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Alternative Solutions to Retaining Qualified Employees in Behavioral Health Organizations

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Kamesha Harris

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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Walden University
2022

Abstract

Alternative Solutions to Retaining Qualified Employees in Behavioral Health

Organizations

by

Kamesha Denise Harris

MS, Walden University, 2019

BS, Winston-Salem State University, 2005

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Psychology in Behavioral Health Leadership

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May 2022

Abstract

In this case study alternative solutions to retaining qualified employees in a behavioral health organization (BHO) located in the Southeastern region of the United States were explored. The specific question examined was how alternative solutions to retaining qualified employees would improve organizational productivity. The study was framed using Baldrige's Excellence Framework, specifically the elements of leadership, valuing people, analysis, and focusing on results. Data were collected from leadership interviews with the three leaders, also examined were exit interviews, retention and turnover data for the past 3 years, strategic plans (present and past), senior leadership meeting minutes, the organization's website, and staff satisfaction survey reports. The results of this study revealed that organizations had the ability to sustain long term success if the organization was able to provide alternative solutions to retaining qualified employees. Themes that emerged from the data analysis revealed that the BHO was uncertain about which best practices would be effective in retaining qualified employees and how employee feedback and leadership played an integral role in retaining qualified employees. Validity and reliability of the study was determined through member checking. This study has implications for positive social change by demonstrating how BHO organizations may creatively retain employees, leading to improved organizational and client outcomes.

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to my father, Phillip Gregory Heyward. May you rest well with the Lord and forever live in my heart.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my family for always believing in anything that I have set out to do in life even when you did not always agree on what I was doing. If not for the support and love that you all give me daily, I do not know where I would be or what I would have become.

I would like to thank my best friend and the love of my life. I appreciate you listening to me read and re-read my paper to you to see if sounded okay. Thank you for believing in me more than I believed in myself, especially when I did not want to continue this journey. I am grateful.

Thank you to Dr. Harris and Dr. Dixon-Lawson for being a wonderful chair and cochair. Your time, patience, and encouragement enabled me to complete a body of work that I take a lot of pride in. You all are truly one of a kind.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Section 1a: The Behavioral Health Organization

Introduction

The behavioral health organization (BHO) in this study is a for-profit, behavioral and mental health hospital located in the southeastern region of the United States. The BHO specializes in treating adolescents, adults, and military personnel with mental, behavioral, or substance abuse issues, specifically depression and suicidal ideation. Programs offered at the BHO include male adolescent sexual reactive behaviors, residential inpatient care, substance abuse rehabilitation for adolescents and adults, acute inpatient care for adolescents, therapeutic foster care, and outpatient treatment. The BHO program combined has 174 beds: 100 adolescent beds, 50 adult beds, and 24 acute inpatient beds.

Practice Problem

Organizational productivity is affected by employers' inability to retain qualified employees (Kalyanamitra et al., 2020). Srivastava and Tiwari (2020) suggested that in the past decade, the lack of qualified employee retention has significantly reduced organization revenue due to productivity. The general business problem was that organizations risk productivity loss when qualified employees are not retained. The specific business problem was the inability of organizations to provide alternative solutions to retain qualified employees. I conducted this qualitative case study to provide the BHO with alternative solutions to retaining qualified employees who are considering ending their employment with the organization.

When led appropriately, employees are willing to commit to the organization and enhance productivity (Sungu et al., 2019). Steigenberger and Mirc (2020) indicated that leaders meeting the employees' expectations was key to retaining them. Sungu et al. (2019) further explained that employees who lack a commitment to the direction and leadership of the organization show minimal productivity and overall engagement. Appropriate leadership styles are vital to employees wanting to stay employed at an organization (Steigenberger & Mirc, 2020). Employees feel that transformational leadership styles can psychologically empower them and increase job satisfaction (Mufti et al., 2020). Liu et al. (2018) discussed that retaining qualified employees significantly correlated to the recruitment process. Leaders within the organization, such as the human resources department, need a new ideology that appeals to the intrinsic needs of potential and current employees (Lee et al., 2018). The retention process should be equally as engaging as the recruitment process of employees (Liu et al., 2018). Developing new ideas that employees have identified as ways to retain their employment can be influential in reducing an organization's turnover ratio (Lee et al., 2018).

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore alternative solutions to retaining qualified employees. The focus of the study was on a private BHO that serves adolescents in the southeastern United States that has self-identified as being affected by the inability to retain qualified employees. The organization was appropriate for this qualitative case study because of the loss of qualified employees without any alternative solutions to retain the employees.

I included Baldrige's theoretical work, which has been used extensively in behavioral health settings and specifically human resources, as a framework for performance improvement and assessment in this qualitative case study (see Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). Furthermore, implementation of the Baldrige Framework of Excellence's offers guidance on improving and enhancing the entire organization instead of individual departments. In this case study, I interviewed the director of human resources, director of marketing, and chief operating officer of the study site BHO. Steigenberger and Mirc (2020) suggested that qualitative interviewing is utilized to gain a deep understanding of what organizations can do to retain qualified employees.

The data sources and collection techniques were instrumental in developing an understanding of the BHO's problem related to retaining qualified employees. To gather data for this study, I conducted an interview with the behavioral health leaders (BHLs) and reviewed budget reports from the accounting department, the mission and vision statements for the organization, an overview of program descriptions, the organization's strategic plan, employee training logs, retention, and turnover data, and staffing reports. Public databases, such as the organization's website, were utilized as well. I also requested secondary data from the human resources department from previous years to identify trends or patterns in employee turnover and retention practices.

Significance

This study is significant because it addressed a gap in understanding by focusing on retaining qualified employees in BHOs. The results of this study could assist

organizations in providing alternative solutions to retaining qualified employees to improve organizational productivity. Because BHOs need qualified employees in key positions, providing alternative solutions to retain employees will be essential to the study site organization's success.

When organizations recruit new employees, organizational culture and team processes are discussed during the process (Fleury et al., 2018). If the recruited employee chooses to accept employment with the organization, the culture and team processes played a decisive part. Employees expect employers to understand the commitment it takes to ensure employee job satisfaction (Brabson et al., 2020). Organizations often explore ways to reduce high turnover rates through measures that satisfy their employees (Martinussen et al., 2020; Rombault & Guerry, 2020).

Specific to this study, the study site BHO needed to find ways to retain qualified employees. The results of the study may contribute to positive social change by providing them with alternative solutions to retaining qualified employees. The study results may increase job satisfaction, employee organizational commitment, and increase productivity with the study site BHO. BHLs that show interest in employee job satisfaction could prove pivotal in employee retention. When BHO leaders are behind positive change, the effects can be long lasting and beneficial to the organization.

Summary

The BHO advertises the quality of care as part of its mission and vision statement; however, the BHO has experienced problems retaining qualified employees to ensure the organization provides compassionate and quality care. BHLs play a significant role in

identifying ways to retain qualified employees. In the next section, I will discuss the

organizational profile and key factors along with organizational background and context.

Section 1b: Organizational Profile

Introduction

I conducted this qualitative case study to explore alternative solutions to retaining qualified employees and determine how alternative solutions to retaining qualified employees would improve organizational productivity. Organizations constantly search for qualified employees to deliver their services to the intended population (Slaughter & Hoefer, 2019). However, retaining those qualified employees has proven to be difficult and leaves organizations spending a significant amount of time and money hiring and recruiting (Oates et al., 2020; Wakerman et al., 2019; Zhao et al. 2019).

The BHO under study has been an important deliverer of quality mental and behavioral health care in their community. To understand the difficulty of retaining qualified employees, examining the organizational profile of the BHO is a necessity (see Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). The organizational profile gives a detailed look at the organizational structure, the clients, other customers, stakeholders, suppliers, partners, competitive environment, strategic context, and performance improvement system, according to the Baldrige Framework of Excellence.

The study site BHO's mission and vision are to ensure that all individuals receive compassionate and quality care from an experienced interdisciplinary team that understands the challenges and difficulties the individual has experienced. . The core competencies for the organization are compassion, understanding, service excellence, and experience. The BHO provides compassion and understanding to show support to individuals who have been going through a difficult time. Service excellence is a part of

the BHO's treatment modality that encourages the treatment of the whole patient. Members of the BHO's interdisciplinary team have years of experience treating individuals with behavioral or mental health issues and have proven to be successful.

Organizational Profile and Key Factors

The study site BHO is led by a CEO that reports to the regional vice president. Per the organizational chart of the BHO, the medical director is aligned with the CEO as having the same level of authority. The chief operating officer (COO) is second in charge in the absence of the CEO and oversees the daily operation of the child/adolescent psychiatric residential treatment facility and acute hospitalization. The chief financial officer (CFO) oversees all financial transactions within the organization and is a key figure who develops the yearly budget. The director of nursing (DON) supervises all nurses in both the adult and adolescent programs. The director of utilization review ensures that the insurance companies are informed about clients in the organization's care and that the client needs the treatment. The director of medical records keeps detailed records of every client admitted to any program within the organization. The human resources director (HRD) oversees recruiting, hiring, and training employees. The director of risk management oversees all regulatory requirements, compliance, and safety policy and procedures within the organization. The director of business/marketing markets locally and nationally to recruit mental health referral services to the organization. The director of clinical services oversees the delivery of all clinical services to the individuals served within the organization. These individuals report directly to the CEO and collectively have over 200 years of service at the BHO.

Organizational Background and Context

The study site BHO offers an array of mental and behavioral health care services, including male adolescent sexual reactive behaviors, residential inpatient care, substance abuse rehabilitation for adolescents and adults, acute inpatient care for adolescents, therapeutic foster care, and outpatient treatment. The BHO's website and distributed brochures state that adolescent services are for individuals between the ages 4 to 17 years old. However, psychiatric residential treatment services are offered to individuals aged 7 to 17, while acute hospitalization starts for children at the age of 4. The adult service programs do not have any age stipulations besides the minimum age requirement of being 18 years old. Most of the programs offered at the BHO are focused on adolescent mental and behavioral health care services.

The BHO is located in a low-income community and is situated on a public transportation line for accessibility. However, most clients served at the BHO are from different states. There is an equal mixture of demographics treated by the BHO, with clients of White, Black, Hispanic, and Native American ethnicities. State-funded insurance is provided by 90% of the clients served. The other 10% of clients use private insurance that is only provided by the adult clients that are treated. Other services offered by the BHO are assessments needed by children who cannot return to school without being deemed safe to return and military inpatient and outpatient services for personnel struggling with mental health issues while on active duty and stationed in the area.

The study site BHO serves different stakeholders. Some of the clients that the BHO serves are between the ages of 4 to 17 years old. This specific demographic

presents with an array of different diagnoses that range from bipolar disorder, depression, and borderline personality disorder to substance abuse disorder. This specific demographic seeks services that will assist the client in being able to live a normal life that is not defined by the stigma of a mental health diagnosis. The BHO also serves adults who need both inpatient and outpatient services. These services include military psychiatric inpatient and outpatient medication management, geriatric inpatient, general psychiatric inpatient, and substance abuse inpatient/outpatient services. Adult client services are required to have private insurance because state-funded insurance is not accepted.

Other stakeholders include the employees of the BHO. The employees are essential to the organization because they are the individuals who provide direct care to the clients and ensure that the daily operational requirements are fulfilled. The employees are the deliverers of all services that are sought out by the BHO's client population. Families and the communities that are served are stakeholders as well. These individuals seek services at the BHO and promote the services they receive to other individuals to further the organization's marketing. The local school board is a stakeholder at the BHO as well. The school board utilizes the organization when local students need assessments to deem them safe to return to school.

In the middle of 2021, the study site BHO established its first partnership with a local hospital. This partnership was established so that any injuries or illnesses at the BHO would be prioritized to be treated immediately when utilizing the hospital's emergency services. This partnership is new; therefore, analysis of the benefits and

outcomes of the partnership is not readily available. Prior to the partnership with the local hospital, the BHO did not have any partnerships but engaged with many entities for supplies.

The BHO uses suppliers for tangible items, such as office equipment. Xerox provides the office equipment for the BHO and ensures that all machines are functioning correctly. If any equipment needs replacement, their company will be the one to facilitate that transaction. US Foods supplies the meals for clients at the BHO. US Foods has established fast delivery services for any immediate food needs the organization may have outside of normal delivery dates. For all other needs, the suppliers are different, unknown vendors that are decided upon by corporate headquarters. The BHO does not partner with any other organizations or take part in any collaborations.

Although the BHO does not partner with any outside community organizations, the organization does have several relationships with referral agencies that recommend clients to the facility. The BHO thrives on relationships with providers, insurance companies, and agencies rather than engaging in partnerships.

The study site BHO does not have a competitive environment. Many individuals that are in executive positions have been in those positions for a minimum of a decade. There is no indication that those individuals will vacate those positions in the immediate future. The direct care staff are known as mental health technicians. Many of these individuals have been employed by the organization ranging from 10 to 22 years. The newer staff have not been employed for long periods of time, but those employed there for at least 5 years tend to stay longer. I obtained this information from the HRD through

direct interviewing and indirect conversation. In correlation with the practice problem, some turnover can be attributed to the noncompetitive environment at the BHO. The HRD discussed that many, if not all, employees want to grow within the organization. If there is no room for growth, and individuals become complacent in their roles, qualified employees will likely look for employment elsewhere (Hitchcock & Stavros, 2017).

The BHO's strategic context and performance improvement system involves the development of different committees. Within the organization, several committees assist in the strategic planning process and performance improvement. The strategic planning committee consists of managers and directors from all the departments within the organization. There is a common strategic goal that becomes the goal of the month, and everyone develops a strategy on how to achieve that goal. The strategies are then implemented and reviewed after a 30-day period to assess any changes that may need to be made. This is an effective way to include all the departments. There is also a performance improvement committee that concentrates solely on ways to optimize the organization's performance. This committee focuses on improving everything from safety to service excellence of its stakeholders. This organization is inclusive because it includes front-line workers, such as technicians and dietary, on the committee.

Summary

The average employee working at the study site BHO has been there an average of 5 years or more. However, newer staff that are hired have not maintained their employment long term. Upon exit interviews with the HRD, the employees leaving the organization have expressed although qualified for the position, the BHO lacks the

essentials needed to retain qualified employees. A high turnover ratio of qualified

employees can lead organizations to lose sustainability and productivity (Shah & Gregar,

2019). In Section 2, I will review extant literature related to the practice problem to

further understand why organizations have difficulty retaining qualified employees.

Section 2: Background and Approach—Leadership Strategy and Assessment

Introduction

Knowing what best practices are necessary to retain qualified employees requires an understanding of an organization's recruiting, hiring, and retention process (Williams & Beidas, 2018). BHOs are facing issues retaining employees (Williams & Beidas, 2018). The general business problem was that organizations risk productivity loss when qualified employees are not retained. The specific business problem was the inability of organizations to provide alternative solutions to retain qualified employees. The study site BHO is challenged to ensure full staffing of qualified employees to treat and educate individuals with behavioral and mental health issues. The BHO's BHL recruiting, hiring, and retention process will contribute to the comprehension of the practice problem.

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore alternative solutions to retaining qualified employees. Jurburg et al. (2016) discussed how organizations want to be competitive in their respective markets, and to do so, the organization needs to recruit and retain qualified individuals to reach this goal. The leaders of the study site BHO have identified that retaining qualified employees has been significant in determining their competitive position in the behavioral health market. Conversations and interviews with the BHO's leaders may reveal that there are challenges that exist to retaining qualified employees within the organization. In Section 2, I review existing literature on the identified practice problem. Sources of evidence, leadership strategy and assessment, clients/population served, workforce and operation, and analytical strategy are discussed in this section as well.

Supporting Literature

I conducted an extensive search of the literature for peer-reviewed journal articles related to the research study's practice problem in search engines and databases, including Google Scholar, Academic Complete Research, Business Source Complete, EBSCO Host, and APA PsycINFO. The following keyword terms were used: *retention, leadership styles, attrition and productivity, organizational culture, leadership,* and *turnover*. In the following subsections, I discuss the extant literature related to these topics relevant to the practice problem.

Retention

Employee retention is an important part of an organization's overall success in retaining qualified employees. Lee et al. (2018) explored alternatives to managing employee retention and turnover by innovating and utilizing ideology that focused on retaining employees from the 21st century. Lee et al. emphasized that utilizing literature that is empirical and theoretical is essential to determining organizations' best practices of retention. Researchers have sought to determine what employees needed to remain employed at their respective organizations. Liu et al. (2018) explored why recruitment and retention are met with challenges in the mental health field. Strategies to retain and recruit staff are highly scrutinized based on overall cost-effectiveness (Liu et al., 2018). Some organizations are unwilling to pay the top cost to retain or recruit, while others will and receive various successes.

Leadership Styles

Leadership is one of the dominant factors affecting whether employees stay employed at organizations (Almas et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2021). Almas et al. (2020)results revealed that transformational leadership increased employee satisfaction. The employees were motivated to work for the transformational leader, which led to an increase in the organization's retention rates. . When employees are motivated by the transformational leadership style, their job performance improves, and the commitment to the organization is evident; however, employees that had low job performance also had low job commitment (Sungu et al., 2019). Organizational leaders can retain their top employees even when the organization is facing change. Professionalism and meeting employee expectations are vital for leaders to retain key employees of the organizations (Steigenberger & Mirc, 2020). Employees want to feel like they are working for an organization and leaders are committed to developing others professionally while meeting expectations without compromising their integrity (Steigenberger & Mirc, 2020).

Attrition and Productivity

Organizations have to be creative in how they plan on retaining qualified employees (Srivastava & Tiwari, 2020). Organizations should offer specific items, such as bonuses, training opportunities, and organizational promotion, to motivate employees to be productive and assist in sustaining the organization (Cialdini et al., 2019). Productivity is a key component of organizational sustainability. Employees buying into the organization's creative plan will be of significance to the organization's overall success (Cialdini et al., 2019).

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture impacts an organization's success and employee satisfaction (Hashmi et al., 2020). However, organizations overlook the magnitude of the organizational culture on turnover, which has resulted in the loss of qualified employees (Mesfin et al., 2020). Listening and meeting the needs of employees and creating a culture that fosters the growth of the employees will promote an atmosphere to which the employee would want to remain loyal (Hashmi et al., 2020). Suppose an organization relates its vision and mission of the organization's culture to the beliefs and values of the employee. In that case, a positive work environment can be produced that contributes to the organization's overall success (Lin & Huang, 2021).

Leadership and Turnover

Leadership behavior can affect employee turnover. The unethical behavior of the leaders results in employees' psychological distress (Cialdini et al., 2019). Based on the leader-follower model, employers who were not honest in their work stressed-out employees, and this was one of the driving factors in employee turnover. Employees often feel underappreciated by their leaders and do not want to work for the organization (Almas et al., 2020). This leads to increased turnover and an increased cost to replace employees who left the organization.

Sources of Evidence

I have gathered multiple sources of evidence for this qualitative case study, including employee exit interviews, organizational charts, and employee training logs. The organization's website and brochures were used as sources of evidence along with

the organization's strategic plan. I also conducted semistructured interviews with the BHO leaders and requested staff satisfaction survey completion rates. Additionally, employee demographics and retention and turnover ratios were collected and analyzed along with policies and procedures, training manuals, the orientation process, and employee training calendars. The collection and analysis of this evidence provided an in-depth understanding of the BHO's issues with retaining qualified employees.

Leadership Strategy and Assessment

The study site BHO is governed by the CEO, who reports to the vice president of the parent organization monthly. The organizational chart indicates that the CEO is at the top of the chart and directly supervises the CFO and COO. The COO is in charge of the daily operations of acute hospitalizations and the psychiatric residential treatment facility. The CFO is in charge of all financial matters at the BHO. The medical director is adjacent to the CEO and is the only individual not under the supervision of the CEO. The medical director supervises the contracted psychiatrists and nurse practitioners. The next level on the organizational chart consists of the rest of the leadership team: the DON, HRD, utilization review, director of admissions, risk manager, director of clinical services, director of business development, and director of education. These individuals oversee adult and adolescent nurses; the recruiting, training, and retention of employees; insurance reviews; referrals and admissions; clinical services; marketing; and adolescent education, respectively.

The BHO receives federal and state funding for programs, such as the public school the adolescents attend within the facility. Most of the adolescent population in

residential care has state insurance. The adult population has private insurance and can only be admitted to the facility under those payee conditions. Due to being a recipient of state and federal funding, the BHO must adhere to specific care outlined by state and federal regulations. The BHO guarantees quality and compassionate care for the population served. The BHO is accredited by Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities and Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) who ensure that all individuals served at the BHO receive optimal care according to the standards outline by their organizations.

Clients/Population Served

The study site BHO serves individuals of all ages, with 4 years old being the minimum required age. The BHO programs are inpatient residential for adolescents; acute hospitalization for adolescents; outpatient therapy; military inpatient/outpatient services; substance abuse; group therapy; and inpatient for adults, including geriatric and general psychiatric care. Individuals can seek services through referrals, the organizational website, call-ins, walk-in assessments, voluntary and involuntary commitments, and transfers from the local hospitals. Information that is gathered from the individuals seeking services is assessed for need of care. If the individual meets the criteria for admission, services begin immediately.

Analytical Strategy

Role of the Researcher

A researcher's role is important to the qualitative research approach. The researcher is an instrument in the research process and must remain objective (Ravitch &

Carl, 2016). I used the Baldrige framework as the foundation to analyze the study site organization. Because I work for the chosen BHO, I have to remind myself of my ethical responsibility during the research and interview process.

Before commencing data collection, I received approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (06-11-21-0258498) to collect and analyze data from senior leader interviews, public data/literature, and internal site documents/data, as per the terms of the site agreement and preapproved consent form. The organization was informed that the requested information was for the sole purpose of the research study. I received consent from the participants before their interviews. Three leaders from the BHO were interviewed and asked semistructured, open-ended questions to explore their lived experiences. Organizational documents, such as exit interviews and turnover and retention data, were also requested from the BHO. As the researcher, I was responsible for all data collection and analysis.

Participants

In this case study, the study site BHO has experienced issues retaining qualified employees over the past few years. I conducted interviews with three organizational leaders who have been employed for at least 3 years. These individuals were chosen based on their roles within the organization. Years of employment were not a determining factor because retention is a particular problem for the BHO.

I began the data collection process for the study with the leader interviews. The interviewees were asked informally to participate in the study. I obtained their signed consent after they gave me a verbal agreement to participate. I communicated with the

interviewees regarding the study through my work and Walden University email accounts. Interviews were conducted and scheduled based on the availability of the participants.

I developed the following semistructured interview questions to obtain information that was related to the identified practice problem:

1. As a leader within the organization, how do you incorporate employee feedback into the decisions that are made?

2. What type of incentive programs are in place for stakeholders within the organization, and how were the incentive programs developed?

3. How would you describe the organization's leadership approach?

4. How do leadership styles play a role in retaining qualified employees?

5. What solutions or strategies are used to retain employees?

Interviews were conducted face-to-face and were audio recorded. I transcribed the recorded interviews using Microsoft Word for validity. Patterns and themes that emerged were coded into categories.

Sampling

I used purposive sampling for this research study because this type of sampling represents the targeted population based on characteristics (see Devers & Frankel, 2000). The three interviewees for this qualitative case study were selected based on their roles within the organization and their knowledge related to the identified practice problem. There was no identifiable sample size needed because saturation was not an issue for this research study as the problem has been identified and nothing else was being explored.

Ethical Research

Walden University (n.d.) has established ethical standards for research. As an employee of the study site BHO, I had to remind myself of my ethical responsibility as a doctoral student. The BHO approved all data that were collected. Participants consented to be a part of the research study and did so without being incentivized. I informed the participants that all identifiable information would be restricted for their privacy and confidentiality and that they could withdraw from the study at any point during the research process. All participant information will be stored and protected with a password.

Data Collection

I began collecting data once approval was granted by the Walden University Institutional Review Board and after the BHO signed the partner agreement. In addition to the interviews that were conducted, I requested the following documents from the BHO to analyze:

- Exit interviews

- Retention rates for the past 3 years

- Turnover rates for the past 3 years

- Employee demographics

- Strategic plans (present and past)

- Senior leadership minutes

- Organization website

- Staff satisfaction survey reports

I requested information from the past 3 years. This time frame was chosen because these are the records currently kept in the organization since the last accreditation. Exit interviews are kept on file for 5 years in case a former employee chooses to return. Retention, turnover, and demographic records are kept by human resources. Strategic plans are dictated and recorded in senior leadership minutes. There is no formal system for retaining senior leadership minutes, so I requested this information from the executive assistant of the BHO. Staff satisfaction surveys are anonymous, so the results of those surveys were requested for analysis of common answers given.

Reliability

Reliability is used in research to solidify the accuracy of the collected data (Leedy & Ormond, 2019). To ensure the reliability of this case study, I analyzed the collected data for accuracy. The reliability and trustworthiness of this study was maintained by the research study being void of any biases. The semistructured interview questions and chosen research method and design assisted in maintaining overall reliability because they all relate to the practice problem.

Validity

To establish the credibility of the collected data, I had the participants take part in member checking. The participants were provided a transcript of their interview to check it for validity. Allowing participants to member check the transcripts ensures that their lived experiences were conveyed without any biases. I also compared all collected data to the information provided in the participant interviews to maintain validity.

Summary

I conducted a literature review to understand the phenomenon of a BHO's inability to retain qualified employees. The literature reviewed suggested that there are explanations as to why retaining qualified employees is a relevant problem. Data collection was an important factor in understanding the identified practice problem. In addition to conducting interviews with senior leaders, I analyzed secondary sources, such as senior leadership minutes, strategic plans, employee exit interviews, surveys, and employee demographics. In Section 3, I will provide an analysis of the organization and knowledge management.

Section 3: Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management Components of the

Organization

Introduction

In this study, in an effort to address the study site BHO's problem I explored

alternative solutions to retaining qualified employees. The Baldrige Excellence

Framework was used to analyze the BHO, a private organization that serves adolescents

and adults with mental and behavioral health issues located in the southeastern United

States. The BHO employs more than 200 individuals, with the majority (over 90%)

having a clinical job description. I collected data from employee exit interviews,

interviews with BHO leaders, and the review of policies and procedures to explore

alternative solutions to retaining qualified employees. New hire employee orientation

agendas and training manuals were also instrumental in providing information related to

the practice problem. In this section, I discuss the BHO's workforce environment,

workforce operations, and knowledge management.

Analysis of the Organization

Workforce Environment

Data collected and analyzed for this study indicate that one way the BHO has

built an effective and supportive workforce is by having a town hall meeting once a

month with all disciplines. During this meeting, all employees discuss any issues,

concerns, and good news with other disciplines. If a concern or issue happens that

another discipline can help with, the departments work together. This collaboration

assists in showing support and promoting an effective workplace through teamwork and togetherness.

Another way the organization builds an effective and supportive workplace is through organizational events specifically for the employees. During these events, employees are often encouraged to engage with one another through communication and activities to get acquainted with someone outside their department. The CEO and COO are in attendance to show their support and are involved with the operation of the employee events. Both the CEO and COO encourage open dialogue and are attentive to the needs of the organization's employees. This makes the employees feel supported in their efforts to promote an effective workplace.

The human resources department is dedicated to recruiting, hiring, and retaining employees. The BHO recruits new employees through job websites, such as Indeed.com and the corporation's website. Employees are also encouraged to recruit new employees through referrals. Employees who refer recruits that maintain employment for at least 6 months receive a $100 referral bonus on their paycheck. The new employee is then eligible for a retention bonus of $300 if they remain employed for a minimum of 6 months. Through training and annual evaluations, the human resources department learns what is needed to retain employees long term. Training is provided both in-house and regionally to accommodate the growth that employees seek in their positions.

During new hire orientation that occurs biweekly, employees are offered several incentives and given an overview of the organization and all the programs included in the BHO health system. Benefit packages are offered to all newly hired employees, including

paid time off; 401k; and health, vision, dental, and life insurance. Employees are also offered free counseling through an employee assistance program service for up to 30 days. Benefits are offered when the employee is first hired and start immediately. Employees have an opportunity to use their paychecks to obtain items and services, such as car insurance and meal plans, as well as perks, such as electronics and home appliances.

All supervisors at the BHO are required to acknowledge their staffing needs and let human resources know what those staffing needs are. Once the supervising manager identifies the staffing need, the position is posted, and a salary is agreed upon with the CFO. Employees hired for specific departments are given their job descriptions and daily tasks by their supervisors. The job description is what supervisors will use annually to determine the monetized increase the employee will receive and if the employee is meeting the demands of the job.

Employee capability and capacity are assessed annually through employee evaluations. Employees are rated based on the job description, service excellence, and general categories. The annual evaluations give the employees an overview of their job performance and how the immediate supervisor views their capability. For these evaluations, the employee is scheduled to meet with their immediate supervisor, and they review the items contained in the annual evaluation together. The final score of the annual evaluation determines whether the employee meets the requirements of employment set forth by the BHO.

Workplace Engagement

Once a year, employees are encouraged to complete an anonymous survey that the corporate office disseminates. The employees do not enter any identifying information on the survey except their assigned department. The BHOs uses the survey to determine the needs and wants of employees and if the organization is meeting them. The results of the survey are discussed in the administration meeting once received. Each department head is given the results for their department. If needed, a strategic plan is developed to address any areas of improvement based on the analyzed data. The plan is then implemented and given a 30-day period to be reviewed. Upon review, if revisions need to be made, they are done during this time.

Other employees are also responsible for engaging employees at the BHO. A committee of direct care staff has been formed to discuss any issues, concerns, or feel-good stories from the perspective of other direct care staff. These individuals meet once a month with the COO, director of residential services, and the CEO to discuss their respected programs. A plan is put into place to address items discussed in the meeting, and another meeting is scheduled for 30 days out to discuss the progress of agenda items from the previous meeting.

Employees are trained regularly throughout the year on a voluntary basis; however, mandatory biannual training is required twice a year, in January and December. During this biannual training, employees are retrained on everything they initially went through in new hire orientation. New items are added to the biannual training based on events that happened within the organization during that specific 6-month period to

ensure that all clinical and nonclinical employees are trained on the same protocols established by the BHO. Employees are given the opportunity to take these training sessions for an entire month to capture everyone and have 100% compliance. If employees do not meet the biannual training requirements, they are removed from the schedule until they satisfy the requirements set forth by the BHO.

Knowledge Management

The risk management department collects organizational data to improve the overall performance of the study site BHO. The organization is accredited by the JCAHO and that accreditation takes place every 3 years with the accreditation window being opened during this study. The organization is also accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, which is essential for the treatment model of the BHO.

According to the organizational chart and job descriptions, the information technology (IT) department is in charge of all IT, organization information, and technology infrastructure. The IT department reports directly to the CFO. The BHO employed a director of the IT department for almost 2 decades, but since the post was vacated, it has not been filled. The IT department protects the organization's assets and information through secured firewalls and authentication log-ins. Emails are encrypted and sent on secured servers. Thumb drives or other external technology cannot be utilized to store information because the BHO prohibits taking patient information outside of the organization so that the information remains protected.

The BHO utilizes a network drive to store all department information with each department having their own folder on the drive. Some folders can be accessed by all, and other folders are department specific and require a password. All computers in the BHO have been updated and are safeguarded as well as password protected. The BHO does not allow access to all external websites, and many are blocked. Unblocked websites are visible only if the employee utilizes quota time, which is logged under that specific employee. This ensures that whoever is accessing the organization's technology is permitted to do so.

All organizational costs are controlled by the CFO, and they approve or deny all fund requests after they are placed on a purchasing order and have the approval of the designated department head. Third-party vendors are used to order goods and services for the organization. Once a third-party vendor is approved by the corporate office, a contract is established between the BHO, and the vendor and orders can be placed through payroll to the vendors via a purchase order form.

Organization minutes indicate that the both the CFO and CEO are responsible for developing and managing the operations budget. Budget reports are sent out every Monday to all department heads through email. Department heads are then tasked with identifying areas where they are losing money and areas where monies can be optimized. This includes looking at whether the individual department is running over in staffing based on what the department is earning or if the department is undermanned. A total budget is submitted to corporate once a year with projected costs and earnings for the organization.

Once a month, a reoccurring meeting is held with the CFO, CEO, billing, and accounting departments to discuss patient billing, collections, and nonpayment. In the meeting, insurance company claims that have been paid and those that failed to pay are discussed to determine what needs to be done for payment to occur.

Summary

In Section 3, I provided an in-depth analysis of the workforce environment, workforce engagement, and knowledge management. The BHO's workforce environment ensures that there are safety measures in place for the organization members and promotes satisfied employees. This is accomplished through having policies and procedures in place that encourage safety and a commitment from the organization on safety. Workforce engagement entails employee trainings, benefits, orientation, and employee incentives that increase engagement. The BHO also conducts monthly townhall meetings and employee engagement activities, such as gatherings, to promote an employee-centered environment. The risk management department is responsible for accreditation and improving overall organizational performance. The CEO and CFO are responsible for budgets, vendors, and all operational costs.

In Section 4, I will present the results of the case study. Client and work-focused results will be analyzed along with a discussion of leadership and governance, implications for social change, the study's strengths and limitations, and unanticipated outcomes and their potential impact on findings.

Section 4: Results—Analysis, Implications, and Preparation of Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore alternative solutions to retaining qualified employees. The study site BHO is located in the southeastern United States. This BHO was of interest because it had recently experienced low retention rates and the BHO's leadership team identified the retention of qualified employees as a significant barrier to the organization's overall success. The BHO has been a consistent leader in the community by providing inpatient and outpatient services and understood that to align itself with its core value of providing quality care, retaining qualified employees had to be a top priority.

During the research process, I conducted a review of current literature related to the retention of employees, leadership, and turnover. To collected data for the study, semistructured interviews were conducted with certain leaders of the organization. Exit interviews, staff satisfaction surveys, leadership meeting minutes, policies and procedures, retention/turnover rates, and other internal documentation were also analyzed. In this section, I provide an analysis of the results and discuss the implications for the BHO.

Analysis, Results, and Implications

The BHO provides several inpatient and outpatient services to adolescents, teens, and adults at its two locations in the southeastern United States. Therapy services are provided to adults in an outpatient and inpatient setting, while those services are provided to adolescents and teens in a residential setting only. Military outpatient and inpatient and

substance abuse treatment services are provided to adults through referrals. The BHO

continues to add to the services provided based on the need of current and potential

clients (see Table 1).

Table 1

Services Offered by the Behavioral Health Organization

Adult inpatient services	Adult outpatient services	Adolescent/teen inpatient services	Substance abuse treatment
Medication management	Outpatient client services	Life skills	Certified peer specialist training
Social services	Prevention skills	Group therapy	Group meetings
Case management	Medication management	DBT individual therapy	Outpatient
Group therapy	Individual and family therapy	Recreation therapy	Court collaborations
Individual therapy	Social services	Child and family team meetings	Individual therapy
Recreation therapy	Group therapy	Case management	
Life skill groups	Life skill groups	Medication management	
Inpatient residential services	Housing referrals	Residential services	

Client-Focused Results

The BHO recognizes and understands that patient care is a priority. The BHO

initiated the utilization of social media, such as Facebook, and luncheons with referral

sources to promote organizational client services to outside entities. The Facebook posts include theme days at the BHO that staff and clients participate in as well as activities clients participated in that were engaging. The BHO relies on the posts from former clients on Google and Yelp to bring awareness to the services provided and the success that they have brought to the clients' lives.

An analysis of leadership meeting minutes revealed that service excellence had been a focal point of the BHO for the last 6 months. Emphasis had been placed on returning patient satisfaction surveys and capturing phone calls of clients interested in the organization's services. Phone calls were targeted after clients revealed that they were attempting to call the BHO and request services, but the phone lines did not get answered. This issue was fixed through routing phone calls to a line that someone would always be ready to answer. This change improved client satisfaction as indicated on the patient satisfaction surveys returned.

The clinical department collects patient satisfaction surveys from adult and adolescent/teen clients. The results from the surveys are compared to the corporate benchmark as well as other facilities under the corporate umbrella. The patient satisfaction surveys are tabulated, and the data are disseminated monthly to the organization's leaders. The satisfaction surveys for the adults and adolescents focus on the categories of patient safety, food satisfaction, therapy satisfaction, physician satisfaction, and overall treatment satisfaction. A comparison of 2020 patient satisfaction surveys to corporate average is presented in Table 2.

Table 1

2020 Patient Satisfaction Surveys Compared to Benchmark

Satisfaction Focus Goals	Surveys Returned (*N* = 250)	Corporate Benchmark
Patient safety	4.10	4.25
Food satisfaction	3.95	4.31
Therapy satisfaction	4.45	4.40
Physician satisfaction	4.70	4.50
Overall treatment satisfaction	4.20	4.35

The answers that could be given on the survey were *strongly agree*, *agree*, *neutral*, *disagree*, or *strongly disagree*. The data in Table 2 are a result of calculations for adult and adolescent patients' satisfaction surveys over the year of 2020, during which the BHO served 387 clients. There was a 65% return rate for clients the BHO served in 2020. The patient satisfaction survey data analysis revealed that in three out of five categories, the BHO did not score better than the benchmark set by corporate, which indicates that there are improvements to be made regarding patient satisfaction.

Workforce-Focused Results

Annually, the BHO preloads staff satisfaction surveys on corporate computers so staff can answer questions that range from what your job position is to do you feel that your direct supervisor supports you in your position. The surveys were made available to employees through the employee entering their identification number into a computer. I analyzed staff survey results from 2019 and 2020 for this study. In 2019, 101 employees took the staff satisfaction survey, and in 2020, 76 employees took the survey. A total of 20 questions were asked on a Likert scale that included the answers of *strongly agree*, *agree*, *neutral*, *disagree*, or *strongly disagree*. The survey results were compiled by the

human resources department and distributed to members of the leadership team. According to the minutes, the results were discussed during the morning leadership meeting, but further exploration did not reveal if the discussion went beyond that meeting. The results that detailed the percentages associated with each answer were not made available due to confidentiality concerns and the employees' identification numbers being included on the surveys.

Employees who choose to vacate their job positions at the BHO are offered the opportunity to participate in exit interviews. The employee is given a designated time to meet with the HRD and then interviewed regarding their decision to leave the BHO. I requested documentation of exit interviews from 2017–2020; however, only data from 2020 was made available because the documentation for interviews from 2017–2019 were stored at an external location. The HRD did provide the number of individuals who resigned during those years for comparison. There were 22 resignations in 2020. The total number of individuals who resigned between 2017–2020 was 30, which did not include those terminated from their positions because those individuals were no longer allowed on the premises. The total number of employees who resigned during 2017–2020 was 52 with the most resignations occurring in 2020 due to the impending COVID-19 pandemic (see Table 3). The utilization of exit interviews is a measurable way to analyze why retaining qualified employees presents a challenge to the BHO.

Table 2

Employee Resignations from 2017-2020

Year	Resignations
2017	10
2018	13
2019	7
2020	22
Total	52

The 22 employee exit interviews I analyzed revealed many reasons why employees chose to leave their positions. The reasons given most were low pay, lack of training, and lack of career advancement (see Table 4). A few employees declined to give a reason for leaving the BHO. The answers provided gave great insight into why qualified employees are not retained at the BHO. The exit interview answers were straightforward as to why the employees were leaving, which made them easier to analyze. Although more exit interviews data would have provided a deeper understanding, the interviews from 2020 were sufficient for the purposes of this study.

Table 3

Exit Interview Reasons for Vacating Positions

Resignation reason	Number
Low pay	8
Training	7
Career advancement	3
COVID-19	2
No excuse given	2

Retaining qualified employees can prove to be a daunting task for any organization. Using incentives and employee engagement can assist organizations with retaining employees to maximize sustainability within the organization (CITE). The BHO provides incentives to employees to increase employee satisfaction, including perks on everyday consumer services, employee luncheons, employee appreciation parties, gift card giveaways, and an employee appreciation week. These incentives for employees occur at regular intervals and are attended by a substantial number of employees, according to the HRD. Other benefits that employees receive are paid time off; an extended leave bank; and vision, dental, and health insurance.

The BHO also recognizes two employees (i.e., one nonclinical and one clinical) each month for the employee of the month. The employee of the month is nominated by their peers, and the employees that receive the most nominations are voted as the winner. According to the HRD, employees enjoy that their peers recognized them for the award because they feel valued by the people they work with daily. At the end of the year, an

employee of the year award is given to the employee who received the most votes. The nominees are individuals who have won the employee of the month award throughout the year.

Organizational performance data are the responsibility of the director of risk management. The data are collected monthly and discussed with the leaders of the organization during a monthly performance improvement meeting. According to the minutes collected, during these meetings performance measurements are discussed in accordance with the JCAHO, the accreditation source for the BHO. The focal point for 2020 was client and employee safety. The director of risk management wanted to reduce employee and patient injuries, so each department was tasked with providing training and getting attestations signed in compliance with corporate and facility policies and procedures to mitigate employee and patient injuries. Overall, employees felt safe within the organization, and safety was not a reason staff elected to vacate their positions, as evidenced in exit interview responses.

Leadership and Governance

I analyzed the BHO's strategic plan and morning leadership meetings for this study. The analyzed strategic plan was created at the beginning of 2020 and focused on three specific goals: customer service, patient safety, and restraint reduction. Client satisfaction surveys from 2019 were analyzed by leadership and utilized in creating the strategic plan for 2020. The goals established in 2020 were:

1. Provide service excellence to every customer.

2. Develop a phone answering system that ensures no incoming phone calls are missed.

3. Enhance current patient safety measures.

4. Improve facilities.

5. Educate all employees on ways to reduce hands-on interventions.

Each leader was assigned a goal for the year. After implementation, the leader had to track the specific goal and provide monthly reports on the tracked results at the leadership meeting.

I also analyzed a total of 20 sets of leadership meeting minutes from 2020. The leadership team meets daily; however, minutes are not always kept from those meetings due to their informal nature. Analyzing the minutes revealed three leaders reported at most of the meetings: the CEO, COO, and risk manager. The reports from these individuals consisted of the daily operations, facility census, and general information that needed to be discussed amongst the leadership team. On occasion, the HRD discussed new hires and terminations during the leadership meetings for the week.

Interviews

I conducted three semistructured interviews with the key BHO leaders. The participants for the study were chosen based on their job title and role within the organization. Length of employment at the BHO did not play a vital role in who was chosen. I asked the same interview questions in the same order of each participant. Two additional questions were asked of each participant to gain a deeper understanding of an answer they had given. I transcribed the interview responses in a Microsoft Word

document. Member checking was used to establish validity. I used coding to identify the four emerging themes from the interviews: uncertainty, feedback, retention, and leadership.

Theme 1: Uncertainty

Uncertainty was the first theme to emerge from the semistructured interviews. All participants emphasized the uncertainty of how to retain qualified employees. Codes related to uncertainty revealed the subcategories of recruiting, turnover, and retention/retaining. Two participants discussed how turnover has been an issue that the BHO is focusing on. Participant 1 stated that "turnover is one thing that we as an organization are focusing more on in an attempt to increase retention rates." Participant 2 added,

> We focus so hard on recruiting, recruiting, recruiting, that a lot of people are shifting their focus from recruiting to retaining. How do you retain people that do wake up and come to work, what brings them to work, what are the reasons they call out, and don't want to come to work?

The uncertainty of what approach to use to retain qualified staff has led to promoting benefits more. For example, Participant 1 stated "and again COVID has changed everything. I still continue to focus on the good. Our benefits are wonderful, and they are affordable. We have the ability for stock. We have a good 401k system, so I focus on that." This was further validated by Participants 2 and 3 who also highlighted the benefits associated with working at the BHO.

Theme 2: Feedback

I asked each participant how they incorporated feedback into the decisions that are made. The codes that emerged related to the theme of feedback were suggestions and incorporation. Participant 1 stated,

I think the best thing is when colleagues come and say, "Hey, why is it this way or why do they do this?" Obviously, get their feedback and then when they share that information as a collective group, be able to implement some of their suggestions.

Participant 2 added,

To be totally transparent, they have some really good suggestions and a lot of what we get comes from the suggestion box. Townhall meetings is another place where they make a lot of suggestions. What do we do with that? When we are in meetings…those things are brought up. For example, we always like to go back to something solid…but again it was a tiny suggestion that was made, and it was incorporated back to a meeting where you do have the different department leaders and see how it is going to impact everyone.

Participant 3 replied that their usage of suggestions and feedback from employees have been revealed as an important factor to retaining qualified employees because the employees feel they are being heard.

Theme 3: Retention

The code that emerged the most when asked about what strategies were being used to retain qualified employees was process and struggle. Participant 1 shared,

Again, if you asked me 2 years ago, I had a whole different thought process. Recruiting…I've been struggling with the recruiting part of this process because…it changes the way that we recruit. I liked the attendance thing we did because people like instant gratification and it was a way to give them something immediately. I like the signing bonus. I hope we can continue with that. Retaining…it is harder to retain when you have to draw the line and I totally get it. How do we get them here every day, on time? It's just a different thought process. I have not been able to overcome these obstacles.

Participant 2 replied, "for recruitment we do sign on bonuses, but for retention we need help, we struggle with this. My focus has shifted to retaining right now, we can't just throw something out there." Participant 3 stated, "my answers don't differ much from the other answers that you have been given. Retention has definitely been a struggle. People just don't want to work and right now they don't have to."

Theme 4: Leadership

The codes related to leadership revealed that participants understood the importance that leaders had on retaining qualified employees. Participant 1 stated,

I think that leadership is vitally important. I don't think people like to be micromanaged any more than they have to be from that corporate perspective. I think that…they do a really, really, good job of not micromanaging unless they have to. So, I think that if you give a task to someone and they can't complete then that is a different conversation. People will stay because of leadership like that.

Participant 2 added,

> The leadership style is driven off of what the expectation of your superior is.
> Whether that is someone meeting your expectation or meeting your own, there is
> that component of getting in that mindset. We are now making decisions that
> would have been different a couple of years ago. Meet people where they
> are…have to be able to trust they will get the job done. We cannot micromanage
> people...if you have a good leadership foundation, that builds trust.

Participant 3 reiterated, "it takes a strong leader to lead. The employees that we have, we
will build them up through trainings and other things that leaders should provide to their
employees. The leadership style is vital to the overall organization and the employees that
are employed there."

Organization's Financial and Marketplace Performance Results

The organization's financial and marketplace performance results were not
reviewed extensively because of its relevance to the practice problem. However, when
reviewing the leadership meeting minutes, the chief financial officer monthly discussed
the gains and losses for the month and where the organization stood in relation to the
yearly budget. The BHO consistently met the monthly budget and was in a surplus in
many of the months due to the admissions in all programs. The CFO also reported that
the budget is created based on the number of admissions for that month in the prior year.
The leadership minutes indicated that weekly the CFO sends out an email that updates the
leadership team on their department's budget. The email indicates whether the
department is at, below, or exceeded budget according to the minutes. The email also

reveals staffing levels for the department based on budget and whether cuts or additions need to be added.

Individuals, Organizations, Communities, and/or Systems

Analyzing the results from collected data suggest that the BHO is committed to providing quality service to the community and the individuals served. Individuals who seek the BHO's services area in great need. Services provided by the BHO deliver seamless benefits to those served so that the individuals can resume a normal way of life. The BHO is devoted to its services that will assist those individuals who suffer from mental health illness, behavioral health issues, addiction, and other life circumstances.

Results from data also suggest that more development and training should be given to the employees to support the BHO. The development and training should focus on how to effectively work with individuals with severe mental health issues and the development that invests in the growth of the employee. The BHO should focus more on promoting the wellness of employees and ensuring that the employee is mentally fit to work with a demanding population. The findings further suggest that the BHO is committed to showing its appreciation for its employees. This has been demonstrated through increased employee appreciation weeks and incentives given to the employees.

Potential Implications to Positive Social Change

The BHO has made a commitment to positive social change by investing more resources into the training and development to retain qualified employees. Having inexperienced employees not only affects the quality of service delivered, but it also impedes the overall productivity and sustainability of the BHO. By providing training

and focusing more on employee appreciation, the BHO shows that it is committed to the employee and that their employees are intricate. The positive social change incurred by the BHO can be utilized universally for other types of organizations. Retaining qualified employees is an important factor to the success of organizations (Yildiz et al., 2020). Organizations are established to be competitive in their market, become successful, and be able to sustain different circumstances with employees that matter to the organization (Reece et al., 2021).

The result of this study is significant because it will address a gap in understanding by focusing on retaining qualified employees in behavioral health organizations. The results of this study could assist organizations in providing alternative solutions to retaining qualified employees to improve organizational productivity. Because behavioral health organizations and other organizations need qualified employees in key positions, providing alternative solutions to retain employees will be essential to the organization's success.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

Strengths

A qualitative case study explores a phenomenon based on the lived experiences of participants (Leedy & Ormod, 2019). This was the appropriate approach to use for this study because the BHO was experiencing issues with retaining qualified employees. Using a qualitative case study, employee retention was able to be studied in the present which led to understanding the retention of qualified employees concerning the practice

problem. A case study was appropriate because of the need of an in-depth exploration of a particular phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019).

Another strength of the study was the willingness and flexibility of the participants in the study. The participants were willing to engage in formal and informal questioning as it pertained to the practice problem of this study. The timeframe for the meeting were met so that the information could be analyzed in a timely manner for this study. The participants were willing to provide necessary resources and further explanation to questions which made analyzing data an easy process.

Limitations

My bias was a potential limitation to the study. This potential bias was the primary instrument to the study and organizational knowledge. Although my bias can be a risk, all efforts were made to reduce or eliminate any bias that may have arisen during the study. Member checking was implemented to eliminate any bias that could have happened during the study.

Limited access to certain data needed was a limitation to the study. Some documents could not be viewed due to the policy and procedures of the organization. Many documents had been moved to an external storage company and would have taken months to return to the facility which would have caused a delay with the study. Documents that were requested for certain topics were either denied or limited to time frames. Leadership meeting minutes were vague or were only done once a week due to the informal style of the meetings. Employee satisfaction data were denied due to

identifiers even though the information would have proven to be an important factor in the study's outcome.

Unanticipated Outcomes and Potential Impact on Findings

Although retaining qualified employees has presented itself as an issue for the BHO, the results of this study would present an opportunity to improve on employee retention. Through interviews and personal communication, the BHO has made changes that current employees have seen as positive. Employees are voicing their satisfaction with changes through the suggestion box and their interactions with members of the leadership team. An unanticipated outcome was the gaps in the leadership meeting minutes. This information had the potential to reveal topics discussed that could have provided further in-depth understanding of the practice problem.

Summary

In Section 4, I provided an in-depth analysis of the organization's client, and workforce-focused results, leadership and governance results, and the organization's financial and marketplace performance results. I also described the implications resulting from findings in terms of individuals, organizations, communities, and/or systems and implications to positive and social change. Strengths, limitations, and unanticipated limitations provided insight into the practice problem. In Section 5, recommendations will be suggested based on the findings of the study.

Section 5: Recommendations and Conclusions

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore alternative solutions to retaining qualified employees. I collected data using semistructured interviews, existing literature related to the practice problem, and review of organizational information and documents. The results of data analysis addressed the practice problem. After categorizing and analyzing common themes from the collected data, I developed the following recommendations.

Recommendation 1: Incentives

The BHO's current incentive program is an important factor in retaining qualified employees. Incentives assist in boosting the morale of employees (Jeffrey, 2020). Incentive programs, such as an attendance raffle, employee appreciation days, employee of the month, paid time off, free meals, and parties, could improve employee engagement further. Employees who feel appreciated are willing to work harder and are satisfied with their place of employment (McKeon et al., 2020). Department leaders should facilitate incentives for their respective employees, so the appreciation feels intimate. Employees that feel their immediate supervisor appreciates the work that they produce could lead to an overall increase in organizational productivity and sustainability.

Recommendation 2: Employee Feedback

Employee feedback is vital to retention. Every year the BHO disseminates employee satisfaction surveys to collect information on the needs and wants of current employees. Analyzing the results of the surveys could assist the BHO in improving

employee engagement and performance. Employee performance and satisfaction are essential to organizational outcomes, making feedback pertinent (Derickson et al., 2019). The feedback has the potential to foster needed communication and the ability to be proactive in addressing employee issues and concerns. By addressing issues at their onset, employees will feel that what they say matters to those who make the decisions within the organization.

Recommendation 3: Hiring Qualified Employees

The BHO has experienced significant employee turnover due to the lack of qualified employees. Employees that have worked at the BHO for years reported feeling fatigued, burnt out, stressed, and defeated because of working with unqualified employees. The BHO should not hire individuals who are not experienced in working with mental health patients. Employing individuals with a lack of experience can lead to more significant issues in the future (Gregory & Clark, 2019). During the initial hiring process, employees from different departments should be present for the interview. The candidate's skill level should be commensurate with the expectations of the BHO. Candidates should be able to explain and demonstrate their skill set to future employers so a correct determination can be made for employment (Gregory & Clark, 2019).

Recommendation 4: Ongoing Employee Training

Another recommendation is to provide ongoing employee training. The BHO currently trains all employees during the initial orientation. After the initial orientation, employees attend biannual training in June and December. Throughout the year, different departments lead more voluntary trainings for employees. Ongoing training provides

employees the needed education to satisfactorily do the job (Nauman et. al, 2021).

Employees want training to further their growth and development within the BHO.

Investing in employees through training demonstrates that the organization is dedicated

to its employees' overall growth and career development (Reissova & Papay, 2021).

Recommendation for Future Studies

Based on the results of the current study, I developed recommendations for future

studies to be considered. There were barriers to acquiring needed data in the current study

because of confidentiality. This limited the access I had to the documents. In the future,

researchers could identify data that would yield the same results and that are accessible

and not restricted. Future researchers could also expand this study to include frontline

employees within the BHO. Different recommendations may arise from involving direct

care employees, leading to further exploration of the practice problem. Employee

inclusion or exclusion in organization decision making affects the retention and turnover

rates of the BHO, and the exclusion of employees could be detrimental to the overall

success of the organization.

Another recommendation is to explore how leadership styles affect the retention

of qualified employees in BHOs. Understanding the effect that leadership styles have on

retention could assist the BHO in developing best hiring practices. Matching leadership

style to the preferences of future candidates and current employees could foster an

environment where potential employees are excited to work for the BHO and current

employees want to stay long term.

Dissemination Plan

My plan for disseminating the results of this study consists of holding a conference call with the leaders of the BHO and my committee chair. During the conference call, I will present an executive summary and a PowerPoint presentation of the doctoral study findings. The presentation will be both informative and engaging. At the conclusion of the presentation, I will provide time for a question-and-answer period.

Summary

In this qualitative case study, I focused on a private BHO located in the southeastern United States that was having issues with retaining of qualified employees. The retention of qualified employees is vital to the overall success of the BHO. To retain qualified employees, BHO needs to offer employees communication, support, appropriate leadership, training, and retention incentives. Qualified employees should be able to trust that their organization will provide these intangibles so the employees can perform their essential job functions. Finding ways to engage employees and actively meet their needs and wants leads to the retention of employees that are instrumental to organizational success (Alvi et al., 2020).

The purpose of this case study was to provide alternatives to retaining qualified employees. The participants in the study provided responses that were important to identifying alternative solutions to retention, including incentives, utilizing employee feedback, leadership, and ongoing training. If these alternative solutions are used, employee engagement and overall morale might improve. I will deliver these

recommendations to the leaders of the BHO to assist in increasing the retention rate of

qualified employees.

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