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Evaluating Expert Opinions for Reducing Voluntary Employee Absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago

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Walden University
2020

Abstract

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by

B. Anthony Brown

MBA, University of Manchester, 2007

STCW II/1, Caribbean Maritime Institute, 1996

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Management

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Abstract

Organizational leaders in Trinidad and Tobago are ill prepared to manage voluntary employee absenteeism due to the ineffectiveness of traditional approaches to curtailing voluntary employee absenteeism. The lack of consensus on desirable, feasible, and important strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago created a scholarly gap. The purpose of this qualitative modified Delphi study was to determine how a panel of 17 Caribbean and global human resources experts view the desirability, feasibility, and importance of 50 forward-looking strategies in 6 overarching elements for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. The research questions addressed this purpose. The conceptual framework was based on the job demands-resources model and theory. Data were collected via 4 rounds of online surveys. Data analysis included assessing a predesigned list of strategies, calculating the top 2 frequency ratings and the median for desirability and feasibility, ordering rankings of importance, and assessing confidence ratings in the top 5 strategies. The 5 strategies with the highest confidence clustered in job resources and motivation: supervisory support to increase employee engagement, organizational and job design practices that better value employees' psychological health, employee appreciation and recognition, improved relationships between supervisors and line staff, and alternative leave options. These strategies may support positive social change by helping to reduce voluntary employee absenteeism, which could promote economic growth based on increased employee production in Trinidad and Tobago.

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Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation to my daughter, Zahra. To my daughter, you inspire me to be the best father and male role model that I can be for you. I love you, and I hope you know how proud I am to be your dad. Thank you for believing in me.

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Table of Contents

iii

iv

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Voluntary employee absenteeism remains a growing and globally studied phenomenon (Kisakye et al., 2016; Kocakulah, Kelley, Mitchell, & Ruggieri, 2016). The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018) in the United States estimated that employee absenteeism accounts for 2.8 million lost workdays annually. This number of days translated to approximately 15% of the payroll costs for U.S. businesses (K. Nielsen & Daniels, 2016). The loss of revenue due to lost production days increases as voluntary employee absenteeism increases (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018). Kocakulah et al. (2016) indicated that although researchers grouped voluntary, involuntary, and sickness absenteeism as a single phenomenon, two thirds of the lost production days recorded as sickness absenteeism were often voluntary absence days.

In Trinidad and Tobago, the island where the current study was conducted, The World Trade Organization (WTO) ranked the island nation as fifth in the world for voluntary workplace absenteeism (Singh, 2015). Voluntary employee absenteeism is the primary barrier to doing business, and Trinidad and Tobago have one of the lowest gross domestic products (GDPs) in the Latin Americas and the Caribbean (Schwab, 2015, 2017). Munyenyembe, Chen, and Chou (2020) indicated that one of the greatest human-capital threats to productivity-improvement goals in the low-income country context is voluntary employee absenteeism. The current study was needed because although voluntary employee absenteeism has been heavily studied in the United States and other nations, there was a lack of consensus on potential desirable, feasible, and important strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism that can be applied to Trinidad

and Tobago (Hadjisolomou, 2015; Kocakulah et al., 2016; Vignoli, Muschalla, & Mariani, 2017). The gap in knowledge the current study addressed was the lack of consensus on potential desirable, feasible, and important strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago, which created a gap in the existing literature on the norms of voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. The results of this modified Delphi study were intended to help close this gap in the existing literature on the norms of voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. Chapter 1 of this study consists of the background of the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, conceptual framework, nature of the study, definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and summary and transition.

Background of the Study

Voluntary employee absenteeism became a growing and recognized concern during the Second World War (Covner, 1950; Schenet, 1945). Schenet (1945) theorized that variables such as age, sex, and length of tenure influenced voluntary employee absenteeism in U.S. war plants. Covner (1950) conducted a study in a similar U.S. war plant setting. Covner's findings revealed that the voluntary absenteeism rate was not due to the employees' sex, but that absenteeism was inversely related to the quality of the relationship between the supervisors and their line staff. Covner concluded that improving the quality of the relationship between the supervisors and the line staff could reduce voluntary employee absenteeism.

Unapproved or unauthorized leave of absence characterizes voluntary employee absenteeism (Ozturk & Karatepe, 2019). Shantz and Alfes (2015) defined voluntary absenteeism as when the employees can attend work but are unwilling to. Munyenyembe et al. (2020) concurred with Shantz and Alfes, and Ozturk and Karatepe (2019) that employee absenteeism when unapproved by the organization is indicative of an optional or voluntary behavior in which the employee chooses not to report for work. Voluntary absenteeism is a function of employees' motivation as measured by the number of times an employee has been absent during a specific period, irrespective of the length of each of those absence episodes (Vignoli, Guglielmi, Bonfiglioli, & Violante, 2016; Vignoli et al., 2017).

In 142 peer-reviewed sources consulted on voluntary employee absenteeism, researchers posited solutions or strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017, 2018; Manzano-García & Ayala, 2017). The solutions or strategies posited by researchers varied across organizations in similar and different nations (Kisakye et al., 2016; Kocakulah et al., 2016; Kwan, Tuckey, & Dollard, 2016). Though researchers posited identical or similar strategies reflecting a divergence of opinions, in multicultural contexts there remains a lack of consensus as to how to address the problem of voluntary employee absenteeism (Kocakulah et al., 2016; Manzano-García & Ayala, 2017; Shantz & Alfes, 2015; Shrivastava, Shrivastava, & Ramasamy, 2015)

In Trinidad and Tobago, voluntary employee absenteeism was recorded at 40% of the adult working population, and the WTO ranked the nation fifth in the world for

voluntary workplace absenteeism (Ernst & Young, 2017; Singh, 2015). Although

researchers have studied (a) Anglo-American and Euro-Asian contexts but not low-

income or developing nation contexts and (b) predominantly participants in the Anglo-

American, Euro-Asian nations (Munyenyembe et al., 2020), there exists a lack of

scholarly research on voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. The lack

of consensus on potential desirable, feasible and important strategies for minimizing

voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago created a gap in the existing

literature on the norms of voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. The

current study could provide vital information for reducing voluntary employee

absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. A suite of forward-looking strategies for

minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago is necessary to

mitigate voluntary employee absenteeism as a barrier to doing business in Trinidad and

Tobago (Schwab, 2015, 2017).

Problem Statement

Job demands in the form of excessive and unnecessary workloads are stressors

that create employee strain and promote voluntary employee absenteeism (Vignoli et al.,

2016). Excessive monitoring and unreasonable workloads are forms of employee

bullying, which create low psychological safety climate (PSC) workplace environments

and promote voluntary employee absenteeism (Kwan et al., 2016; Magee, Gordon,

Robinson, Caputi, & Oades, 2017). Researchers also indicated that excessive job

demands are another form of workplace bullying, which promote voluntary employee

absenteeism (Kwan et al., 2016; Magee et al., 2017). According to Kwan et al. (2016),

workplace bullying by superiors as an excessive job demand, and employees' inability to report the bullying as a low job resource, created demotivated or disengaged employees.

Low PSC workplace environments comprising high job demands and low job resources contribute to a significant loss of revenue due to low productivity and reduced company performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017, 2018; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001; Kocakulah et al., 2016). In cases involving excessive and unnecessary job demands coupled with low job resources, employees engage in voluntary absenteeism as a form of workplace avoidance (Kwan et al., 2016). The social problem is that lost production days recorded as sickness absenteeism are often voluntary absence days, as nearly two thirds of absenteeism is not sickness absenteeism (Kocakulah et al., 2016). Barber and Santuzzi (2015) stated that even the most productive employees might resort to voluntary employee absenteeism due to stressors arising from excessive and unnecessary job demands.

The voluntary employee absenteeism rate at 40% of the adult working population in Trinidad and Tobago results in a substantial cost and loss of revenue to the Trinidad and Tobago economy (Schwab, 2015; Stone, 2016). The specific management problem is the ineffectiveness of traditional approaches to curtailing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago, such as inadequate monitoring of employee attendance register and inconsistent disciplinary actions (Salih, 2018). This ineffectiveness results in disruptions, reduced efficiency, low productivity, reduced quality service, increased managerial workload, and diminished morale among employees who pick up the slack for the absentees (Nguyen, Groth, & Johnson, 2016;

Stone, 2016). If not addressed, voluntary employee absenteeism will continue to promote

disruptions, low productivity, and a sustained increase in the nation's unemployment rate

(Scoppa & Vuri, 2014). The lack of consensus on potential desirable, feasible, and

important strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and

Tobago creates a gap in the existing literature on the norms of voluntary employee

absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative modified Delphi study was to determine how a

panel of 17 Caribbean and global human resources (HR) experts view the desirability,

feasibility, and importance of forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary

employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. The expert panelists shared their opinions

based upon a predesigned list of strategy and overarching elements required for the

reduction of voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago.

Research Questions

The primary research question (RQ) and three subquestions (SQs) posed for this

qualitative modified Delphi study were as follows:

RQ: How does a panel of Caribbean and global HR experts view the desirability,

feasibility, and importance of forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary

employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago?

SQ1: How does a panel of Caribbean and global HR experts view the desirability

of forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in

Trinidad and Tobago?

SQ2: How does a panel of Caribbean and global HR experts view the feasibility of forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago?

SQ3: How does a panel of Caribbean and global HR experts view the importance of forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago?

Conceptual Framework

Demerouti et al. (2001) introduced the job demands-resources (JD-R) model and extended theory. Researchers used the JD-R model to emphasize that high job demands coupled with low job resources lead to voluntary employee absenteeism (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014, 2017, 2018; Demerouti et al., 2001; Vignoli et al., 2016, 2017). The elements of the JD-R model and theory framed the current study and formed the conceptual framework. The elements are job demands, job resources inclusive of personal resources, motivation previously termed engagement, job crafting, self-undermining, and strain previously termed exhaustion and burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017, 2018).

Job Demands

Job demands are the types of effort required for and expended during the execution of a task (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014; Bakker, Demerouti, de Boer, & Schaufeli, 2003; Demerouti et al., 2001). Although all tasks have inherent demands that lead to voluntary employee absenteeism, external job demands exist in the workplace (Barber & Santuzzi, 2015; Kwan et al., 2016; Magee et al., 2017). Although not all job

demands are negative (Cao, Shang, & Meng, 2020), researchers posited that excessive monitoring of employees, unreasonable workloads, and employee bullying by supervisors are external job demands that promote voluntary employee absenteeism (Daouk-Öyry, Anouze, Otaki, Dumit, & Osman, 2014; Manzano-García & Ayala, 2017; Shrivastava et al., 2015).

Job Resources and Personal Resources

Job resources are integral elements of support required by employees to accomplish their work goals (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2014). Job and personal resources can be tangible or intangible (Notenbomer, Roelen, van Rhenen, & Groothoff, 2016; Omar et al., 2017; Sakuraya et al., 2017). Researchers agreed that providing job resources reduced job demands (Cao et al., 2020; Compton & McManus, 2015; Cucchiella, Gastaldi, & Ranieri, 2014; Kisakye et al., 2016). Providing job resources such as supervisor support to counteract high job demands could reduce voluntary employee absenteeism (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014, 2017, 2018; Kwan et al., 2016; Mudaly & Nkosi, 2015).

Motivation

Maslow (1943) posited that motivation is the conduit used by humans to express and satisfy multiple basic needs. Han and Yin (2016) indicated that motivation is the dynamism or initiative that moves an employee to do things such as their job functions to satisfy other needs. In workplace settings, Bakker and Demerouti (2014, 2017, 2018) in their JD-R model established the use of the word motivation in place of engagement. Fostering employee motivation is integral to preventing voluntary employee absenteeism

(Ogbonnaya & Valizade, 2018). Researchers concluded that creating workplace employment in which employees experience fulfillment and job satisfaction is one form of motivation that reduces voluntary employee absenteeism (Devonish, 2018; Jensen, Andersen, & Holten, 2017; Munyenyembe et al., 2020; Nevicka, Van Vianen, De Hoogh, & Voorn, 2018).

Job Crafting

Irrespective of organizational structures and job descriptions, employee autonomy plays a vital role in successful job completion (Catalina-Romero et al., 2015). Autonomous employees can control how they execute their job functions to achieve their goals (Alegre, Mas-Machuca, & Berbegal-Mirabent, 2016). Job crafting refers to how employees exercise their autonomy to create and execute their job functions (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Beal, 2016; Demerouti, Bakker, & Gevers, 2015). Researchers indicated that voluntary employee absenteeism is reduced when autonomous employees design their mode of task execution, which reduces monotony and increases job satisfaction (Kottwitz, Schade, Burger, Radlinger, & Elfering, 2018; Lazarova, Peretz, & Fried, 2017; Sakuraya et al., 2017).

Self-Undermining

Self-undermining occurs when employees create obstacles that hinder goal achievement (Bakker & Costa, 2014). Bakker and Demerouti (2017, 2018) concurred with Bakker and Costa (2014) and added that self-undermining behavior not only undermines performance but also generates employee strain that leads to voluntary employee absenteeism.

Strain

Employees in organizations with high job demands and low resources undergo strain daily (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017, 2018). Strain, previously termed burnout, and exhaustion emerge from the anxieties and pressures associated with excessive workloads, fatigue, weak leader-member exchange (LMX), and unsafe workplace environments (Edralin, 2015; Khan, Nawaz, Qureshi, & Khan, 2016; Mudaly & Nkosi, 2015; Nevicka et al., 2018). Providing workplace environments with job resources to keep workload within reasonable limits to minimize fatigue reduces voluntary employee absenteeism (Bernstrøm & Houkes, 2018; Edralin, 2015; Freudenberger, 1974; Zia-ud-Din, Arif, & Shabbir, 2017).

The tenets and elements of the JD-R model and theory framed the current study and formed the conceptual framework. The JD-R model can be applied to understanding the convergence of strategies that contribute to the reduction of voluntary employee absenteeism (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014, 2017, 2018). The elements of the JD-R model were applicable in this modified Delphi study because there exists a gap in the literature regarding the lack of consensus on potential strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. Demerouti et al. (2001) introduced the JD-R model and extended theory to explain how burnout, now termed strain, leads to voluntary employee absenteeism. An extensive review of the literature on voluntary employee absenteeism indicated that strategies for managing the elements featured in the model could reduce voluntary employee absenteeism (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2014, 2017, 2018; Rosemberg & Li, 2018). Dollard and Bakker (2010) indicated that low PSC

workplace environments are those with high job demands and low job resources. Conversely, workplace environments with job resources that outweigh the job demands are high PSC work environments (Dollard & Bakker, 2010; Kwan et al., 2016; McLinton, Dollard, & Tuckey, 2018; Sakuraya et al., 2017).

Researchers have used the JD-R model in qualitative and quantitative studies to understand or investigate voluntary employee absenteeism and propose strategies to reduce it (see Compton & McManus, 2015; Hadjisolomou, 2015; Vignoli et al., 2016, 2017). Factors that could reduce voluntary employee absenteeism include decreasing effort-reward imbalance (ERI) and creating a high PSC workplace environment by allowing job crafting, providing avenues for personal development, improving supervisory support, and increasing quality of leadership (Catalina-Romero et al., 2015).

According to Salih (2018), traditional approaches to curtailing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago, such as inadequate monitoring of employee attendance registers and inconsistent disciplinary actions, have been ineffective. Consideration must be given to how the JD-R model integrates into the organizational evolution experienced in today's Trinidadian organizations, and how the JD-R model could provide individuals and organizations with ways to abandon traditional means of addressing voluntary employee absenteeism. Chapter 2 contains a thorough explanation of the concepts of the JD-R model and its connections to the current study.

Nature of the Study

There exists a lack of collaborative effort among experts to agree on strategies to minimize voluntary employee absenteeism (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014, 2017, 2018; Manzano-García & Ayala, 2017; Shrivastava et al., 2015). Although researchers have studied (a) Anglo-American and Euro-Asian contexts but not low-income or developing nation contexts and (b) predominantly participants in the Anglo-American, Euro-Asian nations (Munyenyembe et al., 2020), there exists a lack of scholarly research on voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. In addition to the nonexistence of research on voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago, there exists a deficiency of agreement on forward-looking strategies that could minimize voluntary employee absenteeism. The lack of consensus on potential desirable and feasible strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago creates a gap in the literature on the norms of voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago.

A nonprobability, purposive expert sample was used for the current study. Panelists were chosen using criteria based on a set of knowledge and experience indicators unique to the topics requiring expert opinions (see Heitner, Kahn, & Sherman, 2013). The criteria to identify experts for the current study were (a) a degree in business management or social and behavioral sciences from an accredited higher education institution, (b) 3 or more years of human resource management (HRM) experience, and (c) member in a professional HR organization such as the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM).

The primary source for recruiting expert panelists was the HRM groups on LinkedIn (Linkedin, 2018). Permission to join the LinkedIn groups to recruit expert panelists was sought by requesting letters of cooperation from the respective group owners ahead of the Walden Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval process. Acquiring the letters of cooperation ahead of the Walden IRB approval process indicated that LinkedIn groups were cooperating and that expert panelists were available. The SHRM Networking Group and the use of snowball sampling (i.e., eligible expert panelists sharing the survey link and recommendations for expert panel membership made by existing contacts) were the intended recruitment strategies. The sampling frame was estimated to include more than 1,000,000 professionals based on an assessment of LinkedIn and SHRM members who met the criteria for inclusion as an expert panelist.

The LinkedIn group owners did not acknowledge the request for a letter of cooperation; therefore, this approach for recruiting expert panelists was unsuccessful. The SHRM Networking Group granted permission for the posting of the study in the group. Posting in the SHRM Networking Group yielded no expert panelists. Subsequently, the study panel comprised (a) other eligible expert panelists sharing the survey link and (b) recommendations for expert panel membership made by existing contacts.

The number of panelists chosen for a Delphi study varies across studies (von der Gracht, 2008). Panel sizes can range from as few as four to over 100 (Linstone & Turoff, 2002; Skulmoski, Hartman, & Krahn, 2007; von der Gracht, 2008). The desired number of expert panelists for the current study was approximately 25 Caribbean and global expert HR managers. Twenty five was believed to be an appropriate size for a panel

because this size was deemed manageable for a study of this nature and would provide

sufficient data over multiple rounds to reach consensus while compensating for potential

attrition of panel members (see Heitner et al., 2013; Hsu & Sandford, 2007). The current

study commenced with 22 expert panelists who completed Round 1 and ended with 17

who completed Round 4.

Considering the purpose of the study and the nature of the research question, the

current study was classified as qualitative research because the initial data collection

solicited the subjective opinions of experts (see Skulmoski et al., 2007). The Delphi

design is suitable for building a consensus among a panel of experts (see Dalkey &

Helmer, 1963; Heitner et al., 2013; Helmer, 1968; Linstone & Turoff, 2002). Linstone

and Turoff (2002) indicated that the Delphi design is appropriate for generating

consensus regarding situations that are not well understood. In cases in which there is

uncertainty or lack of causation, researchers use the Delphi design to solicit iterative

input from selected experts versed in a particular subject (see Avella, 2016). The experts'

input serves to provide consensus about contentious or ambiguous decisions, or generate

consensus among expert panelists when there is divergence within theories and strategies

on a subject (see Afshari, 2015; Heitner et al., 2013; Parekh et al., 2018; Wester &

Borders, 2014).

A qualitative modified Delphi research design was suitable to determine how an

expert panel viewed the importance of desirable and feasible forward-looking strategies

for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. A predesigned

list of forward-looking strategies derived from a saturated analysis of the literature on

voluntary employee absenteeism replaced the traditional open-ended first-round questions associated with the classical Delphi. This departure from the use of the traditional open-ended Round 1 survey instrument affiliated with the classical Delphi design represented the Delphi modification (see Linstone & Turoff, 2002; Skulmoski et al., 2007).

This modified Delphi research featured four iterative rounds of data collection and analysis to determine how an expert panel viewed the importance of desirable and feasible forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. Surveys administered to the expert panelists via a secure online survey system was the means of data collection for the current study. In Round 1, the panelists were asked to review and modify a predesigned list of forward-looking strategies derived from a saturated analysis of the literature on voluntary employee absenteeism and, if needed, add new strategies to the list. The final list of forward-looking strategies from Round 1 was converted to Likert-type items, and the list advanced to Round 2 and constituted the Round 2 survey instrument. In Round 2, the expert panelists reviewed each forward-looking strategy using Likert-type scales for desirability and feasibility based on criteria developed by Linstone and Turoff (2002). The final list of forward-looking strategies was advanced to Round 3.

In Round 3, the panel of experts reviewed the list of forward-looking strategies advanced from round 2 and ranked the top five strategies according to importance or preference. In the current study, the use of the term preference in comparison to the term importance by Linstone and Turoff (2002) signified the same meaning as McMillan,

King, and Tully (2016) who clarified that the higher-ranking preferences represent

greater importance. The final list of forward-looking strategies was advanced to Round 4.

In Round 4, the expert panelists evaluated their level of confidence in each of the five

most desirable, feasible, and important forward-looking strategies that constituted the

final results of the study (see Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Linstone & Turoff, 2002; von der

Gracht, 2008). Descriptive statistics were used to (a) assess the ratings the expert

panelists provided for desirability and feasibility for each of the Likert-type items in

Round 2, (b) evaluate the expert panelists' rankings for importance or preference for each

of the Likert-type items in Round 3, and (c) appraise the expert panelists' confidence

ratings for each of the Likert-type items in Round 4.

Definitions

Job crafting: Job crafting refers to employees exercising the autonomy to

dynamically design their job functions and orchestrate the type of professional

relationships engaged in at work, which reduces job demands, strain, and task

repetitiveness while enhancing job satisfaction (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Beal, 2016;

Demerouti et al., 2015).

Job demand: Job demands are those sustained psychological (cognitive and

emotional), physiological, physical, social, or organizational efforts required for and

expended during the execution of a task (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014; Bakker et al., 2003;

Demerouti et al., 2001).

Job resources: Job resources include psychological, social, physical, or

organizational characteristics of the job that (a) are integral to achieving work goals; (b)

reduce job demands, strain, self-undermining, and their corresponding physiological and psychological costs; and (c) drive motivation, personal growth, learning, and development (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2014).

Motivation: Motivation is the dynamism or initiative that moves people to do things such as their job functions naturally (Han & Yin, 2016).

Psychosocial safety climate: PSC is the collection of organizational practices, policies, and procedures designed and implemented for the preservation of employee's psychological health and safety (Dollard & Bakker, 2010). High PSC organizations are desirable corporate environments in which managers support, protect, and enhance employees' well-being (Dollard & Bakker, 2010; Kwan et al., 2016; McLinton et al., 2018).

Self-Undermining: Self-undermining refers to how employees' actions create a vicious and negative cycle of excessive job demands and job strains that hinder their performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017, 2018).

Strain: Strain, previously termed burnout, and exhaustion are the organizational, physical, psychological, and physiological pressures and associated anxieties experienced by employees (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017, 2018).

Voluntary absenteeism: Voluntary employee absenteeism is characterized as a function of an employee's motivation in which employees can attend work but are unwilling (Bakker et al., 2003; Vignoli et al., 2016, 2017).

Assumptions

Marshall and Rossman (2015) defined assumptions in qualitative studies as claims that can be considered valid or plausible by the readers of the study. Factors related to the research design, population, statistical tests, or other restrictions placed on the scope of the study constitute the assumptions of qualitative studies (Marshall & Rossman, 2015). The current modified Delphi study included several assumptions. The first was that the self-selecting experts were honest regarding their eligibility for satisfying the criteria for inclusion. This assumption was deemed essential because any attempts to verify eligibility could have compromised the expert panelists' identity leading to erosion of their privacy and the confidentiality of the information they provided.

The second assumption was that the panel of 17 Caribbean and global HR experts would professionally engage and deliver quality answers required to augment the quality and rigor of the current study. Given that the panel comprised experts with a common interest in HRM, a third assumption was that the experts' participation was sincere to evaluate meaningful strategies for reducing the problem of voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago.

Another assumption was that the findings of the current study might contribute to positive social change by triggering a reduction in voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. This assumption was grounded in the driver and needs of the current research, which was to address a social problem. Voluntary employee absenteeism is a global social problem, as evidenced in an exhaustive review of the literature on voluntary employee absenteeism. The final assumption was that scholars,

practitioners, members of the private sector, and government sector leadership could

benefit from the current study's findings.

<div align="center">**Scope and Delimitations**</div>

Voluntary employee absenteeism is a global phenomenon found in every industry

(see Notenbomer et al., 2016; Vignoli et al., 2016). Identifying every possible, desirable,

feasible, and important strategy to reduce this problem cannot be addressed in a single

study. According to Simon and Goes (2013), establishing and defining the scope of

scholarly research creates delimited boundaries that make the study more practical and

manageable. The delimitations of a study are characteristics such as controllable

boundaries and scope that a researcher imposes on the study to keep the study

manageable (see Simon & Goes, 2013; Yin, 2017).

There were several delimitations in the current study. First, the scope of the

current study was delimited to identifying forward-looking desirable, feasible, and

important strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and

Tobago. Second, to maintain an attainable level of complexity in data collection and

analysis, the current study was delimited to HRM strategies. Third, the number of survey

rounds conducted and the Likert-type scales used for desirability, feasibility, and

importance were delimitations imposed on the current study. The volume of controlled

feedback shared with the expert panelists and the criteria for achieving consensus from

the data were also delimitations of the current study.

Amankwaa (2016) stated that transferability of the findings of a qualitative study

exists when the findings are applicable in other contexts. According to von der Gracht

(2008), Delphi studies, such as the current modified Delphi study, require homogenous

expert panelists obtained using the purposive sampling strategy. The prospect for

transferability of the findings of Delphi studies exists due to (a) the aligning of the

expertise of the homogenous expert panelists with the needs of prospective readers, (b)

the use of purposive sampling strategy, (c) the fixed criteria for inclusion as a

homogenous expert panelist, and (d) the description of the phenomenon under study (see

Amankwaa, 2016; Brady, 2015; Connelly, 2016). In the current study, Survey Monkey

was selected as the survey administration tool to ensure consistency in how the expert

panelists completed the survey. The resulting consensus-based list of strategies can be

used as a platform for future research when strategies for reducing voluntary employee

absenteeism require updating and revision.

Limitations

Marshall and Rossman (2015) defined limitations as restrictions or potential

weaknesses associated with the study, which are beyond the researcher's control and

cannot be ignored. Research limitations include a lack of access to data and a lack of

research expert panelists (see Marshall & Rossman, 2015). One limitation of the current

study was the matter of anonymity as an essential tenet of Delphi research and

accountability. With anonymity among expert panelists being a characteristic of Delphi

studies, there was the risk that this anonymity among expert panelists may have resulted

in reduced expert panelists' accountability, which may have influenced the study results

(see Fletcher & Marchildon, 2014). In the absence of accountability, the expert panelists

may have provided impromptu responses, which could have affected the efficacy, accuracy, and rigor of the study (see Fletcher & Marchildon, 2014).

Another limitation was that the anonymity among the expert panelists also eliminated the occurrence of face-to-face communication between the panelists, resulting in a lack of debate. Due to the anonymity that existed among expert panelists and the use of SurveyMonkey as an online survey dissemination tool, there were no verbal exchanges between the panelists, which may have obscured clarifications for conflicting expert responses (see Vernon, 2009).

The self-selection of expert panelists was another limitation of the Delphi study (see Franklin & Hart, 2007). Expert panelists self-reported that they met the criteria for inclusion, but I was unable to verify the integrity of their self-selection. I was not able to conduct background checks to verify qualifications or confirm the honesty of the expert panelists' responses. The resources to conduct background checks on expert panelists were unavailable; therefore, the expert panelists were assumed to be truthful regarding their qualifications for the study.

I used qualitative methodology, which could have attracted respondent bias over four rounds of data collection. Bias could have been in the form of expert panelists who chose to satisfy their own agendas or could have had subjective opinions. Due to the number of rounds and the length of the Round 1 and 2 survey instrument, expert panelists may have felt that the survey had become burdensome and may not have given their best efforts to complete the surveys. The current study was also limited to expert panelists acquired through personal referrals.

Significance of the Study

Singh (2015) noted that surveys conducted by the Employers Consultative

Association showed that traditional approaches to dealing with absenteeism are

ineffective. Previous suggestions for solutions included the WTO chair in 2015 citing a

need to address the national culture, employers allowing employees to work from home,

and harmonizing of use of resources between the private sector and the social program

(Singh, 2015). Schwab (2015) proposed the minimization of poor work ethics while Ernst

and Young (2017) cited the importation of labor as a means of compensating for

inadequate local staffing as potential solutions to reduce the amount and cost of voluntary

employee absenteeism. The voluntary employee absenteeism rate at 40% of the adult

working population in Trinidad and Tobago results in a substantial cost and loss of

revenue to the Trinidad and Tobago economy (Schwab, 2015; Stone, 2016). Despite the

numerous solutions indicated, there remains a lack of consensus on forward-looking

strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism. The current study was

conducted to fill a gap in the existing literature on the culture of voluntary absenteeism in

Trinidad and Tobago.

The results of the current study may contribute to positive social change based on

the adoption of the recommendations of the expert panel. Schwab (2015, 2017) indicated

that voluntary employee absenteeism is the primary barrier to doing business. Given the

barriers to entry and foreign direct investment (FDI), Trinidad and Tobago have one of

the lowest GDPs in the Latin Americas and the Caribbean (Schwab, 2015, 2017). The

implementation of the recommendations of the expert panelists could promote economic

growth. The possible new revenue from improved economic growth, if realized, could be used to promote further positive social change through investment in community and educational programs. The realized earnings from increased production arising from a reduction in voluntary employee absenteeism could facilitate the building of public infrastructure, provide new jobs, and improve the quality of living for the nation's residents.

Failure to address voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago could have an adverse effect on promoting social change in Trinidad and Tobago. Voluntary employee absenteeism could increase beyond the current 40% of the adult working population, resulting in a worsened WTO ranking regarding voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago and a probable lowering of the nation's GDP (Ernst & Young, 2017; Schwab, 2015, 2017; Singh, 2015).

Summary and Transition

Chapter 1 contained a synopsis of the research process for evaluating expert opinions for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. Traditional approaches such as monitoring the employee attendance register and disciplinary actions have failed to curtail voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. The current study incorporated the tenets of the JD-R model to investigate strategies for reducing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. The elements of the JD-R model are job demands and resources inclusive of personal and job resources, motivation previously termed work engagement, job crafting, self-undermining, and strain previously termed exhaustion. Each element is directly

associated with voluntary employee absenteeism and, if managed dynamically, can reduce voluntary employee absenteeism. The Delphi design of the current study consisted of four iterative rounds of surveying. The purpose of these four iterative rounds was to identify the most desirable, feasible, and important forward-looking strategies with the highest confidence level for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. Chapter 2 includes a review of the literature on the history and relevance of the research problem, a detailed description of the conceptual framework, information on the research inquiry, and an overview of the Delphi methodology.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Job demands in the form of excessive and unnecessary workloads are stressors that create employee strain and promote voluntary employee absenteeism (Vignoli et al., 2016). Excessive monitoring and unreasonable workloads are forms of employee bullying that create low PSC workplace environments and promote voluntary employee absenteeism (Kwan et al., 2016; Magee et al., 2017). Researchers also indicated that excessive job demands are another form of workplace bullying that promotes voluntary employee absenteeism (Kwan et al., 2016; Magee et al., 2017). According to Kwan et al. (2016), workplace bullying by superiors, as excessive job demand, and employees' inability to report the bullying, as a low job resource, creates demotivated or disengaged employees.

Low PSC workplace environments comprising high job demands and low job resources contribute to a significant loss of revenue due to low productivity and reduced company performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017, 2018; Demerouti et al., 2001; Kocakulah et al., 2016). In cases involving excessive and unnecessary job demands coupled with low job resources, employees engage in voluntary absenteeism as a form of workplace avoidance (Kwan et al., 2016). The social problem is that lost production days recorded as sickness absenteeism are often voluntary absence days, as nearly two thirds of absenteeism is not sickness absenteeism (Kocakulah et al., 2016). In cases involving excessive job demands, unnecessary job demands, and job strain coupled with low job resources, employees engage in voluntary absenteeism as a form of workplace avoidance (Kwan et al., 2016). Barber and Santuzzi (2015) stated that even the most productive

employees might resort to voluntary employee absenteeism as a coping mechanism to avoid stressors such as excessive and unnecessary job demands, workplace bullying, and overworking. According to Livanos and Zangelidis (2013), employee absenteeism resulted in employees having less disposable income, which could have a significant social and economic effect on their community and nation.

The purpose of this qualitative modified Delphi study was to determine how a panel of 17 Caribbean and global HR experts view the desirability, feasibility, and importance of forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. Although researchers have studied (a) Anglo-American and Euro-Asian contexts but not low-income or developing nation contexts and (b) predominantly participants in the Anglo-American, Euro-Asian nations (Munyenyembe et al., 2020), there exists a lack of scholarly research on voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. In addition to the nonexistence of research on voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago, there exists a deficiency of agreement on forward-looking strategies that could minimize voluntary employee absenteeism. The lack of consensus on desirable and feasible strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago created a gap in the existing literature on the norms of voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. This gap in the literature added to the persistence of the specific management problem, such as the proliferation of disruptions, low productivity, and a sustained increase in the nation's unemployment rate (Scoppa & Vuri, 2014). Chapter 2 contains the literature search strategy, conceptual framework, literature review of voluntary

employee absenteeism, literature review of the Delphi methodology, and a summary and transition.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature search strategy for the current study was essential to identify elements and strategies for the development of a consolidated strategy for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. An exhaustive review of the literature leading to data saturation on voluntary employee absenteeism resulted in the development of elements and corresponding strategies for reducing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. The literature search process entailed conducting searches of key terms and assessing the references associated with the results. The key search terms included *voluntary employee absenteeism*, *employee absenteeism*, *workplace absenteeism*, *presenteeism*, *sickness absenteeism*, *voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago*, *workplace absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago*, *job demands*, *job resources*, *motivation*, *job crafting*, *self-undermining*, *strain*, *psychosocial safety climate*, and *effort-reward imbalance.* See Table 1 for the classification of the resources in the literature review by key search terms and date of publication.

Table 1

Reviewed Resources: Classification and Year of Publication

Key search term	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	Prior	Total
Voluntary employee absenteeism	1	3	1	3	5	3	6	22
Job demands	2	0	2	4	2	2	2	14
Job resources	1	0	5	5	7	9	8	35
Motivation	2	2	7	10	6	4	5	36
Job crafting	0	0	1	5	1	2	0	9
Self-undermining	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	3
Strain	0	0	4	8	5	4	2	23
Total	6	5	21	36	26	24	24	142
Percentage of total	4.20%	3.50%	14.80%	25.40%	18.30%	16.90%	16.90%	

Table 1 displays a breakdown of the literature consulted for the literature review. Table 1 also contains germinal works. The examination of the references allied with the search results contributed to a continued interrogation of the literature on voluntary employee absenteeism. The search process conducted mainly with Google Scholar featured the use of quotation marks in lieu of the Boolean operator AND. A search conducted in the Walden library would read *voluntary employee absenteeism* AND *Trinidad and Tobago*, but I used "voluntary employee absenteeism" "Trinidad and Tobago" without the use of commas in Google Scholar. There were also *cited by* and *related articles* features found in Google Scholar, which provided further access to other literature and relevant search terms. Authors of scholarly peer-reviewed articles highlighted the keywords and subject phrases around which they based their research. Those keywords provided a basis for further search. Automatic alerts were created in Google Scholar using key search terms. The automated alert sent a notification to a

designated e-mail address with sources containing the specified search terms. Although the literature search focused on identifying peer-reviewed articles published within the past 5 years, this literature review included some germinal sources older than 5 years, which highlighted the history and evolution of the research topic within the academic community.

The keyword and search terms used in all databases to search for elements and strategies were *voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago*; *voluntary employee absenteeism*; *workplace absenteeism*; *sickness absenteeism*; *presenteeism*; *job demands*; *job resources*; *motivation*, *job crafting*; *self-undermining*; *strain*; *burnout*, *employee disengagement*; *employee engagement*; *psychosocial safety climate*, *effort-reward imbalance*, *job satisfaction*; *hegemony*; *organizational culture*; *theories constituting to workplace absenteeism*; *meta-analysis of voluntary employee absenteeism*; *critical reviews of voluntary employee absenteeism*, *literature reviews of voluntary employee absenteeism*; *systematic reviews of voluntary employee absenteeism*; *synthesis matrix of voluntary employee absenteeism*; *Trinidad and Tobago* AND *voluntary employee absenteeism*; *job demands* AND *voluntary employee absenteeism*; *job resources* AND *voluntary employee absenteeism*; *motivation* AND *voluntary employee absenteeism*; *job crafting* AND *voluntary employee absenteeism*; *self-undermining* AND *voluntary employee absenteeism*; *strain* AND *voluntary employee absenteeism*; *job demands-resources* AND *voluntary employee absenteeism*; *employee burnout* AND *voluntary employee absenteeism*; *employee engagement* AND *voluntary employee absenteeism*; *employee disengagement* AND *voluntary employee absenteeism*; *job*

satisfaction AND *voluntary employee absenteeism*; *autonomy* AND *voluntary employee absenteeism*; *psychosocial safety climate* AND *voluntary employee absenteeism*; *effort-reward imbalance* AND *voluntary employee absenteeism*; *employee well-being* AND *voluntary employee absenteeism*; *organizational culture* AND *voluntary employee absenteeism*; *national culture* AND *voluntary employee absenteeism*; *servant leadership* AND *voluntary employee absenteeism*; *leader membership exchange* AND *voluntary employee absenteeism*; and *transformational leadership* AND *voluntary employee absenteeism*.

The search for information on the chosen research method was conducted in ProQuest, Google, and Google Scholar. The keyword and search terms used for the information on the chosen research method were *Delphi*; *classical Delphi*; *modified Delphi*; *history of the Delphi design*, *critical analysis of the Delphi method*; *critical reviews of the Delphi method*, *limitations of the Delphi method*; *voluntary employee absenteeism* AND *Delphi study*; *voluntary employee absenteeism* AND *modified Delphi design*; *workplace absenteeism* AND *modified Delphi design*; and *dissertations* AND *Delphi study*. Databases and search engines incorporated in the literature search strategy included ABI/INFORM, Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, CINAHL, EBSCOhost, Emerald, JSTOR, MEDLINE, ProQuest, PsycINFO, SAGE Journals, ScienceDirect, SocINDEX, Thoreau Multi-Database Search, Google Scholar, and Google.

Conceptual Framework

Demerouti et al. (2001) introduced the JD-R model and extended theory. The elements of the JD-R model and theory framed the current study and formed the conceptual framework. Figure 1 depicts the conceptual framework for the current study.
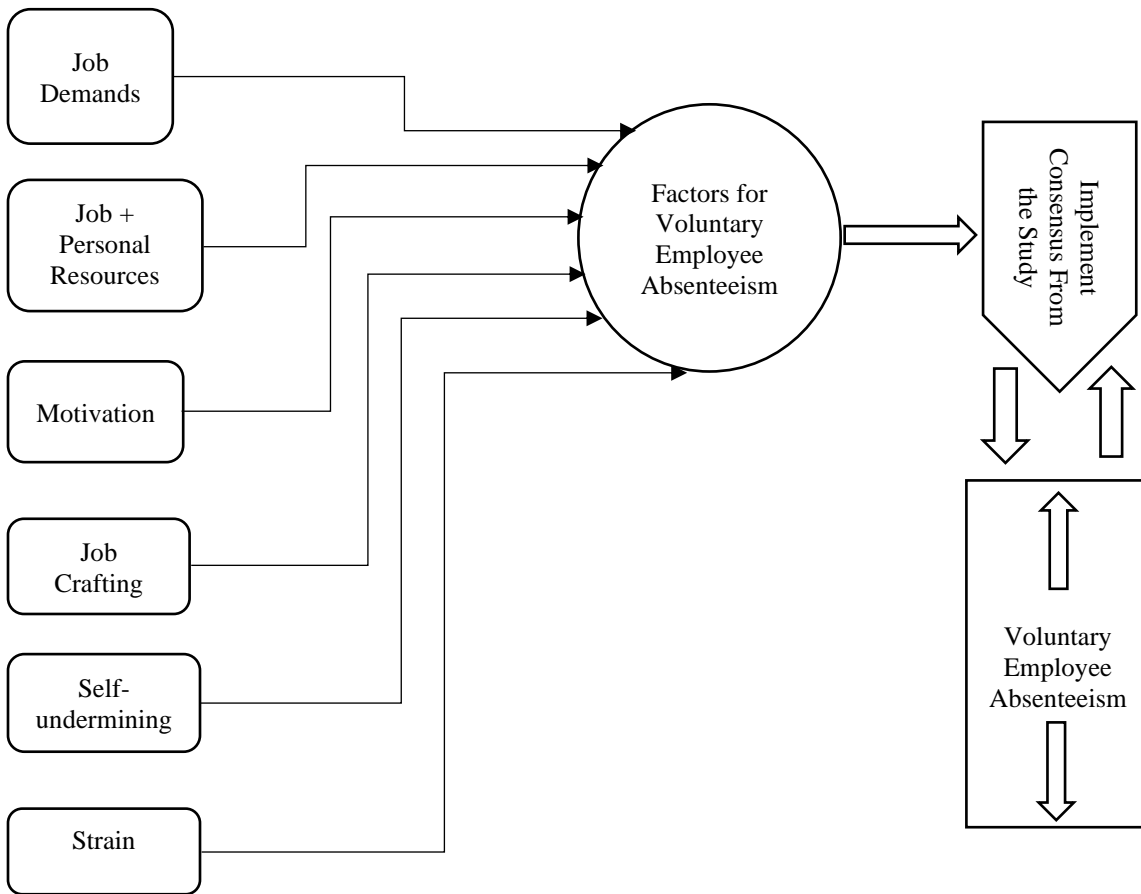
Figure 1. Conceptual framework for reducing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago.

Researchers used the JD-R model to emphasize that high job demands coupled with low job resources lead to voluntary employee absenteeism (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014, 2017, 2018; Demerouti et al., 2001; Vignoli et al., 2016, 2017). The elements of the JD-R

model are job demands, job resources inclusive of personal resources, motivation previously termed engagement, job crafting, self-undermining, and strain previously termed exhaustion and burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017, 2018).

Job Demands-Resource Model and Theory

An extensive review of the literature on voluntary employee absenteeism indicated that strategies for managing the elements featured in the model could reduce voluntary employee absenteeism (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014, 2017, 2018; Rosemberg & Li, 2018). Bakker and Demerouti (2014) indicated that the first use of their 2001 JD-R model was for predicting burnout. The JD-R model is now more extensively used and has spawned the JD-R theory associated with the prediction of organizational commitment, work enjoyment, connectedness and work engagement, sickness absenteeism, and job performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014; Demerouti et al., 2001). The JD-R model and theory's components, namely job demands and job resources, are predictors of voluntary employee absence, and both components interact to predict occupational well-being and indirectly influence operational performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014, 2017, 2018; Rosemberg & Li, 2018). Burnout, organizational commitment, work enjoyment, connectedness and work engagement, high job demands, low job resources, and concern for employees' well-being are factors connected to voluntary employee absenteeism (Bakker and Demerouti, 2014).

Bakker and Demerouti (2017) conducted a review of the first 10 years of the existence of the JD-R model. Bakker and Demerouti (2017) outlined the components of the revised model as job demands, job resources inclusive of personal resources,

motivation previously termed work engagement, job crafting, self-undermining, and strain previously termed burnout and exhaustion. The revision of the model's component featured name changes, but the essence remained the same: increased job demands and lack of resources contribute to voluntary employee absenteeism (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014; Demerouti et al., 2001).

Job demands. Job demands are the types of effort required for and expended during the execution of a task (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014; Bakker et al., 2003; Demerouti et al., 2001). Although all job functions have inherent demands that lead to voluntary employee absenteeism, external job demands exist in the workplace (Barber & Santuzzi, 2015; Kwan et al., 2016; Magee et al., 2017). Researchers posited that excessive monitoring of employees, unreasonable workloads, and employee bullying by supervisors are external job demands that promote voluntary employee absenteeism (Daouk-Öyry et al., 2014; Manzano-García & Ayala, 2017; Shrivastava et al., 2015).

Job resources and personal resources. Job resources are integral elements of support required by employees to accomplish their work goals (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2014). Job and personal resources can be tangible or intangible (Notenbomer et al., 2016; Omar et al., 2017; Sakuraya et al., 2017). Researchers agreed that providing job resources reduces job demands (Compton & McManus, 2015; Cucchiella et al., 2014; Kisakye et al., 2016). Providing job resources such as supervisor support to counteract high job demands could reduce voluntary employee absenteeism (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014, 2017, 2018; Kwan et al., 2016; Mudaly & Nkosi, 2015).

Motivation. Maslow (1943) posited that motivation is the conduit used by

humans to simultaneously express or satisfy multiple basic needs. Han and Yin (2016)

indicated that motivation is the dynamism or initiative that moves an employee to

naturally do things such as their job functions to satisfy other needs. In workplace

settings, Bakker and Demerouti (2014, 2017, 2018) in their JD-R model established the

use of the word motivation in place of engagement. Fostering employee motivation is

integral to preventing voluntary employee absenteeism (Ogbonnaya & Valizade, 2018).

Researchers concluded that creating workplace employment where employees experience

fulfillment and job satisfaction is one form of motivation which reduced voluntary

employee absenteeism (Devonish, 2018; Jensen et al., 2017; Munyenyembe et al., 2020;

Nevicka et al., 2018).

Job crafting. Irrespective of organizational structures and job descriptions,

employee autonomy plays a vital role in successful job completion (Catalina-Romero et

al., 2015). Autonomous employees can control how they execute their job functions to

achieve their goals (Alegre et al., 2016). Job crafting describes how employees exercise

their autonomy to create and perform their job functions (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017;

Beal, 2016; Demerouti et al., 2015). Researchers indicated that voluntary employee

absenteeism is reduced when autonomous employees design their mode of task

execution, which reduces monotony and increases job satisfaction (Kottwitz et al., 2018;

Lazarova et al., 2017; Sakuraya et al., 2017).

Self-Undermining. Self-undermining occurs when employees create their

obstacles, which hinder goal achievement (Bakker & Costa, 2014). Bakker and

Demerouti (2017, 2018) concurred with Bakker and Costa (2014). They added that self-

undermining behavior not only undermined performance but also proliferated employee strain daily, which subsequently led to voluntary employee absenteeism.

Strain. Employees in organizations with high job demands and low resources undergo strain daily (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017, 2018). Strain, previously termed burnout and exhaustion emerge from the anxieties and pressures associated with excessive workloads, fatigue, weak LMX, and unsafe workplace environments (Edralin, 2015; Khan et al., 2016; Mudaly & Nkosi, 2015; Nevicka et al., 2018). Providing workplace environments with job resources to keep workload within reasonable limits to minimize fatigue reduced voluntary employee absenteeism (Bernstrøm & Houkes, 2018; Edralin, 2015; Freudenberger, 1974; Zia-ud-Din et al., 2017).

JD-R Model and Psychosocial Safety Climate

PSC is the collection of organizational practices, policies, and procedures designed and implemented for the preservation of employee's psychological health and safety (Dollard & Bakker, 2010). The absence of these organizational practices, policies, and procedures in workplace environments meant lowered job resources for the protection of employee's psychological health and safety (Dollard & Bakker, 2010). Workplace environments with high job demands and insufficient job resources are low PSC workplace environments (Dollard & Bakker, 2010; Kwan et al., 2016; McLinton et al., 2018). Conversely, workplace environments with job resources that outweigh the job demands are high PSC workplace environments (Dollard & Bakker, 2010; Kwan et al., 2016; McLinton et al., 2018; Sakuraya et al., 2017). Bakker and Demerouti (2018) focused on employees' well-being and self-undermining. Bakker and Demerouti

incorporated the most recent version of the JD-R theory to explain how PSC working conditions influenced employees and how employees shaped their working conditions. Bakker and Demerouti also posited that employee well-being and organizational behavior is a function of factors located at the organization, team, and individual levels, which influenced each other within and over time, which subsequently affects absenteeism.

Researchers have used the JD-R model in qualitative and quantitative researches globally to either understand or investigate voluntary employee absenteeism and to propose strategies to reduce same (see Compton & McManus, 2015; Hadjisolomou, 2015; Vignoli et al., 2016, 2017). Kisakye et al. (2016) conducted a review of the literature on voluntary employee absenteeism in countries such as the United States, Germany, Holland, Finland, Norway, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and Sweden. Financially based incentives, awarding extra leave days to employees who worked for a predetermined period without being absent, and prohibition of private practice, for example, doctors could minimize voluntary employee absenteeism. Kisakye et al. added that the implementation of organizational absenteeism policies inclusive of disciplinary actions, dismissal, or forced retirement of employees could minimize voluntary employee absenteeism. Policies implemented will be dependent on the type of employees the firm attract, warranting the implementation of more severe policies at firms with less motivated workers (Bennedsen, Tsoutsoura, & Wolfenzon, 2019).

Catalina-Romero et al. (2015) executed their study in Spain. Factors that could reduce voluntary employee absenteeism included decreasing ERI and creating a high PSC workplace environment by allowing job crafting, providing avenues for personal

development, improved supervisory support, and quality of leadership (Catalina-Romero et al., 2015). Sakuraya et al. (2017) theorized that there exist distinct relationships between job crafting and work engagement as the tenets of the JD-R model and theory, and psychological distress among Japanese employees. In their conclusion, Sakuraya et al. indicated that the manipulation of the components of the JD-R model affects voluntary employee absenteeism.

Literature Review

The research into voluntary employee absenteeism began during the Second World War (Covner, 1950; Schenet, 1945). Schenet (1945) concluded from his quantitative study that voluntary employee absenteeism was dependent on factors such as employees' age, sex, and length of tenure in the U.S. war plants where he conducted his research. Schenet categorized absenteeism into two groups, namely sick and personal, and concluded that overall, women had three times as much absenteeism as men. Schenet (1945) further concluded that women had approximately twice as much sickness absenteeism as do men, as well as women, had between three and four times as much personal absenteeism as do men. Schenet declared that the differences between absenteeism among men and women were due to sex as a variable because the higher rate of absenteeism among women prevailed in every age group, length of tenure group, and department. In the findings of his study, Schenet also posited that physical characteristics, intelligence test scores, did not appear to bear any significant relationship to the total absenteeism problem. Notable is that Schenet neither offered any explanation of why sex,

age, and tenure were contributory factors to voluntary employee absenteeism, nor did he offer any solutions to reduce voluntary employee absenteeism.

Using a similar U.S. war plant setting, Covner (1950) conducted a comparative study as Schenet. According to Covner, the management of the plant blamed the sex of the employee for high absenteeism, which is subsequently responsible for low production. Covner's findings indicated that the voluntary absenteeism rate was not due to the employees' sex, but that absenteeism was inversely related to the quality of the relationship between the supervisors and their line staff.

The literature review of the current study comprises of an exhaustive review of 142 peer-reviewed literature on voluntary employee absenteeism published since 1947. The authors of these 142 studies indicated that managing individual or combined elements of the JD-R model is integral to minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018; Kisakye et al., 2016; Kocakulah et al., 2016; Kwan et al., 2016; Manzano-García & Ayala, 2017; Shrivastava et al., 2015). The various solutions or strategies for reducing voluntary employee absenteeism contained in the exhaustive review of the literature aligned with the elements and tenets of the JD-R model (Vignoli et al., 2016, 2017). The review of the 142 peer-reviewed sources yielded a total of 151 potential strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism. These 151 strategies, which could reduce voluntary employee absenteeism, were distilled to 50 strategies, which could reduce voluntary employee absenteeism.

The six elements of the JD-R model are job demands, job resources inclusive of personal resources, motivation previously termed engagement, job crafting, self-

undermining, and strain previously termed exhaustion and burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014, 2017, 2018). These six elements of the JD-R model also comprised the conceptual framework which framed the current study.

Overarching Elements and Strategies

Appendix A titled Solution Matrix Condensed From the Review of the Literature is comprised of (a) six overarching elements which are the said six elements which comprise the JD-R model and the conceptual framework which framed the current study and (b) the 50 forward-looking strategies which could reduce voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. Based on the study's conceptual framework aligning with the JD-R model, the six overarching elements and 50 forward-looking strategies posited in Appendix A reflects the potency of the JD-R model for providing potential desirable and feasible strategies for reducing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014, 2017, 2018; Demerouti et al., 2001; Dollard & Bakker, 2010; Notenbomer et al., 2016). Appendix A is integral to the current study because (a) its contents are the core of the discussion in this literature review and (b) the aforementioned exhaustive review of the literature on voluntary employee absenteeism did not yield any studies on voluntary employee absenteeism conducted in Trinidad and Tobago. The lack of research on voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago made the current study important for providing consensus on desirable and feasible forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. The following sections highlight each overarching element and its associated strategies.

Job Demands

Job demands are those sustained psychological (cognitive and emotional), physiological, physical, social, or organizational effort required for and expended during the execution of a task (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014; Bakker et al., 2003; Demerouti et al., 2001). Researchers posited that job demands are a significant contributor to voluntary workplace absenteeism (Notenbomer et al., 2016; Vignoli et al., 2016). While all tasks possess inherent demands, there also exist external job demands in the workplace, which may lead to voluntary employee absenteeism (Barber & Santuzzi, 2015; Kwan et al., 2016; Magee et al., 2017). Researchers posited that while not all job demands lead to negative outcomes, excessive monitoring of employees, unreasonable workloads, and employee bullying by supervisors are external job demands which proliferate voluntary employee absenteeism (Barber & Santuzzi, 2015; Daouk-Öyry et al., 2014; Manzano-García & Ayala, 2017; Shrivastava et al., 2015).

According to Vignoli et al. (2016), job demands in the form of excessive and unnecessary workloads act as stressors. The excessive and unnecessary workloads acting as stressors create employee strain, which promulgates voluntary employee absenteeism (Vignoli et al., 2016). In situations involving excessive and unnecessary job demands, employees engage in voluntary absenteeism as a form of workplace avoidance (Kwan et al., 2016). Barber and Santuzzi (2015) stated that even the most productive employees might resort to voluntary employee absenteeism due to stressors arising from excessive and unnecessary job demands. Vignoli et al. (2016) added that not all job demands are negative, but said demands, if not managed, could become stressors, which could lead to

voluntary employee absenteeism.

Researchers also indicated that workplace bullying is another form of job demand (Kwan et al., 2016; Magee et al., 2017). Excessive monitoring and unreasonable workloads are forms of bullying that create low PSC workplace environments and promote voluntary employee absenteeism (Kwan et al., 2016; Magee et al., 2017). Barber and Santuzzi (2015), Daouk-Öyry et al. (2014), and Shrivastava et al. (2015) posited that reducing excessive job demands could also reduce voluntary employee absenteeism. According to Notenbomer et al. (2016); and Vignoli et al. (2016), reducing job demands could reduce voluntary employee absenteeism.

The researchers of the qualitative and quantitative studies on the alleviation of job demands as a potential desirable and feasible forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism showed congruency in their respective findings (Notenbomer et al., 2016; Vignoli et al., 2016). Notenbomer et al. (2016) conducted a qualitative focus group study in Holland with 15 voluntary employees as panelists. The researchers determined that reducing the job demand component in the JD-R model is a strategy that could reduce voluntary employee absenteeism. Vignoli et al. (2016) conducted their quantitative longitudinal study with 245 employees in Italy. The hypothesis that job demand will be positively related to absenteeism was supported (Vignoli et al., 2016).

The differences in the two studies' research methods, the number of expert panelists, and population demographics such as age, gender, race, and income did not negate the fact that minimizing job demands could be a potential desirable and feasible

forward-looking strategy for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism. Appendix A featuring the minimizing of job demands as a strategy to minimize voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago, was fundamental in the currrent study.

Job Resources

Job resources include psychological, social, physical, or organizational characteristics of the job that (a) are integral to achieving work goals; (b) reduce job demands, strain, self-undermining, and their corresponding physiological and psychological costs; and (c) drive motivation, personal growth, learning, and development (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2014). Magee et al. (2017), Notenbomer et al. (2016), and Omar et al. (2017) agreed that increasing job resources may lead to higher work engagement and could reduce voluntary employee absenteeism. Job and personal resources can be either tangible or intangible (Notenbomer et al., 2016; Omar et al., 2017; Sakuraya et al., 2017).

Sakuraya et al. (2017) interrogated the relationship between the JD-R model and psychological distress and concluded that psychological stress invariably affected voluntary absenteeism. Increasing just the primary job resources which lowered psychological distress could reduce voluntary employee absenteeism (Sakuraya et al., 2017). McLinton et al. (2018) supported Sakuraya et al. by positing that developing organizational and job design practices that better valued employees' psychological health is a form of job resource.

Poor employee psychological health is associated with work environments with low PSC. Organizations with high levels of PSC have less employee discrimination

especially in the way of bullying and other factors contributing to voluntary employee absenteeism (Dollard & Bakker, 2010; Kwan et al., 2016; Leka, Van Wassenhove, & Jain, 2015; Yang, Caughlin, Gazica, Truxillo, & Spector, 2014; Zia-ud-Din et al., 2017). While presenting their seminal PSC model, Dollard and Bakker (2010) indicated that high PSC organizations are a desirable organizational environment where managers support, protect, and enhances the well-being of employees. Conversely, low PSC organizations experience more significant levels of voluntary employee absenteeism as employees use absenteeism as a means of avoiding aversive workplaces (Catalina-Romero et al., 2015; Hassan, Wright, & Yukl, 2014; Kwan et al., 2016; Leka et al., 2015; Mudaly & Nkosi, 2015).

Creating high PSC workplace environments as a job resource that enhances employees' well-being could reduce voluntary employee absenteeism (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014, 2018; Daouk-Öyry et al., 2014; Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara & Sánchez-Medina, 2015). Kisakye et al. (2016) lent support by opining that implementing regulatory mechanisms aimed at improving work environments is inversely related to voluntary employee absenteeism (Kisakye et al., 2016). Workplace bullying is a part of low PSC work environments (Kwan et al., 2016). Creating and maintaining high PSC workplace environments that are free of employee bullying and incivility could reduce voluntary employee absenteeism (Shrivastava et al., 2015; Yang et al., 2014; Zia-ud-Din et al., 2017). Other researchers added that fostering high PSC workplace environments where employees can report workplace bullying by fellow employees could reduce

voluntary employee absenteeism (Curry, 2018; Kwan et al., 2016; M. B. Nielsen, Indregard, & Øverland, 2016; Rajalakshmi & Naresh, 2018).

Job resources, such as employee assistance programs (EAP), comprises high PSC workplace environments (Cucchiella et al., 2014; Richmond, Pampel, Wood, & Nunes, 2017). According to Compton and McManus (2015), EAPs are vital to job resources provided by organizations. Compton and McManus noted that employees come to the workplace with their emotional and home lives and that the two inevitably collide with their work lives, which causes reduced production and, subsequently, voluntary employee absenteeism. Organizations lose thousands of production days as employees unable to afford childcare services engage in voluntary employee absenteeism to attend to their children (Kocakulah et al., 2016). Edralin (2015) concurred that voluntary absenteeism as organizational misbehavior is mainly attributed to the employees: (a) personal and family-related concerns such as bringing children to school or (b) taking care of a sick member of the family. According to Kocakulah et al. (2016), organizations that offered corporate supported childcare services as an EAP job resource experienced reduced voluntary employee absenteeism. As such, EAPs helped employees to manage those aspects of their personal lives, which impeded production and subsequently incubated and proliferated voluntary employee absenteeism (Richmond et al., 2017).

Shrivastava et al. (2015) opined that some EAPs which could minimize voluntary employee absenteeism are: (a) offering health education and counseling services, (b) ensuring adequate preplacement examination; organizing periodical medical examinations to detect diseases at the earliest, (c) advocating the use of personal

protective measures at the workplace; (d) utilizing principles of ergonomics, (e)

implementing measures to maintain a healthy work environment and good human

relations, (f) reducing job stress by encouraging the participation of workers in

recreational activities during their leisure time, (g) developing workplace mistreatment

prevention strategies, and (h) incorporating medical social workers to provide social

support and encourage the fast recovery of sick employees.

Aside from EAPs, other human resource provisions such as the implementation of

flexible schedule policies such as shift-swaps and late starts are proven job resources that

could reduce voluntary employee absenteeism (Hadjisolomou, 2015; Kocakulah et al.,

2016; Lee, Wang, & Weststar, 2015). Edralin (2015) posited that allowing flexible time

for employees to take care of a sick family member could reduce voluntary employee

absenteeism. Kocakulah et al. (2016) added that allowing employees to work from home

or telecommute when they have ill family members or when their babysitter is

unavailable is an invaluable job resource proven to reduce corporate voluntary employee

absenteeism. Hadjisolomou (2015) wrote that offering alternative leave options to

employees, such as unpaid personal days, unpaid study leaves, or career breaks, could

reduce voluntary employee absenteeism. Providing financial and other tangible incentives

such as extra paid leave days for perfect attendance are also strategies suggested for

reducing voluntary employee absenteeism (Kisakye et al., 2016; Kocakulah et al., 2016).

Cucchiella et al. (2014) and Kwan, et al. (2016) opined that while providing

employees with job resources such as PSC workplace environments, EAPs, and flexible

schedules are essential job resources which could reduce voluntary employee

absenteeism, the implementation of organizational policies and procedures to monitor and address the voluntary employee absenteeism is also crucial. Implementing organizational absenteeism management policies that involved (a) changes in corporate culture, (b) communicating absenteeism behavior to all employees and soliciting feedback, (c) outlining disciplinary procedures for absence, and (d) documenting the process for absence review, could also reduce voluntary employee absenteeism (Cucchiella et al., 2014; Kisakye et al., 2016; Kocakulah et al., 2016; Mudaly & Nkosi, 2015).

Creating highly cohesive and interdependent task teams could reduce voluntary employee absenteeism (ten Brummelhuis, Johns, Lyons, & ter Hoeven, 2016). Researchers classified leadership and communication between supervisors and subordinates as significant job resources (Boon, Belschak, Den Hartog, & Pijnenburg, 2014; Catalina-Romero et al., 2015; Hassan et al., 2014). Hassan et al. (2014) explained that exhibiting ethical leadership, which is inclusive of honesty, trustworthiness, and fair practices, could reduce voluntary employee absenteeism. McLinton et al. (2018) concurred with Hassan et al. by adding that maintaining a fair and transparent working system is an essential job resource. Covner (1950), in his findings, stated that improving the quality of the relationship between supervisors and line staff could reduce voluntary employee absenteeism. Since Covner, researchers used various terms especially LMX, to explain the benefits of a proper relationship between leaders and subordinates inclusive of effective communications (Abdullah & Marican, 2017; Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975; Schriesheim, Castro, & Cogliser, 1999). Catalina-Romero et al. (2015) concurred

by adding that improving supervisory support and quality of leadership could reduce voluntary employee absenteeism. Boon et al. (2014); McLinton et al. (2018), and Notenbomer et al. (2016), extended their support in stating that improving communication between managers and subordinates as a job resource is a part of good leadership and integral to the reduction of organizational voluntary employee absenteeism.

The researchers of the qualitative and quantitative studies on job resources as a potential desirable and feasible forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism showed congruency in their respective findings (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014, 2018, 2018; Catalina-Romero et al., 2015; Dollard & Bakker, 2010; Kwan et al., 2016; Magee et al., 2017). The difference in the research methods, number of expert panelists, and population demographics such as age, gender, race, and income supported the fact that providing adequate job resources could be a potential desirable and feasible forward-looking strategy for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism. Appendix A featuring the providing of job resources as a desirable and feasible forward-looking strategy to minimize voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago, was fundamental to the current study.

Motivation

Maslow (1943) posited that motivation is the conduit used by humans to simultaneously express or satisfy multiple basic needs. According to Han and Yin (2016), motivation is the dynamism or initiative that moves an employee to naturally do things such as their job functions to satisfy other needs. The experience of being motivated must

be based upon the accomplishment of tasks and the achievement of goals (Maslow,

1943). Fostering employee motivation and engagement is integral to preventing voluntary

employee absenteeism (Ogbonnaya & Valizade, 2018; Rao, 2017). Kahn (1990) provided

the first definition of employee engagement as employees harnessing themselves

physically, emotionally, and cognitively to their work role or job functions. The

definition of engagement expanded over time to reflect that multi-faceted construct,

which encompasses the positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterized by

vigor, dedication and commitment, and absorption (Bakker, Albrecht, & Leiter, 2011).

Based on the JD-R model and theory and for use in the current study, motivation

previously termed engagement includes work engagement, commitment, and employee

flourishing (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014, 2017, 2018). Vignoli et al. (2017) opined that

the motivational process within the JD-R model indicates that job resources have

motivational potential and could lead to work engagement. Kahn (1990) established that

employees' level of motivation or work engagement dictates their frequency of voluntary

absence from work. Other researchers added that creating workplace employment where

employees experience fulfillment and job satisfaction is one form of motivation which

reduced voluntary employee absenteeism (Devonish, 2018; Jensen et al., 2017;

Munyenyembe et al., 2020; Nevicka et al., 2018).

Shantz and Alfes (2015) defined voluntary absenteeism as when the employees

can attend work but are unwilling to which alluded to a lack of motivation. Ozturk and

Karatepe (2019) indicated that unapproved or unauthorized leave of absence

characterizes voluntary employee absenteeism. Munyenyembe et al. (2020) concurred

with Shantz and Alfes, and Ozturk and Karatepe that employee absenteeism when unapproved by the organization, is indicative of an optional, or voluntary behavior where the employee chooses not to report for work. Shantz and Alfes further posited that work engagement or motivation is inversely related to voluntary employee absenteeism. Vignoli et al. (2016) and Vignoli et al. (2017) identified that voluntary absenteeism is a function of employees' motivation, measured by the number of times an employee has been absent during a specific period, irrespective of the length of each of those absence episodes. Bakker and Demerouti (2017), K. Nielsen and Daniels (2016), and Vignoli et al. (2017) opined that providing supervisory support and social support from colleagues as a type of employee motivation could increase employee engagement and subsequently reduce voluntary employee absenteeism.

Other researchers posited that holistically, absenteeism might reduce if leadership took into consideration the dimension and the depth of the phenomenon by implementing motivational systems and policies which spread the right company culture and by assigning responsibility to the entire network of actors (Cucchiella et al., 2014). Jensen et al. (2017) corroborated Cucchiella et al. (2014) conclusions on the benefits of motivation and job satisfaction by opining that an increase in motivation and job satisfaction minimized voluntary employee absenteeism. Primarily, implementing systems to improve employee motivation, which creates workplace environments where employees experience personal fulfillment and job satisfaction, could reduce voluntary employee absenteeism (Devonish, 2018; Munyenyembe et al., 2020; Schaumberg & Flynn, 2017).

Zia-ud-Din et al. (2017) posited that employees stay away from their workplaces because they are not happy with their jobs. Motivating administrators and employers to increase organizational commitment to employees is integral to keeping employees motivated and engaged, which is inversely correlated to voluntary employee absenteeism (Hassan et al., 2014; Zia-ud-Din et al., 2017). Shrivastava et al. (2015), and Devonish (2018) indicated that implementing measures to maintain a healthy work environment and good human relations constitutes organizational commitment to employees and serves to motivate employees. Corporate obligations, such as increasing managerial visibility and paying attention to subordinates, are inversely related to voluntary employee absenteeism (Kwan et al., 2016). Motivating administrators and employers to increase organizational commitment is also exemplified by providing avenues for employee's personal growth (Catalina-Romero et al., 2015; Zia-ud-Din et al., 2017).

Employees also experience motivation through appreciation and recognition (Allisey, Rodwell, & Noblet, 2016; Notenbomer et al., 2016). A precursor to appreciation and recognition of employees is the implementation of an appraisal and performance-based reward system (Edralin, 2015). Researchers posited that an effective performance-based reward system could reduce voluntary employee absenteeism (Boon et al., 2014; Edralin, 2015). Having an appropriate performance-based reward system will also minimize ERI, which is a significant contributor to voluntary employee absenteeism (Colindres et al., 2018; Rosemberg & Li, 2018). Siegrist (1996), in his seminal work on ERI, posited that jobs have a dual component based on a socially organized exchange process. Employees' effort is one component, and the other component is reward in the

form of money, esteem, and status control (Siegrist, 1996). In situations of high effort and

low reward, employees experience a lack of recognition, and low appreciation, which

leads to demotivation and voluntary employee absenteeism (Allisey et al., 2016;

Catalina-Romero et al., 2015; Manzano-García & Ayala, 2017; Siegrist, 1996). A

reduction in ERI by implementing fair, equitable, and reasonable policies for

compensation, rewards, promotions, and organizational actions could reduce voluntary

employee absenteeism (Devonish, 2018; Rosemberg & Li, 2018). Kisakye et al. (2016)

opined that appreciation and recognition in the form of providing financial incentives

such as rewarding good attendance or awarding extra leave days to employees who

worked for a predetermined period without being absent could reduce voluntary

employee absenteeism.

The researchers of the various studies on motivation as a potential desirable and

feasible forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism

showed congruency and provided caution in their respective findings (Allisey et al.,

2016; Bakker & Demerouti, 2014, 2017, 2018; Colindres et al., 2018; Kahn, 1990;

Manzano-García & Ayala, 2017; Rosemberg & Li, 2018). According to Bakker and

Demerouti (2017), implementing employee-focused systems and policies to improve

employee motivation is essential to reducing voluntary employee absenteeism. Lee et al.

(2015) added that implementing systems and policies that granted employees the

additional hours they desire is directly related to positive changes in job satisfaction and

motivation, which is inversely associated with voluntary employee absenteeism. Lee,

Wang, and Weststar cautioned that despite employees responding positively to employers

who at least try to meet their needs, not all these additional hours showed a definite increase in job satisfaction. Damart and Kletz (2016) indicated that policies and systems involving the use of other staff to reduce absenteeism must explicitly consider the strategies used to cushion its impact. Damart and Kletz warned that such policies and systems for managing the effects of absenteeism could be self-legitimizing and probably lead to an increase in absenteeism, either due to (a) the discouragement of staff when external substitutes are used, or (b) professional burnout when regular staff is asked to replace absentees.

The difference in the research methods, number of expert panelists, and population demographics such as age, gender, race, and income did not motivate employees could be a potential desirable and feasible forward-looking strategy for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism. Appendix A featuring the benefits of employee motivation as a desirable and feasible forward-looking strategy to reduce voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago was fundamental to the current study.

Job Crafting

Irrespective of organizational structures and job descriptions, employee autonomy plays a vital role in successful job completion (Catalina-Romero et al., 2015). Autonomous employees can control how they execute their job functions to achieve their goals (Alegre et al., 2016). Job crafting describes employees exercising their autonomy to dynamically design and execute their job functions (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Beal, 2016; Demerouti et al., 2015). Employees participating in job crafting can design their

roles to achieve organizational goals, orchestrate the type of professional relationships engaged in at work, which, reduces job demands and strain. (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Beal, 2016; Demerouti et al., 2015). Researchers indicated that voluntary employee absenteeism is reduced when autonomous employees design their mode of task execution, which reduces monotony and increases job satisfaction (Kottwitz et al., 2018; Lazarova et al., 2017; Sakuraya et al., 2017).

Bakker and Demerouti (2017) defined job crafting as that positive adjustment employees apply to their job demands and resources. Bakker and Demerouti added that job crafting is a gain spiral as employees become more engaged in their job roles. Beal (2016), Catalina-Romero et al. (2015), and Demerouti et al. (2015) concurred with Bakker and Demerouti by adding that allowing employees to design their work and social environment in the workplace could reduce voluntary employee absenteeism based on the spiral gain. Allowing employees to craft their job functions equates to giving employees autonomy, and giving employees autonomy could reduce voluntary employee absenteeism (Kottwitz et al., 2018; Lazarova et al., 2017; Magee et al., 2017).

The researchers of the qualitative and quantitative studies on job-crafting as a potential desirable and feasible forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism showed congruency in their respective findings (Alegre et al., 2016; Bakker & Demerouti, 2014, 2017, 2018; Beal, 2016; Catalina-Romero et al., 2015; Demerouti et al., 2015, 2015; Kottwitz et al., 2018; Lazarova et al., 2017; Sakuraya et al., 2017). The difference in the research methods, number of expert panelists, and population demographics such as age, gender, race, and income supported the fact that

job resources could be a potential desirable and feasible forward-looking strategy for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism.

Sakuraya et al. (2017) commented that job crafting as an employee-generated job design or redesign construct is gaining traction among scholars and practitioners alike. Sakuraya et al. added that the growth in the study and practical application of job-crafting is essential for the promoting of studies on the relationship between job crafting and employees' well-being outside the western nations, as there exists insufficient evidence if the same relation exists in other countries with differing cultures. Appendix A featuring employee job-crafting as a desirable and feasible forward-looking strategy to minimize voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago was fundamental to the current study.

Self-Undermining

According to Bakker and Costa (2014), self-undermining occurs when employees create obstacles that hinder goal achievement. Self-undermining as an element of the JDR-Model and the conceptual framework of the current study explains how employees' workplace behavior creates and propagates a vicious and negative cycle of additional job demands and job strains (Bakker & Costa, 2014; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017, 2018). Bakker and Costa (2014), Bakker and Demerouti (2017, 2018) opined that the self-undermining behaviors are loss spirals as they act as self-created hurdles which reduced employee performance. These loss spirals create a reverse effect to that produced by job crafting (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017, 2018). Self-undermining, which creates excessive job demands and job strains if minimized by employees, could reduce voluntary

employee absenteeism (Bakker & Costa, 2014; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017, 2018).

Bakker and Demerouti (2017, 2018) concurred with Bakker and Costa (2014) and added

that self-undermining behavior not only undermines performance but also promotes

employee strain daily, which subsequently leads to voluntary employee absenteeism.

The researchers of the qualitative and quantitative studies on the mitigation of

self-undermining as a potential desirable and feasible forward-looking strategies for

minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism exhibited congruency regarding their

respective findings (Bakker & Costa, 2014; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017, 2018). The

difference in the research methods, number of expert panelists, and population

demographics such as age, gender, race, and income supported the fact that the mitigation

of self-undermining could be a potential desirable and feasible forward-looking strategy

for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism.

Bakker and Demerouti (2017, 2018) opined that the self-undermining behaviors

are loss spirals, which create the reverse effect of that produced by job crafting. Appendix

A, including the opposing forces created by promoting job-crafting and mitigating self-

undermining as desirable and feasible forward-looking strategies to minimize voluntary

employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago, is fundamental to the current study.

Strain

Employees in organizations with high job demands and low resources undergo

job-related strain daily (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017, 2018; Schouteten, 2017). Strain

previously termed burnout and exhaustion are the organizational, physical, psychological,

and physiological pressures and associated anxieties experienced by employees (Bakker

& Demerouti, 2017, 2018). Excessive workloads, fatigue, weak LMX, and unsafe workplace environments are factors that lead to employee strain (Edralin, 2015; Khan et al., 2016; Mudaly & Nkosi, 2015; Nevicka et al., 2018). According to Bakker and Costa (2014), strain has a negative impact on employees' job performance. Kwan et al. (2016) concurred with Bakker and Costa that strain causes reduced employee performance. Bakker and Costa, and Kwan et al. further posited that employees who endure strain with insufficient job resources participate in workplace avoidance or voluntary employee absenteeism as a coping mechanism (Bakker & Costa, 2014; Kwan et al., 2016).

In the seminal work on burnout (now termed strain) in employees, Freudenberger (1974) wrote of the importance of managing factors, which gave rise to fatigue. Bakker and Demerouti (2017, 2018); Bernstrøm and Houkes (2018), Khan et al. (2016); and Leka et al. (2015) concurred with Freudenberger (1974) that minimizing factors such as high job demands excessive workload which leads to fatigue and subsequently job strain, could reduce voluntary employee absenteeism. Edralin (2015) and Zia-ud-Din et al. (2017) added that providing workplace environments with job resources to keep workload within reasonable limits to minimize fatigue and job strain reduces voluntary employee absenteeism. Barber and Santuzzi (2015), Colindres et al. (2018), and Demerouti et al. (2001) commented that providing safe and equipped workplace environments could reduce job strain. Edralin (2015) added that minimizing excessive overtime, which results in employee fatigue and subsequent strain, could reduce voluntary employee absenteeism.

K. Nielsen and Daniels (2016) incorporated transformational leadership in their studies and findings on job strain. K. Nielsen and Daniels opined that moderation of transformational leadership by providing supervisory support could reduce voluntary employee absenteeism. Nevicka et al. (2018) offered another perspective on strain and leadership, as they posited that reducing work stress by providing LMX training for narcissistic leaders could reduce voluntary employee absenteeism.

The researchers of the qualitative and quantitative studies on minimizing employee job strain as a potential desirable and feasible forward-looking strategies for reducing voluntary employee absenteeism provided congruency in their respective findings (Bakker & Costa, 2014; Bakker & Demerouti, 2018; Edralin, 2015). The difference in the research methods, number of expert panelists, and population demographics such as age, gender, race, and income did not create any contradiction to the fact that minimizing strain could be a potential desirable and feasible forward-looking strategy for reducing voluntary employee absenteeism. Appendix A featuring the minimization of strain as a desirable and feasible forward-looking strategy for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago was fundamental to the current study, given the adverse effect of strain on employees globally.

Review of the Delphi Technique and Delphi Studies on Voluntary Employee Absenteeism

Dalkey and Helmer (1963) were the authoritative germinal researchers on the use of the Delphi method as a qualitative research design. The Delphi method developed by the RAND Corporation in Santa Monica, California, USA, is a qualitative research

design used to build consensus on forward-thinking solutions (see Dalkey & Helmer,

1963; Linstone & Turoff, 1975; Skulmoski et al., 2007). The Delphi research process

incorporated a panel of experts in specific fields (see Heitner et al., 2013). The experts' or

panelists' job was to build consensus on forward-looking strategies regarding what

quantity of atomic bombs (A-bombs) would the Soviet Union require in 1953, to reduce

the US munitions output by a prescribed amount (see Dalkey & Helmer, 1963; von der

Gracht, 2008). The panelists were not allowed to interact to prevent groupthink and

subsequent biased responses (see Dalkey & Helmer, 1963). At the end of several rounds

of questionnaires and two interviews in this Delphi study, the researchers observed that

the quantities of A-bombs posited by each independent panelist showed a conversion

toward a common mean (see Dalkey & Helmer, 1963; Skulmoski et al., 2007).

The RAND Corporation's inaugural use of their Delphi design for qualitative

research was a cutting edge research methodology in the 1950s (see Avella, 2016; von

der Gracht, 2008). The seven-member panel consisted of four economists, one physical-

vulnerability specialist, one system analyst, and one electronics engineer (see Dalkey &

Helmer, 1963; von der Gracht, 2008). The panelists went through five rounds of

questionnaires, and two interviews with the opportunity to modify the quantities of A-

bombs the panelists declared on previous questionnaires (see Dalkey & Helmer, 1963).

Researchers Gordon and Helmer (1964) were credited for the first use for civil research

of the RAND Corporation's Delphi design. The remainder of this section features a

discussion of the Delphi design and its application in voluntary employee absenteeism

studies from no earlier than the year 2015.

Researchers later termed the RAND Corporation's original Delphi design the Traditional or, more commonly, the classical Delphi (see Sekayi & Kennedy, 2017). The classical Delphi design entails several rounds of surveys with three to four rounds being the most common choice (see Avella, 2016; Brady, 2015). The first-round of the classical Delphi design comprises of an open-ended questionnaire on the topic of discussion, for generating solutions from an expert panel (see Sekayi & Kennedy, 2017; Trevelyan & Robinson, 2015). According to Brady (2015) and Trevelyan and Robinson (2015), the Round 2 survey of a classical Delphi comprises a structured questionnaire incorporating the lists of solutions that the expert panel provided in the first round. Round 3 and any subsequent rounds of a classical Delphi consists of structured questionnaire similar to that of Round 2, which incorporated the lists of strategies and feedback that the expert panels provided in previous rounds (see Brady, 2015; Trevelyan & Robinson, 2015). Surveys disseminated in Round 2 and all subsequent rounds feature a Likert-type scale for the expert panelist to rate or rank their Strategies as required by the survey (see Avella, 2016; Sekayi & Kennedy, 2017). Trevelyan and Robinson (2015) added that the classical Delphi technique has four main characteristics: (a) expert input, (b) anonymity between expert panelists, (c) iteration with controlled feedback of group response, and (d) the statistical aggregation of group responses. Other researchers added panel size, heterogeneity, and consensus as essential characteristics of the classical Delphi design (see Ibiyemi, Adnan, & Daud, 2016).

Other Delphi design types such as policy, e-Delphi (electronic survey), decision or focus, real-time, technological, online, argument, and disaggregate have emerged since

the classical Delphi (see Aengenheyster et al., 2017; Ibiyemi et al., 2016; Skinner, Nelson, Chin, & Land, 2015). Owing to the current and growing use of electronic means of dissemination of surveys versus the traditional mail system used for the classical Delphi, the e-Delphi emerges as the most commonly used Delphi technique (McMillan et al., 2016). Trevelyan and Robinson (2015) posited that researchers could adopt a modified Delphi approach by adjusting the Round 1 survey instrument. This modified Delphi technique entails using a Round 1survey instrument comprising of strategies gathered from a review of the literature on the topic of discussion, in lieu of the traditional open-ended questionnaire synonymous with the Round 1 of a classical Delphi (Trevelyan & Robinson, 2015).

The Delphi design is suitable for building a consensus among a panel of experts (see Dalkey & Helmer, 1963; Heitner et al., 2013; Helmer, 1968; Linstone & Turoff, 2002). Linstone and Turoff (1975) indicated that the Delphi design is complimentary for generating consensus regarding situations that are not well understood. In cases where there is uncertainty or a lack of causation, researchers used the Delphi design to solicit iterative input from selected experts versed in a particular subject (see Avella, 2016). Researchers use the Delphi design to build consensus among expert panelists on Likert-type survey items associated with a subject (see Ibiyemi et al., 2016; Zhong, Clark, Hou, Zang, & FitzGerald, 2015). The experts' contribution served to appraise consensus regarding contentious or ambiguous decisions or generate consensus among expert panelists when there is a discrepancy within the theories and strategies on a specific topic of discussion (see Afshari, 2015; Heitner et al., 2013; Parekh et al., 2018; Wester &

Borders, 2014). Avella (2016) and Wester and Borders (2014) noted that the Delphi

design is suitable for establishing a consensus among a panel of experts regarding matters

where there is insufficient knowledge on a research topic.

While consensus is an essential characteristic of the Delphi design, the definitions

researchers adopted for consensus varied across Delphi researches (see Trevelyan &

Robinson, 2015). Avella (2016) expressed that the range for consensus is 55% to 100%

with 100% consensus being improbable in any Delphi study, and 70% being an

acceptable standard. McMillan et al. (2016) deemed consensus is attained when a median

score of at least 7 is achieved when using a RAND 9-point scale. Trevelyan and

Robinson (2015) indicated a median score of 5-6 for an item on a 6-point Likert-type

scale with an inter-quartile range of less than or equal to 1.75 signified consensus.

Eubank et al. (2016) deemed consensus was achieved when 80% of the panelists agreed

on a survey item. Zhong et al. (2015) acknowledged consensus when a minimum of 70%

of the panelist agreed or strongly agreed on the inclusion of an item. Other researchers

defined consensus for inclusion or exclusion as 80% on a 9-point Likert-type scale (see

Bahl, Dollman, & Davison, 2016); and an agreement of 67% or higher among panelists to

include or exclude a specific survey item (see van Lier et al., 2018). Heitner et al. (2013)

established consensus based on: (a) a minimum of 80% frequency of a score of 4 or 5 for

an item on a 5-point Likert-type scale or (b) a median of at least 4 on the same Likert-

type scale.

The current study incorporated a 5-point Likert-type scale. The 5-point scale

incorporated in the current study is a modification of the 4-point scales developed by

Linstone and Turoff (1975), in which panelists can choose a neutral option if they have no opinion about an item one way or the other. The provision of a neutral option mitigated against panelists making forced responses for or against an item, which could negatively affect the quality of responses (Décieux, Mergener, Neufang, & Sischka, 2015).

The exhaustive review of the literature on voluntary employee absenteeism yielded no research incorporating the Delphi design and forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism. Manzano-García and Ayala (2017), in their e-Delphi study, focused on insufficiently studied factors related to burnout in nursing. Burnout or exhaustion now termed strain is one component of the JD-R model devised by Bakker and Demerouti (2017, 2018). The conceptual framework which framed the current study also featured strain as one of six overarching elements. The e-Delphi conducted by Manzano-García and Ayala (2017) featured three rounds with consensus set at 80% agreement between 40 panelists. The term voluntary employee absenteeism or any variant provided in the current study's literature search strategy was not mentioned.

Round 1 was modified and featured 52 factors distilled from a review of the literature for panelists to rate, which is indicative of a modified Delphi design (Manzano-García & Ayala, 2017). Manzano-García and Ayala (2017) invited the panelist to add factors to the list of 52 factors provided in Round 1, a feature which is also a characteristic of this type of modified Delphi design. The panelists added eight factors to the Round 1 list, making a total of 60 factors (Manzano-García & Ayala, 2017). Rounds 2 and 3 featured factors carried over from the previous rounds, which the panelists rated for

importance in the occurrence of burnout and the level of attention researchers paid to each item, on a 6-point Likert-type scale (Manzano-García & Ayala, 2017). According to Manzano-García and Ayala, the 40 expert panelists classified nine factors as studied very little, 17 factors as studied little; and 34 as well studied respectively. These 60 factors promote burnout or strain, which leads to voluntary employee absenteeism and if addressed, could reduce voluntary employee absenteeism.

Other researchers have conducted studies incorporating the Delphi design and the components of the conceptual framework, which framed the current study (Bjorkman, Engstrom, Olsson, & Wahlberg, 2017). In their modified Delphi research on obstacles and prerequisites in telenurses' work environment, Bjorkman et al. (2017) mentioned burnout and job satisfaction but did not mention the relationship between burnout, job satisfaction, and voluntary employee absenteeism. Bjorkman et al. did not mention the term voluntary employee absenteeism or any variant of the term provided in the current study's literature search strategy.

Researchers van Lier et al. (2018) incorporated a modified Delphi design in their research on the identification, measurement, and evaluation of costs in health economic evaluations. The researchers focused on the cost of all types of employee absenteeism to health organizations but did not discuss any strategies for reducing voluntary employee absenteeism (van Lier et al., 2018). The authors did not mention the term voluntary employee absenteeism, or any variant of the term provided in the current study's literature search strategy (van Lier et al., 2018).

The review of the three studies incorporating the Delphi design was essential to (a) emphasize the general lack of Delphi studies on voluntary employee absenteeism and (b) highlight how the current modified Delphi study and its intended methodology could make a significant contribution to the body of knowledge on voluntary employee absenteeism incorporating the Delphi design. Manzano-García and Ayala did not use the words desirability and feasibility in their study. In Round 2, the 6-point Likert scale provided ranged from 1 = important and well-studied to 6 = very important and studied very little. Manzano-García and Ayala (2017) limited their research to three rounds of data collection, they did not include measurements for neither desirability nor feasibility, and their study did not incorporate a strategic framework or the application of the confidence scale.

In comparison to these other Delphi studies, the current study was consistent in employing a desirability and a feasibility scale, while focusing on voluntary employee absenteeism. The current study also built upon those prior studies in addressing the issue of voluntary employee absenteeism. The current study featured a conceptual framework based on the JD-R model and theory, four rounds of data collection, and scales for desirability, feasibility, and confidence.

Delphi Technique and the Current Study

Researchers predominantly used qualitative or quantitative methods as the mode of research inquiry in the sources which comprised this literature review. Vignoli et al. (2016) conducted their research in Italy and used quantitative methods to study how job demands affected absenteeism. The researchers tested several hypotheses and determined

that job demand was positively related to absenteeism. Compton and McManus (2015) conducted a quantitative study to review and evaluate the success of employee assistance programs (EAP) in Australia. Compton and McManus concluded that EAP reduced the frequency and cost of voluntary employee absenteeism. Hadjisolomou (2015) conducted a qualitative exploration of the role of line managers in managing attendance at work in the UK grocery retail sector. Hadjisolomou wrote that the store operators reduced organizational absence percentage within 18 months due to a new flexibility policy. The flexibility policy offered alternative leave options to employees, such as shift-swaps, late starts, unpaid leave called "me-time," career breaks, and study breaks to prevent employees from calling in sick and creating a sickness or absence file. Kocakulah et al. (2016) indicated that strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism included disciplinary actions, absence management programs, EAP, the creation of positive company culture or PSC, corporate supported childcare services, flexible work hours, and tangible incentives for perfect attendance. These authors added that many reasons existed for voluntary employee absenteeism in the workplace, which consequently attracted multiple different approaches or strategies that could be used to combat the problem and reduce the causes.

Kocakulah et al. (2016) identified multiple different approaches or strategies that could be used to minimize voluntary employee absenteeism without identifying which are optimal. In the absence of an optimal set of strategies to reduce voluntary absence amid literature saturated with recommendations from academics and practitioners, the Delphi design is suitable for building a consensus among selected experts versed in a

particular subject (see Avella, 2016; Dalkey & Helmer, 1963; Heitner et al., 2013;

Helmer, 1968; Linstone & Turoff, 2002). The expert's input serves to evaluate consensus

about contentious or ambiguous decisions, or generate consensus among expert panelists

when there is divergence within the theories and strategies on a subject (see Afshari,

2015; Heitner et al., 2013; Parekh et al., 2018; Wester & Borders, 2014).

Summary and Conclusion

This chapter included a discussion of six overarching elements and 50 strategies

identified in the literature for the reduction of voluntary employee absenteeism in

Trinidad and Tobago. The six overarching elements were job demands, job, and personal

resources, motivation, job crafting, self-undermining, and strain. The 50 strategies were

the specific actions respective to each element. Appendix A includes the six overarching

elements, the 50 strategies, the corresponding references distilled from the review of the

literature in an organized format, which subsequently constituted the Round 1 survey

instrument.

The review of the literature contained studies conducted in both developed and

developing nations, but none conducted in Trinidad and Tobago. Some strategies which

emerged from the review, if adopted by organizations will require changes to the

organizational culture (see Canning & Found, 2015). Cucchiella et al. (2014), Kisakye et

al. (2016), and Mudaly and Nkosi (2015) concurred that implementing organizational

management policies to reduce voluntary absenteeism involve (a) changes in corporate

culture, (b) communicating absenteeism behavior to all employees and soliciting

feedback, (c) outlining disciplinary procedures for absence, and (d) documenting the

process for absence review. If such strategies are adopted, there could be resistance from employees. Owing to cultural differences, not all strategies comprising the Round 1 survey instrument may be applicable in Trinidad and Tobago.

The gap in the existing literature on the topic of the norms of voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago is that consensus on potential desirable, feasible, and important strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago is lacking. This research filled a gap in the existing literature on the culture of voluntary absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago as the research focused specifically on expert views of how forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism can be achieved in this island nation.

This chapter contained a review of three studies executed using the Delphi methodology as the mode of inquiry. The current study is unique by combining the concepts of the Delphi methodology with the construct of the JD-R model and theory for reducing voluntary employee absenteeism as other studies did not have all three constructs. Chapter 3 contains the rationale for selecting a modified Delphi design to address the research question for the current study. The chapter also highlights details on conducting the study and an assessment of the trustworthiness of the methodology.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative modified Delphi study was to determine how a panel of 17 Caribbean and global HR experts view the desirability, feasibility, and importance of forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. Appendix A contains a list of strategies for reducing voluntary employee absenteeism gleaned from an exhaustive review of the literature on reducing voluntary employee absenteeism. Appendix A includes six overarching elements and 50 strategies deemed as potential desirable and feasible forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism. The expert panelists were experts in HRM. The definition of an HRM expert adopted for the current study was someone who has HRM and the associated professional and technical experience globally and, in the Caribbean, met the criteria for inclusion set forth later in this chapter.

The lack of consensus on potential desirable and feasible strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago created a gap in the literature on the norms of voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. The results of this modified Delphi study were intended to help close this gap in the literature on the norms of voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. The results of the current study may contribute to positive social change based on the adoption of the recommendations of the expert panel. Schwab (2015, 2017) indicated that voluntary employee absenteeism is the primary barrier to doing business. Given the barriers to entry and FDI, Trinidad and Tobago have one of the lowest GDPs in the Latin Americas and

the Caribbean (Schwab, 2015, 2017). The implementation of the recommendations of the expert panelists could promote global diplomacy and economic growth, advanced training, and equipment for law enforcement officers to prevent and combat crime and violence.

Chapter 3 includes sections on the research methods for the current study. These sections feature descriptions of the research design and rationale, population and participant selection strategy, data collection instruments, method of data collection, and data analysis strategy. This chapter also includes descriptions of the role of the researcher, the relationship between the researcher and expert panelists, measures for protecting the confidentiality and privacy of study expert panelists, ethical concerns, and the trustworthiness of the study. Chapter 3 concludes with a summary and transition to Chapter 4.

Research Design and Rationale

The primary RQ and three SQs posed for this qualitative modified Delphi study were as follows:

RQ: How does a panel of Caribbean and global HR experts view the desirability, feasibility, and importance of forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago?

SQ1: How does a panel of Caribbean and global HR experts view the desirability of forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago?

SQ2: How does a panel of Caribbean and global HR experts view the feasibility of forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago?

SQ3: How does a panel of Caribbean and global HR experts view the importance of forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago?

Given the purpose of the current study and the nature of the research question, a qualitative method incorporating a modified Delphi design was the most appropriate method of inquiry. The modified Delphi design is a qualitative approach because it contains two distinguishing characteristics synonymous to qualitative methodology: (a) the individual views and perceptions of expert panelists and (b) the creation of a predesigned list of strategies to be evaluated for agreement or disagreement derived from the opinions of expert panelists (see Brady, 2015).

Based on the purpose of the study and the qualitative nature of the research question, the Delphi design was suitable for exploring the views and building a consensus among a panel of experts (see Dalkey & Helmer, 1963; Heitner et al., 2013; Helmer, 1968; Linstone & Turoff, 1975). Linstone and Turoff (1975) indicated that the Delphi design is appropriate for generating consensus regarding situations that are not well understood. In cases where there is uncertainty, the Delphi design solicits iterative input from selected experts versed in a particular subject (see Avella, 2016; Skulmoski et al., 2007). The experts' input serves to evaluate consensus about contentious or ambiguous decisions, or generate consensus among expert panelists when there is divergence within

the theories and strategies on a subject (see Afshari, 2015; Heitner et al., 2013; Parekh et al., 2018; Wester & Borders, 2014).

The Delphi design was appropriate for the current study because the objective was to seek strategies by soliciting iterative input from HRM experts versed in the current study's subject of voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago (see Avella, 2016; Heitner et al., 2013). A predesigned list of forward-looking strategies derived from a saturated analysis of the literature on voluntary employee absenteeism replaced the traditional open-ended first-round questions associated with the classical Delphi. In Round 1 of the current study, the panelists were asked to review and modify the list of forward-looking strategies and, if needed, add new strategies to the list (see Manzano-García & Ayala, 2017; van Vliet et al., 2016). The current study's modified Delphi design was appropriate because the predesigned list of strategies to minimize voluntary employee absenteeism, which constituted the Round 1 questionnaire, was derived from an exhaustive review of the scholarly literature, the conceptual framework, and the research question (see van Vliet et al., 2016).

Phenomenology and grounded theory were alternative qualitative research designs but were less appropriate for the current study. Moustakas (1994) and Percy, Kostere, and Kostere (2015) stated that phenomenological studies best align with research that involves understanding the meanings individuals who experienced a phenomenon in common attribute to that phenomenon. The common phenomenon or lived experience associated with phenomenological studies includes inner experiences unique to the individual or group of individuals having the same lived experience and does not involve

external stimuli or inciters as in the case of voluntary employee absenteeism (see

Moustakas, 1994; Valdez, 2017). The phenomenological design is descriptive in nature

and is used to understand the essence and underlying structure of the phenomenon by

focusing on the participant (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Percy et al., 2015; Valdez,

2017). This design was not appropriate for providing strategies for minimizing voluntary

employee absenteeism.

Merriam and Tisdell (2015) wrote that the grounded theory design permits

researchers not only to understand a phenomenon but also to develop a theory about the

phenomenon under investigation. The objective of the current study was building

consensus on strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism and not on a

creation of theory regarding the phenomenon of voluntary employee absenteeism (see

Avella, 2016; Brady, 2015; Heitner et al., 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The

development of a theory is not necessary in Delphi research because Delphi studies are

conducted to develop consensus related to the phenomenon studied (see van Vliet et al.,

2016).

The purpose of the current study and the composition of the research question

required the use of the modified Delphi design. The use of an established list of strategies

through a saturated analysis of the literature was a departure from the use of an open-

ended survey in a classical Delphi design and represented the Delphi modification. The

expert panelists were asked to review and modify the strategies in the list or add new

strategies to the list. Expert panelists' responses were examined for duplicates, new

strategies, and the clarity of comments.

Avella (2016) and Wester and Borders (2014) opined that the Delphi design is well suited for forming a consensus among a panel of experts regarding matters in which there is insufficient knowledge on a research topic. The experts' input serves to create consensus about contentious or ambiguous decisions, or generate consensus among expert panelists when there is divergence within the theories and strategies on a subject (see Afshari, 2015; Heitner et al., 2013; Parekh et al., 2018; Wester & Borders, 2014). The modified Delphi serves to establish how a panel of experts in a homogenous field views the desirability, feasibility, and importance of forward-looking strategies on a common topic (see Eubank et al., 2016; Manzano-García & Ayala, 2017; van Vliet et al., 2016).

Role of the Researcher

Yin (2017) and Merriam and Tisdell (2015) concurred that the researchers are the most valuable asset in traditional qualitative studies because the researchers often serve as the main instrument for data collection and analysis. According to Avella (2016), in studies featuring the Delphi design, the researcher takes on the more critical and focused roles of planners and facilitators. Avella further stated that the risks of researchers' bias tend to be negligible when panels are carefully designed and executed, due to the researcher's primary responsibilities being those of planning and facilitating.

The planning of the current study included but was not limited to the compilation of a predesigned list of potential strategies that might reduce voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. An exhaustive review of the peer-reviewed literature on voluntary employee absenteeism resulted in the compilation of the

predesigned list. This exhaustive compilation process represented an objective and unbiased stance based on the consultation of multiple peer-reviewed resources until data saturation occurred.

Facilitating the execution of the data collection aspect of the current study included but was not limited to the recruitment of the expert panelists and the use of established communication methods and procedures. For this current modified Delphi study, e-mail was the primary means of communication, and the data collection tools on the SurveyMonkey platform served as the sole means of data collection. According to Avella (2016), the back-and-forth communication between the researcher and the panelists contributes to internal process auditing and bias mitigation.

Methodology

Participant Selection

Generalized samples obtained from random sampling do not suit Delphi studies because Delphi studies incorporate a panel of experts proficient in a designated issue (see Brady, 2015). The use of purposive sampling for selecting experts versed in a particular field is a tenet of Delphi studies (see Heitner et al., 2013; Skulmoski et al., 2007; von der Gracht, 2008). Given the convergence of opinion required in a Delphi study, the panel of experts must possess extensive knowledge of the matter under discussion (see Avella, 2016; Bahl et al., 2016; Linstone & Turoff, 1975). No universal criteria for the classification of being an expert in a Delphi study exist (see von der Gracht, 2008). According to Keeney, Hasson, and McKenna (2001), there are many acceptable definitions of the word expert and the criteria for being classified as an expert. The

purpose of a Delphi study is to explore the level of consensus regarding the topic of

research, which makes each study unique and requires a panel with specific knowledge of

the matter under discussion (see Heitner et al., 2013; Keeney et al., 2001; Keeney,

McKenna, & Hasson, 2011; Steele, Booy, & Mor, 2018; van Vliet et al., 2016).

Researchers noted that education, years of tenure, professional publications especially on

the topic under investigation, professional qualification, and affiliation with relevant

professional groups and societies are part of the criteria for consideration as an expert

(see Bahl et al., 2016; Heitner et al., 2013; von der Gracht, 2008).

For the current study, individuals qualified as expert panelists by meeting the

following criteria (a) a degree in business management or social and behavioral sciences

from an accredited higher education institution, (b) 3 or more years of HRM experience,

and (c) membership in a professional HR organization such as the SHRM. The criteria

for inclusion as an expert was based on qualifications, knowledge, and experience in

HRM because managing voluntary employee absenteeism is a function within the HR

specialization (see Cucchiella et al., 2014; Kisakye et al., 2016; Mudaly & Nkosi, 2015).

The inclusion of global HR managers as expert panelists was necessary because there

were not enough experts in Trinidad and Tobago with sufficient knowledge and

experience in addressing the problem to limit the study to experts there. Although

employee absenteeism manifests in unique ways in each culture, a global perspective is

valuable to identify views about strategies to address the problem that may be applicable

to and adaptable in other cultures. Drawing on a pool of global experts who may have

knowledge and experience from their efforts to address the problem successfully in their

own geographic location provided the opportunity to apply global perspectives to addressing a local problem. Leaders in Trinidad and Tobago may consider the strategies that emerge from the current study within the cultural context and apply them to the local problem of employee absenteeism. I did not restrict expert panelists to a commercial industry or organization.

A nonprobability, purposive expert sample was used. Expert panelists were chosen using the stated criteria based on a set of knowledge and experience indicators unique to the topics requiring expert opinions (see de Loë, Melnychuk, Murray, & Plummer, 2016; Heitner et al., 2013). The use of purposive sampling ensured that only persons satisfying the criteria for inclusion as an expert panelist were admitted to the panel for this modified Delphi study.

The number of panelists chosen for a Delphi study varies, and panel sizes range from as few as four to over 100 (see Skulmoski et al., 2007). An initial panel size of 25 expert panelists was anticipated for the current study. Twenty five was believed to be an appropriate size for the panel because this size was manageable for a study of this nature and would provide sufficient data over multiple rounds to reach consensus while compensating for potential attrition of 20% to 30% of panel members (see Bardecki, 1984; Heitner et al., 2013; Hsu & Sandford, 2007). For the current study, 22 panelists completed Round 1; with attrition, 17 Caribbean and global expert HR managers constituted the panel who completed all four rounds of surveys.

Recruitment

The proposed primary source for recruiting expert panelists were the HRM groups

on LinkedIn (Linkedin, 2018), once study approval was given by Walden's IRB. The preliminary search for HRM groups on LinkedIn yielded two potential groups: (a) Human Resource Management (HR, SPHR, SHRM, Recruiter, Resources Manager, Talent Strategy & Staffing) with 158,642 members, and (b) Linked: HR (#1 Human Resources Group) with 968,849 members. The membership of both groups combined would have provided access to a total of 1,127,491 potential expert panelists, and even a response of 0.0025%, from either group, would have provided more than the 17 expert panelists who provided their opinions in the current study.

Using the LinkedIn e-mail feature for the communication, individual request for permission to join the two targeted LinkedIn group and post the official letter of invitation to the members in the group was sent to the respective group owners (see Appendix C). On the SHRM website, a similar e-mail was sent to the chief executive officer of the SHRM Networking Group requesting permission to join the SHRM Networking Group to post the official letter of invitation to the members in the group (see Appendix D). Approval to join the LinkedIn groups to recruit expert panelists would be in the form of letters of cooperation from the respective group owners. Acquiring the letters of cooperation ahead of the Walden's IRB approval process would have served to emphasize that LinkedIn groups were cooperating, and that study expert panelists were available. The LinkedIn group owners did not acknowledge the request for a letter of cooperation; thus, this approach for recruiting expert panelists was unsuccessful. During the process of obtaining IRB approval from Walden University, Walden's IRB advised that getting letters of cooperation or permission was not a requirement for posting the

study invitation in the public or general forums of any social media platform. Appendix E

represents the official letter of invitation and the embedded Round 1 survey (with

informed consent attached) as posted in the LinkedIn general forum via SurveyMonkey's

social media weblink.

The contents of the Walden IRB approved letter of invitation to expert panelists

guaranteed the use of snowball sampling. The invitation stated that expert panelists could

share the included survey link with other eligible individuals, and the expert panelists for

the current study comprised of referrals, which included my contacts. The Walden IRB

did not require a change in procedures for the personal referrals approach. The SHRM

Networking Group, as one of the contingencies, granted a notification of acceptance that

permitted joining the group for the posting of the study (see Appendix G). Appendix H

represents the study posted in the SHRM Networking Group. Posting in the SHRM

Networking Group yielded no expert panelists. Subsequently, the study panel comprised

of (a) other eligible expert panelists sharing the survey link and (b) recommendations for

expert panel membership made by existing contacts.

Instrumentation

Surveys were the designated data collection instruments for the current study. The

current modified Delphi study featured four iterative rounds of data collection using

surveys administered via SurveyMonkey to a panel of Caribbean and global HR experts.

The solution matrix containing 50 strategies categorized under six overarching elements

was the source for creating the surveys. This current study's literature review formed the

basis for the construction of the solution matrix and the survey's content.

In Round 1 of the current modified Delphi study, panelists were provided with a predesigned list of 50 strategies, as found in the saturated review of literature from peer-reviewed journal articles. This predesigned list of strategies for reducing voluntary employee absenteeism was grouped into categories based upon elements of the JD-R model. The use of an established list of strategies through a saturated analysis of the literature denoted the departure from the use of an open-ended survey in a classical Delphi design and represented the Delphi modification. The panelists were asked to review and modify the strategies in the list or add new strategies to the list. Panelist responses were evaluated for duplicates, new strategies, and the clarity of comments. The final list of modified Round 1 strategies converted into Likert-type items, comprised the Round 2 survey instrument.

In Round 2, the panel of experts reviewed the list of strategies and rated the desirability and feasibility of each strategy. According to Linstone and Turoff (1975), desirability denotes the effectiveness of a strategy, while feasibility refers to the practicality associated with implementing the desired strategy or solution. Two five-point Likert-type scale accompanied each strategy – one scale for the desirability rating of the strategy and the other scale for feasibility rating of the said strategy. Regarding the desirability of a strategy, higher ratings on the provided scale corresponded to higher efficacy such that (a) 1 = highly undesirable, (b) 2 = undesirable, (c) 3 = neither desirable nor undesirable, (d) 4 = desirable, and (e) 5 = highly desirable (Linstone & Turoff, 1975). Similarly, regarding the feasibility of a strategy, higher ratings on the provided scale corresponded to higher efficacy such that (a) 1 = highly unfeasible, (b) 2 = unfeasible, (c)

3 = neither feasible nor unfeasible, (d) 4 = feasible, and (e) 5 = highly feasible (Linstone & Turoff, 1975). The Round 2 survey instrument featured a text box below each rating scale for the expert panelist to give a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

In Round 3, the expert panelists reviewed the list of strategies advanced from round 2 and chose their top five preferred strategies. The expert panelists ranked their preferred strategies in order of their highest to lowest preference. The ranking ranged from one for the highest-ranking or the most preferred strategy to five for the lowest ranking or least preferred strategy, with higher ranking numbers signifying greater importance (see McMillan et al., 2016). The results from the Round 3 survey were the overall results of the survey.

In Round 4, the expert panelists rated their confidence in each of the five most desirable, feasible, and important forward-looking strategies which constituted the final results of the study (see Linstone & Turoff, 1975). As opined by Linstone and Turoff (1975), and von der Gracht (2008), the measure of confidence expressed by each expert panelist in Round 4, is a self-rating of how self-assured the experts are in their responses provided in Round 3. For the current study, the voting parameters of the confidence scale was (a) 5 = Certain (indicating a low risk of being incorrect), (b) 4 = Reliable (indicating some risk of being incorrect), (c) 3 = Neither reliable nor Unreliable (d) 2 = Risky (indicating a considerable risk of being incorrect), and (e) 1 = Unreliable (suggesting a great risk of being incorrect). The criteria 3 = Neither Reliable nor Unreliable was added

for cases where experts have a neutral stance, thus preventing cases of forced answering, which could deplete the quality of responses (Décieux et al., 2015).

Field Test

A field test was conducted before the dissemination of the Round 1 questionnaire. The purpose of this field test was to verify that the content of the Round 1 questionnaire is appropriate, void of errors, and suits the use of the current study. A prototype for the Round 2 instrument, which contained instructions and several sample Likert-type items, accompanied the field test. This field test required 3-5 persons with intimate knowledge of voluntary employee absenteeism to provide feedback on the Round 1 questionnaire. The expert panelists of the field test scrutinized the questionnaire and provided feedback based on the following:

1. Based upon the purpose of the study and research questions, are the questions on the questionnaire likely to generate information to answer the research question? If not, what changes would you recommend?

2. Are the expert panelists likely to find any of the questions on the questionnaire (the nature of the question or specific wording) objectionable? If so, why? What changes would you recommend?

3. Were any of the questions on the questionnaire difficult to comprehend? If so, why? What changes would you recommend?

4. Feel free to provide any additional thoughts about the questionnaire, which were not covered in questions 1 through 3, above.

IRB approval was not required for the field test because data was not being collected from the involved experts. The experts in this field test only provided feedback to enhance the quality of Round 1 and 2 questionnaires. It was my intention to revise the original Round 1 questionnaire and instructions to the Round 2 questionnaire using feedback from the experts in the field test. The request for the field test is presented in Appendix B.

Two experts received the field test, and they did not express concerns with respect to the clarity and appropriateness of the wording of the Likert-type items. One participant sent a reminder of the need to ensure that instructions for survey completion be clearly stated within the SurveyMonkey form. As a result, no revisions to the instruments were made. The two expert who participated the field test were not among the expert panelists who participated in the current study's four rounds of electronic surveys.

Data Collection and Analyses

The IRB approval number for the current study is 03-20-20-0641279, and the IRB approval expires on March 19, 2021. On the SurveyMonkey website, the informed consent form was electronically linked to the Round 1 survey instrument. The informed consent form became the first page the expert panelists encountered upon accessing the study link received form SurveyMonkey. The informed consent document contained information on the research, protecting the expert panelists' anonymity, the risks, procedures to withdraw, criteria to be an expert panelist, and the benefits of participating in the study. Granting consent permitted expert panelists to proceed to review the 50 strategies. Termination of the study occurred for expert panelists who did not grant

consent. The design of the Round 1 survey on the SurveyMonkey platform also required that consenting expert panelists input their e-mail address so that (a) they could proceed to review the 50 strategies, and (b) only expert panelists who completed the Round 1 survey would receive the IRB approved Round 2 survey instrument. The data collection and analysis phase lasted approximately eight weeks and consisted of four iterative rounds of data collection and analysis

Round 1. The self-selected expert panelists received all survey instruments electronically from the SurveyMonkey website. The expert panelists received a link form SurveyMonkey that connected them to the informed consent form. Only expert panelists who acknowledged the informed consent form proceeded to the study's introduction and the Round 1 survey. The introduction included (a) the purpose of the questionnaire, (b) a notation that indicated the allotted time for the completion and return of the Round 1 survey responses as one week from the date of dissemination, and (c) a reminder that there remained three further rounds of survey. An introduction accompanied each successive survey. Appendix I contains the Round 1 survey, which was organized by the six overarching elements and 50 corresponding strategies for reducing voluntary absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago.

After the introduction to Round 1, the expert panelists proceeded to the list of 50 strategies for reducing voluntary absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. The expert panelists were asked to review and modify the strategies in the list and add new strategies or elements to the list as they see fit. Expert panelist responses were examined for duplicates, new strategies, and the clarity of comments. The final list of modified Round

1 strategies converted into Likert-type items, comprised the Round 2 survey instrument.

A 5-point Likert-type survey characterized the response format for Rounds 2, 3, and 4

survey instruments.

Round 2. Appendix J contains the Round 2 survey instrument. The expert

panelists received the survey link via the SurveyMonkey platform, granting access to the

Round 2 survey instrument. In this second round, panelists rated for desirability and

feasibility, the 50 strategies for reducing voluntary strategies advanced from Round 1.

The Round 2 survey instrument featured a text box below each rating scale for the expert

panelist to give a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments. The

responses, when received, were analyzed for consensus. The convergence of opinion

toward consensus, based upon the Round 2 data collected from survey responses, was

evaluated by employing the use of (a) frequencies and (b) medians as measures toward

consensus for agreement. In the current study, frequency was the primary means of

inclusion and ascertaining consensus. Consensus was deemed achieved when the

frequency of the convergence of opinions among panelists is 70% for any item scoring a

4 or 5 on the associated 5-point Likert-type scales. The use of medians as a secondary

measure for inclusion served to reduce the influence of multiple neutral or no opinion

ratings by panelists. The mitigation of neutral responses was essential as neutral

responses could lower the frequency output as the primary measure. Using medians as a

secondary measure for the current study, a consensus was deemed achieved when an item

has a median score of minimum 3.5, a tendency toward agreement, on both the associated

desirability and feasibility 5-point Likert-type scale (see Linstone & Turoff, 2002).

Using both measures resulted in all 50 strategies meeting consensus for advancing to the third round. The advancing of all 50 strategies from Round 2 to 3 would not have reflected any data reduction. Achieving data reduction entailed (a) raising the primary measure from a minimum of 70% frequency to a minimum of 85% frequency for strategies scoring a 4 or 5 on both the desirability and feasibility 5-point Likert-type scales, and (b) increasing the secondary measure from a median score of at least 3.5 to the maximum median score of 5 on both the desirability and feasibility Likert-type scales. The adjustment of the measures which established agreement among expert panelists for Round 2 strategies to advance to Round 3, resulted in the elimination or 19 strategies. These 19 strategies did not meet the new frequency parameters for either desirability, feasibility, or both, and did not meet the new median parameters for either desirability, feasibility, or both. In total, with the more rigorous filter, the Round 2 strategies reduced from 50 to 31 strategies representing an inclination toward consensus, which was the elimination of 19 or 38% of the Round 2 strategies. All 31 strategies that met the new primary and secondary measures of a tendency toward consensus advanced to the Round 3 data collection process for further consensus-building.

Round 3. Appendix K contains the Round 3 survey instrument. The 31 most desirable and feasible forward-looking strategies advanced from Round 2, which displayed a tendency toward consensus based upon the modified measures for agreement, were the strategies that comprised the Round 3 survey. The expert panelists chose their top five strategies from the list of 31 forward-looking strategies advanced from Round 2. The expert panelists then ranked their five most important or top five preferred strategies

in order of their highest to lowest preference. The ranking of the preferred strategies

ranged from one for highest ranked or most preferred to five for lowest ranked or least

preferred. Each important or preferred strategy when listed was assigned a certain weight

with higher weights signifying higher preference for the strategy (a) ranking 1 = weight

of 5, (b) ranking 2 = weight of 4, (c) ranking 3 = weight of 3, (d) ranking 4 = weight of 2,

and (e) ranking 5 = weight of 1. A given ranked strategy had its rankings multiplied by its

assigned weights. The results were summed, and the total divided by the sum of the

weights. The strategy with the greatest weighted average ranking was the most preferred.

The expert panelists were allowed to enter brief comments for their rankings. The top

five most desirable, feasible, and important forward-looking strategies among the panel

advanced to Round 4.

Round 4. Appendix L represents the data collection instrument for Round 4. The

self-reported measure of credibility among the panelists was denoted by the level of

panelists' confidence recorded at the end of Round 4. The expert panelists rated their

confidence in each of the five most desirable, feasible, and important strategies identified

in previous rounds using a 5-point Likert-type scale (see Linstone & Turoff, 2002). The

voting parameters of the confidence scale were (a) 5 = Certain (low risk of being wrong),

(b) 4 = Reliable (some risk of being wrong), (c) 3 = Neither Reliable nor Unreliable, (d) 2

= Risky (substantial risk of being wrong), and (e) 1 = Unreliable (great risk of being

wrong). The expert panelists had the option to provide comments about their confidence

in the results of the study. Chapter 4 contains the overall findings of the study.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that trustworthiness as an appropriate measure for evaluating the content of qualitative studies. In qualitative studies, trustworthiness is the degree to which one can have confidence in a study's findings and supports the salient aspects of the survey (see Elo et al., 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Brady (2015) opined that trustworthiness refers to the integrity of the research process and the findings. Lincoln and Guba established that there are four components of trustworthiness, namely (a) credibility, (b) transferability, (c) dependability, and (d) confirmability.

Credibility

The credibility of a qualitative study encompasses the veracity of the data and expert panelists' viewpoint, and the interpretation of the data presented by the researcher (see Cope, 2014; Elo et al., 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The responsibility lies with the researcher to demonstrate the credibility of the study by identifying that expert panelists are involved in the research and accurately interpreting and representing each participant (see Elo et al., 2014). Accurate interpretation and representation of a participant allows for others not affiliated with the study but possessing similar experience or expertise, to recognize the descriptions detailed by the researcher (see Elo et al., 2014).

Delphi studies incorporate multiple rounds of iteration between researchers and various panelists (see Brady, 2015; Skulmoski et al., 2007). The multiple rounds of iteration inclusive of rating or voting, ranking, feedback, and the modification of prior responses after reading feedback, establishes and authenticates the credibility in Delphi studies (see Heitner et al., 2013; Manzano-García & Ayala, 2017; van Vliet et al., 2016).

According to Linstone and Turoff (1975), expert panelists rating their confidence in the results of a Delphi study is a self-reported measure of credibility, which establishes credibility in the Delphi study.

The factors which established credibility in Delphi studies applied to the current study. There were multiple rounds of iterations inclusive of (a) expert panelists offering feedback on the Round 1 predesigned list of strategies and (b) the revision of a strategy according to the expert panelist's Round 1 feedback. The inclusion of the Round 3 ranking survey allowed expert panelists to share another measure of the importance of the strategies. The study procedures also enabled expert panelists to report their confidence in the final list of strategies.

Transferability

Transferability is the extent to which the findings of one completed qualitative study is applicable in another setting, involving expert panelists with similar lived experiences with the phenomenon but did not participate in the initial study (see Amankwaa, 2016; Connelly, 2016; Cope, 2014). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), researchers demonstrate transferability of their study by providing sufficient descriptive data that makes transferability assessments possible for readers of the results of the study. As opined by Brady (2015), the incorporation of the purposeful sampling strategy in Delphi research allows readers of Delphi studies to self-assess the methodology for transferability based on the context of the expert panelists and the description of the phenomenon under study.

Dependability

Dependability refers to the stability and consistency of research finding over time (see Connelly, 2016; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The findings of this Delphi study would be considered stable and consistent if this same research is replicated by a different researcher, using similar expert panelists, under similar conditions, and yield the same or similar findings (see Cope, 2014; Elo et al., 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Researchers conducting Delphi studies ensured the dependability of findings with the use of inquiry audit and audit trail (see Amankwaa, 2016; Connelly, 2016; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Skulmoski et al., 2007). The audit trail for Delphi researchers is inclusive of (a) explanation of the data collection process, (b) secure storage of raw data, (c) questionnaire data, (d) data analysis and reduction involving usage of analysis software, and (e) presentation of iterative rounds of reports containing statistical responses from expert panelists (Fletcher & Marchildon, 2014).

Confirmability

Qualitative researchers are immersed in their studies and forms part of their study owing to constant interaction with the research and expert panelists (see Burkholder, Cox, & Crawford, 2016). The continuous interaction creates the inability to differentiate between researcher and method and makes for biased researcher findings (see Ravitch & Carl, 2015; Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Confirmability is the extent or degree of impartiality, to which I presented the findings which were founded only on the expert panelists' responses, and not my biases, motivations, interests or proclivities (see Amankwaa, 2016; Connelly, 2016).

Ethical Procedures

The Walden's IRB approval number for the current study is 03-20-20-0641279,

and the IRB approval expires on March 19, 2021. The proposed primary source for

recruiting expert panelists were the HRM groups on LinkedIn (Linkedin, 2018).

Although the LinkedIn group owners did not acknowledge the request for a letter of

cooperation, which rendered this approach for recruiting expert panelists unsuccessful,

the procedures for LinkedIn were ethical. Walden IRB advised that obtaining letters of

cooperation or permission was not a requirement for posting the study invitation in the

public or general forums of any social media platform.

The contents of the Walden's IRB approved official letter of invitation to expert

panelists guaranteed the use of snowball sampling. The invitation stated that expert

panelists could share the included survey link with other eligible individuals, and expert

panelists for the current study were acquired through referrals, which included my

contacts. Walden's IRB did not require a change in procedures for the personal referrals

approach. The SHRM Networking Group, as one of the contingencies, granted

permission for the posting of the study in the group. Posting in the SHRM Networking

Group yielded no expert panelists.

Panelist recruitment procedure. Walden's IRB received for their consideration,

copies of all letters regarding seeking, and the granting of permission to conduct the

study. The purpose of this IRB vetting is to ensure that neither the panelists nor the

university would not be harmed in the outlined recruitment process. There were also no

ethical concerns related to data collection. All panelists were advised in the informed

consent form that (a) they can at any point and without permission withdraw from the study and (b) there were no penalties to them for premature withdrawal from the study.

Anonymity among panelists as a tenet of Delphi studies. In keeping with the privacy protection statements of the informed consent form, and the anonymity characteristics of a Delphi study, all data were anonymously collected and securely stored. The use of SurveyMonkey allowed the expert panelists to remain anonymous to each other. The use of online surveys helped to (a) support the anonymity between panelists, (b) promote the panelists' well-being in that they could be truthful in their responses without the fear of retribution for their participation, and (c) improve expert panelists' engagement, as panelists had the assurance that the survey and their response were confidential.

In each study's introduction, all expert panelists were asked to provide their e-mail address. The introduction highlighted that (a) all e-mail addresses were kept confidential and will only be seen by me, (b) no personal or identifiable information would be shared with anyone, (c) SurveyMonkey's privacy policy also ensured users' information was kept private and confidential, and (d) their mail address was used to notify them of subsequent rounds of survey. During the Round 1 analysis, a unique identifier code was created for each expert panelist. The said unique identifiers were also presented when detailing participant responses in the published findings for the current study. Expert panelists who completed the Round 4 survey received an e-mailed Round 4 data analysis report. The continued use of the SurveyMonkey platform to send this report

provided the consistent protection of anonymity among expert panelists, as well as the protection of their privacy and confidential information.

A combination of password-protected portable hard drives, flash drives, and cloud storage such as OneDrive and Google Drive facilitated the secured storage of the data collected. Before commencing the Round 1 data analysis, a secure password enabled portable external solid-state drive for added security was added to the cadre of password protected storage facility. Data analysis reports which comprised of frequencies, medians, ratings, rankings, and expert panelists 'comments were shared with my dissertation Chair. The survey data was available to only two members of my dissertation committee, along with me. All associated survey data will be destroyed by shredding all printed material and deletion of electronic data five years after the university fully approves the study.

Summary

Chapter 3 featured a comprehensive portrayal of the research and data collection procedures associated with the current study. The modified Delphi design, as a qualitative research design was appropriate for this type of study because the objective of the study was to evaluate expert opinions regarding the desirability, feasibility, and importance of forward-looking strategies for reducing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago, and the Delphi met these specific study needs.

The expert panelists recruited for their expert opinions needed only to satisfy the stipulated criteria for inclusion as an expert panelist, and there were no other stipulations on being government, private sector, or self-employed. The recruitment protocol and documentation included an introduction and invitation to the self-selected panelists

recruited through posting in the LinkedIn public forum and personal referrals. Neither of the two LinkedIn HRM professional groups as the intended primary plan for recruitment nor the contingency plan, which was the SHRM Networking Group yielded any expert panelists. During the data collection phase, panelists remained anonymous to each other while providing expert opinions to address the research problem.

A solution matrix for voluntary employee absenteeism was prepared based on an extensive review of the peer-reviewed literature on voluntary employee absenteeism. Appendix A contains the Round 1 survey, which was the result of the solution matrix. The data collection phase lasted approximately eight weeks, consisting of four iterative rounds of data collection and analysis. The research procedures for the current study complied with all ethical protocols set out by the Walden University Institutional Review Board.

Chapter 4 contains the results of the study inclusive of the entire data collection procedure and the data analysis process for each round. The levels of convergence of opinion for desirability and feasibility are reported for each strategy and corresponding overarching elements for developing a consolidated strategy for reducing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. The chapter also contains (a) the self-reported levels of confidence among the expert panelists from Round 4 and (b) any diversion from the original data collection and analysis procedure previously outlined.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative modified Delphi study was to determine how a panel of 17 Caribbean and global HR experts view the desirability, feasibility, and importance of forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. The experts shared their views based upon a predesigned list of strategies to minimize voluntary employee absenteeism. Chapter 4 contains details of the research setting, demographics, details for recruiting expert panelists, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, study results, and a chapter summary.

Research Setting

Four rounds of electronic surveys were administered through SurveyMonkey in an online environment. There were no observed conditions (personal or professional/organizational) that may have influenced the opinions and experiences of the panelists because there were no in-person or direct interactions with any panelists. Due to the absence of observation, I did not have any knowledge of any factors or conditions that might have influenced the results of the study.

Demographics

The expert panelists for the current study self-selected according to selection criteria stated in the Round 1 study invitation and the informed consent form. These criteria were (a) a degree in business management or social and behavioral sciences from an accredited higher education institution, (b) 3 or more years of HRM experience, and (c) membership in a professional HR organization such as the SHRM. The inclusion of

global HR managers as expert panelists was necessary because there were not enough experts in Trinidad and Tobago with sufficient knowledge and experience in addressing the problem to limit the study to experts there. Although employee absenteeism manifests in unique ways in each culture, a global perspective is valuable to identify views about strategies to address the problem that may be applicable to and adaptable in other cultures. Drawing on a pool of global experts who may have knowledge and experience from their efforts to address the problem successfully in their own geographic location provided the opportunity to apply global perspectives to addressing a local problem. Leaders in Trinidad and Tobago may consider the strategies that emerge from the current study within the cultural context and apply them to the local problem of employee absenteeism. No other demographic information was collected or recognized for the current study.

Data Collection

Upon receipt of Walden University's IRB approval of the current study (approval number 03-20-20-0641279), Round 1 of data collection commenced electronically from the Caribbean and global HR expert panelists. The expert panelists received a link from SurveyMonkey that connected them to the informed consent form. Only expert panelists who electronically acknowledged the informed consent form proceeded to the study's introduction and the Round 1 survey. The only personal information collected from expert panelists was e-mail addresses needed to (a) invite participants to subsequent rounds and (b) send a copy of the Round 4 results.

Field Test

A successful field test can identify any potential confusion or ambiguity, allowing for the modification of the survey instrument before Round 1 begins. A draft of the Round 1 survey was sent to two experts with either subject matter experience or some expertise in conducting a Delphi study. The two experts also had experiences with voluntary employee absenteeism. These experts reviewed the instrument and provided feedback relating to the Delphi data collection method. Expert panelists in this field test were asked to comment on the clarity and relevance of the survey instructions, as well as comprehensibility of the instructions and survey questions. The two experts did not express concerns with respect to the clarity and appropriateness of the wording of the Likert-type items. One participant sent a reminder of the need to ensure that instructions for survey completion be clearly stated within the SurveyMonkey form. As a result, no revisions to the instruments were made. The two expert who participated the field test were not among the expert panelists who participated in the current study's four rounds of electronic surveys.

Participation Overview

The posting of the Round 1 survey in the LinkedIn public forum yielded two respondents. One of the two did not grant consent for participation and was automatically exited from the study. The second respondent acknowledged the informed consent form and completed the Round 1 survey, thereby becoming the first expert panelist.

The contents of the Walden IRB approved letter of invitation to expert panelists guaranteed the use of snowball sampling as the invitation stated that expert panelists

could share the included survey link with other eligible individuals. Twenty seven

interested expert panelists were acquired through referrals, which included my contacts.

The 27 referred individuals received the official letter of invitation and Round 1 survey

via the e-mail and weblink data collection tools on SurveyMonkey (see Appendix F). Of

the 27 interested expert panelists, 24 acknowledged the informed consent form and

proceeded to the Round 1 survey. Of those 24 referred individuals who acknowledged the

informed consent form, 21 completed the Round 1 survey, making a total of 22 expert

panelists who successfully completed the Round 1 survey.

Based on the original count of 22 expert panelists who completed the Round 1

survey, the panelist attrition rate was 22.73% across the four rounds of surveys. Eighty

percent of the attrition occurred between Round 1 and Round 2. In the absence of a

definite reason for the drop-off rate, one assumption was that the lengthiness of the

Round 1 survey might have been a contributing factor. Another assumption was that the

data collection and analysis process occurred during the period of the global lockdown

due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the lockdown, concerns for health and

prevention of viral infection was the priority. Table 2 highlights the number of surveys

distributed and completed for each round with the response rate.

Table 2

Survey Response Rate

Round	Expert panelists reached	Informed consent forms acknowledged	Surveys completed	Response rate %
1	29	25	22	75.90
2	22	N/A	18	81.20
3	18	N/A	17	94.40
4	17	N/A	17	100.00

Note. N/A indicates not applicable as the informed consent form was disseminated in Round 1 only.

Location, Frequency, and Duration of Data Collection

Electronic data collection occurred on SurveyMonkey between April 6, 2020, and June 1, 2020. The four iterative rounds of data collection lasted the projected 8 weeks, including 1 week per round for data collection and 1 week in between each round for data analysis. Table 3 comprises the data collection and analyses timelines for each round. For all survey rounds, start dates were the dates of dissemination of the survey link to the expert panelists.

Table 3

Data Collection and Analyses Timeline

	Survey dates		Analysis dates	
Round	Started	Ended	Started	Ended
1	4/6/2020	4/22/2020	4/12/2020	4/22/2020
2	4/27/2020	5/5/2020	5/5/2020	5/10/2020
3	5/18/2020	5/24/2020	5/25/2020	5/26/2020
4	5/28/2019	6/1/2020	6/1/2020	6/1/2020

Round 1. All of the Round 1 surveys disseminated from SurveyMonkey were electronic surveys designed on the SurveyMonkey website. Of the 29 survey invitations disseminated, 25 expert panelists acknowledged the informed consent form. Round 1 ended with 22 completed surveys. The rewording suggestions of the expert panelists provided in the Round 1 responses did not result in the addition of any new forward-looking strategies but resulted in the modification of one forward-looking strategy. The modification of the one strategy did not compromise the efficacy as intended by the published interpretations of thought leaders in the peer-reviewed journals. Fifty forward-looking strategies including the one modified forward-looking strategy advanced to Round 2.

Round 2. The Round 2 instrument consisted of 50 forward-looking strategies, including 49 original forward-looking strategies and one modified forward-looking strategy that was an original strategy revised based on an expert panelist's comments from Round 1. Round 2 of data collection commenced following data analysis from Round 1 and Walden's IRB approval of the Round 2 survey instrument. The expert panel rated the 50 forward-looking strategies for desirability and feasibility using two separate 5-point Likert-type scales. Expert panelists used the text box below each rating scale to give a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2 or to give general comments.

Of the 50 forward-looking strategies in the Round 2 survey, 45 met the primary measure for consensus. The remaining five forward-looking strategies met the criteria for inclusion based on the application of the secondary measure for consensus. Because all 50 strategies in the Round 2 survey instrument met consensus, for data reduction

purposes the primary measure for inclusion was increased to a minimum of 85%

frequency for forward-looking strategies scoring a 4 or 5 on both the desirability and

feasibility 5-point Likert-type scales, and the secondary measure was increased to the

maximum median score of 5 on both the desirability and feasibility Likert-type scales.

Thirty one of the 50 strategies from Round 2 advanced to the Round 3 survey for further

consensus building.

Round 3. In the third round, expert panelists selected their top five strategies

from the 31 forward-looking strategies rated the most desirable and feasible that

advanced from Round 2. The expert panelists then ranked their top five selected

strategies for importance using the numbers 1 to 5, where 1 indicated their highest ranked

forward-looking strategy and 5 represented their lowest ranked of the top five forward-

looking strategies in terms of importance. An entry cell was available at the end of the

survey for expert panelists to enter optional comments.

Round 4. The Round 4 survey consisted of the five most desirable, feasible, and

important forward-looking strategies that advanced from Round 3. These five strategies

constituted the final results of the current study. In Round 4, the expert panelists rated

their confidence in each of the five most desirable, feasible, and important forward-

looking strategies on a 5-point Likert-type scale.

Data Recording Procedures

SurveyMonkey was the sole means to disseminate each survey instrument

electronically. The exportation of data from SurveyMonkey into Microsoft Excel

spreadsheets for analysis occurred at the end of each round of data collection. The

quantitative and narrative data from Rounds 2, 3, and 4 underwent separation once

exported from SurveyMonkey and input into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.

Variation in Data Collection

There were several differences between the original data collection plan and the

actual data collection. First, in Round 1, the letter of cooperation from the SHRM

Networking Group arrived on April 14, 2020, the same day the Round 1 data collection

ended. Thus, to include prospective panelists from SHRM, the Round 1 survey was

reopened on April 16, 2020, and closed on April 22, 2020.

Second, in Round 2, data reduction did not occur because all 50 forward-looking

strategies would have advanced to Round 3 based on the proposed and established

primary and secondary measures for consensus. Data reduction occurred by (a) raising

the primary measure from a minimum of 70% frequency to a minimum of 85% frequency

for strategies scoring a 4 or 5 on both the desirability and feasibility 5-point Likert-type

scales, and (b) increasing the secondary measure from a median score of at least 3.5 to

the maximum median score of 5 on both the desirability and feasibility Likert-type scales.

The adjustment of the primary and secondary measures for consensus resulted in 31

(62%) of the most desirable and feasible strategies advancing to Round 3.

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Data Analysis

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The integrated tools from SurveyMonkey and Microsoft Excel aided in the quick

analysis of the large volume of data analyzed before commencing a new round and across

all rounds. Processing of the Round 1 survey data entailed the use of multiple Microsoft

Excel spreadsheets to analyze the rewording suggestions of the list of 50 forward-looking

strategies from the expert panelists. The expert panelists' rewording suggestions resulted in the rewording of one strategy located in the job crafting element category. From the Round 1 survey instrument, 50 forward-looking strategies in six element categories met the criteria for Round 2: 49 of the original strategies and the one modified strategy.

The Round 2 data underwent analysis numerically to ascertain the frequencies and the median for the forward-looking strategies rated by the participants for desirability and feasibility. A high level of consensus from Round 2 results prompted the need for a different measure of consensus than that recommended in the literature (see Hsu & Sandford, 2007). The measures for consensus in Round 2 increased to 85% and a median of 5, which resulted in the elimination of 19 (38%) of the Round 2 strategies. All 31 strategies that met the primary and secondary measures of a tendency toward consensus advanced to the Round 3 data collection process for further consensus building.

For Round 3, SurveyMonkey provided analyzed aggregated data including weighted average outputs for the 31 most desirable and feasible forward-looking strategies based on the rankings of importance provided by the 17 expert panelists. The aggregated data presented the 31 strategies by weighted averages in the order of highest to lowest value. The numerical analysis of the Round 3 data determined the level of importance of the 31 forward-looking strategies. The five most desirable, feasible, and important forward-looking strategies gleaned from the 17 expert panelists across the full data set formed the results of the current study and constituted the Round 4 survey instrument.

For Round 4, the data analysis tool on the SurveyMonkey website provided analyzed aggregated data such as frequency outputs (in percent) of the panelists' ratings of confidence on a 5-point Likert-type scale. The frequency output was based on the ratings for confidence provided by the 17 expert panelists for each of the five strategies.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

The factors which established credibility in Delphi studies applied to the current study. There were no deviations from the credibility approach projected in Chapter 3, and that used in the current study. There were multiple rounds of iterations inclusive of expert panelists offering feedback on the Round 1 predesigned list of strategies and the revision of a strategy according to the expert panelists' Round 1 feedback. The inclusion of the Round 3 ranking survey allowed expert panelists to share another measure of the importance of the strategies. The study procedures also enabled expert panelists to report their confidence in the final list of strategies. In Round 4 of the current study, expert panelists rated their confidence level in each of the final five strategies, which signified compliance with the self-reported measure of credibility associated with Delphi studies. The round 4 results signified the level of confidence that each of the 17 expert panelists had in each of the five most desirable, feasible, and important forward-looking strategies that could minimize voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago.

Transferability

Using the methodology outlined in Chapter 3, a researcher could replicate the current study using the same criteria for recruiting expert panelists, survey instruments,

and analysis tools and software. Although the strategies identified in the current study for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism may have applications beyond Trinidad and Tobago, such as to other countries and islands in the Caribbean, assembling a panel with identical characteristics is likely improbable. Further, the opinions of the current expert panel may be different from those of a newly orchestrated group of experts. The resulting consensus-based list of strategies for reducing voluntary employee absenteeism could potentially serve as a launchpad for future research, especially in other nations and cultures, or when strategies for reducing voluntary employee absenteeism require revision and updating.

Dependability

Appropriate documentation and record-keeping for Delphi methods improved dependability, including information about survey instrument data, data collection and analysis, data storage, and software use. Providing detailed instructions in the instrumentation as well as the research method, also improved dependability. In the current study, both the dissertation committee feedback and an audit trail throughout the four iterative rounds helped to guarantee the dependability of the methods of listing, analysis, calculation of statistical data, as well as overall interpretation of each round and comprehensive study results. The current study's audit trail included: (a) an explanation of the data collection process, (b) secure storage of raw data, (c) survey instrument data, (d) data analysis and reduction involving usage of analysis software, and (e) presentation of iterative rounds of reports containing statistical responses from expert panelists. All

decisions deviating from the proposed methodology as outlined in Chapter 3 underwent detailed discussion with the dissertation chair.

Confirmability

Confirmability is the extent or degree of impartiality to which the findings on which the current study's results are founded are only the expert panelists' responses and not the researcher's biases, motivations, interests, or proclivities. The audit trail associated with the current study can be attributed to the conformability of the study findings. The detailed data reduction protocols documented in this chapter can also be assigned to the confirmability of the study's findings.

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Study Results

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This section contains the study's results and the answers to the study's research questions. The primary RQ and three SQs posed for this qualitative modified Delphi study were as follows:

RQ: How does a panel of Caribbean and global HR experts view the desirability, feasibility, and importance of forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago?

SQ1: How does a panel of Caribbean and global HR experts view the desirability of forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago?

SQ2: How does a panel of Caribbean and global HR experts view the feasibility of forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago?

SQ3: How does a panel of Caribbean and global HR experts view the importance of forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago?

Figure 2 contains the data reduction results of the strategy for each round.
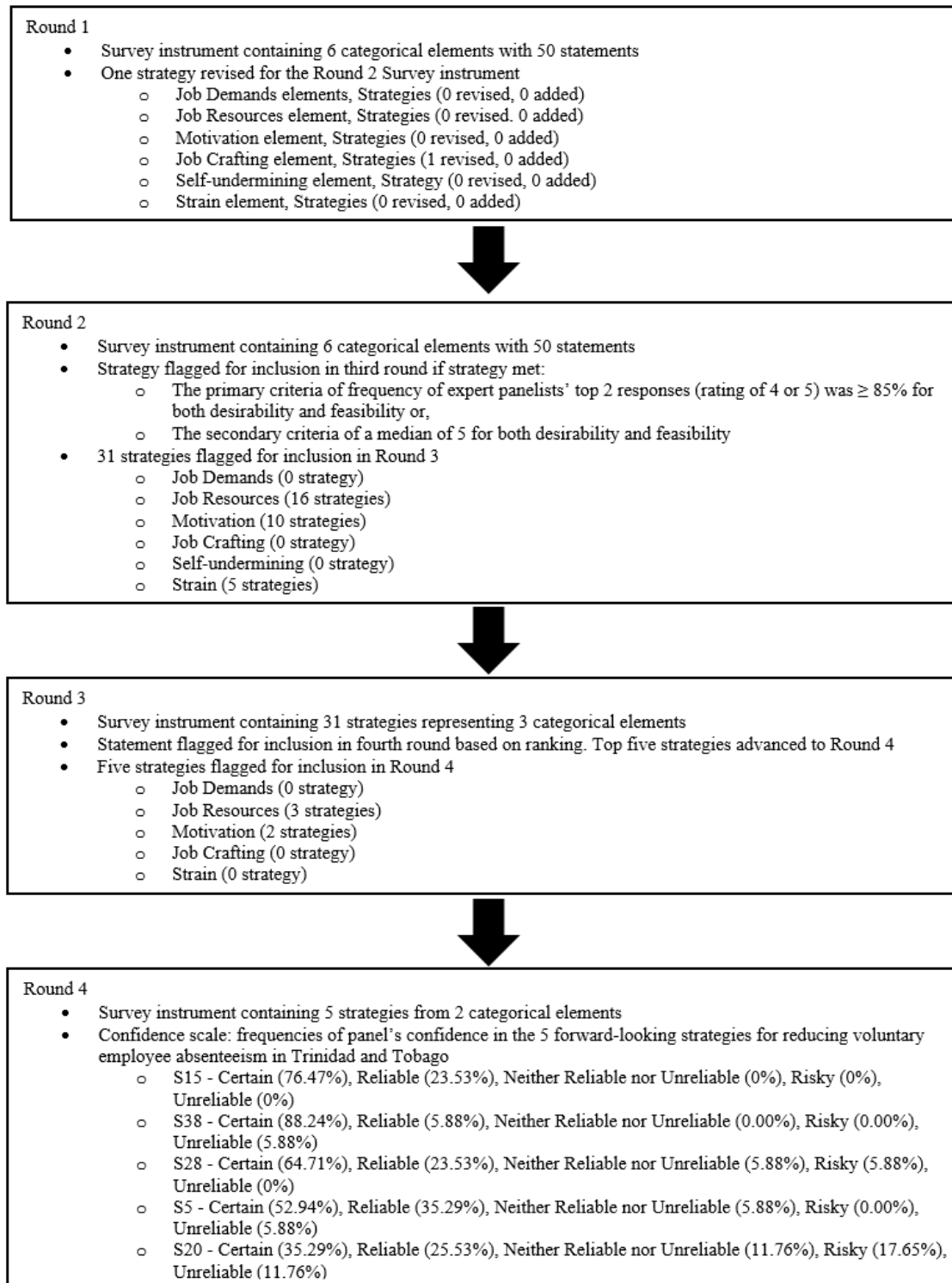
Round 1
- Survey instrument containing 6 categorical elements with 50 statements
- One strategy revised for the Round 2 Survey instrument
  o Job Demands elements, Strategies (0 revised, 0 added)
  o Job Resources element, Strategies (0 revised. 0 added)
  o Motivation element, Strategies (0 revised, 0 added)
  o Job Crafting element, Strategies (1 revised, 0 added)
  o Self-undermining element, Strategy (0 revised, 0 added)
  o Strain element, Strategies (0 revised, 0 added)

Round 2
- Survey instrument containing 6 categorical elements with 50 statements
- Strategy flagged for inclusion in third round if strategy met:
  o The primary criteria of frequency of expert panelists' top 2 responses (rating of 4 or 5) was ≥ 85% for both desirability and feasibility or,
  o The secondary criteria of a median of 5 for both desirability and feasibility
- 31 strategies flagged for inclusion in Round 3
  o Job Demands (0 strategy)
  o Job Resources (16 strategies)
  o Motivation (10 strategies)
  o Job Crafting (0 strategy)
  o Self-undermining (0 strategy)
  o Strain (5 strategies)

Round 3
- Survey instrument containing 31 strategies representing 3 categorical elements
- Statement flagged for inclusion in fourth round based on ranking. Top five strategies advanced to Round 4
- Five strategies flagged for inclusion in Round 4
  o Job Demands (0 strategy)
  o Job Resources (3 strategies)
  o Motivation (2 strategies)
  o Job Crafting (0 strategy)
  o Strain (0 strategy)

Round 4
- Survey instrument containing 5 strategies from 2 categorical elements
- Confidence scale: frequencies of panel's confidence in the 5 forward-looking strategies for reducing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago
  o S15 - Certain (76.47%), Reliable (23.53%), Neither Reliable nor Unreliable (0%), Risky (0%), Unreliable (0%)
  o S38 - Certain (88.24%), Reliable (5.88%), Neither Reliable nor Unreliable (0.00%), Risky (0.00%), Unreliable (5.88%)
  o S28 - Certain (64.71%), Reliable (23.53%), Neither Reliable nor Unreliable (5.88%), Risky (5.88%), Unreliable (0%)
  o S5 - Certain (52.94%), Reliable (35.29%), Neither Reliable nor Unreliable (5.88%), Risky (0.00%), Unreliable (5.88%)
  o S20 - Certain (35.29%), Reliable (25.53%), Neither Reliable nor Unreliable (11.76%), Risky (17.65%), Unreliable (11.76%)

Figure 1. Data reduction results.

Round 1

Several of the expert panelists offered responses such as yes, ok, none, agree, or disagree, as responses for the wording suggestions of the strategies. These responses could be the expert panelists' preference for the strategy, although such opinions were not solicited in Round 1. These views on preference or relevance did not result in any changes to the strategies. Subsequently, the expert panel's comments to the Round 1 survey generated only one revised strategy, under the job crafting element, as depicted in Table 4. The expert panelists provided no pertinent information sufficient to generate either new strategies or new elements.

Table 4

Strategies Revised Due to Round 1 Comments

Element	Original strategy	Revised strategy
Job crafting	S43. Organizations should give employees autonomy	S43. Organizations should give employees autonomy within parameters agreed upon between employees and management

Round 2

The expert panel achieved the established levels for consensus on all 50 strategies, which comprised the Round 2 survey. Appendix M contains the frequencies and medians of all 50 strategies. Appendix N covers the strategies satisfying consensus according to the primary and secondary measures for consensus. Concerning the minimum 70% frequency derived from the sum of the top two scores for a tendency toward consensus, 18 of the strategies met 100% frequency in the desirability rating. Four

of these 18 consensus strategies that met 100% frequency in the desirability rating also:

(a) met 100% frequency in the feasibility rating, and (b) attained a median of 5 in both

the desirability and the feasibility rating. The four strategies were the following:

- Organizations should create and maintain high PSC workplace environments where employees can report unethical conduct, rather than resorting to voluntary employee absenteeism as a means of workplace avoidance.

- Organizations should improve the quality of the relationship between supervisors and line staff.

- Organizations should implement an appraisal process which incorporates a performance-based reward system.

- Organizations should provide safe workplace environments which reduce employee strain.

Twenty six additional strategies also attained a median of 5 in both the desirability and the feasibility rating.

The medians and frequencies for all the strategies represented various depictions for the established levels of consensus. Of the 50 strategies that comprised the Round 2 survey instrument, 45 strategies satisfied the primary measure for the tendency toward consensus. The remaining five strategies met the secondary measure toward consensus. Table 5 features a summary of the 50 strategies across the various depictions for establish levels for consensus.

Table 5

Summary of Depictions on Established Levels for Consensus

Depictions according to established levels of consensus	D+ Dm+ F+ Fm+	D+ Dm+ F- Fm+	D- Dm+ F+ Fm+	D- Dm+ F- Fm+	D+ Dm+ F- Fm-	D- Dm- F+ Fm+	D- Dm+ F- Fm-	D- Dm- F- Fm+	D- Dm- F- Fm-
Total	45	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Note. The abbreviations in the table are D=Desirability, Dm=Median of Desirability, F=Feasibility, and Fm=Median of Feasibility. The plus (+) and minus (-) indicate if the criterion was met (+) or not met (-) for each measure (D, Dm, F, and Fm).

The primary measure of meeting both the established tendencies toward consensus for both desirability and feasibility, was the most stringent of the two determinants for consensus in the current study. This primary measure was to ensure that the strategies of agreement produced from the study may be deemed both desirable and feasible in both the private and government sector situations. Table 6 contains the 45 strategies which met consensus according to this primary measure.

Table 6

Most Desirable and Feasible Forward-Looking Strategies Satisfying the Primary Measure

Element	Strategies from Round 2 survey instrument
Job demands	S2
Job resources	S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S8, S9, S10, S11, S12, S13, S14, S15, S16, S17, S18, S20, S21, S23, S24, S25, S27
Motivation	S28, S29, S30, S31, S32, S33, S34, S35, S36, S37, S38, S39, S40, S41
Job crafting	S43
Self-undermining	S44
Strain	S45, S46, S47, S48, S49, S50

The only strategy modified in Round 1 based on an expert panelist's suggestion - organizations should give employees autonomy (S43) - also comprised the 45 strategies that satisfied the primary measure for consensus in Round 2.

Table 7 contains the 31 desirable and feasible forward-looking strategies located in three elements that satisfied the adjusted measures for a propensity toward consensus, presented by element. These 31 desirable and feasible forward-looking strategies advanced to Round 3 and were included in the Round 3 survey instrument for selection and ranking of importance.

Table 7

Most Desirable and Feasible Forward-Looking Strategies Satisfying the Modified Primary and Secondary Measure

Element	Strategies from Round 2 survey instrument
Job demands	None
Job resources	S5, S6, S7, S8, S9, S10, S11, S12, S14, S15, S16 S17, S20, S21, S23, S24
Motivation	S28, S30, S31, S34, S35, S37, S38, S39, S40, S41
Job crafting	None
Self-undermining	None
Strain	S45, S46, S47, S49, S50

Answering SQ 1 and SQ 2

This section highlights the study results for consensus on desirable and feasible forward-looking strategies by research subquestions. The findings for SQ 1 and SQ2 are based on the results of the panelists' ratings of the strategies for desirability and feasibility in Round 2.

SQ 1. Research Subquestion 1 (SQ1) concerned how a panel of Caribbean and global HR experts view the desirability of forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. The 31 most desirable forward-looking strategies fit within the three elements of job resources, motivation, and strain. See Table 7, above, for these desirable forward-looking strategies listed by element. These findings are described further in Appendices M and N.

SQ 2. Research Subquestion 2 (SQ2) concerned how a panel of Caribbean and global HR experts view the feasibility of forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. The 31 most feasible forward-looking strategies fit within the three elements of job resources, motivation, and strain. See Table 7, above, for these desirable forward-looking strategies listed by element. These findings are described further in Appendices M and N.

Rationales and general comments. The Round 2 survey instrument featured a text box below each rating scale for the expert panelist to give a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments. Rationale pertained to feedback where the expert panelist responded with a rating of either a 1 or 2. General comments pertained to feedback where the expert panelist responded with a rating of a 3, 4, or 5. Table 8 highlights the total number of rationales and general comments provided by the five expert panelists who were among the 18 who completed the Round 2 Survey.

Table 8

Number of Rationales and General Comments Provided in Round 2

Rationales for desirability ratings of 1or 2	General comments for desirability rating of 3, 4, or 5	Rationales for feasibility ratings of 1 or 2	General comments for feasibility ratings of 3, 4, or 5
2	5	6	15

Several of the expert panelists offered responses indicative of statements not appropriate for consideration as neither rationale nor general comments based on the respective definitions of desirability and feasibility. These types of rationales and general comments neither comprised nor contributed to the analyses. Expert panelists provided fewer rationales and general comments for the desirability ratings than they did for the feasibility ratings. Based on the definition of desirability that accompanied the current study, the two rationales provided for desirability ratings were not appropriate for consideration. Three of the five general comments provided for desirability ratings showed congruence with the definition offered for desirability and portrayed parallelism between the rating posited and the respective written general comments.

The theme across the appropriate feasibility rationales centered around a need for the strategies being rated, but that the size of some organizations and or unavailability of financial resources could diminish the practicality associated with implementing the rated strategy. The theme across the appropriate feasibility general comments resonated positively with ease of practicality regarding the implementation of the rated strategy.

Round 3

Of the rankings of the 31 feasible and desirable forward-looking strategies

analyzed for importance, the full panel of experts voted on 25 of the strategies as being

suitable for a place among the top five important strategies. No rankings were offered for

the other six strategies. Appendix O contains the ranking order of the 31 strategies in

Round 3.

Table 9 contains the five most desirable and feasible forward-looking strategies

expert panelists identified and ranked as most important, presented by element, that

advanced to Round 4. The five most desirable, feasible, and important strategies were in

two of the five element categories.

Table 9

Five Most Desirable, Feasible, and Important Strategies by Element

Strategy ranking	Overarching element	Strategy	Weighted average
1	Motivation	S28: Organizations should provide supervisory support to increase employee engagement.	4.50
2	Job resources	S5: Organizations should develop organizational and job design practices that better value employees' psychological health.	4.20
3	Motivation	S38: Organizations should appreciate and recognize employees.	3.67
4	Job resources	S15: Organizations should improve the quality of the relationship between supervisors and line staff.	3.50
5	Job resources	S20: Organizations should offer employees alternative leave options such as unpaid personal days.	3.50

Answering SQ 3

Research Subquestion 3 (SQ3) concerned how a panel of Caribbean and global HR experts view the importance of forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. These five most important forward-looking strategies listed in Table 9 above answered SQ3. These five strategies clustered in the job resources and motivation elements.

Round 4

Round 4 analysis revealed the five most desirable, feasible, and important forward-looking strategies in which the panelists had the highest confidence according to their ratings on a Likert-type scale. The points on the confidence scale were (a) 5 = Certain (low risk of being wrong), (b) 4 = Reliable (some risk of being wrong), (c) 3 = Neither Reliable nor Unreliable, (d) 2 = Risky (substantial risk of being wrong), and (e) 1 = Unreliable (great risk of being wrong). The sum of the top two confidence scale frequencies (reliable and certain in percent) for each of the five most desirable, feasible, and important forward-looking strategy with the highest confidence was as follows: Strategy 15 (100.00%), Strategy 38 (94.12%), Strategy 28 (88.24%), Strategy 5 (88.23%), and Strategy 20 (58.82%). Table 10 displays the results of the panelists' rating of their confidence in the five most important strategies listed in the Round 4 survey.

Table 10

Five Most Desirable, Feasible, and Important Strategies With the Highest Confidence

Strategies (highest to lowest importance)	Confidence level (%)					Weighted average
	1	2	3	4	5	
S15. Organizations should improve the quality of the relationship between supervisors and line staff.	0.00	0.00	0.00	23.53	76.47	4.76
S38. Organizations should appreciate and recognize employees.	5.88	0.00	0.00	5.88	88.24	4.71
S28. Organizations should provide supervisory support to increase employee engagement.	0.00	5.88	5.88	23.53	64.71	4.47
S5. Organizations should develop organizational and job design practices that better value employees' psychological health.	5.88	0.00	5.88	35.29	52.94	4.29
S20. Organizations should offer employees alternative leave options such as unpaid personal days.	11.76	17.65	11.76	23.53	35.29	3.53

Expert panelist, X10, provided the only comment for Round 4: "The goal of any organisation [*sic*] should be alignment of organisation's [*sic*] strategies with that of the employee. When voluntary absenteeism is addressed and aligned with the individual needs of the employee, motivation and job satisfaction would be enhanced for the employee leading to greater productivity and efficiencies overall."

Answering the RQ

The main research question (RQ) pertained to how a panel of Caribbean and global HR experts view the desirability, feasibility, and importance of forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. The five most desirable, feasible, and important forward-looking strategies with the highest confidence rating emerged from the four rounds of data collection and analysis. These five strategies, presented in Table 10, above, constitute the answer to the primary research question. The strategies clustered into two categories - the job resources

element, with three forward-looking strategies, and the motivation element, with two forward-looking strategies. These strategies are (S15) organizations should improve the quality of the relationship between supervisors and line staff, (S38) organizations should appreciate and recognize employees, (S28) organizations should provide supervisory support to increase employee engagement, (S5), organizations should develop organizational and job design practices that better value employees' psychological health and (S20) organizations should offer employees alternative leave options such as unpaid personal days.

Summary

This chapter contained the results of a four-round qualitative, modified Delphi research designed to explore how a panel of Caribbean and global HR experts view the desirability, feasibility, and importance of forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. The first three rounds revealed the panelists' consensus on the five most desirable, feasible, and important strategies, which clustered in two categories - the job resources element and the motivation element. In Round 4, 17 expert panelists rated their confidence in each of the five most desirable, feasible, and important forward-looking strategies advanced from Round 3. The sum of the top two confidence rating frequencies for the five most desirable, feasible, and important forward-looking strategies ranged from 100.00% (Strategy 15) to 58.82% (Strategy 20). Chapter 5 contains the interpretation of findings and their relationship with the literature, limitations of the study, recommendations for further research, implications of the study, and conclusions.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative modified Delphi study was to determine how a panel of 17 Caribbean and global HR experts view the desirability, feasibility, and importance of forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. The experts shared their views based upon a predesigned list of strategies to minimize voluntary employee absenteeism. The current study was conducted to contribute new knowledge to the field of management, in particular HRM, regarding a consensus based list of desirable, feasible, and important forward-looking strategies for reducing voluntary employee absenteeism. A review of existing literature indicated a lack of consensus regarding forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. The modified Delphi technique elected for this research was appropriate to solicit iterative input from selected experts versed in the subject (see Avella, 2016) and for generating consensus regarding situations that are not well understood (see Linstone & Turoff, 2002).

At the end of the four rounds of surveys, the results revealed the five strategies that 17 expert panelists deemed the most desirable, feasible, and important forward-looking strategies for reducing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. These five strategies fit into two categories, the job resources element with three forward-looking strategies and the motivation element with two forward-looking strategies: (a) organizations should improve the quality of the relationship between supervisors and line staff (S15), (b) organizations should appreciate and recognize employees (S38), (c) organizations should provide supervisory support to increase employee engagement

(S28), (d) organizations should develop organizational and job design practices that better value employees' psychological health (S5), and (e) organizations should offer employees alternative leave options such as unpaid personal days (S20). The sum of the top two confidence scale frequencies for these strategies was Strategy 15 (100.00%), Strategy 38 (94.12%), Strategy 28 (88.24%), Strategy 5 (88.23%), and Strategy 20 (58.82%). Chapter 5 contains the interpretation of findings, limitations of the study, recommendations for further research, implications, and conclusions.

Interpretation of Findings

Although researchers have studied (a) Anglo-American and Euro-Asian contexts but not low-income or developing nation contexts and (b) predominantly participants in the Anglo-American, Euro-Asian nations (Munyenyembe et al., 2020), there was a lack of scholarly research on voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. The five strategies that constitute the findings of the current study address this knowledge gap on how experts view the most desirable, feasible, and important strategies in which they had the highest confidence for reducing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. The findings are interpreted in the context of the existing published literature on the topic.

This section focuses on the interpretation of the five forward-looking strategies that expert panelists in the current study viewed as most desirable, feasible, and important, and in which they had the highest confidence. The five strategies clustered in two categories: the job resources element with three strategies and the motivation element with two strategies. Findings for each of these five forward-looking strategies are

discussed in relation to the peer-reviewed literature, organized from highest to lowest

confidence rating in Round 4.

Quality of the Relationship Between Supervisors and Line Staff (Strategy 15)

This job resources element strategy had the highest confidence rating among the

expert panelists in Round 4. The panelists ranked Strategy 15 as the fourth most

important in Round 3. The panelists agreed that organizations should improve the quality

of the relationship between supervisors and line staff. The panelists' high regard for

organizations to improve the quality of the relationship between supervisors and line staff

is evidence the panelists recognize the potential success of this strategy in reducing

voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago.

The literature supports this finding across other settings, as it aligns with LMX

that the relationship between superiors and subordinates is a vital job resource. Improving

the quality of the relationship between supervisors and line staff in the workplace could

reduce voluntary employee absenteeism (Covner, 1950). Functional LMX provides the

benefits of improving the quality of the relationship between supervisors and line staff, as

supervisors will develop a better understanding of their subordinates. Improvement in the

communication skills of supervisors, especially narcissistic supervisors, may be assisted

by the use of training (Nevicka et al., 2018).

In the context of Trinidad and Tobago based on its culture and setting, the finding

suggests that although employees desire professional relationships with their supervisors,

they also expect that their supervisors will be attentive to them regarding personal issues,

which might affect their job performance. Line staff or subordinates may want to report

workplace bullying or other injustices but may refrain from making a report due to the poor relationship with their supervisors (Kwan et al., 2016). Workplace bullying by superiors (as excessive job demand) and employees' inability and to report the bullying (as a low job resource) create demotivated or disengaged employees (Kwan et al., 2016). In the absence of a good relationship between supervisors and line staff where employee bullying and discrimination can be reported to a superior without fear of reprisal, employees might resort to workplace avoidance or voluntary employee absenteeism as a coping mechanism (Bakker & Costa, 2014; Kwan et al., 2016).

Appreciating and Recognizing Employees (Strategy 38)

This motivation element strategy had the second highest confidence rating among the expert panelists. The panelists also ranked Strategy 38 as the third most important in Round 3. The panelists agreed that organizations should appreciate and recognize employees. Their high regard for organizations to appreciate and recognize employees is evidence they realize the potential success of this strategy in reducing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago.

The literature supports this finding across other settings as it aligns with the notion that voluntary absenteeism is a function of employees' motivation (Vignoli et al., 2016; Vignoli et al., 2017). Employees experience motivation through appreciation and recognition (Allisey et al., 2016; Notenbomer et al., 2016). Although appreciation and recognition can be either monetary or nonmonetary, employees value appreciation and recognition and desire to experience the feeling of appreciation and recognition.

In any organization, even in Trinidad and Tobago, a precursor to appreciation and recognition of employees is the implementation of a fair and effective appraisal and performance-based reward system. An appropriate and effective performance-based reward system could reduce voluntary employee absenteeism (Boon et al., 2014; Edralin, 2015), especially a system that minimizes ERI, a significant contributor to voluntary employee absenteeism (Colindres et al., 2018; Rosemberg & Li, 2018). In situations of high effort and low reward, employees experience a lack of recognition and low appreciation, which leads to demotivation and voluntary employee absenteeism (Allisey et al., 2016; Catalina-Romero et al., 2015; Manzano-García & Ayala, 2017; Siegrist, 1996). A reduction in ERI by implementing fair, equitable, and reasonable policies for compensation, rewards, promotions, and organizational actions could reduce voluntary employee absenteeism.

Regarding job promotions as a means of employee motivation, employees might become demotivated and resort to voluntary employee absenteeism if they are aware that they will not receive a job promotion (Bennedsen et al., 2019). In the context of Trinidad and Tobago based on its culture and setting, the finding suggests that employers promoting employees within organizations in Trinidad and Tobago would serve as a means of driving the appreciation and recognition aspect of the organizational motivation process. In workplace situations with high job demands, organizational motivational practices such as promotion prospects keep employees motivated as they believe that their efforts will be positively appraised and rewarded by the organization (de Reuver, Van de Voorde, & Kilroy, 2019). Although not all employees will receive job

promotions, employees who did not receive a job promotion might be motivated to come to work, having witnessed the appreciation and recognition of other employees.

Supervisory Support (Strategy 28)

This motivation element strategy had the third highest confidence rating among the expert panelists. Panelists also ranked Strategy 28 as most important in Round 3. The panelists agreed that organizations should provide supervisory support to increase employee engagement. The expert panelists' high regard for organizations to provide supervisory support to increase employee engagement is evidence that the panelists recognize the potential success of this strategy in reducing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago.

The literature supports this finding across other settings, as it aligns with the notion that voluntary absenteeism occurs when the employees can attend work but are unwilling to, which alludes to a lack of motivation (Shantz & Alfes, 2015). Unapproved or unauthorized leave of absence characterizes voluntary employee absenteeism; employee absenteeism, when unapproved by the organization, is indicative of an optional or voluntary behavior where the employee chooses not to report for work (Munyenyembe et al., 2020; Ozturk & Karatepe, 2019). Given that (a) voluntary absenteeism is a function of employees' motivation as measured by the number of times an employee has been absent during a specific period, irrespective of the length of each of those absence episodes (Vignoli et al., 2016; Vignoli et al., 2017); (b) based on the JD-R model and theory and for use in the current study, motivation previously termed engagement includes work engagement, commitment, and employee flourishing (Bakker &

Demerouti, 2014, 2017, 2018); and (c) work engagement or motivation is inversely

related to voluntary employee absenteeism (Shantz & Alfes, 2015), there is strong

evidence that providing supervisory support as a type of employee motivation could

increase employee engagement and reduce voluntary employee absenteeism.

In the context of Trinidad and Tobago based on its culture and setting, the finding

suggests that supervisory support fosters employee willingness (increased employee

engagement), which leads to better performance (Tang & Tsaur, 2016). Supervisory

support is a desire of all employees, as employees prefer to report to work in high PSC

workplace environments where their superiors support them and care about their personal

well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018). In low PSC workplace environments,

supervisory support not only provides job resources but also encompasses social support,

which minimizes employee burnout or strain (K. Nielsen & Daniels, 2016). In cases in

which employees lack supervisory support, employees participate in workplace

avoidance or voluntary employee absenteeism as a coping mechanism (Bakker & Costa,

2014; Kwan et al., 2016).

Employees' Psychological Health (Strategy 5)

This job resources element strategy had the fourth highest confidence rating

among the expert panelists. The panelists also ranked Strategy 5 as the second most

important in Round 3. The panelists agreed that organizations should develop

organizational and job design practices that better value employees' psychological health.

The panelists' high regard for organizations to develop organizational and job design

practices that better value employees' psychological health is evidence the panel

recognized the potential success of this strategy in reducing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago.

The literature supports this finding across other settings as it aligns with the notion that low PSC workplace environments are those with high job demands and low job resources (Dollard & Bakker, 2010). Conversely, workplace environments with job resources that outweigh the job demands are high PSC work environments (Dollard & Bakker, 2010; Kwan et al., 2016; McLinton et al., 2018; Sakuraya et al., 2017).

In the context of Trinidad and Tobago based on its culture and setting, the finding suggests that developing organizational and job design practices that better value employees' psychological health incorporates creating high PSC workplace environments. Creating high PSC workplace environments includes but is not limited to minimizing job demands and increasing the primary job resources, which lower psychological distress (Mudaly & Nkosi, 2015; Sakuraya et al., 2017). Creating high PSC workplace environments with organizational and job design practices may support, protect, and enhances employees' well-being and psychological health in Trinidad and Tobago. Based on the relationship between the JD-R model and psychological distress, psychological stress is directly proportional to voluntary absenteeism (Sakuraya et al., 2017). All tasks have inherent job demands that can erode organizational and job design practices that better value employees' psychological health, but the responsibility lies with the employers in Trinidad and Tobago to create and maintain high PSC workplace environments with organizational and job design practices that support, protect, and enhance employees' well-being and psychological health.

Alternative Leave Options (Strategy 20)

This job resources element strategy had the lowest confidence rating among the expert panelists, and panelists ranked it the fifth most important in Round 3. The panelists agreed that organizations should offer employees alternative leave options such as unpaid personal days. The panelists' high regard for organizations to offer employees alternative leave options such as unpaid personal days is evidence the panelists recognized the potential success of this strategy in reducing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago.

The literature supports this finding across other settings as it aligns with the notion that offering alternative leave options to employees, such as shift swaps, late starts, unpaid personal days, career breaks, and study breaks, is desirable (Hadjisolomou, 2015). The strategy of alternative leave options emerged from a qualitative exploratory study of the role of line managers in managing attendance at work in the U.K. grocery retail sector (Hadjisolomou, 2015). The strategy worked in the United Kingdom given the context it was applied in (Hadjisolomou, 2015), and made the list of the five most desirable, feasible, and important strategies with the highest confidence in the current study.

In the context of Trinidad and Tobago based on its culture and setting, the strategy is a potential success in reducing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. Granting alternate alternative leave options such as unpaid personal days should allow employees to be more forthcoming regarding intended absenteeism and give employers sufficient notice to schedule a suitable replacement for forecasted employee

absences (Hadjisolomou, 2015). Employers' ability to plan for absenteeism reduces

interruption in organizational productivity (Hadjisolomou, 2015; Nguyen et al., 2016).

Although employees would not receive a salary for neither the requested alternative leave

option if granted nor for being voluntarily absent, if an unpaid personal day were

requested and given, the employee personal file would reflect " unpaid personal day

requested and approved instead of "call out sick" or "absent without leave."

Limitations of the Study

Several limitations are apparent with the current study. First, the current study

was limited to expert panelists acquired through personal referrals. Neither of the two

LinkedIn HRM professional groups as the intended primary plan for recruitment nor the

contingency plan, which was the SHRM Networking Group, yielded any of the projected

initial 25 expert panelists for Round 1. The limitations associated with recruiting form

personal referrals were (a) access to a smaller population (compared to LinkedIn and

SHRM) from which to recruit the projected number of expert panelists, (b) the potential

of encountering fewer expert panelists who could satisfy the established criteria for

inclusion as an expert panelist, and (c) similarity among the panelists in terms of

expertise and viewpoints.

The self-selection of expert panelists was another limitation of the current study

(see Franklin & Hart, 2007). Expert panelists self-reported that they met the criteria for

inclusion, without verification of the integrity of their self-selection. Because of the

assumption that the expert panelists would be truthful in their qualifications for the study

and responses, no background checks occurred either to verify the expert panelists'

qualifications or confirm the honesty of their responses. The resources to conduct background checks on expert panelists were unavailable; therefore, the expert panelists were assumed to be truthful regarding their qualifications for the study.

The anonymity among the expert panelists precluded the occurrence of face-to-face communication between the panelists, resulting in a lack of potential debate. Due to anonymity among the expert panelists and questionnaires completed online, there were no verbal exchanges between the panelists, which may have obscured clarifications for conflicting expert responses (see Vernon, 2009). In the absence of accountability, the expert panelists may have provided impromptu responses, which could have severely affected the efficacy, accuracy, and rigor of the study (see Fletcher & Marchildon, 2014).

The attrition rate was another limitation of the current study, as the number of participants who dropped out decreased with each round. Participant attrition is an inherent weakness synonymous with the Delphi technique due to the time commitment required for four iterative rounds of data collection; the probability of expert panelist discontinuing increases typically with each round (see Hsu & Sandford, 2007). Due to the number of rounds, and the length of the Round 1 and 2 survey instrument, expert panelists could have felt that the survey had become tedious and time-consuming, and subsequently elected to discontinue their voluntary participation. The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 could have also attributed to the attrition rate. During the global lockdown concerns for life, health, and prevention of a viral infection for which there was no known cure were the priority, and naturally took precedence over participation in a survey.

Potential respondent bias over four rounds of data collection was another limitation of the current study. Bias could have been in the form of expert panelists who chose to satisfy their own agendas or could have had subjective opinions. There existed many comments in the form acquiescence and counter- acquiescence responses, particularly regarding the Round 1 survey where expert panelists offered responses such as yes, ok, none, agree, or disagree instead of the requested rewording suggestions of the strategies. The acquiescence and counter- acquiescence responses could be the expert panelists' bias for or against the strategy, although such opinions were not requested in Round 1. The text box provided in Round 2 for rationales and comments featured pattern in acquiescence and counter- acquiescence. Another consideration regarding acquiescence and counter- acquiescence responses was that due to the number of rounds, and the length of the Round 1 and 2 survey instrument, expert panelists might have felt that the survey had become burdensome and subsequently did not give their best efforts to completing the surveys.

Another limitation of the current study was the findings may not be transferable to other settings. Although the strategies identified in this study for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism may have applications beyond Trinidad and Tobago, such as to other countries and islands in the Caribbean, the unique characteristics of the workplace and the workers in Trinidad and Tobago might limit transferability to other settings.

Recommendations

A limitation of the current study was the expert panelists' attrition rate. Scholars seeking to extend the body of knowledge regarding the results of the current study may

want to consider expert panelist motivation in the form of incentives such as compensation when designing recruitment strategies and drafting the criteria for inclusion as an expert panelist. The incorporation of participant motivation could increase the likelihood that potential expert panelist panelists are intrinsically motivated and remain committed to the objectives of the study (Hsu & Sandford, 2007).

The current study was also limited to expert panelists acquired through personal referrals. When delineating the study population, scholars seeking to extend the body of knowledge regarding the results of the current study should identify multiple means of gaining access to sampling frames of potential expert panelists. To circumvent delays due to the unavailability of expert panelists, researchers should increase their sampling frame through several professional organization membership lists (Creswell, 2015), collaborate with organizations, and or the labor department in the country in which the study will be executed.

The current study focused on the perceptions of an expert panel that (a) met specific criteria, (b) worked in the government or private sector, and (c) may also have had very different backgrounds and professional experience. An opportunity for further research may be to replicate this current modified Delphi study in different countries or national cultures. Voluntary employee absenteeism is a global phenomenon found in every industry, and identifying every possible, desirable, and feasible strategy important to reduce same is a problem that cannot be addressed in a single study. A follow-up Delphi study similar to the current study could be an option for future research. The final list of strategies from Round 3 could be used as a starting point for the Round 1 survey in

a prospective classical or modified Delphi study. The criteria for panel selection could be adjusted such that line staffs are the panelists or a mixture of HR managers and line staff. A study like this one could be conducted every few years to maintain a current list of strategies that reflects trends in the industry.

Alternative Methodologies

Voluntary employee absenteeism may vary across similar or different industries in the same or different national cultures. For further research on voluntary employee absenteeism, the current study could be replicated across fields or industries such as manufacturing, hospitality, transportation, engineering, environment, planning, medical care, social service provision, infrastructure, law enforcement, among others. The strategy "offering employees alternative leave options such as unpaid personal days" emerged from a qualitative exploratory study of the role of line managers in managing attendance at work in the U.K. grocery retail sector (Hadjisolomou, 2015). According to Hadjisolomou (2015), the store operators reduced organizational absence within 18 months due to a new flexibility policy, which included the strategy currently under review. This strategy worked in the U.K. grocery retail sector and made the current study's list of the five most desirable, feasible, and important strategies with the highest confidence, thus emphasizing that this strategy is a potential success in reducing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. The U.K. national culture is different from that of Trinidad and Tobago, and scholars could use the exploratory case study design to provide supplemental research regarding this strategy to understand better

how each participant identifies the importance of strategies to reduce voluntary employee absenteeism.

Additional methodological enhancements could involve the use of qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods approaches that could extend the knowledge generated by the current study. For example, future researchers could use the full results of the current study as hypotheses for testing in a quantitative of mixed-methods studies, or chose one strategy for example: "organizations should provide supervisory support to increase employee engagement" to extend the extant literature on voluntary employee absenteeism with the use of a longitudinal study. The use of longitudinal research (whether qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods) would allow collection and analysis of data on the enhancement of the extant literature regarding the growth, change, and development over time of supervisors and employees, when organizations provide supervisory support to increase employee engagement.

Implications

Positive Social Change

The final results of this research may contribute to positive social change based on the adoption of the potential recommendations of the expert panel. Schwab (2015) researchers and Schwab (2017) researchers indicated that voluntary employee absenteeism is the primary barrier to doing business. Given the barriers to entry and FDI, Trinidad and Tobago have one of the lowest GDPs in the Latin Americas and the Caribbean (Schwab, 2015, 2017). The implementation of the recommendations of the expert panelists could promote economic growth based on increased production due to a

reduction in voluntary employee absenteeism. The possible new revenues from improved

economic growth, if realized, could be used to promote further positive social change

through investment in community and educational programs, and provide advanced

training and equipment for law enforcement officers to prevent and combat crime and

violence. The realized earnings from increased production arising from a reduction in

voluntary employee absenteeism could facilitate the building of public infrastructures,

provide new jobs, and improve the quality of living for the nation's residents.

With voluntary employee absenteeism rate at 40% of the adult working

population in Trinidad and Tobago, voluntary employee absenteeism comes at a

substantial cost and loss of revenues to Trinidad and Tobago (Schwab, 2015; Stone,

2016). Employee absenteeism resulted in employees having less disposable income,

which could have a significant social and economic effect on their community and nation

(Livanos & Zangelidis (2013). There is the suggestion of the importation of labor to

reduce voluntary absenteeism (Ernst & Young, 2017), but the introduction of foreign

labor could increase the local unemployment rate, and further generate adverse social

change.

Implications for Theory

The results of the current study could influence the interpretation and application

of existing theories or inform the creation of new theories pertinent to reducing voluntary

employee absenteeism. The current study contributes to a greater understanding of

voluntary employee absenteeism. It enables researchers to regard the reduction of

voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago as a critical process that must

incorporate the most desirable, feasible, and important strategies which emerged from the current study. This Delphi study helped to reduce the gap in the existing body of literature by providing scholars and practitioners with consensus-based strategies and elements, leading to a consolidated strategy for reducing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago.

The study's findings supported the conceptual framework for appraising all the relevant elements and strategies related to the issues associated with voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. The elements of the JD-R model and theory applied to this modified Delphi study as they (a) framed the current study, (b) formed the conceptual framework, and (c) can be applied to understanding the convergence of various strategies that contribute to the reduction of voluntary employee absenteeism. The JD-R model and theory (Demerouti et al., 2001) emphasized that high job demands, coupled with low job resources, lead to voluntary employee absenteeism. The elements of the JD-R model and theory pertains to the creation of high PSC workplace environments, organizational and job design practices that support, protect, and enhances the employees' wellbeing and psychological health, and subsequently the reduction of voluntary employee absenteeism.

Findings from the current study also have implications for the motivation theory (Maslow, 1943). Motivation is: (a) one of the six elements which comprise the JD-R model and theory, and the JD-R model and theory framed the conceptual framework of the current study, (b) one of the six overarching elements for the current study's survey instruments, and (c) the element which contains two of the five most desirable, feasible,

and important forward-looking strategies with the highest confidence, which comprise

the findings of this current Delphi study. Maslow (1943) posited that motivation is the

conduit used by humans to simultaneously express or satisfy multiple basic needs.

Maslow's theory of motivation could help in understanding employers' disposition

toward motivation and the reduction of voluntary employee absenteeism associated with

motivational factors such as: (a) organizations appreciating and recognizing employees

and (b) organizations providing supervisory support to increase employee engagement.

Implications for Practice

The WTO ranked Trinidad and Tobago fifth in the world for voluntary workplace

absenteeism (Singh, 2015). A suite of desirable, feasible, and important forward-looking

strategies for reducing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago is

necessary to mitigate voluntary employee absenteeism as a barrier to doing business in

Trinidad and Tobago (Schwab, 2015, 2017). The implications for reskilling opportunities

and supervisory and management training tie into the JD-R model and theory (Bakker &

Demerouti, 2014, 2017, 2018). Another implication of the findings from this research is

the augmenting of the extant body of literature on voluntary employee absenteeism,

especially voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. A recommendation

is that organizational leaders use the current study's results to (a) develop strategies for

further training department managers and supervisors as needed, (b) evaluate and modify

current organizational voluntary employee absenteeism policies, and (c) develop new

organizational strategies on managing voluntary employee absenteeism.

The forward-looking strategies pertaining to supervisory support, appreciation, and recognition, and improving relationships necessitate that department managers and supervisors receive training in LMX, emotional intelligence, employee motivation and acknowledgment, corporate compassion, and any other training geared at teaching the importance of building and maintain relationships between leaders and subordinates. Strategies pertaining to practices that value psychological health and leave options entail policy development at the senior management or corporate level, with said policies filtered down to the departmental or operational level. The adaptation and implementation of the five strategies can be made in phases or all simultaneously depending on factors which include but not limited to: (a) type of organization, (b) size of the organization, and (c) available organizational resources. The results of this research could also be used as a resource for collaboration and HRM strategy development between organizations and academia.

Conclusions

The lack of effective strategies to reduce voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago could have a continued adverse effect on promoting social change in Trinidad and Tobago. Failure to address voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago could have an adverse impact on fostering social change in Trinidad and Tobago. Voluntary employee absenteeism could increase beyond the current 40% of the adult working population, resulting in a worsened WTO ranking regarding voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago, and a probable lowering of the nation's GDP. The purpose of this qualitative modified Delphi study was to determine how a

panel of 17 Caribbean and global HR experts view the desirability, feasibility, and importance of forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago.

The qualitative modified Delphi design elected for this four-round study was successful in evaluating the expert opinions of a panel of Caribbean and global HR experts regarding desirable, feasible, and important forward-looking strategies for reducing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. The five most desirable, feasible, and important strategies with the highest confidence, which comprise the findings of the current study, were in two categories –job resources and motivation: (a) organizations should improve the quality of the relationship between supervisors and line staff (S15), (b) organizations should appreciate and recognize employees (S38), (c) organizations should provide supervisory support to increase employee engagement (S28), (d) organizations should develop organizational and job design practices that better value employees' psychological health (S5), and (e) organizations should offer employees alternative leave options such as unpaid personal days (S20). The panelists' top two confidence ratings for these strategies ranged from 100.00% to 58.82%. Organizational leaders can use the results of the study as a guide to provide better leaders trained in LMX, and high PSC workplace environments conducive to reducing voluntary employee absenteeism.

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Appendix A: Solution Matrix Condensed From the Review of the Literature

Source	Element	Strategy
Barber & Santuzzi (2015); Daouk-Öyry, Anouze, Otaki, Dumit, & Osman (2014); Kwan, Tuckey, & Dollard (2016); Manzano-García & Ayala (2017); Shrivastava, Shrivastava, & Ramasamy (2015)	Job Demands	Organizations should reduce excessive job demands (example of excessive job demands are excessive monitoring of employees)
Magee, Gordon, Robinson, Caputi, & Oades (2017)	Job Demands	Organizations should reduce job demands in the form of workplace bullying (examples of job demands are unreasonable workloads and unrealistic timelines)
Magee et al. (2017); Notenbomer, Roelen, van Rhenen, & Groothoff (2016); Omar et al. (2017)	Job Resources	Organizations should increase job resources such as managerial and human resource (HR) interventions which may lead to higher work engagement
Sakuraya et al. (2017)	Job Resources	Organizations should increase structural job resources which lower psychological distress (examples of structural job resources are autonomy, variety, and, opportunities for development)
McLinton, Dollard, & Tuckey (2018)	Job Resources	Organizations should develop organizational and job design practices that better value employees' psychological health

McLinton et al. (2018)	Job Resources	Organizations should maintain a fair and transparent working system
Kisakye et al. (2016)	Job Resources	Organizations should implement regulatory mechanisms aimed at improving work environments
Compton & McManus (2015); Cucchiella, Gastaldi, & Ranieri (2014); Richmond, Pampel, Wood, & Nunes (2017); Shrivastava et al. (2015)	Job Resources	Organizations should offer job resources such as employee assistance programs (EAP)
Bakker & Demerouti, (2014, 2018); Catalina-Romero et al. (2015); Daouk-Öyry et al. (2014); Dollard & Bakker (2010); Lee, Wang, & Weststar (2015); Leka, Van Wassenhove, & Jain (2015); Magee et al., (2017); McLinton et al., (2018); Mudaly & Nkosi, (2015); Sakuraya et al., (2017); Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara & Sánchez-Medina (2015)	Job Resources	Organizations should create high psychosocial safety climate (PSC) workplace environments which enhance employees' well-being
Hassan, Wright, & Yukl (2014)	Job Resources	Organizations should create and maintain high PSC workplace environments where employees can report unethical conduct, rather than resorting to voluntary employee absenteeism as a means of workplace avoidance

Shrivastava et al. (2015); Yang, Caughlin, Gazica, Truxillo, & Spector (2014); Zia-ud-Din, Arif, & Shabbir, (2017)	Job Resources	Organizations should create and maintain high PSC workplace environments which are free of employee bullying and incivility
Curry (2018); Kwan et al., (2016); Magee et al. (2017); M. B. Nielsen, Indregard, & Øverland (2016); Rajalakshmi & Naresh (2018)	Job Resources	Organizations should create and maintain high PSC workplace environments where employees can report workplace bullying by fellow employees
Nguyen, Groth, & Johnson (2016)	Job Resources	Organizations should provide resources to reduce emotional labor (an example of a resource is training employees to be confident with managing their emotional displays)
Hassan et al. (2014)	Job Resources	Organizations should exhibit ethical leadership which is inclusive of honesty, trustworthiness, and fair practices
Covner (1950)	Job Resources	Organizations should improve the quality of the relationship between supervisors and line staff
Catalina-Romero et al. (2015)	Job Resources	Organizations should improve supervisory support and quality of leadership
Boon, Belschak, Den Hartog, & Pijnenburg (2014); McLinton et al. (2018; Notenbomer et al. (2016)	Job Resources	Organizations should improve communication between managers and subordinates

Edralin (2015); Hadjisolomou (2015); Kocakulah, Kelley, Mitchell, & Ruggieri, (2016); Lee et al. (2015)	Job Resources	Organizations should implement flexible employee work scheduling policies (examples of employee work scheduling policies are shift-swaps and late starts)
Edralin (2015)	Job Resources	Organizations should allow flexible time for employees to take care of a sick family member
Hadjisolomou (2015)	Job Resources	Organizations should offer employees alternative leave options such as unpaid personal days
Hadjisolomou (2015)	Job Resources	Organizations should offer employees alternative leave options unpaid study leave or career breaks
Kocakulah et al. (2016)	Job Resources	Organizations should offer corporate supported childcare services
Cucchiella et al. (2014); Kisakye et al. (2016); Mudaly & Nkosi (2015)	Job Resources	Organizations should implement organizational absenteeism management policies that involve communicating absenteeism behavior to all employees and soliciting feedback
Cucchiella et al. (2014); Kisakye et al. (2016); Mudaly & Nkosi (2015)	Job Resources	Organizations should implement organizational absenteeism management policies that involve outlining disciplinary procedures for absence and documenting the process for absence review

Cucchiella et al. (2014); Kisakye et al. (2016); Mudaly & Nkosi (2015)	Job Resources	Organizations should implement organizational absenteeism management policies that involve documenting the process for individual employee absence review
Kisakye et al. (2016); Kocakulah et al. (2016)	Job Resources	Organizations should offer financial, and other tangible incentives such as extra paid leave days for perfect attendance
ten Brummelhuis, Johns, Lyons, & ter Hoeven (2016	Job Resources	Organizations should create highly cohesive and interdependent task teams
Bakker & Demerouti, (2017); Manzano-García & Ayala (2017); K. Nielsen & Daniels (2016); Sakuraya et al. (2017); Vignoli, Muschalla, & Mariani (2017)	Motivation (Previously Termed Engagement)	Organizations should provide supervisory support to increase employee engagement
Bakker & Demerouti, (2017); Manzano-García & Ayala (2017); K. Nielsen & Daniels (2016); Sakuraya et al. (2017); Vignoli et al. (2017)	Motivation	Organizations should encourage social or peer support among colleagues to increase employee engagement
Hassan et al. (2014); Shrivastava et al. (2015); Zia-ud-Din et al. (2017)	Motivation	Organizations should motivate their leaders to increase organizational commitment
Ogbonnaya & Valizade (2018); Rao (2017)	Motivation	Organizations should foster employee engagement
Bakker & Demerouti (2017); Cucchiella et al.	Motivation	Organizations should implement employee-

(2014); Damart & Kletz (2016); Edralin (2015); Kahn (1990); Shantz & Alfes (2015)		focused systems and policies such as effective replacement systems for absentees to improve employee motivation
Bakker & Demerouti (2017); Cucchiella et al. (2014); Damart & Kletz (2016); Edralin (2015); Kahn (1990); Shantz & Alfes (2015)	Motivation	Organizations should implement employee-focused systems and policies such as scheduled vacation policies to improve employee motivation
Bakker & Demerouti (2017); Cucchiella et al. (2014); Damart & Kletz (2016); Edralin (2015); Kahn (1990); Shantz & Alfes (2015)	Motivation	Organizations should implement employee-focused systems and policies such as spreading the right company culture to improve employee motivation
Devonish, (2018); Jensen, Andersen, & Holten, (2017); Manzano-García & Ayala (2017); (Munyenyembe, Chen, & Chou, (2020); Nevicka, Van Vianen, De Hoogh, & Voorn (2018); Ogbonnaya & Valizade (2018); Schaumberg & Flynn (2017)	Motivation	Organizations should create workplace environments where employees experience personal fulfillment and job satisfaction
Kwan et al. (2016)	Motivation	Organizations should increase managerial visibility
Kwan et al. (2016)	Motivation	Organizations should pay more attention to subordinates

Allisey, Rodwell, & Noblet (2016); Manzano-García & Ayala (2017); Notenbomer et al. (2016)	Motivation	Organizations should appreciate and recognize employees
Catalina-Romero et al. (2015)	Motivation	Organizations should provide avenues for personal development
Allisey et al. (2016); Catalina-Romero et al. (2015); Colindres et al. (2018); Devonish (2018); Edralin (2015); Manzano-García & Ayala (2017); Rosemberg & Li (2018); Siegrist (1996)	Motivation	Organizations should decrease effort-reward imbalance (ERI) by implementing fair, equitable, and reasonable policies for compensation, rewards, promotions, and organizational actions
Boon et al. (2014); Edralin (2015)	Motivation	Organizations should implement an appraisal process which incorporates a performance-based reward system
Bakker & Demerouti (2017); Beal (2016); Catalina-Romero et al. (2015); Demerouti, Bakker, & Gevers (2015); Sakuraya et al. (2017)	Job Crafting	Organizations should allow employees to design their work and social environment in the workplace
Kottwitz, Schade, Burger, Radlinger, & Elfering (2018); Lazarova, Peretz, & Fried (2017); Magee et al. (2017); Manzano-García & Ayala (2017)	Job Crafting	Organizations should give employees autonomy
Bakker & Costa (2014); Bakker & Demerouti (2017, 2018)	Self-undermining	Employees should minimize self-undermining which creates excessive job demands and job strains

Barber & Santuzzi (2015); Colindres et al. (2018); Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli (2001); Freudenberger (1974); Khan, Nawaz, Qureshi, & Khan (2016)	Strain (Previously Termed Exhaustion or Burnout)	Organizations should provide safe workplace environments which reduce employee strain
Barber & Santuzzi (2015); Colindres et al. (2018); Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli (2001); Freudenberger (1974); Khan, Nawaz, Qureshi, & Khan (2016)	Strain	Organizations should provide properly equipped workplace environments which reduce employee strain
Bakker & Demerouti (2017, 2018); Bernstrøm & Houkes (2018); Edralin, (2015); Freudenberger (1974); Khan et al. (2016); Leka et al. (2015); Magee et al. (2017); Manzano-García & Ayala (2017); Mudaly & Nkosi (2015); Zia-ud-Din et al. (2017)	Strain	Organizations should keep workloads within reasonable limits to reduce jobs strain
Bakker & Demerouti, (2017, 2018); Colindres et al. (2018); Damart & Kletz (2016); Jensen et al. (2017); Khan et al. (2016); Mudaly & Nkosi (2015); K. Nielsen & Daniels, (2016); Schouteten (2017); Vignoli, Guglielmi, Bonfiglioli, & Violante, (2016); Vignoli et al. (2017)	Strain	Organizations should reduce workplace situations which creates job strain (an example of such a workplace situation is excessive overtime)
K. Nielsen & Daniels (2016)	Strain	Organizations should moderate transformational leadership by providing supervisory support

Nevicka et al. (2018)	Strain	Organizations should reduce work strain by providing leader-member exchange (LMX) training for narcissistic leaders

Appendix B: Field Test Request

Hello,

My name is Brian Brown, and I am a doctoral student pursuing a PhD in Management at Walden University. The purpose of this qualitative modified Delphi study is to determine how a panel of approximately 25 Caribbean and global HR experts view the desirability, feasibility, and importance of forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. Given the purpose of the study, I will use the modified Delphi method as a qualitative research design.

For my research, I am seeking approximately 25 Caribbean and global HR experts to form an evaluation panel. The criteria for inclusion as an expert were (a) a degree in business management or social and behavioral sciences from an accredited higher education institution, (b) 3 or more years of human resource management (HRM) experience, and (c) membership in a professional HR organization such as the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). I am seeking your input regarding the formatting and appropriateness of the questions, the panelists will answer, and if the questions asked are aligned with the purpose of the study.

The primary research question (RQ) and three subquestions (SQ) posed for this qualitative modified Delphi study were as follows:

RQ: How does a panel of Caribbean and global HR experts view the desirability, feasibility, and importance of forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago?

SQ1: How does a panel of Caribbean and global HR experts view the desirability of forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago?

SQ2: How does a panel of Caribbean and global HR experts view the feasibility of forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago?

SQ3: How does a panel of Caribbean and global HR experts view the importance of forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago?

After reviewing the research questions, and the questions for the questionnaire attached to this request, please respond to these four field test questions:

1. Based upon the purpose of the study and research questions, are the questions on the questionnaire likely to generate information to answer the research question?

2. Are the expert panelists likely to find any of the questions on the questionnaire (the nature of the question or specific wording) objectionable? If so, why? What changes would you recommend?

3. Were any of the questions on the questionnaire difficult to comprehend? If so, why? What changes would you recommend?

4. Please provide at will any other comments you deemed necessary which were not covered in questions 1, 2, and 3 above.

Should you choose to participate in this field test, please do not answer the interview

questions intended for the study expert panelists. Thank you in advance for your time and

input.

Respectfully,

B. Anthony Brown.

brian.brown3@waldenu.edu

1 (868) 326-0029

Appendix C: Request to LinkedIn Group Owners for Accessing Group

Good day, ███████

My name is Brian Brown, and I am a doctoral student pursuing a PhD in Management at Walden University. I am requesting permission to join your professional group to recruit HR experts to participate in a Dissertation study. The purpose of my research is to determine how a panel of approximately 25 Caribbean and global HR experts view the desirability, feasibility, and importance of forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. The HR experts in your group will evaluate opinions associated with the divergence within the theories and strategies for reducing voluntary employee absenteeism.

I sincerely request the honor to join your group and the privilege to post the official letter of invitation in your group.

Sincerely,

B. Anthony Brown

Appendix D: Request to SHRM Chief Executive Officer for Joining Group

Dear ████████:

My name is Brian Anthony Brown, and I am a doctoral student pursuing a PhD in Management at Walden University. I am requesting permission to join your professional group to recruit HR experts to participate in a Dissertation study. The purpose of my research is to determine how a panel of approximately 25 Caribbean and global HR experts view the desirability, feasibility, and importance of forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. The HR experts in your group will evaluate opinions associated with the divergence within the theories and strategies for reducing voluntary employee absenteeism.

I sincerely request the honor to join your group and the privilege to post the official letter of invitation in your group.

Sincerely,

B. Anthony Brown

Appendix E: LinkedIn Post With Embedded Link Generated by SurveyMonkey

Capt. B. Anthony Brown, MBA
Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Candidate
2d • 🌐

Official Letter of Invitation to LinkedIn Experts
My name is Brian Brown and I am a doctoral student pursuing a PhD in Management at Walden University. I am inviting you to participate in a Dissertation study that forms part of my doctoral program. The purpose of my study is to determine how a panel of approximately 25 Caribbean and global HR experts view the desirability, feasibility, and importance of forward-looking strategies for reducing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago.
Online Survey Format and Time Commitment:
Should you elect to engage as a panelist, you will be invited to complete four rounds of online surveys hosted on SurveyMonkey over approximately eight weeks.
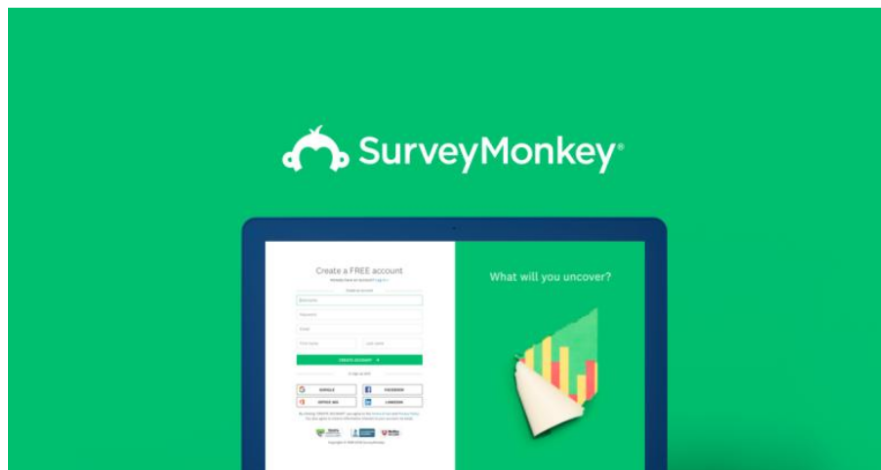Participation and date of Commencement:
By self-selecting to be a panelist via the link provided on SurveyMonkey, you have confirmed that you have met the criteria for inclusion. The survey link can be shared with other eligible individuals. Please use the survey link below to start the survey. Should you have any questions or need clarification, please contact me at brian.brown3@waldenu.edu.
Sincerely,
B. Anthony Brown

	Research Survey for Evaluating Expert Opinions for Reducing Voluntary Employee Absenteeism...	View
	surveymonkey.com	

Appendix F: Official Letter of Invitation With Survey Weblink to Referred Experts

My name is Brian Brown and I am a doctoral candidate pursuing a PhD in Management at Walden University. I am inviting you to participate in a Dissertation study that forms part of my doctoral program. The purpose of my study is to determine how a panel of approximately 25 Caribbean and global HR experts view the desirability, feasibility, and importance of forward-looking strategies for minimizing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago.

Criteria for Inclusion as an Expert Panelist:

For the current study, you can be a panelist if you satisfy the following criteria:

- A degree in business management or social and behavioral sciences from an accredited higher education institution

- Three or more years of human resource management (HRM) experience

- Member of a professional human resource (HR) organization such as the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM).

Online Survey Format and Time Commitment:

Should you elect to engage as a panelist, you will be invited to complete four rounds of online surveys hosted on SurveyMonkey over approximately eight weeks.

Participation and date of Commencement:

By self-selecting to be a panelist via the link provided on SurveyMonkey, you have confirmed that you have met the criteria for inclusion. The survey link can be shared with other eligible individuals. Please use the survey link below to start the survey:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VEAR1

Should you have any questions or need clarification, please contact me at

brian.brown3@waldenu.edu.

Sincerely,

B. Anthony Brown

Appendix G: Acceptance Notification From the SHRM Networking Group

Appendix H: SHRM Post With Weblink and Embedded Link Generated by

SurveyMonkey

Capt. B. Anthony Brown, MBA
Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Candidate
6d

Official Letter of Invitation to SHRM Experts
My name is Brian Brown and I am a doctoral student pursuing a PhD in Management at Walden University. I am inviting you to participate in a Dissertation study that forms part of my doctoral program. The purpose of my study is to determine how a panel of approximately 25 Caribbean and global HR experts view the desirability, feasibility, and importance of forward-looking strategies for reducing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago.
Online Survey Format and Time Commitment:
Should you elect to engage as a panelist, you will be invited to complete four rounds of online surveys hosted on SurveyMonkey over approximately eight weeks.
Participation and date of Commencement:
By self-selecting to be a panelist via the link provided on SurveyMonkey, you have confirmed that you have met the criteria for inclusion. The survey link can be shared with other eligible individuals. Please use the survey link below to start the survey:
https://lnkd.in/d3qbfwZ

Should you have any questions or need clarification, please contact me at brian.brown3@waldenu.edu.
Sincerely,
B. Anthony Brown

Research Survey for Evaluating Expert Opinions for Reducing Voluntary Employee Absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago

surveymonkey.com

Appendix I: Round 1 Survey

Welcome to the Round 1 Research Survey for Evaluating Expert Opinions for

Reducing Voluntary Employee Absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago

The purpose of this survey is to develop a Consolidated Strategy for reducing voluntary

employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. This Round 1 questionnaire contains a

list of 6 elements and 50 strategies that might develop a consolidated strategy. The list

was developed using an exhaustive review of the literature on voluntary employee

absenteeism, consisting or 142 peer-reviewed studies published since 1950.

There are six overarching elements that categorize the 50 strategies in this Round 1

survey, and each overarching element carries a brief description. Should you deem that

the strategy should be re-worded, a cell is provided with each strategy for your

suggestion. If you deem that re-wording is not required, then please insert N/A in the

wording suggestion cell. At the end of each overarching element is a cell for you to input

additional strategies. At the end of the survey list is a cell for you to input additional

elements.

This survey should take no more than 15 minutes of your time. You may leave the

SurveyMonkey unattended, resume, and complete the survey. This survey will expire on

Sunday, April 19, 2020, and will no longer be accessible to you. Please click the submit

radio button after completing the Round 1 survey.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. I assure you that this study will

benefit immensely from your feedback.

Please be reminded that Round 2 of 4 becomes accessible on Monday, April 27, 2020.

Panelists will be notified by e-mail.

Please kindly provide your e-mail address below. This e-mail address will be used to

notify you of subsequent rounds of survey.

E-mail address

Element 1: Job Demands of the Consolidated Strategy

Job demands are those sustained psychological (cognitive and emotional),

physiological, physical, social, or organizational effort required for and

expended during the execution of a task.

1. Organizations should reduce excessive job demands (example of excessive job

   demands are excessive monitoring of employees).

Wording Suggestion

2. Organizations should reduce job demands in the form of workplace bullying

   (examples of job demands are unreasonable workloads and unrealistic timelines).

Wording Suggestion

Suggested Strategies (Use a period to separate strategies)

Element 2: Job Resources of the Consolidated Strategy

Job resources include psychological, social, physical, or organizational characteristics of the job that (a) are integral to achieving work goals; (b) reduce job demands, strain, self-undermining, and their corresponding physiological and psychological costs; and (c) drive motivation, personal growth, learning, and development.

3. Organizations should increase job resources such as managerial and HR interventions, which may lead to higher work engagement.

Wording Suggestion

4. Organizations should increase structural job resources, which lower psychological distress (examples of structural job resources are autonomy, variety, and opportunities for development).

Wording Suggestion

5. Organizations should develop organizational and job design practices that better value employees' psychological health.

Wording Suggestion

6. Organizations should maintain a fair and transparent working system.

Wording Suggestion

7. Organizations should implement regulatory mechanisms aimed at improving work environments.

Wording Suggestion

8. Organizations should offer job resources such as employee assistance programs (EAP).

Wording Suggestion

9. Organizations should create high psychosocial safety climate (PSC) workplace environments that enhance employees' well-being.

Wording Suggestion

10. Organizations should create and maintain high PSC workplace environments where employees can report unethical conduct, rather than resorting to voluntary employee absenteeism as a means of workplace avoidance.

Wording Suggestion

11. Organizations should create and maintain high PSC workplace environments that are free of employee bullying and incivility.

Wording Suggestion

12. Organizations should create and maintain high PSC workplace environments where employees can report workplace bullying by fellow employees.

Wording Suggestion

13. Organizations should provide resources to reduce emotional labor (an example of a resource is training employees to be confident with managing their emotional displays).

Wording Suggestion

14. Organizations should exhibit ethical leadership, which is inclusive of honesty, trustworthiness, and fair practices.

Wording Suggestion

15. Organizations should improve the quality of the relationship between supervisors and line staff.

Wording Suggestion

16. Organizations should improve supervisory support and quality of leadership.

Wording Suggestion

17. Organizations should improve communication between managers and subordinates.

Wording Suggestion

18. Organizations should implement flexible schedule policies such as shift-swaps

and late starts.

Wording Suggestion

19. Organizations should allow flexible time for employees to take care of a sick

family member.

Wording Suggestion

20. Organizations should offer employees alternative leave options such as unpaid

personal days.

Wording Suggestion

21. Organizations should offer employees alternative leave options such as unpaid

study leave or career breaks.

Wording Suggestion

22. Organizations should offer corporate supported childcare services.

Wording Suggestion

23. Organizations should implement organizational absenteeism management policies that involve communicating absenteeism behavior to all employees and soliciting feedback.

> Wording Suggestion

24. Organizations should implement organizational absenteeism management policies that involve outlining disciplinary procedures for absence and documenting the process for absence review.

> Wording Suggestion

25. Organizations should implement organizational absenteeism management policies that involve documenting the process for individual employee absence review.

> Wording Suggestion

26. Organizations should offer financial, and other tangible incentives such as extra paid leave days for perfect attendance.

> Wording Suggestion

27. Organizations should create highly cohesive and interdependent task teams.

> Wording Suggestion

Suggested Strategies (Use a period to separate strategies)

Element 3: Motivation of the Consolidated Strategy

Motivation previously termed engagement includes work engagement, commitment, and employee flourishing; and is also the dynamism or initiative that moves people to naturally do things such as their job functions.

28. Organizations should provide supervisory support to increase employee engagement.

Wording Suggestion

29. Organizations should encourage social or peer support among colleagues to increase employee engagement.

Wording Suggestion

30. Organizations should motivate their leaders to increase organizational commitment.

Wording Suggestion

31. Organizations should foster employee engagement.

Wording Suggestion

32. Organizations should implement employee-focused systems and policies such as effective replacement systems for absentees to improve employee motivation.

Wording Suggestion

33. Organizations should implement employee-focused systems and policies, such as scheduled vacation policies, to improve employee motivation.

Wording Suggestion

34. Organizations should implement employee-focused systems and policies such as spreading the right company culture to improve employee motivation.

Wording Suggestion

35. Organizations should create workplace environments where employees experience personal fulfillment and job satisfaction.

Wording Suggestion

36. Organizations should increase managerial visibility.

Wording Suggestion

37. Organizations should pay more attention to subordinates.

Wording Suggestion

38. Organizations should appreciate and recognize employees.

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Wording Suggestion
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39. Organizations should provide avenues for personal development.

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Wording Suggestion
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40. Organizations should decrease effort-reward imbalance (ERI) by implementing

fair, equitable, and reasonable policies for compensation, rewards, promotions,

and organizational actions.

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Wording Suggestion
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41. Organizations should implement an appraisal process which incorporates a

performance-based reward system.

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Wording Suggestion
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Suggested Strategies
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Element 4: Job Crafting of the Consolidated Strategy

Job crafting describes employees exercising the autonomy to design their job

functions dynamically and orchestrate the type of professional relationships

engaged in at work, which, reduces job demands, strain, and task repetitiveness, while enhancing job satisfaction.

42. Organizations should allow employees to design their work and social environment in the workplace.

Wording Suggestion

43. Organizations should give employees autonomy.

Wording Suggestion

Suggested Strategies (Use a period to separate strategies)

Element 5: Self-Undermining of the Consolidated Strategy

Self-undermining explains how employees' actions create a vicious and negative cycle of excessive job demands and job strains.

44. Employees should minimize self-undermining, which creates excessive job demands and job strains.

Wording Suggestion

Suggested Strategies (Use a period to separate strategies)

Element 6: Strain of the Consolidated Strategy

Strain previously termed burnout and exhaustion are the organizational, physical, psychological, and physiological pressures and associated anxieties experienced by employees.

45. Organizations should provide safe workplace environments which reduce employee strain.

Wording Suggestion

46. Organizations should provide properly equipped workplace environments which reduce employee strain.

Wording Suggestion

47. Organizations should keep workloads within reasonable limits to reduce job strain.

Wording Suggestion

48. Organizations should reduce workplace situations, which creates job strain (an example of such a workplace situation is excessive overtime).

Wording Suggestion

49. Organizations should moderate transformational leadership by providing

supervisory support.

Wording Suggestion

50. Organizations should reduce work strain by providing leader-member exchange

(LMX) training for narcissistic leaders.

Wording Suggestion

Suggested Strategies (Use a period to separate strategies)

Suggested Elements (Use a period to separate elements)

Suggestions for any new elements to be added to the survey, and associated strategies for each new element (Please number each element and use a period to separate the associated strategies)

Please click submit upon completing reviewing this list.

Appendix J: Round 2 Survey

Welcome to the Round 2 Research Survey for Evaluating Expert Opinions for

Reducing Voluntary Employee Absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago

The list of strategies and associated elements presented here are advanced from Round 1.

You are kindly asked to rate the desirability and feasibility of each strategy in the

development of a Consolidated Strategy for reducing voluntary employee absenteeism in

Trinidad and Tobago. Desirability denotes the benefit or effectiveness of a strategy.

Feasibility refers to the practicality associated with implementing the desired strategy.

There are 50 trategies in this Round 2. There is a scale for indicating the

desirability of the strategy and a scale for indicating the feasibility of the said strategy.

Use the numbers 1-5 for both scales. The desirability scale is: 1 = highly undesirable, 2 =

undesirable, 3 = neither desirable nor undesirable, 4 = desirable, and 5 = highly desirable.

The feasibility scale is: 1 = highly unfeasible, 2 = unfeasible, 3 = neither feasible nor

unfeasible, 4 = feasible, and 5 = highly feasible. You may use the text box provided

below each rating scale to give a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general

comments.

This survey should take no more than 15 minutes of your time. You may leave the

SurveyMonkey unattended, resume, and complete the survey. This survey will expire on

Sunday, May 3, 2020, and will no longer be accessible to you. Please click the submit

radio button after completing the Round 2 survey.

Thank you for supporting my study by providing your invaluable feedback.

Please kindly provide your e-mail address below. This e-mail address will

be used to notify you of subsequent rounds of survey.

E-mail address

Element 1: Job Demands of the Consolidated Strategy

Job demands are those sustained psychological (cognitive and

emotional), physiological, physical, social, or organizational

effort required for and expended during the execution of a task.

1. Organizations should reduce excessive job demands (example of excessive job demands are excessive monitoring of employees).

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	○	○	○	○	○

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	○	○	○	○	○

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

2. Organizations should reduce job demands in the form of workplace bullying (examples of workplace bullying in the form of job demands are unreasonable workloads and unrealistic timelines).

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	○	○	○	○	○

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	○	○	○	○	○

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Element 2: Job Resources of the Consolidated Strategy

Job resources include psychological, social, physical, or organizational characteristics of the job that (a) are integral to achieving work goals; (b) reduce job demands, strain, self-undermining, and their corresponding physiological and psychological costs; and (c) drive motivation, personal growth, learning, and development.

3. Organizations should increase job resources such as managerial and HR interventions, which may lead to higher work engagement.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	○	○	○	○	○

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	○	○	○	○	○

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

4. Organizations should increase structural job resources, which lower psychological distress (examples of structural job resources are autonomy, variety, and opportunities for development).

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

5. Organizations should develop organizational and job design practices that better value employees' psychological health.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

6. Organizations should maintain a fair and transparent working system.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

7. Organizations should implement regulatory mechanisms aimed at improving work environments.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

8. Organizations should offer job resources such as employee assistance programs (EAP).

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

9. Organizations should create high psychosocial safety climate (PSC) workplace environments that enhance employees' well-being.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

10. Organizations should create and maintain high PSC workplace environments where employees can report unethical conduct, rather than resorting to voluntary employee absenteeism as a means of workplace avoidance.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

11. Organizations should create and maintain high PSC workplace environments that are free of employee bullying and incivility.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

12. Organizations should create and maintain high PSC workplace environments where employees can report workplace bullying by fellow employees.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

13. Organizations should provide resources to reduce emotional labor (an example of a resource is training employees to be confident with managing their emotional displays).

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

14. Organizations should exhibit ethical leadership, which is inclusive of honesty, trustworthiness, and fair practices.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

15. Organizations should improve the quality of the relationship between supervisors and line staff.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

16. Organizations should improve supervisory support and quality of leadership.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

17. Organizations should improve communication between managers and subordinates.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

18. Organizations should implement flexible schedule policies such as shift-swaps and late starts.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

19. Organizations should allow flexible time for employees to take care of a sick family member.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

20. Organizations should offer employees alternative leave options such as unpaid personal days.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

21. Organizations should offer employees alternative leave options such as unpaid study leave or career breaks.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

22. Organizations should offer corporate supported childcare services.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

23. Organizations should implement organizational absenteeism management policies that involve communicating absenteeism behavior to all employees and soliciting feedback.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

24. Organizations should implement organizational absenteeism management policies that involve outlining disciplinary procedures for absence and documenting the process for absence review.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

25. Organizations should implement organizational absenteeism management policies that involve documenting the process for individual employee absence review.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

26. Organizations should offer financial, and other tangible incentives such as extra paid leave days for perfect attendance.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

27. Organizations should create highly cohesive and interdependent task teams.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Element 3: Motivation of the Consolidated Strategy

Motivation previously termed engagement includes work engagement, commitment, and employee flourishing; and is also the dynamism or initiative that moves people to naturally do things such as their job functions.

28. Organizations should provide supervisory support to increase employee engagement.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

	1	2	3	4	5
Feasibility	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

29. Organizations should encourage social or peer support among colleagues to increase employee engagement.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

	1	2	3	4	5
Feasibility	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

30. Organizations should motivate their leaders to increase organizational commitment.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	○	○	○	○	○

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

31. Organizations should foster employee engagement.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	○	○	○	○	○

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	○	○	○	○	○

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

32. Organizations should implement employee-focused systems and policies such as effective replacement systems for absentees to improve employee motivation.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	○	○	○	○	○

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	○	○	○	○	○

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

33. Organizations should implement employee-focused systems and policies such as scheduled vacation policies to improve employee motivation.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	○	○	○	○	○

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.
Feasibility   O   O   O   O   O
Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

34. Organizations should implement employee-focused systems and policies such as spreading the right company culture to improve employee motivation.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.
Feasibility   O   O   O   O   O
Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

35. Organizations should create workplace environments where employees experience personal fulfillment and job satisfaction.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.
Feasibility   O   O   O   O   O
Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

36. Organizations should increase managerial visibility.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

37. Organizations should pay more attention to subordinates.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

38. Organizations should appreciate and recognize employees.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

39. Organizations should provide avenues for personal development.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

| Feasibility | O | O | O | O | O |

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

40. Organizations should decrease effort-reward imbalance (ERI) by implementing fair, equitable, and reasonable policies for compensation, rewards, promotions, and organizational actions.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

| Feasibility | O | O | O | O | O |

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

41. Organizations should implement an appraisal process which incorporates a performance-based reward system.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

| Feasibility | O | O | O | O | O |

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Element 4: Job Crafting of the Consolidated Strategy

Job crafting describes employees exercising the autonomy to design their job functions dynamically and orchestrate the type of professional relationships engaged in at work, which, reduces job demands, strain, and task repetitiveness, while enhancing job satisfaction.

42. Organizations should allow employees to design their work and social environment in the workplace.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

43. Organizations should give employees autonomy within parameters agreed upon between employees and management.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Element 5: Self-Undermining of the Consolidated Strategy

Self-undermining explains how employees' actions create a vicious and negative cycle of excessive job demands and job strains.

44. Employees should minimize self-undermining, which creates excessive job demands and job strains.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Element 6: Strain of the Consolidated Strategy

Strain previously termed burnout and exhaustion are the organizational, physical, psychological, and physiological pressures and associated anxieties experienced by employees.

45. Organizations should provide safe workplace environments which reduce employee strain.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Feasibility	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

46. Organizations should provide properly equipped workplace environments which reduce employee strain.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	O	O	O	O	O

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

| Feasibility | O | O | O | O | O |

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

47. Organizations should keep workloads within reasonable limits to reduce job strain.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Desirability | O | O | O | O | O |

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

| Feasibility | O | O | O | O | O |

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

48. Organizations should reduce workplace situations, which creates job strain (an example of such a workplace situation is excessive overtime).

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Desirability | O | O | O | O | O |

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

| Feasibility | O | O | O | O | O |

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

49. Organizations should moderate transformational leadership by providing supervisory support.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Desirability | O | O | O | O | O |

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

| Feasibility | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

50. Organizations should reduce work strain by providing leader-member exchange (LMX) training for narcissistic leaders.

	1	2	3	4	5
Desirability	○	○	○	○	○

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

| Feasibility | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Use this space if you wish to provide a rationale for choosing a rating of 1 or 2, or for general comments.

Please note that Round 3 of 4 becomes accessible on Monday, May 18, 2020. Panelists will be notified by e-mail.

Appendix K: Round 3 Survey

Welcome to the Round 3 Research Survey for Evaluating Expert Opinions for

Reducing Voluntary Employee Absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago

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In this Round 3 survey, you are presented with the 31 strategies that met the criteria for consensus in both desirability and feasibility by the panel in Round 2. For this survey, you will be asked to choose and then rank your five (5) most preferred strategies for the development of a Consolidated Strategy for reducing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago.

This Round 3 survey is comprised of two (2) parts. In part 1, you are provided with five (5) dropdown boxes. Each dropdown box contains all 31 strategies for reducing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago labeled consecutively S1 through to S31. Please select your five (5) preferred strategies – one from each dropdown box.

After selecting your top five (5) strategies, you will arrive at part 2, the ranking section. In part 2, you are kindly asked to rank your five (5) most preferred strategies selected in part 1. To rank the strategies, click on any of the checkboxes under numbers 1 to 5, which are located to the right of your selected preferred strategy. Use from the number 1 to indicate your highest ranking or most preferred strategy to the number 5 to indicate your lowest ranking or least preferred strategy. An entry cell is available at the end of the survey for your optional comments.

This survey should take no more than 10 minutes of your time. You may leave the

SurveyMonkey unattended, resume, and complete the survey. This survey will expire on

Sunday, May 24, 2020, and will no longer be accessible to you. Please click the submit

radio button after completing the Round 3 survey. Thank you for supporting my study by

providing your invaluable feedback.

Please be reminded that that Round 4 of 4 becomes accessible on Monday, June 8, 2020.

Panelists will be notified by e-mail.

> Please kindly provide your e-mail address below. Your e-mail address will be
> kept confidential and will only be seen by me. No personally identifiable
> information will be shared with anyone. SurveyMonkey's privacy policy also
> ensures information will be kept private and confidential. This e-mail address
> will be used to notify you of subsequent rounds of survey.

E-mail address

Part 1:

You are provided with five 5 dropdown boxes, and each dropdown box contains all 31

strategies for reducing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. Please

select your five (5) most preferred strategies for the development of a Consolidated

Strategy for reducing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. To select

your preferred strategy, click on each dropdown box to reveal the 31 strategies, then click

on the box to the left of the preferred strategy.

⇩
⇧

☐ **S5.** Organizations should develop organizational and job design practices that better value employees' psychological health.

☐ **S6.** Organizations should maintain a fair and transparent working system.

☐ **S7.** Organizations should implement regulatory mechanisms aimed at improving work environments.

☐ **S8.** Organizations should offer job resources such as employee assistance programs (EAP).

☐ **S9.** Organizations should create high psychosocial safety climate (PSC) workplace environments that enhance employees' well-being.

☐ **S10.** Organizations should create and maintain high PSC workplace environments where employees can report unethical conduct, rather than resorting to voluntary employee absenteeism as a means of workplace avoidance.

☐ **S11.** Organizations should create and maintain high PSC workplace environments that are free of employee bullying and incivility.

☐ **S12.** Organizations should create and maintain high PSC workplace environments where employees can report workplace bullying by fellow employees.

☐ **S14.** Organizations should exhibit ethical leadership, which is inclusive of honesty, trustworthiness, and fair practices.

☐ **S15.** Organizations should improve the quality of the relationship between supervisors and line staff.

☐ **S16.** Organizations should improve supervisory support and quality of leadership.

☐ **S17.** Organizations should improve communication between managers and subordinates.

☐ **S20.** Organizations should offer employees alternative leave options such as unpaid personal days.

☐ **S21.** Organizations should offer employees alternative leave options such as unpaid study leave or career breaks.

☐ **S23.** Organizations should implement organizational absenteeism management policies that involve communicating absenteeism behavior to all employees and soliciting feedback.

☐ **S24.** Organizations should implement organizational absenteeism management policies that involve outlining disciplinary procedures for absence and documenting the process for absence review.

☐ **S28.** Organizations should provide supervisory support to increase employee engagement.

☐ **S30.** Organizations should motivate their leaders to increase organizational commitment.

☐ **S31.** Organizations should foster employee engagement.

☐ **S34.** Organizations should implement employee-focused systems and policies such as spreading the right company culture to improve employee motivation.

☐ **S35.** Organizations should create workplace environments where employees experience personal fulfillment and job satisfaction.

☐ **S37.** Organizations should pay more attention to subordinates.

☐ **S38.** Organizations should appreciate and recognize employees.

☐ **S39.** Organizations should provide avenues for personal development.

☐ **S40.** Organizations should decrease effort-reward imbalance (ERI) by implementing fair, equitable, and reasonable policies for compensation, rewards, promotions, and organizational actions.

☐ **S41.** Organizations should implement an appraisal process which incorporates a performance-based reward system.

☐ **S45.** Organizations should provide safe workplace environments which reduce employee strain.

☐ **S46.** Organizations should provide properly equipped workplace environments which reduce employee strain.

☐ **S47.** Organizations should keep workloads within reasonable limits to reduce job strain.

☐ **S49.** Organizations should moderate transformational leadership by providing supervisory support.

☐ **S50.** Organizations should reduce work strain by providing leader-member exchange (LMX) training for narcissistic leaders.

Part 2:

You are kindly asked to rank your five (5) most preferred strategies that you selected in part 1. To rank the strategies, click on any of the checkboxes under numbers 1 to 5, which are located to the right of your selected preferred strategy. Use from the number 1 to represent your highest ranking or most preferred strategy to the number 5 to represent your lowest ranking or least preferred strategy. You can scroll up to any of the dropdown boxes in part 1 at any time, to look at any of your five (5) selections as a reminder, or review the selection you made for any of your five (5) most preferred strategies. If you choose to change a strategy during your review of part 1, you will need to change to that new selected strategy in part 2. Please ensure that you rank only five (5) strategies in this part 2 and that the five strategies you rank here in part 2, corresponds with your five (5) selections made in part 1.

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Preferred solution by expert panelist	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Preferred solution by expert panelist	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Preferred solution by expert panelist	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Preferred solution by expert panelist	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Preferred solution by expert panelist	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3.   Please use the text box below to enter any comments regarding your ranking (optional).

Before clicking the submit button, kindly re-check that you ranked only five (5) strategies in part 2 and that these five (5) ranked strategies are the exact strategies selected in part 1.

Appendix L: Round 4 Survey Instrument

Welcome to the Round 4 Research Survey for Evaluating Expert Opinions for

Reducing Voluntary Employee Absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago

This Round 4 survey contains the top five ranked strategies based upon the voting

preferences of the expert panel in Round 3. In this Round 4, please rate your confidence

in this final list of strategies leading to the development of a Consolidated Strategy for

reducing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. Confidence is the

degree of certainty you have in the collective panel prediction being correct about these

strategies.

Please use the numbers 1-5 for the scale. The confidence scale will be 1 = Unreliable

(great risk of being wrong); 2 = Risky (substantial risk of being wrong); 3 = Neither

Reliable nor Unreliable; 4 = Reliable (some risk of being wrong), and 5 = Certain (low

risk of being wrong).

This survey should take no more than 5 minutes of your time. You may leave the

SurveyMonkey unattended, resume, and complete the survey. This survey will expire on

Sunday, June 14, 2020, and will no longer be accessible to you. Please click the submit

button after completing the Round 4 survey.

Congratulations! You have completed your invaluable role as an expert panelist and are

released from this research survey. Thank you for supporting my study by providing your

valuable feedback for the development of a Consolidated Strategy for reducing voluntary

employee absenteeism in Trinidad and Tobago. Your active involvement, inclusive of but

not limited to the valuable time and effort you gave to this research, is highly appreciated.

Please kindly provide your e-mail address below. Your e-mail address will be

kept confidential and will only be seen by me. No personally identifiable

information will be shared with anyone. SurveyMonkey's privacy policy also

ensures data will be kept private and confidential. This e-mail address will be

used to send you a copy of the final results of the four rounds of the survey.

E-mail address

1. Of the five strategies below, please rate your overall confidence in this group of

    Consolidated Strategies for reducing voluntary employee absenteeism in Trinidad and

    Tobago.

    S28.   Organizations should provide supervisory support to increase
            employee engagement.

    S5.   Organizations should develop organizational and job design
            practices that better value employees' psychological health.

    S38.   Organizations should appreciate and recognize employees.

    S15.   Organizations should improve the quality of the relationship
            between supervisors and line staff.

    S20.   Organizations should offer employees alternative leave options
            such as unpaid personal days.

	1	2	3	4	5
Confidence	○	○	○	○	○

2. Enter optional comments.

Appendix M: Round 2 Frequencies (in Percent) and Medians of Strategies

Strategy (S)				Desirability						Feasibility		
	Frequencies (%) Likert-type scale				Median (M)		Frequencies (%) Likert-type scale				Median (M)	
S	1	2	3	4	5	M	1	2	3	4	5	M
1	5.6	5.6	16.7	33.3	38.9	4	5.6	0.0	33.3	33.3	27.8	4
2	0.0	0.0	5.56	22.2	72.2	5	0.0	0.0	27.8	22.2	50.0	5
3	0.0	0.0	5.6	11.1	83.3	5	0.0	0.0	11.1	38.9	50.0	5
4	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	66.7	5	0.0	0.0	16.7	33.3	50.0	5
5	0.0	0.0	0.0	27.8	72.2	5	0.0	0.0	16.7	22.2	61.1	5
6	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.1	89.9	5	0.0	0.0	5.6	27.8	66.7	5
7	0.0	0.0	0.0	27.8	72.2	5	0.0	0.0	11.1	33.3	55.6	5
8	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	83.3	5	0.0	5.6	0.0	22.2	72.2	5
9	0.0	0.0	5.6	22.2	72.2	5	0.0	0.0	16.7	22.2	61.1	5
10	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	83.3	5	0.0	0.0	0.0	38.9	61.1	5
11	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	83.3	5	0.0	0.0	5.6	27.8	66.7	5
12	0.0	0.0	5.6	11.1	83.3	5	0.0	0.0	5.6	38.9	55.6	5
13	0.0	0.0	11.1	22.2	66.7	5	0.0	5.6	16.7	50.0	27.8	4
14	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100	5	0.0	0.0	5.6	27.8	66.7	5
15	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	83.3	5	0.0	0.0	0.0	44.4	55.6	5
16	0.0	0.0	5.6	11.1	83.3	5	0.0	5.6	22.2	11.1	61.1	5
17	0.0	0.0	5.6	11.1	83.3	5	0.0	0.0	11.1	22.2	66.7	5
18	0.0	0.0	11.1	44.4	44.4	4	0.0	5.6	22.2	44.4	27.8	4

19	0.0	0.0	16.7	22.2	61.1	5	0.0	5.6	27.8	22.2	44.4	4
20	0.0	0.0	22.2	16.7	61.1	5	0.0	5.6	22.2	16.7	55.6	5
21	0.0	5.6	16.7	16.7	61.1	5	0.0	11.1	16.7	16.7	55.6	5
22	0.0	0.0	5.6	27.8	66.7	5	5.6	5.6	33.3	11.1	44.4	4
23	0.0	0.0	5.6	38.9	55.6	5	5.6	0.0	5.6	22.2	66.7	5
24	0.0	0.0	11.1	16.7	72.2	5	0.0	5.6	11.1	11.1	72.2	5
25	0.0	0.0	11.1	33.3	55.6	5	0.0	5.6	22.2	27.8	44.4	4
26	0.0	0.0	22.2	22.2	55.6	5	11.1	0.0	33.3	16.7	38.9	4
27	0.0	0.0	0.0	55.6	44.4	4	0.0	5.6	11.1	50.0	33.3	4
28	0.0	0.0	5.6	50.0	44.4	4	0.0	0.0	11.1	50.0	38.9	4
29	0.0	0.0	5.6	44.4	50.0	5	0.0	5.6	22.2	27.8	44.4	4
30	0.0	0.0	5.6	16.7	77.8	5	0.0	0.0	5.6	27.8	66.7	5
31	0.0	0.0	0.0	22.2	77.8	5	0.0	0.0	11.1	33.3	55.6	5
32	0.0	0.0	11.1	33.3	55.6	5	0.0	0.0	22.2	44.4	33.3	4
33	0.0	0.0	5.6	27.8	66.7	5	0.0	5.6	11.1	38.9	44.4	4
34	0.0	0.0	11.1	16.7	72.2	5	0.0	0.0	22.2	22.2	55.6	5
35	0.0	0.0	5.6	27.8	66.7	5	0.0	0.0	11.1	33.3	55.6	5
36	0.0	0.0	5.6	44.4	50.0	5	0.0	11.1	5.6	33.3	50.0	5
37	0.0	0.0	0.0	22.2	77.8	5	0.0	11.1	0.0	16.7	72.2	5
38	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.1	88.9	5	0.0	5.6	5.6	11.1	77.8	5
39	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	83.3	5	0.0	5.6	5.6	22.2	66.7	5

40	0.0	0.0	0.0	22.2	77.8	5	0.0	0.0	11.1	33.3	55.6	5
41	0.0	0.0	0.0	22.2	77.8	5	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	66.7	5
42	5.6	0.0	16.7	44.4	33.3	4	5.6	11.1	33.3	22.2	27.8	4
43	0.0	0.0	5.6	27.8	66.7	5	5.56	5.56	16.7	22.2	50.0	5
44	0.0	0.0	16.7	27.8	55.6	5	0.0	5.6	22.2	22.2	50.0	5
45	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.1	88.9	5	0.0	0.0	0.0	38.9	61.1	5
46	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	83.3	5	0.0	11.1	0.0	16.7	72.2	5
47	0.0	0.0	5.6	22.2	72.2	5	0.0	5.6	11.1	16.7	66.7	5
48	0.0	0.0	5.6	33.3	61.1	5	0.0	5.6	16.7	27.8	50.0	5
49	0.0	5.6	5.6	16.7	72.2	5	5.6	5.6	5.6	16.7	66.7	5
50	5.6	5.6	0.0	27.8	61.1	5	5.56	11.1	0.0	22.2	61.1	5

Appendix N: Round 2 Strategies Satisfying Established Levels for Consensus

Strategies (satisfying consensus in both desirability and feasibility)	Desirability		Feasibility	
	Frequency of 4 and 5 %	Median	Frequency of 4 and 5 %	Median
1. Organizations should reduce excessive job demands (example of excessive job demands are excessive monitoring of employees).	72.2	4	61.1	4
2. Organizations should reduce job demands in the form of workplace bullying (examples of job demands are unreasonable workloads and unrealistic timelines).	94.4	5	72.2	5
3. Organizations should increase job resources such as managerial and HR interventions, which may lead to higher work engagement.	94.4	5	88.9	5
4. Organizations should increase structural job resources, which lower psychological distress (examples of structural job resources are autonomy, variety, and opportunities for development).	100.0	5	83.3	5
5. Organizations should develop organizational and job design practices that better value employees' psychological health.	100.0	5	83.3	5
6. Organizations should maintain a fair and transparent working system.	100.0	5	94.5	5
7. Organizations should implement regulatory mechanisms aimed at improving work environments.	100.0	5	88.9	5
8. Organizations should offer job resources such as employee assistance programs (EAP).	100.0	5	94.4	5
9. Organizations should create high psychosocial safety climate (PSC) workplace environments that enhance employees' well-being.	94.4	5	83.3	5

10. Organizations should create and maintain high PSC workplace environments where employees can report unethical conduct, rather than resorting to voluntary employee absenteeism as a means of workplace avoidance.	100.0	5	100.0	5
11. Organizations should create and maintain high PSC workplace environments that are free of employee bullying and incivility.	100.0	5	94.5	5
12. Organizations should create and maintain high PSC workplace environments where employees can report workplace bullying by fellow employees.	94.4	5	94.5	5
13. Organizations should provide resources to reduce emotional labor (an example of a resource is training employees to be confident with managing their emotional displays).	88.9	5	77.8	4
14. Organizations should exhibit ethical leadership, which is inclusive of honesty, trustworthiness, and fair practices.	100.0	5	94.5	5
15. Organizations should improve the quality of the relationship between supervisors and line staff.	100.0	5	100.0	5
16. Organizations should improve supervisory support and quality of leadership.	94.4	5	72.2	5
17. Organizations should improve communication between managers and subordinates.	94.4	5	88.9	5
18. Organizations should implement flexible schedule policies such as shift-swaps and late starts.	88.8	4	72.2	4
19. Organizations should allow flexible time for employees to take care of a sick family member.	83.3	5	66.6	4
20. Organizations should offer employees alternative leave options such as unpaid personal days.	77.8	5	72.3	5

21. Organizations should offer employees alternative leave options such as unpaid study leave or career breaks.	77.8	5	72.3	5
22. Organizations should offer corporate supported childcare services.	94.5	5	55.5	4
23. Organizations should implement organizational absenteeism management policies that involve communicating absenteeism behavior to all employees and soliciting feedback.	94.5	5	88.9	5
24. Organizations should implement organizational absenteeism management policies that involve outlining disciplinary procedures for absence and documenting the process for absence review.	88.9	5	83.3	5
25. Organizations should implement organizational absenteeism management policies that involve documenting the process for individual employee absence review.	88.9	5	72.2	4
26. Organizations should offer financial, and other tangible incentives such as extra paid leave days for perfect attendance.	77.8	5	55.6	4
27. Organizations should create highly cohesive and interdependent task teams.	100.0	4	83.3	4
28. Organizations should provide supervisory support to increase employee engagement.	94.4	4	88.9	4
29. Organizations should encourage social or peer support among colleagues to increase employee engagement.	94.4	5	72.2	4
30. Organizations should motivate their leaders to increase organizational commitment.	94.5	5	94.5	5
31. Organizations should foster employee engagement.	100.0	5	88.9	5
32. Organizations should implement employee-focused systems and policies such as effective replacement systems	88.9	5	77.7	4

for absentees to improve employee motivation.			
33. Organizations should implement employee-focused systems and policies such as scheduled vacation policies to improve employee motivation.	94.5	5	83.3	4
34. Organizations should implement employee-focused systems and policies such as spreading the right company culture to improve employee motivation.	88.9	5	77.8	5
35. Organizations should create workplace environments where employees experience personal fulfillment and job satisfaction.	94.5	5	88.9	5
36. Organizations should increase managerial visibility.	94.4	5	83.3	5
37. Organizations should pay more attention to subordinates.	100.0	5	88.9	5
38. Organizations should appreciate and recognize employees.	100.0	5	88.9	5
39. Organizations should provide avenues for personal development.	100.0	5	88.9	5
40. Organizations should decrease effort-reward imbalance (ERI) by implementing fair, equitable, and reasonable policies for compensation, rewards, promotions, and organizational actions.	100.0	5	88.9	5
41. Organizations should implement an appraisal process which incorporates a performance-based reward system.	100.0	5	100.0	5
42. Organizations should allow employees to design their work and social environment in the workplace.	77.7	4	50	4
43. Organizations should give employees autonomy within parameters agreed upon between employees and management.	94.5	5	72.2	5
44. Employees should minimize self-undermining, which creates excessive job demands and job strains.	83.4	5	72.2	5

45. Organizations should provide safe workplace environments which reduce employee strain.	100.0	5	100.0	5
46. Organizations should provide properly equipped workplace environments which reduce employee strain.	100.0	5	88.9	5
47. Organizations should keep workloads within reasonable limits to reduce job strain.	94.4	5	83.4	5
48. Organizations should reduce workplace situations, which creates job strain (an example of such a workplace situation is excessive overtime).	94.4	5	77.8	5
49. Organizations should moderate transformational leadership by providing supervisory support.	88.9	5	83.4	5
50. Organizations should reduce work strain by providing leader-member exchange (LMX) training for narcissistic leaders.	88.9	5	83.3	5

Appendix O: Round 3 Ranking Order of Importance for 31 Strategies

Strategy	Average rankings (highest to lowest)
S28. Organizations should provide supervisory support to increase employee engagement.	4.50
S5. Organizations should develop organizational and job design practices that better value employees' psychological health.	4.20
S38. Organizations should appreciate and recognize employees.	3.67
S15. Organizations should improve the quality of the relationship between supervisors and line staff.	3.50
S20. Organizations should offer employees alternative leave options such as unpaid personal days.	3.50
S21. Organizations should offer employees alternative leave options such as unpaid study leave or career breaks.	3.50

S37. Organizations should pay more attention to subordinates.	3.50
S6. Organizations should maintain a fair and transparent working system.	3.43
S7. Organizations should implement regulatory mechanisms aimed at improving work environments.	3.33
S8. Organizations should offer job resources such as employee assistance programs (EAP).	3.33
S9. Organizations should create high psychosocial safety climate (PSC) workplace environments that enhance employees' well-being.	3.00
S10. Organizations should create and maintain high PSC workplace environments where employees can report unethical conduct, rather than resorting to voluntary employee absenteeism as a means of workplace avoidance.	3.00

S17. Organizations should improve communication between managers and subordinates.	3.00
S40. Organizations should decrease effort-reward imbalance (ERI) by implementing fair, equitable, and reasonable policies for compensation, rewards, promotions, and organizational actions.	3.00
S45. Organizations should provide safe workplace environments which reduce employee strain.	3.00
S14. Organizations should exhibit ethical leadership, which is inclusive of honesty, trustworthiness, and fair practices.	2.86
S16. Organizations should improve supervisory support and quality of leadership.	2.80
S35. Organizations should create workplace environments where employees experience personal fulfillment and job satisfaction.	2.67

S34. Organizations should implement employee-focused systems and policies such as spreading the right company culture to improve employee motivation.	2.33
S46. Organizations should provide properly equipped workplace environments which reduce employee strain.	2.25
S31. Organizations should foster employee engagement.	2.00
S47. Organizations should keep workloads within reasonable limits to reduce job strain.	2.00
S50. Organizations should reduce work strain by providing leader-member exchange (LMX) training for narcissistic leaders.	2.00
S41. Organizations should implement an appraisal process which incorporates a performance-based reward system.	1.50
S23. Organizations should implement organizational absenteeism management	1.33

policies that involve communicating absenteeism behavior to all employees and soliciting feedback.	
S11. Organizations should create and maintain high PSC workplace environments that are free of employee bullying and incivility.	0.00
S12. Organizations should create and maintain high PSC workplace environments where employees can report workplace bullying by fellow employees.	0.00
S24. Organizations should implement organizational absenteeism management policies that involve outlining disciplinary procedures for absence and documenting the process for absence review.	0.00
S18. Organizations should motivate their leaders to increase organizational commitment.	0.00

S24. Organizations should provide avenues for personal development.	0.00
S30. Organizations should moderate transformational leadership by providing supervisory support.	0.00