Western scholars agree job fit is an important aspect of retention, Ramesh and Gelfand (2010) found that job fit is not critical in all cultures.

Carleton (2011) noted that KWs also need recognition, adequate resources, and a supportive environment to feel job satisfaction and to be effective. Hausknect et al. (2009) found that 41% of high-performing KWs are motivated by extrinsic rewards, such as pay and benefits. Other researchers have presenting conflicting evidence, stating that extrinsic rewards are not significant long-term motivators (Allen et al., 2010; Caddy, 2007; Hausknect et al., 2009; Grossman & Evans, 2001).

Evans and McKinley (2011), however, postulated that high-performing KWs expect to be properly rewarded for their extra effort. Although salary may be important to KWs, salary alone is not an adequate motivator (Allen et al., 2010; Carleton, 2011; Frick & Drucker, 2011), perhaps partly because KWs are mobile and their clients often follow the KWs to new businesses (Acsente, 2010).

Motivation and retention of stylists. As KWs, stylists process, blend, and create new knowledge (Jui-Min et al., 2008) and are therefore critical to a salon's success (Grossman & Evans, 2001). Further, because stylists are KWs, retaining and motivating them involves ensuring they have meaningful and challenging work, receive opportunities to increase their knowledge and skills, have adequate resources, are recognized for their contributions, and work in a supportive environment (Carleton, 2011).

As in other industries, high-performing KWs in salons are often referred to as "talent" (Liu & Zhao, 2008). Li and Zhao stated that talent is unlikely to stay at a

company if they do not feel loyal to the company. The talent in salons are loyal to their organizations when they have the same goals as their organizations (Grossman & Evans, 2001; Liu & Zhao, 2008). Talented stylists enjoy the work involved in serving people, enjoy their colleagues, and have fun on the job, but they will not stay high performers if they are not adequately compensated in various ways (Grossman & Evans, 2001).

Stylists value interacting with clients, developing positive relationships with their supervisors, and working for a salon with the desired image (Hausknect et al., 2009). Salon owners should therefore be aware of their behavior toward stylists and create a feeling of belonging and collective identity in the salon (Analoui et al., 2013; Carleton, 2011; Hollman et al., 2011; Liu & Zhao, 2008). One way to create a culture of collective identity is to ask stylists what they need in terms of support and learning (Drucker, 1988; Jui-Min et al., 2008). Salon owners should also reinforce and reward professionalism and collaboration and deemphasize individual measures and rewards (Carleton, 2011).

Salons are highly social environments (Bagby, 2010; Grossman & Evans, 2001). Research shows that highly social work environments are more negatively affected by turnover, whether intentional or unintentional (gaggle) (Allen et al., 2010; Shaw, Delery, Jenkins, & Gupta, 1998; Shaw et al., 2005). The highly social environment may increase the likelihood of a gaggle walkout. Socially situated learning, however, is a strong motivator of retention, and researchers estimate as much as 80% of adult learning occurs outside the classroom, such as during on-the-job training and mentoring (Addleson, 2009; Carleton, 2011; Jui-Min et al., 2008; Sauve, 2007; Šebestová & Rylková, 2011).

Salon owners must ensure they treat stylists fairly, respect their knowledge, and allow autonomy (Acsente, 2010; Carleton, 2011; Davenport, 2011). Salon owners may

be tempted to separate a stylist from clients as a method of control—when clients are not loyal to one stylist, the stylist has less power and is less likely to walk out (Bove & Johnson, 2006; Cohen, 2010). Salon owners must also ensure that KWs' knowledge is not distorted or manipulated (Evans & McKinley, 2011).

For example, if a salon owner prompted a highly talented stylist to share his or her tacit knowledge with the organization, the owner must ensure the knowledge is not used against the stylist, either socially or financially. When the stylist shares tacit knowledge, the stylist's power decreases; therefore, the salon is enriched at the cost of the stylist. Unfair and unethical behavior often demotivates KWs and causes them to be less effective, which ultimately will hurt the salon (Carleton, 2011). Further, inappropriate managerial behavior might sow discontent and trigger the stylist to leave, which may lead to a gaggle walkout of other stylists and their clients (Kirby, 2011; Sarfati, 2011).

A critical component in retaining knowledge-worker stylists is to provide regular opportunities for professional development; failure to provide such opportunities may lead to turnover, either in the form of a gaggle or a slow drain of talent (Baker, 2010; Kirby, 2011; Minifie & Otto, 2011). According to Ford (2012), many owners provide in-salon training; however 83.9% of salon stylists have also attended outside training or trade shows within the past two years. Providing training opportunities helps stylists develop relationships with clients as the stylists explain to their clients the new technique and how the stylists learned the techniques (Crow, 2009).

Relationships between stylists and customers can bring steady business to the salon, though the relationships may also contribute to stylist mobility (Acsente, 2010). According to Jui-Min et al. (2008), salon owners should design training processes that

allow specialization as well as standardization, accounting for individual differences in aptitude. Learning differences might be further enhanced in a salon if trainers used apprenticeships, mentoring, modeling, simulations, and social interactions (Jui-Min et al., 2008).

As previously mentioned, income is not the only motivating factor for KWs (Allen et al., 2010; Caddy, 2007; Hausknect et al., 2009; Grossman & Evans, 2001), but it does have an effect on stylists' job satisfaction and motivation to stay at a salon (Minifie & Otto, 2011). Brooks and Smith (2009) reported that some hairdressers earn more than lawyers and that these hairdressers consider pay an indication of their talent.

Minifie and Otto (2011) found that when all stylists are paid hourly wages and provided with regular paid training in a team environment, stylists do not compete for clients and are less likely to leave a salon. It is also possible that the hourly pay hindered the development of relationships between the stylists, which in turn might have hindered the stylists from leaving (Sarfati, 2011).

Though income and, to a greater degree, training may be important motivators, salon owners should also seek to understand stylists' other motivations and aspirations. Industry survey results reflect many stylists aspire to enter competitions and to become salon owners (Lewis-Orr, 2013). Understanding these motivations may help salon owners assist stylists in pursuing these goals while also benefiting the salon.

In addition to applying strategies to prevent the likelihood of walkouts, a salon owner might be able to anticipate the likelihood of a walkout by assessing the stylists' job satisfaction and comparing the salon's turnover rate with the turnover rate of the closest competitor (Allen et al., 2010; Hausknect et al., 2009; Huang, 2011; Kirby 2011).

Emotional Intelligence

Researchers have reported that emotional intelligence (EI) and emotional quotient (EQ) are social skills with significant effects on every aspect of personal and professional lives (Darabi, 2012; Lopez-Zafra et al., 2012; Nowack, 2012). EI has become popular as an alternative view of organizational and personal behavior (Ashkanasy, 2002; Goleman, 1995). According to Nazari and Emami (2012), EI is an important consideration in human resources planning, talent retention, recruitment, and customer service management. Cooper and Sawaf (1998) suggested emotions and feelings are an essential tool for insightful decision making. The emotional state of leaders affects the leaders' companies because emotions are contagious and team members take cues from the team leader (Goleman, 2002; Guillén & Florent-Treacy, 2011; Rosete & Ciarrochi, 2005). Goleman (2002) stated that group EI is the aggregation of all team members' EIs.

History of EI and EQ. EI and EQ are similar concepts that have been discussed for centuries but that have only recently been studied scientifically (Nazari & Emami, 2012). Chopra and Kanji (2010) suggested that ancient Greeks were the first to write about EI. Many scholars point out that Darwin considered emotions important aspects in the evolution of the species (Chopra & Kanji, 2010; Darabi, 2012; Nazari & Emami, 2012). As Maulding (2002) explained, however, most scholars claim EI originated with Thorndike's theory of social intelligence.

In 1920, Thorndike defined *social intelligence* as the ability for a person to act wisely in social situations. This definition was hard to prove scientifically, and the theory languished (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005; Darabi, 2012; Klem, 2008). Current trends in EI began in 1990, when Salovey and Mayer (1990) published an article delineating the basic

constructs of EI as the abilities to understand emotions in oneself, to understand emotions in others, and to manage these perceived emotions (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005). Soon after Salovey and Mayer's article was printed, Goleman (1995) published a book on his perspective of EI and succeeded in popularizing the concept (Araujo & Taylor, 2012). Bar-On (1997) soon after modified the concept and renamed the well-being measurement as EQ.

The three theories of EI are similar, but each has its own measurements. Salovey and Mayer (1990) believed EI was a form of pure intelligence. They developed an independent test regarding the four EI abilities: self-awareness, emotional self-management, empathy, and relationship management or social skills (Nazari & Emami, 2012; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Goleman's (1995) theory, the most popular stream of EI (Araujo & Taylor, 2012), included a five-branch, self-reporting measurement of self-awareness, emotional management, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Bar-On (1997) developed a self-reporting tool based on his concept of EQ. The three theories are discussed in more detail below.

EI according to Salovey and Mayer. Salovey and Mayer (1990) defined *EI* as, "The ability to perceive emotion, integrate emotion to facilitate thought, understand emotion and to regulate emotions to promote personal growth" (Chopra & Kanji, 2010, p. 975). Salovey and Mayer developed a performance-based test to evaluate a person's EI ability in the areas of self-awareness, emotional self-management, empathy, and relationship skills (Chopra & Kanji, 2010).

Self-awareness is a person's perceptions of emotion in himself or herself and in others (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Emotional self-management

regards an individual's ability to assimilate his or her self-awareness into conscious thought. Empathy is the understanding of emotions and how they operate in the environment. Social skills regard the ability to manage and regulate an individual's emotions and the emotions of others (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005; Chopra & Kanji, 2010; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Because Salovey and Mayer's measurement of EI is performance based, as opposed to self-reported, their approach is considered the easiest to defend scientifically (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005). Though Salovey and Mayer's approach is the most scientific, Goleman's approach is the most popular (Araujo & Taylor, 2012).

EI according to Goleman. Goleman's (1995) definition of *EI* is considered a mixed model and therefore more pragmatic and business based. Goleman's model includes five constructs: self-awareness, self-regulation, social skills, empathy, and motivation. Self-awareness involves an individual knowing his or her emotional strengths and weaknesses. Self-regulation consists of controlling or redirecting disruptive impulses and adapting to changing circumstances (Goleman, 1995, 2002). Social skills are used to move relationships and people in a desired direction. Empathy consists of considering others' feelings when making decisions. Motivation involves being driven to achieve (Goleman, 1995, 2002).

Goleman claimed that EI is more important than IQ in determining job success (Donohue & Louisa, n.d.; Goleman, 1995). According to Goleman, most leaders at high levels of business have similar IQs and therefore success is more attributable to an above-average EI than cognitive skills. If an individual has a low EI, he or she will be at a disadvantage as he or she attempts to climb the corporate ladder.

According to Goleman (1995), many individuals with exceptional EI have innate abilities, but most people have average EI. Cherniss and Adler (2000) noted that EI is not fixed genetically or in early childhood. As people grow older, they seem to develop greater EI. Additionally, team-based learning appears to be an effective way of improving a team's EI (Clarke, 2010).

EQ according to Bar-On. Bar-On's (1997) concept of EQ is also a mixed model of abilities and traits. Bar-On considered EQ as an individual's ability to effectively understand his or her own and others' emotions while relating and adapting to people and coping with changes in the environment. Bar-On recognized that an individual's innate abilities in EQ develop over time, and he noted that EQ and IQ equally contribute to one's general intelligence. Bar-On measured EQ with a self-reporting survey that assesses social and emotional competence.

Critiques of EI models. EI and EQ (which are used interchangeably in this subsection) are popular in the business community but have been more difficult to prove scientifically (Tucker, Sojka, Barone, & McCarthy, 2000). Goleman's and Bar-On's tests are self-reporting and therefore lack validity and are subject to faking (Nazari & Emami, 2012). Salovey and Mayer's model of EI is the most defensible because the model is performance based (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005).

Locke (2005) considered the assumptions of EI to be incorrect, stating that EI is an oxymoron. Landy (2005) presented three general issues with EI. First, EI is lacking in scientific scrutiny (Landy, 2005). Second, EI is too rooted in social intelligence, which Landy believed discredited the concept. Third, EI research is generally weak in design and lacks validity (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005; Landy, 2005).

Lindebaum (2009) contended that institutional EI development as advocated in Goleman's books is ineffective; Lindebaum did, however, advocate for individual EI improvements. Nowack (2012) noted that some associations between EI and productivity are negative; for instance, research shows that a negative relationship exists between EI and employee performance when social and emotional competence are not highly related to the job.

Cote, DeCelles, McCarthy, and Hideg (2011) presented a unique critique of EI, contending that the definition of *EI* is biased toward positive, prosocial behavior and that having high EI is desirable. For instance, Goleman (2002) claimed 80% to 90% of the abilities and skills that separate average leaders and outstanding leaders are related to EI. If this assertion is true, hiring managers and human resource personnel should use EI assessments to identify and hire individuals with high EI (Cote et al., 2011). Cote et al., however, noted two studies in which bullies and sociopaths scored high on EI assessments.

As Cote et al. noted, "brilliant *emotional saints* are benefited by their knowledge of emotional regulation to behave more pro-socially, and at the same time, *evil emotional geniuses* benefit from this same knowledge to perform more interpersonal-deviant actions" (2011, p. 106). EI has also been criticized for being culture dependent. For example, Ghorbani, Bing, Watson, Davidson, and Mack (2002) found EI varied by culture. These critiques aside, EI is a useful tool for understanding and predicting behavior in individuals in social situations (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005).

Team EI. Just as EI can assist in understanding and predicting individual behavior, EI also can be used to understand team behavior in the salon industry. In the

context of teams, EI affects interactions between team members that enable the team to be productive and choose constructive methods of handling conflict (Mote, 2012). A team's EI level may be higher than the average EI of individual team members' EI scores (Naseer, Chishti, Rahman, & Jumani, 2011). Research indicates that high team EI is important in developing a cooperative culture and encouraging team members to perform with maximum effort (Gardenswartz, Cherbosque, & Rowe, 2009; Jordan, & Lawrence, 2009; Nazari & Emami, 2012).

Jordan and Troth (2004) and Stough, Saklofske, and Parker (2009) presented evidence that teams with members who have higher EI perform better than teams with member who have lower EI. Chang et al. (2012) found that a team's performance may also improve if the leader has a high EI. Teams with high EI may be more likely to use emotions in functional ways (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2000). These teams may have more effective communication skills and are more likely to develop interteam trust, which fosters collaboration, creativity, and high performance (Barczak et al., 2010; Chang et al., 2012).

Additionally, these teams may be more capable of making social adjustments based on the perceived emotional culture of the team. When team members have higher EI scores, they are also more likely to apply creative strategies to resolve conflicts and complex problems (Jordan & Troth, 2004; Sadri, 2012).

Though studies indicate high team EI is associated with increased performance, the effects of EI on team performance are not linier and are complex (Farh et al., 2012; Feyerherm & Rice, 2002; Nowack, 2012). Othman, Abdulla, and Ahmad (2009) reported mixed results regarding EI and positive work drive. The researchers found that teams

with average positive work drive performed at higher levels than teams with high EI and high work drive (Othman et al., 2009).

Feyerherm and Rice (2002) found a negative correlation between team leader EI and team productivity but found a strong positive correlation between team EI and productivity in the customer service environment, such as in salons. Nowack (2012) concluded that much is still unknown about how individual and team EI affect job performance.

Emotional Contagion

The term *emotional contagion* refers to the emotional atmosphere or culture of an organization. The concept was first used in the social sciences in Le Bon's (1903) book *The Crowd*. Le Bon believed individuals in a crowd would forego personal interests and give into the collective emotion if the emotion were intense (Borch, 2009; Levy & Nail, 1993). Since Le Bon introduced the term, the concept has been defined in various ways. Blumer (1951) defined the term as "the relatively rapid, unwitting, and non-rational dissemination of a mood, impulse, or form of conduct" (p. 176). Sullins (1991) defined *emotional contagion* as "the process by which individuals seem to 'catch' the mood of others around them" (p. 166).

Hill, Rand, Nowak, and Christakis (2010) stated emotional contagion is a unique type of social influence that spreads from one person to another person or group in a social context where the individual or group does not perceive intentional manipulation or leadership from the initiator of the influence. As these definitions indicate, emotional contagion is a group phenomenon because more than one individual is required for the contagion to spread (Barsade, 2002). Emotional contagion is often mixed with other

types of contagion, such as behavioral and social contagion (Barsade, 2002; Levy & Nail, 1993; Sullins, 1991).

Emotional contagion can result in a common mood. *Mood* can be defined as "transient feeling states that occur at specific times and situations: they are instant reactions to 'real time' happenings by individuals" (Huang & Dai, 2010, p. 69). Emotions are responses to situations and are more stable than moods (Huang & Dai, 2010). Research shows that the interpersonal relationships of service workers, such as salon employees, are connected with the workers' everyday emotional experiences and interactions with coworkers and clients (Hill & Bradley, 2010).

Hill and Bradley (2010) conducted an ethnographic examination of salon workers and found that salon workers can ascertain each other's moods because they spend considerable time together in proximity. When stylists are cooperative, friendly, and supportive, the stylists develop solidarity and emotional energy. Emotional energy decreases the effort, or emotional labor, required to express organizationally desired emotions, such as happiness and cheer (Huang & Dai, 2010; Hill & Bradley, 2010).

Emotional contagion can be positive or negative. Emotional contagion can be relatively harmless (e.g., influencing the actions of a high school clique) or malignant (e.g., influencing gang members to murder someone of another gang) (Papachristos, 2006). Traditionally emotional contagion is considered symmetrical; that is, positive moods and emotions produce positive results, and negative moods and emotions generate negative results (Lindebaum & Fielden, 2011; Lindebaum, Jordan, & Dasborough, 2013).

As an example, Bono and Llies (2006) found a positive association between a charismatic leader and the followers' moods. The researchers further discovered that a

leader's positive emotional expressions and followers' moods have a positive impact on the leader's perceived effectiveness. In terms of emotional contagion, the charismatic leader's positive mood spread like a contagion to the followers, improving their moods and their perceptions about the leader (Bono & Llies, 2006). Huang and Dai (2010) found that moods and emotions transfer not only to employees but also to customers. Likewise, customers' feelings and emotions can transfer to employees. When both customers and employees feel happy, employees' emotional labor greatly decreases (Huang & Dai, 2010).

Recent research shows that emotional contagion can be positive or negative and produce positive or negative results, depending on the context of the emotion. Gray, Ishii, and Ambady (2011) found that sadness, generally considered a negative emotion can result in group members feeling more connected. For example, many people felt sadness and despair because of the category five tornado that caused death and destruction in Moore, Oklahoma, in May 2013. However, the sorrow brought together community members as well as individuals from other parts of the nation who assisted tornado victims (Davis, 2013).

Peker and Tekcan (2009) and Storbeck and Clore (2005) reported that sadness can increase group members' accuracy, whereas happiness and group synergy can produce inaccurate memories. Lindebaum and Fielden (2011) studied leaders of construction projects and concluded that angry leaders can rally workers to put forth the extra effort needed to complete projects on time. In contrast to the negative emotions that lead to positive outcomes, Ali et al. (2011) identified positive emotions that lead to negative

outcomes. The researchers analyzed positive emotional contagion among adolescents and found that emotional contagion is a predictor of marijuana use (Ali et al., 2011).

A subset of emotional contagion is disinhibitory contagion. Levy and Nail (1993) defined *disinhibitory contagion* as a type of emotional contagion in which an individual feels reduced constraints to adhere to social norms as a result observing the influencer perform the nonstandard behavior. A mob is the most obvious example of disinhibitory contagion (Barsade, 2002; Le Bon, 1903; Levy & Nail, 1993).

Similar to disinhibitory contagion is context-driven goal contagion. Leander and Shah (2013) described goal contagion as the unconscious catching of another person's goals. In a salon setting, the goal of one stylist might be to consolidate clients in preparation for leaving the salon. Other stylists might also consolidate clients without realizing the first stylist was consolidating as part of the goal of leaving the salon. When the first stylists leave, a combination of disinhibitory contagion and goal contagion might precipitate a gaggle because the other stylists are unintentionally prepared to leave (Barsade, 2002; Leander & Shah, 2013).

Summary

Chapter 2 contained a review of the literature related to the current study. Topics included historical and current perspectives of cosmetology and the salon industry, stylist training and certification, and the special relationship between stylists and clients. The chapter also contained discussion of walkouts, including general labor walkouts, student walkouts, and salon walkouts. Also discussed were knowledge, KWs, and KW management, followed by information on EI and emotional contagion.

Hairstyling can be traced back to ancient Egypt. Although hairstyling has always involved a knowledge-based approach, the details of hairstyling and the salon business have changed over the centuries (Willett, 2010). Stylists may be considered KWs because of their professional specialties, their specialized activities, and their high level of creativity (Šajeva, 2007).

Stylists develop their specialized skill sets through significant precertification training, continual learning, and practice during their careers (Acsente, 2010; Caddy, 2007; Davenport, 2011; Ford, 2012; Huang, 2011; Mustapa & Daud, 2012; Reinhardt et al., 2011; Šajeva, 2007; TDLR, 2012a; Willett, 2012). Stylists are also KWs because the knowledge stylists are a capital investment, not an expenditure (Acsente, 2010; Caddy, 2007; Carter & Scarbrough, 2001; Šajeva, 2007; Toit et al., 2011). As KWs, stylists own their unique knowledge and can transfer their knowledge to whatever salons they choose to work at (Acsente, 2010; Carter & Scarbrough, 2001; Chen, 2010; Drucker, 1999).

Because of stylists' KW status, managers should not supervise or endeavor to motivate stylists in the same way as general laborers. For example, to motivate high performance and retention among stylists, managers need to develop strong, positive relationships with the stylists (Analoui et al., 2013; Frick & Drucker, 2011; Hollman et al., 2011; Yukl & Kanuk, 1979).

When salon owners do not manage their stylists appropriately, the stylists may gaggle. When stylists gaggle, their clients often follow, which leaves the salon without valuable talent and clients. Consequently, the business may fail (Allen et al., 2010; Carleton, 2011; Chen, 2010; Hausknect et al., 2009; Huang, 2011; Kirby, 2012; Shaw et al., 1998; Shaw et al., 2005). Though motivating and retaining stylists are critical in

maintaining organizational sustainability (Carleton, 2011), prior to the current study, researchers had not explored the perceptions and experiences of salon owners, workers, and booth renters to understand the specific factors contributing to salon walkouts and how salon walkouts might be avoided. The current study begins to fill this gap in the literature.

Chapter 3 contains a detailed presentation of the method that will be used to conduct the current study. The research method and design are discussed, followed by information on the study population, participants, and sampling method. The informed consent process and considerations regarding confidentiality will also be presented. The chapter also includes a description of the data collection method, the steps that will be taken to ensure validity, and the data analysis method.

Chapter 3

Method

The purpose of this qualitative, interpretive phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of salon owners, employees, and IBRs before, during, and after gaggle walkouts. Salon owners fear mass employee walkouts (gaggles) which may bankrupt the salon (Allen et al., 2010; Carleton, 2011; Chen, 2010; Hausknect et al., 2009; Huang, 2011; Kirby, 2012; Shaw et al., 1998; Shaw et al., 2005). Chapter 3 contains the details of the methodology that will be used in the study.

Whittemore and Melkus (2008) explained that selecting a research method is an important aspect of the planning and design stage because the methodological decisions will affect "the overall quality of the study and the generalizability of results" (p. 204). In this chapter, the research method and design, including their suitability for the study will be presented, followed by discussion of the study population, sampling, and sampling method. Also discussed in the chapter are informed consent and methods to ensure the participants' confidentiality. Chapter 3 also includes a description of the data collection process, the pilot study, measures that will be taken to enhance qualitative validity, and the data analysis process.

Research Method

Research method. The research method most appropriate for a study depends on the nature of the study and what will be studied (Amaratunga, Baldry, Sarshar, & Newton, 2002; Neuman, 2006). The qualitative method is suitable for research on subjects about which little is known (Shank, 2006). The current study was groundbreaking because researchers had not previously studied the lived experiences of

participants in salon gaggle walkouts. In addition, treating stylists as KWs was unique. The qualitative method was therefore appropriate for this study.

The qualitative method is also suitable when the causes of a phenomenon cannot be identified through using the quantitative method and quantitative research designs (Rusinova et al., 2009). Using the quantitative method in the current study would not have led to an in-depth understanding of why salon owners, workers, and booth renters believe walkouts occur. As Rusinova et al. (2009) explained, using the qualitative method is appropriate for discovering why an event happens, which aligns with the intent of the current study.

Creswell (2008) noted that the quantitative method is best suited for examining and uncovering explanations or trends in data. Because data on salon walkouts had not previously been collected, explaining and identifying trends in the data were not options in the current study. Further, in quantitative studies, the goal is to collect and statistically analyze objective, numeral data to test hypotheses (Neuman, 2006; Rusinova et al., 2009; Shank, 2006). In the current study, in-depth textual data were collected from participants who shared their subjective perspectives and lived experiences. The data were phenomenologically and iteratively analyzed to identify and interpret themes that relate to the central phenomenon (Crist & Tanner, 2003). These characteristics align with the qualitative method (Creswell, 2008).

Research design. Of the various qualitative designs, the interpretive phenomenological design was the best design for the study. Interpretive phenomenology "aims to achieve understanding through interpretation and adopts a process that clarifies the phenomenon of interest in its context" (Dowling & Cooney, 2012, p. 25). The

objective of phenomenology is to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of individuals regarding a central phenomenon (Shank, 2006). Phenomenologists attempt to understand actors in a social situation from the actors' ontological views (Suddaby, 2006), or as Groenewald (2004) stated, to understand individuals on their own terms.

The phenomenological concepts of *Dassin* (being there) and *In-der-Weld-stein* (being in the world) are fundamental to understanding the meanings of individuals' lived experiences and perceptions (Papadopoulou & Birch, 2009; Smythe, Ironside, Sims, Swenson, & Spence, 2008). The phenomenological design was appropriate for the study because the intent was to understand the lived experiences and perceptions of salon owners, employees, and booth renters regarding the phenomenon of salon walkouts (Groenewald, 2004; Kenny, 2012; Moustakas, 1994; Shank, 2006).

In phenomenological research, the researcher approaches the study with an open mind and flexibility, going where the data leads (Kleiman, 2004). Data collection in phenomenological research often consists of semistructured interviews with open-ended questions. Using this data collection method allows study participants to provide rich, in-depth, extensive information regarding their experiences and perceptions, without being restricted, minimizing both researcher and contextual bias (Christensen, Johnson, & Turner, 2010; Miles et al., 2013; Smythe et al., 2008). Therefore, data collection in the current study consisted of semistructured interviews with open-ended questions, which assisted in accomplishing the purpose of the study.

Two common approaches to phenomenology are descriptive phenomenology and interpretive phenomenology (Connelly, 2010). Descriptive phenomenology is based on Husserl's assertion that researchers must bracket out their preconceptions and biases so

that the participants' experiences and perceptions can be viewed with fresh eyes (Balls, 2009; Connelly, 2010; Kenny, 2012; Moustakas, 1994).

In contrast to Husserl, Heidegger argued that researchers cannot bracket their biases and presuppositions "because they are a part of the person; the researcher can only be aware of them and any effect they have on the study" (Connelly, 2010, p. 127). The decision to bracket one's biases or acknowledge and use prior and learned knowledge is a critical difference between descriptive and interpretive phenomenology (Dowling, 2012). Finley (2013) and Tuohy et al. (2013) considered this *phenomenological attitude* the central factor in phenomenological research. This critical difference affects the interviews and analysis of the interviews.

Husserl assumed that reduction required removing oneself completely from the phenomenon in order to more fully understand the true nature of the phenomenon. In essence, one must be above the phenomenon looking down objectively at the phenomenon (Giorgi, 2012). Descriptive phenomenologist, therefore, endeavor to describe a phenomenon in purity (Dowling, 2012).

Heidegger understood that the researcher is already embedded in the world of meaning (Finley, 2013, Smythe et al., 2008). To further demonstrate the point, the understanding of the person experiencing the phenomenon is also colored by his or her worldview (Miles et al., 2013). "Understanding occurs when researcher and the participants meet through dialogue and openness" (Finley, 2013).

Describing, interpreting, and therefore understanding a phenomenon requires active thinking and the use of prior knowledge (Smythe et al., 2008). For example, the researcher learns as he or she experiences and describes the phenomenon, so bracketing is

illogical. If one chooses to fully describe a phenomenon, one needs to learn about the phenomenon as the nature of the phenomenon is discovered (Rapport & Wainwright, 2006). Heidegger's interpretive approach to phenomenology will be used in the current study because the intent is to focus on, describe, deeply understand, and interpret the study participants' experiences and perceptions (Ivey, 2013; Tuohy et al., 2013). This iterative approach may require follow-up interviews as new knowledge is discovered.

Other qualitative research designs considered include grounded theory, case study, and ethnography. The grounded theory design involves developing a theory to explain a phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). The focus is on understanding the unique lived experiences and perceptions of individuals, making the design unsuitable for the current study. In addition, no theory was developed.

"The all-encompassing feature of a case study is it intense focus on a single phenomenon within its real-life context" (Yin, 1999, p. 1211). A case study can use qualitative or quantitative methods (Yin, 1981). Data may be collected through observations, interviews, and supporting documentation (Creswell, 2008; Sangster-Gormley, 2013; Yin, 2009). Yin (2009) listed three types of case studies: descriptive, explanatory, and exploratory. According to Taylor (2013), effective case study research explores complex situations from multiple sources, in real life setting, and is contextual based.

> The purpose of the case study is to provide an in-depth *description, exploration, or explanation* of a particular system or phenomenon through quantitative and/or qualitative data collection and analysis. The case study aims to generate or test a

theory in its particular, social, cultural, and historical context. (Lee, Mishna, & Brennenstuhl, 2010, p. 682)

Even though the various case-study methods and descriptive phenomenology may rely on lived experiences of the individuals, their foci are different. In a case study, whether intrinsic, multi-case, or instrumental, the focus is on the collective experiences of the bounded system (Olding, Gavin, & Coe, 2014). Also, case studies are interested in the uniqueness of an individual, an institution, or setting (Olding et al., 2014 Salkind, 2003). In other words, if the emphasis of this study was a walkout in a unique salon (a single case study) or several salons (a multi case study), the focus would be on the individual experiences of the participants in the context of that salon or series of salons.

In this study, the salon was merely the physical place where the gaggle occurred. Participants were from different salons. The only connecting factor was that the participants experienced gaggles. In addition, the nature of a gaggle, in which the employees and IBRs scatter to multiple subsequent salons, made a case study of a particular salon problematic. Furthermore, the salon that experiences the gaggle often goes out of business.

A case study might be a suitable follow-up study because the gaggle is often unexpected. If a researcher becomes aware of an impending gaggle, a single salon case study might be conducted to further explain a gaggle in the context of that unique salon. With such a case study, demographic information about the salon might make a mixed method appropriate. The case study design, therefore, was not selected for the study because the study was not restricted to a particular walkout, a particular salon, or another bounded system.

The ethnographic design is used to "understand events, behaviors, and the cultural meaning human beings in a specific culture use to interpret their experiences" (Aldiabat & Le Navenec, 2011, p. 6). The ethnographic design was not suitable for the study because salon owners, employees, and booth renters are not from the same cultural group, though they do share several characteristics. Further, this design was not appropriate because the focus of the study was on understanding the gaggle phenomenon, not the culture surrounding the phenomenon.

Population and Sample

The population for the study consisted of salon owners, employees, and IBRs in the Dallas and Fort Worth metropolitan area who had experienced gaggle walkouts in salons. These three categories of workers are often mixed. For example, a salon owner usually works as a stylist in his or her salon. The salon owner likely began his or her career as an employee. Current employees and IBRs might have owned a salon previously. The deciding factor for this study was what role the participant was in when the gaggle occurred. Sampling members from this population resulted in rich, in-depth data regarding the central phenomenon. Though the population consisted of three categories of people—salon owners, employees, and booth renters—the members of the groups have common characteristics. For example, 95% of salon employees and booth renters in the United States are female (Ford, 2012; PayScale, 2012; U.S. Census Bureau 2012). All members of each group have been state certified, and most members have not completed higher education (TDLR, 2012b). Further, the members of the study population often move between categories during their careers. For instance, most salon owners have been employees, IBRs, or both. Salon owners who sell their salons often

stay at the salons to work as employees or booth renters (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012; U.S. Census Bureau, 2012).

Morrow (2005) contended that the sample size in qualitative research can be small because of the variety and depth of the data collected through interviews. Although the sample size in qualitative research is typically be smaller than in quantitative research, participants in qualitative research are studied in much more depth (Connelly, 2010). Creswell (2008) and Leedy and Ormrod (2010) asserted that a sample size of five to 25 participants is suitable for qualitative research.

The study sample consisted of 10 members of the study population. The exact number was determined based on when data saturation occurred (Newman, 2006). Data saturation was achieved when collecting data from additional participants did not lead to additional information (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010; Morrow, 2005).

As is appropriate in qualitative research, purposive sampling was used to recruit participants for the study (Groenewald, 2004; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010; Neuman, 2006; Shank, 2006; Whittemore & Melkus, 2008). Purposive sampling involves selecting participants who have experienced the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2008; Polkinghorne, 2005).

The sampling process began by contacting the owner of a salon academy, which is located in the Dallas and Fort Worth metropolitan area. The owner of the academy was previously a salon owner and is a point of contact for many of the salons in the area. The owner was asked to identify individuals who met the participation criteria and to indicate how to contact the individuals. If this technique had not been successful in identifying and obtaining contact information for potential participants, the researcher

would have contacted an acquaintance who was formerly a salon owner and had experienced a walkout.

After a few potential participants were identified, they were sent a letter introducing the study and inviting the individuals to participate (see Appendix A). After obtaining one participant, snowball sampling was used to obtain additional participants. Snowball sampling involved asking participants to identify others who met the participation criteria and who might agree to participate in the study (Groenewald, 2004; Watson & de Bruin, 2007). For this study, three participants had experienced a gaggle walkout as a salon owner, seven as an employee, and five as an IBR. Additionally, one male member of the study population was recruited to mirror the gender distribution in the salon industry (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012).

Informed Consent

Each participant signed a consent form (see Appendix B) before participating in the study. The intent of the consent form was to ensure the participants understood their rights in the study and agreed to voluntarily participate. Orb, Eisenhauer, and Wynaden (2000) noted that embedded in research is a power relationship between the researcher and the participants; the informed consent form helps equalize the relationship. Groenewald (2004) suggested the consent form should contain a brief description of the research goals, indicate the time commitment for participating, and identify any remuneration provided for participating in the study.

To align with Groenewald's recommendations, the consent form for this study included the purpose of the study, indicate data would be collected through a 60- to 90-minute audio recorded interview, and explained that rewards would not be provided. The

consent form also indicated that participation was voluntary and that no risks were associated with participating in the study. Further, the form indicated that a participant could withdraw at any time and for any reason without penalty:

- The participant could withdraw before the study by e-mailing confirmation of his or her withdrawal.
- The participant could withdraw during the study without any penalty by saying, "Stop, I do not want to continue."
- The participant could withdraw from the study up to 14 days after the interview. Analysis would not begin until after 14 days. The participant could call or e-mail the researcher about the desire to withdraw, and a confirmation e-mail would be sent to the participants. All transcripts and recordings would immediately be destroyed.

Additionally, the consent form included assurance that the participants' confidentiality would be maintained.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an essential aspect of research (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Confidentiality is particularly important in qualitative research because the participants are often asked personal questions (Luckerhoff & Guillemette, 2011). The participants in the current study were asked to share their experiences and perceptions regarding the sensitive subject of salon walkouts. The participants were also asked to share information regarding their ages and incomes.

Several methods were used in the current study to protect the participants' confidentiality. As one method, each participant was assigned a pseudonym that was

used instead of the participant's name throughout the study and when reporting the results (Creswell, 2008; Groenewald, 2004). For the female participants, the pseudonym consisted of an unrelated female name, followed by *O* (owner), *E* (employee), or *B* (IBR). The male participant's pseudonyms followed the same format, but a male name was used. Del Rio-Roberts (2011) suggested using gender-based pseudonyms to help identify whether responses differed based on gender.

Additional precautions were needed because members of the salon industry are a tight-knit community. If participants mentioned other industry members or salons in their interviews, the names could be tied back to the participants and thereby compromise their confidentiality. Consequently, when participants mentioned any names or other revealing information during their interviews, the information was not included in the interview transcripts (Orb et al., 2000; Wolf, Paradise, & Caga-anan, 2008).

Participant confidentiality was also maintained through securing all study materials before, during, and after the study. All physical materials (e.g., informed consent forms and interview audio recordings) were secured in a locked, fireproof safe in the researcher's office. All electronic files were secured in an encrypted, password-protected folder on the researcher's computer. The study materials will be stored for 3 years following completion of the study, after which the materials will be destroyed.

Data Collection Process

After an individual signed the informed consent form, he or she was scheduled for an interview at a time convenient for the participant. At the beginning of the interview, the participant was thanked for participating in the study. Small talk was used to build rapport and to help the participant feel at ease. It was assumed that building rapport and

helping the participant feel comfortable would encourage the participant to answer the interview questions honestly and in detail (Blagden & Pemberton, 2010). Next, the purpose of the study and the informed consent form were reviewed (see Appendix C), and the participant had the opportunity to ask any questions.

Once any questions were answered, the participant was asked to complete the demographic questionnaire (see Appendix D). Collecting the demographic information led to a greater understanding of the participants. A summary of the demographic data was presented in Chapter 4 to help other researchers determine whether the study findings are transferable to other groups (Trochim, 2006).

Following the demographic questionnaire, the semistructured interview began. The semistructured format was appropriate for the study because the format enabled flexibility to explore the participants' unique experiences (Pathak & Intratat, 2012). Because the instrument was the researcher, Christensen et al. (2010) recommended the researcher constantly monitor himself or herself for signs of bias. Each interview consisted of 6 or 7 open-ended questions, depending on whether the subject was an owner, employee, or IBR (see Appendix D). Moustakas (1994) reported that open-ended questions should be broad so the questions will not lead participants to provide a certain response. The interview questions in this study were designed to encourage the participants to describe vividly and in detail their unique experiences and perceptions regarding salon walkouts. In addition to the main questions, subquestions and probing questions were used to elicit additional data and to clarify the participants' responses (Bowen, 2011).

The interview questions regarded the participants' perceptions and experiences before, during, and after a gaggle. The interview questions for salon owners were worded slightly differently from the questions for the salon employees and booth renters, to address the participants' different perspectives (e.g., salon employees knowing about an impending gaggle vs. salon owners not being aware of an impending gaggle).

To avoid faulty data and researcher bias, the questions were asked in a neutral, friendly manner so that the participants would feel comfortable answering the questions and would not be influenced to answer in a certain way (Powell, Feltis, & Hughes, 2011). The interview also avoided making comments that might have made the participants feel uncomfortable (Qu & Dumay, 2011).

A reflexive journal was maintained from the time of the proposal acceptance to the time of the dissertation publication. "A reflective diary should provide the rationale for decisions made, instincts, and personal challenges that the researcher experienced during research" (Houghton, 2013, p. 15). Reflexive journaling throughout the research phase also helped avoid contextual bias (Hale et al., 2007). The journal had the additional advantage of facilitating clarity in decisions and decision nodes. This clarity was enhanced by maintaining a decision trail by using NVivo 10 in the data analysis.

During the interviews, which lasted 30–50 minutes, notes were taken to record observations concerning the participants' vocal inflections (Creswell, 2008). The interviews were also audio recorded; following the interviews, the recordings were transcribed into Microsoft Word documents.

Pilot Study

Prior to beginning data collection, a pilot study was completed to test the interview protocol, demographic questionnaire, and interview questions. According to Neuman (2006) and Sproull (2004), a pilot study is the easiest method of ensuring the data collection procedures are congruent with the purpose of the study. Deal (2010) and Hardy, Allore, and Studenski (2009) suggested a pilot study is a particularly effective tool for examining whether the data collection instrument aligns with the study's research questions, design, and intended outcomes. Deal and Leedy and Ormrod (2010) added that a pilot study not only increases the likelihood of success in a qualitative study but also helps identify unintentional biases in interview questions. Biases can be identified through observing the participant's responses and reactions to the questions, as well as by asking the participant whether any questions seemed biased (Secomb & Smith, 2011).

In the current study, the interview protocol and questions were tested with an IBR who had experienced a walkout and had also been a salon owner and employee. The pilot test was conducted using the procedures designed for the main study. At the end of the interview, the pilot study participant was asked to provide feedback on the procedures, particularly on whether any interview questions should be revised, added, or deleted to ensure the questions would elicit the desired data regarding the participants' lived experiences and perceptions (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010; Shank, 2006; Wengraf, 2001). The data collection protocol, demographic questionnaire, and interview questions were revised based on the pilot study participant's feedback and the researcher's observations regarding the effectiveness of the pilot study.

Validity

In qualitative research, validity is discussed in terms of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Trochim, 2006). These concepts are elaborated upon in the following subsections.

Credibility. The term *credibility* relates to whether the findings of the study are believable from the perspectives of the participants (Trochim, 2006). To enhance the credibility in the current study, biases and preconceived notions were reflexively considered to avoid skewing the data collection, data analysis, and interpretations regarding the central phenomenon. This reflection helped ensure the focus remained on the participants' lived experiences and perceptions.

The interviews were conducted in a friendly, casual manner so the participants felt at ease providing honest, extensive responses to the interview questions (Blagden & Pemberton, 2010). Further, after the interview audio recordings were transcribed, the recordings and the transcriptions were compared to ensure the transcriptions were accurate. The participants were also asked to review their transcriptions to verify their experiences and perceptions were captured accurately (McConnell-Henry, Chapman, & Francis, 2011).

Dependability. Dependability involves accounting for the changes in the context in which the research is conducted (Trochim, 2006). Ensuring dependability in this study involved describing any changes that occur in the study setting; whether the changes influenced how the research was conducted; and if so, how (Trochim, 2006).

Confirmability. A study is confirmable to the degree that other people can confirm or corroborate the findings (Trochim, 2006; Sbaraini, Carter, Evans, &

Blinkhorn, 2011). One method of enhancing confirmability is to use triangulation. Various types of triangulation are available, such as comparing data from various sources (Morse, 2006; Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002; Neuman, 2006; Rubin, 2007). Creswell (2008) suggested that comparing the data and analysis results to other sources increases confidence in the accuracy of the study findings.

In the current study, data were collected from salon owners, employees, and booth renters. The data from these participants were compared. Then, the analysis results were compared to previous literature to identify how the results aligned with or contradicted past research (Creswell, 2008). Another type of triangulation used in the study was member checking. Prior to analyzing the data, the participants were asked to review their interview transcripts to ensure their experiences and perceptions were captured accurately. The participants were given the opportunity to clarify and make any changes needed (Creswell, 2008).

Transferability. Transferability is the degree to the findings of the study can be appropriately transferred, or applied, to other settings, groups, or times (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2012). The potential transferability of the results in this study were enhanced by meticulously documenting and describing the research methodology. Providing detailed information will enable individuals to determine whether the findings are applicable to other situations and groups (Trochim, 2006).

Data Analysis Process

After the interview audio recordings were transcribed and member checked, the data were analyzed. The goal of the analysis phase was to identify themes and uncover

the essences of the participants' experiences and perceptions regarding salon walkouts (Moustakas, 1994). To achieve this goal, a four-step analysis process was applied:

- Step 1: Identifying and isolating units of meaning in each interview transcript
- Step 2: Clustering units of meaning to identify themes in each interview transcript
- Step 3: Validating the units of meaning and the themes by reviewing the interview transcript and verifying the transcript supports the units of meaning
- Step 4: Reviewing the themes in each transcript to identify themes common among the transcripts and then preparing a composite summary that reflects "the context or 'horizon' from which the themes emerged" (Groenewald, 2004, p. 51).

This process is a modified version of the five-step process described by Groenewald (2004). Groenewald's suggested step of bracketing will not be used because bracketing is inappropriate for interpretive phenomenological research (Connelly, 2010). Rather than applying bracketing, prior to and throughout the analysis process the researcher (a) contemplated his knowledge and prior experiences, or preunderstandings, regarding the phenomenon and (b) maintained a reflexive journal (Christ & Tanner, 2003; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Finlay (2013) and Miles et al. (2013) pointed out that participants also relate their experiences through their unique worldviews. Using dialogue, openness, and careful listening, the participants and interviewer should be able

to reach common understanding of the lived experiences of the gaggle effect (Finley, 2013).

Heidegger employed the word *preunderstanding* to describe something already existing before someone seeks to understand it, such as the practices and language of a cultural group (Dowling & Cooney, 2012). As part of this process, the interview audio recordings, transcripts, and field notes were reviewed several times to become familiar with and develop a holistic perspective regarding each participant's lived experiences (Groenewald, 2004). Preunderstandings were continually reflected upon. Contemplating the preunderstandings and how they changed as additional interviews were reviewed helped ensure the focus remained on the participants' viewpoints (Finlay, 2013).

During the first step—identifying and isolating units of meaning—important words and phrases were extracted from each interview transcript. This process required considerable judgment regarding what words and phrases had important meanings regarding the central phenomenon. Once the units of meaning were identified, the units were clustered to develop themes (Creswell, 2008), which was the second step in Groenewald's (2004) analysis process.

NVivo 10 was used during this step. This software supported the data analysis process; via word count and mathematical algorithms; NVivo helped identify repeated words, phrases, and ideas (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011; Rocha-Pereira, 2012). NVivo 10, or any computer aided analysis, is not a substitute for human analysis (Groenewald, 2004). For instance, one word may have different meanings based on different contexts; the NVivo 10 results were refined through manually examining the nuances of meanings of words and phrases (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011).

During the third step, the units of meaning and the themes identified for each participant were compared to the participant's transcript to ensure the units and themes aligned with and were supported by the raw data (Groenewald, 2004). The fourth step involved reviewing the themes in each transcript to identify themes common to most or all participants. These themes were considered overarching themes regarding the central phenomenon (Groenewald, 2004). The analysis process was concluded by using the themes to prepare a composite summary of the essences of the participants' lived experiences and perceptions (Moustakas, 1994) regarding salon walkouts.

Groenewald's five-step process for understanding participants' lived experiences is linear; however, Crist and Tanner (2003) suggested that to determine meaning, the process should be less linear and more iterative. With interpretive phenomenology, analysis can begin after completion of the first interview (Crist & Tanner, 2003). The themes identified from analyzing the first few interviews may differ from the themes identified through analyzing the data from additional interviews. In such cases, all interview data should be analyzed again to determine whether the later themes are present in the initial interviews. If necessary, follow-up interviews are conducted to reach saturation.

An iterative approach is also essential for achieving the goal of interpretive phenomenology, which is to fuse the horizons (Lopez & Willis, 2004) of the participants and the researcher. According to Finlay (2012), the iterative analysis process includes embracing the phenomenological attitude, entering the lifeworld of each participant, dwelling and fusing the horizons of meanings, describing the phenomenon holistically, and integrating frames of reference (Finlay, 2012). In the current study, the four-step

analysis process was iterative, with the steps being repeated until saturation of meaning and understanding occurred. This cycle is displayed in Figure 2.

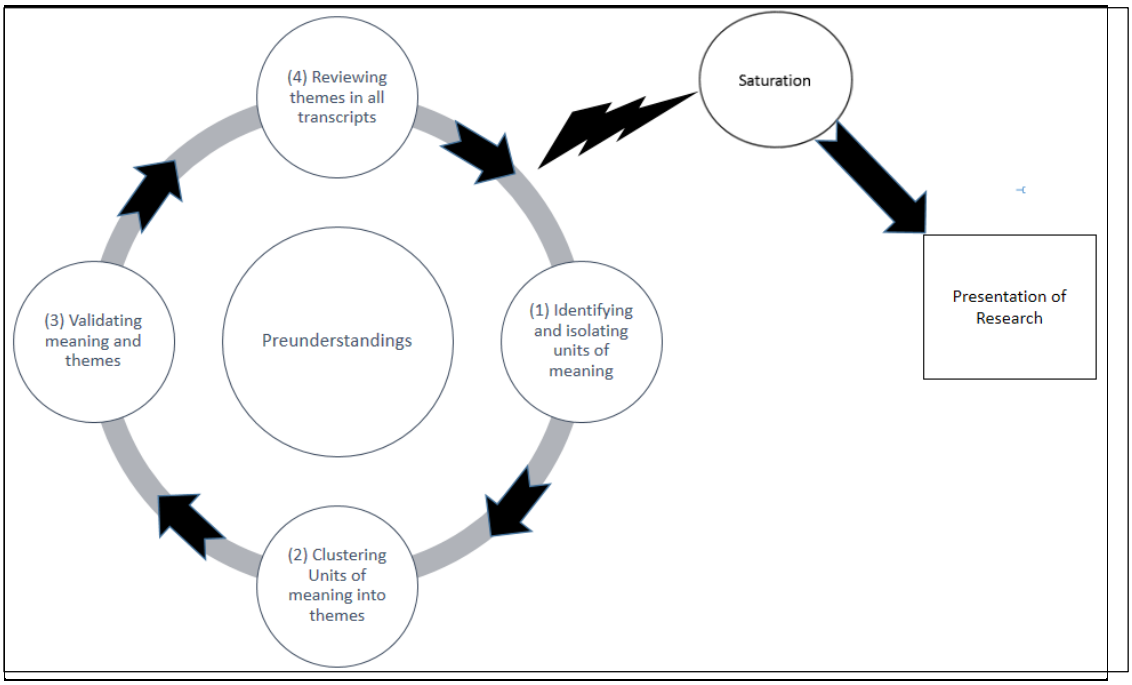

Figure 2. The iterative process for understanding and interpreting a phenomenon. The researcher reflects on any preunderstandings before and during the iterative process of describing and interpreting the lived experiences of the participants individually and as a group.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative, interpretive phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of salon owners, employees, and IBRs regarding gaggle walkouts. Chapter 3 contained an overview of the research methodology that will be used to accomplish the study's purpose. The research method and design were discussed,

and the rationale for selecting an interpretive phenomenological approach was presented. The qualitative method is suitable when little research exists on the topic that will be explored. The interpretive phenomenological design is appropriate for exploring the lived experiences and perceptions of individuals regarding a central phenomenon and interpreting the meanings behind the descriptions (Tuohy et al., 2013).

The study population, sample, and sampling method were also presented in the chapter. From the population of salon owners, employees, and booth renters in the Dallas and Fort Worth metropolitan area, 10 individuals were purposefully sampled for the study. The chapter also contained discussion of the informed consent process and the steps that were completed to protect the participants' confidentiality. The participants were assigned pseudonyms, any identifying information was removed from the interview data, and the study materials were stored in a locked safe and a password-protected computer folder.

Chapter 3 also contained discussion of the data collection method and the pilot study. Data were collected through a demographic questionnaire and one-on-one, semistructured interviews with open-ended questions. The instruments and interview protocol were tested in a pilot study to ensure the data collection method was appropriate. The overarching research question was as follows: What are the meanings of the lived experiences of salon owners, employees, and IBRs before, during, and after salon gaggle walkouts?

Also discussed in this chapter were qualitative validity and the data analysis process. To ensure qualitative validity in the study, steps were taken to enhance the credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability of the study's findings. The

findings of the study consisted of themes regarding the central phenomenon. These themes were identified through modifying Groenewald's (2004) five steps to four steps and using an iterative approach to analyze the qualitative data.

Chapter 4

Data Presentation and Analysis

The purpose of this interpretive phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of salon owners, employees, and IBRs regarding gaggle walkouts. This current study is unique because previous research had not been conducted on mass walkouts in the beauty industry and because of the study's assumption that stylists are KWs. Many salon owners and industry experts believe gaggle walkouts are inevitable and create emotional and financial damage. This study involved exploring the experiences and perceptions of salon owners, employees, and IBRs before, during, and after gaggles, with the goal of gaining insight on the lived experiences of the principle actors of a gaggle walkout. Chapter 4 provides a review of the data collection and analysis procedures, followed by a presentation of the data analysis results.

Pilot Study

Prior to conducting the main study, a pilot study was conducted to test the interview questions and the interviewer's techniques. One member of the study population participated in the pilot study. This individual was an IBR who had experienced a gaggle after selling her salon to another stylist. This participant was assigned the pseudonym Suzi B. After returning the informed consent form and completing the demographic questionnaire, Suzi B participated in a telephone interview containing the open-ended questions developed for the main study.

After answering the interview questions, Suzi B provided feedback regarding the questions and the overall interview protocol. The pilot study participant's responses were also transcribed and analyzed. The results of the pilot study indicated the questions and

answers were related more to *why* stylists walk out than to the lived experiences of stylists before, during, and after gaggle walkouts. Therefore, the open-ended questions, follow-up questions, and interviewer technique were improved (see Appendix D) to focus on the lived experiences of the stylists regarding the phenomenon.

The results of the pilot study also highlighted the power relationship between the researcher and the participants. In the pilot study, the interviewer's introduction as a doctoral candidate and completion of the informed consent process shifted power from the participant to the interviewer. The atmosphere of the interview needed to be scholarly and professional, but not intimidating. The solution was a longer, informal introductory period to discover common ground and develop rapport.

Study Sampling Method and Sample

The purposeful, snowball sampling process began by contacting the owner of a salon academy located in the Dallas and Fort Worth metropolitan area. The owner of the academy was asked to provide the names and contact information of individuals who met the participant criteria. In addition, stylists at various salons were contacted. Potential participants received an introductory letter containing an invitation to participate. These individuals were also asked to identify other potential participants, and these additional individuals also received an introductory letter and an invitation to participate in the study. All individuals were required to sign the informed consent form before participating in the study. The introductory and informed consent letters were important in encouraging trust, such as by explaining the confidential and voluntary nature of participation. To protect the participants' confidentiality, each participant was given a pseudonym consisting of a first name and a last name initial. The first name indicated the

participant's gender. The last name initial indicated whether the participant was an owner (*O*), employee (*E*), or IBR (*B*) at the time of the walkout.

Prior to and during the interviews, steps were taken to gain the participants' trust. Fostering trust was important because the participants perceived gaggles to be painful experiences and therefore difficult to discuss without trust. Initially, some potential participants were distrustful. Ashlee B alluded to this lack of trust when she said, "other stylists thought you might be a spy from one of the salons [they gaggled from]." Establishing trust with the participants allowed the interviewer to ask for the names and of and contact information for other stylists who might be interested in participating in the study. Often, the participants contacted the potential participants prior to the interviewer, thus extending the bond of trust between the interviewer and the new participants.

The sampling process continued until enough participants were interviewed to achieve data saturation. Data saturation was achieved through interviewing 10 participants. To verify data saturation, the interview responses were reviewed following each interview. The results of the review show that the participants had experienced multiple walkouts, had experienced walkouts as owners and employees, and had witnessed but not participated in walkouts. Because the participants had multiple experiences with walkouts and in various capacities, the information was greatly detailed, extensive, and rich. Consequently, only nine participants were needed to obtain data saturation. A 10th stylist was interviewed to verify the data saturation.

Data Collection

After a participant returned the informed consent form, he or she was scheduled for a telephone interview at a time that was convenient for the participant. The participant also received the demographic data questionnaire. The purpose of the questionnaire was to better understand the participant prior to the interview. Collecting these data also enabled all of the interview questions to be open ended. Each participant completed the questionnaire before the interview.

The interview was recorded via a cell phone application and an additional recording device. Using two devices ensured the interview data would be captured even if one recording method failed. Eight of the 10 interviews were conducted without interruption and lasted 30–50 minutes, depending on how many walkouts the participant had experienced and in which capacities. If a participant had experienced a walkout as an employee and also as an owner, he or she answered the questions first as an employee and then as an owner. If the participant had experienced multiple gaggles as an employee or an IBR, the participant discussed the most vivid walkout first, followed by the others. If the participants had experienced a gaggle but had not walked out, the participant discussed this perspective separately. In the two interviews that were interrupted, the participants had to end the conversation prior to answering all of the interview questions. Each participant agreed to an additional interview time to finish answering the questions. Each of the second interviews started with a summary of the first interview, and then the participant finished answering the interview questions.

Throughout the interview process, the interviewer took notes regarding insights and follow-up questions to ask to gain a deeper understanding. The notes also indicated

when the participant was particularly sensitive or emotional. Making these field notes helped with the data analysis process.

Participant Demographics

The demographic data were tabulated to obtain an understanding of the participants' characteristics. As shown in Table 2, the participants were ages 30–51 years old; the average age was 39.8 years; 60% of the participants were in their 30s. All of the participants had completed high school, and 60% had completed additional education. The participant with the highest level of education level had earned a master's degree in counseling. The average years of education equaled an associate's degree.

The average number of years in the beauty industry was 21.8 years. The average number of salons the participants had worked at was five. Based on these two averages, participants moved to a different salon an average of every 4 years.

The participants' income ranged from $40,000 to $175,000. One participant preferred not to identify her salary range, and another participant only indicated her income was over $70,000. One owner and one IBR stated their salaries were well over $100,000. Based on the data the participants provided, the average income of the participants (using the midpoint of each salary range) was $71,000.

Table 2

Participants' Demographic Characteristics

Pseudonym	Age	Years of education	Years in beauty industry	Number of salons worked in	Current income per year
Ashlee B	45	20	26	6	Not given
Bianca E	32	16	13	4	$50,001–$60,000
Bridgett B	61	20	20	6	$60,001–$70,000
Isa OE	33	12	26	6	$60,001–$70,000
Jed E	30	12	13	3	$175,000
Kim OBE	33	16	44	4	$40,001–$50,000
Laura OE	51	12	28	4	>$70,000
Natalie B	50	14	32	9	$40,001–$50,000
Nichole E	30	14	13	3	$60,001–$70,000
Tatiana BE	33	12	15	3	$132,000
Average	39.8	14.4	21.8	5	$80,000/$71,000 (w/o owners)

Table 3 shows each participant's job position when a gaggle occurred, the number of gaggles the participant experienced, any prior positions held, and the participant's position at the time of the study. In this study, an IBR was considered a special type of employee who worked for himself or herself. If IBRs were considered salon owners, most of the participants could have been considered owners.

Table 3

Participants' Positions and Gaggle Experiences

Pseudonym	Position(s) at time(s) of gaggle(s)	Number of gaggles	Prior position(s)	Current position(s)
Ashlee B	IBR	2	E, IBR	IBR
Bianca E	E	4	E, IBR, O	E, IBR
Bridgett B	IBR	1	E, IBR, O	IBR
Isa OE	E, O	3, 1	E, IBR, O	IBR
Jed E	E	1	E, IBR, O	O
Kim OBE	E, IBR, O	3, 1, 1	E, IBR, O	IBR
Laura OE	E, O	3, 1	E, O	O
Natalie B	IBR[a]	2	E, IBR, O	O
Nichole E	E	1	E, O	IBR
Tatiana BE	IBR, E[a]	1, 1	E, IBR, O	IBR
Total	7 E, 5 IBR, 3 O	26	10 E, 8 IBR, 7 O	1 E, 7 IBR, 3 O

Note. *E* = employee; *IBR* = IBR; *O* = owner.

[a]The gaggle was experienced as a remainder and not as a walkout.

Seventy percent of the participants had experienced more than one walkout. All owners had experienced a walkout as an employee or an IBR. Two participants, Natalie B and Tatiana BE, had experienced a walkout and remained. Jed E was late to a walkout because he needed time to collect client data; he had not been intending to gaggle. Therefore, he experienced "remaining" understandings similar to those of Natalie B and Tatiana BE. All participants had been employees, and 80% had been IBRs or were IBRs at the time of the study. At the time of the study, 70% of participants were IBRs, 30% were owners, and 10% were employees. Bianca E was an employee at a salon academy and was an IBR on the weekends, maintaining her personal set of clients.

The typical progression of a stylist is to graduate from a cosmetology school, become an employee at a salon, move to an IBR role, and then become an owner. Stylists may, however, move back and forth between positions, based on their individual needs. All participants in this study had collected detailed client information before joining a walkout; therefore, IBRs and employees were grouped together for the purposes of theme development during the analysis process.

Data Analysis

All interview audio recordings were transcribed in Microsoft Word files. The transcriptions were compared to the audio recordings to ensure accuracy. After each transcript was sanitized of names and salons, the transcript was sent to the participant for member checking. No participants indicated the need for changes. The verified transcripts were then imported into NVivo 10 and were also printed to review and highlight during the iterative data analysis process.

The data were analyzed using a modified version of Groenewald's five-step process. The process was modified to include Heidegger's concept of preunderstanding and to fuse the horizons of the participants and the interviewer. The modified analysis process contained four steps:

- Step 1: Identifying and isolating units of meaning in each interview transcript by coding the data
- Step 2: Clustering units of meaning to identify themes in each interview transcript

- Step 3: Validating the units of meaning and the themes by reviewing the interview transcript and verifying the transcript supports the units of meaning
- Step 4: Reviewing the themes in each transcript to identify themes common among the transcripts and then preparing a composite summary that reflects the context in which the themes occurred

Throughout this iterative analysis process, the interviewer's preunderstandings and biases were reflected upon to ensure the findings aligned with the participants' experiences and perceptions. The preunderstandings of the gaggle effect were based on observing the daily activities of the interviewer's spouse, who had been in the industry for 3 years. However, neither the spouse nor the interviewer had experienced a gaggle walkout. Preconceived opinions of walkouts were also based on stories published in industry publications and shared by individuals the interviewer knows. During the analysis process, constantly reflecting on preconceived notions and preunderstandings of the phenomenon decreased the potential of researcher bias.

Step 1: Identifying and isolating units of meaning. To complete the first step, the interview audio recordings, transcriptions, and field notes were reviewed several times. NVivo 10 was used to code words and phrases that related to the central phenomenon. NVivo 10's emergent coding tool was used to assist in uncovering the participants' lived experiences and to minimize biases.

Step 2: Clustering units of meaning into themes. The second step involved clustering the coded data that were similar in meaning. For instance, the words *angry* and *upset* were clustered in one category. NVivo 10 was used to merge units of meaning

into child nodes; the software was also used to compute word counts and to complete algorithms to identify repeated words and phrases with similar meanings. The initial parent nodes, which regarded the main points of the research questions, were as follows:

- The lived experiences of employees before a gaggle walkout
- The lived experiences of IBRs before a gaggle walkout
- The lived experiences of owners before a gaggle walkout
- The lived experiences of employees during a gaggle walkout
- The lived experiences of IBRs during a gaggle walkout
- The lived experiences of owners during a gaggle walkout
- The lived experiences of employees after a gaggle walkout
- The lived experiences of IBRs after a gaggle walkout
- The lived experiences of owners after a gaggle walkout

Starting with the first interview, coded data were assigned to the parent nodes. After each interview, the child nodes were consolidated into clusters.

Step 3: Validating units of meaning and themes. After each interview was coded in NVivo 10, the prior interview transcripts were reviewed to validate the emerging meanings and themes. This process helped to solidify themes; however, it became clear that the themes did not fit neatly into the initial parent nodes. Therefore, the nodes were recoded into themes and subthemes that aligned more precisely with the data.

Step 4: Reviewing the themes. After the data from half of the transcripts had been coded, a review of the transcripts indicated further enhancements could be made to cluster the meanings and to develop themes. For instance, some lived experiences were

mentioned by all categories of participants, whereas other experiences were unique to a particular category. It also became clear that there was essentially no difference in the lived experiences of employees and IBRs. Because the lived experience of employees and IBRs were largely the same, these participants' data were grouped together during the development of themes.

Additionally, the time frames of before and during the gaggle were discovered to be very subjective because some gaggles were immediate and some spanned days or months. The themes were better developed by using the end of the gaggle as the time differentiator. Therefore, themes were categorized as related to (a) before and during a gaggle or (b) after a gaggle.

Themes. The analysis process resulted in the identification of themes regarding the participants' experiences before/during gaggles and after gaggles. The overarching themes are themes that were found in the data of all three groups of participants: employees, IBRs, and owners. Themes were also identified regarding salon owners only and regarding employees and IBRs only. Three of the 17 total themes are overarching themes. Further, five of the seven subthemes relate to all time frames and categories of participants. Five themes and two subthemes relate to the lived experiences of employees and IBRs before and during gaggles; an additional three themes relate to the lived experiences of employees and IBRs after gaggles. Three themes regard the experiences of salon owners before and during gaggles, and three themes regard salon owners after gaggles.

Although the purpose of the study was to understand and interpret the lived experiences of the employees, IBRs, and owners, the participants also shared information regarding the following:

- Employees' and IBRs' view of owners' actions during a gaggle
- How change in ownership affects gaggles
- Gaggle leadership/lack of leadership
- KW's behavior
- Recommendation for others to join the salon industry

Themes by Research Question

Analysis of the 10 interviews provided 17 themes and 7 subthemes (Appendix E). The themes and subthemes are presented below in relation to the research questions for the study.

Central research question: What are the meanings of the lived experiences of salon owners, employees, and IBRs before, during, and after salon gaggle walkouts? The purpose of the central research question was to understand the lived experiences of all participants and at all points of time related to gaggle walkouts. Three themes and five subthemes were identified regarding the central research question. The first theme is personal attacks, with subthemes of anger, betrayal, and end of relationships. The second theme is inevitability, with subthemes of stylists' immaturity, and growth and independence. The third theme is financial considerations. Each group of participants believed that at some point in the experience, the gaggle was a personal threat to their financial well-being or way of life. These themes are discussed in more detail in the following subsections.

Theme 1: Personal attack. The first theme indicates gaggle walkouts are perceived as being a personal attack, not just a business decision. Most (80%) of the participants believed the walkout or the way they were treated during the walkout was personal. Laura OE said gaggle walkouts "are always painful for everybody involved." Tatiana BE explained, "I think the owner felt like it was a personal attack against her as opposed to people leaving for a better situation themselves." Isa OE expounded on the walkout she experienced as an owner, "I felt it was personal, especially since, like I said, I had done something just out of the generous kindness of my heart." The perception of a personal attack resulted in the participants feeling angry and betrayed, as well as that relationships were ending.

Subtheme 1a: Anger. Sixty percent of the participants responded to the personal attack with anger. All of the owners were angry at the employees who participated in the walkout. Isa OE summarized her feelings about the walkout:

> I was hurt and angry and kind of shocked. When you know something is fix'n to happen [the gaggle walkout] because of a stupid reason. I was just angry. I was angry that I, like I said before, . . . did something generous and in return got dumped on.

Laura OE explained, "I was devastated, absolutely devastated. I mean it was devastating, painful, hurtful. Probably more hurt, just personably hurt." Kim OBE felt insulted when the gaggle walkout started on her day off. "She could have called me and said, 'I'd like to talk to you about it' before just standing up and leaving. I felt it was very disrespectful." Laura OE explained the following regarding her first walkout as an owner: "I went home bawling that night."

Fifty percent of the employees and IBRs felt angry with the salon owners. Bianca E explained that the way she was treated because of the gaggle walkout made her angry. "I was pissed! I was angry; it took everything in me to keep my composure at that moment." Isa OE, talking about a walkout she did not participate in, said the following:

> It was one person getting mad and then they get everyone else in a little tirade and then they all take off. Any little thing that somebody might not be happy with or they get mad, they are going to bring everything up to that person and they are going to fuel the fire. People cannot take it, and you have that walkout.

Jed E said after his coworkers left, the owner began treating the remaining employees in a harsh manner. "Why are you treating me like this all of a sudden? It is like it is not enough. I think I could make [the owners] a six figure [income] and it still was not enough." Jed joined the walkout after gathering his clients' information. Isa OE explained that as an IBR, "I was pretty angry and frustrated about a lot of it because my income was being compromised with all the changes."

Subtheme 1b: Betrayal. Forty percent of the participants believed betrayal made the walkout personal. Isa OE explained the following:

> One person in particular was pregnant and was out on maternity leave . . . as an independent contractor, you don't get paid when you are off. So I gave her free rent while she was out on maternity leave and did not make her pay. . . . This person came back later from maternity leave and got mad because there was not a receptionist to baby [the IBRs] and take her appointments. [She] got [the other stylists] together and decided to leave. And that was the reason they left.

Laura OE shared her thoughts of betrayal at the time of the walkout: "How could they do this to me? How could they do this to us, as a team? How in the world is the salon going to make it. All of those feelings."

Participants who were employees at the time of the walkout also felt betrayed. Participants described other employees informing management if the stylists were considering leaving. Jed E said, "definitely betrayed, for sure. Yeah. Anytime someone rats you out like that, especially if they are doing the same thing." Tatiana BE explained that she was the first in her salon to tell her owner she was leaving. Her decision encouraged 50% of the other stylists to walk out. Because Tatiana was first to decide to leave, and she gave notice, some of the other IBRs perceived she had betrayed them.

Tatiana described a walkout she did not participate in: "Everybody that was staying felt, I guess, betrayed." She felt betrayed by the people who walked out. Jed E also felt betrayed by the owners because he was a hard worker and the owners made his life miserable even though he had not participated in the walkout.

Subtheme 1c: End of relationships. Forty percent of the participants believed that gaggle walkouts were personal because the walkouts ended relationships. All the owners in the study had continued working as stylists while managing their businesses. The owners, employees, and IBRs were friends before the salons opened, and the owners developed personal relationships with the people they hired. When Laura OE gaggled to open her salon, she did not encourage other employees to follow her. Nevertheless, three coworkers eventually moved to her salon. "We were good friends, and we had a great working relationship." When Laura OE experienced a walkout as an owner, she understood how difficult it is to be friends with employees and IBRs. "To have that

employer/employee relationship and then have a personal friendship on the side is a difficult thing to do."

Bianca E also discussed the relationships that form between stylists and how a gaggle can end the relationships:

> It just feels like a little part of you is gone, especially if you are used to seeing them and they are your coworkers and you see them all the time and suddenly they leave and then you have that tug of war because if they are planning to own their own salon, they want you to come with them. Or they are planning to go to a different salon, [and] they want you to come with them.

Employees also struggle when their relationships with owners end. Jed E explained, "you have a good relationship [with the owner] and one day it just comes to an end." Perhaps Nichole E explained the perception best: "It really was like family moving away. Even though you knew you would see them again, you just didn't know when."

Theme 2: Inevitability. Eighty percent of the participants believed gaggle walkouts are an inevitable part of the salon industry. Laura OE stated, "and as an employer, I then also was a recipient of a couple of these walkouts as well. So it's just the nature of the beast." Isa OE, speaking as an owner, agreed: "I have been in the business long enough, and there is always going to be [gaggle walkouts]. I do not think there is anything an employer can do to change things." Tatiana BE noted that gaggle walkouts are "something I'd always heard about; I just hadn't gone through it. You know, it's out there. It's out there all the time."

Subtheme 2a: Stylists' immaturity. All of the owners believed that stylists' immature behavior makes gaggle walkouts inevitable. All owners were once stylists and

they recognized they were talking about themselves in previous years. Laura OE, speaking as an owner, said the following:

> There's a maturity level or lack of maturity sometimes. . . . I don't think that [the stylists] think they are hurting people when they [walk out]. I think that they are always thinking that there's something better out there.

Isa OE said, "this is just going to sound so awful, because I am one of them, but I guess I don't act that way. But hair stylists are fickle. And they are going to come, and they are going to go." Isa OE later elaborated on this perspective: "A stylist will come in, they will work for a little while, then build up a clientele, and then they will take them and leave." Kim OBE noted the following:

> You have some people who are really selfish, per se, and they will get mad if you tell them what they need to do and they do not want to do it. I know a lot of stylists walk out because of the rules of the business place.

Employees who had not been owners did not admit to behaving immaturely. Employees did, however, describe behavior that indicated immaturity. For instance, Bianca E admitted that she made her walkout decision spur-of-the moment:

> I wasn't planning on quitting, but they had made me so pissed that I told them that they were full of shit, and I put my keys on the table. I made the decision out of anger, but in the end, I'm glad I did.

Subtheme 2b: Growth and independence. Fifty percent of the participants believed that stylists left to obtain more growth and independence. Kim OBE summarized this subtheme: "You have to let people grow and let them go, so I believe in letting them grow and go on their own and find that out for themselves."

All of the employees who gaggled to start their own salons did so for personal growth. Isa OE explained, "you move because you want maybe a better opportunity or a better location. My move from an employee to an independent contractor [IBR] was so I could make more money and work less hours." Laura OE described the following about gaggling to her own salon:

> The salon that I worked at before I left, I had worked there for 9 years. I was a part-time employee, I worked 3 days a week, and most of the vendors that came into the salon thought that I owned the place. So when they thought I owned the place, . . . I kept thinking that if this is what, how you have to act to own the place, maybe I could do this.

Laura OE and Isa OE also mentioned the gaggles were necessary for them to grow as owners and for their salons to grow. Laura OE explained the following:

> When you look back, the first [gaggle walkout] happened, it kind of [was] like the riff-raft got out of here. Now those of us that was left, we more clearly defined our mission, what we wanted to do, who we wanted to be, and we all came on board with that.

Kim OBE stated a gaggle walkout "is never a good thing, but you can grow from it."

Kim OBE explained that when she was an employee, she knew the discriminatory actions at the salon where she worked would not change. "I knew where it was going to be time for me to remove myself from the situation and find something better for myself." Ashlee B walked out to move "forward with my life. I am not going to say that I leave at the drop of a hat, because I have not." For Jed E, watching the walkout and eventually joining the gaggle opened his eyes to working as an IBR and to eventually

owning a salon. "I could do it on my own. It drove me more just to be better." When Tatiana BE spoke with her boss when walking out, Tatiana BE explained, "I've really enjoyed my time here. I'm very sad to leave. I've been here a long time. I practically [grew] up with you all. I was 19 when I started. It's just time to move on." Nichole E described her experience as follows:

> I knew that I can't grow anymore here, so I'm really just really stagnant so I don't want to be like that and the industry is always changing and I just knew that I couldn't grow anymore so I was really happy, nervous, excited but really glad that I did that I did finally do it.

Theme 3: Financial considerations. Seventy percent of the participants mentioned financial considerations related to walkouts. Two-thirds (66%) of the owners mentioned financial aspects of the walkout. In the short term, all of the owners' salons lost money because they lost customers and stylists. Laura OB commented:

> Every time there is a walkout, there is a financial hit to the salon, whether it be because they are booth renters and you are no longer getting the income as an employer from their booth or as a commissioned situation, the salon takes a big hit. It's always such a painful situation.

Some salons ceased operating almost immediately; one example is the salon Bridgett B gaggled from. Isa OE's salon lasted much longer after a gaggle but eventually closed. At some salons, the format changed after a gaggle; examples include the salon that Ashlee B and Tatiana BE gaggled from. Their salon did not replace the gaggling stylists, the owner used the freed space to open a clothes boutique in the salon. Some salons, like Laura OE's, experienced only a brief setback. The salon that Jed E gaggled

from lost all employees except for the owner and manager, but the salon has increased in size and clientele since the walkout.

Isa OE said, "the walkout did sort of hurt us financially. We never recovered back any more stylists to take their place." Laura OE noted the following:

> The salon hiccupped, truly just a little hiccup, and we went on. . . . It was actually a time when we had a new employee in the salon anyway, so the new employee built her clientele and was on a rosy way.

Both Isa OE and Laura OE were surprised by the gaggles and were concerned for their salons. Isa OE had a business partner and did not rely on income from the salon to survive, so the reduction of income did not cause the salon to close immediately. Isa OE and her partner closed the salon after their lease was up. Laura OE assumed future walkouts would occur, so she changed her financial plan to adjust to them as they occurred. "You suffer the financial loss of [the gaggle walkout] and anticipate that and if [the stylists] don't fit, it's not good for them to be there anyway."

To the employees, the financial considerations involved more than just money; time and potential were also important. Isa OE, speaking from an employee's perspective, said, "you move because you want maybe a better opportunity or a better location. My move from an employee to an independent contractor was so I could make more money and work less hours."

Some participants walked out because they believed a poorly run or financially insolvent salon placed their income in jeopardy. Bridgett B walked out because "I needed to protect my livelihood, and I felt I had no choice." Bridgett mentioned

livelihood eight times. Her final thought was that "in the end, I had to protect my livelihood, and that was what we did. We all decided we were going."

Whereas Bridgett B walked out to help her income remain stable, others walked out to improve their situations. Ashlee B walked out because she was paying full rent for a booth but working only part-time. "A lot of it was financial for several of us because we worked part-time and we were paying the same full rent on a booth that we only used part-time. It really just came down to the finances." While reducing her rent improved Ashlee B's financial situation, Tatiana BE moved to consolidate two rooms into one large room with a view and adding services. Her rent did not decrease, but her opportunities increased substantially:

> My business has absolutely taken off. I think sometimes the change, getting out of your rut, finding something new, and then going out totally on your own where you've got nobody booking your appointments, nobody managing you . . . that feeling of freedom.

Research subquestions 1 and 2 for employees and IBRs: What are the lived experiences and perceptions unique to employees and IBRs before and during a gaggle? Five themes are relevant to the experiences of employees and IBRs before and during gaggles: negative atmosphere, plan B, empowerment, and relief. These themes are discussed in the following subsections.

Theme 4: Negative atmosphere. Ninety percent of the employees and IBRs described experiencing a negative work environment before and during a gaggle. Tatiana BE said, "it was an atmosphere of kind of stress, I guess." Jed E similarly noted, "it's a bad atmosphere. People feel it. Clients feel it." Some participants reported that the work

environment had deteriorated over time. Bridgett B explained, "the atmosphere had gone from quite a light-hearted professional but somewhat lively and happy working environment to a very stressful atmosphere, which had just negative vibes within the business." In other cases, a wave of emotion spread because of uncertainty, and the work environment quickly became toxic.

Subtheme 4a: Emotional contagion. Ninety percent of the participants commented on some aspect of emotional contagion. Natalie B said the following:

> You know it's the uncertainty, it was the atmosphere, the negativity in the atmosphere, you know, just the insecurity that people were feeling and people want you to jump on their bandwagon. They're leaving, so you should leave; they are unhappy so you should be unhappy, and I wasn't good with that, you know, the chaos of that.

Fifty percent of the participants related feeling unhappy as employees or IBRs before and during gaggles. Isa OE, describing a walkout she did not participate in, said the following:

> It was one person getting mad, and then they get everyone else in a little tirade and then they all take off. Any little thing that somebody might not be happy with or they get mad, they are going to bring everything up to that person and they are going to fuel the fire.

Ashlee B noted that before the gaggle, there had been discontent: "People were unhappy for different reasons." Bridgett B described being unhappy and "really concerned for [her] clientele." She further explained, "everyone that I worked with in the

salon was getting more and more upset, disgruntled." Kim OBE was unhappy because she felt discriminated against before she walked out:

> At one point of time, I enjoyed working, but it got to the point where I did not enjoy working any longer based on how I was being treated, based on the color of my skin. That just is unacceptable to me. I will not tolerate that.

Fifty percent of subjects perceived the salon stylists had developed cliques before and during the gaggle walkouts. Natalie B remarked that her previous salon "was very cliquish, very, very cliquish." The stylists separated into two groups: those who would participate in the gaggle and those who would not. Ashlee B similarly reported:

> The situation was very tense between the people that were staying and the people that were leaving. There was talk of us being backstabbers, how could we do this. . . . The last day that I was going to be at the salon, I felt ostracized. Fights between friends in the salons happened.

Tatiana BE also described the cliques that formed prior to a walkout at the salon where she worked:

> People got into . . . almost had a fight—a physical fight. You know, arguments out in the middle of the salon. It was pretty crazy. Friendships have since severed over that. . . . Salons can be on the cliquier side, and I'm not. I don't go to work to make friends; I go to work to make money.

Natalie B did not gaggle in one walkout at her salon, so she was behaving in opposition to her friends and believed she was no longer welcome in the clique.

> I was pretty good friends with them, still am even to this day. But, you know, getting pushed and prodded, you know, "You need to come with us. You need to

> do this; it's the best thing for you." . . . I don't like people feeling that they need to impose their feelings and their drama on others.

Thirty percent of participants believed a lack of trust permeated the salon before and during the gaggle. Jed E described this lack of trust and how it affected his decision to walk out. He was planning to remain at his salon long-term and perhaps start a franchise, but then a significant number of his colleagues began to gaggle and he felt the negative atmosphere and emotional contagion.

> Whenever two people decide to leave, and they are gone, then it just becomes a very uncomfortable environment. Because no longer are you there every day being trusted. You are all of a sudden being untrusted, and [the owners] have trusted you for all these years.

Jed E eventually joined the gaggle. Tatiana BE felt a similar atmosphere. "I have a feeling of distrust, I guess. I feel like if you're upfront about your intentions and honest from the get-go, then there's really no reason to punish someone or put them in that difficult of a situation." Bianca E put it simply: "If you don't trust your employees, then don't hire them."

Subtheme 4b: Disinhibitory contagion. Forty percent of the employees and IBRs felt disinhibitory contagion. Jed E explained his disinhibitory contagion experience:

> One person decided to leave and left to go rent a room, and after that, it pretty much gave everyone someone to follow. And then once you realized that they were just going somewhere better, you just knew it was possible. So everybody just decided to leave.

Ashlee B commented, "some people left earlier on. They went to various other salons, and then word got out that this other salon place was opening up down the street." Neither Laura OE nor Bridgett B wanted anyone to gaggle with them, but both started gaggles when others realized it was possible to leave and prosper in a healthier environment.

Theme 5: Plan B. Eighty percent of employees and IBRs mentioned having a plan B, that is, keeping their options open. Natalie B explained, "you've got to have a plan B. . . . Things change all the time, and you have to be prepared for those changes, whether its conforming to new rules . . . new leases . . . new management."

The most significant part of the participants' plan B was to keep client information and expensive equipment (e.g., shears) with them. Tatiana BE stated the perspective as follows: "When your job is still your clients, you still have a full schedule on your books. You're not penniless, but you're just placeless." Keeping clients' information updated and accessible was the first step in the participants' plan B. Experienced stylists encouraged novice stylists to maintain client information and prepare for a gaggle. Ashlee B stated the following:

> I would advise [new stylists] to prepare for it if they are planning on leaving. A couple of my friends ran into a couple of hiccups because they had not done a good job of taking care of their clients' information.

The other critical element of the participants' plan B was to find a new place to work. With a new salon to work in and with clients intact, stylists could walk out of one salon on Sunday and be set up in another salon by Tuesday.

Theme 6: Empowerment. Fifty percent of employees and IBRs felt empowered by the decision to gaggle. Jed E realized, "I could [be an IBR]. I do not have to depend on someone else." Tatiana BE mentioned, "I think it gave me more faith in myself to go out and make it happen. It turned out so much better than I ever thought it would be."

Theme 7: Client considerations. Forty percent of employees and IBRs expressed concern for their clients during gaggles. These participants shared the belief that when a stylist moves, a portion of his or her clients will stay loyal to the salon and not follow the stylist. Clients may remain loyal to a salon because they purchase several of the salon's services, such as massages, manicures, and facials. Salon owners used client loyalty to try to prevent gaggles. Ashlee B did not believe gaggles resulted in a large loss of clients. "These are people that have been coming to me for 20 years, and you think moving two streets down is going to make a difference? I found that amusing."

Some participants were also concerned about how the negative salon environment that developed prior to a gaggle affected clients. Natalie B stated, "clients don't want to listen to that babble" that occurs before a gaggle. Bridgett B's comments were typical:

> I feel when you know your clients well that they can . . . pick up an atmosphere. And just trying to reassure them that everything is okay and if there are any changes that we would stay in communication. . . . I would let them know if the salon were sold or changed terms, closed, or I went somewhere else.

Theme 8: Relief. Forty percent of employees and IBRs expressed feeling relief after deciding to leave. Bridgett B reported: "Once I had made up my mind to do it [gaggle], it just felt so much better. I had a peacefulness that happened." Similarly,

Ashlee B recalled thinking, "whew, okay, this is done. Because it was really awkward while we were waiting to go into a new place."

Research subquestions 1 and 2 for owners: What are the lived experiences and perceptions unique to salon owners before and during a gaggle? Three themes relate to salon owners' experiences before and during gaggles. The first theme is feeling shocked. The second theme is the perception that employees were ungrateful for the services the owner provided. The final theme is the feeling of being hurt.

Theme 9: Shock. All of the owners were shocked when they realized a gaggle was about to occur. All the employees and IBRs, except Nichole E, similarly expressed the opinion that their owners were unaware of the impending gaggles. (Gaggles at Nichole E's low-end, high-turnover, entry-level salon were common and therefore not surprising.) Kim OBE was not at work when some of her employees walked out. She vividly remembered hearing about the walkout from remaining employees. Laura OE suggested an owner cannot determine whether a gaggle is going to occur.

> By the time *you* find out, it has already happened. They [stylists] have already contacted their guests. . . . People call up and say, "oh, by the way, I'm cancelling my appointment with so-and-so for tomorrow because she is going to be at salon so-and-so."

In hindsight, however, most of the owners had noticed something was developing. Isa OE said, "you just know as a person working with others. When they start talking and whispering behind your back, just doing things they would not normally do, that something's up and something's fix'n to happen." Laura OE elaborated on this idea:

> I always worked behind the chair. . . . You kind of always knew, and I don't know how you know, but you just kinda always had that gut feeling . . . that something was going on, but I couldn't put my finger on it.

Theme 10: Ingratitude. All of the owners mentioned perceiving that employees who walked out were ungrateful, particularly since the salon owners were often the employees' first mentors after completing cosmology school. Isa OE expressed the opinion that "you do something nice for somebody and you get taken advantage of." In discussing the perception of ingratitude, the participants expressed strong emotions. The participants seemed to feel similar to how a parent might feel when a child is ungrateful. Laura OE explained her devastation: "How can they, how can people be so ungrateful? I mean, if you want to get to the raw emotion of it, it was crying, blithering, bellyaching, how can you make it through the next day?" Kim OBE felt insulted when her employees just left. "Anybody would feel disrespected as an owner if someone decides to leave because of whatever they feel at that moment without calling to say, 'hey, this is what I am going to do.'"

Theme 11: Hurt. Two-thirds (66%) of the owners mentioned feeling hurt. Isa OE discussed an IBR gaggle walkout, noting, "I was hurt and angry and kind of shocked. My personal feelings were hurt because I was not a boss, per se. These people were independent contractors." Isa OE provided more services then IBRs normally receive, such as receptionists and laundry, but the IBRs still walked out. As Laura OE succinctly expressed, gaggle walkouts "are always painful for everybody involved."

Research subquestion 3 for employees and IBRs: What are the lived experiences and perceptions unique to employees and IBRs after a gaggle? Three

themes relate to the experiences of employees and IBRs following a gaggle: happiness, client considerations, and prosperity. These themes are discussed in the following subsections.

Theme 12: Happiness. Fifty percent of the employees and IBRs mentioned feeling happy after a gaggle. Jed E said, "I'm glad it happened, because if it did not happen, I would still be stuck there. . . . It broadened my mind to be able to do more." Natalie B explained:

> Once I did move, I kind of thought, "well, that wasn't so bad." You know, it just kind of added a notch to the belt of life, you know? Like, I survived it and it wasn't as bad as I thought, and why am I making such a big deal out of it. So it is kind of a maturity thing.

Theme 13: Client considerations. Fifty percent of employees and IBRs stated they were able to serve their customers better after a gaggle. Ashlee B explained, "I felt like I would be providing a better service for my clients, and that was confirmed several times after I was in the new place." Tatiana BE mentioned that "a lot of clients said, 'I'm so glad you moved. I'm so happy to be in a place that's lighter, quieter.'" Client considerations also encourage stylists to transition quickly to a new salon. For instance, Bridgett B said, "I finished on a Saturday, and I started at the new location of Tuesday (because they are closed on Sunday and Monday)."

Theme 14: Prosperity. None of the employees or IBRs said that gaggling had negative emotion or financial results. Forty percent mentioned they were thriving. Bridgett B expressed the following:

> I am thriving. . . . Every opportunity provides you with challenges. But the girls that all followed me there, they are all happy and they are so glad to be at the same location, because they were all miserable as well.

Jed E noted that through walking out, "you let yourself become unstoppable." When Ashlee B was asked about the 14 IBRs who gaggled with her, she said, "nobody quit [the industry]. Everyone thrived."

Research subquestion 3 for owners: What are the lived experiences and perceptions unique to salon owners after a gaggle? Three themes were unique to the lived experiences of owners after a gaggle. First theme regards the environment after the gaggle. The second theme involves the owner becoming more businesslike. The third theme relates to the owners' personal growth. These themes are discussed in the following subsections.

Theme 15: Salon environment. All of the owners believed the salon environment was better after the gaggle walkout. Laura OE explained the following:

> The other thing that happens with [gaggle walkouts] is typically it is a salon cleanse. It's always not a horrible thing. Hindsight, when you look back, the first one that happened, it kind of [was] like the riff-raft got out of here.

The employees who remained at the salon were a better fit, and thus the salon was more successful. Isa OE explained that after the gaggle, the stylists "all fit emotionally and stepped up and helped out with the other things as well." Laura OE expressed the same opinion. After the walkouts, each of the owner's salons remained open for at least a few years. Natalie B and Tatiana BE, the two employees who experienced walkouts but stayed, likewise noted that their salons calmed down after the walkouts and survived.

Theme 16: Businesslike behavior. All of the owners became more businesslike after walkouts, particularly the first walkout. Laura OE intuitively knew she had to be more businesslike and present herself as "cheery Laura" because the remaining employees looked up to her as the owner and trusted her to protect their livelihoods. Kim OBE discussed the need to "be more proactive" in operating her business. She emphasized the importance of "doing everything you are asking your employees, meeting their expectations, and also following procedures." Leading by example is also important; however, Isa OE realized she needed to be less personal with her employees. "You treat it like a business, and if it's in the contract and your rent is due, then your rent is due."

Theme 17: Personal growth. One (33%) of the owners considered personal growth to be a positive outcome of her gaggle experience. This participant, Kim OBE, explained:

> I can learn from every situation at hand. . . . So I feel that as an owner, as an employee, you need to check yourself first. It's easy to criticize and talk about somebody else. . . . Maybe I should look at myself and check myself to make sure that I am not slipping out of my boundaries.

Other Findings

During the course of analyzing the interviews to answer the research questions, several additional findings were uncovered:

- Employees' and IBRs' view of owners' actions during a gaggle
- How change in ownership affects gaggles
- Gaggle leadership/lack of leadership

- KW's behavior
- Recommendation for others to join the salon industry

These findings are discussed in the following subsections because the findings provide further insight regarding the central phenomenon.

Employees' and IBRs' view of owners' actions during a gaggle. Employees and IBRs believed owners' actions before, during, and after a gaggle ruined the owners' relationships with employees and IBRs. These perceptions are discussed below.

Before and during a gaggle. Jed E and Bianca OE were not planning to gaggle when their walkouts started. Both ended up having their equipment packed for them and being escorted out of the building. For these two participants, the precipitating issue was trust. Jed remarked, "I think they would rather catch you, like trying to look for something to catch you, because that becomes expensive if you have ten employees that you got to pay unemployment to." Bianca OE stated, "I felt like I couldn't trust my employer. [I] worked with this employer for 2 years, having dinner at her house, [and then] she pretty much didn't believe anything I said." Bianca OE's most vivid memory was "the way they escorted me out of the building like I was a criminal."

Before the gaggle that Natalie B participated in had begun, another stylist complained about the owner and perceived injustices. One stylist left, and the owner told another vocal stylist, "just get your things and get out." Upon hearing this conversation between the stylist and the owner, Natalie B explained,

> I just started packing and taking things home at night, and we left, I think, within the week. . . . We had given notice, and she had given her notice at the same

time. But he said to just get out, "you've got to go," because she was raising nine kinds of hell with the new management.

Participants often noted the salon environment was deteriorating because owners or managers were disengaged or making poor management decisions. Ashlee B, Bridgett B, and Tatianna BE, who gaggled from different salons, each thought her owner's interest in the respective salon had begun to wane. Bridgett B and coworkers tried to address the negative environment at their salon: "We . . . approached management and voiced our concerns, each and every one of us. So we gave opportunity for something to be rectified, and it never was." In Jed E's salon, "word got out that [the owner] was letting everyone go."

Attempts at intimidating employees was also common. Natalie B stated, "we would have an addendum [to our work agreement] for this and an addendum for that, and little tiny, dumb things that would change." Ashlee B remembered her owner saying, "'every time you move, you leave a percentage of your clientele.' . . . There was talk of us being backstabbers. . . . We do not care about anybody but ourselves." Bridgett B noted her manager "was not nice at all. . . . Instead of asking why, is there anything that he could do to change my mind, or thank you for staying and propelling my business for 4½ years, he was just ticked off and worried about his own pocket."

After a gaggle. The salon owners, according to the employees and IBR, continued their hurtful behavior after the stylists left the salon. Tatiana BE noted that after a walkout she did not participate in, "the receptionist would say, 'oh, they don't work here anymore. We don't have their number.'" Some owners said the stylists had left the profession. Such actions exacerbated the mistrust between stylists and owners.

Ashlee B said, "I can tell you that there were a couple of people that were nervous talking to you [the interviewer]. They talked about maybe you were a spy or something like that."

Laura OE left to start her own salon. While she waited for her salon to be built, she worked at a different salon. The owner of the salon she walked out of confronted Laura OE in the second salon about Laura building a new salon. This confrontation required Laura OE to quit her job at the second salon. The owner's actions convinced three other stylists to gaggle to Laura's salon when it opened. Such behavior puzzled Tatiana BE: "As a salon owner, I don't understand why they would be 'oh, get your stuff and go.' I never understood that. . . . Most salon owners were also employees before they left to start their salon." Laura OE did not try to recruit her friends to work at her new salon; however, she did provide indirect gaggle leadership through leaving the first salon.

Change in ownership. Forty percent of the participants mentioned that one reason they gaggled was a change in ownership. In discussing a walkout Isa OE witnessed but did not participate in, she said the walkout was precipitated by a change in ownership. Even though a stylist from the salon bought the business, 40% of the other stylists walked out to start their own salon. Natalie B proposed one reason a change in ownership instigates a walkout:

> People look for reasons to [gaggle]. Maybe they want to do something different or they were bored or maybe there is something going on in their lives, or maybe they were just waiting for a change, but they use that situation [a change in

> ownership] to make it [the walkout] more acceptable . . . or to blame it on [the owner], which it really truly had nothing to do with the new owner.

This perspective seems to be supported by the reason Isa OE gaggled to start her own salon. This participant said she and three others walked out because they did not like the dress policies the new owner imposed on IBRs.

Natalie B noted that new owners promise not to change the salon but make changes anyway. "One of the things that I like to hear from people is 'we have a new owner and nothing is going to change.' That's always a lie—always."

Bridgett B sold her salon to a new owner but promised to stay at the salon for 12 months. This action probably helped delay changes and therefore a gaggle. A gaggle eventually occurred 3 years after Bridgett B sold the salon. She explained, "everyone stayed because I stayed, and I felt that was a good move for" the new owner.

Gaggle leadership. Seventy percent of the participants commented on gaggle leadership. Some participants, such as Bridgett B, Isa OE, and Laura OE, stated they did not want to lead gaggles. For example, Laura liked her owner but needed to leave so she could grow professionally:

> [The other employees] didn't know I was doing what I was doing because I didn't want to create a gaggle effect. My whole intent was not to have anybody come with me. . . . However, 5 months later, after my salon was built, then two of the other employees . . . joined my salon.

Bridgett B explained the following:

> I was the first person to leave. . . . I didn't incite other people to come with me. I just said it is your choice to, it is your business. . . . Once they had made up their mind, I mean, I did not try to persuade them [in] anyway. It was their choice.

Isa OE unintentionally led four stylists to the salon she purchased. "Was it a walkout that I initiated? No, it was just none of us liked what the new owner was trying to do. You talk—its women, women talk, everyone talks."

Ashlee B did not notice gaggle leadership: "I think people had their own reasons. It happened pretty organically. There was not a 'hey, everybody, follow me.'" Ashlee B later admitted that she "probably recommended [gathering client information] to a couple of people." Jed E explained the lack of leadership as follows: "One person decided to leave and left to go rent a room, and after that it just pretty much gave everyone someone to follow. I think after the fourth or fifth person left, that is when I realized [a gaggle was occurring]." Tatiana BE mentioned, "everyone had their own reasons for leaving, but there just hasn't been a place to go. I think once there was somewhere being built, you know, newer, bigger, better, there was some place to go."

KW behavior. All of the participants demonstrated KW behavior before, during, and after gaggles. Most participants made comments similar to Bianca E, who said:

> [There are] many avenues in the beauty industry besides just working behind the chair or owning a salon or working in a beauty school or being an instructor. It's a whole big industry that has so many different avenues that you can go [in].

Bridgett B recalled, "I usually tried to keep up and go to different beauty supplier events, hair shows, workshops. There [are] always new techniques, always new products, there are always new styles, new fashions in the industry every year." Isa OE

explained, “we now have to take classes, your continuing education every 2 years to renew your license.” Kim OBE elaborated on this idea: “You will always continue to educate yourself in the industry. So I was still building my clientele while working underneath another company.”

Learning new information and then returning to the salon to teach the information is a classic behavior of KWs. Nichole E explained that even though she knew working at another person’s salon was only “a stepping stone, I still treated it like it was my own salon. Whatever skill I learned, I brought back and promoted” to the other stylists. Nichole E believed that stylists must “feel like they can grow if they want to . . . make sure they’re compensated enough for what they do, make sure they are appreciated.”

Before and during the gaggle. Seventy percent of the participants exhibited KW behavior before and during gaggles. A significant aspect of this behavior involved collecting and storing clients’ information, including color formulas, e-mail addresses, phone numbers, and preferred styles. Ashlee B encouraged newer stylists to collect the information. “I would advise them to prepare for [gaggle walkouts] if they are planning on leaving. A couple of my friends ran into a couple of hiccups just because they had not done a good job of taking . . . their clients’ information down.” As an owner, Kim OBE always encouraged her stylists to maintain records of clients’ information and to remain in contact with customers in order to foster the special bond between the stylist and the client. This unique bond allows the stylist to move to a different salon without a significant loss of customers and income. According to Ashlee B, when an owner remarked that joining a gaggle would cost Ashlee B some of her clients, she “did an internal giggle because I thought, ‘serious, dude?’ These people have been coming to me

for 20 years, and you think moving two streets down is going to make a difference?" I found that amusing."

After the gaggle. Fifty percent of the participants demonstrated KW behavior after a gaggle. For instance, some participants moved to new salons to obtain diverse learning experiences. Kim OBE remarked that after her gaggle, she was closer to her goals as a stylist. "I'm a multicultural stylist. My goal is to be an international stylist with a multicultural background. That lets you know that I can do every texture and type of hair because I did not set up for just one." Nicole E also presented a KW perspective:

> When you are at a company, working for somebody, soak up everything you can do to better yourselves. And don't be happy with where you are at. Don't get too content to where you don't want to experience personal growth.

Tatiana BE described her post gaggle situation as follows: "Your job is still your clients. You still have a full schedule on your books. You're not penniless, but you're just placeless." According to Tatiana BE, stylists have their knowledge and their special relationship with their clients, allowing the stylists to continue in their profession.

Recommending the industry. All of the participants said they would recommend the profession to other people. Twenty percent added a caveat, however. Jed E explained being a stylist is difficult and that to be successful, stylists must like working with people. Isa OBE was worried that not everyone has the character to be in the business. She also explained that when novice 18 year old stylists, just out of high school, go to hair shows there is a plethora of opportunities for them to get into trouble. Nevertheless, Isa asserted the following:

> It is a great career. I think as far as women go, if you hair looks good, you feel good. . . . As a hair stylist, you feel accomplished when you do a total makeover and they look younger or different in general and they like the new look. It is great money for a working mother. If you have children, you can make your own hours.

The remainder of the participants recommended the industry without stipulation. For example, Laura OE explained:

> I love this industry. No, I would encourage anybody to be a part of it. My 28 years in the industry, I've seen so many different things and had so many incredible experiences. I can't image working in another industry. Would I do it again? In a heartbeat.

Nicole E thought the business is perfect for the younger generation. Additionally, Tatiana BE stated the following opinion:

> I would still encourage [the beauty industry] because as bad as an experience as [the gaggle] was, it was only two experiences out of my entire life. You know, I've had overall 15 great years and 6 really, really shitty weeks.

Summary

Chapter 4 contained a review of the research protocol and a presentation of the analysis results. The 10 participants were selected via purposeful, snowball sampling. Data were collected through a demographic questionnaire and a telephone interview with open-ended questions. The interviews were transcribed and then imported into NVivo 10 for data analysis. Emergent coding and a modified version of Groenewald's analysis process were used to identify 17 themes and seven subthemes regarding the participants'

lived experiences. The analysis also uncovered five additional important findings. Chapter 5 contains discussion of the interpretations of the findings and their relation to previous research. The chapter also includes discussion of the limitations of the study, recommendations for leaders in the beauty industry and in the KW community, suggestions for further research, and conclusions.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

Mass salon employee walkouts, or gaggles, are common, painful, and potentially financially damaging for salon owners (Kirby, 2011; Sarfati, 2011). The general problem is that salon owners fear gaggle walkouts, particularly because clients may follow the gaggling employees. Salon owners understand they are one large gaggle away from financial insolvency (Kirby, 2011). The purpose of this interpretive phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of salon owners, employees, and IBRs regarding gaggle walkouts. This study is significant because prior to the study, there was a gap in the academic research regarding salon walkouts. This study is also distinctive because of the viewpoint that stylists are KWs whose clients are portable.

Chapter 5 contains interpretations and conclusions of the study's findings, particularly in relation to the chaos theory and the complexity systems theory. The chapter also contains discussion of the study's limitations, recommendations for leaders, suggestions for future research, and a summary.

Conclusions

Conclusion 1. Salons are entropic systems. According to chaos theory and complexity systems theory, salons are open social systems constantly undergoing change. Chaos theory indicates that small deviations can create large changes in a system in seemingly unrelated ways (Liebovitch, 1998). Figure 3 shows how a salon moves from equilibrium to disequilibrium because of change variables. From the perspective of complexity systems theory, which evolved from chaos theory, the salon is a complicated, unstable system with unpredictable and intermittent reactions to change (Ozdemir,

Ozdemir, & Yilmaz, 2014). Viewing the salon at a macro-level eases the process of understanding behavioral reactions to change variables (Ozdemir et al., 2014).

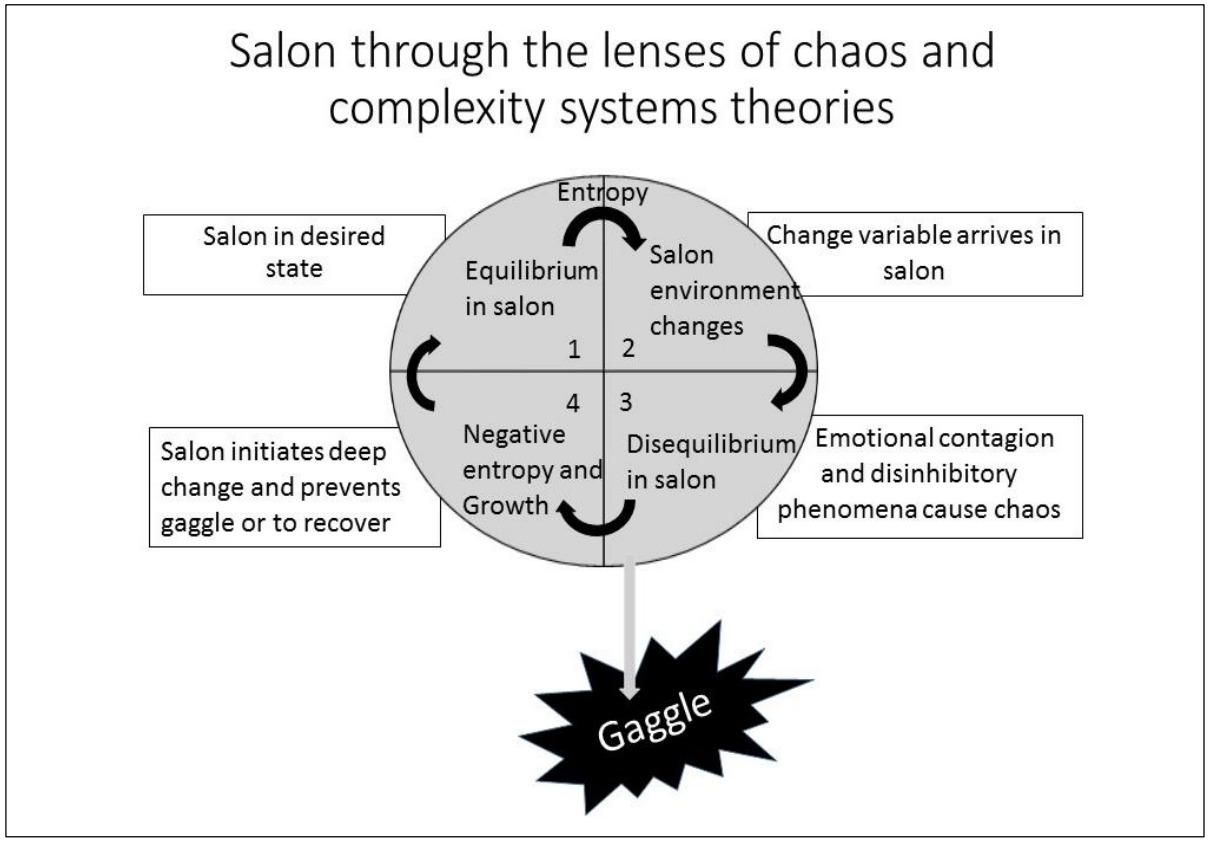

Figure 3. A salon (an entropic system) viewed through the lens of chaos theory and complexity systems theory. Salons move from equilibrium to disequilibrium because of the introduction of a change variable. By adapting to change, the salon moves back to equilibrium. Adapted from *Transformational Leadership Through the Lens of Chaos* (Doctoral dissertation), by J. J. Middleton, 2011, retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database (UMI No. 3454516), p. 7. Copyright 2011 by J. J. Middleton.

When the salon owners, employees, and IBRs in this study began to understand something was happening just prior to the gaggle, they were in a state of disequilibrium caused by change. The participants described changes that occurred just prior to noticing the disequilibrium. The complexity systems theorists would have the participants look further back. Complexity theory indicates there is rarely a direct cause-and-effect reason for disequilibrium (Darity, 2008; Liebovitch, 1998; Middleton, 2011; Ozdemir et al., 2014; Taneja et al., 2013). For example, Ashlee BE said she gaggled because the owner would not allow her and a partner to share a suite and split the rent. One indirect cause of the gaggle might have been the decision of city council members two years earlier to allow an investor to build a salon suite in a better location a few blocks away from Ashlee BE's salon. If the new salon opened shortly before Ashlee BE walked out, the opening might have been a precipitating reason for the gaggle.

Themes 1–3 in this study are related to the four quadrants of the chaos model (see Figure 3). Theme 1—personal attack—relates to the micro view of the owners', employees', and IBRs' lived experiences before, during, and after a gaggle walkout. The subthemes of anger, betrayal, and end of relationships support the view that disequilibrium contributed to a toxic salon environment, which in turn contributed to a walkout. Theme 3—financial considerations—was expressed by 70% of the participants and relates to the fear of gaggle walkouts potentially causing financial losses. These two overarching themes indicate hurt feelings linger even after a salon reaches equilibrium after a walkout.

The findings of this study align with Martin's (2014) research that indicates emotions are a large component of trust. When the employee-employer relationship

includes negative emotions (theme 4) and is accompanied by incompetency (mismanagement of a salon in disequilibrium), the trust level is at its lowest (Martin, 2014). Participants reported the lack of trust lasted beyond the gaggle. Lingering negative emotions and a lack of trust lead to the next change variable, a descent into disequilibrium, and the perception that nothing can be done to avoid gaggles (theme 2).

Themes 4–8 regarded the lived experiences of employees and IBRs while in the third quadrant (disequilibrium). Ninety percent of these participants mentioned the negative environment (theme 4) before and during the gaggle. During disequilibrium, the employees and IBRs concentrated on surviving the gaggle by developing an alternative plan (theme 5) and preparing their clients to eventually leave the salon (theme 7). Once the employees and IBRs decided to gaggle, they felt empowered (theme 6) and relieved (theme 8).

None of the owners recognized the disequilibrium as fully as did the employees and IBRs. Consequently, the owners were surprised when gaggles began (theme 9). Though the salon owners were surprised, they had suspected something was occurring (the change element). Once the owners recovered from their shock, they felt taken advantage of (theme 10) and hurt (theme 11).

After the gaggle, the employees and IBRs who gaggled moved from disequilibrium in the current salon to equilibrium in another salon. They reported being happy (theme 12) and thriving (theme 14). They also reported that their clients were more content (theme 13).

After the gaggle, all owners believed their salons had been cleansed of the personnel who did not fit with the salon environment (theme 15). The owners also

instituted operational changes and were more businesslike (theme 16). Further, the owners grew personally (theme 17).

Exploring the participants' lived experiences from a macro perspective using chaos theory and complex systems theory elucidates the overall gaggle phenomenon and aligns with the research of Middleton (2011) and Ozdemir et al. (2014). The gaggle clearly takes place in quadrant 3 (disequilibrium). The next set of conclusions is based on a micro analysis of the salon in disequilibrium.

Conclusion 2. A salon environment is a socially complex environment containing multiple forces that encourage stylists to stay (grounding forces) or encourage stylists to leave (flight forces). Figure 4 shows grounding and flight forces in a salon. The salon is in equilibrium when the grounding forces equal the flight forces. In disequilibrium, the flight forces are more substantial.

Grounding forces, such as the social aspect of the salon, can add energy to the system and thereby contribute to equilibrium. Participants said the effort required to move their equipment and clients to a new salon discouraged the participants from walking out. After establishing a routine at a salon, neither the stylists nor the clients are eager to move. According to the participants, events that decrease the influence of grounding forces include changes in management, the physical deterioration of the salon, and the opening of nearby salons with more-responsive managers.

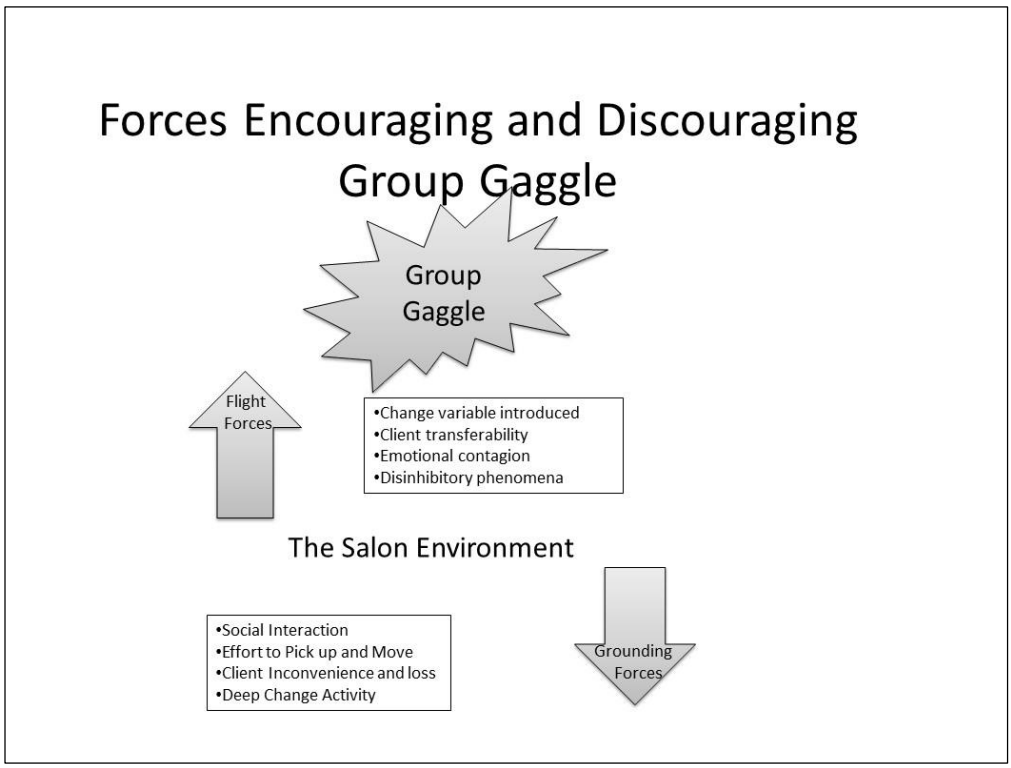

Figure 4. Forces encouraging and discouraging group gaggles. A salon environment is a socially complex environment that faces multiple forces that either discourage stylists to leave (grounding) or encourage stylists to leave (flight).

Increases in flight forces encourage stylists to walk out. Any change introduced in the salon environment increases the likelihood of a gaggle; change in the ownership is the most significant factor. Another factor is a stylist's status as a KW. Novice stylists learn to be KWs and start collecting client information. This information makes the stylist's job portable (assuming clients are more loyal to the stylist than to the salon). The results of this study show that a KW with a portable income has a low tolerance for disequilibrium.

Figure 4 is similar to Lewin's (1951) force field analysis model. Lewin developed this model to depict a change scenario. Driving forces try to move an organization from its current state to a desired state. Opposing those forces are restraining forces aimed at preventing the organization from moving toward the desired state (Lewin, 1951). Lewin postulated that when the restraining forces are mitigated, the driving forces will move the organization to change.

The most apparent difference between Lewin's (1951) force field model and the gaggle model is that a gaggle is not a desired state. In addition, the forces encouraging and discouraging a gaggle are not necessarily opposing. As noted in Figure 3, the desired state is equilibrium. The best example is when a stylist transitions from a process worker to a KW. A motivated KW is highly desirable because of his or her creativity and technical knowledge (Acsente, 2010; Carleton, 2011; Davenport, 2011). However, a KW who has his or her customers' information, client-relationship skills, and transportable explicit and tacit knowledge may be a flight risk (Hausknect et al., 2009). The salon operates most efficiently at equilibrium, when the stylists are most creative and engaged (Acsente, 2010).

Conclusion 3. Emotional contagion (subtheme 6) is a significant contributor to the entropic tendencies present in a salon. Emotional contagion is the leaderless spreading of positive or negative emotions that disrupt a normally functioning salon (Barsade, 2002). Several participants said that when one person was dissatisfied, he or she made others dissatisfied. Natalie B described the effect of emotional contagion. She explained that stylists believed that "if they were unhappy, you should be unhappy."

Soon the negative emotional contagion contaminated the entire salon, leading to a toxic environment.

Conclusion 4. The participants perception of a toxic salon environment (theme 4) is the best predictor of an impending gaggle. Ninety percent of the participants commented that the salon's atmosphere deteriorated before and during the gaggle. This toxic atmosphere was evidence of a salon in disequilibrium because of a change variable.

The toxic environment was exacerbated by emotional contagion. After one stylist demonstrated a mood of despair, other stylists adopted this attitude. Similar findings are present in the research of Hill and Bradley (2010) and Huang and Dai (2010).

Conclusion 5. Disinhibitory factors are change variables that can create disequilibrium in a salon. Disinhibitory factors may be related to emotional contagion and a toxic environment. A disinhibitory phenomenon is an event that signals to stylists that an action they believed would have a bad outcome will in fact not be negative (Levy & Nail, 1993). For instance, stylists may believe they will lose a significant percentage of their income if they leave. If the stylists witness coworkers leaving without consequences, the stylists will feel less pressure to stay.

As another example of a disinhibitory phenomenon, new stylists may watch more experienced stylists gather client data and increase customer-relationship skills without being punished by the owners. The new stylists may decide to implement these behaviors. Leander and Shah (2013) labeled this behavior goal contagion. The results of this study indicate support of the relationship between disinhibitory and goal contagion, consistent with the research of Barsade (2002) and Leander and Shah (2013). A disinhibitory phenomena in the past can affect individuals' current behavior. As an

example, if a stylist watched others leave successfully during a previous gaggle, then the remaining stylists (e.g., Jed E, Natalie B, and Tatiana EB) are more likely to leave during the next gaggle.

Change in ownership/management is a significant disinhibitory phenomenon. The participants noted that when ownership/management changes, the environment will also change, for better or for worse. The change is often a catalyst of a gaggle, though not necessarily the fault of the new owner or manager. If stylists are already unhappy and the salon is in disequilibrium, a change in ownership may become the event that leads to a gaggle. According to the stylists' thinking, if the salon is going to change, they might as well change salons.

Conclusion 6. The phenomenon of a stylist advancing from a novice service provider to a KW is a change variable. A salon is a tapestry of novice and experienced workers. The stylists can be salaried employees, commissioned employees, or IBRs. As the stylists' experience and the social nature of the salon change, the salon may slowly move to disequilibrium.

The most significant change is a novice stylist moving from the status of an inexperienced stylist to the status of a KW. A KW stylist owns his or her knowledge and client information. The KW behaviors identified during this study that are compatible with previous research including mobility (Acsente, 2010), ownership of tacit and explicit knowledge of customer relations and cosmetology (Mustapa & Daud, 2012), independent work, appreciation of autonomy (Davenport, 2011), innovation, and creativity (Toit et al., 2011). As the number of stylists who become KWs increases, the grounding forces regarding gaggles decrease.

Conclusion 7. The participants' salon teams did not display effective team EI. Group EI theory indicates that a small social group with strong EI is productive and able to manage conflict constructively (Mote, 2012). Stylists who engage in gaggle walkouts are not constructively managing the conflict associated with disequilibrium. Whether the poor team EI is caused by the owner, team members, or both, the gaggle is destructive to the team. Even when a salon survives, as did the salons of the three owners interviewed, the salon is changed and the original team is disbanded.

Conclusion 8. Salon walkouts are markedly different from labor union walkouts and school walkouts. Researchers of these latter types of walkouts have examined the causes and the negotiations that occur to bring together all stakeholders (Barberena et al., 2008; Devereux & Hart, 2011; Fiester, 2004; Franklin, 2004; Rascher & DeSchriver, 2012; Shelton, 1968; Yosso & García, 2008). The individuals who walked out intended to return to their jobs or schools after grievances were addressed. In contrast, the results of the current study show that gaggling stylists do not intend to return to their gaggled salons. The owners in the study said only two stylists attempted to return, and neither stylist was rehired. The negative emotions regarding the gaggle were too intense and recent for the owners.

Recommendations for Leaders

Salons can be viewed as complex social systems (Bagby, 2010; Grossman & Evans, 2001). Salons typically include owners (and possibly managers), commissioned or salaried employees, and independent contractors. When a gaggle is impending, the salon is infused with negative emotional contagion, spreading from stylist to stylist and eventually to the owner (Hill et al., 2010). The result is a toxic environment. The gaggle

signifies a crucible of leadership for the owner. The owner must decide whether to strive for deep change or to maintain the status quo (Bennis & Thompson, 2003). If the owner leads by example and moves early from reactive to proactive behaviors, then the owner may mitigate flight factors and increase grounding factors, thereby minimizing the likelihood of a gaggle walkout (Quinn & Caza, 2004).

Recognize salons are entropic systems. Given conclusion 1 (salons are entropic systems), it is important for leaders in the beauty industry, including salon owners, to view salons from the perspective of chaos and complexity systems theories. Leaders must look at the macro-environment of the salon. Through the lens of complex systems theory, the salon becomes understandable at high levels. Leaders need to understand that because salons are entropic systems, constant energy is required to maintain equilibrium. Even with constant energy, any change can create disequilibrium in a salon.

Chaos theory indicates small changes (which may appear insignificant) can cause large changes later (Middleton, 2011). The reason stylists give for the gaggle walkout may not provide a comprehensive view of the precipitating factors. For instance, a gaggle attributed to a change in ownership may have been influenced by a series of alterations that made the atmosphere toxic, which was the reason for the sale of the salon.

Gaggles occur during disequilibrium, so any indication that the salon environment has experienced a change variable requires leaders' attention. If the change variable is likely to create disequilibrium, leaders should intervene. Restoring equilibrium requires a reaction to the change. One method is to implement a cultural change, such as deep change. Deep change encompasses organizational and personal change (Quinn &Caza, 2004). According to Quinn and Caza (2004), the fundamental state of leadership is a

state in which a leader can transform an organization. A leader in the fundamental state provides the energy to stop organizational decay and begin rebirth and growth (quadrant 4 in Figure 3). When quadrant 4 is attained, the organization is again in equilibrium. The change can move all stakeholders toward integrity. The owners' first step is to self-reflect. Kim OBE explained the following:

> As an owner . . . you must check yourself first. It's easy to criticize and talk about somebody else. . . . Maybe I should look at myself and check myself to make sure I am not slipping out of my boundaries.

Understand the forces that encourage and discourage gaggles. Conclusion 2 indicates the need to understand the forces acting on a salon at all times. The owner must work to increase the grounding forces and mitigate the flight forces (see Figure 4). To complete these tasks, the owner can develop and support an organizational mission statement and other standard business practices. While some flight forces, such as change variables, cannot be eliminated, they can be managed.

One common tactic for managing flight forces is limiting the relationships between stylists and clients, thereby reducing client transferability (Bove & Johnson, 2000). When a gaggle walkout struck in the salon that Laura OE owned, the first thing she did was "lock down the computers." She was attempting to separate gaggling stylists from their clients and to discourage remaining stylists from joining the gaggle.

Stylists in the study who remained at a salon during a walkout indicated the information lockdown made them feel untrusted, even though they were loyal to the company. Jed E, for example, said this distrust developed in an instant and was

unjustified in relation to his behavior. The ultimate result of the lockdown was that the remaining stylists collected client data later and then joined a gaggle. Tatiana BE and Jed E mentioned that stylists typically service every client at least once every 2 months, meaning the stylists can collect information in a relatively short time.

Separating clients from stylists, therefore, is counterproductive. Research shows that increasing the relationship between the stylists and clients increases loyalty to the salon (Bove & Johnson, 2006; Yim et al., 2007). Yim et al. (2007) noted that good relationships influence a client to stay with the salon even when an attractive alternative, such a newer, closer salon is present. In addition, as Tatiana BE noted, the client often stays at the old salon for services other than hair, as long as the environment is not too toxic. When owners and other personnel lie to clients about the stylists who walked out, the client's trust in the salon erodes. Clients often know, for instance, that the receptionist is lying when she says their favorite stylists are no longer in the business.

Respond to emotional contagion and subsequent toxic environments. Regarding conclusions 3 and 4, once an owner recognizes a negative emotional contagion in the salon, he or she should take immediate action. The owners in the study were shocked when gaggles occurred because they failed to fully recognize the negative atmosphere that resulted from emotional contagion. The owners knew something was happening but didn't further examine the matter. The first walkout each owner experienced was when they were novice owners, so not recognizing the negative emotional contagion was understandable. Nevertheless, the results are potentially disastrous.

Once an owner recognizes a toxic atmosphere, the owner should immediately implement substantial changes. The owner might begin to rebuild the stylists' trust by using team-building exercises. Rebuilding trust may not prevent a gaggle but it may decrease the number of stylists who gaggle. Increasing trust will also foster a positive environment post-gaggle. Further, if the team building addresses the concerns of the remaining stylists, the team will have the energy required to move from quadrant 3 (disequilibrium) to quadrant 4 (growth).

Proactively adapt to disinhibitory phenomena. Conclusion 6 indicates the need for a proactive approach to disinhibitory phenomena. Any disinhibitory phenomena stylists experience are change variables that may lead to disequilibrium. As an example of being proactive, when an owner hire stylists, the owner must understand the backgrounds of the potential employees. If the stylists have successfully gaggled, they may be more likely than other stylists to gaggle again. Understanding why stylists left previous salons may help with the hiring decision and the development of stylist compensation plan.

The most significant disinhibitory phenomenon in the salons was a change in ownership. Changes in ownership and significant changes to operating procedures (deep change) are likely to lead to disequilibrium. Owners should therefore create strategies to proactively address disequilibrium. Outgoing owners could meet with each employee and explain the reason for selling the salon, which may alleviate the stylists' fears. The outgoing owner could also elicit promises from the stylists to stay at the salon for a period to give the new owner time to implement team-building strategies.

Some disinhibitory phenomena are desirable. As a stylist transforms from a process worker to a KW, he or she becomes empowered (Grossman & Evans, 2001). When the stylist grows in knowledge and customer service skills, he or she becomes more autonomous, which increases disinhibitory forces. The growth in knowledge and skills also increases the stylist's value to the salon and can be managed with different KW reward systems (Carleton, 2011). Other disinhibitory phenomena include watching other stylists leave, feeling untrusted, and observing stylists being harshly or unfairly punished after giving the required two week notice of intention to leave the salon..

Recognize, hire, motivate, and retain KW stylists. Conclusion 6 regards stylists becoming KWs. Although not all stylists become KWs, the ones who do need to be managed and rewarded differently than other stylists (Carleton, 2011; Frick & Drucker, 2011). To recognize KWs, owners need to know the characteristic of KWs. These characteristics include good relationships with clients, the desire to continue learning (including outside of the salon), and the desire to share knowledge and techniques with coworkers. KWs expect to be highly compensated for their expertise, but they also respond well to opportunities for continual learning and skill development, a supportive job environment, and opportunities to assume managerial roles (Allen et al., 2010; Grossman & Evans, 2001; Mustapa & Daud, 2012).

Because of the specialized skills of KWs, hiring these individuals is a critical task (Frick & Drucker, 2011). A salon owner might be tempted to delegate the hiring process, but the owner must use caution (Wocke, 2011). An important aspect of limiting current gaggles and eliminating future gaggles is hiring the correct KW stylists or stylists with KW potential. Especially with small, owner-operated salons, the incoming stylists must

fit with the existing team. To prevent the hiring of a new stylist (a change variable) creating disequilibrium, the stylist could be hired on a trial basis, and team members could be given the opportunity to provide input on the final hiring decision.

Become a team EI expert. Conclusion 7 indicates the importance of team building, EI, and team EI. Team EI requires the owner and each employee to become familiar with the tenets of effective teams and individual EI (Mote, 2012). Particularly important after a gaggle, high team EI promotes interteam trust, which may have been lost in the disequilibrium and subsequent gaggle (Chang, Sy, & Choi, 2012). One effective use of teams in the salon setting might be to assign stylists to different operations, such as marketing, facility management, client considerations, and strategic planning. Involving employees in daily operating procedures reduces the workload of the owner or manager, allowing the owner or manager to continue styling hair in addition to operating the salon. A further benefit of team management is the stylists may experience greater grounding forces because of the social interactions and client considerations (see Figure 4).

Implications for Leaders

In this study, stylists were considered KWs. Small-business owners in other industries also need to hire and maintain KWs to remain competitive and profitable (Hausknect et al., 2009). Such owners may be able to apply, with appropriate modification, the recommendations in this study. Of specific interest to owners of small KW companies may be KW growth. For instance, when a salon opens, the salon might predominately consist of novice stylists and a few experienced IBRs. The rules and protocols for employees may be autocratic, which works for young, inexperienced

stylists. Monetary incentive programs may motivate young stylist to perform better. With such a system in place, the salon will plateau at an acceptable level of performance (quadrant 1 in Figure 3).

Personnel, however, do not remain static. The stylists increase their knowledge, their abilities to transfer the knowledge, their client bases, and their customer relationship skills. Even one stylist moving from the status of process worker to the status of KW indicates a change event (quadrant 2). The owner might want to maintain the status quo, but as a creative stylist becomes autonomous, financially self-reliant, and empowered, the old rules and motivation schemes become a burden. Chaos may overtake the salon unless the owner recognizes that change is required.

The owner has the choice of being proactive or reactive. A reactive owner deals with each stylist as he or she becomes empowered. The results of the current study indicate the reactive approach often leads to gaggle walkouts. A proactive owner designs a system to adapt as stylists become KWs. A proactive owner might facilitate deep change to address the change event and its ramifications on the salon and the stylists.

Owners in other KW industries might see the same growth pattern from novice worker to KW. Although this study is an interpretive phenomenological study and therefore not generalizable, leaders of teams with KW might see similarities. These leaders may use the chaos theory and complexity systems theory to monitor the chaos associated with creative KWs. Even in KW industries that do not experience the gaggle effect, the mobility of autonomous KWs suggests the workers might leave for seemingly small reasons. Whereas in the salon industry the gaggle effect occurs in quadrant 3, companies in other industries may experience a slow drain of talent when in quadrant 3.

Leaders of KWs must understand the trends in their industries to retain KWs. Retaining KWs is critical because the loss of knowledge and intellectual capital can be devastating (Huang, 2011).

Based on the complexity systems theory, leaders should explore, deeper and indirect reasons KWs leave their organizations. A slow drain of talent and the time and capital required to train a new worker should encourage managers to discover change events. Since a simple cause-and-effect connection rarely exists in a complex system, the leader needs to recognize the change events that cause a move to disequilibrium.

Suggestions for Further Research

In this pioneering study, many opportunities for further research were uncovered. Minimal research is available on the relationship between service providers and their clients (Johnson, 2006), particularly between stylists and their clients (Cohen, 2010). There is also a large gap in the research regarding work relationships between employees and employers in the salon industry.

Because a gaggle walkout is considered a failure for the salon, there was difficulty finding owners who were willing to discuss the topic. Normally when a gaggle occurs, the stylists gaggle to many salons. Often the salons do not survive or survive in a different format. These considerations make academic research problematic. However, conducting the following research will add to the current knowledge about walkouts.

Qualitative. Conducting additional qualitative studies on the salon industry would provide a deeper understanding of the business models that salon owners use. A multicase study regarding the business models of mature salons that have not experienced walkouts and mature salons that have experienced gaggle walkouts could provide further

information regarding the lived experiences of stylists in different salon environments. The results of the case study might provide a preliminary answer the question of whether gaggle walkouts are inevitable.

In most small, owner-operated salons, the owner works as a stylist as well as the business operator (Sarfati, 2011). Research on the emotional consequences of being an owner-operator with stylist employees could help novice owners understand the significance of managing KWs in an emotional employer/employee relationship

Although not intentional, all participants in the current study remained in the profession after the gaggle walkouts they experienced. Another study could be conducted with stylists who left the profession or owners who businesses closed after a gaggle walkout. Such research could uncover additional themes regarding the lived experiences of owners and stylists before, during, and after gaggles.

Quantitative. Quantitative research could be conducted with a random sample of stylists from across the country to understand the general career path of stylists. For instance, the research could involve determining how many stylists have experienced gaggle walkouts, how many stylists become KWs, and which career paths appear to attract gaggles. Another study could be conducted to compare a typical salon with a learning salon.

Limitations

The study contained several limitations. The first limitation was the minimal prior academic research related to the salon industry and gaggle walkouts. Most of the literature directly related to mass employee walkouts was from professional beauty publications.

Another limitation of the study was that only successful stylists were interviewed; none of the owners interviewed had lost their businesses because of gaggles. Being successful was not a participant criterion but was rather an inadvertent result of using the snowball sampling method. Most stylists and owners had experienced a gaggle walkout early in their careers, and three had experienced one within the last 3 years. None of the participants were novice stylists at the time of the study. Though the participants had not experienced salon failures, some of the participants provided rich accounts of salons that had failed after gaggles.

The study was also limited by its qualitative, interpretive phenomenological approach. Because of this approach, the results are not generalizable to the overall salon population or to other industries. The general salon population, however, is very homogenous (Cohen, 2010), and the implications and recommendations for leaders might be useful to owners of all salons and managers of small KW teams in other industries.

The interviews were conducted during a 3-month period, which could have resulted in a snapshot of the perceptions and lived experiences of the participants at that time. This potential limitation was mitigated by obtaining data regarding the participants' lived experiences throughout their careers (all of the participants had worked in the industry for over a decade). This longer perspective provided a more complete view of gaggle walkouts and the lived experiences associated with them.

However, in phenomenological studies, the vividness of the participants' experiences is an important aspect in developing themes (A. Giorgi, 2006; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). The participants discussed experiences that had sometimes occurred many years before, which may have caused memories of the gaggles to fade. Gaggle

walkouts, however, were traumatic for the participants, and their emotions before, during, and after gaggles appeared to remain vivid in the participants' minds.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative, interpretive phenomenological study was to explore and interpret the lived experiences of salon owners, employees, and IBRs regarding gaggle walkouts. This study is important because salon owners live in fear of gaggle walkouts, a phenomenon that many owners and stylists consider inevitable (Kirby, 2011; Sarfati, 2011).

The data analysis process resulted in 17 themes and seven subthemes. The participants perceived walkouts to be personal attacks that included anger and betrayal. The stylists vividly expressed feeling sad that relationships were ending. The stylists and owners also feared for their livelihoods. Whereas owners and remaining stylists believed the gaggling stylist were immature, the gaggling stylists believed they needed to leave to escape a toxic environment, to grow personally, and to grow financially. When individual stylists became unhappy, emotional contagion spread the feeling of discontent across the salon, creating a negative atmosphere. Owners agreed that after the gaggling stylists left, the owners were able to improve the atmosphere for the remaining stylists.

The deep pain the owners, employees, and IBRs felt was discussed from the perspective of chaos theory and complexity systems theory. The salon moved from equilibrium to disequilibrium because of a change that the owners missed or ignored. The gaggle walkouts caused owners to implement procedures to mitigate the effects of the walkouts but not to avoid the walkouts.

The stylists and owners reported reasons for their walkouts, but the complexity systems theory indicates other reasons may have influenced the decision. The stylists had a web of personal and professional reasons for leaving; these reasons included their livelihoods, desire for growth, ownership changes, KW behavior, disinhibitory phenomena, and personal-life changes. Although many findings resulted from the study, the predominant lived experience was pain. The gaggle phenomenon separated friends, inconvenienced clients, threatened livelihoods, and ended relationships.

The study's findings begin to fill the gap in the research regarding gaggle walkouts in the salon industry. The study also contributes to the literature on disinhibitory contagion, emotional contagion, KWs, and team EI. The findings contrast with research on school and union walkouts; whereas students and union members intend to return to their organizations, gaggling stylists have no intention of returning.

Based on the findings, leaders are encouraged to use the chaos theory and the complexity systems theory to recognize when a change event has occurred. Owners can use deep change to self-reflect and transition from being a reactive leader to being a fundamental leader. Salon owners are also encouraged to increase the factors that mitigate gaggles and to decrease the factors that promote gaggles; however, owners should not discourage relationships between clients and stylists. Owners must respond proactively to emotional contagion and toxic salon environments. Owners need to be team EI experts and understand the role of KWs.

Additional research in several areas is needed. There is a lack of academic research on the beauty industry. The salon is a small, entropic, social system composed of innovative, autonomous KWs with very little incentive to stay at a particular salon.

Qualitative and quantitative studies on business models and the frequency of walkouts will add to the body of knowledge. The gaggle phenomenon is potentially debilitating for salons, and many owners and stylists believe the phenomenon is inevitable (Kirby, 2011). This study began the exploration of owners' and stylists' lived experiences before, during, and after gaggles. With further study, perhaps the gaggle effect will be better understood and possibly managed for the benefit of all stakeholders.

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Appendix A

Letter of Introduction

Hello,

My name is George Christensen, and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Phoenix. As part of my doctoral program, I am conducting a study titled *The Gaggle Effect: A Phenomenological Study of Employee Walkouts in the Salon Industry*. This study is needed because there is a general lack of research on the causes and effects of mass employee walkouts in the salon industry. Employee walkouts occur frequently and are universally feared by salon owners.

I am inviting you to participate in this study because you have experienced a walkout in a salon you owned or worked at. I would like to understand a walkout from your perspective so that I can better appreciate how you were feeling before, during, and after the walkout. If I can grasp the effects of the walkout, perhaps countermeasures can be implemented in salons to eliminate the need for walkouts.

If you choose to participate, your participation will consist of answering a short demographic questionnaire followed by a series of open-ended questions in a 60- to 90-minute interview, which will be audio recorded. In addition, after I transcribe the recordings, I will ask you to review the transcript to ensure that I accurately captured your perceptions. Your participation will remain anonymous, and I will protect your confidentiality before, during, and after the interview. I will assign you a pseudonym to use in place of your name during the study, and any documentation that contains your personal information will be kept in a locked cabinet in my office. I will secure all study materials for three years following the study and will then destroy all materials.

There is also the chance that I will ask you a few follow up questions at a later date. After talking to other stylists and owners, I might require some additional information. These questions will help me better understand the gaggle effect from your perspective.

If you agree to be part of this study, you may later decide not to be part of this study and withdraw at any time. If you want to withdraw, you can do so without any problems.

- You may withdraw *before the study*. I will respond by sending you an email confirmation of your withdrawal without penalty
- You may withdraw *during the study* without any penalty. You can stop your participation at any stage of the interview without worry. Just say "stop, I do not want to continue." I will immediately destroy any information you have provided thus far.
- You may withdraw from the *study up to 14 days after* the interview. I will not begin analysis until after the 14 days. Call ###-###-#### or email me at xxx@xxx.com. I will send you an email confirmation of your withdrawal, without penalty. I will immediately destroy all transcripts and recordings and will not use any information gathered from you.

If you have any questions about participation involves, please feel free to e-mail me at xxx@xxx.com or call me at ###-###-####. You can also contact my mentor, Dr. Michael Vandermark, by e-mail at xxx@xxx.com or by phone at ###-###-####.

If you would like to participate in this study, please e-mail me. I will then send you an informed consent form, which includes a guarantee that your confidentiality will be maintained. Once you have signed the form and returned it to me, I will contact you to set up an interview at a time convenient for you.

Thanks for your time,

George Christensen

Appendix B

Informed Consent: Participants 18 years of age and older

Dear ,

My name is George Christensen and I am a student at the University of Phoenix working on a doctoral degree. I am doing a research study entitled *The gaggle effect: A study of employee walkouts in the salon industry*. The purpose of the research study is to understand how people who own or work in a salon feel when the workers leave the salon. The intention and potential benefit of this study is increased understanding of why salon walkouts happen. This information may help salon owners change the way the salon is run and decrease how often workers leave the salon.

Your participation will involve completing an interview lasting around 60–90 minutes. In the interview, I will ask you a few questions regarding your experiences and feelings about a salon walkout. I will record the interview and transcribe the recording. I will ask you to review the written words to make sure it is correct and reflects your experiences and thoughts. It is possible that a follow on interview might be required to help me better understand how the gaggle or salon walkout affected you.

You can decide to be a part of this study or not. Once you start, you can withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty or loss of benefits. The results of the research study may be published but your identity will remain confidential and your name will not be made known to any outside party.

In this research, there are no foreseeable risks to you. Although there may be no direct benefit to you, a possible benefit from your being part of this study is a deeper

understanding of walkouts, which may help salon owners and employees avoid them. Also clients, who are not part of this study, will also benefit if walkouts are avoided.

If you have any questions about the research study, please call me at ###-###-#### or email me at xxx@xxx.com. For questions about your rights as a study participant, or any concerns or complaints, please contact the University of Phoenix Institutional Review Board via email at xxx@phoenix.edu.

As a participant in this study, you should understand the following:

- You may decide not to be part of this study or you may want to withdraw from the study at any time. If you want to withdraw, you can do so without any problems.
    - You may withdraw *before the study*. I will respond by sending you an email confirmation of your withdrawal without penalty
    - You may withdraw *during the study* without any penalty. You can stop your participation at any stage of the interview without worry. Just say "stop, I do not want to continue."
    - You may withdraw from the *study up to 14 days after* the interview. I will not begin analysis until after the 14 days. Call ###-###-#### or email me at xxx@xxx.com. I will send you an email confirmation of your withdrawal, without penalty. I will immediately destroy all transcripts and recordings and will not use any information gathered from you.
- Your identity will be kept confidential.

- George Christensen, the researcher, has fully explained the nature of the research study and has answered all of your questions and concerns.
- If interviews are done, they may be recorded. If they are recorded, you must give permission for the researcher, George Christensen, to record the interviews. You understand that the information from the recorded interviews may be transcribed. The researcher will develop a way to code the data to assure that your name is protected.
- Data will be kept in a secure and locked area. The data will be kept for three years, and then destroyed.
- The results of this study may be published.

By signing this form, you agree that you understand the nature of the study, the possible risks to you as a participant, and how your identity will be kept confidential. When you sign this form, this means that you are 18 years old or older and that you give your permission to volunteer as a participant in the study that is described here.

(☐)I accept the above terms. (☐)I do not accept the above terms. (CHECK ONE)

Signature of the interviewee _____ Date _____

Signature of the researcher _____ Date _____

Appendix C

Verbal Script for Interviews

Hello,

Thanks for choosing to participate in this study. As you know, this is a study about employee walkouts in the salon industry. I'd like to review the pertinent aspects of this research so that you will be fully informed about the nature of the study and the information that we will be discussing, so you will feel comfortable to proceed with the interview. Please feel free to stop me at any point to review any of the things said. OK?

Fantastic. My name is George Christensen, and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Phoenix. I am conducting a study titled *The Gaggle Effect: A Phenomenological Study of Employee Walkouts in the Salon Industry*. I'm conducting this study because there is a lack of research on why mass walkouts occur in the salon industry. You are participating in this study because you have experienced a walkout in a salon you owned or worked at. Your participation is important because if I can understand walkouts from your perspective, I might be able to determine why walkouts occur. If I can determine why, perhaps salon owners can implement strategies to make the walkouts unnecessary.

Your participation in this study will consist of answering a demographic questionnaire and a series of open-ended questions, which will take about 60–90 minutes. This interview will be audio recorded, and after I transcribe the recordings, I will ask you to review the transcript to ensure I accurately captured your perceptions. During this interview and the entire research project, your confidentiality will be protected. I have assigned you a pseudonym, which will be used throughout the study. Any study

materials that contain your personal information will be kept in a locked cabinet and in a password-protected computer in my office. Once the study is complete, I will store all study materials in the locked cabinet for 3 years, after which I will destroy the materials.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary; during the course of the interview, you can request at any time to take a break or to stop the interview altogether. Withdrawing from the research will have no consequences of any kind.

- You may withdraw *during the study* without any penalty. You can stop your participation at any stage of the interview without worry. Just say "stop, I do not want to continue." I will immediately destroy any information you have provided thus far.
- You may withdraw from the *study up to 14 days after* the interview. I will not begin analysis until after the 14 days. Call ###-###-#### or email me at xxx@xxx.com. I will send you an email confirmation of your withdrawal, without penalty. I will immediately destroy all transcripts and recordings and will not use any information gathered from you.

Do you have any questions about what your participation involves in this study?

Do you want to participate in this study?

[If no: I understand, and I will destroy any study materials containing your personal information. Thanks for your time.]

[If yes: Great, we can now proceed to the interview.]

Appendix D

Data Collection Instruments

Demographic Questionnaire

1. Pseudonym: _____ Age: _____
2. Gender: _____
3. Degrees Held: _____Associate's _____Bachelor's _____Master's _____Doctorate
4. How many years have you worked in the salon industry? _____
5. How many salons have you worked at? _____
6. What was your position at salon during **walkout:** _____Owner _____Employee _____IBR
7. What is your **current** position in the salon industry: _____Salon Owner _____Employee _____IBR _____Not currently working
8. What **previous** positions have you held in the salon industry: _____Salon Owner _____Employee _____IBR
9. What is your current **yearly** salary range _____<$10,000 _____$10,001–$20,000 _____$20,001–$30,0000 _____$30,001–$40,000 _____$40,001–$50,000 _____$50,001–$60,000 _____$60,001–$70,000 _____other amount (please state)
10. How many employee walkouts have you experienced? _____
11. What are the top three reasons you left or if owner, why you think you had a walkout?
    a. _____
    b. _____
    c. _____

Interview Questions for Employees and IBRs

1. As you think back throughout your career in the beauty industry, what are your memories regarding any walkout experiences?
    a. What happened? What was it like to be part of the experience?
        i. Can you recall how it felt to be part of a gaggle, a walkout?
    b. What did the experience mean to you?
        i. Were you changed in anyway?
2. Part of the reason you were selected for this study is because you have experienced a walkout/gaggle as an employee or booth rental.
    a. What comes to mind as your most vivid memory of the experience?
        i. What happened? Can you describe your experience emotionally?
    b. How did the walkout affect you personally as you lived through it?
    c. What were your feelings as you experienced the walkout as a professional who provides services to clients?
3. Before you walked out, did you make arrangements to join another salon?
    a. If so, can you say a few words about your experience of leaving one salon for another? What did it mean to you?
    b. If did not have a salon to gaggle to, how did it feel to leave without a new location in mind?
4. Since the time of the walkout, how has the experience of the walkout itself changed your attitudes or beliefs about the beauty industry and your role in it?
    a. Overall, what did the walkout/gaggle experience mean to you?

b. Based on your experience, what advice would you offer a new salon owner or employee about your experience of the walkout?

5. Finally, if someone you cared deeply about was contemplating joining the salon industry – walkouts/gaggles included – would you be happy about their choice? Please elaborate.
6. Any closing comments about life lessons learned?

Interview Questions for Salon Owners

1. As you think back throughout your career in the beauty industry, what are your memories regarding any walkout experiences?
    a. What happened? What was it like to be part of the experience?
        i. Can you recall how it felt to be part of a gaggle, a walkout?
    b. What did the experience mean to you?
        i. Were you changed in anyway?
2. You were selected partly because you experienced a walkout as an owner.
    a. Please say a few words about what happened, its meaning to you, and your reaction to the walkout.
    b. I would like to understand a walkout from your emotional and business owner's perspective. What memories are most vivid for you?
3. Forward your thinking to after the gaggle finished. What were the emotions you felt after the gaggle?
        i. What actions did you take following the walkout? For example, did you decide to close or sell your salon?
        ii. Did you make any changes in your life that you believe were significant due to the walkout?
        iii. Did you change any of your beliefs and attitudes about business ownership or perhaps the beauty industry because of the walkout?
4. If you could pass on some words of wisdom or advice to a salon owner facing an imminent walkout, based on your experience, what would you advise?

5. Since the time of the walkout, how has the experience of the walkout itself changed your attitudes or beliefs about the beauty industry and your role in it?
    a. Overall, what did the walkout/gaggle experience mean to you?
    b. Based on your experience, what advice would you offer a new salon owner or employee about your experience of the walkout?
6. Finally, if someone you cared deeply about was contemplating joining the salon industry – walkouts/gaggles included – would you be happy about their choice? Please elaborate.
7. Any closing comments about life lessons learned?

Appendix E

Themes and Subthemes by Research Question

Research question	Theme	Subtheme
What are the lived experiences and perceptions of salon owners, IBRs, and employees before, during, and after a gaggle?	1: Personal attack (80%) The walkout is personal, not just a business decision.	1a: Anger (60%) Owners felt anger toward employees, and employees felt anger toward owners.
		1b: Betrayal (40%) Owners and employees felt betrayed by each other
		1c: End of relationships (40%) Relationships between employees and between employees and the owner ended.
	2: Inevitability (80%) Gaggle walkouts are part of the industry.	2a: Stylists' immaturity Owners' and stylists' believed some stylists are immature.
		2b: Growth and independence (50%) All owners were employees who had gaggled. Sometimes stylists need to leave to grow professionally.
	3: Financial considerations (70%) For owners, a gaggle is a financial burden; for employees, a gaggle can lead to a higher income and other opportunities.	
Research subquestions 1 and 2 for employees and IBRs: What are the lived experiences and perceptions unique to employees and IBRs before and during a gaggle?	4. Negative atmosphere (90%) The salon environment becomes negative and is obvious to employees and clients.	4a: Emotional contagion (90%) Negative emotional reactions spread from one employee to another. These emotions include unhappiness, cliquish behavior, and lack of trust.
		4b: Disinhibitory contagion (40%) Once one stylist walked out, other stylists felt free to do the same.

Research question	Theme	Subtheme
	5. Plan B (80%) Employees and IBRs maintain client information and look for other places to work in case of a gaggle or ownership change.	
	6. Empowerment (50%) Gaggles empower stylists not to depend on others.	
	7. Client considerations (40%) Stylists forecast how many clients they will lose in a gaggle.	
	8. Relief (50%) Stylists feel relieved after deciding to gaggle.	
Research subquestions 1 and 2 for owners: What are the lived experiences and perceptions unique to owners before and during a gaggle?	9. Shock (100%) Owners are surprised when they realize a gaggle is occurring.	
	10. Ingratitude (100%) Owners provide training and mentoring, yet employees still leave.	
	11. Hurt (66%) Owners feel hurt because they are friends with their employees.	
Research subquestion 3 for employees and IBRs: What are the lived experiences and perceptions unique to employees and IBRs after a gaggle?	12. Happiness (50%) Employees and IBRs are better off after a gaggle.	
	13. Client considerations (50%) Clients are happier after.	
	14. Prosperity (40%) All stylists and IBRs survived, and 40 % were doing significantly better afterward.	
Research subquestion 3 for owners: What are the lived experiences and perceptions	15. Salon environment (100%) The negative atmosphere disappears after the gaggle.	

Research question	Theme	Subtheme
unique to salon owners after a gaggle?		
	16. Businesslike behavior (100%) Owners are more businesslike, treating employees as employees rather than as friends.	
	17. Personal growth (33%) Owners identified personal benefits from experiencing gaggles.	