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## Human Resource Managers' Strategies to Reduce Coercive Management Practices

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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Lakerria S. Brown

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

Abstract

Human Resource Managers' Strategies to Reduce Coercive Management Practices

by

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MS, Savannah State University, 2018

BS, Savannah State University, 2016

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

October 2022

## Abstract

Coercive management is a detrimental phenomenon in the health care industry that negatively impacts the organization and employees. Human resource managers in the health care industry who fail to identify and implement strategies to reduce coercive management practices experience poor employee engagement, increased voluntary turnover, and counterproductive work behavior by employees. Grounded in the leader-member exchange theory, the purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies human resource managers in the health care industry use to reduce coercive management practices. The participants were four human resource managers from the health care industry in Georgia who successfully developed and implemented strategies to mitigate coercive management practices. Data were collected from semistructured interviews, company handbooks, and training manuals and analyzed using methodological triangulation. The themes that emerged were communication and engagement, improving management support, and training. A key recommendation is for managers to communicate and engage with employees, provide managerial support, and receive managerial training as strategies to reduce coercive management practices. The implications for positive social change include the potential to boost employee commitment, reduce voluntary turnover, decrease unemployment rates, and stabilize communities.

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## Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral study to my Lord and Savior for blessing me with good health, strength, determination, and patience to progress through my doctoral journey. To my parents, Kelvin and Tammy Brown, thank you both for your love, support, encouragement, and prayers throughout the years. Thank you for raising me and grooming me into the woman I am today. To my family and friends, thank you all for the love and support throughout this journey. I dedicate this study to my late great grandmother, Lucille Duggan, who is always in my heart. I finally did it grandma. I love you.

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I acknowledge the participants in the study for taking time out of their busy schedules to share their experiences and helping me contribute to the research literature on strategies for reducing coercive management practices.

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## Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Implementing strategies to improve employee engagement, decrease voluntary turnover, and prevent counterproductive work behaviors are elements to reducing coercive management practices. Coercive managers increase distrust by isolating people, prevent the development of productive relationships, and prevent creativity development (Ozer et al., 2017). Coercive management practices negatively contribute to organizational performance on an organizational level and an individual level. Coercive management results in employees engaging in workplace deviance (Eissa et al., 2019). This section consists of reasons for conducting the study as well as strategies to reduce coercive management practices. I present the background of the problem, problem statement, nature of study, research and interview questions, conceptual framework, significance of study, and a review of academic literature.

### **Background of the Problem**

Coercive management is a phenomenon that remains largely unexplored (Luethke et al., 2020). This type of management is detrimental to an organization and employees. Coercive management influences hostility, depression, job dissatisfaction, and anxiety (P.B., 2019). Coercive management takes place when managers attempt to abuse their power through various actions. These behaviors may consist of humiliating employees, constantly threatening termination, withholding information, retaliating against employees, and discouraging growth opportunities.

Some managers hold the belief that coercive management is associated with the responsibilities of being a manager. In certain work environments where a manager may

be considered mediocre, managers may feel threatened by employees who are knowledgeable and experienced in the organization. Managers who are threatened by skilled employees choose to incorporate coercive management practices by engaging in hostile behaviors to weaken those skilled employees (Yu et al., 2018). Companies lose approximately \$23 billion annually in health care costs and productivity reductions related to coercive management (Fouk et al., 2018). According to Rice et al. (2020), coercive management can transform employees into poor organizational citizens and future quitters. Employee commitment is significant to the success of an organization. Positively influencing and motivating employees are necessary for managers to ensure organizational success.

Employees may spend time dealing with coercive management rather than focusing on assigned tasks, which has a negative impact on job performance (Velez, 2020). Coercive management is a workplace stressor that results in emotional exhaustion (Lim et al., 2020). Ronen and Donia (2020) noted that coercive leaders reduce employees' autonomous motivation and increase controlled motivation. The findings of the study provide human resource managers in the health care industry with an in-depth understanding of strategies to reduce coercive management practices.

### **Problem Statement**

When employees feel mistreated, they lower their organizational commitment to distance themselves from the organizational treatment (Booth et al., 2019, p. 138). Fifty-six percent of employees currently work for a toxic leader whose behavior has created an unhealthy work environment (Paltu & Brouwers, 2020). The general business problem is

that coercive management practices can reduce employee engagement, increase voluntary turnover, and enable counterproductive work behavior. The specific business problem is that some human resource managers in the health care industry lack strategies to reduce coercive management practices.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies some human resource managers in the health care industry use to reduce coercive management practices. The target population was comprised of four human resource managers within the health care industry located in the Georgia region of the United States. The managers were selected because each successfully implemented strategies to reduce coercive management practices. Implications for positive social change include a potential to boost employee commitment and reduce voluntary turnover that will reduce unemployment rates and stabilize communities. Human resource managers in the health care industry may contribute to social change through employees' work-life balance and emotional well-being.

### **Nature of the Study**

Qualitative methodology was chosen for the study. Qualitative researchers seek in-depth understanding of a social phenomenon within a natural setting (Klenke, 2016). The qualitative method has been used to describe the "what," "how," and "why" of phenomena (Hamilton & Finley, 2019). Qualitative methodology is appropriate for the study because I explored human resource managers' experiences in a business setting. Researchers use the quantitative methodology to identify and examine specific variable

characteristics or relationships within the context of the study (Park & Park, 2016). A quantitative methodology was not appropriate for the research effort because examining potential relationships among variables or use statistical analysis to test human behavior was not the goal of the study. Mixed methods research applies both qualitative and quantitative perspective (Reily & Jones, 2017). A mixed method was not appropriate for the study because the goal was not to examine variables' characteristics or relationships.

A multiple case study was selected and appropriate for the study because the focus was to conduct interviews on human resource management within four health care facilities. The human resource managers of the four health care facilities chosen for the study offered an in-depth understanding of similarities and differences in the strategies implemented among some human resource managers in the health care industry. Multiple case studies are time intensive and provides an in-depth description of the phenomena under investigation (Civitillo et al., 2019). Case study is a qualitative approach in which the researcher explores real-life bounded systems through in-depth data collection from multiple sources (Alpi & Evan, 2019).

Ethnographic, phenomenological, and narrative studies are qualitative research designs which were also considered for the study. An ethnographic researcher attempts to interpret the values, beliefs, and language of a specific group or individuals (Kassan et al., 2020). An ethnographic design was not appropriate for the study because ethnographic researchers study a culture of people to gain understanding of their experiences and an observation of the group's culture did not occur. Phenomenological researchers attempt to look beyond perceptions to discover and identify how an event was

felt and identify the shared essence of the participants' personal encounters with an experience (Papakitsou, 2020). A phenomenological design was not appropriate for the study because the purpose was not to evaluate feelings about participants' shared encounters. A narrative research design was not appropriate for the study because narrative researchers collect stories from people and make meaning of those stories between the researcher and participant (Khwaja & Mahoney, 2019).

### **Research Question**

What strategies do human resource managers within the health care industry use to reduce coercive management practices?

### **Interview Questions**

1. How do you define coercive management in your organization?
2. To what extent was coercive management an issue in the organization in the past?
3. What strategies have you implemented to deter coercive management practices?
4. What were the key challenges encountered while implementing these strategies? How were these overcome?
5. How do you measure the success of the strategies implemented to deter coercive management practices?
6. How do you determine when it is necessary to act on coercive management complaints?
7. What were the costs to the organization of coercive management practices?

8. What additional information, if any, can you share regarding your organization's experience with coercive management practice?

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework was the leader-member exchange theory. The leader-member exchange theory emerged from research conducted by Dansereau et al. (1975). The theory perceives leadership as consisting of dyadic relationships that link the leader with a follower. Dansereau et al. identified the quality of relationships is based on the key constructs of trust, loyalty, support, respect, and obligation. According to the leader-member exchange theory, different kinds of relationships are formed between leaders and subordinates. A positive leader-member exchange is positively associated with job satisfaction, job performance, commitment to organizational change, trust between leaders and followers, work climate, willingness to help co-worker, and satisfaction with leadership (Soeprapto, 2020). The leader-member exchange theory aligned well with the purpose of the study because the theory reveals to human resource managers that there are various qualities of manager-employee relationships that can affect an employee's work behavior and influence coercive management practices.

### **Operational Definitions**

The following terms operationally represented in the study are:

*Affective commitment*: An employee's emotional attachment with an organization (Pulungan et al., 2020)

*Coercive management*: A display of hostile verbal and nonverbal management behavior (Vogel & Bolino, 2017)



*Continuance commitment*: The views of employees to remain with or leave an organization (Sariwulan et al., 2019)

*Leader-member exchange*: The nature and processes of social interactions between a supervisor and a subordinate (Huang et al., 2021)

*Normative commitment*: The extent to which employees feel obligated to remain in an organization (Pulungan et al., 2020)

### **Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations**

#### **Assumptions**

Assumptions are non-testable factors that are assumed to be true (Zhuge et al., 2016). This study included three assumptions. One assumption was human resource managers would be honest and open about their experiences with implementing strategies to reduce coercive management practices. Selecting a multiple case study would be an opportunity to gather reliable information associated with strategies used to reduce coercive management practices was also an assumption of this study. Another assumption was the research question would be fully answered through interviewing and researching the health care industry.

#### **Limitations**

Limitations concern potential weaknesses out of the researcher's control (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). This study included three limitations. One limitation of this study was that data collection was retrieved only from human resource managers in the health care industry. The small sample size was another limitation because the information collected may not be transferable to another area. The perspective of the

participants may not be the same as participants in a larger population. Collecting data only from human resource managers and not include employees was a limitation.

Interviewing both human resource managers and employees would have allowed me the opportunity to analyze both experiences with coercive management practices.

### **Delimitations**

Delimitations are the definitions that researchers set as boundaries or limits of their study so that the study's goal is not impossible to achieve (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). The first delimitation of the study was that only health care managers residing in Georgia could participate in the study. The second delimitation was that the study focused only on human resource managers within the health care industry rather than human resource managers from various industries.

### **Significance of the Study**

The study findings may be of value to human resource managers in the health care industry who seek to promote employee engagement, reduce voluntary turnover, and increase productivity. Employee and management commitment are important to achieve organizational goals and success. This study may enable human resource managers to evaluate the working environment and develop strategies that will reduce coercive management practices.

### **Contribution to Business Practice**

The study findings may have relevance to human resource managers in health care to create an effective and productive work environment. If a manager shows improper behavior, subordinates will perceive the work environment unfair, leading to

psychological problems from employees such as job stress, frustration, and helplessness (Yang et al., 2019). Managers with little or no coercive practices may encourage employees to change their perspective of the workplace by creating an environment that promotes employee engagement and performance for increased productivity, resulting in achieving organizations' goals.

### **Implications for Social Change**

The implications for social change included that some human resource managers in the health care industry could increase revenue by reducing coercive management practices, which in turn could stabilize the community through an increase in employment opportunities leading to a decrease in unemployment rates. By lowering unemployment rates, employees may be capable of providing a stable financial living environment for their families. Losing a job can affect family or household role identities, such as financial supporter, and shift them to other roles deemed to be of lower status or less important (Maitoza, 2019).

### **A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature**

The objective of this literature review was to explore sources regarding leader-member exchange theory (LMX). This section consists of articles and peer-reviewed journals related to the research question: What strategies do human resource managers in the health care industry use to reduce coercive management practices? The target population comprised of four managers from four health care facilities with no more than 60 employees in Georgia. Implications for positive social change include a potential to boost employee commitment and reduce voluntary turnover which in turn will reduce

unemployment rates and stabilize communities. An exploration of professional and academic literature can assist to identify strategies some managers in the health care industry can implement to reduce coercive management practices to boost employee engagement and retain employees. Coercive management is a subordinate's subjective assessment of supervisor behavior with focus on how subordinates affected their personal traits, work environment, and colleagues (Yang et al., 2019). The objective of this professional and academic literature was to compare and synthesize sources related to the research question.

The literature review is organized into three sections. The first section is a discussion of the leader-member exchange theory, which is the conceptual framework for the study. Within the first section, I expounded on the three constructs of the leader-member exchange theory which are job satisfaction, commitment, and job performance. Next, a discussion of supporting and opposing theories, including the implicit leadership theory dimension of tyranny and social exchange theory. Then, a discussion occurred on the behaviors of coercive management, the impact coercive management may have on the organization, and interventions human resource managers can develop to avoid coercive management practices in the health care industry.

The review of professional and academic literature includes an explanation of the search strategy used to find relevant research on how coercive management affects employee engagement and commitment. The following primary terms were used for the study: *Employee commitment, organizational commitment, employee engagement, coercive management, coercive leadership, coercive power, employee disengagement,*

*employee motivation, job satisfaction, employee turnover and retention, management strategies, schadenfreude, narcissism, job stress, influences of employee engagement, affective commitment, leader-member exchange theory, implicit theories of leadership, destructive voice, toxic leadership behaviors, counterproductive behavior, leader-member relationship.*

The business phenomenon for the study is that some human resource managers fail to avoid coercive management practices which in turn may negatively impact employee engagement and commitment to the organization. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies that some managers in the health care industry used to successfully implement strategies to avoid coercive management practices. This literature review is an exploration of the leader-member exchange theory and an evaluation of different theories researchers used to explore strategies to reduce coercive management practices.

### **Leader-Member Exchange Theory**

The leader-member exchange theory was introduced in 1975 by Fred Dansereau, George Graen, and William Haga. The relationships between managers and employees can either contribute to or deter the potential growth of an organization. Coercive management reflects subordinates' sustained perceptions of hostile supervisory behaviors (Mackey et al., 2020). The conceptual framework that supported the study was the leader-member exchange theory. Managers tend to form different types of relationships amongst employees. Some managers establish a close relationship with employees who are perceived as valuable and trustworthy while employees who are perceived to be less

valuable receive a different type of treatment. The different treatment toward the group of employees who are considered invaluable has the potential to influence coercive management practices. Leaders develop various relationships with employees, ranging from low-quality relationships to high-quality socio-emotional relationships (Yu et al., 2018).

The aspects of LMX are affection, loyalty, contribution, and professionalism (Prasetyo et al., 2021). Affection is measured on the level to which an employee connects with a manager in a personal relationship. The aspect of loyalty may be shown in the way managers defend and stand up for employees when necessary. Contribution is measured based on how dedicated an employee is to a manager by completing tasks and giving more effort toward achieving organizational goals. Professionalism is measured through the level of respect and employee shows a manager. Respect is achieved in the degree to which employees are impressed with the knowledge, competence, and skills of a manager. Gutermann et al. (2017) examined how leaders' work engagement can spread to followers by highlighting the role of leader-member exchange as an underlying process. Gutermann et al. found that engaged managers aim for positive social relationships with their followers. In addition, the researchers identified leaders' work engagement as a key factor to positive leader-follower relationships and the promotion of employee engagement and performance.

Litano and Morganson (2020) used the leader-member exchange theory to examine how employees, who report to managers, experience work-family conflict and found that LMX relationships may enhance work-family balance so that managers may

inhibit access to policies and broader organizational culture. As recommended in Litano and Morganson's study, managers should communicate with one another to seek a better balance. Aligning with studies by Gutermann et al. (2017) and Litano and Morganson (2020), Teng et al. (2020) tested a moderated mediation model that examined the relationships among ethical work climate, organizational identification, leader-member exchange, and organizational citizenship behavior. The findings presented that high quality LMX enhances employee satisfaction and fosters favorable outcomes such as job satisfaction, commitment, and job performance.

### ***LMX and Job Satisfaction***

The health care industry can be an overwhelming and emotional workplace for most employees. The health care profession is the most stressful career associated with turnover, absenteeism, and burnout (Leskovic et al., 2020). Health care workers have several stress factors that coincide with their job responsibilities such as providing care for patients and working long hours. In addition to the existing stress, some health care workers must learn how to cope with coercive management practices. Selamu et al. (2017) explored the conceptualization of well-being, stress, and burnout among primary health care employees. Fifty-two primary health care workers participated in an in-depth interview and focus group discussions. The participants in Selamu et al.'s study defined well-being as absence of stress rather than a positive state of mind. The interviews revealed that the main stressors were inadequate supplies, workload and economic self-sufficiency, and burnout. The researchers found that job related stress can affect health care workers resulting in mental health problems and burnout.

Job related stress may have the potential to create job dissatisfaction among health care workers if there is a lack of management support. Many dissatisfied employees intentionally give less effort and engage in counterproductive work behaviors because of stress and coercive management. Employees become satisfied in the workplace when they feel growth and balance (Ershad Sarabi et al., 2020). Ohara et al. (2021) expounded Selamu et al.'s (2017) study by assessing job satisfaction and job attractiveness among dental hygienists by conducting a survey of the employment status of dental hygienist. The results of Ohara et al.'s study showed that satisfaction and attractiveness may lead to motivation and positive attitudes toward work which may lead to an improvement in employee retention. Also, Ohara et al. revealed that salary demands, and employment stability were more important factors for employees than the workload. Employees with high-quality LMX reach a higher level of information exchange and are trusted by their managers more, compared to employees with low-quality LMX (Pan et al., 2021). LMX may help employees have access to more resource necessary to structure their jobs. Pan et al. evaluated the effects of LMX on job and life satisfaction among nurses and examined the effect of job crafting between LMX and job and life satisfaction. The researchers used questionnaires to measure the variables of LMX, job crafting, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction. Pan et al. suggested that medical institutions should pay close attention to employees or give them the authority to adjust their workflow based on their needs. Also, Pan et al. suggested that managers create an environment to strengthen employees' quality of life and raise job satisfaction.



Some human resource managers may measure job satisfaction based solely on employee salary. Even though salary is crucial to employees, it does not measure nor the define the satisfaction level of an employee. Kim and Cho (2020) analyzed the characteristics of job stress and satisfaction, the effect of job stress on job satisfaction, and the effect of managerial roles. Kim and Cho found that in situations in which employees are overwhelmed with stress, managers taking a role in supporting those employees have a positive effect on job satisfaction. The researchers noted that irregular employees' perspective of managerial intervention is negative, creating job dissatisfaction. Managers play an important role in job satisfaction and should take necessary measures to ensure the needs of employees are met. Like the study of Kim and Cho, Asif et al. (2019) examined the relationships between transformational leadership, structural empowerment, job satisfaction, nurse-assessed adverse patient outcomes, and the quality of care. The findings show that when managers take interest in health care workers development and empower them, employees feel confident and are willing to engage in work.

### ***LMX and Employee Commitment***

Employees who are committed to an organization usually experience higher levels of job satisfaction and motivation. Employee commitment is the loyalty of a worker to an organization which leads to intention and willingness to accomplish organizational goals (Olawajun, 2021). An employee who is highly committed to an organization can be considered a valuable employee because they are more determined to achieve organizational goals. Employees' observation of organizational performance affects their

commitment and high levels of commitment are beneficial which leads to positive behavioral outcomes (Uddin & Shaiq, 2020; Abdullah et al., 2020). Managers should hire employees who are likely to be connected to an organization's objectives (Ahmad et al., 2020). These employees should be provided with an environment that will strengthen their commitment and enhance efficiency. Health care managers need to promote quality work life of employees in the categories of salary and benefits, amenities, health and safety, and flexibility (Agus & Selvaraj, 2020).

Commitment consists of three distinct types: affective, normative, and continuance commitment. Employees who are affectively committed to an organization identify with organizational goals, perceived as the right fit for the organization, and are satisfied with their job. When employees have a high level of affective commitment, they believe that managers have invested in them which promotes employees' effort to take charge (Wang et al., 2020). Brown et al. (2019) conducted a study to analyze the impact of a leader's communication style on the quality of interaction between leader-member exchanges and how it translates into the employee's affective commitment. The researchers implied that when the leader's communication style demonstrates expressiveness, precision, and questioning, building high quality leader-member relationships becomes easier. Employees who identify with the values of their managers engage in organizational citizenship behavior to benefit the organization (Khaola & Rambe 2020).

Normatively committed employees feel they are morally obligated to remain in an organization and may feel guilty if they decide to leave the organization. Employees with

strong normative commitment may believe leaving an organization when an organization does not act ethically is better (Pulungan et al., 2020). Continuance and normative commitment are similar in the aspect of an employee feeling the need to stay at their organization. Continued committed employees have an underlying reason for why they feel obligated to remain in an organization such as high salary and benefits that cannot be obtained in another organization. Continued committed employees are more likely to become dissatisfied in an organization because they may be unhappy with the leaders or the work environment, but the fear of losing benefits keeps them at the organization. Galanaki (2019) found two aspects of continuance commitment: concern about alternatives and concern about the cost of not being committed.

### ***LMX and Employee Job Performance***

Employee performance is based on how well an employee fulfills their responsibilities and the quality of their work. The stress health care workers deal with may result in job dissatisfaction. Research showed that 7.4% of health care workers had absenteeism weekly because of stress (Etemadinezhad et al., 2018). Managers influence employee performance through supervisor-induced hindrance stressors that enhance the degree to which employees engage in job neglect (McLarty et al., 2021). Employees expect to receive some form of support from management as they attempt to fulfill their job responsibility. McIlroy et al. (2021) found that employees actively requesting support from management without a response from management may lead to employees feeling a disconnect with management. However, management may feel threaten by employees that display a high level of job performance. Managers who create high quality leader-

member exchange with employees influence hindrance stressor-neglect relationship by reducing the impact of the stressors on subsequent employee performance (McLarty et al., 2021).

Job performance can be influenced by an organization's loyalty to employees. De Clercq et al. (2020) conducted a study to assess the relationship between violations of organizational promise and job performance. The researchers found that organizational betrayal may reduce job performance because of the high anxiety employees experience. Dust et al. (2021) revealed that job demands influence the trajectory of performance through motivational control. The researchers noted that performance may decrease in response to a decline in motivation. In addition, Dust et al. further investigated individual characteristics that impact entrainment suggesting that mindful employees are less likely to experience a downward trajectory in motivation and performance.

### **Supporting and Opposing Theories**

Employees are the human assets that contribute to the success or failure of an organization. Human resource managers should, in turn, implement strategies to meet the needs of employees which will potentially enhance job satisfaction and employee commitment. The supporting and opposing theories considered for the study are the implicit leadership theory dimension of tyranny and social exchange theory. Social exchange theory maximizes benefits through social behavior of an exchange process. Implicit leadership theories are created based on the perception of employees.

Recent studies of coercive management practices governed the findings of various strategies that effect managerial behavior. To obtain a better understanding of strategies

used to reduce coercive management practices, I reviewed the implicit leadership theory of tyranny and social exchange theory as supporting and opposing the leader-member exchange theory. After reviewing studies associated with the implicit leadership theory of tyranny and the social exchange theory, the notions established a solid foundation for understanding how researchers explored various strategies to reduce coercive management practices.

### ***Implicit Leadership Theory of Tyranny***

In most organizations, employees may create their own ideas about what it means to be a manager and what behaviors managers should display. Implicit leadership theories are ideas that individual employees have about what leaders are like. Implicit leadership theories can affect how employees view their current manager in an organization, which means that some employees may not view management the same. Employees feel able and willing to lead when they see themselves as the images of effective leaders because they are confident in their ability to lead (Schyns et al., 2020). Coercive management is aligned with the implicit leadership theory of tyranny, which is an image defined as domineering, pushy, dominant, manipulative, power-hungry, conceited, loud, selfish, obnoxious, and demanding (Walker et al., 2020).

Based on implicit leadership theory of tyranny, individuals who have behavioral characteristics of a coercive manager may perceive a coercive manager as the ideal leadership for an organization. Schyns et al. (2020) viewed tyranny as feelings of abuse of power which makes the negative dimension of implicit leadership theories relevant when perceiving coercive management. The researchers argued that the relationship

between suspicion and the perception of coercive management will increase when negative implicit leadership theories are high. Also, Schyns et al. found that employees high in the implicit leadership theories of tyranny will perceive their managers as more coercive.

Implicit leadership theories serve a meaningful role in followers' cognitive and perceptual processes of leadership (Da'as & Zibenberg, 2019). Khorakian and Sharifirad (2019) examined the assertion that higher congruence between followers' implicit leadership theory and the characteristics of managers enhance job performance through higher quality of leader-member exchange and self-efficacy. The researchers found that attachment insecurity was a predictor of leader-member exchange and the congruence between followers' implicit leadership theories and their managers.

### ***Social Exchange Theory***

Relationships are indicators of an employee's success in the workplace. Employees who feel disconnected from co-workers or supervisors may leave and search for relationships in other workplaces. Social exchange theory may help structure the work environment by promoting positive relationships to assist in helping employees feel connected with co-workers and managers. Social exchange theory explains employee behavior with a focus on reciprocity and their reaction to experience of aggressiveness when aiming to restore balance regardless of hierarchal differences (Camps et al., 2020).

Relationships between organizations and employees should be developed through trust, loyalty, and mutual commitment (Meira & Hancer, 2021). Hsu et al. (2019) and Kim and Qu (2020) agreed that developing feelings of obligation because of trust and

reciprocity can increase positive outcomes and reduce intentional turnovers. Employees assess relationships by evaluating the benefits they can potentially receive from the relationships. The social exchange theory is driven by an employee's willingness to secure their well-being without the help of others. To explain human interactions, there are several assumptions underlying social exchange theory. The first assumption is rationality. Employees act rationally by evaluating the costs and benefits of social exchanges which, in turn, assist in decision-making. Second, employees seek to receive the most valued benefits as possible. Lastly, that employees will learn the strategies of the exchange process to earn rewards. If individuals receive support in an organization they will have greater work commitment, which influence behavior that is essential to the success of an organization (Tan et al., 2021).

Employers are expected to provide opportunities to employees in exchange for hard work. Coercive management will occur if employees hold back their efforts at work (Lim et al., 2020). Employees who perceive a negative social exchange relationship with managers respond with deviant behaviors toward their managers (Mackey et al., 2019). Wang et al. (2018) suggested that high social exchange relationships between employees and managers are likely to motivate employees to perform unethical pro-organizational behavior because of their moral disengagement and licensing effect.

### **Behaviors Associated With Coercive Management Practices**

Coercive management behavior harm employees' psychological well-being, performance, creativity, and in-home relationship qualities (Foulk et al., 2018). Even though coercive management can be harmful to an organization, many managers continue

to encourage this type of management practices to maintain order. Qin et al. (2018) proposed that abusing employees may improve managers' recovery level by preventing resource loss for self-control and gain new resources through an enhanced sense of control. Managers with low empathic concern usually focus on personal benefits and are insensitive to employees. However, managers with high empathic concern may not engage in coercive practices frequently because of their concern for employees.

Coercive management behaviors are highly prevalent in the health care industry. Labrague et al. (2020) conducted a study to identify the predictors of coercive behaviors in nurse managers. The participants compiled of 240 nurse managers from ten hospitals in the Central Philippines. Data was collected using a questionnaire in which participants rated the managers based on four dimensions: intemperate, narcissistic, self-promoting, and humiliating behaviors. Labrague et al. identified three predictors of coercive management behaviors. The first predictor of coercive behavior was the years of experience as a nurse manager. Nurse managers with less experience often experience challenges while trying to adapt to their role and may not be prepared with the proper materials to perform. Also, the results of the study revealed that some nurses lack training. These various stressors may cause nurse managers with less experience to display coercive behaviors. The second predictor of coercive behavior was employment status. Coercive behavior arises in vulnerable managers, where there is an increased threat to their job status, power, or control (Coldwell, 2019).

Based on the results Labrague et al.'s (2020) study, nurse managers who work part-time or contractual reported high levels of coercive behaviors. Part-time and



contractual jobs come with a level of uncertainty regarding job security which may lead to nurses becoming vulnerable. Vulnerability can result in coercive behaviors. Also, nurses who work in areas with a high number of patients may display coercive behaviors as well. Having a demanding job, increased workloads, and an inflexible schedule contributes to high stress levels. Labrague et al. recommended that nurse managers with less experience receive mentoring and coaching from experienced nurse manager. Also, it was recommended that training sessions for stress management and coping skills should be implemented by health care facilities to help nurse managers handle their emotions to avoid coercive behaviors. The last recommendation is for nurse managers to create an ethical work culture by encouraging collective decision-making, open communication, and develop clear guidelines that outline expected behavior.

### ***Workplace Bullying***

Coercive management can be viewed as a form of workplace bullying. Rai and Agarwal (2018) defined workplace bullying as a situation in which an employee feel subjected to negative behaviors by supervisors. Rai and Agarwal examined the effects of workplace bullying on employee silence and test psychological contract violation as a mediating role. The researchers collected data in two stages from full-time managerial employees who worked in 11 Indian organizations. The first stage of data collection included a questionnaire, consisting of demographic information and workplace bullying, was distributed to 930 employees. For the second stage, data on the dependent variables (silence behaviors and psychological contract violation) and the moderator variable (workplace friendships) was collected from 870 participants. Rai and Agarwal revealed

that employees become silent as a response to workplace bullying. The results of the study implied that management support may encourage employees to stand against bullying by voicing their concerns. Managers should engage in preventive communication measures against bullying (Lee et al., 2021). Also, Rai and Agarwal (2018) recommended that a well-formulated and effective policy implemented against bullying will encourage more HR involvement. Managers should be aware that workplace bullying can be harmful to an organization that may result in financial loss, lack of productivity, high turnover rates, and reduced employee loyalty.

Bullying can be harmful to an organization because these behaviors negatively impact the well-being of employees as well as job performance. The aggressive attitudes of managers have a strong impact on the behavior of employees compared to aggression from other sources in the workplace (Khan et al., 2020). Khan et al. investigated the effect of coercive management on the relationship between psychopathy and work engagement, psychopathy, and negative socioemotional behavior. Data was collected through questionnaires in face-face meetings with participants using random sampling method. Supervisors were asked to evaluate subordinates' traits on three scales: 1= not present, 2 = somewhat present, and 3 = present. Subordinates who received 75 percent or higher were considered psychopaths. Employees who obtained a high or medium score on psychopathy were contacted to provide feedback on coercive management. The results of the study revealed that coercive management simulates negative social and emotional behaviors of employees with psychopathic tendencies. Khan et al. noted that the role of human resource management is critical in answering questions of whether coercive

management stimulates psychopathic behavior or reduces productivity because HR is responsible for the selection of valuable human capital in the organization.

Hurst et al. (2019) examined a coercive management model that moderates the relationship between primary psychopathy and positive work-related outcomes, highlighting that the relationships are effective under environments of coercive management and negative in environments with a low level of coercive management. Hurst et al. expounded on Khan et al.'s (2020) research by arguing that primary psychopathic employees possess characteristics that enable them to experience high levels of well-being and low levels of anger under coercive management. The data of the study was collected from two samples. In the first sample, Hurst et al. conducted a scenario study with 433 participants which included measures of personality, coercive management, and demographics. The data for sample two was collected from the same group, but the data was collected based on personality, coercive management, and demographics without the use of scenario studies. Hurst et al. suggested that coercive managers may empower employees with characteristics that can potentially damage the organization. Human resource managers need to be concerned not only about who coercive managers are demoralizing, but also about who coercive managers are empowering (Hurst et al., 2019).

Employees who experience verbal violence or power imbalance may find it difficult to set aside bullying, so they are likely to experience psychological strain (Liang, 2020). Liang examined the effects of workplaces bullying on conformity in the workplace and work-family conflict. Workplace bullying is considered a psychological

hazard with detrimental consequences for the individual and the organization (Sarwar et al., 2019). The researcher used data collected from two self-reported surveys from 650 full-time employees who worked in a large corporation in Taiwan and their spouses. The surveys used a five-point Likert response scale which measured workplace bullying, psychological strain, and facades of conformity for employees. The measures for employees' partners were work-family conflict and control variables. Liang identified potential factors that are necessary for employees to conform in an organization.

Human resource managers should encourage employees to build social relationships to avoid workplace bullying. Steele et al. (2020) analyzed workplace bullying and traditional job stressors of role overload and low job control to determine the association of each with mental health and well-being. Data was collected from 21 Australian Defense Force units that totaled a sample size of 3,193 using an organizational climate questionnaire administered. Steele et al. found that bullying and psychological distress were significantly correlated and, therefore, workplace bullying should receive the same amount of attention given to traditional workplace stressors. Based on the findings of Steel et al.'s study, human resource managers may understand that, in addition to recruiting the right employee to achieve goals, ensuring employees remain productive and engaged in their job is imperative.

### ***Narcissism***

Narcissistic behaviors may occur any time in the workplace which may lead to conflicting issues between employees and managers. Narcissistic managers usually lack empathy for others and are motivated by their own needs. This type of management

behavior can carry attractive leadership qualities, but the positive qualities can decline as a narcissistic manager spends more time around followers (Watkins & Walker, 2021). Narcissists have high expectations for themselves and a high need for achievement (Brender-Ilan & Sheaffer, 2019). Researchers have found that narcissist managers seek relationships with individuals who will admire them and praise their greatness (Lyons et al., 2019). Lyons et al. examined whether leader-member exchange influences the relationship between leaders' dark triad traits and follower perceptions of coercive management. The researchers proposed that high LMX weakens the positive relationship between leaders' dark triad traits and perceptions of coercive management. The study findings demonstrated that the effects of leader narcissisms and psychopathy on subordinates' perceptions of coercive management are moderated by LMX. Lyons et al. noted that although managers seek to reduce the antagonistic and self-centered managers in their workforces, coercive managers exist, and their behaviors often lead to negative consequences for their subordinates.

Finney et al. (2021) explored the extent to which managers who rate higher on narcissism use behaviors, such as self-promotion and unpredictability, that mediate the relationship between narcissism and perceived abuse. Data collection was retrieved from a survey of 949 students from a U.S. university. The participants rated their most destructive manager based on the measures of self-promotion, unpredictability, narcissism, and coerciveness. Finney et al. noted that the work behaviors narcissistic managers use to achieve their personal goals may seem unpredictable to employees who interpret these behaviors in reference to organizational goals. The unpredictability may be

interpreted as an intentional approach to meet self-serving goals and keep employees off balance, so they disengage in activities that threaten the manager's ego (Itzkovich et al., 2020). The findings Finney et al. (2021) showed the degree of perceived managerial narcissism predicted perceptions of coercive management, but the manager's self-promotion and unpredictability fully influenced the relationship between narcissism and coercive management.

Fehn and Schutz (2020) proposed that working for leaders high in narcissistic rivalry will negatively impact how employees feel and behave. Fehn and Schutz investigated the effects of leaders' narcissistic rivalry by asking the following: How do followers perceive leaders high in narcissistic rivalry, how is the perceived relationship with their leaders affected, how do they feel about themselves, and what is the impact on their self-reported behavior in the workplace?

Fehn and Schutz (2020) found that the negative effects of leaders' narcissistic rivalry on followers are driven by the expression of narcissistic behaviors. Leader development should focus on changing coercive behavior. Fehn and Schutz proposed that leaders high in narcissistic rivalry may be motivated to make changes if they are shown that by hurting employees, they will undermine their own reputation in the organization. Also, the researchers recommended that selection and promotion practices should include measures to weaken the effects of narcissistic leaders' self-promotional strategies and prevent narcissistic individuals from growing into leadership roles.

Fehn and Schutz (2020) identified that leaders' narcissistic rivalry's negative effects on employees can be traced back to employees' perceptions of their leader's

behavior. The researchers recommended that human resource managers work with leaders on their coercive behaviors and attitude toward others in the organization, alerting them of the negative impact their behavior may have on employees. Also, Fehn and Schutz recommended that human resource managers design performance ratings as an incentive for narcissistic leaders to change their coercive behavior. Furthermore, the researchers noted that monitoring potentially coercive leaders and establishing disciplinary policies, take employee feedback seriously, and ensure employee rights can help organizations avoid narcissistic leaders.

### **Effects of Coercive Management Practices**

Coercive management practices can be detrimental to employees and their well-being. Each employee responds differently to coercive management practices. Some employees may learn various strategies to help cope with coercive managers, but some employees may find it difficult to cope. In most instances, employees may feel that retaliation is the only choice they must get even with coercive managers. The employees who struggle to cope with coercive management practices may experience the feeling of dehumanization, respond through schadenfreude, or use destructive voice. Baloyi (2020) posed that coercive management consists of managers who consistently abuse authority, degrade employees, ridicule employees, force employees to perform strenuous tasks, and promote divisiveness between employees. Baloyi argued for the need of ethical management which may establish a trusting relationship between a manager and employees. Coercive management can affect job satisfaction and reduce work quality.

Zhang et al. (2020) explored how to balance coercive and non-coercive powers to enhance green supplier integration and the role of relationship commitment and relationship closeness. Zhang et al. noted that executives should carefully balance coercive and non-coercive powers to encourage firms to maintain good relationships to develop common environmental values and bring awareness that high levels of trust and dependence can affect the impact of power. A manager may create a nice work environment, but to be fair, coercive behavior may be a necessary reaction to a particular employee's behavior (Kovach, 2021). Kovach studied working professionals to determine whether their motivation was impacted by power displayed by the manager. Qin et al. (2018) posed that although coercive management may generate benefits for managers, it is detrimental for both managers and employees in the long-term.

Sometimes, coercive management may result in employees remaining silent which can be perceived as a problem in most organizations. Stouten et al. (2019) argued that management literature has a limited and biased view of silence because silence can have value for employees and the organization. Stouten et al. also argued that silence offers an opportunity for employees to examine coercive management behaviors. To demonstrate when silence can be functional, Stouten et al. used a cognitive stage model of seeing, judging, and acting. The see-judge-act model presented that employees' silence depend on whether employees view their leaders as coercive, judge the leaders' behavior as counter normative and intentional, and decide to act. The model serves to identify conditions that need to occur before employees express themselves. Stouten et al.



explained that the value in silence lies in the need for employees to make a valid judgement about whether the manager's coercive behavior violates acceptable behavior.

### ***Employee Dehumanization***

Dehumanization is the perception of employees based on how they are treated by the organization as property rather than a human being (Caesens et al., 2019). Caesens et al. examined whether coercive management lead employees to feel dehumanized by their organization and the consequences associated with it. The researchers indicated that coercive management leads to organizational dehumanization perceptions. Also, the results of the study indicated that organizational dehumanization mediates the relationships between coercive management and employees' job satisfaction, affective commitment, and turnover.

Caesens et al. (2019) suggested that if employees perceive abusive treatments from supervisors, it may lead to employees to direct it toward the organization which can emerge dehumanization. Stinglhamber et al. (2019) examined the negative relationship between leader-member exchange, organizational dehumanization, and the consequences of LMX-dehumanization relationship on employees' emotional exhaustion, affective commitment, and voice behaviors. Stinglhamber et al. presented that when employees strongly identify their manager with the organization, a high-quality leader-member exchange extends to the entire organization which may lead to lower dehumanization perceptions.

### *Schadenfreude*

Li et al. (2019) defined schadenfreude as pleasure at the misfortunes of others. Qiao et al. (2019) explored how coercive management affects third parties by utilizing the emotion-based process model of schadenfreude. The researchers suggested that third parties will take pleasure in peer coercive management and experience schadenfreude, increasing work engagement as a response to peer coercive management. The results of Qiao et al.'s study indicated that coercive management affects third party observers by increasing their work engagement after witnessing co-workers being abused. However, the researchers suggested that managers should not use coercive management practices as a strategy to increase work engagement. Instead, Qiao et al. recommended managers to be vigilant with the benefit of schadenfreude and build an ethical workplace.

Li et al. (2019) examined an incongruent emotion known as observer schadenfreude. The researchers proposed an emotion-based process model that illustrates the appraisal process underlying the emergence and development of observer schadenfreude. Li et al. addressed the implications of schadenfreude for observer behavior and the effects of observers' moral foundations. The researchers noted that as interpersonal treatment increase, managers and employees should realize that if schadenfreude becomes common in the workplace, mistreatment will become a norm. Li et al. offered several recommendations for human resource managers to reduce schadenfreude and prevent mistreatment.

First, managers should reduce structural, interpersonal, and intergroup tensions that cause schadenfreude by promoting cooperation through shared team-based

incentives. The next recommendation Li et al. (2019) provided was that managers should implement practices that reduce envy and be aware that undeserved advantages may lead to envy and resentment while deserved advantages may result in benign responses. Li et al. advised managers to investigate incidents of mistreatment with the focus being on whether injustice occurred by providing observers with information about transgressions and emphasize inappropriateness to jump to conclusions for justifying mistreatment.

### ***Destructive Voice***

Mackey et al. (2020) examined the indirect relationship between coercive management and supervisor-directed destructive voice. The researchers argued that management-directed destructive voice is a means for employees to express themselves and stand up against their manager. Mackey et al.'s study was based on the LMX theory to present the argument that the exchange relationship between managers and employees affects how each employee react to coercive management. The researchers found that higher LMX differentiation strengthen the relationship between coercive management and employees' relational ego depletion. Based on the findings, Mackey et al. recommended that human resource managers be aware that instances of destructive voice may be an indication of poor LMX relationships that are interfering with employees' self-control during manager-employee interactions.

Zhao et al. (2021) examined whether illegitimate tasks may lead to destructive voice and time theft which are two forms of counterproductive work behavior. The researchers investigated the role of morale disengagement and psychological entitlement. Zhao et al. posed that an employee may retaliate against the organization by stealing time

at work and devaluing the organization in front of others. The implications of the study suggested that employees who receive illegitimate tasks react by venting their dissatisfaction through destructive voice and time theft because employees can be sensitive as to whether they receive a fair share of work and benefits.

Tabarsa et al. (2019) investigated the influence of employees' social use of social networking on employees' destructive voice and the role of job satisfaction and affective commitment to the organization. The results of the study show that the use of social networking sites in the workplace increases destructive voice. Social networking sites can serve as an outlet for employees to express their ideas or concerns. Tabarsa et al. clarified that the use of social networking sites does not lead to deterioration but can transform potential objections into actual one. Social networking sites can serve as a boost for employees to express their issues with the organization. Additionally, Tabarsa et al. found that job satisfaction has a positive effect on destructive voice. Employees seek emotional, social, and financial resources in the workplace. Tabarsa et al. provided two perspectives toward destructive voice. The first perspective is that employees with higher levels of resources are less stressed and are satisfied with their job, but they make more complaints. The second perspective is that employees with lower resource levels are more stressed in the workplace and likely to make complaints as well because they are seeking resources. The final point that Tabarsa et al. noted was the negative effect affective commitment has on destructive voice because affective commitment reduces the use of destructive voice. Employees only use destructive voice when they feel disconnected or dissatisfied with the workplace.

## **Coercive Management Interventions**

Human resource managers should identify various intervention methods to help reduce coercive management practices. Initiatives to merge both mental health and primary care of employees can provide an opportunity to promote the well-being of health care workers and address workplace stressors (Selamu, 2017). By reducing coercive management practices, human resource managers may see positive changes in the way some employees interact or behave in the workplace. Managers are role models for employees to share their opinions and deal with the pressure of authority (Shaikh et al., 2021). It is imperative for managers and employees to work together to accomplish organizational goals. In this section, there will be a discussion on some of the identified intervention methods human resource managers utilize to reduce coercive management practices.

Wallace et al. (2020) posed that having the ability to create a work culture of acceptance, dignity, and respect are not inherent in leaders, but applied behavioral scientists in leadership and development have a role in developing leaders. Wallace et al. offered several suggestions for implementing development programs to reduce coercive management. The first suggestion was that managers should rely on formal instruction and ensure that their programs include other elements outside of acceptance, dignity, and respect to reinforce development relationships and experiences. The second suggestion Wallace et al. provided was that managers should implement in-person programs that leverage diverse teaching, coaching, and mentoring programs.

Wallace et al. (2020) also recommended that managers provide the opportunity for employees to be challenged. The challenging experiences may help develop skills for creating a culture of acceptance, dignity, and respect while also including the opportunity to practice effective communication, participate in teams, and engage with those who are perceived as coercive managers. The last recommendation Wallace et al. provided was for human resource managers to assess the learning outcome. The assessments should incorporate affective, cognitive, and behavioral learning outcomes that support skill building and leadership identity. Wallace et al. noted that these practices will become accepted norms and shared values of the organization, transforming the culture of the organization to one that will not tolerate coercive management.

### **Management Training**

Even though there may not be a solution to ending coercive management practices, there are various strategies that human resource managers can incorporate to lower coercive management practices. Mostafa (2019) conducted a study that examined the role of coercive management, and the impact coercive management has on moral courage. The results of the study showed that coercive management is negatively associated with moral courage. Also, the researcher found that when moral efficacy is high, the negative association between coercive management and moral courage is reduced. Mostafa's research pose that human resource managers should avoid hiring managers who are known to mistreat employees and display coercive practices. The researcher recommended using integrity testing that include questions related to the treatment of employees when hiring managers. Furthermore, human resource managers

should offer training to manage hostile behavior and consider follower moral efficacy when matching managers with followers. Being that coercive managers are not easily identified, Mostafa suggested that methods such as employee feedback and 360-degree appraisals may assist in identifying coercive managers.

Eissa et al. (2019) conducted a quantitative study tested a moderated-mediation model that outlined the process of coercive management based on the stressor-emotion model of counterproductive work behavior. Also, the researchers argued that employee organizational citizenship behavior plays an important role in predicting coercive management. Eissa et al. argued that employees' interpersonal deviance prompt negative emotions from managers which leads to managers engaging in coercive management behaviors. Eissa et al. provided several recommendations for human resource managers to reduce coercive management behaviors. First, the researchers suggested that human resource managers find effective strategies to reduce norm-violating behaviors of employees by including organizational norms into employee orientation programs. Interactive training may enable employees to understand the consequences of deviant behaviors. The second recommendation provided was that human resource should train and coach managers on the ethical way of dealing with a deviant employee. To ethically manage the issue of deviant employees, managers should gather relevant facts, apply code of conduct, and clearly communicate mechanisms to report grievances.

Pratiwi et al. (2021) proposed the implementation of a coercive intellectual leadership development model driven by organizational learning. The coercive intellectual leadership development model may increase the need for achievement and

maximize performance. Pratiwi et al. posed that implementation of coercive intellectual leadership developmental model is indicated by the leader's ability to map individual learning, inspire others, display honest behavior, and ability to be a firm thinker. Also, the researchers highlighted that coercive intellectual leadership is influenced by the learning process, which is discuss and analyze, seek knowledge and skills, review new information and data, and develop new protocols and testing methods.

Baloyi (2020) noted that individuals who aspire to be in managerial roles require training on ethics and morals. Potential managers gaining skills that enable them to manage ethically and effectively is important. Baloyi added that training is a necessity to understand the purpose of ethical management even though coercive managers may not willingly participate in training that is designed to change their style to align with the interest of others.

### **Consider Perceptions of Coercive Management**

Employee perceptions of coercive management require the use of self-control capacities to regulate employees' responses to their managers (Mackey et al., 2018). Schyns (2021) examined the relationship between trait suspicion and the perception of coercive management by conducting two studies, a survey study, and an experimental vignette study. The purpose of the two studies were to examine the effects of suspicion on the perception of coercive management. Schyns' (2021) first study was conducted from a sample of 103 participants who were employed full-time and worked under a supervisor during the time of the study. The instruments assessed for the study were suspicion, implicit leadership theories, and coercive management.



Schyns' (2021) second study was conducted from a sample of 243 participants. Also, the same instruments used in the first study were used for the second study. The findings of the second study indicated that suspicion is significantly correlated to the perception of coercive management. Schyns (2021) argued that implicit theories can increase the effect of suspicion on the perception of coercive management. The researcher suggested that human resource managers should consider including follower characteristics such as suspicion that are known to influence the perception of management behavior. Schyns also added that when employees perceive managers as coercive, conducting a follow-up and taking necessary measures to prevent coercive management practices is crucial.

Employee-centered human resource management perspective advocates that employees can act as active or proactive members and shape their own mind through perceptions and observation of human resource practices (Luu, 2019). Employees' perceptions and attitudes toward their manager can create positive or negative feelings toward their managers which can affect the organization's work environment (Palmer & Dillard, 2019). Luu (2019) provided several recommendations for human resource managers to transition to an employee-centered human resource perspective. First, it was recommended that organizations build a discretionary HRM system within their HRM strategy and human resource managers should partner with other managers to communicate the HRM strategy into practice. The second recommendation was that organizations should ensure that the HRM system and managers remain consistent toward employees. Lastly, Luu suggested that human resource managers design and

launch leadership training programs for managers at all levels to create a caring and nurturing management style rather than a coercive one.

### **Transition**

Section 1 of the study consisted of an explanation of the background of the problem, problem statement, purpose statement, nature of study, research and interview questions, and conceptual framework. The assumptions, limitations, and delimitations associated with the study were identified as well. Furthermore, the significance of study, contribution to business practice, and social implications of change were identified. Next, an extensive review of academic literature review was conducted in which an in-depth analysis of literature.

Section 2 consists of the purpose statement, my role as the researcher, and the eligibility requirements for participants. Also, there will be a discussion on the research method and research design, population and sampling, strategy for maintaining ethical standards, data collection instruments and techniques, data organization technique, reliability and validity, and analysis of data. In Section 3, I will discuss the results and findings of the research, conclusion, and recommendations for future research.

## Section 2: The Project

This qualitative multiple case study explored strategies human resource managers in the health care industry use to successfully implement strategies to reduce coercive management practices. The focus of Section 1 was to gain an in-depth understanding of the leader-member exchange theory and the potential influence of management strategies to reduce coercive management practices. In Section 2, I reiterate the purpose statement and describe the research methodology and design. The section consists of an explanation of my role as a researcher, participants of the study, and relevance of the chosen research method and design. Also, I discuss population and sampling and ethical research. I conclude Section 2 with a discussion of reliability and validity. The data collected may be suitable for reducing coercive management practices in the health care industry by understanding human resource management strategies.

### **Purpose Statement**

This qualitative multiple case study explored strategies human resource managers in the health care industry use to reduce coercive management practices. The target population was comprised of four managers from four health care facilities located in the Georgia region of the United States. These managers were selected because they have successfully implemented strategies to reduce coercive management practices. Implications for positive social change include a potential to boost employee commitment and reduce voluntary turnover, which in turn will reduce unemployment rates and stabilize communities. Human resource managers in the health care industry

may contribute to social change through employees' work-life balance and emotional well-being.

### **Role of the Researcher**

My role as the researcher entailed conducting interviews that enabled me to gather information about strategies human resource managers in the health care industry need to reduce coercive management practices. Bush et al. (2019) noted that qualitative research offers the advantages of emergent design, exploration of a problem in a natural setting, and ability to capture participants' meaning through descriptions. Qualitative researchers build on visual methods to explore phenomena and how people experience and give meaning to the phenomena (Cristancho & Helmich, 2019). Qualitative researchers are both interpreters and instruments of a study (Holland, 2020). Researchers in qualitative studies provide insights into why people engage in certain actions and how they experience them (Bush et al., 2019). The role of the researcher was fulfilled by adhering to research standards and ensuring reliability and validity. In this multiple case study, my role as the data-gathering instrument included conducting interviews and gathering relevant documentation.

Researchers are likely to engage in discrimination if they fail to recognize their own biases (Karagiozis, 2016). I do not have any experience working as a manager in the health care industry, but I have managerial experience in retail, where I trained employees on the daily tasks and business procedures. Also, I had the experience of being employed under coercive management for 3 years in administrative work. It was

imperative for me to adhere to research protocol and standards throughout the study to avoid expressing personal opinions.

I used the ethical principles noted by Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure confidentiality and protection of the study participants and integrity of the research. Ethical research on human subjects require that subjects give free and informed consent to participate in a study (Jansen, 2020). I used the Belmont Report interview protocol for the study. The Belmont Report entails providing a comfortable environment for participants, explaining the purpose of the study, and receiving permission to conduct interviews. Also, the Belmont Report influences responsibility in conducting research by ensuring respect, beneficence, and just treatment of participants (Kowalski et al., 2017). I mitigated bias and avoided viewing data through a personal lens during the interview process. I avoided bias by paying attention to participants' feedback to establish. I mitigated bias by conducting multiple interviews for data collection.

### **Participants**

The eligibility requirement for the study was that four human resource managers from the four health care facilities must have successfully implemented strategies to reduce coercive management practices. Each selected health care facility must have at least 50 employees located in the Savannah, GA area. After receiving approval from the IRB, my strategy for recruiting participants was to send them a message through LinkedIn and via email. The first four participants who responded and agreed to participate in the study was the method I employed to determine the participants of the study. I used an interview protocol to avoid biases and asked all participants the same

questions. The participants' experience and understanding of the phenomenon must be considered when recruiting individuals to participate in a study (Liu & Lawrenz, 2018).

To establish a strong working relationship with the participants, I explained the intentions and expectations for the study. Establishing a working relationship with participants during the interview process is useful in retrieving valid information (Kravets, 2019). Also, I continued to communicate with each participant who agreed to participate in the study. I informed all participants that they were allowed to withdraw from the study at any time.

## **Research Method and Design**

### **Research Method**

I chose the qualitative methodology for the study. Qualitative researchers seek in-depth understanding of a social phenomenon within a natural setting (Klenke, 2016). The qualitative method has been used to describe the "what," "how," and "why" of phenomena (Hamilton & Finley, 2019). The qualitative methodology is appropriate for the study because I explored managers' experiences in a business setting. Researchers use the quantitative methodology to identify and examine specific variables' characteristics or relationships within the context of the study (Park & Park, 2016). The quantitative methodology was not appropriate for the research effort because examining potential relationships among variables or using statistical analysis to test human behavior was not the goal of my study. Mixed methods research use both qualitative and quantitative perspective (Reily & Jones, 2017). The mixed method was not appropriate for the study because my goal was not to examine variables' characteristics or relationships.

## **Research Design**

A multiple case study was conducted and was appropriate for the study because the focus was on interviewing human resource management within four health care facilities. The human resource managers of the four health care facilities chosen for the study offered an in-depth understanding of similarities and differences in the strategies implemented among some human resource managers in the health care industry. Multiple case studies are time intensive and provide an in-depth description of the phenomena under investigation (Civitillo et al., 2019). Case study methodology is a qualitative approach in which the researcher explores real-life bounded systems through in-depth data collection from multiple sources (Alpi & Evan, 2019).

Ethnographic, phenomenological, and narrative studies are qualitative research designs that were also considered for the study. An ethnographic researcher attempts to interpret the values, beliefs, and language of a specific group or individuals (Kassan et al., 2020). An ethnographic design was not appropriate for the study because ethnographic researchers study a culture of people to gain understanding of their experiences and I did not observe the culture of a group. Phenomenological researchers attempt to look beyond perceptions to discover how an event was felt and identify the shared essence of the participants' personal encounters with an experience (Papakitsou, 2020). A phenomenological design was not appropriate for the study because the purpose was not to evaluate feelings about participants' shared encounters. A narrative research design was not appropriate for the study because narrative researchers collect stories from

people and make meaning of those stories between the researcher and participant (Khwaja & Mahoney, 2019).

### **Population and Sampling**

I used criterion sampling to evaluate data for my study. The eligibility criteria and criterion sampling assisted in aligning the population. Criterion sampling may assist a researcher to select participants that align with the study (Larsen, 2018). The population for the study consisted of four human resource managers from four health care facilities with at least 50 employees located in the Georgia region of the United States who have successfully implemented strategies to reduce coercive management practices.

The experience of working in health care facilities was the qualification for participating in the study. Too much data in a qualitative study can undermine the researcher's ability to conduct a thorough analysis (Ames et al., 2019). To determine the number of participants in a qualitative multiple case study can be difficult from the amount of in-depth information that a participant can give (Zhao et al., 2019). I ensured data saturation by identifying common themes through the repetition of common words and phrases.

### **Ethical Research**

Conducting ethical research is important for protecting participants in a study. Hamid and Widjaja (2019) noted ethical research enhance research practices and behaviors. Ethical methods are used by researchers to improve the interview process, encourage communication, promote awareness of the business phenomenon, record accurate responses, and avoid personal bias (Fish, 2019). As the researcher, I



implemented protocols that ensured confidentiality and did not cause harm to the participants. Also, I recruited participants who met the criteria through email and asked each participant who consented to the study reply with *I consent*. Once I received the participants' response confirming their consent, I emailed each of them a consent form to complete within 24 hours. The consent form outlined the risks and benefits of participating in the study. If the participants agreed to move forward with the study, I asked that they reply with *I consent* once again. Each participant had the option to save a copy of the consent form for their own keeping.

Participation in the study was voluntary and each participant had the option to withdraw from the study verbally or in writing. Information about withdrawing from the study was included in the consent form. Individuals who participated in the study did not receive compensation of any form which was also included in the consent form.

To ensure the protection of the participants and uphold ethical standard, I obtained approval from the IRB before collecting data from participants. After I received IRB approval, I contacted the participants who met the criteria of the study and had consented. To ensure confidentiality, I implemented a coding system using a letter-number method such as P1, P2, P3, and P4. I secured the information of the participants and their organizations. This information will be secured for 5 years as required by Walden University, then all documentation will be shredded after the 5-year duration.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

As the researcher, I was the data collecting instrument for the study. I conducted a semi-structured phone interviews with each participant and asked eight open-ended

questions (see Appendix B), which explored strategies that some human resource managers in health care facilities implement to reduce coercive management practices. Qualitative researchers gather data from interviews that can be coded using thematic analysis (Quintao et al., 2020).

I contacted the participants via email (see Appendix C), after IRB approval, to recruit individuals for the study. If I did not receive a response within 3 business days, I followed up with another email. If the participants agreed to the study, they responded by stating *I consent*. Then, I emailed a consent form that outlined the risks and benefits of the study and explained the participants' option to withdraw from the study. If the participants understood the expectations of the study, they responded by stating *I consent*. The participants were allowed to maintain a copy of the consent form. To ensure that participants are comfortable, and their privacy protected, I allowed each participant to choose a specific time and date for the phone interview. I allotted approximately 30 minutes for each interview and allowed more or less time depending on the participants' response. All participants were asked the same questions.

I enhanced reliability and validity of the data collection using the member checking technique through each phone interview. I read the information provided by the participant to ensure that the information received was accurate. According to Brear (2019), researchers use member checking to improve accuracy, credibility, reliability, and validity of the study. Naidu and Prose (2018) added that member checking is a way of validating the participants' responses by having participants confirm the accuracy of the

information and conclusions of the study. The participants in the study validated the authenticity of their interview.

Data collection is important for gathering information needed to answer the research question pertaining to what strategies human resource managers use to reduce coercive management practices. An interview protocol was used to ensure consistency in research and avoid distractions from the purpose of the study. I followed an interview protocol (see Appendix A) with each participant and evaluated the interview questions.

### **Data Collection Technique**

For this qualitative multiple case study, I was the primary data collector. The study consisted of semi-structured phone interviews, reviewing company handbooks and training manuals, and audio recording. To collect data, I used the iPhone voice memo application and Microsoft Excel to transcribe the data. Companies may benefit from various data collection techniques when identifying strategies to reduce coercive management practices. Qualitative researchers use various data collection techniques to ensure reliability, validity, and quality of the study (Silva et al., 2019). I conducted, approximately, a 45-minute phone interview with all four participants and asked eight open-ended questions. During each interview, I took notes to capture pertinent information from participants' responses and reviewed company handbooks and training manuals to gather in-depth information on the policies of each facility and the expectations of employees and managers. I requested access to company handbooks and training manuals from each participant.

After receiving IRB approval, approval number 02-23-22-1009413, I recorded each participants' response through audio recording and analyzed the companies' handbook and training manuals. Yin (2018) noted that open-ended questions in qualitative multiple case studies provide more in-depth and reliable data. A pilot study was not necessary for the study because I tested data before the research to determine if the information was valid. I contacted the participants for a 15-minute follow-up interview before completing the data collection process to ensure the validity of responses. The follow-up interview entailed participants sharing additional information and reviewing responses to each interview to avoid misinterpretations. Member checking is a process that confirms and validates that the data collected from the interview is collected (Naidu & Prose, 2018). No changes were made to the responses of the participants.

### **Data Organization Technique**

Keeping record of an organization's data is an important aspect of the study. As the researcher, I was the primary data collector for the study. Todorov et al. (2019) found that organizing data is necessary in qualitative studies. Yin (2018) noted that data organization enhances the understanding of the researcher's findings. I used the letter-number method which protected the identities of the participants and their companies. Themes were created based on the responses from participants. I deleted all recordings once the data was transcribed to ensure confidentiality. Each statement was recorded, examined, and kept on a flash drive. Each recording was labeled based on the letter-number coding used to identify each participant.

Each interview was recorded, retrieved data was examined, and the data collected was kept on a flash drive. Yuan et al. (2018) suggested that researchers secure the data collected from participants for five years. I will abide by research ethics by maintaining record of the participants' identities and information for five years. As the primary data collector, I was the only authorized individual who had access to retrieve information. After five years of completing the study, I will delete the data by destroying the flash drive and shred all documents retrieved from the interviews. Todorov et al. (2019) identified that protecting participants' information for five years is an important principle of research ethics.

### **Data Analysis**

Methodological triangulation was the most appropriate data analysis process for the study. Methodological triangulation consists of the use of qualitative multiple case study which requires data validation (Fischer & Van de Bovenkamp, 2019). The data analysis process for the study consisted of gathering documentation from the companies, collecting and transcribing data, letter-number coding, member-checking, and conducting in-depth interviews. I retrieved and exported all data including phone interviews, company handbooks and training manuals, and member-checking results into Microsoft Excel. Next, I explored data converted into Microsoft Excel and conducted a manual check. Then, I organized and evaluated each theme as a representation of the manual analysis. The information explored in Microsoft Excel was imported into a data analysis software. Yin (2018) noted that qualitative analysis entails gathering data, evaluating data, understanding data, identifying data, and concluding the data.

A logical process for analyzing data was to implement an exploration of data after interviewing and gathering documentation such as handbooks and training manuals from the participants. I used Microsoft Excel to develop themes which were identified through the data analysis and sections from the literature review. Researchers use Microsoft Excel to generate themes and patterns (Briones & Escola, 2019). The primary purpose of the data analysis was to identify themes that answered the research question of the study. Excel is beneficial because the software helps the researcher sort, filter, and search for data (Collins, 2019). My objective for the study was to identify themes based on the experiences of the participants.

The conceptual framework for the study was the leader-member exchange theory. I evaluated data considering the leader-member exchange theory, which included identifying the various types of relationships that exists between employees and managers. Analyzing employee-manager relationships and identifying human resource management strategies through leader-member exchange theory assisted in creating themes that supported reducing coercive management. I explored strategies to reduce coercive management practices through the lens of the leader-member exchange theory by supporting and opposing themes in the literature review. I confirmed the authenticity of the data through member checking and evaluate the data by the consistency of themes in the literature review.

### **Reliability and Validity**

Qualitative researchers implement trustworthy and sustainable approaches to ensure reliability and validity (Yin, 2018). Reliable and valid methods were used to

authorize the findings of the research. Reliability encompasses the accuracy of a study while validity entails creditability, transferability, confirmability, and data saturation (Ertugrul-Akyol, 2019).

### **Reliability**

To ensure dependability within reliability, I engaged participants in member checking by validating the data and evaluation interpretations of responses from the interviews. Member checking involves validating data, evaluating interpretations, and developing conclusions from interviews (Madill & Sullivan, 2018). Member checking ensures the accuracy of data collection (Iivari, 2018). I used an interview protocol (see Appendix A) to avoid bias and ensure consistency. Consistency and reliability are based on the quality of a study. Atilgan (2019) noted that qualitative researchers use strategic notes to obtain dependability of the study. Akbiyik and Senturk (2019) noted that researchers use reliable documents as tools to ensure dependability and reduce fabrication.

### **Validity**

#### ***Credibility***

Qualitative researchers should ensure a study's validity through credibility, transferability, confirmability, and data saturation (Engelberg & Gouzoules, 2019). Member checking was administered after data evaluation to ensure reliability. The study findings must be credible to uphold validity in research. Researchers should become adept at using use-of-self techniques to improve their credibility as practitioners and researchers (Shufutinsky, 2020). I used peer-reviewed literature to increase validity. After

evaluating the collected data, member checking was conducted for credibility. As part of the member checking process, a phone conference was scheduled to read the participants' their responses to verify if additional information is needed.

### ***Transferability***

The role of a researcher is to provide accurate information for future research. Transferability offers readers evidence that a study's findings may be relevant to other content and situations (Essa et al., 2019). The researcher needs to be able to transfer the findings of a study to other content and situations (Ferrando et al., 2019). Data collection and organization methods were used to remain consistent and increase transferability.

### ***Confirmability***

Confirmability consists of relevant instruments, processes, and collected data in qualitative research (Haven & Van Grootel, 2019). Participants may shape the findings of a research through responses rather than the researcher's bias. Confirmability also involves eliminating personal viewpoints and contains neutral and direct data (Korsjens & Moser, 2018). To ensure confirmability, I used methodological triangulation to confirm the findings from multiple sources which provided a high confidence level in the study findings. I obtained company handbooks and training manuals from the health care facilities which provided aid in the exploration of strategies some health care managers use to successfully reduce coercive management practices.

### ***Data Saturation***

Data saturation indicates that a researcher concludes the transferability and confirmability of a study. Data saturation is the stage at which no additional data emerge



from the information collected (Yin, 2018). Obtaining data saturation consists of processing the data evaluated and assists with validating dependability of a study (Hennink, et al., 2019). To fulfill data saturation, I utilized multiple data collection techniques such as semistructured phone interviews, note taking from participants' interviews to gather key information, and member checking. After the interview process is complete, the responses of participants were transcribed and authenticated for member checking to ratify the interpretations. Also, I verified that no new information is necessary to ensure accuracy of the explanation for data saturation.

### **Transition**

The objective of this study was to explore strategies that some managers in the health care industry use to successfully implement strategies to reduce coercive management practices. In Section 2, I reiterated the purpose statement, my role as the researcher, and the eligibility requirements for participants. Also, I discussed the research method and research design, population and sampling, strategy for maintaining ethical standards, data collection instruments and techniques, data organization technique, reliability and validity, and analysis of data.

In Section 3, the results and findings of the research were discussed. The section began with the purpose of this study, presentation of findings, application for professional practice, and implications for social change. Also, a discussion of recommendations for future research and reflection of my experience as a researcher are included. Lastly, the section consists of a summary and conclusion of this study.

### Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

#### **Introduction**

The intent of the qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that some human resource managers in the health care industry. The focus was on the successful implementation of strategies to reduce coercive management practices in the health care industry. I conducted telephonic semistructured interviews with four human resource managers from four different organizations in the Savannah, Georgia area to collect data. The themes that emerged from the interviews were improving communication, promoting teamwork, and improving management support.

The four human resource managers interviewed in the health care industry used strategies to reduce coercive management practices. Human resource managers using the findings of this study might contribute to positive social change by reducing unemployment rates and stabilizing communities through boosting employee commitment and reducing voluntary turnover. The findings of this study may be of use to other industries because of the human resource manager approach to reducing coercive management practices.

#### **Presentation of Findings**

In this study, I conducted telephonic semistructured interviews with four human resource managers from four different health care facilities in the Savannah, GA area. The participants answered the research question: What strategies do human resource managers in the health care industry use to reduce coercive management practices? The interviews allowed the participants to share experiences and knowledge of strategies used

to reduce coercive management practices. Company handbooks and training manuals were reviewed to gain insight on the objectives of each health care facility and the expectations of employees and management.

Before conducting the interviews, each participant was reminded that participation was voluntary, and they were allowed to withdraw from the study at any time. Also, the participants were informed that the interview would not cause harm and each participant's identity would be confidential and not released. The information collected consisted of interview audio recordings and notations. Using the interview protocol, each participant was asked the same question in the same order, which enabled consistency and avoided any bias.

After collecting data, the information was transcribed using the letter-number codes and interpreted the audio recordings. The transcribed interviews were uploaded in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. A follow-up telephonic interview was conducted for each participant for member checking to authenticate the interpretations of the collected data. After analyzing and gathering data, three themes were identified: communication and engagement, improving management support, and management training. The identified themes aligned with the conceptual framework of Dansereau et al.'s (1975) leader-member exchange theory and some of the peer-reviewed studies from the literature review.

### **Theme 1: Communication and Engagement**

The first theme identified was communication and engagement. Each participant stated that communication was the key factor in reducing coercive management practices.

The participants also noted that employees maintain a positive attitude when managers communicate in an effective and respectable manner. P1 stated that “communication is essential in order to control coercive management practices. Management should communicate with employees in a positive manner rather than an aggressive tone.” P2 stated,

As a manager, you have to understand that all employees are different and cannot be treated the same. Employees respond to the behavior of a manager. There have been times when employees outside my department have approached me for advice rather than their appropriate supervisor because I have established a trusting relationship with all employees, which makes employees more comfortable to communicate their issues or concerns with me. Most managers hold the belief that titles instantly grants respect and that is not true. An employee respects a person of leadership because that person has respectable characteristics.

P3 explained that “communication requires a conversation between management and the individual(s) with concerns. Most of the time managers make the mistake of discussing all issues with everyone in the organization rather than with just the individuals involved.” P4 asserted that “positive coercive communication may be necessary in the beginning for a manager to establish their position and expectations, so employees know what to expect. However, overtime, softening the coercive style is important. Employees may not be receptive to a soften manager who transitions into a coercive manager because employees may perceive the manager as a fake.”

P2 and P3 elaborated on the topic of communication by explaining how communication plays an integral role when addressing coercive behaviors. P2 stated,

I have a protocol that I follow when dealing with coercive management issues. First, management receives a verbal warning. Secondly, a private meeting is called with the manager to discuss the issue that is resulting in coercive behaviors and we reach an agreed upon solution that will satisfy my expectations of the manager and satisfy the needs of the manager. This agreement is documented and signed by both parties. My last option is to conduct a formal write-up if management's behavior has not improved. This is why communication is crucial because if I reach the stage of a formal write-up, I can go back and show the manager everything that has been discussed and agreed upon that he or she did not adhere to.

P3 stated, "No conflict should be left unresolved or discussed at a later date." P3 further explained that each conflict or issue should be addressed in the moment of occurrence, discussed privately, and documented. Also, P2 and P3 both noted the implementation of an open-door policy that welcomes all management and employees to freely discuss various concerns, issues, or ideas. P1 stated, "When management is the underlying issue, some employees are fearful of filing a complaint because they feel their jobs may be at risk. As a human resource manager, I feel it is necessary to make employees aware that they can freely report any managerial issues directly to me without consequences." P4 took a slightly different approach from the other participants. P4 noted that when coercive management is reported, the manager who was reported is transferred to another department. If the manager is reported for a second time, a meeting takes place

to discuss the manager's behavior and what actions may take place if the behavior continues. Methodological triangulation consisted of the companies' handbooks and training manuals. After thorough review of the documentation received from each participant, I identified that business meetings and employee feedback serve a vital role in the communication and engagement efforts of human resource managers.

### **Theme 2: Improving Management Support**

Each participant noted that managerial support is one of the most important aspects in the health care industry to avoid coercive management and, at the present time, to cope with the experience of dealing COVID-19. The pandemic has taken a toll on the health care workers both physically and mentally. P2 stated, "We are all in this together and we have to be supportive of each other. Conducting a simple check on managers and employees go a long way in my facility." P2 explained his implementation of the employee goal guide in which management and employees are required to fill out, outlining their goals for the month and the steps they are going to take to achieve the goals. P2 requires all employees to have a goal regardless if the goal is big, small, work related, or non-work related. P2 receives a copy from each manager and employee and checks in with them on their progress throughout the month. P1 stated, "I make mental health a priority now since COVID struck us. At least twice a month, I have a meeting with all employees and managers to conduct a mental health check. In these meetings, we simply talk about anything that may be on their minds whether it is work-related or personal." P3 and P4 both take the approach of reiterating to employees and managers

that they are allowed to discuss any work-related or personal issues with them privately if necessary.

All participants noted that, aside from COVID, managerial support is imperative to the work efforts of employees and acknowledging good work is important. P1 stated, “Employees should not receive recognition only when they make mistakes or lack in performance. Negative recognition drives morale completely down. Employees deserve to be recognized for their achievements and contribution to the organization.” P1 and P2 noted that reward systems and offering managerial support are great initiatives to boost morale. P2 stated, “Employees should be motivated to come to work. For example, employee of the month awards are great strategies to promote productivity and motivate employees to not only meet expectations but exceed expectations.” P3 posed that sometimes employees may feel overwhelmed with work, which is why offering support from management is imperative to help employees by either removing some of the workload for their tasks or encourage them to do their best. Also, this participant noted that some managers fail to understand that telling an employee they are doing a good job is a reward in itself. P2 and P4 emphasized the managerial support can stem from being open to receive feedback from employees, whether it is constructive criticism or ideas to improve work processes, because management need support from employees also. P4 further noted that feedback from employees can help management control their behavior and approach if they hear it directly from the employees. P2 stated, “Management need to understand that empathy and support is vital in establishing a relationship with employees because it shows the employee that they are valued.”

### **Theme 3: Management Training**

Management training was the third theme that emerged from the study. Each participant shared their perspective on the impact and importance of management training to reduce coercive management practices. The participants indicated that the costs associated with coercive management practices were time, money, and voluntary turnover.

P1 elaborated that in order to overcome coercive management practices, her facility implemented a management training program that cost a great amount of time and money to incorporate. The program was designed to familiarize management with the culture of that specific facility and outline the expectations of management from a human resource management perspective and the employees' perspective. P1 revealed, "Because of the experience with coercive management in the past, we had to spend approximately \$8,000 in management training programs and lost around ten valuable employees. After we implemented the training programs, we noticed a positive tremendous change in managements' behaviors and an increase in the retention rate." P3 noted the importance of training managers at the start of their employment. The participant asserted that training managers from the beginning is an effective strategy to reduce coercive management practices because the training set boundaries for management. P3 stated, "When you set the rules and expectations from the beginning, one usually does not occupy additional time later on to re-train management. Also, the importance for others to speak up when they witness management displaying coercive behaviors is vital so it can be addressed immediately. My way of viewing management training is to train



managers as they progress. Anytime managers do something wrong or make a mistake, I address the issue in that moment so they will know what they did was wrong.”

P2 discussed the need and importance to conduct training sessions for current managers at least twice a year to ensure that management remains consistent. Ongoing evaluations and adjustments are necessary to avoid coercive management practices. P4 emphasized that employing managerial training programs display the balance in the organization and shows that not one individual is more important than another. P2 stated, “Managers need refreshing too. Sometimes, the need to sit back, regroup, and remind yourself what your purpose is as a manager is essential. Also, employee feedback is an effective training for managers as well.” P4 stated, “In this particular setting, we do not create the traditional training programs for managers. If managers begin to lack and display negative coercive behaviors, we must make changes to the organizational structure in which the manager is moved to a more relaxed unit that requires limited tasks and, eventually, work their way back up.”

### **Relevance of the Findings to the Literature**

Three themes emerged from the data analysis that answered the research question: What strategies do human resource managers within the health care industry use to reduce coercive management practices? The themes consisted of communication and engagement, improving management support, and management training in the health care industry. The human resource managers’ responses indicated that each manager used various strategies to reduce coercive management practices in the health care industry. One of the primary components to reducing coercive management practices was effective

communication between management and employees. According to Doe et al. (2020), governance is essential in preventing or solving problems associated with coercive management behaviors.

The first theme that emerged from data analysis was communication and engagement. Dai et al. (2018) posited that effective communication contributes to the daily operation, promotes organizational benefits, and avoids workplace accidents. Managers should effectively communicate and engage with employees by establishing a comfortable working environment. All participants noted that open communication and engagement are effective strategies for reducing coercive management practices. Health care managers could use communication as an option to control attrition and optimize performance of employees (Dalal et al., 2021). Effective communication between management and employees can influence employees' work performance, which is an essential component of a health care organization's effectiveness. Managers can support employees in maintaining positive emotions by developing an encouragement plan at the start of each workday and reduce obstructions to work demands such as workload (Wang, 2022). The results of the study suggested that human resource managers who prioritize communication and engagement strategies may employ communication and engagement strategies to reduce coercive management practices in the health care industry.

Improving management support was the second theme that emerged from the data analysis. Manager support is the degree to which managers appreciate the contributions of its employees and care about their welfare (Wassem et al., 2019). Human resource managers play a primary role in increasing employees' abilities and in establishing an

efficient work environment through the development of training programs. Arshad et al. (2021) postulated that managerial support can enhance employees' discretionary behavior, which may provide social settings that support the achievement of organizational goals. Managerial support may take on different forms including communication, involving employees in decision-making, promotions, recognizing achievements, and providing feedback to employees. The study's results suggested that human resource managers who value managerial support may use the managerial support strategies that reduce coercive management practices.

Management training was the third theme that emerged from the data analysis. Management training is necessary in the effort to reduce coercive management in the health care industry as well as increase productivity amongst employees. Managerial training is significant to develop human resources for both public and private organizations (Sahni, 2020). Panagiotakopoulos (2020) found that management training had a positive impact on organizational performance, improved productivity, and enhanced employee satisfaction. Managers may contribute to both uncovering the effects of manager interventions and retrieving knowledge about how to design effective interventions to strengthen employee health and well-being by applying evidence-based training (Kuehnl et al., 2019). Based on this study's results, human resource managers that effectively employ management training tools or programs can increase productivity and reduce stress in the workplace.

### **Relevance to Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this study was the leader-member exchange theory. The leader-member exchange theory was chosen to understand the relationship components that link the manager and employee in the health care industry to reduce coercive management practices. Dansereau et al. (1975) identified trust, loyalty, support, respect, and obligation are key constructs that link the relationships between managers and employees. In high quality leader-member exchange, managers support employees beyond general expectation, so the employees are more engaged in their work (Liao et al., 2019). P2 specifically discussed the importance of establishing a relationship with employees and being supportive of employees to create an environment of trust and respect. P1 and P3 addressed the need for managers to take the initiative to communicate with their employees so they can open opportunities to establish a relationship with employees. The participants' responses aligned with the leader-member exchange theory, showing how leader-member relationships can influence the culture of the work environment.

The identified themes in the study align with the leader-member exchange theory. The themes identified were communication and engagement, improving management support, and management training. Each participant discussed the need for managers to have a balanced relationship with employees that focus on achieving organizational goals and the well-being of employees. Management involves showing concern for employees and take account of their needs. Ruzgar (2018) noted that when employees feel they are

members of outer group, they contribute to the organization at a minimum level and display low performance.

### **Application to Professional Practice**

Enhancing the relationship between employees and management is an ongoing issue within most health care organizations. Health care organizations will need to identify and implement different strategies to reduce coercive management practices. Reporting systems, office structures, and job classification impact the possibility of coercive management behaviors occurring in an organization (Doe et al., 2020). The findings may be relevant to human resource managers in the health care industry. The study findings are relevant to human resource managers to maintain a productive work environment by reducing coercive management practices.

Human resource managers may use the findings to enhance the relationship between managers and employees by implementing communication and engagement, improving management support, and management training. Human resource managers in the health care industry who choose to implement the three themes may experience positive work behaviors and productivity from employees. If managers choose to harmonize an environment without increasing dissatisfaction and turnover, they need to consider the psychological security of employees by providing a safe environment for employees to ask, analyze, and solve work-related issues (Eivazzadeh & Nadiri, 2022). Human resource managers in the health care industry may find this study valuable because it offers solutions to reduce coercive management practices.

### **Implications for Social Change**

Reducing coercive management practices which increases productivity and reduces work-related stress has positive implications for social change. The implications for social change include that some human resource managers in the health care industry may increase productivity and enhance employee morale by reducing coercive management practices, which may stabilize the community by decreasing unemployment rates. An increase in employment opportunities may result in employees being able to provide a stable financial living environment for their families. Iqbal et al. (2022) posed that coercive management and cognitive distraction might increase employee turnover intention. Erdal and Budak (2021) suggested that coercive management negatively affects job satisfaction and senior management should introduce measures to control coercive management practices. The study findings may influence social change for employees and their families, providing stable financial living conditions.

Human resource managers may have other positive impact on social change by removing coercive management behaviors. High turnover rate disrupts the processes and functioning while also incurring costs in recruiting and developing new employees (Iqbal et al., 2022). Ozkan et al. (2022) suggested that supporting employees with in-service training and building resistance against coercive management behaviors will be beneficial for the effective operations of an organization. Saleem et al. (2021) recommended committed employees can decrease the adverse effects of coercive management practices by concentrating on their work and achieving organizational goals.

### **Recommendations for Action**

Human resource managers can use the findings discussed in this study to reduce coercive management practices which enhance productivity. The findings are useful to both human resource managers and employees that have experienced coercive management practices in their organizations. Human resource managers in organizations can understand how to link the leader-member exchange theory to reduce coercive management practices. Given the negative impact of coercive management practices, human resource managers can implement the following strategies to reduce coercive management: enhance communication and engagement, improve management support, and promote management training.

Human resource managers should encourage communication and engagement to provide a comfortable environment for employees to express their opinions and experiences with coercive managers. Healthy communication in organizations can bring employees' satisfaction and have a positive impact on their performance (Damghanian & Ghaleroudkhani, 2022). Human resource managers who create an open work environment give employees the opportunity to discuss identified coercive management behaviors before the issue worsens. Poor communication may increase workplace stress.

Managerial support has also been a factor in creating coercive management practices. Managerial support and acknowledgement of employee work efforts is imperative. Organizations that lack managerial support may see a decline in employee performance and job satisfaction. Managers have a direct impact on employees' day-to-

day environments and can be a major cause of turnover, poor engagement, stress, and health issues (Yadegari, 2022). The presence of managerial support will provide a means to avoid coercive management practices and may convince employees that they are valued in an organization. Additionally, support from management may require managers to allow employees to utilize their own skills and abilities to successfully perform their job duties.

Management training is essential in improving the skills of a manager. Some training programs focus on communication skills, employee engagement, and teamwork. Managerial training is a primary component of human resource development for investigating the influence on employees and organizational performance (Sahni, 2020). With the help of managerial training programs, managers tend to treat employees better by increasing motivation, promoting teamwork, and recognize achievements. Depending on the nature of the work environment, managerial training programs should be chosen based on the needs of the organization.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

Further research can be expanded based on the limitations of the study. One limitation of this study is that data was collected only from four human resource managers who are employed in the health care industry. Future researchers can seek to expand data collection from a larger group of participants from other industries. The perspective of a larger group may differ from a small sample size. The findings from this study may not be applicable to a large group of participants. Future studies should contain findings from other industries and different cultural environments in the way



coercive management practices are handled. Additionally, future researchers could conduct further research by getting coercive management perspectives of both managers and employees to obtain more in-depth data.

### **Reflections**

When I began my doctoral journey, I knew that I was starting a new chapter in my life and in the process of achieving my goal of obtaining a doctoral degree. My experience with pursuing a doctoral degree has taught me how to be patient and to not let minor setbacks stand in the way of achieving my goal. This journey has been life changing and fulfilling because I have learned so much about myself and capabilities. Achieving my DBA is sentimental to me because I want to be an example to the generations after me and make sure they understand that anything is possible if you have faith and work hard.

I was able to gain so much knowledge throughout my doctoral journey. I was able to gain a plethora of knowledge of the health care industry and their strategies for dealing with coercive management practices. The data collection process revealed that human resource managers in the health care industry have different issues with coercive management and must handle each issue differently. However, the approaches each human resource manager took to resolve coercive management practices were similar and effective.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies human resource managers in the health care industry use to reduce coercive management

practices. Coercive management is detrimental to employee engagement, turnover, and counterproductive work behaviors. Human resource managers need to implement strategies to reduce coercive management practices so that employee engagement, turnover, and counterproductive work behaviors will be less prevalent in the health care industry. The goal of this study was to explore strategies that human resource managers in the health care industry use to reduce coercive management practices. Communication, management support, and management training were the three themes that emerged from the study findings as strategies to reduce coercive management practices.

Coercive management in the health care industry has damaged the positive working environment in the health care industry. The leader-member exchange theory provided insight on the key components that link employee-manager relationships: trust, loyalty, support, respect, and obligation. The study findings revealed the need for communication, support from management, and management training to reduce coercive management practices. Furthermore, human resource managers affected by coercive management practices can use study findings to enhance employee engagement, reduce voluntary turnover, and increase productivity.

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## Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Title of Doctoral Study: Strategies for Managers in the Health Care Industry to Reduce Coercive Management Practices

Interview Purpose: Data collection on strategies that human resource managers use to successfully reduce coercive management practices.

1. Each interview will be approximately 45 minutes.
2. I will introduce myself as the interviewer and greet the participants and thank him/her for agreeing to take part in the study.
3. I will provide each participant with a copy of the e-signed consent form.
4. I will reiterate to the participants that they are allowed to withdraw from the study at any given time.
5. I will explain that the data collected will be used for research purposes only.
6. I will reiterate to the participants that I will be audio recording the phone interview. I will explain that I want to capture every response, including stating their name, date, time, and their location.
7. Coding will take place to ensure confidentiality.
8. I will begin by asking the participants the interview questions and follow-up questions if needed.
9. I will take notes while the participants are responding to questions
10. At the close of the phone interview, I will thank the participants for their contribution to the study and provide my contact information if they have any questions and schedule a follow-up for member checking.

### Appendix B: Interview Questions for Human Resource Managers

1. How do you define coercive management in your organization?
2. To what extent was coercive management an issue in the organization in the past?
3. What strategies have you implemented to deter coercive management practices?
4. What were the key challenges encountered while implementing these strategies?  
How were these overcome?
5. How do you measure the success of the strategies implemented to deter coercive management practices?
6. How do you determine when it is necessary to act on coercive management complaints?
7. What were the costs to the organization of coercive management practices?
8. What additional information, if any, can you share regarding your organization's experience with coercive management practice?

## Appendix C: Letter of Invitation to Participate in Study

[Date]

Dear [Name],

My name is Lakerria Brown, a student at Walden University. I am conducting a doctoral study to explore strategies that human resource managers in the health care industry implement to reduce coercive management practices. I am interested in conducting a telephonic interview with human resource managers in the Savannah, Ga area, who has successfully implemented strategies to reduce to coercive management practices.

I believe human resource managers who best fit the criteria for the study could propose a unique perspective of this study. During my research for human resource managers and health care facilities, I discovered your facility as being one to successfully employ strategies to reduce coercive management practices. I would like to conduct a telephonic interview with. Please understand that your participation in this study is voluntary and confidential. The telephonic interview will be approximately 45 minutes, including eight open-ended questions.

You can choose the date and time for the telephonic interview. Please feel free to contact me for any questions at \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lakerria Brown

Walden University DBA Student