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Strategies for Increasing Workforce Engagement

JoAnne White Hayes
Walden University

Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

JoAnne White Hayes

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Review Committee
Dr. Annie Brown, Committee Chairperson, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Rocky Dwyer, Committee Member, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Mary Dereshiwsky, University Reviewer, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
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Abstract

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MS, Webster University, 2015

BS, North Carolina A & T State University, 1982

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

The existence of disengaged employees can reduce productivity and increase organizations' costs. Engaged employees are vital to many organizations and the success of organizational leaders. Grounded in Herzberg's two factor theory, the purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies managers used to increase employee engagement in the nonprofit industry. Participants were 3 managers in South Carolina who successfully implemented strategies to increase employee engagement. Data were collected from semistructured interviews and a review of company documents. Data were analyzed using Yin's 5-step method of analysis, and 3 themes emerged: providing clear and concise communication, recognition and rewards**,** and training and development. A key recommendation is for managers of nonprofit organizations to take actions based on the findings such as adding more recognition and rewards programs to increase employee engagement. The implications for positive social change include the possibility of sustainability within the local nonprofit community and improving the quality of life for the employees and members of the community.

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Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral study to my mom, Catherine, who has always instilled the value of an education in me and encouraged me to complete all my accomplishments in life. I am thankful for your love, care, and values. This is also dedicated to my children, Dr. Joannie, James, Daisy, and Virginia, I am truly blessed to have you in my life. During my doctoral process, you have motivated me to overcome life's obstacles as they popped up. Please remember that "Knowledge is power" and once you get it NO ONE can take it from you. So, keep learning! I will love you all forever!

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First and foremost, I want to thank the Lord Jesus Christ for getting me through the DBA process. I give him the praise and the glory as HE truly gave me the knowledge and determination to strive to overcome obstacles. I had to make sacrifices along the way but the ALMIGHTY knew what was best for me and gave me what I needed to endure the challenges of this program. I would like to thank my significant other and anyone else who encouraged and believed in me along the way. I would like to also thank Dr. Tracy Washington (Sissy & Soror) who was always there to pick me up during some of lowest points. I would also like to thank Dr. Annie Brown, my study chair, for her guidance and motivation. Your emails and words of encouragement inspired me to overcome disappointments and let me know you believed in me. I would like to thank Dr. Rocky Dwyer, my second committee member, and Dr. Mary I. Dereshiwsky, University Research Reviewer, for improving my study with your great feedback.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Employee engagement is an important factor in business (Griffin, Bryant, & Koerber, 2015). The purpose of this study was to explore strategies managers can use to increase workforce engagement. Disengaged employees can be costly to organizations in terms of profit and productivity. According to Shuck, Twyford, Reio, and Shuck (2014), managers should focus on holding the reduction of turnover to improve organizational performance and focus on retention strategies. In order to help reduce turnover and ensure employee organizational commitment, managers must focus on factors such as leadership development, employee relations, and compensation (Shuck et al., 2014). However, according to Strom, Sears, and Kelly (2014), some managers in the nonprofit industry lack engagement strategies to meet the needs of the nonprofit organizations. This section includes reasons for conducting this study and strategies for improving employee engagement in the workplace. I present the background of the problem, problem statement, purpose statement, nature of the study, and qualitative research question. The conceptual framework for this study was the two-factor theory developed by Frederick Herzberg in 1959. A review of the professional and academic literature on employee engagement regarding this study appears in Section 2.

Background of the Problem

Employee engagement plays a very important role in the survival of a business. Engaged employees may show commitment to the organization and a belief in the organization's mission and vision. An engaged employee may express himself or herself physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances whereas disengaged employees withdraw and defend themselves physically, cognitively, or emotionally during role performances (Jose & Mampilly, 2014; Kahn, 1990). Nonprofit managers face a task of having turnovers due to lack of employee engagement which could cause problems.

According to Hausknecht and Holwerda (2013), low performance and a high turnover are the results of unhappy and disengaged workers. Low morale, poor performance, poor work element of teamwork, loss of knowledge from departing employees, and an organization’s lack of strategies for employee engagement in an organization could lead to high turnover. The loss as a result of disengaged employees can be costly to organizations. Costs may incur when organizations interview, hire, and train new employees. Other costs may incur if employees voluntarily leave, thus creating costs to replace them (Hazelton, 2014).

Organizational leaders with a strategic plan can help create a pleasant, safe, and productive and engaged workforce. Wollard (2011) suggested that the retention rate of engaged employees tend to be higher than disengaged employees. In March of 2016, 34% of U.S. employees were engaged, along with 16.5% who were "actively disengaged", with the remaining 53% of the workers in the "not engaged" category (Harter, 2018). Disengaged employees tend to quit more often, are less productive, and sick more often, which can negatively affect the cost-effectiveness of an organization (Wollard, 2011). Additional research is necessary regarding how managers can influence employee engagement with necessary strategies. New research may assist in the development of strategies to increase employee engagement in the nonprofit industry.

Problem Statement

Disengaged employees cost organizations between $450 and $550 billion annually (Auh, Menguc, Spyropoulou, & Wang, 2016). Auh et al. (2016) concluded that disengaged employees lack enthusiasm and commitment to work and the workplace. The general business problem is disengaged employees can reduce productivity and increase organizations' costs. The specific problem is some managers lack strategies to increase employee engagement in the nonprofit industry.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies managers use to increase employee engagement in the nonprofit industry. The target population was three managers in a midsize nonprofit organization with a statewide presence in South Carolina who have successfully implemented strategies to increase employee engagement. The information from this study will lead to positive social change with sustainability of a nonprofit organization that nurtures success of employees, employees' families, and communities. The creation of a work environment that nurtures employee engagement, nonprofit leaders may also contribute to social change through an employee's improved home life and emotional well-being.

Nature of the Study

The three methods of research considered for this study were quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. I used a qualitative descriptive case study approach. Shtulman (2015) explained that using a qualitative method can enable researchers to interpret phenomena from the viewpoint of participants. Yin (2017) stated that the quantitative method involves measurements of analyzed collected data to examine variable relationships or differences through statistical procedures. A quantitative method would not be appropriate for this study because this method requires the testing of relationships between two known variables and did not collect numerical data for statistical testing. A mixed method was not appropriate because researchers use mixed methods to focus on understanding the cause of an issue and not finding a solution to a problem (Golicic & Davis, 2012). Therefore, quantitative or mixed methods were not appropriate for this study. Therefore, neither the quantitative nor the mixed methods were appropriate for this study because the research of this business problem focused on life experiences and both use mathematical data. Therefore, neither the quantitative nor mixed-method methods were appropriate for this study because the research of this business problem focused on the life experiences of the participants and quantitative and mixed methods use mathematical data.

I used single-case study design in this study. Yin (2017) explained that a case study design is appropriate for addressing what, how, and why research questions focused on behavioral events, rather than frequencies of incidence. The single-case study design was most appropriate for this study because the focus was on a single organization. The single organization chosen for the study offered a unique set of engagement strategies based on the premise that the company was a service-based organization in South Carolina. Through descriptive designs, participants responded to interview questions according to their knowledge and experiences. An ethnographic researcher studies the culture of a particular group (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). A grounded theory researcher studies the construction of theory through data analysis, and the narrative theory researcher studies individuals' stories (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Baskerville and Myers (2015) noted that ethnographic researchers go beyond observation and actively engage participants in the field to characterize group cultures. The ethnographic research design was not the best because ethnographers focus on studying an entire culture of individuals to gain views of their experiences and I did not study or observe an entire group culture. Therefore, grounded theory, narrative, and ethnographic designs were not appropriate designs for my study, and I used a single case study.

Research Question

What strategies do managers use to increase employees' engagement in the nonprofit industry?

Interview Questions

1. How do managers define employee engagement in your organization?
2. What strategies do managers use to motivate employee engagement in your organization?
3. What strategies does your organization have in place to help employees improve engagement?
4. How do your managers assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the strategies used to increase employee engagement?
5. How would you evaluate your current training programs used to increase employee engagement?
6. What workplace tools (e.g. onsite training, e-learning, etc.) are available to

enhance employees' engagement in your organization?

7. How did you address the key barriers to implementing your successful strategies for improving employee engagement in the organization?
8. What additional information about employee engagement would you like to provide that you have not already addressed?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was the two-factor theory developed by Frederick Herzberg. Herzberg (1959) was very interested in people's motivation and job satisfaction and thus came up with the theory. He conducted his research by asking a group of people about their good and bad experiences at work. Surprisingly, the responses to the questions about their good experiences were very different than those about their bad experiences. The two-factor theory provides two factors that affect motivation in the workplace. These factors are hygiene factors and motivating factors. Hygiene factors will cause an employee to work less if not present. Motivating factors will encourage an employee to work harder if present (Herzberg, 1959). Motivational factors yield positive satisfaction and employees should be praised and recognized for their accomplishments by managers. Motivational factors that were relevant for this study were recognition, sense of achievement, and meaningfulness of the work. The two-factor theory was beneficial for nonprofit managers to have an increased understanding of the findings of this study. Managers Knowing the specifics of what motivates employees and what works when there are issues that bother them will help with employee satisfaction. Herzberg's theory is important to organizational commitment, employee engagement, and personal needs of employees because the more motivated the employees are, the more empowered the team is. The more teamwork and individual employee contribution, the more profit and success will exist in the business.

Operational Definitions

This section includes definitions of terms and phrases used regarding the topic of employee engagement.

Disengaged employee: Disengaged employees are physically, mentally, and emotionally absent from their roles at work (Kahn, 1990).

Engaged employee: Employees who are fully involved in and passionate about their work (Kahn, 1990).

Job dissatisfaction: Negative attitudes and lack of pleasurable emotional feelings employees have towards their jobs (Locke, 1969).

Job satisfaction: Overall positive attitudes of employees towards their job. (Locke, 1969).

Strategies: Strategies are guidelines used by organizational leaders to make decisions about the future of organizations and their ability to produce desired results (Iyamabo & Otubanjo, 2013).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

The purpose of this subsection is to discuss assumptions, limitations, and delimitations. Assumptions are accepted as true, or at least believable by researchers without real evidence. Limitations are potential weaknesses in the study and are out of the researcher’s control. Delimitations are choices made by the researcher which should be mentioned. They describe the boundaries that the researcher has set for the study (Schwarzfeld & Sperling, 2014). These all play a role in the study because if a researcher has an understanding and can separate the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations, the study will be successful.

Assumptions

Assumptions are what the researcher believes to be true without real evidence (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Three assumptions guided this study:

1. Participants answered interview questions honestly.
2. The interview questions are applicable for this study and the responses from the participants can provide the necessary information needed to answer the research question in this study.
3. The participants for this study will provide information during the interview that is relevant to the study topic and contribute to the overall business knowledge of this topic.

Limitations

Limitations are factors known at the beginning of the study that may affect outcomes of the study (Schwarzfeld & Sperling, 2014). Two limitations that guided this study were:

1. The sample population interviewed leaders and not the full staff which may limit the results of the study because the attention is on performance of certain members of the management team.

2. The qualitative single-case study was limited as the results were not general and open to all settings, industries, and populations.

Delimitations

Delimitations are boundaries or restrictions that researchers enforce on a study to limit its range (Foss & Hallberg, 2014). Two delimitations that guided this study were:

1. The sample size in the multiple case study included qualification through data saturation. In the study, I used purposeful sampling of participants to secure strategies on employee engagement.
2. The restrictions of the study included nonprofit leaders and did not allow for participants outside of the population.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study could help nonprofit business leaders to improve their business outcomes by improved volunteer performance because according to Dutton & Kleiner (2015), poor engagement affects employees' attitude, sense of security with their jobs, and confidence in the workplace.

Contribution to Business Practice

The findings will serve as a guide for managers who lack strategies to increase employees' engagement in the nonprofit industry. Managers could use findings to improve their strategies for increasing employee engagement, and ultimately increase customer satisfaction with more employee engagement and the performance of the nonprofit. Implementing motivation strategies could enable a nonprofit organization to address employee problems such as complaining, gossiping, lacking enthusiasm, and lack of willingness to help others in the workplace.

Implications for Social Change

Implications for social change from this finding of this study could include the potential for improved opportunities such as education and community programs provided by nonprofit organizations subsequently improving the lives of the people in the community. Nonprofit leaders are able to motivate and engage their volunteers and meet their organizational goals, nonprofit organizations increase the potential to grow and employ more volunteers. An increase in the number of volunteers could lead to a larger number of social change programs that the community can use, thus making the lives of the people who live in the community better.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies of nonprofit managers used to increase employee engagement in the nonprofit industry. I explored the different strategies that will increase engagement in the workplace. I conducted a qualitative single-case study focusing on one nonprofit organization in South Carolina. To increase the knowledge of those in management or leadership roles about engagement, researchers must understand how employee engagement and disengagement could affect performance in a business organization. The following keywords including combinations of terms were used for this study: *Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation*, *Vroom's expectancy theory*, *employee engagement*, *barriers of employee engagement*, *influences of engagement*, *a leader's role on engagement*, *transformational* *leadership, organizational alignment, turnover, strategy nonprofit turnover, employee turnover, employee retention strategies, organizational commitment, employer-employee relations, nonprofit employees, employee turnover in nonprofits, and nonprofit retention strategies.* Areas of focus in the academic literature were organized based on the following topics: Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation, employee engagement, employee engagement types, employee disengagement, leadership types, performance and engagement strategies, productivity and engagement factors, motivation and employee engagement, engagement initiatives, and positive psychology. I used several academic databases to obtain literature for this study. Literature about employee engagement included peer-reviewed articles and journals, books, websites, dissertations, and government reports. Primary research databases were the Walden University online library, ProQuest, Google Scholar, Thoreau, SAGE, EBSCO, and Emerald Management. The total number of articles in the literature review was 189, of which 97% were peer-reviewed, and 35% were published within the last 5 years required by Walden University. The first part of this literature review focuses on employee engagement and different factors.

Conceptual Framework: Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation

Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation includes motivation and hygiene factors. He wanted to know when they were satisfied and unsatisfied when it came to the workplace. Herzberg concluded that motivation factors lead to job satisfaction while hygiene factors lead to a reduction in job dissatisfaction. There is no direct correlation between satisfaction and dissatisfaction of the workforce, which means satisfaction does not increase when dissatisfaction decreases, and vice versa (Kim, Kim, & Heo, 2016). In Herzberg's study, the participants offered their views on what pleased them and displeased them in their work environment and other work-related characteristics.

The first factor known as motivators or satisfiers are described as intrinsic. Intrinsic motivation refers to behavior that is driven by internal rewards and arises from within the individual (Fareed & Jan, 2016). Herzberg explained that employee satisfaction was a result of certain job-related characteristics such as knowledge and skills, mental and physical demands, and working conditions. Managers need to offer motivators or satisfiers linked to employee motivation. Some aspects of satisfaction include advancement, responsibility, recognition of on the job achievement, opportunities for growth, and advancement (Herzberg, 2003).

Herzberg's second factor is known as the hygiene factor. Hygiene is used to describe the factors that cause dissatisfaction in the workplace (Kermally, 2005). These factors are extrinsic and arise from outside the individual and are connected to compensation, salary, job security, job status, working conditions, personal growth, quality of leadership, supervision, and the relationship between supervisors, subordinates, and peers. Hygiene factors are for making employees feel comfortable, happy, and secure (Herzberg, 2003). According to Herzberg's theory, to limit employee dissatisfaction, managers must offer hygiene factors such as good working conditions and good rapport with the workers to keep them satisfied.

While the lack of job satisfaction and compensation are some of the factors that could lead to employee dissatisfaction, managers should recognize employee's contributions to the organization, disseminate responsibilities, and help their employees grow in order to produce motivated behavior in employees (Fareed & Jan, 2016). Herzberg contended that motivational factors such as job satisfaction, communication, and motivation are important because they can directly influence the attitude and morale of employees and can contribute to the reduction of employee turnover.

Contrasting Theory: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow’s (1943) theory of human motivation theory was in regards to the motivational needs of human beings. Maslow used the theory to describe motivation based on the ground that people need fulfillment to be motivated. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a motivational theory containing the following needs (a) physiological, (b) safety, (c) love, (d) esteem, and (e) self-actualization are the important the needs of humans (Maslow, 1943). It has been shown by researchers that humans need to achieve lower-level needs before addressing the higher-level needs (Rahman & Nurullah, 2014). Maslow explained that humans need to have all their needs fulfilled to be motivated and to have needs of self-actualization emerge. The needs that will be the focus of this study are self-actualization of achieving one’s full potential and physiological needs of esteem and belonging. These needs could be the focus because volunteers are unpaid and I suppose that volunteers have accomplished the lower-level physiological and safety needs. The findings of this study could contribute to the framework on the factors that nonprofit leaders could use to motivate the volunteers of the organization from the lower level of Maslow’s hierarchy to a higher level.

Physiological Needs

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (1943), the strongest human needs are physiological needs. These needs consist of oxygen, food, drink, and adequate sleep. Physiological needs are the strongest needs because they are needed to sustain life and is needed in the upkeep of the human body. Maslow believed that these needs are the most instinctive needs because all needs become secondary until these needs are met.

Safety Needs

Maslow (1970) stated that the safety needs of an individual consist of sense of security, stability, protection, and order. The safety needs of an individual consist of a person’s sense of security, stability, protection, or order (Maslow, 1970). The safety needs might serve as the single most exclusive controller of a person’s behavior simply because the need for safety can become a leading mobilizer of the person’s capacities to establish order or security (Maslow, 1970).

Maslow (1970) declared, it is human nature to desire a safe and secure place that protects from dangers in a person’s environment as well as the need for financial security that establishes a stable life. Such needs of security cognitively represent the value humans place on existence (Gouveia, Milfont, and Guerra (2014). Thus, an expression of the need to affirm the basic conditions for individual biological or psychological survival is a person’s value of existence. In the sense of safety and stability, Maslow (1943) highlighted the human need for familiarity rather than unfamiliarity and the tendency to organize the universe and other people as a safety seeking instrument.

Esteem Needs

People want self-respect, self-esteem, and the esteem of others (Maslow, 1970). Esteem needs refer to the need for respect, self-esteem, and self-confidence. Esteem needs are the basis for the human desire we all have to be accepted and valued by others. Maslow’s hierarchy is the need for appreciation and respect. All people desire confidence, strength, self-belief of believing in oneself, personal and social acceptance, and respect from others. When the needs of three lower levels have been satisfied, the esteem needs begin to play a more important role in motivating behavior.

Human behavior is driven by needs, one of which is the need for a sense of personal importance, value, or self-esteem (Maslow, 1970). Maslow (1943) characterized esteem needs into two categories: esteem for oneself, which involves the desire of a person to achievement, adequacy, competence, confidence, independence, and strength, and desire for reputation and respect from others, which includes status, prestige, dominance, recognition, attention, dignity, and appreciation. Maslow indicated that the needs of children and adolescents for respect or reputation is most important and comes before self-esteem or dignity because life changes and challenges to self-esteem must be faced each stage of the children and adolescents’ life. He or she must repeatedly redefine who they are and continuously re-evaluate how they are doing in the process. When self-esteem needs are satisfied, individuals tend to improve about themselves when self-confidence, self-worth, and capabilities are gained (Maslow, 1970). Insufficient esteem needs tend to create feelings of humbleness, weakness, or helplessness (Maslow, 1943).

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is an indispensable concept towards many characteristics of individual and organizational performance. Kahn (1990) described employee engagement as the commitment level employees provide to organizations in terms of reaching the goals of the organization and how employees feel, think positively, and commit to the organization. Employee engagement is becoming the focus of attention in different organizational settings because employees are recognized by management as being essential to the success of the business. (Bakker, 2011) explained that engagement in the workplace between employees and leaders is critical to the success of an organization. Employee engagement is a concept used in the management of a business to measure the investment of employees (Kumar & Sia, 2012). Kahn (1990) conceptualized the engagement theory and suggested that when people are personally engaged, they pay attention and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally when in-role performance. Engaged employees devote their complete selves in roles while in the workplace.

Employee engagement is not the only concept that can fit in all organizations, and the size and type of organization may determine the strategies used to encourage engagement Shuck & Herd (2012) explained that applying different methods strategically might establish a culture of engagement in different ways based on the structure of the organization Many companies use a business strategy to incorporate effective employee engagement (Cattermole, Johnson, & Jackson, 2014). Leaders might have to examine why employees are not motivated to engage and then devise a plan that best fits the needs of their organization.

Engagement Types

Kahn (1990) described three types of engagement: cognitive, behavioral, and emotional engagement. According to Shuck and Reio (2014), cognitive engagement happens in the workplace where employees feel connected to their work and are motivated to do their job well. Subramoniam (2013) explained that engaged employees associate meaningful work through the organization’s products, purpose, and services and find gratification when they serve the organization’s customers based on each employee’s contribution to the organization. The engaged employees tend to be more involved and when they see their work as meaningful and helpful in terms of the success of the company (Steger, Dik, & Duffy, 2012).

Shuck & Reio (2014) described b*ehavioral engagement* as the manifestation of emotional and cognitive engagement in a physical form. Employees are highly productive and their contribution increases as employees progress in their careers when involved in behavioral engagement (Alagaraja & Shuck, 2015). Behavioral engagement also involves the physical effort put into the work which causes high engagement and causes an increase of emotional and cognitive engagement. Engaged employees who value the work environment and are doing meaningful work may express their ideas without fear of retribution.

Emotional engagement is the passion an employee has for the work he does and believes in. Shuck & Reio (2014) described emotional engagement as a connection that causes a commitment from individuals by providing a personal sense of beliefs, pride, and knowledge to the organization. Shuck and Rose (2013) suggested that experiences such as family, stress, and emotional connection might affect the growth of employee engagement. Emotional engagement occurs when an employee demonstrates an emotional connection with the organization. Organizations that are family-focused usually have an emotional connection.

Types of Employees

Employee engagement is the degree to which employees feel a level of passion for their jobs and have a level of commitment to the organization. This type of emotional commitment means the employees are engaged and care about their work and their company (Kahn, 1990). An employee is considered highly engaged if he is fully engrossed in his work or encouraged to perform his task beyond what typically is expected in his job role (Alagaraja & Shuck, 2015). Being this engaged shows that these employees don't work just for a paycheck, or just for the next promotion, but on behalf of the organization's goals.

Employees can be classified into three categories: actively engaged, not engaged, and actively disengaged. Engaged employees are emotionally attached to the organization and tend to work with passion. These employees are inventive and provide new ideas and have a consistent performance to move the organization forward (Shao, Feng, & Wang, 2017). They have personalized the company’s goals and objectives and tend to work above and beyond their job requirements for the advancement of the organization.

Employees not engaged will work their scheduled time, they are not passionate about their work, and will not put energy into their work. These are the employees who only do what is asked of them (Kahn, 1990). They can have either a positive or negative attitude towards the organization. The job was only a paycheck, nothing more.

Actively disengaged employees tend to be unhappy, resentful, and willing to spread negativity within the organization. Yet, despite doing less than the minimum, these employees tend to last longer in the organization by removing employees whom they perceive will attain higher positions soon (Anand, 2017).

Employee Disengagement

Disengaged employees can create tension in an organization. Actively disengaged employees are defined as employees who are not unhappy at work and tend to act out their unhappiness by performing poorly at work (Soane et al., 2013). Employee disengagement is related to employee engagement, these phenomena are often studied as being connected to each other and disengagement is often discussed in the way of its negative influence on the organization (Kahn, 1990). Employee engagement and disengagement are influenced by personal and work experiences (Kahn, 1990).

A disengaged employee can be damaging to an organization. Unsatisfied employees will not be as engaged in their work and tend to be less productive and more likely to leave (Jofreh, Aghaei, & Mamqani, 2014). Marrelli (2011) explained that while a disengaged employee may stay with an organization, the unhappiness could lead to an increase in absenteeism, low productivity, burnout, resistance to change, negativity, and a decrease in an organization's profitability. Organizations are negatively impacted by weak leadership through increased employee turn-over rates, decreases in production, and a decrease in product quality (Heather et al., 2014).

Unhappy employees tend to become unengaged employees. Unengaged employees focus on tasks instead of goals and usually do not have work relationships with managers and coworkers (Anand, 2017). Detached and disengaged employees focus on tasks and tend not to work at their full potential. Unengaged employees tend to have poor relationships with other employees in the workplace (Anand, 2017). Disengaged employees have little regard for the mission and vision of the organizations for which the employees work. According to Marrelli (2011), employees might become disengaged because employees no longer trust their supervisor, their goals are not measurable, and lack of communication from leadership and supervisor who does not follow through on commitments.

Disengaged employees tend to not link with work or coworkers in the workplace. Wollard (2011) explained that disengaged workers may separate themselves from their work duties because of professional or personal or reasons. Individuals may not commit themselves completely to work duties because of other areas of satisfaction such as volunteering and hobbies (Marrelli, 2011). Employees disengage at work for several reasons, such as lack of desire, work responsibilities, or management.

Leadership

Leadership may be a serious factor to assist with increased engagement of the employee in the workplace. Hagemann and Stroope (2013) said that the next generation of leaders is not prepared, or does not have the necessary competencies, for a leadership role. The development of future leaders is essential for organizations to survive and still can compete. Future leaders, as shown through research, need new skills such as creating a vision, leading teams, driving results, and managing work which is no different from the past (Kalenderian, Taichman, Skoulas, Nadershahi, & Victoroff, 2013). Catchings (2015) explained that a skill for the next generation of leaders was to have the ability to apply critical thinking to complex situations. It was also found by the researchers that future leaders need to be tolerant and flexible because the structure of the workforce will consist of multiple generations and cultures.

Sometimes the key to the success of an organization is the leaders. McKee, Waples, and Tullis (2017) declared that there is evidence that business leaders may provide meaningful work, support and development, personal resources, and enhanced work relationships. Leaders could increase employee engagement if they would focus on worker enthusiasm which could ultimately affect productivity and work quality (Pater & Lewis, 2012). Business leaders might need to remain committed to employee engagement on a nonstop basis. An increase in employee engagement happened because employers demanded long-term commitments from management (Keeble-Ramsay & Armitage, 2014). Powis (2012) explained that having open and honest communication continuously with feedback to employees might increase engagement initiatives. A consistent line of communication between employees and business leaders might increase employee worth in the organization and, thus, increase engagement (Powis, 2012). However, there must be a willingness to communicate organizational goals to employees to implement the workplace approach of employee engagement by the leaders. Leadership development programs, when provided by organizations, can offer employees with job resources to increase their engagement, satisfaction, and commitment. Decision making by leadership must be solid and strong enough for employees to accept organizational change (Carter, Armenakis, Feild, & Mossholder, 2013). Managers should be aware of their actions and behavior as their decisions may drive employee engagement (Saks & Gruman, 2014). For this to happen, employees must trust their leadership and understand that leaders are making these decisions for the organization (Malinen, Wright, & Cammock, 2013).

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership has become increasingly a popular subject for organized inquiry within most fields. Steinwart and Ziegler (2014) described transformational leaders are projected to be able to inspire trust from followers and serve as role models for employees. Transformational leaders are defined as visionary, proactive, and innovative. This form of leadership is based on the personal values of the leader (Steinwart & Ziegler, 2014) and is expressed through their interactions with others. Transformational leaders stimulate and inspire followers to provide a little more effort to achieve group goals (Amanchukwu, Stanley, & Ololube, 2015). Leaders of this style have a vision that focuses on employees' attention on their contributions to the organization (Steinwart & Ziegler, 2014).

Followers of transformational leaders are motivated to go beyond the achievement of short-term goals, based on self-centeredness, to the next level of personal and organizational goals. The transformational leader also promotes an organizational culture where employees are encouraged to be creative (Kopperud, Martinsen, & Humborstad

2014). This leadership approach nurtures development, increased commitment, and motivation. Increased commitment will yield the results of extra effort and enhanced productivity (Henker, Sonnentag, & Unger, 2015). Onorato (2013) described four characteristics associated with transformational leadership: (a) charisma, (b) individual consideration, (c) intellectual stimulation, and (d) inspirational motivation. Charisma refers to vision and the ability to gain trust and respect from employees while instilling pride among them. This behavior also involves a strong sense of mission (Antonakis & House, 2013). The charismatic behavior encourages followers to strive for the good of the team while inspiring them that obstacles can be overcome, and goals can be achieved. McCleskey (2014) stated that individual consideration is focused on the personal and professional development of the followers (McCleskey, 2014). McCleskey (2014) claimed that this behavior can include employee development through mentoring and coaching.

Intellectual leaders tend to encourage originality and creativity among employees. Additionally, intellectual leaders tend to promote critical thinking, and problem-solving. Henker et al. (2015) described how intellectual stimulation allows followers to create new ideas and think artistically. The researchers claimed that this type of leader promotes level-headedness, intellect, and problem-solving (Henker et al., 2015). This type of leader engages various viewpoints to solve problems and is highly respected. The character of intellectual stimulation is to increase groundbreaking thinking and capabilities amongst followers. Antonakis and House (2013) inspirational motivation is the process by which a leader launches higher standards and becomes a reference for those standards. The researchers theorized that the employees consider the leader a role model, and therefore, inspirational and with that are higher expectations of communication. The leader is expected to always be positive about the future through reasonable, clear objectives and solid strategies, and employees are encouraged to put in their best effort (Antonakis & House, 2013).

Transformational leaders can improve organizational creativity through an environment that encourages different methods of problem-solving. Transformational leaders have more confidence and thus instill confidence in their followers. Amanchukwu et al. (2015) stated that an important characteristic of transformational leadership is effective communication. Thus, the leaders must be able to explain the difficult issues and intellectualize ideas in ways that the employees can understand.

Ethical Leadership

Ethical leadership is one form of leadership where individuals show respectable conduct for the common good that is satisfactory and appropriate in every area of their life. Ethical leadership is made up of three major elements: (1) Be the example: An ethical leader should remember that actions speak louder than words (Bouckenooghe, Zafar, & Raja, 2015). An ethical leader should practice and demonstrate the use of ethical, honest and unselfish behavior to its employees and peers. (2) Champion the Importance of Ethics: An ethical leader should focus on the overall importance of ethics such as ethical standards and other ethical issues, and how these factors can influence society. (3) Communicate: Effective ethical leaders tend to be good communicators (Bouckenooghe et al., 2015).

Leaders should know that people communicate in different ways. Some may feel comfortable speaking in public while others may be hesitant about public speaking. Those who are hesitant may be better communicating via email, rather than in person. Leaders need to build camaraderie with their team. The building of a quality relationship tends to be built on trust, fairness, integrity, honesty, consideration, and respect (Kangas et al., 2016).

Ethical leaders must always be an example of an organization's values. Ethical leaders prefer to promote constructive interactions between themselves and their employees in the workplace with attention to the ethical behaviors of all in the workplace (Engelbrecht, Heine, & Mahembe, 2014). Ethical leadership tends to lead to valuable organizational outcomes and employee engagement and the followers of ethical leaders will copy the behaviors of their leader and sequentially make ethical decisions (Tu & Lu, 2016). Those in the workforce will develop trust for their leaders when ethical behavior is displayed. This display of ethical behavior will turn into trust for the organization (Engelbrecht et al., 2014). There are many ways that ethical leaders motivate their workforce. Ethical leaders instill self-reliance in their followers and motivate them to work harder (Tu & Lu, 2016). Ethical leaders also provide their workforce with effective performance appraisals, freedom to complete their tasks, and the tools to complete their jobs (Yidong & Xinxin, 2013).

Participative Leadership

Management and staff participation are an important part of an organization. Vincent (2016) described participative leadership as a managerial style that welcomes input from employees on all or most company decisions. In a participative, the staff is given relevant information regarding company issues, and a majority vote determines the course of action the company will take thus encouraging the participation of the workforce (Vincent, 2016). Participative leadership means the leader will give up, delegate, or share some of his or her decision-making power and control to the team (Lam, Huang, & Chan, 2015). Sagnak (2016) explained that participative leaders encourage innovation while creating opportunities to learn.

The level of participative leadership will depend on the leader. There are many beliefs associated with participative leadership. The first is that the employee is more committed when involved in the decision-making process (Huda, 2014). The second belief is that when employees in the workplace working on mutual goals, they tend to be more cooperative (Huda, 2014). The final belief is that employees make better decisions when working as a group, as opposed to working alone (Huda, 2014). Participative leaders can inspire and motivate their employees. Participative leadership has a positive effect on the intrinsic motivation of employees in the workplace and organizational performance (Sagnak, 2016) The positive relationship between participative leadership and intrinsic motivation means that as participative leadership increases so does the intrinsic motivation of the team. Participative leadership also helps to develop and instill trust in the leader from the employees (Newman, Rose, & Teo, 2014). Although many recognize participation from the employees as a motivator, some leaders do no implement participation to its fullest potential (Lam et al., 2015).

Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership values order and structure in an organization. Transactional leadership is defined as the give and take that occurs between the leader and followers (Chandani, Mehta, Mall, & Khokhar, 2016). This leadership style tends to focus on work, reward, and processes that drive consistent results. Transactional leaders lack the excitement and charisma often found in transformative leadership. Transactional leaders are results-oriented, which is usually great for business for an organization. The use of power is what Transactional leaders base their leadership style on and on a system of rewards and penalties (Brahim, Riđić, & Jukić, 2015). There are two integral factors of transactional leadership: contingent reward and management by exception. Transactional leaders use contingent rewards to motivate their workforce (Masa'deh, Obeidat, & Tarhini, 2016). Contingent rewards occur are when positive exchanges between the leader and his or her followers exist after the individual accomplishes the goal (Brahim et al., 2015). Contingent reward motivates with expectations and subsequent rewards for reaching the goal (Brahim et al., 2015). The rewards are a motivational tool for followers. Leadership by exception is a system in which the transactional leader must intercede when the follower does not meet the acceptable standard of their work (Brahim et al., 2015).

Transactional leaders tend to not be interested in transforming or improving the future. They prefer things to remain the same. Creating innovation is not a strength of transactional leaders and does not produce long-lasting changes (Martin, 2015). Transactional leaders set the standards of performance and tend to focus more on task completion rather than motivation (Martin, 2015). Transactional leaders set goals, assign responsibilities, and made clear the expectations to confirm that leaders can achieve the desired organizational ends (Martin, 2015). The employee will either receive a reward for the completion of the task or punishment for not completing the task. Transactional leaders provide the employee with clear targets and a reward or punishment will be provided based on the outcome of these targets (Rawung, Wuryaningrat, & Elvinita, 2015). A transactional leader bases his or her relationship with followers on reward or punishment, which does not promote a true relationship. Transactional leaders are competent in establishing only a short-term leader-follower relationship (Rawung et al., 2015). Transactional leadership may be useful in motivating employee engagement, but it is not as effective as transformational leadership (Breevart et al., 2014). By providing contingent rewards, the transactional leader may inspire involvement, loyalty, commitment, and performance (Keskes, 2014).

Transactional leadership can damage employees. Breevart et al. (2014) explained that after a review of the literature, transactional leadership unfavorably affects an employee’s engagement. Breevart et al. (2014) found that transactional leadership may be useful in stimulating employee engagement but is not as effective as transformational leadership. By providing contingent rewards, the transactional leader might inspire a reasonable degree of involvement, loyalty, commitment, and performance (Keskes, 2014). A financial incentive is enough to motivate many employees into productive work habits and using the rewards system, the Transactional leader can focus on proven processes that will produce the desired consistent results.

Charismatic Leadership

Charismatic leaders tend to motivate employees to get things done. Charisma is a process, a line between the characteristics of a charismatic leader, the group that is being led, their identification with their leader, their needs and the circumstances that require a charismatic leader like a crisis or need for change (Horn, Mathis, Robinson, & Randle, 2015). However, when it comes to the charismatic traits of a leader, the importance is placed on the way they communicate with members of the group and the leaders' ability to gain the trust of followers and inspire the individuals to perform (Horn et al., 2015).

Charismatic leadership is the method of encouraging behaviors in others by way of powerful communication, persuasion, and force of personality. Charismatic leaders use many techniques to motivate their employees. Charismatic leaders motivate followers to get things done or improve the way certain things are done. Shao et al. (2017) explained that charismatic leaders inspire and motivate their followers to get things done or improve the way certain things are done by speaking positively about the future and implanting positive ideas in their followers. Charismatic leaders use clear communication with a clear expectation set to motivate their workforce (Horn et al., 2015). Charismatic leaders also have a sense of self-confidence to empower their workforce and share a vision (Ponsombut, Kanokorn, & Sujanya, 2014).

Charismatic leaders are very skilled communicators. These individuals are very good at expressing themselves verbally and they can communicate with the people they lead on a deep, emotional level (Lepine, Yiwen, Crawford, & Rich 2016). One of the advantages of charismatic leadership is the ability of these individuals to articulate an enchanting or persuasive vision (Zhang, Avery, Bergsteiner, & More, 2014). They can induce strong emotions in their followers as well. Charismatic leaders also have the significant ability to separate and interpret any inefficiency within an organization (Zhang et al., 2014). The creative traits attributed to this leadership style often result from critical thinking, the compiling of facts and finding ways to solve a variety of problems (Zhang et al., 2014). Charismatic leadership contains a sense of style, talent, and confidence. Charismatic leaders have a quality that is hard to pinpoint but tends to attract followers and inspire people to action (Zehir, Müceldili, Altindağ, Şehitoğlu, & Zehir, 2014). Transformational leaders tend to be highly charismatic because they have the capability of starting and maintaining an important level of change in the organization (Zhang et al., 2014). Listed below are the top ten most visible characteristics of charismatic leadership:

Charismatic leaders have extraordinary skills in communication and are just as comfortable communicating one-to-one or in a group setting. This helps to motivate employees through tough times and also help them stay grounded when things are good (Sacavém, Martinez, da Cunha, Abreu, & Johnson, 2017).

A charismatic leader has maturity and character to go along with a powerful personality. Charismatic leaders draw on their wisdom and knowledge which they have accumulated over the years of life and business experiences. They always behave maturely and responsibly (Sacavém et al., 2017).

Charismatic leaders also have a sense of humility. They place a lot of value on each employee and they demonstrate by listening to their concerns. The charismatic leader can convince the employee that he is valuable to the organization and show them how their contributions influence the strategic interests of the company. They motivate great loyalty from their employees (Sacavém et al., 2017).

Compassionate charismatic leaders are also successful. Because it can fade quickly, charisma alone may not be enough. A compassionate charismatic leader also may have display other qualities such as integrity, honesty, and fortitude which will help them to be successful charismatic leaders (Sacavém et al., 2017).

Charisma can only exist without substance for a very brief time. A leader may display the behavior of being showy and glitzy to capture the attention of people, but this display is short-lived because the people want something significant once they realize the behavior is fake (Sacavém et al., 2017). A charismatic leader must not only talk the talk but also walk the walk. A charisma leader knows that to close the deal he needs substance (Sacavém et al., 2017).

Charismatic leaders are confident. They are the leaders with the belief that the glass is half full and is content with who they are. They are true to themselves and will not try to be anyone else. In other words, charismatic leaders are comfortable in their skin (Sacavém et al., 2017).

A charismatic leader has a warm, open, and positive body language. They tend to make eye contact with anyone they are talking to, they smile and introduce themselves to strangers with the sincere joy of making a new contact. They are authentic and have an appealing swagger (Sacavém et al., 2017).

Charismatic leaders are very good listeners. When they listen to you, they don't fidget or look distracted. A charismatic leader pays attention to what is being said and listens with interest. They are engaged in the conversation and act with empathy (Sacavém et al., 2017).

One of the characteristics of charismatic leaders is that they often tend to watch themselves. The fact that their followers are constantly watching them makes them more aware of their powerful personality. Charismatic leaders have to portray a worthy image of themselves to their followers which can only be achieved through self-monitoring (Sacavém et al., 2017).

A charismatic leader understands that he has certain qualities that make him different from others and that these are the qualities that get him attention and make him charismatic. So, he also knows how important it is to continually improve himself (Sacavém et al., 2017).

Motivation in Nonprofit Organizations

Employees at nonprofit organizations come from all walks of life. The pool of employees of nonprofit organizations is composed of individuals from all walks of life including leaders, teachers, managers, lawyers, housewives, coaches, students, mentors, scientists, and nurses (Gazzola & Amelio, 2015). Individuals have different reasons which will help them decide where they will work and volunteer. Word and Park (2015) explained that some may choose their place of employment based on the financial success of the organization, the status of the organization, and its contribution to the community. More than anything else, individuals may also choose their place of employment centered around on their personal needs, values, and motivation (Word & Park, 2015).

Individuals work for nonprofit organizations for many reasons. Individuals who choose careers in nonprofit organizations consider helping others as a priority in life and tend to have intrinsic (Baines, Campey, Cunningham, & Shield, 2014). It is necessary to the success of any organization to find the right individuals for the right job and making sure the individuals were fit with the values of the organization (Baines et al., 2014). An important function of the leadership team involves the motivation of nonprofit employees which can lead to the success of the organization. It is important for an organization to know and understand the factors that motivate employees (Conrad, Ghosh, & Isaacson, 2015). Job advancement is not a motivating factor for employees who work for nonprofit organizations (Porter, Riesenmy, & Fields, 2016). Individuals who choose to work in nonprofit organizations should share the same vision with the nonprofit organization in order to help make a difference (Gazzola & Amelio, 2015). Instead, they gain motivation to work for nonprofit leaders and organizations because of past experiences, interests, and community ties (Nencini, Romaioli, & Meneghini, 2016).

Motivation of Volunteers

Those who work for a nonprofit organization tend to be prepared and willing to work in any capacity. Volunteers tend to wear many hats within an organization from planning to organizing events (Gazzola & Amelio, 2015). Leaders of a nonprofit organization often use volunteers to balance the workplace. These leaders are aware that volunteers are the heart and soul of their organization with their smiles and hard work that enables the leader to push the cause of their organization forward. Volunteer retention is a critical factor in the success of a nonprofit organization (Temminck, Mearns, & Fruhen, 2015). There are two benefits when it comes to volunteers. The first is the motivation of volunteers, it is a significant factor for nonprofit leadership because the knowledge and experience of volunteers provide benefits to the volunteer and the organizations they serve (Nencini et al., 2016). The second benefit is when using volunteers as employees, volunteering opportunities are valuable to both the organization and the volunteer. This, in turn, becomes an organizational benefit of cost savings on labor while the volunteer benefits from helping the community in which they serve (Nencini et al., 2016).

Motivational Factors

Green, Finkel, Fitzsimons, & Gino (2017) explained the five ways to start motivating nonprofit's volunteers: (a) Leaders should know and understand the volunteer's reasons for volunteering. Having this information will provide the leaders the knowledge keeps volunteers engaged and motivated; (b) Leaders should communicate what the expectations and responsibilities are of the volunteers. Communication is perhaps the easiest and most effective way of keeping volunteers motivated; (c) The act of appreciation. Regardless of why an individual volunteer, they want to know they are appreciated. This is important because lack of appreciation could potentially create a disengaged volunteer who will then become less and less available; (d) Finally, leaders should provide social recognition. Leaders can have the volunteers' work recognized both internally and externally by taking advantage of social media or an awards banquet. At the end, when volunteers are motivated, they become devoted and willing to give more of their time and effort to their volunteering responsibilities (Alfes, Shantz, & Saksida, 2015).

Supporting Theory: Vroom's Expectancy Theory

While Maslow and Herzberg looked at the relationship between internal needs and the resulting effort expended to fulfill them, Vroom's expectancy theory separates effort which arises from motivation, performance, and outcomes (Baumann & Bonner, 2016). I. Vroom studied the motivation of people and determined it depends on three factors: expectancy, instrumentality, and valence. Multiplying the expectancy, the instrumentality, and valence will calculate the motivation of the workforce (Nimri, Bdair, & Al Bitar, 2015).

Expectancy can be defined as the person's perception that a greater effort will result in greater performance. In other words, an employee believes that increased effort will lead to increased performance (Nimri et al., 2015). Instrumentality is about the employee's performance is good enough to achieve the desired result. An organization can stimulate an employee's desire by giving incentives and rewards such as bonuses or promotions. An employee must believe that if he or she performs well, an appreciation will be shown to them for the results. An important element of instrumentality is transparency throughout the rewarding process (Nimri et al., 2015). Valence is the importance that one places upon the expected outcome. For the valence to be positive, the individual must prefer achieving the outcome of not achieving it. (Nimri et al., 2015).

Vroom's expectancy theory works on perceptions. An employer may think he has provided everything appropriate for motivation and it may work with most people in that organization, there is always the chance that someone won't perceive that it doesn't work for them (Wood, Logar, & Riley, 2015). Abraham Maslow and Frederick Herzberg researched the relationship between the needs of people and the efforts they make. Vroom distinguishes between the effort people put in, their performance and the result. Vroom’s theory mainly relates to motivation in the work environment (Munoz, Miller, & Poole, 2015). Victor Vroom contends that when employees can make choices in their work, they will generally choose what motivates them the most (Wood et al., 2015). In the final analysis, Vroom's expectancy theory of motivation is not about self-interest in rewards but about the connections people make towards the expected outcomes and the contribution they feel they can make towards those outcomes (Hsu, Shinnar, & Powell, 2014).

Transition

The information in Section 1 involved the difficulties of a nonprofit organization in South Carolina and they encounter when employees are not engaged in the workplace. Section 1 includes the background of the problem, problem statement, purpose statement, nature of the study, and research question. Next, I presented the conceptual framework, operational definition, assumption, limitations, delimitations, and significance of the study. Lastly, the literature review includes a comprehensive combination of studies done by past researchers performed to confirm why employee engagement is essential to an organization. This research study consisted of two additional sections.

Section 2 began with a restatement of the purpose of the study, the role of the researcher, the participants, research method and design. Next is a comprehensive explanation of the research method and design, population and sampling, procedures involved in ethical research, data collection instruments and techniques, data organization technique, and analysis of the data. I concluded the section with the reliability and validity of the project. Section 3 includes the findings of the study, a conclusion, and recommendations for future study.

Section 2: The Project

Section 2 includes the purpose of the study and research. The research method and design for this study was a qualitative single-case study approach. In Section 2, I restate the purpose of the study, and provide descriptions of how I planned to conduct the study. Section 2 of this study includes a restatement of the purpose, role of the researcher, research participants, research method and design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection instruments, data collection techniques, data organization techniques, and reliability and validity of the study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore what strategies three nonprofit managers used to increase employee engagement in the nonprofit industry. The target population will be three managers in a midsize nonprofit organization with a statewide presence in South Carolina who had successfully implemented strategies to increase employee engagement. Implications for positive social change could contribute to positive social change by enhancing the understanding of the strategies used by nonprofit leaders to create a focus on engaging workers in the workforce. Insufficient volunteer services to schools, healthcare settings, and other organizations would upset the activities of the communities in which these organizations operate (Stukas, Snyder & Clary, 2016). Regardless of the status of a worker, paid or unpaid, workers need to be motivated by an organizational leader to realize their goals and to make the organization successful (Jyothi, 2016).

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher is to collect, protect, and analyze data to identify and report findings in an ethical manner. The researcher acts as a data collection instrument while interviewing a potential participant (Yin, 2017). Researchers who conduct qualitative case studies hold group discussions, conduct face-to-face interviews, and observe participants (Makono & Nyaruawata, 2014). Researchers must treat participants with fairness, ensuring that ethical interview protocols are in place (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1979; Yin, 2017). A qualitative researcher uses semistructured interviews and open-ended questions with participants to properly document data (Yin, 2017). The Belmont Report, established in 1979, provides ethical principles and guidelines for research involving human subjects. Researchers produce ethical research partly by ensuring anonymity of the participants, confidentiality of participant's identity, and informed consent of the participants, as well as considering how the research may affect participants (Sanjari et al., 2014). I adhered to all Belmont Report ethical principles which include respect for individuals, beneficence, justice, and informed consent for participants.

Yin (2017) noted that researchers must acknowledge their lens and consider how they may influence research choices throughout a study. My role as a researcher was to reveal strategies managers could use to engage and increase employee engagement in the nonprofit industry. Personal biases may nullify the credibility and reliability of a research project (Gittelman et al., 2015). I do not have a relationship with any of the participants in this nonprofit organization I interviewed. Before I started the collection of data, I had to decide on my interview questions. To develop these questions, I used my past experiences. I have personal knowledge and training in volunteering in the nonprofit industry; therefore, my goal within this process was to remain unbiased and remove any personal feelings and beliefs I may have during each interview. In order to remain unbiased during the interview process, I approached the study as an independent participant and acted only to gather data, while leaving out any personal beliefs.

A researcher has the responsibility to gather information from participants. I used an interview protocol (see Appendix B) throughout my data collection and analysis to ensure the integrity of the research and protect the confidentiality of participants. The interview protocol included providing a comfortable environment, thoroughly explaining the purpose of the study, and most of all, obtaining permission to conduct the interview. Conducting interviews was the primary data collection method with open-ended questions to enable participants to share their experiences. Note-taking was the process I used to gather data and capture participants' responses. Other ways involved analyzing data, transcribing information from each participant through member checking, creating themes based on information discovered from the interviews, and using data to provide insight into strategies to promote successful employee engagement. After each interview, I reviewed data to interpret and identify common themes and patterns.

Participants

This qualitative single case study included three managers involved in keeping volunteers engaged. A qualitative researcher must select participants based upon established criteria to ensure relevant responses addressing the overarching research question (Yin, 2017). A key component of a qualitative study is to select appropriate participants voluntarily (Maskara, 2014). Participants met the eligibility requirements of having a comprehensive knowledge and lived experience regarding the topic of engaging employees in a nonprofit industry, currently employed at a nonprofit organization using employee engagement strategies, having the authority to direct and provide resources to employees, and a proven success of implementing successful and current strategies.

. Participants were nonprofit managers in South Carolina who had successfully implemented strategies to engage employees to improve productivity in the workplace. I emailed letters of cooperation (see Appendix A) to potential participants and invited them to take part in my study. I emailed consent forms to each qualified participant before scheduling interviews. Once I received consent, I scheduled interviews with each participant. A key element of a qualitative study is to select appropriate participants for the proposed study voluntarily (Maskara, 2014). Participants voluntarily participated in interviews. After receiving IRB approval (# 11-19-19-0654628), I began the research process to meet with each participant, I provided a copy of the consent form to each participant before conducting each interview. I shared my transcribed interview report with each participant to confirm and validate interviews. I provided copies of my study results to each participant who signed a letter of cooperation. To protect the confidentiality of participants, no data collected for this study identified participating organizations or any of the interviewees. Participants had the option to remove themselves from the study at any time.

Research Method and Design

Yin (2014) explained that researchers can choose from three different research methods: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. The research method for this study was qualitative, and the design was a single-case study. I selected the research method and design based on the nature of the topic. Strategies to engage employees in the workplace need further examination. Engaged employees are important and critical to the success of businesses and organizations. My research method was qualitative and my research design was a single case study. The basis for using the qualitative method is to observe and develop knowledge of an individuals' behaviors in a natural setting. I chose a single-case design rather than a multiple case design for this study because the focus was on a single organization.

Research Method

I used a qualitative research method for this proposed study. As the researcher, I attained useful information and identified successful strategies to answer the study's research question. Bailey (2014) explained that a qualitative methodology provides a better understanding of the lived experiences of the individual. Researchers who use the qualitative method are actively listening, observing, and using participation skills which may create an empathetic interview (Drabble, Trocki, Salcedo, Walker, & Korcha, 2016; Johnson, 2015). I managers interviewed in the nonprofit sector were currently and purposely engaging employees in the workplace. Walsh (2014) explained that using a qualitative research method was to explore the central research question by communicating the voices of participants through face-to-face interviews.

The quantitative method was not suitable for the use of this study. Norris, Plonsky, Ross, and Schoonen (2015) explained that quantitative research involves data analysis and a test of objective theories by examining the relationship between multiple variables that conclude with a measure or computable data. A quantitative researcher's goal is to support or reject the hypothesis by focusing on the experimental data (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Researchers use the mixed method approach to include both qualitative and quantitative research methods, therefore allowing for comprehensive research and a balance of efficient data collection (Boeije, van Wesel, & Slagt, 2014). A qualitative method alone was appropriate in my proposed study.

Research Design

I used a single case study design to explore strategies for increasing engagement in the workplace. A case study design is appropriate for addressing research questions focused on behavioral events, rather than frequencies or incidence (Yin, 2017). A case study researcher attempts to understand several decisions about the motives and implementations of the decision made (Yin, 2017). The purpose of a case study design is to understand a problem and define a strategy (Brown, Hewitt, & Reilly, 2013; Gregor & Hevner, 2013; Hughes & Chapel, 2013). I explored an event, program, activity, and a process in-depth to gain this understanding. The case study design was appropriate to explore the experiences of the participants in this study. An ethnographic approach includes thorough fieldwork, and direct observation of participants in the study (Punch, 2013). The ethnographic design is suitable for a study of the values of individuals or a group of participants over a prolonged period (Baskerville & Myers, 2015; Grossoehme, 2014; Yin, 2017). Ethnographic researchers use extensive research regardless of the increased popularity (Cayla & Arnould, 2013). The ethnographic design was not appropriate for this study into strategies to increase employee engagement in the workplace.

The use of phenomenological design is suitable when a researcher wants to explore the lived experiences and the perception of participants in a study; this research is more suited for studying effective, emotional, and often intense human experiences (Moustakas, 1994). The phenomenology design relies on interviews as its source of data collection. The phenomenological design builds researchers' comprehension of individuals' and groups' experiences (Zahavi & Simionescu-Panait, 2014). Maree, Parker, Kaplan, and Oosthuizen (2016) suggested using phenomenological design means a researcher must not allow the behaviors or thoughts of participants to interfere with the data collected and the researcher must be open. I did not select a phenomenological design for my study.

A researcher may use the grounded theory to understand the concepts within the development of goals or the expansion of a theory (Khan, 2014). Researchers use the grounded theory design to develop theories from natural settings using a systematic analysis of data from a specific experience (Johnson, 2016; Lawrence & Tar, 2013). Grounded theory design involves proving the effectiveness of the existing theory or theories, as well as their development based on the field notes, narrations, and explanations (Grossoehme, 2014; Witts, 2016; Yin, 2017). However, I attempted to understand the strategies managers used to increase employee engagement in the workplace and therefore a grounded theory design was not appropriate.

I used open-ended questions to conduct in-depth interviews to achieve data saturation. I conducted personal, in-depth interviews with the three managers who were able to increase workforce engagement. I asked the same open-ended questions with the impression of getting repetitive responses from different participants. Data saturation occurs when a researcher receives the same responses to the same questions from different participants (Cleary, Horsfall, & Hayter, 2014; Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenotm, 2013). In the case study approach, data collection and analysis may take place concurrently, and themes arise from the significant statements (Heather et al., 2014; Lamb, 2013). To achieve data saturation, I looked for common themes through the repetition of words, phrases, and employee engagement terminology.

Population and Sampling

The population in this study comprised of all the people who met the participant criteria. The population consisted of three managers from a nonprofit organization located in South Carolina. Each of these participants had implemented successful strategies they were using to increase employee engagement workplace. The use of census sampling requires interviewing 100% of the population (Stake, 1995). By doing this, I was able to ensure that my sample size is adequate and that the sample fully represents the population. To participate in the study, participants were required to have a comprehensive knowledge and lived experience regarding the topic, be employed at a nonprofit currently using employee engagement strategies, have the authority to direct and provide resources to employees, and have proven success in implementing successful and current strategies. I sent an interview invitation to each participant through e-mail. Ando, Cousins, and Young (2014); Maskara (2014); Yin (2014) explained that the interview setting should be familiar, relaxing, and at a convenient time for the participants.

Data saturation in qualitative research is when data contains no new themes or concepts (Boddy, 2016; Marshall et al., 2013). The number of factors in a qualitative study could affect the number of interviews needed in order to achieve data saturation (Marshall et al., 2013). To ensure there was enough data for the analysis in this study, I achieved data saturation through the selection of interviewing participants from the nonprofit organization until I had interviewed three participants. Three participants were a small number to align with the findings of qualitative research literature and but it fits within the population of the participating organization. I interviewed managers who had an in-depth knowledge of implementing successful strategies used to increase employee engagement workplace. Marshall et al. (2013) and Dworkin (2012) explained that when conducting qualitative research, the sample size of participants used should be large enough to collect satisfactory data for analysis, but small enough to avoid losing valuable time.

Ethical Research

The core of any profession is ethical competence, along with integrity acting as a mechanism guiding and ensuring ethical behavior (Ferguson, Yonge, & Myrick, 2015; Madini & Nooy, 2013). Buschman (2014) explained that ethical issues can apply to all sections of a research study beginning with the subject matter, the research problem and data collection or interpretation. The attention to ethical consideration is extremely important and highly recommended during the entire research process. Petrova, Dewing, and Camilleri (2014) and Witts (2016) explained that participants have the right to make an informed decision on their participation in a research project.

Before I started collecting data, I gained permission from the IRB at Walden University. I requested each participant read and sign the informed consent form. I included the Walden University approval number of **11-19-19-0654628** and with an expiration date of **November 18, 2020** in this study after the IRB approval. The contact details of the University's representative were included in the details on the consent form. To ensure compliance with the ethical standards, I began collecting data after I received approval from the IRB. As part of the approval process, I completed a web-based training course on the protection of human research participants. I received a certificate of completion from the National Institute of Health (NIH). Other contact details on the consent form included my name, my email address, and my mobile telephone number. To ensure ethical standards, the consent form included background information, procedures, the nature of the study, the risk and benefits of the study, compensation, and privacy of the study.

Participants did not receive incentives for their participation. Participants could have withdrawn at any point before and during the interview process with a verbal or written notice. I did not use the participants' names, nor did I use the names of the organizations they worked for at any time during my study. All data collected for the study will be stored for five years. Brown et al. (2013) and Maskara (2014) explained that to ensure confidentiality, all data collected will be stored using a secured folder on a password-protected and encrypted cloud-based storage system. I will maintain all consent forms and data in a locked fireproof safe for 5 years to protect confidentiality. During the 5 years, only I will have access to the safe.

Data Collection Instruments

Heffetz and Ligett (2014) described data collection instruments as tools a researcher uses to retrieve information from participants. The researcher is the principal data collection instrument in qualitative research studies (Fowler, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). As the researcher, I was the primary data collection instrument for my proposed study, and I implemented an interview protocol with scripted, open-ended interview questions. My instrument for data collection was face-to-face, semistructured interviews. Kapoulas and Mitic (2012), Robinson (2014), and Yin (2014) explained that a face-to-face semistructured interview is an appropriate instrument to use for qualitative case studies. The primary tool for the data collection instrument in my proposed study was my interview questions.

My qualitative single case study involved face-to-face interviews with three nonprofit managers. The semistructured interviews involved a list of eight questions designed to address the research question. The interview process involved administering interview questions limited to no more than 45 minutes to each participant in the study.

I analyzed the data from the interviews and observations, and then triangulate the data to confirm the dependability of my interpretations. Data triangulation is a measure of the credibility and consistency of the study that researchers use to compare multiple data sources (Modell, 2015). Qualitative researchers rely on the use of data triangulation, which involves using multiple sources of data during a study (Joslin & Müller, 2016). Yin (2009) identified five sources of useful qualitative evidence: (a) interviews, (b) archival records, (c) direct observations, (d) participant observations, and (e) physical artifacts. I developed the reliability and validity of the data collection and processes with the use of member checking. Member checking occurred by asking the interviewees to review the interview summary for reliability and validity purposes. To improve the credibility of my interview data, I triangulated this data by using an alternative collection method known as secondary data. My secondary data collection help to support the information I collected from each participant. I used company documentations as part of my data collection. I used the policies and procedures the nonprofit organization uses to engage its employees as my secondary data collection for my study. Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, and Walter (2016) explained that secondary data is an integral part of data collection. My analysis of the documentation helped to answer my research question.

Data Collection Technique

The data collection technique for my study involved on-site semistructured interviews using open-ended interview questions. and the answers received from the nonprofit organization on how to engage employees in the workplace. Researchers use semistructured interviews to cover all relevant dimensions of the research question (Bernard, 2013; Dubé, Scheinke, Strasser, & Lightfoot, 2014). I used semi-structured interviews to explore strategies nonprofit managers used to engage employees in the workplace. Before each interview, I reviewed the interview questions to make sure everything was in the appropriate order. I examined the audio recording device to ensure it was working properly, and I had an extra set of new batteries on hand. Face-to-face interviews give the researcher feedback from participants about their lived experiences (Dubé et al., 2014). Each participant received a consent form to read, sign, and return. Participants had an opportunity to ask questions before they signed the consent form. Participants could ask questions about the study by email or by phone. Once I received the signed consent form, I scheduled an interview at a convenient time and location for the participant. The day before the interview, I called to confirm the appointment. All my data collection process followed the Walden IRB requirements.

The advantages and disadvantages of the data collection techniques will vary based on the participants. Since I was conducting face-to-face interviews, I gained insights regarding the lived experiences of managers who successfully implemented strategies to increase engagement in the workplace which is an advantage. Butler (2014), Irvine, Drew, and Sainsbury (2012), and (Seitz) 2015 explained that the advantage of face-to-face interviews is to recognize the respondent’s emphasis via body language and the ability to ask follow-up questions. A disadvantage of my data collection technique was to rely on subjective information and trusting that participants were honest in their responses.

My study was to record a face-to-face, semi-structured interview as part of the data collection technique. After collecting data from participants using a semi-structured interview and documentation review, I used member checking to support their responses.

Oswick (2015) explained that member checking applies to the data obtained during the interview. Member checking includes asking the participants clarifying questions to validate the recording of accurate responses and taking detailed notes during each interview. Anney (2014) and Witts (2016) explained that member checking is a feedback mechanism that qualitative researchers use to improve the validity, accuracy, and credibility of the study. The main goal of member checking is to ensure the responses by the participants are authentic, original, and reliable (Perkins, Columna, Lieberman, & Bailey, 2013). Kemparaj and Chavan (2013) described that capturing the responses to the questions of the participants on tape helps increase the validity and reliability. A digital recorder was available during the interview session, and I took additional notes. Thus, I used member checking to ensure consistency, validity, and reliability of my proposed study. I scheduled a time to review my transcribed interview data with the participants for accuracy and to ensure no new information surfaced. I wanted to ensure data saturation occurred.

Data Organization Technique

A critical component of data analysis is a data organization (De Waal, Goedegebuure, & Tan Akaraborworn, 2014). Brennan and Bakken (2015) expounded that researchers use data organization to classify data into different themes to interpret data analysis results. I wrote the key points and observations made during the interview to achieve a complete data organization in a journal. I plan to store my data collection on a password-protected laptop computer and on a digital recorder. I used NVivo12 software to compile all interview data and documentation. Electronic folders on my laptop helped to organize the data received during my research process. I created one folder for the transcriptions of interviews, and another folder for any secondary documents I received during my research. All recorded interviews received a different label name to keep the data separate; for example, Manager-1, Manager-2, and Manager-3. The transcribed files for each interview will be stored in a separate folder using the same naming system I used for the recorded interviews. Bui and Kim (2014), Li, Dai, Ming, and Qiu (2016) explicated that combining data encoding with compression can provide strong protection for confidential data obtained from each participant. Data encoding was used to ensure the confidentiality of each participant. I will store hard copies of the documents and the digital recorder in a locked fireproof safe in my personal residence for at least five years and also, ensure I have sole access to the stored data. All files will remain stored for 5 years, after which I will shred all hard copy documents and erase all electronic files.

Data Analysis

My study answered the research question: What strategies do managers use to increase employees' engagement in the nonprofit industry? The data analysis process consisted of detailed and consistent procedures involving organized phases to ensure the validity and reliability of results. Phase one involved the organization and preparation of the data for research analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 2015). Phase two was to review all of the collected data. This process allowed for the explanation of findings and provided opportunities to screen the data that did not relate to the research question or overall purpose of the study. Phase three involved the coding process where the separation of the data was to begin (Yin, 2014). I used data triangulation to help support the validity of my interviews. Wood, Gilbreath, Rutherford, and O'Boyle (2014) defined data triangulation as the use of multiple data sources to increase reliability and validity. Yin (2014) stated that data triangulation helps to strengthen the construct validity of a case study. To help analyze the data, I listened to the recorded interviews and reviewed the information received from the review of company documents. Data analysis consists of coding, reviewing, categorizing, defining, and combining common statements to identify emergent themes and conclusions (Yin, 2014). The use of NVivo software helped me code the data and identified themes. I used NVivo12 software to help sort, code, and organize the data obtained from my research. After I imported, sorted, coded, and organized the data, I transcribed the audio recording of my interviews. A researcher reaches data saturation when the participants repeat similar concepts and ideas (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Data saturation was reached when the information provided by the participants were being replicated. There was no other way to obtain any additional new information.

The final writeup of my study included the conclusion of the data. I scheduled a time to review my transcribed interview data with the participants for accuracy and to ensure no new information surfaced.

Reliability and Validity

Researchers strive for the utmost quality of work when conducting research. Minn (2015) explained that research requires the gathering and sharing of useful information that simplifies the successful conduction of future research and practices of a qualitative study. Dubé et al. (2014) explained that the researcher relies on semistructured interview protocols to obtain unity and strengthen consistency, reliability, and validity. Reliability and validity of qualitative research is the combination of four elements: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Cope, 2014). This section detailed the processes I used to ensure reliability and strengthen validity.

Reliability

I documented every step of the data collection process and removed personal opinions during the interview process. I evaluated all steps within my project to ensure all the collected data was of its highest level of reliability and validity. Dependability one and the same with reliability. I addressed dependability by requesting that participants verify the accuracy of the data through member checking. Member checking, documenting the process, and recording any changes that can occur demonstrates the reliability and validity of the study (Harvey, 2015). I used member checking to ensure that the information provided by the participants was reliable by verifying with the participants my interpretations of what they stated. Member checking helps to ensure credibility (Platt & Skowron, 2013). I used an interview protocol to ensure I provided each participant with the same questions and guidelines.

Validity

In qualitative research, validity refers to the appropriateness of the chosen method, design, sample size, data collection techniques and analysis, and the results of the study concerning the research question (Leung, 2015). Researchers confirm validity by making sure the research findings are accurate and consistent (Aravamudhan & Krishnaveni, 2016). Venkatesh et al. (2013) explained that credibility, transferability, conformability, and data saturation are common uses to assess validity in qualitative research.

Confirming data accuracy increases the validity of the study. Data validity in my study included internal and external viewpoints. My main source of data was collected from interviews. Internal validity in qualitative research refers to honesty in whether the effects observed in a study are due to the manipulation of the independent variable and not some other factor (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). External validity addresses the commonalities in the data collected. Data received from interviews helped the researcher find the external validity exploring generalizations and possible scientific or social impact across populations and setting (Marshall & Rossman, 2014).

Transferability states the degree to which the findings of research can apply or transfer beyond the boundaries of the study (Boffa, Moules, Mayan, & Cowie, 2013). Researchers must provide a detailed description of the research context to ensure transferability (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Yilmaz, (2013) explained that providing a decent description of the research context will help readers determine whether the findings of a study are transferable to another research. Providing detailed descriptions of the participants and research context will help future scholars decide on the transferability of the findings to another context (Elo, Kääriäinen, Kanste, Pölkki, Utriainen, & Kyngäs, 2014). Some of the factors that can influence the transferability of the results of research are population, geographical location, and sample size (Burchett, Mayhew, Lavis, & Dobrow, 2013). I explored the effective strategies used by nonprofit managers to increase employee engagement in South Carolina, the limits of this study might affect the transferability of the findings to other sectors and geographical locations. To improve transferability, I provided a detailed description of the data analysis process, participants, and research context.

Transition and Summary

In Section 2, I presented a detailed view of the study design and the study plan. I also provided additional details on the plan for the research design by reinstating the purpose statement of the study and describing the role of the researcher, the research participants, the research method and design, the population and sampling for the study, the ethical research of the study, the data collection instruments, data collection techniques, data organization techniques, reliability of the study, and the validity of the study. Section 3 includes a presentation of findings, applications to professional practice, implications for social change, recommendations for action, recommendations for further research, reflections, and a conclusion.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies that some managers in a nonprofit organization to increase employee engagement. There are nonprofit leaders who often lack the knowledge on how to increase employee engagement. Based on the research question, compiling and analyzing responses from the interviews, I identified three themes: (a) providing clear and concise communication, (b) recognition and rewards, and (c) training and development.

Section 3 include a presentation of the findings and applications to professional practice. Section 3 also includes information of why and how the findings are relevant to improve business practice. Implications for social change, recommendations for action, how results might be used in training, contributions to the literature, recommendations for future research, reflections, and a conclusion are included in Section 3.

Presentation of the Findings

The intent of this qualitative single case study was to answer the central research question: What strategies do managers use to increase employee engagement in the workplace? To answer this research question, I conducted face-to-face interviews with three managers from a nonprofit organization located in South Carolina.

I completed the five-step process. Yin (2009) identified five sources of useful qualitative evidence: (a) interviews, (b) archival records, (c) direct observations, (d) participant observations, and (e) physical artifacts. I collected information learned from interviews and conducted member checking for validation. I disassembled the data by each participant for manual analysis. Data was then reassembled and analyzed manually for themes. I then highlighted the themes in Word based on my manual analysis. Data was then reassembled and analyzed manually for themes. I then highlighted the themes in Word based on my manual analysis. The data was then imported into NVivo 12, disassembled, reassembled, and interpreted. The interpretation of the data revealed themes that supported the manual analysis. The three themes that emerged from the data analyzed in this research study were clear and concise communication, recognition and rewards, and training and development. The results confirmed the three main themes I identified in my assessment and revealed the following strategies that could be used to increase employee engagement including communication and rewards, benefits, training, and development.

Theme 1: Clear and Concise Communication

Communication is critical to avoid any misunderstanding or misinterpretation in engaging employees in the success of any organization. P3 explained communication is a tool that successful leaders use to encourage employee engagement while achieving organizational goals. During the interview process, agreed and revealed that clear and concise communication is an important strategy for increasing employee engagement. Good communication leaves little room for misunderstanding and misinterpretation of instructions. P1 stated the ways he communicated was verbally when he spoke to the volunteer and now verbally through emails. Unanimously, all managers agreed that face-to-face communication was the most effective way to communicate to enable discussion and clarity in terms of what was discussed. P1 stated, “Good communication gives us as managers the ability to listen and a chance to connect with our employees.” P2 said:

> Communication works when the manager and volunteer understand each other; we cannot expect our employees to do their best at communicating if management is not doing their part to communicate effectively. Without clear and concise communication, volunteers would have no direction. Every person in a leadership role should attend at least one communication training a year.

Managers in this study were able to corroborate the importance of effective communication. Managers were willing and able to share their insights on what managers could do in an organization to encourage effective communication. The insights of the managers from the participating organization implemented clear and concise communication at every level.

Thompson, Lemmon, and Walter (2015) described face-to-face communication as the most reliable form of communication which includes verbal and nonverbal cues because face-to-face communication allows one to examine body language and facial expressions. Face-to-face also allows for immediate feedback for clarification. P3 expressed the importance of open and honest communication and how it creates support, participation, and increased employee engagement. Herzberg (1959) stressed the importance of how factors such as job satisfaction, communication, and motivation directly influence the reduction of employee turnover. Employees are less likely to leave an organization if they are satisfied. Employees become more engaged when there is an open line of communication and morale and motivation is high. Lin-hi, Hörisch, and

Blumberg (2015) suggested that leaders within organizations keep employees engaged by keeping employees informed to establish trust and confidence. Karanges, Johnston, Beatson, and Lings (2015) stated that the way leaders communicate can lessen chances employee resistance to change. This change can lead to sustainable growth and increased employee engagement in terms of the ways they communicate and how they provide effective communication.

Theme 2: Recognition and Rewards

During the interview process, the responses each manager shared showed the importance of recognition and rewards. The three managers agreed that recognition and rewards can affect employee engagement in terms of motivation and willingness to help others. P1 stated that rewards and recognition tend to boost the confidence of employees, which in turn will increase engagement. P3 said that it is managements should find out what motivates their team and suggested that sometimes it involves simple signs of appreciation such as cake and ice cream for an employee’s birthday.

The managers stated the importance of recognizing employees is a way to boost morale. The importance of recognizing employees keeps motivated and P1 explained that a steady recognition and rewards system was an effective key that helped to maintain engagement. Taking extra steps will help encourage employee engagement. P2 and P3 agreed that having a good reward system to motivate workers will positively reinforce work engagement. This would lead to favorable results of coming to work and the willingness to help customers and coworkers. All of this could lead to employee engagement.

The findings align with the literature. Hertzberg (1959) shared that when organizational leaders learn how to balance performance levels of employees and extrinsic rewards, engagement is more likely to be developed and sustain. P3 further explained how an increase in employee engagement was because of a process of peer reward and recognition by the workers in the nonprofit organization. Creating this program would allow employees in the nonprofit organization to endorse and recognize each other for the work they were doing. This additional strategy lifted morale, and P3 said that the key to maintaining employee engagement is to put a rewards and recognition and training procedures in place to sustain and increase employee morale.

The research findings of reward and recognition aligned with the significance of the study and related to the conceptual framework for employee engagement. A recognition program can include various factors of praise, positive feedback, appreciation, and encouragement. A rewards program can include salary, promotional opportunities, job security, relationships, and working conditions. Because recognition programs do not usually include any financial rewards, the low-cost option is always there to be implemented. Recognition is a real tool to motivate the workforce but it will cost less when equating with rewards, which can be valuable to the organization's financial wealth in the long run (Lourenço, 2015). According to Hertzberg (1959), organizational leaders should learn how to balance performance levels and extrinsic rewards, engagement is more likely to develop and sustain. Since this is a nonprofit organization, placing a greater emphasis on recognizing the workforce will have a positive impact on their motivation levels while increasing performance and decreasing turnover (Rawat, Khugshal, & Chaubey, 2015).

The themes that emerged increased my understanding of employee engagement in this single case qualitative study and helped address the purpose of the study as well as the research question. Commitment, perspective, and safety help to define some of the characteristics of employee engagement in an organization (Kahn, 1990). These characteristics can include rewards and recognition and training and development of skills. Having a complete rewards package that includes recognition and rewards is a strategy that can be used to attract talented and dedicated employees, which could lead to increased engagement. Malik, Butt, and Choi (2015) explained that when business leaders in any organization have an understanding of the importance of engagement they will then develop and create strategies to engage workers in the workplace. When workers are given a sense of belonging, they tend to feel a part of the organization and this sense of inclusion could increase employee engagement whether it is in the workplace, community, or home.

Theme 3: Training and Development

The success and engagement of employees start with organizations being able to provide suitable training. When limited training exist, employee engagement decreases, and this makes it easier for employees to leave an organization (Biswakarma, 2016). P1 explained that a successful training program takes time to develop. The training program first has to be developed, studied, training of management.

Training and developing the skills of employees will help improve the performance and moods of employees, and the ultimate benefit will be for organizations in the form of better customer service, less absenteeism, and organizational loyalty (Biswakarma, 2016). P3 explained how he never considered the organization's training program as being incapable of being changed because workers learn and train differently. P2 agreed and stated, "As a manager and a trainer, I keep the organization's strategy of engaging employees on every level and every phase while training. Every sector of our organization is not for everyone in the sense that everyone cannot do every job." The three managers agreed that due to the nature of their business, the organization has a training plan for every volunteer regardless of what they choose to do. P3 explained how there is always a process in place especially for those who want to be cross-trained and have a willingness to learn more. The findings align with the literature. According to Hertzberg (1959), factors for satisfaction include responsibility, job satisfaction, recognition, achievement, opportunities for growth, and advancement.

P1 stated that training is the key to the development, motivation, and retention of their organization's volunteers. P2 agreed and added, "Training of volunteers plays an important role in any nonprofit organization, and as managers, we should treat it as such. We want our organization to be successful and to be able to serve our clients who are our customers."

Minn (2015) suggested that organizational leaders can invest in employee personal growth by developing programs such as management training and customer service. Integrating these new training programs with career opportunities will improve the morale of workers and provide career opportunities. Hagemann and Stroope (2013) explained that an employee's awareness of training opportunities could improve an employee's engagement and commitment to the organization.

Applications to Professional Practice

The findings from this study support the idea that Hertzberg had that employee engagement research applies to business practice, as it provides strategies for increasing workplace engagement. Understanding these strategies could assist nonprofit organizations with employee engagement training while increasing their performance and productivity. The findings from this study could improve the practices of nonprofit organizations by assisting and supporting the growth of employee engagement guidelines and training. The results of this study could also make it easier for recommendations of strategic actions as well as further research studies. It is essential for nonprofit leaders to have the proper tools needed to accurately train employees to operate efficiently and still have the ability to create an environment where all its employees are comfortable and happy.

Disengaged employees can have a negative impact on business leaders (Kang & Busser, 2018). Hence, it is important for nonprofit business leaders to apply their organizational strategies that will embrace employee engagement and while improving profits with the available resources (Kang & Busser, 2018). A sign of an ineffective leader who lacks knowledge is the existence of disengaged employees with low productivity. Theme 1 showed how leaders could increase employee engagement when clear and concise communication is used as a strategy, thus leaders could increase employee engagement. Mikkelson, York, and Arritola (2015) explained how leadership behaviors and specific communication are considerably related to employee outcomes. The responses from the participants are evidence that the strategy listed in Theme 1 could be used by business leaders to increase engagement.

Theme 2 revealed the recognition and rewards strategy that business leaders could use to increase employee engagement. Having a complete rewards package that includes recognition and rewards is a strategy that can be used to attract talented and dedicated employees, which could lead to increased engagement. As soon as an individual becomes a volunteer, the employee engagement initiatives begin with the internal process of increasing employee engagement. The three participants' responses support these findings. The most important element for organizational success is to hire a leader who will work on increasing employee engagement in the workplace. Good leadership is the foundation to managing a worker's behavior in the workplace. While workers can have an emotional commitment to work and effect leadership engagement, ultimately it is up to the leader to manage the employee, not the employee manage the leader. Griffin et al. (2015) explained that employee engagement is not a new topic to organizational behavioral science, yet leadership is one of the most studied matters in organizational research. It is important to remember that leadership and employee engagement are both necessary to increase performance.

Theme 3**,** training and development for volunteers are the final strategy in this study. The three participants confirmed that training and developing the skills of employees will help improve the performance and engagement in the workplace. A welltrained employee is a competent employee and a competent employee will produce an engaged employee. According to Griffin et al. (2015), low productivity or decreased employee engagement is the sign of a lack of knowledge of effective leadership strategies. The results of the study may help to fill in the gap of knowledge regarding what strategies influence employee engagement. Business leaders may better understand and apply new leadership strategies to improve employee engagement and business loyalty. The importance of rewarding engaged employees for their hard work was also revealed. According to Griffin et al. (2015), leadership is one of the most studied topics in organizational research, and employee engagement is not a new topic to organizational behavioral science. Leadership and employee engagement are both necessary to increase performance. As a result, nonprofit business leaders may learn from the findings the best leadership strategies to overcome barriers, volunteer limitations, and attain a competitive advantage.

Increased engagement relates to increased performance, productivity, and job satisfaction. Griffin et al., (2015) stated, engaged individuals are satisfied with their job and tend to have higher quality work performance and productivity. Business leaders who implement the strategies revealed in the findings of this study could have a more productive workforce. Organizational support leads to, positive and productive responses from employees (Griffin et al., 2015). The findings of this study could provide great evidence of past and current research literature of how organizational leaders could benefit from the implementation of successful strategies to encourage employee engagement through communication, incentives, and training. In order to put volunteer back on track, leaders can choose which strategies to use to reverse a disengaged volunteer within their organization. According to Alagaraja and Schuck (2015) the hurdle to leaders increasing employee engagement is disengagement. Finally, the occurrence of success could take place in nonprofit organizations that understand how to use the findings of this study. The organizational leader could use these findings to improve their business practice with these strategies that could increase employee engagement and performance. Employee engagement should be managed at all organizational levels and should be reflected in the strategic plan of the organization (Griffin et al., 2015).

Implications for Social Change

The study could contribute to social change in organizations especially a nonprofit organization. The participants in this study consisted of managers who were able to create and implement strategies to promote employee engagement, which led to an increase in employee engagement in the workplace. Leaders in nonprofit organizations may be able to incorporate the strategies from this study to support employee engagement. Engaged employees tend to be happier at work, they are more innovative, they tend to focus on the environment of the organization, and create a cohesive work environment (Bernstein, Buse, & Slatten, 2015). Increased employee engagement in a business organization could promote and develop employee self-worth and pride, thereby creating a more productive work environment (Plester & Hutchison, 2016).

Leaders that invest in the well-being of employees through employee engagement initiatives experience increased engagement (Catchings, 2015). Engaged employees tend to be happier at work, they are more innovative, they tend to focus on the environment of the organization, and create a cohesive work environment (Bernstein et al., 2015). An increase in engagement could lead to an increase in productivity, employee retention, and increase performance in the workplace (Brahim et al., 2015). The findings of this study could contribute to social change by providing organizations with an understanding of what it takes to motivate employees to become engaged. Business leaders could benefit from the findings of this study that provided strategies on how to promote and increase employee engagement in the work environment. Employees may benefit from the strategies business leaders effectively execute by increased job satisfaction and meaningful work.

Recommendations for Action

Employee engagement has become one of the main goals of success for organizational leaders. Business leaders and managers in any organization should consider if the strategies presented in this study supports their business plans to increase employee engagement in the workplace. The results from this study indicated that employee engagement is part of an organizations' everyday operation in many ways, which will, in turn, improve employees' performance and customer satisfaction. The findings of the study are suitable for all levels of leadership within an organization and all employees. For business leaders to apply these concepts to business practices, leaders should adjust integrate themes from the research findings: (a) clear and concise communication, (b) recognition and rewards, and (c) training and development. An increase in engagement leads to employee satisfaction, reduced turnover, increased performance, and productivity. Strategic goals and objectives provide business organizations with an opportunity to develop action plans for improvement and implementation where it is needed (Caesens, Stinglhamber, & Marmier, 2016).

I would recommend the following steps to improve employee engagement: (a) create an engagement committee consisting of managers, paid employees, volunteers, and other staff that could develop and implement strategies to increase engagement; (b) develop more engagement rewards that support the organization’s strategic mission which may result in more volunteers; (c) develop a strategic plan for disengaged employees; (d) include engagement strategies in the employee hiring or training process, and (e) ensure that managers or trainers are held accountable for improving employee engagement and communicating the organization’s vision to employees. I distributed a summary of the findings of this study to the participants in the study and other business leaders. Furthermore, this study will be available on the ProQuest database for anyone who seeks information regarding strategies to increase employee engagement and reduce employee turnover. I considered disseminating the results of this study through presentations, conferences, or training to communicate my research findings and inform individuals on strategies to increase employee engagement in their organization.

Recommendations for Further Research

The findings of this study have helped to confirm the study of engagement strategies. Leaders should develop teams that embrace and foster engagement of the employees and the organization. This will allow them to implement the most effective engagement strategies that best fit the needs of the organization. The recommendations for future studies involve exploring the limitations of this study, specifically, the small sample size and location. Limitations in this study included three managers in South Carolina and did not allow for any other locations outside of this area to be included. Future research should explore engagement strategies with a broader sample size of similar organization and larger geographic location.

Organizations outside of South Carolina in different geographic locations, may have similarities or differences in organizational culture for increasing employee engagement. The qualitative single case study is limited because the research was done with a single organization and three participants. I recommend exploration of a multi-case study on engagement for future research and more participants. Future research could include a quantitative, or mixed methods approach on engagement, which could provide an intense level of detail on employee engagement.

This study was limited to one nonprofit organization. The employee engagement standard is based on the clientele this nonprofit organization serves. I recommend extending employee engagement to similar nonprofit organizations. Finally, the findings of this study warrant further exploration to examine elements such as engagement, rewards, and training. This research study found that caring about your employees and showing them that they matter is important to employee engagement and the success of any organization.

Reflections

The research study involved three participants from a nonprofit organization in South Carolina. Each participant shared their perception of what strategies can be used to increase employee engagement and retention. I purposely developed open-ended interview questions that would not limit their responses to safeguard that I was able to obtain wide-range, abundant data about the study participants lived experiences. I began the interview process by sending out an email to introduce the study, describe the process, and request participation. Each interview took place in an environment without distractions. Each interview took place in the same way, however, the review of data varied according to the participant's understanding of each research question. I followed protocol throughout the research process, attempted to collect data accurately, and transcribed interviews exactly to maintain the integrity of the data and research findings.

Before conducting this study, I believed employees left nonprofit organizations for monetary reasons after the study, I have a different perspective on the desires of employees. After conducting this study, I have a better understanding of the reasons why employees become rooted in nonprofit organizations where they work and give of themselves unselfishly; therefore, I will incorporate some of the strategies revealed by the participants of this study to assist with increasing engagement and reducing some of the concerns of the employees with my current place of employment.

The findings from this study exposed me to additional practices and strategies that I can use with employees in my organization. From the research results, I saw the need for leaders to understand the concepts and policies as it relates to employee engagement. Organizational leaders should clearly define all themes from the research results. The research findings gave me more clarity on what is necessary and what a business leader needs to be effectively engage employees as well as creating leadership strategies.

Conclusion

The purpose of the qualitative single case study was to explore successful employee engagement strategies used by some managers of one nonprofit organization used to bring sustainability to their organization. Nonprofit organizations are increasingly growing, and with that growth comes challenges of survival and challenges involving employees (Beaton & Hwang). Organizational leaders should implement strategies that will promote employee engagement to stimulate higher levels of engagement. The use of semistructured interviews was conducted to attain a better understanding of the employee engagement strategies leaders used for organizational sustainability. I used data triangulation for this study which consisted of semistructured interviews and company documents. The data triangulation enabled me to analyze the data collected through interviews and observations. Three main themes emerged from this study to include providing (a) clear and concise communication, (b) recognition and rewards, and (c) training and development. The research findings were consistent with the purpose and significance of the study and related to the conceptual framework for this study, the two-factor theory. The findings indicated that organizational leaders who implement these strategies will have the opportunity to increase employee engagement and might affect social change by lowering voluntary and involuntary employee turnover, hence lowering unemployment within communities.

The findings from this study suggest that employee engagement is accompanied by the elements of communication, rewards, and training. Organizational leaders must lead by example to create manager-employee relationships. They must also implement programs to include communication, incentives and rewards, and training which could increase employee engagement. Employee engagement plays an essential role in any organization. I conclude that implementing strategies, which align with organizations' business goals, could increase employee engagement leading to customer satisfaction, cost-effectiveness, higher levels of productivity, fewer turnovers, and more committed employees. The main takeaway from this doctoral study was that employees are willing to commit to the organization's vision and goal if organizational leaders acknowledge a sense of appreciation, value, and self-worth to the employees.

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Appendix A: Letter of Cooperation

<Managers at Nonprofit >
<Contact Information>
<Date>

Dear JoAnne Hayes,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give my permission for you to conduct the study entitled Strategies for Increasing Workforce Engagement. As part of this study, I authorize you to provide a Letter of Consent to each participant, interview questions for prior review, audio recorder, and reach out to potential participants to schedule the initial interview and the dissemination of the results. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibility is to provide a list of participants with contact information, and a meeting room to conduct private interviews. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I understand that the student will not be naming our organization in the doctoral project report that is published in ProQuest.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

<Authorization Official>

<Contact Information>

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Interview: Finding strategies some managers use to increase workforce involvement.

1. I will begin the interview by greeting and thanking the participants for agreeing to participate in the interview. Next, I will make sure I introduce myself and restate my research topic to the participants.
2. I will explain the voluntary nature to participate and the flexibility to withdraw at any time.
3. I will give participants a copy of the consent form (if needed) to keep.
4. I will inform participants of the interview procedures, which involves the use of audio recording the interview.
5. The interview will be restricted to 45 minutes for responses to 8 interview questions, in addition to any follow-up questions.
6. I ask participants to be available 3 to 5 days after the initial interview to participate in the follow-up interview to review the interview questions and interpretation of the researcher, this takes about 10-20 minutes.
7. I will inform participants that I will provide them with a summarized version of the final study.
8. At the end of the interview, I will thank the participants for agreeing to take part in the research study. I will also confirm the participants contact information has not changed, and I will confirm that it is okay for me to contact each participant if I have any further questions