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Strategies for Optimizing Employee Engagement in Luxury Hotels

Justin Honeycutt
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Justin Honeycutt

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Review Committee

Dr. Gwendolyn Dooley, Committee Chairperson, Doctor of Business Administration
Faculty

Dr. Kevin Davies, Committee Member, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Yvonne Doll, University Reviewer, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

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

Walden University
2022

Abstract

Strategies for Optimizing Employee Engagement in Luxury Hotels

by

Justin M. Honeycutt

MS, University of the Incarnate Word, 2018

BS, Greenville College, 2014

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

June 2022

Abstract

Lack of employee engagement has negative effects on many factors associated with organizational performance. Employee engagement is significant for managers in the hospitality industry due to the demanding nature of the hospitality work environment. Grounded in Herzberg's two-factor theory, the purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies luxury hotel managers use to increase employee engagement. The participants comprised four managers from one luxury resort in Hawaii who implemented successful strategies for increasing employee engagement. Data were collected from semistructured interviews and company documents, including audit forms, company newsletters, and company meeting notes. Three primary themes resulted from thematic analysis (a) prioritizing employee feedback, (b) recognition programs, and (c) employee development. One primary recommendation for business leaders is to identify ways to get their employees involved in the discussion regarding organizational goals, policy creation, areas of improvement, and individual needs. The implications for positive social change include the opportunity for hotel managers to understand employee engagement and increased job satisfaction for employees. A decrease in unemployment rates may occur due to increased employee engagement, enhancing the local economy.

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Dedication

First, I dedicate this doctoral study to my wife, Alicia Honeycutt, who believes in me more than I believe in myself, not only in academia but in every area of life. Not one time throughout this entire journey did you ever ask if I could delay my work to accommodate your wants or needs. Oftentimes, this would result in you staying home throughout the weekend, just so I didn't have to be writing alone. Your selflessness is one of the many qualities that make me love you, and your support throughout this journey highlights your amazing heart.

Secondly, I dedicate this doctoral study to three men who helped keep me motivated throughout this process. It has been said that individuals need three types of people in their life: (a) a mentor, (b) a peer, and (c) a mentee. I worked with Dr. Brian Ching, DO, during the last 3 years of my military service. Dr. Ching would constantly ask how much progress I had made and where I was at along my doctoral journey, and most importantly, showed me what it looked like to be a subject matter expert in the professional field of one's choice. I can only hope that I can inspire a few individuals the way Dr. Ching has inspired me. Dr. Ching is the mentor. Kirk Pearce was a college football teammate, a roommate, and a groomsman, and recently completed his PhD at Virginia Tech. Kirk and I would often discuss our progress throughout our respective journeys, and a conversation that we had heavily influenced my decision to begin this program. Kirk is my peer. Jacob Garza was a "battle buddy," a work colleague, a groomsman, and my roommate when I was trying to decide whether I was doing a qualitative or a quantitative study. Jacob is the mentee in this story.

Acknowledgments

I must thank God for all of the gifts he has given me that allow me to participate and learn in a program like this. Unfortunately, many of these gifts I take for granted on a daily basis, and it is during these times of reflection that I realize how blessed I really am. It is nice to think back and remember the spiritual peace I got when I thought about pursuing this degree. Now, as I am finished with this journey, this peace, I believe, was a sign that I was making the “right” decision.

I would like to thank, in a more professional manner, my current doctoral study committee members, Dr. Gwendolyn Dooley (Chair), Dr. Kevin Davies (SCM), and Dr. Yvonne Doll (URR). Although my committee members have changed multiple times throughout this process, your support and advice have helped me complete this program and finish this season of life. I have said many times in the past, and I will continue to tell this to everyone who asks me about my doctoral experience, becoming a part of Team Dooley, and having Dr. Dooley as my chair member, is the best thing that could’ve happened to me during this program. I attribute much of my progress and success to you. I will forever be grateful for your guidance and your patience.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Employee engagement is an imperative variable of organizational performance that must be considered by hotel managers. Jung et al. (2021) found that that employee engagement can decrease turnover intent in hotel employees. Singh et al. (2019) supported these findings and suggested that increased employee engagement yields higher job satisfaction and reduced turnover intention. Altinay et al. (2019) found that hotel leaders may be able to increase employee engagement by reducing role overload and raising job security. Furthermore, leaders must account for the complexity of engagement. Mokhine and Geysers (2020) found that work engagement varies with differences in age, marital status, and educational status. Creating and implementing effective strategies to increase employee engagement may contribute to maintaining a competitive advantage in the highly competitive global hotel industry.

Background of the Problem

Business leaders are concerned with employee engagement, as it is associated with job satisfaction, motivation, work performance, productivity, and turnover. Additionally, engagement is considered a primary predictor of profitability (Borah & Barua, 2018). Due to the direct impact on the individual, team, and organizational levels, engagement is a popular topic amongst business and research professionals (Kosaka & Sato, 2020; Krisnaveni & Monica, 2016). Wang et al. (2020) found that employee engagement and job satisfaction negatively affect turnover intention in the hospitality industry. Hotel managers must implement strategies to optimize employee engagement at

all levels in their organization if they want to maintain high performance levels in a highly competitive industry.

Different leadership styles are commonly researched to explore how they affect employee engagement. Because it is the leaders' responsibility to guide employees toward goal achievement, leadership is considered the driving force of employee engagement (Muddle, 2020). Ethical leadership has been shown to directly influence employee engagement (Joplin et al., 2019; McKenna & Jeske, 2010). Furthermore, transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and authentic leadership have all been shown to foster employee engagement (Meskelis & Whittington, 2020; Muddle, 2019). Leaders must fully understand their engagement strategies' implications and must carefully implement engagement strategies based on their organization's characteristics.

Problem Statement

There is a reported gap between the importance of employee engagement and engagement strategy practice (Matthews, 2018). Organizations with highly engaged employees have an 80% less chance of losing workforce personnel than organizations with high employee disengagement (Seray, 2021). The general business problem is that employee disengagement costs companies billions of dollars each year. The specific business problem is that some hotel managers lack strategies to engage employees.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies that hotel managers use to engage employees. The target population included three managers from one luxury hotel on the island of Oahu, Hawaii, who implemented effective

strategies to engage employees. The implications for positive social change include the potential to increase employee engagement, which may result in increased profitability (Tadesse, 2019). Increased profitability and growth may create new job opportunities and stimulate community prosperity.

Nature of the Study

The method for this study was qualitative. Researchers select the qualitative method to explore descriptions and perceptions provided by a population whose members experienced the phenomena (Witell et al., 2020). Furthermore, qualitative research is commonly associated with inductive reasoning by first collecting data and then formulating meaning by analyzing the data (Witell et al., 2020). Lastly, researchers using qualitative research, in contrast to a quantitative approach, seek to gain meaning by exploring participants' experiences and perspectives (Hesse-Biber, 2016). The quantitative method and mixed methods were inappropriate for this study. Quantitative research is a method used to examine variables' characteristics or relationships between characteristics or compare groups (Hesse-Biber, 2016). It was not the intent of my study to examine relationships or compare groups, and therefore the quantitative method was appropriate. The qualitative method was appropriate to explore the participants' direct experiences and perspectives about the research problem.

Case study and ethnography are different research designs associated with the qualitative method (Witell et al., 2020). Researchers analyze one unit in a single case study, rather than two or more of the same type of case in a multiple case study (Fishman, 2016). Because I was exploring the successful strategies and processes that one specific

unit implemented to increase employee engagement, a qualitative single case study was the most appropriate design. Furthermore, researchers use multiple case studies to compare and contrast similar cases (Fishman, 2016). A multiple case study was inappropriate because the purpose of my study was not to compare multiple cases. Other qualitative designs, such as action research or ethnography, were not appropriate for this study. Action research was not appropriate because it is an iterative process that is commonly used to implement change, requiring researchers, organizational participants, and practitioners to work together toward a common goal over an extended period (Wing et al., 2017). The processes and procedures for action research were not aligned with the purpose of this study. An ethnographic research design was also inappropriate for this study. The purpose of my study was not to explore the practices of a specific group or population via methods of observation over several weeks or months before conducting interviews (Pagano et al., 2018). Therefore, a single case study design was most appropriate to explore specific strategies that hotel managers use to increase engagement.

Research Question

What strategies do hotel managers use to engage employees?

Interview Questions

1. What strategies do you use to engage your employees?
2. How do the employees respond to those strategies?
3. How do you assess the effectiveness of the strategies for engaging employees?
4. What strategy is most effective when attempting to increase engagement?
5. What strategy is least effective when attempting to increase engagement?

6. Based on your experiences, what organizational changes occurred as a result of employee engagement?
7. What factors were the key barriers to implementing the successful strategies to improve employee engagement?
8. What additional information would you like to share about employee engagement?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was the two-factor theory, also known as the motivation-hygiene theory, developed by Frederick Herzberg in 1959. According to the two-factor theory, employee satisfaction is determined by two types of factors: (a) motivation factors and (b) hygiene factors (Herzberg, 1974). Herzberg noted that motivation factors relate to the content of one's job, while hygiene factors relate to the context of one's working environment. One should understand that job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction are not opposites; however, the opposite of satisfaction is lack of job satisfaction, while the opposite of job dissatisfaction is no job dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1968). It is important to note that the factors involved in producing job satisfaction are separate from the factors that lead to job dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1968). Motivation factors, also known as satisfier factors, include achievement, recognition, opportunity for growth and advancement, and interesting work (Herzberg, 1974). Herzberg (1974) also identified hygiene factors, also known as dissatisfiers, which include company policy, salary, status, working conditions, and interpersonal relationships. Motivation factors,

when present, increase motivation, while hygiene factors, when absent, decrease motivation (Kermally, 2005).

Herzberg's two-factor theory framework is commonly used by researchers to explore the phenomena of employee engagement. Employee engagement is one main predictor of job satisfaction in human resource research and has been shown to have a positive relationship with job satisfaction (Raza & Nadeem, 2018). Furthermore, Gamage and Jayatilake (2019) explained that engaged employees represent increased satisfaction and disengagement may result in job dissatisfaction. Lastly, factors driving employee engagement are like the factors that promote increased job satisfaction (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Due to the relationship between job satisfaction and employee engagement, Herzberg's two-factor theory was expected to enable me to explore strategies that hotel managers use to increase employee engagement to remain competitive.

Operational Definitions

Job satisfaction: Job satisfaction refers to an individual's positive response and attitude toward their job and organization (Chan, 2019).

Hygiene factors: Also known as dissatisfiers, hygiene factors relate to the context in one's work, that, in their negative aspects, result in job dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1974).

Motivation factors: Also known as satisfiers, motivation factors, if they are present in appropriate amounts, result in positive attitudes of job satisfaction (Herzberg, 1974).

Employee engagement: Employee engagement refers to an active positive state of mind that is directed by cognitive, emotional, and behavioral energy (Schuck et al., 2017).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are ideas, issues, or positions found throughout a study that are widely accepted and considered to be true (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). My main assumption was that participants would provide unbiased, honest feedback during their interviews. Secondly, I assumed that the chosen participants possessed the knowledge required to address the research question. Furthermore, I assumed that their experience would allow them to answer the interview questions better than individuals who had never had luxury hotel managerial experiences. Third, I assumed that improving employee engagement would improve organizational performance. My final assumption was that the Herzberg's two-factor theory is an appropriate conceptual framework to explore strategies that hotel managers use to improve employee engagement.

Limitations

Limitations refer to potential weaknesses of a study that are usually out of the researcher's control (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). The first limitation was that I would be held fully responsible for data collection. This may have created an opportunity for research bias, requiring practices to mitigate bias and increase reliability and validity of the study. Secondly, the geographic location acted as a limitation of this study, as the results of this study may not be applicable to hotel managers operating in

other geographic locations. The responses given by leaders in Honolulu, Hawaii may not represent the view of hotel leaders in other geographic locations. The voluntary nature of the study, creating a possibility for participants to refuse participation and an opportunity to withhold relevant information associated with their strategies to improve employee engagement, was another limitation of this study.

Delimitations

Delimitations refer to a study's boundaries that are set by a researcher (Denscombe, 2013). The delimitations of this study included the sample, the industry, the participants, and the research question. The sample included participants from only one hotel. Future researchers could explore the perceptions of various supervisors of multiple hotels. Furthermore, future studies could explore strategies used in other industries, rather than hospitality. I did not include managers from other businesses. Lastly, the research question acted as a delimitation, as I only focused on strategies that leaders use to increase employee engagement. There may be other problems that hotel leaders must overcome that should be explored.

Significance of the Study

Valuable to Business

The results of this study may be beneficial to business leaders by providing insight into strategies that increase employee engagement. Sarti (2014) explained that employee engagement is perceived to be related to positive organizational performance. Business leaders who are focused on their long-term performance goals may benefit from committing to building a culture of engagement throughout their organization. Macey and

Schneider (2008) explained that increased levels of employee engagement have a positive relationship with productivity, sales, customer satisfaction, and employee retention. In summary, engaged employees may stay with their companies longer, reduce turnover, and save organizational costs in recruitment, training, and retention (Tadesse, 2019). The results of this study may result in positive social change by equipping hotel leaders with strategies to increase employee engagement, remain competitive, and provide high-quality services to their communities.

Contribution to Business Practice

The findings of this qualitative study may contribute to effective business practice. First, these findings may expand managers' knowledge regarding strategies for improving employee engagement within their respective organizations. New insights may help managers better understand how other managers within the hotel industry are creating an engaged workforce. The findings of this study may be useful in solving problems associated with employee disengagement. With an increased awareness of the importance of employee engagement, managers may be able to decrease the number of disengaged employees within their organization, resulting in improved performance and remaining competitive.

Implications for Social Change

The results of this study could promote positive social change by identifying strategies to support hotel managers in engaging employees. These strategies may provide managers with information to help their organizations prosper. Businesses that are continuously growing and expanding will require more personnel, resulting in more

individuals in community employment. Lastly, this study's findings may contribute to positive social change on the individual level, due to the positive relationship between employee engagement and job satisfaction. Alfayad and Arif (2017) stated that job satisfaction is one element that results in appreciation, accomplishment of objectives, and feelings of fulfillment.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

Literature Review Opening Narrative

A literature review should include critical analysis and synthesis of multiple sources, presenting current knowledge and identifying relevant findings that pertain to the researcher's theoretical framework. Researchers must consider prior relevant literature regardless of the research discipline and project (Snyder, 2019). A total of 101 resources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, textbooks, websites, and doctoral studies, were used for this literature review. Of the 101 sources, 85 (84%) of were published within 5 years of my anticipated graduation date, 2022. Sixteen percent of the sources were published before 2017. Additionally, 94 (93%) sources in the literature review were peer reviewed.

I used several databases to research relevant literature, including ABI/INFORM Global, Science Direct, ProQuest, Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost, Sage Journals, Scholarworks, and Emerald Management. I accessed the literature via Google Scholar and the Walden University Library. The scope of the literature review and the study's theoretical framework guided my literature research. Search terms for this literature review included *employee engagement*, *work engagement*, *job satisfaction*,

Herzberg's two-factor theory, motivation-hygiene theory, charisma, hotel engagement, and motivation.

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies that luxury hotel managers use to increase employee engagement. The literature exposed common themes and topics related to the problem statement, purpose statement, and research question. This literature review focused on Herzberg's two-factor theory, employee engagement, employee engagement in the hotel industry, and job satisfaction. Furthermore, I used the literature review to show how Herzberg's two-factor theory is related to the study's specific business problem and purpose.

Herzberg's two-factor theory acted as the theoretical framework for this study, and I organized the literature review subsections beginning with a detailed explanation of this theory. The following subsections include how Herzberg's two-factor theory is related to leadership, motivation, and employee engagement. Furthermore, I discuss supporting and contrasting theories. Lastly, I provide an exhaustive review of relevant terms associated with this study: (a) employee motivation, (b) employee engagement, and (c) the relationship between employee motivation and employee engagement.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

One popular motivation theory is Herzberg's two-factor theory, also known as *motivation-hygiene theory*. In 1959, Frederick Herzberg introduced his two-factor theory in his book *The Motivation to Work* (Kermally, 2005). The theory was derived from a study in which participants described when they felt exceptionally good or exceptionally bad about their job. The participants were then asked probing questions to elaborate on

the reactions to the chosen events (Herzberg, 1965). Herzberg determined that that job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction must be considered separate entities, not opposites (Herzberg, 1968). Herzberg (1968) explained that job satisfaction is no satisfaction, not dissatisfaction, and the opposite of job dissatisfaction is no job dissatisfaction, not job satisfaction.

Herzberg's two-factor theory has provided the foundation for numerous studies. For example, Ruiz and Davis (2017) explored the strategies that supervisors used to retain millennial employees while using Herzberg's two-factor theory to guide their study. Alrawahi et al. (2020) explored different motivational elements associated with job satisfaction. Furthermore, Hur (2017) identified the effects of Herzberg's motivators and hygiene factors on job satisfaction. Holliman and Daniels (2018) focused their study on the impact of financial concern on motivation and job satisfaction and the means for leaders' approach to disclosing financial information. Employee motivation may influence employee engagement, and much research has been conducted involving Herzberg's two-factor theory and the theory's relationship to other organizational factors.

Herzberg's two-factor theory does not go without critique, as some studies that tested Herzberg's two-factor theory provided contradictory results. For example, Herzberg (1968) identified workload as a motivator; however, Alrawahi et al. (2020) suggested that a heavy workload can significantly contribute to job dissatisfaction. Furthermore, employee recognition can be viewed as a hygiene factor contributing to job dissatisfaction, rather than being viewed as a motivating factor contributing to job satisfaction (Alrawahi et al., 2020). Holliman and Daniels (2018) explained that their

findings suggest that leadership transparency can act as a motivator, rather than a hygiene factor, and influence employee motivation and job satisfaction. The issue is that the classification of motivators and hygiene factors may not universally contribute to job satisfaction or dissatisfaction, respectively. This boundary condition may result in theory critique.

Achievement, identified as a motivator by Herzberg, has been shown to have a significantly negative effect on job satisfaction. However, the researchers explained that this was an uncommon finding compared to most previous research (Ann & Blum, 2020). Other studies have shown that factors initially identified as hygiene factors by Herzberg— administration, supervision, and interpersonal relationships—can significantly contribute to job satisfaction (Cox, 2019). The varying results regarding which factors, motivators, or hygiene factors contribute to job satisfaction and which factors contribute to job dissatisfaction compromise the theory's integrity.

Motivators

Motivators contribute to the degree of one's job satisfaction. Herzberg explained that job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction result from different work factors—motivators and hygiene factors, respectively (Herzberg, 1974). When motivators are present in the appropriate amounts, they result in positive job satisfaction attitudes (Herzberg, 1974). Motivators relate to the content of one's job, are intrinsic, and include the following: (a) task achievement, (b) recognition for achievement, (c) intrinsic interest in the task, (d) increased task responsibility, (e) advancement, and (f) the possibility of occupational growth (Herzberg, 1965). The motivating intrinsic factors can lead to job satisfaction, or

if absent, may cause no satisfaction; however, motivators do not contribute to dissatisfaction (Fareed & Jan, 2016). Zámečník and Kožíšek (2021) found that motivating factors can influence an employee's internal satisfaction and job performance. By ensuring that motivators are in place, business leaders may increase job satisfaction levels within their work environment.

Achieving organizational goals helps increase employee motivation. Achievement can be described as the art of gaining the desired goals within an organization (Jiang et al., 2017). Achievement can be associated with personal goals or goals that are predetermined by one's organization. Unfortunately, there are few hotel managers who have created systems that provide employees with predetermined standards and goals that can be used as the foundation for the organization's reward system (Rosemberg & Li, 2018). Increased self-worth is accompanied by achievement, and achievement increases the employee's intrinsic motivation to accomplish more goals (Jiang et al., 2017). Hotel leaders should provide opportunities to their employees that will result in a sense of achievement and feeling of having done something worthwhile.

Interest in one's work may increase energy level, increase work enjoyment, and increase job satisfaction. The work itself is an intrinsic motivational factor and can be described as the employee's relationship to the customer inside or outside of the organization (Herzberg et al., 1959). Ward (2019) found that the work itself and recognition were the strongest predictors of job satisfaction in a study of a regional bank in the southeastern United States. Krczal (2017) found that the main source of employee motivation is interesting, meaningful work that can be done independently and imposes

responsibility on the employee. Business leaders must ensure that jobs are interesting and provide enough challenge to keep the employees motivated.

Empowering employees by making them responsible for the achievement of organizational goals can be used as a motivation strategy within the workplace. Jiang et al. (2017) explained that organizational goals are measured against the employee's ability to execute tasks based on their responsibilities. Additionally, Heyden et al. (2017) suggested that increased responsibility can enhance the development of employees. Lastly, Hofmann et al. (2017) explained that employees can help promote organizational success when their environment supports their responsibilities. Therefore, hotel leaders may consider allocating adequate resources to help create an environment that supports their employees in stewarding their responsibilities.

Career advancement often results in increased motivation and increased engagement. Promotion opportunities, along with professional development opportunities, may influence employee motivation. Yamamoto et al. (2021) explained that improving one's technical skill increases job satisfaction and positively relates to the well-being of the workers. Employee development initiatives should increase employee competency and be expected to yield high returns for the organization (Bosse et al., 2017). Researchers have found that leaders may benefit by creating strategies to enable promotion opportunities and educate their employees on different advancement opportunities.

Leaders demonstrate positive recognition by commending employees via praise or rewards to reach the desired goal or produce high-quality work. Management recognition

of performance has been shown to motivate employees (Prasad Kotni & Kamrumuri, (2018). Additionally, work-based recognition results in increased performance and increased work output (Anderson et al., 2017). Despite research showing the importance of recognition, Wang et al. (2018) conducted a study in which over 50% of participants reported that lack of recognition often affects their work. Based on the previous research, managers may increase work performance by implementing positive recognition practices within their organization.

Hygiene Factors

Extrinsic factors that contribute to one's job dissatisfaction are hygiene factors. The hygiene factors, which are external to the job, include (a) company policy and administration, (b) supervision, (c) interpersonal relationships, (d) working conditions, (e) salary, (f) status, and (g) job security (Herzberg, 1968). When hygiene factors are not present, the result is dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1974). Hygiene factors only contribute to the individual's degree of dissatisfaction (Alrawahi et al., 2020). A study conducted by Ann and Blum (2020) showed that four hygiene factors, (a) technical supervision, (b) personal life, (c) job security, and (d) status, had a significant negative effect on job dissatisfaction. Poor working conditions, lack of recognition, excessive workload, and low salary have been significant factors contributing to dissatisfaction in previous research (Alrawahi et al. 2020). By eliminating dissatisfaction, leaders may be able to optimize their employees' performance.

Company Policy and Administration. Company policy can influence employee attitude, job satisfaction, and motivation. Business leaders should aim to create a policy

that creates an inclusive culture and motivates employees (Cesário & Chambel, 2017). Bosse et al. (2017) highlighted the importance of company policy in the hotel industry, explaining that policy must promote the growth and development of the organization's employees. Additionally, Angayarakanni (2021) noted that opportunities for training and development and creating potential for career advancement directly influence job satisfaction. Researchers have suggested that developing and implementing sustainable and efficient policies that promote the growth of the organization can directly affect employees.

Supervision. Business leaders often recognize the importance of workplace motivation but rarely take the necessary steps to cultivate a motivational environment. Boakye et al. (2021) found that supervisory support and interpersonal support are positively associated with employee engagement. High-quality supervision can be a positive influence on overall organizational success (Jiang et al., 2017). Ling et al. (2019) examined the relationship between leaders who create a feedback environment and their employees' intrinsic motivation. The authors found a significant positive relationship between feedback environment and intrinsic motivation; however, the level of influence was determined by the feedback quality, feedback delivery, and constructive feedback. Erdal and Budak (2021) highlighted the negative effects of abusive supervision and explained that toxic relationships between employees and leaders affect job satisfaction, efficiency, and productivity. The oversight of staff activity and the creation of efficient lines of communication can positively influence an organization.

Successful organizations have clear communication channels in which supervisors

and subordinates can exchange information as needed. Jiang et al. (2017) suggested that having too strict reporting lines hinders leader oversight. Furthermore, Filimonau et al. (2020) explained that larger hotels that have strict vertical hierarchical structures may experience a delayed flow of information. Unclear communication may decrease performance due to slow knowledge exchange in a continuously evolving environment.

Interpersonal Relationships. Interpersonal relationships within the workplace refer to the personal and working relationships between workers and their supervisors, subordinates, and peers. Herzberg et al. (1959) suggested that interpersonal relationships between managers, subordinates, and peers do not directly contribute to job satisfaction, but the absence of positive relationships may result in dissatisfaction. The level of relationship engagement between managers and subordinates directly influences the realization of organizational goals (Jiang et al., 2017). Goodboy et al. (2017) explored how workplace bullying affected work engagement and found that workplace bullying indirectly disengaged employees by denying autonomy and decreasing motivation to perform fulfilling work. Interpersonal relationships may influence work production by motivating or demotivating employees (Bosse et al., 2017). Furthermore, Yan et al. (2021) found that workplace friendships were positively associated with employee engagement but noted that this relationship was partially mediated by role ambiguity. The engagement of various workgroups and unified operations can promote positive interpersonal relationships throughout the organization and may lead to organizational success.

Working Conditions. Working conditions can directly influence employee motivation and job satisfaction. Working conditions include physical surroundings, environment, workload, location, air quality, and work equipment (Herzberg et al., 1959). Yamamoto et al. (2021) explained that improving the workplace environment is one way to keep employee motivation high and keep turnover rates low. Bashir et al. (2020) examined the relationship between work conditions, job satisfaction, motivation, and job performance. The researchers found that (a) favorable work conditions result in increased job satisfaction, (b) a positive relationship exists between work conditions and performance through job satisfaction, and (c) motivation has a significant and positive influence on the work condition–job satisfaction–job performance relationship. Hotel managers may benefit from understanding the importance of providing a healthy work environment for their employees and may use this information to better prioritize initiatives to improve workplace conditions.

Job Security. Employees may be more motivated if they have a sense of job security and do not experience constant pressure from the prospect of being fired. Employees experience job security when they sense stability relating to continuous employment (Herzberg et al., 1959). Job security is one of the biggest influencing factors of employee motivation and performance (Jiang et al., 2017). Altinay et al. (2019) found that job security can mediate the relationship between leader–member exchange and work engagement, suggesting that when leaders and employees have strong relationships, the employee will have an increased sense of job security and will be able to be more engaged in their work. Filimonau et al. (2020) examined the relationship between

organizational resilience, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and perceived job security. The researchers found that hotels that invested in their CSR initiatives increased their organizational resilience, which increased perceived job security and further promoted organizational commitment. By ensuring the job security of their employees, managers can promote organizational commitment and increase retention.

Salary. Employee salary rates may influence organizational commitment and retention. Furthermore, compensation can be leveraged to recruit potential employees. Increasing employee salary can result in increased work production (Herzberg et al., 1959). Based on their findings, Chiwawa and Wissink (2021) suggested leaders are transparent with their communication regarding pay Yamamoto et al (2021) found that salary was one of the most important factors that determined workplace motivation; however, the authors suggested that the combination of financial and non-financial rewards should be used to maximize employee motivation. In support of Yamamoto et al. (2021), Kollenschner et al. (2016) found that salary is considered a motivating factor for employees. Researchers highlight the importance of employee salary rate and show how managers can leverage salary to influence employee motivation, job satisfaction, performance, and hotel profitability.

Status. The status of an employee within the organization is another factor that can influence morale, motivation, and job satisfaction. Seniority is one variable that contributes to an employee's status (Maak et al., 2017). Conflicts may arise as employees strive to reach a higher status within their organization. Leaders may be able to mitigate potential conflict by creating organizational structures that make the employees feel

appreciated and acknowledged (Hetland et al., 2018). Being aware of privileges, job titles, and symbols of rank or positional within the organization will help hotel managers create business strategies to promote status in all positions by providing meaningful work for all individuals at all levels of the organization.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Leadership

Based on previous research, organizational leaders may benefit from understanding how Herzberg's two-factor theory relates to human resource management's different characteristics. For example, leaders may reduce dissatisfaction by focusing on company policy, administration, and other hygiene factors. Ruiz and Davis (2017) explained that their findings suggest that hygiene factors such as positive working conditions, positive relationships with supervisors, and positive relationships with peers, were included in effective strategies to retain millennial employees. Alrawahi et al. (2020) highlighted the importance of positive hygiene factors in workplace conditions. The authors explained that the absence of health and safety measures in their participant's workplace was the most frequently mentioned source of job satisfaction. Occupational stressors, such as documentation procedures and work environment, can also be a primary source of job dissatisfaction, resulting in increased job turnover rates (Garza & Taliaferro, 2021). Leaders who fully understand their organizational environment and factors contributing to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction may choose to implement different leadership strategies to optimize workforce productivity.

Leaders must also understand how they can leverage motivators to increase job satisfaction within the workplace. Ruiz and Davis (2017) explained eight of their nine

participants stated opportunities for growth and advancement were reasons they did not leave their current occupation. Alrawahi et al. (2020) explained that individuals from all three participating hospitals mentioned professional development opportunities contributed to their job satisfaction. Factors such as autonomy, flexibility, and positive feedback from leadership have also contributed to positive work satisfaction (Garza & Taliaferro, 2021). The factors that contribute to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction within the business context can be individually leveraged to increase job satisfaction and decrease job dissatisfaction.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Motivation

Motivation may influence productivity, output, and goal achievement within an organization. Motivation refers to one's desire to accomplish organizational and individual goals (Chang & Teng, 2017). Using Herzberg's two-factor theory to guide their data analysis and synthesis, Ebenso et al. (2020) suggested various mechanisms to address employee motivation: (a) feelings of support, (b) comfortable environment, (c) feeling valued and employee recognition, (d) confidence to perform a given task, and (e) interpersonal relationships. Ann and Blum (2020) used Herzberg's two-factor theory to guide their study to identify which motivational factors best predicted job satisfaction and which hygiene factors most contributed to dissatisfaction within their study's population. Their findings suggest that recognition and the work itself has a significant effect on job satisfaction. Shatrov et al. (2021) used Herzberg's two-factor theory to examine how successfully implementing identified factors may be used to decrease demotivation and

increase motivation. Increased workplace motivation can result in maximum employee contribution throughout an organization and may positively impact job satisfaction.

Other Theories Considered

The research in this study focused on employee engagement in the luxury hotel industry. If hotel managers can better understand how to increase employee engagement, they may increase profits and positively affect social change. I used Herzberg's two-factor theory as the conceptual framework to guide this study; however, other relevant theories were considered. Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Vroom's expectancy theory, transformational leadership theory, and the job-demands resources model are commonly used to study the phenomena of employee engagement.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory

Motivational theories are commonly used in business management research to help leaders better understand what may motivate their employees. One of the most well-known motivational theories is Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. Maslow (1943) identified five basic human needs that all people share, including physiological needs, safety needs, social belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization. These needs have a hierarchy and are commonly displayed in a pyramid fashion, indicating that the needs of one's current level must be met before individuals are motivated to meet the needs of the next level (Güss, Burger, & Dörner (2017). For example, because self-actualization is the top of the pyramid, the needs associated with the other four lower levels must be met before the individual can materialize self-actualization needs. Physiological needs, such as hunger, characterize the lowest level, followed by safety needs, social belonging

needs, needs of the ego, and finally, self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). If business leaders can better understand their employees' needs, they may be able to strategically use this information to increase motivation, job satisfaction, and employee engagement.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs model and Herzberg's two-factor theory are similar in nature, as they are both foundational motivation theories. Maslow (1943) and Herzberg (1968) identified factors that motivate employees within the workplace, and these factors are all related to each other. For example, in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the lower level's needs must be met before the individual prioritizes the higher level's requirements. Similarly, for the motivators identified by Herzberg to be fully optimized, hygiene factors must be in place to ensure there is minimal job dissatisfaction. Because of this relationship, Alrawahi et al. (2020) suggested that Herzberg's two-factor theory's motivators are similar to the higher needs identified by Maslow's hierarchy, and Herzberg's hygiene factors are similar to the levels of lower needs. The intrinsic factors are comparable to the higher needs of self-esteem and actualization, while the external factors are similar to physiological and safety needs.

Herzberg (1968) emphasized that job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction are two independent constructs; thus, they can exist simultaneously. Similarly, Maslow (1943) stated that most humans are partially satisfied with their basic needs and somewhat unsatisfied with their basic needs at the same time. Maslow also explained that a reversal of the hierarchy could occur based on the priorities of the individual in some instances. Similarly, research has shown that factors initially identified by Herzberg as hygiene factors may act as motivators in some circumstances (Holliman & Daniels, 2018). This

dynamic relationship between motivational factors and individuals' basic needs suggests that leaders must understand that employees' needs may never be fully met. Furthermore, employees will likely have certain levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction at the same time. I did not choose Maslow's hierarchy of needs for the conceptual framework because I do not plan to interview subordinates to assess whether their needs are met by their supervisors.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Employee Engagement. Due to the relationship between motivation and employee engagement, Maslow's hierarchy of needs provides a foundation for researchers to explore employee engagement. Business leaders need deeply engaged and motivated employees to achieve organizational goals (Helbling, 2018). Madan (2017) explained that Maslow's hierarchy of needs relates to Mercer's four-stage model of employee engagement, suggesting that, (a) fulfilling basic and safety needs will satisfy employees, (b) fulfilling social needs leads to motivated employees, (c) providing social and esteem needs will result in committed employees, and (d) meeting esteem and self-actualization needs allows employees to reach the advocate stage within Mercer's model. King and Gontarz (2020) described how engagement strategies developed from Maslow's hierarchy of needs may be used to decrease employee absenteeism. If business leaders understand their employees' needs, they may be able to implement strategies that result in a motivated and engaged workforce.

Vroom's Expectancy Theory

Although both Vroom's expectancy theory and Herzberg's two-factor theory are related to motivation, Vroom emphasized one's expectation of future outcomes rather

than the individual's needs. Vroom (1964) suggested that one's motivation is a product of three factors: (a) valence, how much an individual values a reward, (b) expectancy, the belief that increased efforts will lead to increased performance, and (c) instrumentality, the belief that one's increased performance will lead to a reward. Vroom's expectancy theory is a cognitive theory of goal choice, in which individuals weigh the cost and benefits of different options before selecting a goal with an expected outcome (Kanfer et al., 2017). Vroom's theory has been empirically tested and widely debated due to its heavy influence on researcher's modern (Lloyd & Mertens, 2018). Organizational leaders may implement motivation strategies based on Vroom's expectancy theory to increase employee engagement. I did not choose Vroom's expectancy theory due to the focus on performance outcome rather than individual motivation.

Vroom's Expectancy Theory and Employee Engagement. Motivation has been shown to influence employees job attitudes, behavior, job performance, and employee engagement. Supatn and Puapradit (2019) used Vroom's expectancy theory to explore how the motivational factors introduced in the model influence employee engagement, and found a direct influence of expectancy, extrinsic instrumentality, and intrinsic valence on employee engagement, while the influence of intrinsic instrumentality and extrinsic valence on employee engagement was not found. These findings suggest that employees will be more engaged when they believe they will receive an outcome that they value if they apply full effort and complete their job tasks. Wamweru and Makokha (2018) explained that Vroom's expectancy theory provides motivational factors that drive employee engagement and emphasize that leaders must account for personal differences

when providing rewards to individuals. Leaders must take a personal interest in their employees to ensure they provide a valuable reward to the recipient.

Furthermore, leaders should consider tailoring their performance management system to the needs of their organization. Bandow and Self (2016) explained that Vroom's expectancy theory can help leaders accomplish their goals by influencing followers' psychological processes by ensuring expectancy, instrumentality, and valence are perceived. These findings suggest that leaders should create strategies that align new expectations with the employees' behaviors and attitudes throughout the organization to foster a culture of employee engagement.

Transformational Leadership Theory

Leadership is one factor that is routinely studied when exploring employee engagement. James MacGregor Burns popularized the term transformational leadership through his work in the late '70s (Burns, 1978). Transformational leadership can lead to increased performance, increased employee satisfaction, and increased corporate reputation (Cote, 2017). Transformational leadership results in a relationship in which the leader and follower share values, and the leader guide their followers toward a common goal in pursuit of mutual satisfaction (Burns, 1978). Bass and Avolio (1996) extended the work of Burns by further investigating the differences between transactional and transformational leadership and identifying the four tenets of transformational leadership: (a) idealized influence, (b) inspirational motivation, (c) intellectual stimulation, and (d) individualized consideration. I did not choose transformational leadership theory as the conceptual framework for this study because the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

(MLQ) is commonly used to measure transformational leadership in quantitative studies, and my single case study is a qualitative study.

The four tenets of transformational leadership can be demonstrated in the workplace. Leaders show individualized consideration by coaching employees based on the individual's personal developmental needs (Bass, 1999). Idealized influence, which can further be split into idealized attributes and idealized behavior, describes a leader who is a role model to their follower (Paola et al., 2020). Inspirational motivation refers to the leader's ability to motivate employees by emphasizing goals and articulating the organization's future state (Jha & Malviya, 2017). Transformational leaders foster organizational change via intellectual stimulation by allowing employees to challenge the status quo, think creatively, and find new ways of solving problems (Bass, 1999). With a better understanding of the tenets of transformational leadership, individuals may be able to demonstrate actions that are effective during engagement initiatives.

Transformational Leadership Theory and Employee Engagement.

Researchers commonly use transformational leadership theory to explore how a leader's characteristics can influence their work environment and directly impact employee engagement. Mat et al. (2019) found that employee engagement was positively influenced by transformational leadership and highlighted the importance of employing transformational leadership behavior leaders to enhance employee engagement. Breevaart and Bakker (2018) examined how daily transformational leadership influences employee engagement found that transformational leadership boosts engagement when challenge demands are high and can buffer the negative impact of hindrance demands on employee

engagement. Furthermore, Ali Ababneh et al. (2021) found that transformational leadership played a major role in strengthening the association between a hotel's improvement initiative and the employee engagement with the identified initiatives.

Leadership behavior may vary daily, suggesting that transformational leadership behavior may be a finite resource. Faupel and Sub (2019) found that transformational leaders increase employee work engagement during times of change. Buil et al. (2019) found that employee engagement mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and job performance. According to Jha and Malviya (2017), transformational leadership creates an organizational environment that fosters employee engagement and has continuously shown to have a positive relationship with employee engagement. Hai et al. (2019) used the transformational leadership theory to examine the relationship between high-performance human resource practice (HPHRP) and employee engagement. The authors found that transformational leadership moderates the relationship between perceived HPHRP and job engagement in their South Korea sample, but not in the US employee sample.

Transformational leadership theory is directly related to Herzberg's two-factor theory, as it has also been shown to be associated with job satisfaction. Dung and Hai (2020) found a positively significant correlation between transformational leadership and job satisfaction. The authors suggested that business leaders maintain employees' positive attitudes and behavior by applying transformational leadership. Paola et al. (2020) found that transformational leadership was positively related to job satisfaction. Furthermore, Abelha et al. (2018) confirmed a positive relationship between job satisfaction and

transformational leadership and suggest developing transformational leadership competencies within leadership positions. Leaders may be able to foster a culture of positive attitudes and increase job satisfaction if they possess transformational leadership attributes.

Job Demands–Resource Model

Leaders in various career fields can apply the job demands-resource model (JD-R) to improve employee performance and well-being within their organization. JD-R indicates that all job factors relating to employee stress can be classified into two categories: (a) job demands and (b) job resources. Job demands refer to aspects of the job that require physical and psychological effort and job resources refers to aspects of both that aid in achieving work goals, reduce job demands and their associated psychological/physical costs, and stimulate employee learning and development (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Job demands can be further described as (a) hindrance demands, demands that hinder personal development and goal achievement, and (b) challenge demands, demands that may create opportunities for personal growth (Breevaart & Bakker, 2018). Job demands may include emotional interactions with clients, high work pressures, and poor work environment (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Understanding the dimensions of the JDR model may lead to organizational sustainability and strategies for job satisfaction.

The JD-R model suggests that the negative toll of job demands can be buffered by providing an adequate number of resources to the employee, including psychological support, autonomy, and performance feedback (Byrne et al., 2017). Furthermore, job

resources should be valued independently due to their association with employee motivation, as resources can be considered a means to achieve or protect other valued resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Because the JD-R model assumes that every occupation is characterized by two factors, job demands and job resources, the JD-R model may be applied by leaders in every context, regardless of the specific demands and resources associated with the particular setting.

Job Demands–Resource Model and Employee Engagement. Researchers frequently apply the job demands-resources model to identify and measure employee engagement. Schleupner and Kühnel (2021) explained that mental and physical health can act as personal resources within the conceptual model, and found that mental health mediated the relationship between sleep quality and work engagement. Furthermore, employee engagement has been shown to be directly related to the number of resources provided to the employee (Bakker et al., 2007). Lee and Eissenstat (2018) conducted a study composed of 1,997 employees to investigate how the JD-R model may be applied to work engagement and career development and found that career-related job resources and personal resources resulted in high levels of work engagement. These findings suggest that leaders may increase employee engagement by providing career and supervisor support via coaching, mentoring, and encouraging their employees to use organizational benefits.

Furthermore, Tripathi et al. (2021) collected data from 224 hotel employees, used the JD-R model to examine the relationship between psychological empowerment and employee engagement, and found a significant effect of psychological empowerment on

employee engagement levels. Chen et al. (2018) applied the JD-R model in a multi-level study to explore how a leader's autonomy-support climate and psychological resources effect employee engagement, finding that a leaders' autonomy support climate psychological resources are two important motivators for work engagement. In this study, autonomy-support climate refers to the extent to which a leader shows support for an employee's autonomous actions, and psychological resources refer to personal resources including (a) optimism, (b) efficacy, (c) resiliency, and (d) hope. The authors explained that the findings suggest that autonomy support is crucial for employees who have lower personal resources to engage in their work.

The JD-R model has been studied in various work environments. Lee et al. (2019) applied the JD-R model to examine the level of work engagement in 393 childcare workers. They found that job resources, psychological rewards, and job control are significantly associated with the population's work engagement. Furthermore, the findings showed a buffering effect of job resources on the relationship between job demands and work engagement. Cooke et al. (2019) applied the JD-R model to investigate the relationship between public service motivation and employee engagement within 388 participants and found that public service motivation acts as a resource resulting in motivation rather than a moderator of job hindrances. These findings suggest that when workers perceive they have personal resources, workplace resources and are free of rules that hinder efficiency (red tape rules), they will be more engaged. Because literature shows that job demands and job resources are directly related to employee engagement, business leaders may benefit from understanding how to apply the JD-R

within their organization to increase employee engagement, prevent burnout, and increase employee well-being. I did not choose to use the JD-R model as the conceptual framework of this study because although the JD-R model is associated with engagement, is primarily used to assess employee health and well-being.

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement continues to be the focus of business leaders, as increased levels of engagement may result in increased productivity, work quality, and decreased turnover. Kahn (1990) provided the first definition of employee engagement and explained that engagement is characterized by physical, cognitive, and emotional expression during one's role performance. Other researchers refer to employee engagement as the positive, work-related state of mind that is characterized by: (a) vigor, high levels of energy and resilience, (b) dedication, a sense of significance, inspiration, and pride, and (c) absorption, being fully concentrated on one's work (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Many types of engagement are acknowledged in research; however, the popular focus on engagement research includes work engagement and employee engagement despite the unclear differentiation amongst various types of engagement (Kosaka & Sato, 2020). Employee engagement is a multidimensional, motivational concept that often refers to levels of involvement, passion, enthusiasm, and energy (Eldor & Vigoda-Gadot, 2016). A universal definition of employee engagement cannot be described because the concept is characterized by cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components (Ryan, 2017; Ruck et al., 2017). Although there are many different definitions of engagement accepted in management research, its influence on job performance, climate, resources,

profitability, and other organizational factors makes it a focal point for today's business leaders.

Previous research has demonstrated a relationship between employee engagement and productivity. Engaged employees identify with their work role and actively contribute to the work's goals (Kahn, 1990). Engaged employees believe they can deal with their job demands and have a sense of connection with their work duties (Schaufeli et al., 2002). A motivated employee is engaged and works harder to achieve organizational success (Tsvangirai & Chinyamurindi, 2019). Cesário and Chambel (2017) studied 274 workers to examine the relationship between organizational commitment, work engagement, and employee performance. They found that engagement and organizational commitment have a positive relationship with employee performance, with engagement showing a stronger association. Eldor (2017) explained that the perception of organizational politics within previously engaged employees strengthens the relationship between employee engagement and certain workplace behaviors: (a) knowledge sharing, (b) creativity, (c) proactivity, and (d) adaptivity. These findings suggest that engaged employees may view organizational politics as a challenge that can result in more opportunities to achieve goals within the organization rather than a hindrance.

Previous research has been conducted to examine the relationship between engagement and performance. Ismail et al. (2018) conducted a study with 186 participants to explore the relationship between employee engagement and job performance and found a significant positive relationship between employee engagement

and job performance; however, this relationship was mediated by creativity. These findings suggest that the relationship between job performance and employee engagement may not be straightforward. Carter et al. (2018) explained that employee engagement has a strong and positive relationship with job performance and found that engagement can contribute to job performance prediction. Zondo (2020) examined the influence of employee engagement, employee participation, and absenteeism on labor productivity improvement and found that absenteeism has a relationship with labor productivity, and employee engagement and employee participation do not improve labor productivity. These findings suggest that leaders should consider multiple factors when creating strategies to improve employee engagement.

Employee Engagement in the Hospitality Industry

Employee engagement is a popular topic among hotel leaders, as it can be linked to leadership strategy, employee turnover, motivation, and job satisfaction. Sarwar et al. (2020) conducted a quantitative study to explore how ethical leadership is related to employee engagement, collecting data from 697 employees in the hospitality industry. The researchers found that ethical leadership was positively associated with employee engagement and suggest that leaders should emphasize the importance of employee engagement, as it may increase job satisfaction (Sarwar et al., 2020). Additionally, Ozturk et al. (2021) found that servant leadership strategy and tactics had a stronger positive effect on employee engagement than job satisfaction. Kaya and Karatepe (2020) collected data from Turkish hotel employees to discover if servant leadership better explains work engagement, career satisfaction, and adaptive performance than authentic

leadership. Their findings showed that the positive relationship between servant leadership and work engagement and performance outcome was stronger than the relationship between authentic leadership and work engagement and performance outcomes. Furthermore, the researchers found that work engagement predicts both career satisfaction and adaptive performance.

Business leaders must be aware how engagement can be leveraged to create various strategies within their organization. Hu et al. (2020) investigated how hotel employee perception of the organization's corporate social responsibility (CSR) would impact customer orientation and found that a higher degree of perceived CSR leads to greater orientation through work engagement. The researchers explained their findings and suggested that one effective way to motivate employees' customer-oriented behavior is to develop a CSR strategy, provide CSR resources, and monitor how the employees' perception of the organization's CSR strategy affects employee engagement. Arasli and Arici (2019) collected data from 305 seasonal employees working in five-star hotels to examine how their perceived supervisor support effected work engagement and turnover intention. They found a positive relationship between perceived supervisor support and (a) job satisfaction and (b) work engagement. Additionally, they found that work engagement had a positive relationship with job embeddedness and a negative association with turnover intention. These findings suggest that hotel managers may benefit if they create an environment that supports their employees, leading to an engaged workforce and decreasing turnover intention.

Reducing turnover results in the reduction of recruiting and training costs. Deri et al. (2021) found that promotion opportunity, a factor identified by Herzberg to influence job satisfaction, was the best indicator of turnover intention in their hotel participants. Turnover in the hospitality industry is estimated between 50 and 300% (Karatepe & Kaviti, 2016). Book et al. (2019) conducted a study with employees from a hotel-casino resort in the Southwestern United States. The authors found that leadership satisfaction (LS) directly affects employee engagement, loyalty, and intention to stay. Furthermore, the researchers found that employee engagement mediated the relationship between LS and loyalty and the relationship between LS and intention to stay. Book et al. (2019) explained that hospital managers might benefit from their findings by creating strategies to increase engagement, yielding increased loyalty and intention to stay. Hotel managers can leverage resources such as bonus pay and feedback to provide the motivation that will increase engagement and mediate the negative effects of burnout and stress (Employee engagement insights, 2019). Olugbade and Karatepe (2019) found that work engagement fosters service recovery performance, creative performance, and job performance while mitigating quitting intentions. Hotel leaders should create a work environment that promotes employee engagement for the positive effects associated with reducing turnover.

Engaged front-line employees are necessary for maintaining excellent service in the hospitality workplace. Grobelna (2019) examined the effects of personal and job-related characteristics on one's work engagement and its influence on the individuals' performance. The findings show that the personal characteristics of positive affectivity

and polychronicity, and the job characteristics of task significance, have a positive and significant impact on hotel employees' work engagement, thus, increasing the individuals' job performance. This information may help managers create recruiting strategies that assess individuals for high positive affectivity and polychronic tendency.

Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction

Employee engagement may influence various factors such as organizational commitment, production, and job satisfaction. Aggarwal and Chaudhuri (2017) conducted a study consisting of 362 participants to identify factors leading to engagement, factors leading to job satisfaction, and the relationship between engagement and job satisfaction and found that employee engagement leads to job satisfaction within their studies' population. Bailey et al. (2017) conducted an extensive review of 217 studies. They identified eight studies that examined the relationship between engagement as an independent factor and job satisfaction as an outcome, all of which found that engagement was positively associated with job satisfaction. Furthermore, Bailey et al. (2017) concluded their research by explaining that although there are mixed findings in business literature regarding the outcome of engagement, it is associated most strongly with the outcomes of job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

It is important for leaders to understand the differences and similarities between job satisfaction and employee engagement. Eldor and Vigoda-Gadot (2016) explained that their findings support previous literature and suggest that employee engagement is an independent motivational construct and needs to be distinguished from job satisfaction. This paradigm must be understood, as it allows for a relationship to exist between the two

concepts and allows for independent measurements of the two concepts. Victor and Hoole (2017) examined the relationship between rewards, trust, and engagement. They utilized four subscales from the job satisfaction survey (JSS) to measure the participants' perceptions and attitudes regarding extrinsic rewards. The researchers found that extrinsic, intrinsic, and total rewards have a statistically significant relationship with work engagement, suggesting that higher rewards, extrinsic and intrinsic, will yield higher engagement levels. Business leaders may benefit from considering job satisfaction and employee engagement when creating reward systems.

Various research models have been utilized to explore the relationship between multiple factors and employee engagement. Rai and Maheshwari (2021) utilized the job characteristics model (JCM) to examine the relationship between five core job characteristics: (a) autonomy, (b) task identity, (c) task significance, (d) skill variety, and (e) feedback, with work engagement, organizational engagement, and job satisfaction. The authors found that job characteristics positively influenced work engagement, organizational engagement, and job satisfaction. Furthermore, work engagement fully mediated the relationship between the job characteristics identified in the JCM and organizational engagement and job satisfaction. These findings suggest that leaders may utilize a job design focused on the JCM to increase job satisfaction and organizational engagement by engaging employees with the work. Employee engagement is a complex concept that can be manipulated by many different variables.

Topchyan and Woehler (2021) explored whether teacher status, gender, and years of experience affected job satisfaction and work engagement. Their findings showed that

full-time teachers had high levels of social engagement, engagement with the students, and job satisfaction and those female teachers were more engaged with the students than the male teachers in the study. Furthermore, the researchers showed that length of experience did not significantly affect job satisfaction or work engagement. Researchers suggest that the factors that directly affected the participants' engagement also directly affected the participants' job satisfaction. However, McIlveen et al. (2021) found that factors identified by the Decent Work Scale (DWS), complementary values, free time and rest, adequate compensation, access to health care, and safe conditions, that predicted job satisfaction were different than the factors that predicted work engagement.

Complementary values were the only DWS characteristic that predicted job satisfaction, work engagement, and withdrawal intention. Leaders may be able to apply this research to understand that the DWS has independent positive associations with job satisfaction and work engagement.

Employee Engagement and Motivation

Researchers have shown that employee motivation is related to employee engagement in many ways. Motivation and psychological meaningfulness influence employee engagement (Zondo, 2020). Through their literature-based analysis, Al Mehrzi and Singh (2016) explained that organizational culture, leadership, perceived organizational support, and teamwork are factors that influence employee engagement when mediated by employee motivation. Eldor and Vigoda-Gadot (2016) identified four behaviors of employee engagement that most researchers agree upon based on their literature: knowledge sharing, creativity, proactivity, and adaptability. Tsvangirai and

Chinyamurindi (2019) examined the moderating effect of employee motivation on workplace surveillance, the employer's actions to ensure employees' actions are seen and monitored, and employee engagement. The researchers found that employee motivation had a significant positive moderating effect on the relationship between workplace surveillance and employee engagement. Furthermore, Tsvangirai and Chinyamurindi (2019) found that employee motivation and employee engagement positively relate to one another, suggesting that a positive change in one variable will positively affect the other.

Leaders may be able to leverage motivating factors to enhance employee engagement. Vujčić et al. (2017) investigated the role of autonomous motivation in the relationship between job demands and work-related well-being. The researchers found that when their participants experienced more challenges, they also experience more motivation, which resulted in reporting increased positive affect and work engagement. Furthermore, when the participants experienced more hindrance demands, they experienced less autonomous motivation and reported less positive affect and less work engagement. Mani and Mishra (2020) conducted an extensive literature review to identify non-monetary variables that business practitioners could utilize to increase employee engagement. In doing so, they created the "GREAT" model of motivation to be used as a framework for leaders to increase workplace morale and motivation. Twenty variables were identified and grouped into five levers to create the acronym "GREAT": (a) growth lever, (b) renewal lever, (c) enabling lever, (d) aspirational lever, and (e) transparency lever. Business leaders can implement an employee engagement strategy with a non-

monetary focus to increase their workforce's motivation and morale (Mani & Mishra, 2020). Basic needs satisfaction in the workplace has been shown to be associated with increased employee engagement and can minimize the negative relationship between stress and engagement, connecting universal motivation theory and engagement theory (Breugh, 2021). This suggests that the basic needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are positively related to engagement. Leaders may be able to implement these factors into their engagement strategies, resulting in a positive effect on employee behavior.

Transition

In Section 1, I highlighted the importance of employee engagement in the hospitality industry, suggesting that some hotel leaders lack strategies to engage employees. The purpose of this qualitative single-case study is to explore strategies hotel leaders implement to increase employee engagement. The interview questions contained in Section 1 will be used to interview hotel managers to collect data. I explained Herzberg's two-factor theory, the conceptual framework of this study, and provided a list of operational definitions that may be uncommon for many readers. Section 1 also includes the assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and significance of the study. I concluded Section 1 with a review of the professional and academic literature associated with Herzberg's two-factor theory and employee engagement.

In Section 2 of the study, I will provide a detailed description of the research process, explaining my role as the primary data collection instrument and providing a description of the research population. I justify my sampling method and why I chose to

perform a qualitative single case study. Next, I list my data collection instruments and describing how I will collect and organize my gathered data. I finish Section 2 explaining Braun and Clarke's six phases of thematic analysis and the dependability and appropriateness of my research strategy. In conclusion, in Section 3, I will present my findings and discuss how leaders may apply the findings in their business. Lastly, I provide recommendations for practical future action and suggestions for future research.

Section 2: The Project

The focus of this qualitative study was to understand the strategies that hotel managers use to increase employee engagement. Section 2 provides a detailed review of this study and the research process. Section 2 includes the purpose statement and an explanation of my role as the primary research instrument. Next, I describe my research population and justify my sampling method. I highlight the importance of ethical research, list my data collection instruments, explain how I collected and organized my data, and describe Braun and Clarke's six phases of thematic analysis. Lastly, I justify the appropriateness of my research strategy.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies that hotel managers use to engage employees. The target population consisted of three managers from one luxury hotel in Oahu, Hawaii, who implemented effective strategies to engage employees. The implications for positive social change include the potential to increase employee engagement, which may result in increased profitability (Tadesse, 2019). Increased profitability and growth may create new job opportunities and stimulate community prosperity. Furthermore, this study can serve as a research model for future studies in the hotel industry.

Role of the Researcher

I served as the primary instrument for data collection in this study. The researcher acts as the primary instrument by which data are collected in qualitative research (Roller, 2019). The data sources included semistructured interviews and company documents

related to employee engagement strategies. Additionally, qualitative researchers record data obtained in interviews, code and categorize the data, attach concepts to the categories, and identify emerging themes exposed in the data (Ganapathy, 2016). As the researcher, I recruited participants, developed and conducted interviews, and analyzed the data obtained throughout the interviews. I did not have any previous experience working in hospitality leadership. Furthermore, I had no knowledge of leadership strategies to increase employee engagement in luxury hotels. I had no previous relationship with the participants in this study. I chose my research topic out of personal interest and faculty support.

For research to be conducted, ethical approval must be obtained from a research ethics committee and the university's institutional review board, allowing for protecting the participants' rights, safety, and well-being (Doody & Noonan, 2016). I complied with the principles of the Belmont Report for this study. The three guiding principles of the Belmont Report are respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (Miracle, 2016). I adhered to the principles of the Belmont Report by providing participants with a written consent form that explained the purpose of the study and confidentiality procedures, offering full disclosure of participation. Furthermore, I obtained Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval before collecting data.

Researcher bias is a potential threat to data quality in qualitative research (Roller, 2019). To minimize bias, researchers must consider their views on the studied phenomenon during the planning and analysis stages of a study (Bengtsson, 2016). Bracketing is a method that many researchers use to help mitigate the possible negative

effects of bias, which involves suspending an individual's preconceptions associated with the research topic (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Furthermore, bracketing may enrich data collection, research findings, and interpretation of the data (Tufford & Newman, 2012). I maintained a research journal consisting of memos throughout the data collection and analysis processes. The research journal allowed me to acknowledge my preconceptions and reflect on my personal engagement with the data. Furthermore, journaling helped me avoid using leading questions while conducting interviews to remain clear and neutral.

Researchers can also mitigate bias by exploring a variety of sources. I used multiple data sources to collect information during the data collection phase of this study. The use of multiple data sources may increase the validity of results in research that includes self-reporting methods such as interviews (Althubaiti, 2016). Lastly, I used member checking to minimize researcher bias. Member checking happens when the participants are actively involved in checking and confirming the researcher's interpretations of the interview responses prior to data analysis (Birt et al., 2016).

Open-ended interviews can provide more depth than other data collection methods, as they allow for opportunities to deepen discussions if time permits (Bengtsson, 2016). Interview protocols help facilitate the interview process and can increase interview effectiveness by ensuring that information is obtained in the allotted time (Yeong et al., 2018). Using an interview protocol helped mitigate bias, as I asked all participants the same questions. Furthermore, conducting semistructured interviews with a final open-ended question allows the researcher to probe the participant for additional

information regarding their experience and perception of the researched phenomena (Yeong et al., 2018).

Participants

The participants included managers who implemented strategies to engage employees within their organization. Participants were from one luxury hotel in Honolulu, Hawaii. Foundational criteria for interviewees in qualitative research include availability, willingness to interview, and the individuals' experience and knowledge related to the research topic (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Other eligibility criteria for my study included (a) currently employed at the participating hotel, (b) 2 or more years of management experience at the participating hotel, (c) five or more direct subordinates, and (d) speaks fluent English. The participants worked in various levels of leadership, including executive-level leaders, directors, and department managers.

I did not have personal relationships with anyone in the participating organization. I had no interaction with any individuals from the participating organization prior to conducting this study. Additionally, I did not work for the participating organization; thus, no individuals were considered professional colleagues.

My strategy for gaining access to my participants included emailing the hotel's human resources (HR) personnel, explaining my recruitment process, and asking for assistance recruiting participants. This was an informal inquiry that provided a general overview of my study. First, I asked the HR representative to request participation from leaders who met the qualifying criteria by providing a letter of invitation. This informally confirmed the participating organization. Any formal interaction with the participating

organization needed to first be approved by members of the Walden University IRB. After I gained approval to move forward with my study, I contacted the participating HR representative to make initial contact with my study's participants. I asked the HR representative to provide a list of volunteers with contact information included. I contacted the participants and established a working relationship with my participants by discussing the purpose of my study, requesting a signature for informed consent and answering any related questions via email and/or telephone.

Discussing confidentiality with the participants helped to build trust (Doody & Noonan, 2013). Doody and Noonan (2013) explained the importance of establishing rapport and trust because the participant needs to be comfortable providing honest answers. Researchers can build trust with their participants by emphasizing why the research is being done and why their participation is meaningful (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). By outlining the purpose of the study, providing full disclosure of voluntary participation, and explaining confidentiality procedures, I established a trusting relationship with all participants. Many researchers attempt to establish commonalities, rapport, and trust with their participants before conducting interviews (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). To further enhance participant trust, I reviewed the purpose of the study, the consent, and the agenda for the interview process before beginning the interview.

Research Method and Design

Research Method

I used a qualitative research method to explore strategies that some hotel leaders use to increase employee engagement. Researchers can use a qualitative method,

quantitative method, or mixed methods to collect and analyze data during research (Hammond & Wellington, 2013). Qualitative data refer to information gathered by a researcher that is not numerical, such as participant judgments, feelings, ideas, and beliefs that are expressed in words (Walliman, 2011). When a researcher intends to explore and understand participants' experiences, the qualitative method is preferred (Yin, 2017). Qualitative research focuses on words, text, and images rather than statistical data associated with quantitative research (Hesse-Biber, 2016). To better understand the lived experiences of my study's participants, I conducted semistructured interviews using open-ended questions. In qualitative studies, the aim is to explore phenomena and discover meaning based on the subjective expressions of the participants (Hesse-Biber, 2016). I sought to collect nonnumerical data to understand strategies to increase employee engagement, so a qualitative method was most appropriate for this study.

A quantitative method was not appropriate for my study. Quantitative studies are confirmatory, as the aim of a quantitative study is to test a hypothesis (Hesse-Biber, 2016). Quantitative data are characterized by numbers that are analyzed with statistics (Walliman, 2011). Hammond and Wellington (2013) explained that a quantitative method is deductive, and researchers typically focus on hypothesis testing. The quantitative method includes surveys and questionnaires to collect numerical data. Furthermore, the quantitative method is commonly used to explore change across studied units (Smith & Hasan, 2020). During my research, I did not test a hypothesis by comparing numerical data or examine quantitative differences amongst multiple cases.

Although quantitative and qualitative methods are useful to understand the

strategies that hotel leaders use to increase employee engagement, using mixed methods would not have been the most appropriate choice because a qualitative method allowed me to answer my research question. When a researcher uses qualitative and quantitative methods within a single study, the methodology is referred to as mixed methods (Hesse-Biber, 2016). Researchers use mixed methods to develop previous research further, enhance conclusions of previous research, or expand the focus of a study (Corr et al., 2020). Furthermore, researchers use mixed methods to create generalizable results from qualitative research (Strijker et al., 2020). The purpose of this study was not to expand on the conclusions of previous quantitative research or to use my qualitative research as foundational planning for future quantitative research. Additionally, I did not have variables to compare or contrast; therefore, conducting a mixed-methods study would have been inappropriate.

Research Design

Common qualitative research designs include case studies, ethnography, and action research (Witell et al., 2020). Case studies are used to explore a phenomenon in a real-world context (Witell et al., 2020). Researchers conducting case studies commonly use interviews, focus groups, observations, and exploration of organizational artifacts when collecting data (Harrison et al., 2017). A single case study was the most appropriate research design to answer my research question by interviewing participants with real-world experience related to the phenomena of interest.

Yin (2018) explained that researchers must decide whether to have a single case or multiple cases in their studies. I used a single case study design for my research to

understand how one organization implemented strategies to increase employee engagement. A researcher must ensure that the case is relevant to the research question (Yin, 2018). The participants included hotel managers who used strategies to increase employee engagement. Multiple case studies are advantageous when researchers compare similarities and differences in various cases (Ridder, 2017). As I previously stated, I explored a single organization's successful employee engagement strategies. Fishman (2016) explained that multiple case studies are used by researchers to compare similar cases. My research design did not include comparing multiple cases. Thus, a multiple case study design was inappropriate.

The purpose of this study was not to focus on a specific culture over an extended period but rather to explore a relevant business problem. Long-term data collection via participant observation and documentation to understand a culture or social setting describes ethnography (Hammersley, 2018). Due to the required presence of the researcher, closeness to the studied topic is the main advantage of ethnography (Witell et al., 2020). Yin (2018) explained that ethnographies require long periods of observation in the field, which is one main distinction compared to case study research. Ethnography was not the most appropriate design to explore strategies that leaders use to increase employee engagement.

Action research design was inappropriate, as I did not work with managers to help identify problems within their organization, create a plan to solve the identified problem, and implement a new strategy. During action research, a researcher collaborates with practitioners to identify a problem, conduct research, create guidelines based on data, and

intervene (Witell et al., 2020). Action research involves collecting evidence to support improvement interventions through cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Edwards & Burns, 2016). Action research may aid in integrating theory and practice to help managers solve business problems in complex environments (Ripamonti et al., 2016). Although action research may be beneficial to many businesses, intervention was not the focus of my study.

Data saturation is one criterion used to assess the quality of qualitative research, signifying that the collected data are adequate to answer the research question (Lowe et al., 2018). Researchers achieve data saturation when no new relevant information emerges despite additional interviews, suggesting that the researcher may conclude their data collection process (Fofana et al., 2020). Researchers can use open-ended questions during interviews to explore various aspects of their topic of interest, allowing participants to offer detailed descriptions (Tran et al., 2017). Fofana et al. (2020) explained that qualitative researchers often use the concept of data saturation to determine adequate sample size. To achieve data saturation, I interviewed eligible participants until no new themes or ideas emerged during data collection. Furthermore, to achieve data saturation, I analyzed the collected data until no new themes emerged.

Population and Sampling

The sampling technique that was most appropriate for this study was purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a technique that allows researcher to match their sample with the objective of the study, which improves the trustworthiness of the results. (Campbell et al., 2020). Ames et al. (2019) explained that researchers can use purposive

sampling to achieve a manageable amount of rich data that are in alignment with the purpose of their study. The main disadvantage of purposive sampling is that it may be prone to research bias (Sharma., 2017). To mitigate bias, participation was voluntary, and I had no affiliation with the participating organization. Furthermore, avoiding leading questions during the interview and using multiple data sources helped mitigate bias. Implementing purposive sampling allowed to me to ensure that volunteer participants met predetermined criteria that aligned with my research question.

The population initially included three hotel managers in Hawaii who had implemented strategies to maintain high levels of employee engagement. Participants included in this study met foundational criteria that included (a) availability, (b) willingness to participate, and (c) related experience implementing successful strategies to increase employee engagement. Other eligibility criteria included (a) currently employed at the participating hotel, (b) 2 or more years of management experience at the participating hotel, and (c) speaks fluent English.

I planned for additional interviewees to be chosen, if needed, from the initial pool of volunteers gathered by the assisting HR representative. Marshall et al. (2013) explained that determining adequate sample size relates to data saturation when a researcher no longer gathers new data from the participants. Snowball sampling occurs when participants refer eligible individuals from their network (Valerio et al., 2016). I sought to achieve data saturation by selecting and interviewing participants until no new data emerged.

I conducted virtual interviews via Zoom software. I asked the participants to

choose a location for themselves that is accessible, in an area appropriate for minimizing distractions, and during a time of convenience. The interviewee selected a location that allows them to be alone to maintain confidentiality. I asked the participants to participate in an interview that will last approximately one hour.

Ethical Research

Before I started my research, I requested Walden University's IRB approval to contact potential participants. Once I received approval number 01-21-22-0980422 from Walden's IRB, I contacted an HR representative from the participating hotel requesting access to volunteer participants. To help mitigate potential misunderstandings, I will email the HR representative an outline including the purpose of my study, eligibility requirements, full disclosure of voluntary participation, confidentiality procedures, and my contact information in an informed consent form. I asked the HR representative to disseminate the document to the volunteers and I collect the consent once it is complete. I will collect the documents from the HR representative.

Ethical disagreements may occur between a researcher and participants during the research process (Dawson et al., 2019). Because ethical issues may arise, researchers should continuously monitor ethical issues during their research (Dawson et al., 2019). I followed the Belmont Report to ensure ethical conduct throughout the entirety of the research process. The Belmont Report summarizes ethical principles and guidelines that enable researchers to resolve ethical issues that may be associated with studies including human subjects and consists of three basic ethical principles: (a) respect for persons, (b) beneficence, and (c) justice (US Department of Health & Human Services, 1979). To

adhere to the criteria of the Belmont report, I first provided the participants with an informed consent that explains the participants' right to withdraw from the study at any time with no repercussion. I encouraged participants to express feelings of discomfort during the interviews, as I made efforts to ensure the participant's well-being. Lastly, I showed justice by gaining IRB approval contacting potential subjects, and expressing that participation is voluntary during recruitment. I did not provide monetary incentives for participation.

Infringements of confidentiality could result in decreased trust between participants and researchers, negative effects on the reputation of a group, or harmful effects to participants (Turcotte-Tremblay & McSween-Cadieux, 2018). To ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the participants, I labeled interviews with a participation code rather than using the participants' name. Furthermore, I stored all research data, documents, and consent forms on a USB drive that is password protected. After five years, I will discard the physical and digital documents, so it is not recoverable by shredding paper documents and dismantling the USB drive to destroy data.

Data Collection Instruments

I was the primary data collection instrument in this study. Roller (2019) explained that one attribute of qualitative research is that the researcher is at the center of gathering data, acting as the main instrument to collect data. Verbal interaction between the researcher and participants can provide more depth than written questions (Bengtsson, 2016). In-depth interviews allow participants to explain personal details about the researched phenomena (Doody & Noonan, 2013). I conducted semistructured interviews

using an interview protocol.

I developed my interview protocol (Appendix) consisting of open-ended interview questions to explore strategies that hotel managers use to increase employee engagement. The benefits of using an interview protocol include facilitating the interview process among various participants consistently and ensuring the researcher obtains high-quality information in the allotted interview time (Yeong et al., 2018). The open-ended interview questions helped participants answer the research question and allow probing for more information if necessary. I encouraged the participants to respond based on their experience in the hotel industry.

The Walden DBA program requires researchers to implement triangulation. There are four types of triangulations that allow researchers to increase validity and decrease bias in one's research: (a) data triangulation, (b) investigator triangulation, (c) methodological triangulation, and (d) theory triangulation (Joslin & Muller, 2016). I used methodological triangulation during my research. Researchers use methodological triangulation by collecting data via various data collection procedures or sources (Joslin & Muller, 2016). For example, researchers can use a combination of interviews, observations, questionnaires, and relevant company documents to collect data (Abdalla et al., 2017). I used documents that relate to engagement strategies within the participating organization as a second data source.

During participant recruitment, I requested documents used when the participants were developing their employee engagement strategies. Documents used to track employee engagement were requested during the initial contact with the participant. This

allowed for time to gather relative documentation. Document analysis may provide useful information when analyzing recorded interview data (Rooshenas et al., 2019). I used these documents to triangulate the data collected in the interviews. Triangulation adds depth to collected data during qualitative research (Fusch et al., 2018). I asked that participants explain the importance of their provided documents to their engagement strategy to understand the documents' relevancy.

Yin (2018) explained that case study research is judged on four criteria: (a) construct validity, (b) internal validity, (c) external validity, and (d) reliability. I applied member checking to allow participants to validate my interpretation of their interview responses. Member checking refers to the researcher returning analyzed data to the participants, allowing them to check for accuracy and validation (Birt et al., 2016). Once the interview data was analyzed, I emailed the participants summary of their response, requesting that they review my analysis for accuracy and provide feedback accordingly. Member checking is one validation technique that researchers can use to increase trustworthiness and the credibility of one's results (Birt et al., 2016).

Data Collection Technique

Before collecting data, I obtained informed consent by all participants. Recruiting participants began by emailing the participating hotel's HR personnel. I then has the HR representative contact hotel leaders who implemented strategies to increase employee engagement and who were willing to participate in the study. I will request that the HR representative provide a list of volunteers with contact information included. I will then contact the volunteers via email. Video conferencing technology, Zoom, was used to

conduct the interviews at a time that is agreed upon with the participants. I received IRB approval and gained permission to conduct my study before interacting with the participants. I restated the purpose of the study and reviewed the consent before beginning interviews. Yin (2018) explained researchers may use various data resources throughout the data collection process. I collected company documents relating to employee engagement strategies for secondary data. I requested documents used to create employee engagement strategies, documents used to track employee engagement, and any other documents the participant feels are relevant to their organization's employee engagement strategy. Researchers should review collected document several times to refine their interpretation of data as new insights emerge during analysis (Rooshenas et al., 2019). The primary data source for this single case study was semistructured face-to-face interviews. I used a field-tested interview protocol (Appendix) to facilitate data collection, asking participants the same questions based on the interview protocol. I asked follow-up questions as needed to probe for more in-depth information.

Suitability of my interview protocol was determined by various factors. First, I conducted an extensive literature review and considered relevant information when creating the protocol. Secondly, I ensured Walden faculty members reviewed my interview protocol and approved of the interview questions.

There are advantages and disadvantages when using open-ended interviews as the primary data collection technique. Interviews are one of the most important data sources in case studies (Yin, 2018). Secondly, interviews provide data that researchers use when triangulating data during data analysis (Fusch et al., 2018). Furthermore, open-ended

questions provide the researcher an opportunity to ask probing questions that may yield more specific responses (van de Wiel, 2017). Main disadvantages of interviews include researcher and response bias, reflexivity, and poor articulation (Yin, 2018). Secondly, even though probing questions may be advantageous, the disadvantage of probing questions is that the participant may lose focus, and the interview may deter from the interview protocol (van de Wiel, 2017). Advantages of using archival records or documentation as a secondary resource include stability, specificity, and length of records, while disadvantages include retrievability and biased selectivity (Yin, 2018).

I implemented member checking to increase the credibility of my research. Researchers commonly use member checking to verify accuracy of their collected data (Naidu & Prose, 2018). After conducting the interviews, I reviewed the responses for two weeks and paraphrased the interview responses. Next, I email the paraphrased response to the participants to review my paraphrase for accuracy. If changes were needed, I made them accordingly. Birt et al. (2016) explained that researcher bias might be reduced by allowing the participants to check and confirm collected data, resulting in effectively implementing member checking to analyze accurate data and increase the trustworthiness of my results.

Data Organization Technique

Researchers must organize their collected data throughout the entirety of their research. To organize my data, I (a) maintained a journal throughout the research process and (b) used NVivoTM to organize my transcribed interview responses. Keeping a journal enables researchers to maintain awareness of their background, experiences, emotions,

values, and biases during the research process (Oliphant & Bennet, 2020). I used NVivo™ software to assist with coding information and categorizing the data into themes. NVivo™ software allows researchers to identify common topics and provides quick access to review and compare files (Min et al., 2017). While planning my interviews, I explained to the participants that the interview will be conducted via Zoom software.

I recorded the interview so that I can transcribe the semi-structured interviews accurately. Additionally, recording the video interview allowed me to review the recording and journal facial and body expressions accurately. I will also use an audio recorder during the interview that allowed me to record the audio of the interview. This allowed for additional review of the interview if problems occur with the video recording. I stored all raw interview data on a secure computer drive and a password-protected USB drive. When confidentiality is compromised, the researcher and participant (Turcotte-Tremblay & McSween-Cadieux, 2018). To protect the participants' confidentiality, I assigned a generic code to each participant and label their files P1, P2, etc., accordingly. All physical research documents were kept in a locked filing cabinet in which only I could access. After five years, I will shred all of the paper documents, erase all electronic files, and erase the password-protected USB drive.

Data Analysis

I used Braun and Clarke's six-phases of thematic analysis to analyze my collected data. Researchers use thematic analysis to identify, analyze, and report patterns within their data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Researchers should focus on data sets that answer

their research question when attempting to identify themes rather than focusing on how many times similar data appears (Scharp & Sanders, 2019). Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis include the following: (a) familiarization with the data, (b) create initial coding categories, (c) identify themes, (d) review themes, (e) define themes, and (f) producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). My interview protocol served as a guide for analyzing data. Furthermore, implementing a thematic analysis strategy allowed me to organize my data during analysis strategically.

Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis allowed me to identify, analyze, and report patterns that I recognize in my data. I used the phases identified by Braun and Clarke (2006) accordingly:

1. Phase 1: I became familiarized with the data, phase one, while I read and transcribed the data. Additionally, I took notes that included my thoughts and ideas during the initial readings.
2. Phase 2: Generating the initial codes, phase two, refers to researchers systematically identifying interesting data features (Scharp & Sanders, 2019). I used NVivo™ to generate my initial codes once the data are input into the software. The use of NVivo™ allows researchers to visualize their data, which can increase their understanding (Harsanyi et al., 2020).
3. Phase 3: During phase three, identifying themes, I considered all codes to classify potential themes. During phase three, researchers need to consider how they can combine different codes to create a broader theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

4. Phase 4: Scharp and Sanders (2019) explained that reviewing themes involves ensuring the themes relate to the codes and the other data sources. In this phase, I reviewed the codes to ensure they appear in patterns that justify the theme. Next, I reviewed the entire data set to ensure the themes relate to the data and checked for additional data that I may have missed during the initial coding phase.
5. Phase 5: During phase five, define themes, I created a narrative that described what the identified themes are and why they were relevant to my study. Furthermore, I elaborated on how each theme is interrelated. In this phase, it is essential that the researcher clearly understand each theme's scope, allowing them to describe what the theme is not (Braun and Clarke, 2006).
6. Phase 6: In the last phase, producing the report, I created a thematic analysis writing. Researchers must be able to write in a way that convinces the reader of the validity of their analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). My write up included not only a description of my data, but will also included how the analyzed data is relevant to the research question.

Additionally, I analyzed multiple sources using methodological triangulation.

Analyzed data can be combined with various sources to allow researchers to triangulate their data in case study research (Yin, 2018). Researchers can add depth to their data during qualitative research by triangulating multiple data sources (Fusch et al., 2018). I used methodological triangulation during my research; researchers use methodological triangulation to collect various data sources and possibly implement different procedures

to collect data (Joslin & Muller, 2016). Sources in this study included interview recordings, observation notes, and company documents relating to the participating organization's employee engagement strategy.

To assist with identifying themes and coding, I used NVivo™ software. Once I confirmed that my interpretation of the interview responses were accurate via member checking, I transcribed the interviews. Next, I uploaded the transcribed audio recording into NVivo™ data analysis software to assist with coding and organizing my collected data. NVivo™ assists researchers in identifying common topics and organizing files, allowing researchers to effectively organize their data for quick access (Min et al., 2017). Researchers can review word frequency within their interview responses and visualize qualitative data while using NVivo™ (Harsanyi et al., 2020). By continuously reviewing the coding and themes identified in NVivo™, I ensured my identified themes aligned with my research question.

Herzberg's two-factor theory acted as the conceptual framework lens that guided my data analysis. Scharp and Sanders (2019) explained that researchers must engage with data relevant to their research question and not only focus on how many times specific information appears during analysis. I analyzed emerging themes based on the perspective of Herzberg's two-factor theory, which suggests that motivation factors and hygiene factors directly influence an employee's satisfaction or dissatisfaction, respectively (Herzberg, 1968). As they relate to my studies' research question and conceptual framework, analysis of the findings helped me identify strategies that hotel leaders use to increase employee engagement.

Reliability and Validity

Two key concepts associated with the quality and rigor of qualitative studies are reliability and validity. Yin (2018) explained that researchers should enhance their study's reliability and validity to increase the quality of their findings. The term dependability is associated with a qualitative study's reliability, while credibility, transferability, and confirmability refer to the validity of a qualitative study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The researcher should consider the reliability and validity of their study throughout the study's design, the analysis of the results, and when judging the entire study (Cypress, 2017).

Reliability

The criteria for judging the reliability of a qualitative study are referred to as dependability. Maher et al. (2018) explained that if a study is dependable, future researchers may be able to follow the described processes within a study and achieve similar results, requiring detailed descriptions throughout one's study. Furthermore, the authors explained that dependability is one of four criteria that must be evaluated when determining if a qualitative study is trustworthy. To increase one's study's dependability, researchers can use triangulation and provide an audit trail of one's research processes (Morse, 2015). By collecting data from various sources, I implemented methodological triangulation during my study. I maintained a series of notes throughout my study, including details regarding researcher bias, changes in my thought processes, relevant details when interviewing participants (i.e., body language), and a detailed description of the justification to support my decisions for the study. Furthermore, my doctoral chair

committee reviewed and approved my interview protocol to ensure the questions are relevant to the research question.

Member checking is another method used by qualitative researchers to enhance the dependability of one's study. Researchers can enhance the trustworthiness of their results when implementing member checking (Birt et al., 2016). I applied member checking to allow participants to validate my interpretation of their interview responses. Naidu and Prose (2018) explained that researchers use member checking to verify collected data accuracy. After conducting my interviews, I provided each participant with my interpretation of their response. This allowed the participant to address any misunderstandings and identified information that needed to be corrected and provided any additional information relevant to the research question. I made note of feedback and made changes based on the feedback of the participants.

Validity

Researchers must consider validity within qualitative research during the entirety of the research process. The validity of one's study refers to the appropriateness of the different strategies implemented throughout the researcher's study (Maher et al., 2018). To ensure my research process's suitability, I gained approval from an expert panel of faculty members before collecting data. Cypress (2017) explained that one's creativity, flexibility, and research skill are researcher qualities that help determine the researcher's final study's validity. Marshall and Rossman (2016) explained that credibility, transferability, and confirmability are the three qualitative research criteria for validity. Researchers must establish these three specific criteria, (a) credibility, (b) transferability,

and (c) confirmability, using various qualitative methods to increase the validity of their study.

Credibility

As the primary data collection instrument, I ensured there were procedures in place that provided readers with the opportunity to comprehend accurate findings. Credibility is established by accurately depicting the participant's experiences (Cypress, 2017). Maher et al. (2018) stated there are various ways for researchers to enhance their credibility, including prolonged engagement and member checking. Furthermore, Cypress (2017) emphasized the importance of prolonged engagement with the participants, allowing the researcher to accurately depict the participant's experiences. Although I conducted virtual interviews, prolonged engagement was established with quick responses during any participant engagement, establishing trust and rapport at the beginning of the study, and communicating with transparent dialogue when implementing member checking. I implemented member checking within my research by providing the individual participants with my interpretation of their interview responses after conducting the interview.

Member checking provided the participants with an opportunity to clarify misunderstandings and misinterpretation. I established a clear understanding based on the participant's feedback to ensure I provide an accurate reflection of the participant's experiences. Lastly, triangulation can enhance the credibility of one's research (Cypress, 2017). I used methodological triangulation during my research. Methodological triangulation refers to a researcher collecting information from various data sources

before analysis (Joslin & Muller, 2016). I used interview recordings, notes, and company documents relating to the participating organization's employee engagement strategy to achieve methodological triangulation. I asked for annual reports relating to employee engagement, policy and procedure documents, project management plans, and engagement strategy plans when collecting company documents.

Transferability

As a researcher, I must consider how my study relates to the reader and future research. Transferability refers to how applicable the findings are to a different context (Maher et al., 2018). A researcher can increase their findings' transferability by including a thick description of the participant's experiences and research process (Cypress, 2017). A thick report of one's research includes details regarding context, location, participants, and data analysis transparency (Connelly, 2016). To ensure I can provide a thick description of information, I collected enough data to achieve data saturation. Marshall et al. (2013) explained that a researcher determines if they have reached data saturation based on the emergence of new data. Furthermore, achieving data saturation is vital to the reader, to ensure I can provide a thick description of the study's context. Descriptive writing allowed the reader and future researchers to determine if the findings are transferable to their context or future research areas.

Confirmability

Researchers must be aware of their own bias while designing their study, conducting interviews, gathering various data sources, and analyzing their collected data. Confirmability refers to the researcher remaining neutral and objective throughout their

study (Connelly, 2016). To increase confirmability, researchers must minimize investigator bias (Maher et al., 2018). One method to increase the confirmability of one's research is to maintain an audit trail or memo log throughout the study (Connelly, 2016). I kept a reflexive journal during the research process that included notes, ideas, thoughts, etc., that are relevant to my study. After each interview, I noted additional recollections from the interview, which I sent to each participant during the member checking process. Connelly (2016) explained that member checking also contributes to the confirmability of one's study. Journaling allows researchers to maintain constant awareness of their biases, assumptions, beliefs, and presuppositions (Cypress, 2017). Keeping a detailed reflexive journal and conducting member checking increased my study's confirmability and objectivity.

Transition and Summary

Section 2 began with restating the purpose of the study and explained my role as the researcher in this study. Next, I discussed details regarding the participant criteria and explained how I will provide ethical protection of the participants during and after the study. I explained my research method, research design, and how I will collect and organize my data. I completed section 2 with an explanation of my strategy to ensure reliability and validity of the study. Section 3 will include the presentation of my findings in relation to the research question. I will provide an analysis of the data and a discussion of my findings. Additionally, my discussion will include how my findings relate to previous research in this discipline. Next, I will explain how business professionals may apply the findings of my study to business practice, and how my findings can be

leveraged to create positive social change. Lastly, I will recommend actions for future research.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies that luxury hotel managers use to increase employee engagement. Seray (2021) and Wang et al. (2020) explained that high levels of employee disengagement can negatively affect an organization, especially in regard to employee turnover. Turner (2020) stated that a highly engaged employee has above-average productivity levels and suggested that the various benefits of increased employee engagement have resulted in the popularity of engagement research. Due to the nature of the hospitality industry, which is characterized by diverse customer demographics and the demand for high levels of professionalism and service-oriented behavior, hospitality employee engagement is an important topic of interest (Tripathi et al., 2021). Because employee engagement is related to various aspects of organizational performance, business leaders need to understand how to increase employee engagement.

I explored strategies for increasing employee engagement by interviewing four managers at a luxury hotel in Hawaii. Before the interviews, the participants reviewed consent forms and consented to participate by responding “I content” to my email invitation. During the interviews, I asked open-ended questions to allow the participants to share their experiences with implanting successful strategies to engage employees. To increase the reliability and validity of my data, I sent my interpretation of the interview responses back to the participants to validate the accuracy of the information. Based on the interview responses, business leaders can increase employee engagement by

implementing strategies that include (a) prioritizing employee feedback, (b) recognition programs, and (c) employee development.

Presentation of the Findings

This study's research question was the following: What strategies do hotel managers use to engage employees? I answered this question by conducting semistructured interviews with three luxury hotel managers who had successfully implemented strategies to engage employees. Furthermore, I reviewed company documents that included meeting templates, agendas, transcripts, event flyers, recognition flyers, quality assurance audits, satisfaction surveys, coaching templates, budget breakdowns, auditing templates, and position descriptions. I used the six phases of thematic analyses, developed by Braun and Clarke (2006), to recognize themes and analyze my collected data. Additionally, I used NVivoTM while organizing and analyzing my data. After analyzing the data and eliminating irrelevant information, I identified three emerging themes: (a) prioritize employee feedback, (b) recognition programs, and (c) employee development.

Theme 1: Prioritize Employee Feedback

The first theme that emerged from the data was the importance of listening to employee feedback. Every respondent highlighted the importance of genuinely addressing the concerns of their employees. Participant 1 stated, in regard to their employees, "if I listen to their concerns, show them that I care and that I may be able to resolve their issue, the employee will be more inclined to work for me." Participant 2 stated, when describing effective strategies to increase employee engagement, "Once an

employee identifies what things are important to them, I must authentically address them, not superficially.” Lastly, P4 explained that asking for feedback regularly was one strategy used to engage the employee. This response, along with the responses of the other participants, directly answered the overall research question.

Subtheme: Opportunity for Employees to Provide Feedback/Involvement

For employees to be able to provide feedback and put forth their needs to their supervisors, they must have the opportunity to do so. Participant 1 explained that strategies other than prizes, gifts, money, and benefits, such as meetings, are also important for employee engagement. The respondent explained that in department meetings, supervisors review what was discussed in the previous meeting, address any action items that were pending from their previous meeting, and ask the employees what resources are needed from the management team. Participant 1 emphasized getting the employees involved because the employees are on the floor and can explain any structural problems, what is working, and what is not working. Participant 1 stated, “my conviction is that we should make them part of the process.” Participant 4 stated that when employees are directly involved in coming up with suggestions and solutions, it empowers them and gives them a sense of ownership. This strategy shows that the supervisors value the input of the employee.

Additionally, P1, P2, and P4 provided detailed explanations regarding the company focus groups, where the general manager (GM) and the resort manager meet with a group of employees to engage in unfettered, uncensored, candid communication regarding any issues that the employees may have. During these focus groups, the GM

and resort manager may also provide a high-level overview of upcoming changes, barriers to requested change, and company strategy. Participant 1 explained that these meetings happen quarterly and allow the staff to provide information to a higher level of company personnel if issues have not been properly addressed, and the communication regarding higher level issues provides a sense of ownership to the employees. In regard to this specific meeting, P4 emphasized that nothing is off limits, and the results of these meetings are shared with the entire hotel staff. Participant 2 explained that these meetings help foster an atmosphere of trust and cooperation. Based on these responses, business leaders may be able to implement this strategy to build a trusting environment and increase employee engagement throughout their organization.

Daily meetings are conducted to communicate what is going on that day, set daily expectations, and address weekly or even quarterly goals. Participant 3 explained that in these daily “stand-ups,” supervisors can brief daily, weekly, and quarterly goals, and this gives the employees something to look forward to. Participant 3 stated, “our employees should have goals in mind when they are working with us and then they are attending to the guests.” Participant 1 stated, “we tell the employees in the daily stand-ups, ‘if you need anything, come see us.’ We try to be very open to communication with them and get them engaged in letting us know where we can help.” Participant 4 stated, “I regularly ask for feedback on what is working and what isn’t as far as procedures, processes, and vendor relations.” Daily communication emerged as a subtheme, and the associated responses provided support to answer the research question.

Individualized meetings allow for more personal interaction and relationship building. When asked what the most effective strategy was for increasing employee engagement, P2 explained, “managers must be able to connect with their employees on a personal level that goes beyond positional power. Personal interaction is effective and inspires the employee.” Furthermore, P2 explained that managers must know the learning style, life, and personality of their audience for their engagement initiatives to be successful. When asked to provide the least effective strategy for increasing employee engagement, P3 stated, “sending a memo style communication that is broad and expecting changes to happen without seeking the opinions of the employee, it is not going to be effective.” Participant 1 explained that during meetings with individual employees, managers should try to connect on a personal level, especially during stressful times. Participant 1 stated, “it’s important that during these individual meetings, I try not to only talk about operations.” Based on these responses, effective strategies to increase employee engagement should involve meetings that allow for personal interaction between the employee and the supervisor.

Theme 2: Recognition Programs

The second theme that emerged from the data was employee recognition. In response to Question 1, every respondent mentioned the organization’s recognition programs. In particular, three of the respondents elaborated on their program that involves providing employees with an award that the employee can submit to the HR department. HR then selects from the submitted awards in a raffle-like fashion, and the employee can win a prize. Examples of prizes included cash, gift cards, and coupons to

internal stores. Regarding this program, P1 indicated, “I’ve noticed that people like to be recognized. Employees will place these awards on their lockers and hang them up on their office boards. Our staff seems to be quite responsive to this.” Participant 3 stated, “recognition is important. That is a big, big part of our engagement process. This reward recognition program provides an additional incentive on top of just verbal engagement. This program tends to have a pretty positive response.” Participant 4 answered Question 2 by suggesting that recognition, incentives, and monetary rewards had been the most effective strategy to increase employee engagement.

More formal recognition programs that were discussed included the employee of the year, in which the winner is gifted a trip to Japan, and recognizing employees who were specifically identified by external auditing groups by awarding them a cash prize. Company newsletters are also used as a form of employee recognition and are used to showcase individuals. For example, the company uses the newsletter to introduce and integrate new employees, but also uses the platform to share stories of a recognized employee, tell stories about the individual, and highlight how the employee demonstrated the core values and pride of the organization.

Additionally, P1 and P2 discussed their monthly department engagement budget. The operational departments can use these funds for events for their team. Participant 1 explained,

this is a great tool that managers can use to get everyone together and recognize the staff. These things work well for us. I’ve noticed that if we push it off to the

end of the month, sometimes, staff will come into the office and ask about the engagement meeting.

Participant 2 indicated that the line managers are very in tune with this program, and the managers can tailor their funds to the interests and needs of their respective departments.

Participant 2 explained that a more structured recognition program includes celebrating the employee of the month and quarter, which funnels up to the employee of the year award. With this program, the employee of the year wins a trip to Japan.

Theme 3: Employee Development

The third theme that emerged from the data was the importance of coaching.

Every respondent provided examples of how coaching was used as a strategy to increase employee engagement and how organizational leaders try to coach people to get better.

Participant 3 stated,

I do not want to surprise my employees with my expectation, and then start coaching them and they're not aware of what was expected in the first place. In our organization, we have good communication with our teams. The employees are aware of what is expected and this allows them to take contrastive feedback when we give that to them.

One of P4's responses related to expectation directly supported this comment. P4 stated that communication from management that is unclear or contradicting and higher manager expectations without proper understanding and support are key barriers to implementing successful strategies to improve employee engagement. Furthermore, when asked to identify organizational changes resulting from increased engagement, P3

directly related the performance of the employees to coaching and communication of expectations and standards. Participant 3 explained that coaching and effective communication of standards and expectations had resulted in sharp improvements in duty performance, guest engagements, and quality assurance audits.

Participant 1 expressed the importance of asking the employee about their interests and goals. P1 stated,

I share my ideas about what I think the employee should work on, but I ask them for their insight as well. I think if you can have people come up with their goals themselves, instead of pushing them down, it makes a big difference. I've noticed that when people come up with something themselves, they are often more motivated to make that work and they'll even come back to you on their own and report to you, sometimes too much. But hey, that is engagement and that is what we're talking about.

Expanding on the topic of personal interests, P2 indicated that the organization would sponsor educational or vocational experiences for its employees. Participant 2 stated, "for example, if there is an electrician that wants to earn a higher certificate, we can sponsor them taking classes, and this program is funded by our resort so we can offer these development opportunities." These responses directly contribute to answering the overall research question and provide practical information that leaders may want to consider when implementing employee engagement strategies.

Participant 2 discussed details from a higher level of leadership, explaining that the development managers conducted leadership training for department managers that

included topics such as developing relationships amongst the team, fostering an environment of trust and cooperation, practicing ethical leadership, establishing and maintaining credibility, being open to feedback, managing conflict, performing conflict resolution, using progressive discipline, and conducting performance appraisals.

Participant 2 stated, “we want the management team to be engaged, and developing them is critical.” Participant 4 expanded on the importance of leadership development and leadership alignment by explaining that the environment throughout the resort had changed because the GM and the resort manager had created an environment that allows the employees to approach supervisors and the leaders keep clear and open communication throughout the property.

Relevance to the Literature

The three themes of prioritizing employee feedback, recognition programs, and employee development are relevant in today’s current literature regarding employee engagement. All four respondents provided details on the strategies that they used relating to the three identified themes to increase employee engagement. Participant responses included details regarding meetings, open communication, specific awards, recognition programs, incentives, and coaching strategies.

Theme 1, prioritize employee feedback, highlights the importance of not only employee involvement, but also participant responses and includes details on effective communication and proper follow-up. Business leaders can engage their staff and inspire their employees by emphasizing the importance of employee input (Yanhus et al., 2020). Nuzulul et al. (2021) found a positive relationship between highly involving employees

during decision making, information sharing, and reward systems, and employee engagement. Furthermore, Bischoff and Webster (2021) conducted a case study and found that employees felt disempowered because they felt that their leaders did not allow for participation during decision making. All four of my interviewees provided at least one specific way in which they involved their employees in decision-making processes. The responses of my interview participants were in alignment with some of the findings in recent literature, suggesting that prioritizing employee feedback may be beneficial to leaders implementing strategies to engage employees.

The participants also highlighted the importance of interpersonal relationships when it comes to giving and receiving feedback. Erdal and Budak (2021) highlighted the negative effects of abusive supervision and explained that toxic relationships between employees and leaders affect job satisfaction, efficiency, and productivity. The level of relationship engagement between managers and subordinates directly influences the realization of organizational goals (Jiang et al., 2017). In regard to feedback, leaders must consider developing trusting relationships with their employees if the managers want their engagement strategies to be effective.

Theme 2, recognition programs, is also relevant to the literature related to employee engagement. All four respondents described multiple recognition programs, and many of the documents provided during data collection were associated with the participating organization's recognition programs. Recognition programs are useful in engaging employees and have also been shown to align employees with the organization's strategic vision (Reese, 2020). Lartey (2021) explained that recognition

can be either a nonmonetary form of appreciation or a monetary form in the case of cash awards, and found that manager recognition has a higher contribution to employee engagement compared to employee autonomy. Tate et al. (2021) found that feedback and recognition had more influence on employee engagement levels than developing a climate of trust and performance goals and development. However, Tate et al. explained that a climate of trust and performance goals and development also has a statistically significant positive relationship with employee engagement. Due to the relationship between recognition programs and employee engagement shown in the literature, accompanied with the collected data in this study, business leaders should consider including recognition programs in their strategies to increase employee engagement.

Theme 3, employee development, can be beneficial throughout all levels of the organization. Participant 1 highlighted the importance of the participating organization's leadership development program, and how that has a direct effect on the engagement strategies that are implemented throughout the organization. Boakye et al. (2021) found that supervisory support and interpersonal support are positively associated with employee engagement. Srivasta and Singh (2020) found a positive association between personal growth initiative, in which the employee is actively involved in changing themselves for self-improvement and personal growth, and employee engagement. The researchers explained that employees will be more engaged when they have the opportunity to make changes to their work, and that supervisors should encourage employees when the employee contributes ideas that may enhance organizational excellence (Srivasta & Singh, 2020). Yanchus et al. (2020) found that actionable best

practices to engage staff included supporting employee growth by offering leadership training and development, employee training and development, and explained that managers, supervisors, and executives can all influence the development of employees throughout the organization. In a study including 121 employees, Tate et al. (2021) found that the variable of performance goals and development had a statistically significant positive relationship with employee engagement. Lartey (2021) found that out of three variables, career planning had the most contribution to the level of employee engagement. The growth and development of employees is a complex idea, and there are many tools leadership personnel should consider when implementing their employee development strategies. The relevant literature and the collected data show that developing employees throughout all levels of the organization can increase employee engagement.

Relevance to the Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was Herzberg's two-factor theory. I used this theory to better understand strategies that luxury hotel managers use to engage employees. According to Herzberg, there are two types of factors influencing job satisfaction, motivators and hygiene factors (Herzberg, 1974). The motivation factors include achievement, recognition, an opportunity for growth and advancement, and the work itself (Herzberg, 1974). Herzberg (1974) identified the hygiene factors as company policy, salary, status, working conditions, and interpersonal relationships. Due to the relationship between job satisfaction and employee engagement, Herzberg's two-factor theory is commonly used to explore employee engagement in business-related research.

The findings of this study are closely related to the factors identified in Herzberg's two-factor theory.

The themes identified in the data can be directly related to the various influential factors identified in Herzberg's two-factor theory. Additionally, some specifics provided by the respondents directly relate to factors such as company policy and working conditions. Based on the details in the responses of the participants, theme one, listening to employee feedback, and the associated subtheme of providing an opportunity for the employee to provide feedback by involving the employee in organizational processes connects to the hygiene factor interpersonal relationships/supervision. Regarding feedback, all respondents included an explanation of ensuring the manager had a personal relationship with the employee for their engagement initiative to be effective, although, all respondents were able to elaborate with different detail.

Participant 2 and P3 both highlighted the importance of knowing the employee on a personal level so the manager can tailor their message to their employee. Participant 3 explained that, because individuals respond in different ways to different types of feedback, managers should use a tailored approach. Participant 3 went on to explain that,

we want to treat our employees like we expect them to treat our guests. In that sense, we must tailor our message to the individual employee to ensure we get a positive response, just as we would want our employees to treat our guests as individuals and provide the best-personalized service to them. For that reason, we must take responsibility for how the employee responds to our feedback and know them well enough to tailor our message to that individual.

Participant 2 directly supports the notion of a tailored approach, and suggested that three key factors for implanting successful engagement strategies include: (a) ensuring one's message is matched to the audience, (b) listening and paying attention to the needs of the employees, and (c) embrace the issues that are important to the employee. Additionally, P2 explained that the most effective strategies are the ones that are inspiring, that connect on a personal level and is "visceral" connection.

Participant 1 and P2 both identified the engagement budget funds that are set aside for each department. When these are used, this provides an opportunity for job-related interaction, as well as social discussion within the work environment but during break time. Regarding higher-level leadership, P1 described manager outings that happen quarterly, where department managers will pick a location off-property and spend time together. The budget for this is also set aside by the organization. P1 stated, "people are really excited about these meetings. The employees do not pay anything. Everything is unlimited and we do not spare expenses. If we are going to take care of our employees, we take care of them."

Lastly, in regards to quality supervision and the employees' judgments of their supervisors, all three respondents emphasized the importance of, not only listening to feedback but taking action on that feedback. Participant 3 explained that when your employees know they can be open with you, and that you are receptive to their feedback, you make it easier for them to engage and let you know what help is needed. Along the same line, P3 suggested that the least effective way to engage employees is to send an email, or try to mass communicate, and not follow up.

Participant 2 also elaborated on this topic and explains that managers must listen and pay attention to the needs of their employees and authentically take action to address the employee's concerns. Participant 2 stated, "you have to create a sense of authenticity and credibility while you're putting something together; otherwise, it is not heartfelt, it becomes superficial, it's not meaningful."

Participant 1 touched on the topic many times throughout the interview. P1 explained that during meetings, the team will follow up on any action items that were previously discussed. When asked what strategy is most effective, P1 stated, "all strategies effective, but only if you follow up on it." Participant 1 was the only respondent to discuss demotivating an employee and explains that if you provide an employee an opportunity to ask for resources and share problems, but you do nothing about it, it will be demotivating. P1 stated,

if you're not going to commit, then sometimes doing nothing is better than something that is not done well. If you get the employee engaged, and you don't follow up, your result may be worse than if you would have done nothing. Not only did your employee not get a response, but you probably pulled them down in the opposite direction. If you invest your time in a personal meeting, you better do it properly and follow up properly. If you do not take feedback to heart at your meetings, it can be very, very counterproductive.

Theme 2, recognition, is directly connected to the motivation factor of recognition. Participant 4 explained that recognition, incentive, and reward has been the most effective strategy for increasing engagement. All four respondents provided detailed

descriptions regarding the participating resort's recognition programs, specifically, the resort's program in which employees can write other employees an award, and this award can be submitted into a "raffle-like" drawing for a prize. Participant 1 stated, "these are given in addition to normal verbal praise, and the staff seems to be responsive to this for several reasons." Participant 1 suggests that the staff not only look forward to the prize that may be won but because many staff members display their awards for others to see, the staff like the recognition. Participant 3 used similar verbiage when explaining the importance of recognition. Participant 3 stated, "some of our recognition strategies include offering different sorts of incentives, on top of just the verbal engagement, to make sure we can provide some additional benefits resulting in positive attitudes at work."

Additional opportunities for recognition include an employee of the month, quarter, and year, cash prizes for an employee who gets recognized for exceptional work by third-party auditors and recognizing employees for various reasons on company documents, such as a company newsletter. Participant 2 explained that the company newsletter is a great way to showcase an individual's accomplishments, as well as introduce new employees to the resort.

Theme 3, employee development, connects to the motivation factors of possibility for growth and advancement. Participant 3 mentioned coaching numerous times throughout the interview, explaining that having clearly defined and understood expectations is a crucial part of communication when coaching employees. Additionally, Participant 3 explained that coaching is a part of the follow-up process when discussing

goal achievement, suggested that coaching should be tailored to the individual so that the message is fully received, and provided an example of when the resort noticed a “sharp improvement” in duty performance and engaging the guests when the employees we’re re-coached and the standards were re-communicated.

Participant 1 and P2 were able to elaborate on, not only coaching front-line staff but also coaching managers. Participant 2 explained that leadership development coaching is provided for managers. This training course includes a curriculum on topics such as developing relationships, fostering an environment of trust and communication, conflict resolution, and progressive discipline. Participant 2 stated, “we have a full curriculum that the managers are exposed to, and hopefully, managers will shore up their skill sets and then provide good engagement with their teams.” Participant 1 described conducting one-on-one meetings with managers, in which they discuss what is going well within their respective department, what is not going so well, and what support/resources are needed at this time.

Additionally, P1 highlights the importance of using this time to connect to the managers on a personal level due to high levels of stress, budget constraints, etc. When lay-offs were activated in the resort due to the COVID pandemic, many managers were asked to work in other areas. This required support from higher leadership but also required additional coaching due to working in a new environment. Furthermore, this one-on-one time is used for coaching and goal setting. P1 stated. “we try to design strategies to coach people to get better.”

Due to the format and interaction of meetings/coaching described by the respondents, this theme could connect with the supervision hygiene factor as well. Ling et al. (2019) found a significant positive relationship between feedback environment and intrinsic motivation; however, the level of influence was determined by the feedback quality, feedback delivery, and constructive feedback. All four respondents emphasized the importance of quality feedback in their interviews. Participant 2 suggested that it is “crucial” that managers pay attention to what their employees are saying and what the employees need. Additionally, P2 explained that interventions and engagement with an employee are “not one size fits all,” but managers must be able to match their approach to their employees. P2 stated, “the idea is that we have to understand the complexity and diversity of our audience, and our message, our delivery vehicle, needs to be refined and tailored to the manner that the employees like to be engaged.” Participant 3 supported this statement by sharing that everyone responds in different ways to different types of feedback, and if the managers want the resort employees to treat their guests with a sense of individuality, the managers must treat the employees in the same manner.

Participant 1 seemed to focus on two parts of the idea of feedback: (a) the importance of allowing for quality feedback from the employee, and (b) manager follow-up. Participant 1, P2, and P4 explained that front-line staff is involved in the creation of the resort’s standard operating procedures (SOPs), mission statement, resort themes, and core principles. Participant 2 explained that this type of involvement creates a powerful connection rather than just having a transactional culture. When asked what the least effective strategy was for engaging employees, P4 stated, “sending out and implementing

management SOPs without having feedback from the staff.” Participant 1 discussed the process of providing a draft SOP to the employees and asking the staff to provide suggestions for changes to the SOP based on their knowledge of what happens on a day-to-day basis. Participant 1 ended the discussion of creating SOPs by explaining the importance of telling the employees why something cannot be changed if the management team is unable to meet the employee requests. Although I didn’t identify this topic as a theme because of its specificity, these individual responses directly relate to the hygiene factor of policy.

Triangulation of Data

I used methodological triangulation to better understand strategies that luxury hotel managers use to increase employee engagement. Yin (2018) explained that, in case study research, researchers can triangulate their data by combining their analyzed data with other data sources. Furthermore, triangulating multiple data sources adds depth to one’s data in qualitative research (Fusch et al., 2018). First, I conducted semi-structured interviews to allow for open-ended responses and further questioning if necessary. Next, I transcribed and summarized the interview data for member checking. All respondents verified that my interpretation of their responses was accurate before I began data analysis. During the interview, I asked that the participants provide company documents associated with their engagement strategies so that I can use them for data triangulation. Using methodological triangulation allowed me to gain a comprehensive understanding of strategies that luxury hotel managers use to engage employees.

To complement the semi-structured interview, I reviewed company documents that included

- meeting agendas
- meeting transcription summaries
- event flyers
- recognition station flyers
- the employee of the year flyers
- position descriptions
- quality assurance audit templates
- daily meeting templates/notes
- guest satisfaction survey
- employee performance coaching templates
- individual employee performance audit template
- engagement budget breakdown
- department meeting minutes/transcription

The documents provided by the participants supported their interview responses. The audit reports included criteria associated with personalized interaction, supporting the managers' responses regarding tailoring one's message so it is received. The position description highlights duties such as improving recognition efforts, creating opportunities for inter-department collaboration, and finding outlets to support constructive feedback. Recognition was one of the themes identified during the data analysis on the interview responses. Furthermore, the various company flyers promoted multiple recognition

stations that are used to engage with colleagues and show appreciation for their hard work. The employee of the year flyers was provided for analysis, and are used to recognize and showcase individuals, which was mentioned in the interviews.

Lastly, the meeting agendas and their associated notes provided additional detailed support for the importance of feedback, setting clear standards and expectations, and improving two-way communication. For example, employees from multiple departments shared that there is a sense of trust throughout the departments and the hotel and that their team always shares the load of work. Additionally, one employee mentioned, based on the meeting summary, that there is always room for growth within the department and across the hotel, and that this was one of the greatest strengths of the resort. The summary of the meetings also shows the dialogue between managers and front-line staff, supporting the responses associated with allowing for feedback and genuinely addressing the concerns of the employees. Based on the interview responses, validated interpretation, company documents, and researcher notes used for methodological triangulation, managers from the participating resort have implemented successful strategies to increase employee engagement.

Applications to Professional Practice

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies that managers use to increase employee engagement at a luxury hotel in Hawaii. Based on my data analysis, I identified three themes: (a) prioritize employee feedback, (b) recognition programs, and (c) employee development. The respondents all provided detailed descriptions of their implemented strategies to increase employee engagement, and by

implementing similar strategies, business leaders may be able to increase employee engagement within their organizations.

Theme 1, prioritize employee feedback, revealed that providing the opportunity for employees to offer their opinion, and genuinely addressing the concern of the employee, has resulted in increased employee engagement throughout the participant organization. All four respondents mentioned that daily meetings were held to allow employees to ask for additional resources and support if needed, and to ensure everyone in their respective departments understood their plan for their day. Furthermore, the respondents discussed quarterly meetings that were helpful with higher-level leaders, which allows the employees to address concerns that are being handled with their direct supervisors but also allows the leadership to discuss the organization's strategy to make the employees feel connected and involved. Gautam and Kothari (2021) found that employees are more likely to be engaged when supervisors give direction and provide support. Managers may be able to increase employee engagement by creating opportunities for their employees to voice their opinion, and following up on the concerns and/or needs of the employee.

Theme 2, recognition, was also mentioned by all four respondents, one of which identified recognition as the most effective strategy to engage employees. Recent literature has shown that feedback and recognition were two main determining factors of employee engagement (Tate et al., 2021). Additionally, incentives associated with the organization's recognition programs were highlighted by the participants. Three of the three respondents provided a detailed description of the organization's program involving

recognizing an employee by providing them with an award in which the employees can turn into HR for a chance to win a prize. Based on the findings, business leaders may be able to increase employee engagement by creating and maintaining successful employee recognition programs.

Theme 3, employee development, emerged as a theme due to the practicality of the strategies. The respondents explained that they coached their employees based on an audit program, that they allowed their employees the opportunity to come up with their own goals, and how the organization will sponsor an employee if they want to further their credentialing. Additionally, one respondent mentioned the importance of leadership development and how this has a direct effect on engagement levels throughout the organization. Researchers have found that employees are encouraged to grow within their organizations and their initiatives are supported, the employee experiences empowerment; which, in the same study, was shown to have a significant and positive association with employee engagement (Srivastava & Singh, 2020). By taking the time to encourage growth and development throughout their organizations, leaders may be able to increase employee engagement.

I would be remiss if I did not include further detail regarding practical strategies mentioned during data collection, and that is associated with Herzberg's two-factor theory, but did not emerge as a general theme during analysis. Associated with theme one, leaders may increase employee engagement by involving their employees during the creation of company values, vision, and policies. Associated with theme two, leaders can strategically budget for company recognition events. Lastly, associated with theme three,

ensuring two-way communication is valued throughout all levels of the organization may prove to be beneficial when applying strategies to increase employee engagement.

Implications for Social Change

The results of this study may contribute to positive social change for the individuals within the organization, as well as the surrounding communities. The results of this study can promote positive social change by identifying strategies to support hotel managers in engaging employees. Employees who experience increased levels of employee engagement may also experience increased job satisfaction, due to the positive relationship between employee engagement and job satisfaction (Alfayad & Arif, 2017). Tadesse (2019) explained that employee engagement may result reduce turnover, saving the organization costs in recruitment, training, and other retention strategies. Increased employee engagement may have a positive direct and indirect impact at the individual level.

Furthermore, increased employee engagement may lead to increased profitability for the organization. A prospering organization may create new job opportunities, decrease unemployment rates, and support the local community. Furthermore, due to the nature of the luxury hospitality industry, a prospering resort will provide high-quality services to its customers who may be traveling from locations throughout the world. Although not identified as a theme, P1 described how the participating organization supports the local community by partnering with various organizations to support environmental sustainability efforts. The organization provides opportunities, not only for their employees but also for their guests. This example shows that a thriving organization

with high levels of employee engagement may be able to allocate resources to provide opportunities for employees and customers to support their local community in various ways.

Recommendations for Action

Although employee engagement is a highly discussed topic amongst business leaders, many leaders lack strategies to engage employees. Thus, the information, findings, and recommendations in this study may be used to enhance the understanding and implementation of successful strategies to increase employee engagement. The findings in this study suggest that allowing for, and attending to, employee feedback, creating and sustaining recognition programs, and developing employees can increase employee engagement. By implementing the strategies discussed in this study, managers and business leaders may be able to increase employee engagement levels throughout their organization.

My recommendations for actions are based on the emerging themes of the data. First, I recommend that leaders identify ways to get their employees involved in the discussion and provide the opportunity for employee feedback regarding goals, policy creation, areas of improvement, and individual support needs. This must be coupled with timely and genuine follow-up from the leaders. Yancus et al. (2021) suggested that leaders communicate to their respective organizations that staff input and feedback are highly valued and that this allows the leaders of the organization to better understand what matters to the employees. Based on my interview responses, this has a positive effect on the employees and makes them feel valued.

Secondly, I recommend that business leaders include recognition programs in their engagement strategies. Employee recognition can be displayed in various ways, including company flyers, awards, and recognition events. Lartey (2021) explained that recognizing employees lets the individual know they are on a successful path within the organization, and when paired with additional elements, recognition motivates employees and enhances engagement and performance. Based on the interview responses, I suggest that business leaders create a budget for their recognition efforts to ensure they are sustained.

Lastly, I recommend that leaders offer opportunities for growth and advancement within their organizations. The participants explained their techniques for coaching, leadership development, and supporting their employees in their self-identified growth interests. Furthermore, the respondents highlighted the importance of tailoring feedback to ensure the employee constructively receives their coaching. Leaders must have created and maintain a personal relationship with their employees to understand how to deliver a message so that it is useful to the employee. Leaders should empower their employees and allow them to suggest ideas for their personal growth (Srivastava & Singh, 2020). Leaders should consider writing progression plans for their employees, which may involve the growth and progression of their employees by moving into a different branch or department within the organization (Lartey, 2021). P1 had explained multiple times which employees were coached into different positions to allow them to remain on staff and maintain consistent working hours. I suggest business leaders use these three recommendations to create, adjust, or maintain engagement strategies.

I will send each participant a summary of my study after it is approved as a part of my plan to share my results and recommendations. Secondly, I will develop a presentation based on my findings to be offered at engagement events and conferences. This presentation could be further disseminated for various leadership training or workshops. Lastly, individuals who have access to Walden University's ScholarWorks database will be able to access my study.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on previous research related to employee engagement, I identified an area that could be further explored to expand the body of literature. I performed a single case study to explore strategies that luxury hotel managers used to increase employee engagement. The location was one limitation of my study. I performed this study with one luxury hotel on the island of Oahu in Hawaii. I recommend that future researchers conduct similar studies in other geographic locations, and with different types of hotels. Research should consider the size of the hotel and ratings of the hotels when performing similar research. Additionally, researchers could conduct a multiple case study rather than a single case study.

A second limitation was that I was fully responsible for the data collection throughout my study. Future researchers may consider having multiple researchers involved in data collection and could go on to use investigator triangulation. Multiple researchers can compare their findings during this type of future research. Furthermore, future researchers could conduct a quantitative or mixed-method study by themselves or with a group of researchers.

Reflections

Upon reflecting on my doctoral journey, I have identified two principles that have helped me along the way, and that I believe can be applied to other avenues of one's personal life. First, create a plan and work your plan. As independent scholars, we often begin our terms by providing our chair members with a purposed plan of action, to which the chair can approve or recommend changes. We must complete all of our identified tasks on our plan in that term to "pass" the class. I would invite you, the reader, to do the same within the various areas of your life. Create a plan to achieve whatever goal you are moving toward, and tightly adhere to that plan.

Secondly, never stop writing, or in other areas of life, never stop moving toward the end. There were many times throughout my doctoral journey in which I would take a break, stop my momentum, and then have to work long days to complete my planned tasks. Fortunately, my chair member, along with my peer group, would continuously encourage all of the independent scholars to continue to write, even if it wasn't perfect. We would often refer to the injunction that one can always edit a poorly written paper; however, one cannot edit a blank document. I encourage you to always take another step of progress toward whatever goal you are pursuing, no matter how small that step may be. Continue to "write".

As mentioned previously, I implemented member checking to help prevent researcher bias from affecting my study. Throughout this process, I worked to maintain a neutral position and remain objective during my data collection and analysis process. For example, during my interviews, I ensured to only ask probing questions related to the

comments of the respondents, rather than asking leading questions that may have resulted in an exact response I would've expected. I did my best to take the place of an active listener during my interviews, rather than the position of the subject matter expert. A part of my role as the researcher was to reduce researcher bias and provide accurate findings. My experiences throughout this process, along with the mitigation strategies I implemented, have allowed me to do that.

There have been a few key changes in my thinking based on my reflection on my doctoral journey. I have been shown the power of working as a team for the adult learning process. In addition to my chair member, I was very fortunate to have amazing peers, other independent scholars, who helped mentor me along the way. Furthermore, as I progressed throughout the program and new individuals became my peers, I realized how much one can learn from helping others progress during their journey.

Secondly, I have been exposed to, and have become familiarized with, the relevant literature and theories associated with employee engagement. I am interested to see how my increased awareness, and my increased knowledge, will affect my daily professional life at work. Additionally, exploring strategies that hotel managers use to increase employee engagement has provided me with practical tools I can implement in my work environment, and also share with others in various ways in the future. I am grateful for this experience, and I am looking forward to where my newfound knowledge will lead me as I move on to pursue other goals and promote positive social change.

Conclusion

The purpose of this single case study was to explore strategies that luxury hotel managers use to increase employee engagement. The overarching research question was: What strategies do luxury hotel managers use to increase employee engagement? Four leaders from one luxury hotel in Hawaii participated in semistructured interviews to provide responses that were used as the main data source of this study. Member checking was completed to ensure the accuracy of the response interpretation before methodological triangulation was applied. All three of the themes identified were related to Herzberg's two-factor theory, and some of the detailed explanations of the participants were directly related to other factors of this conceptual framework.

Managers in every industry are concerned with the complex phenomena of employee engagement. The existing literature suggests that employee engagement can heavily influence various factors of organizational performance; furthermore, research suggests that disengagement can be problematic for organizational leaders. To increase employee engagement, hotel managers must understand the concept of employee engagement and be intentional about implementing effective strategies to increase employee engagement. The findings of this study indicated that strategies that allow for supervisors to listen to employee feedback, include recognition programs, and support employee growth and development may lead to increased employee engagement. Hotel managers who implement these strategies may be able to maintain a competitive advantage by increasing employee engagement throughout their organization.

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Appendix: Interview Protocol

Date _____

Location _____

Interviewer _____

Interviewee _____

Orientation & Reminders

- Greet participant.
- Remind participant of the purpose of the study.
- Confirm the participant is willing to participate and has signed consent.
- Explain the interview process (Approx. 1 hour):
 - Informational will be confidential.
 - Zoom will be recorded, and I will be taking handwritten notes during interview.
 - Interview will be recorded.
 - Participant may withdraw at any time.
 - Schedule follow up times for member checking after data analysis.
 - Before we begin, any questions/concerns?

Research Question

What strategies do hotel leaders use to engage employees?

Interview Questions

1. What strategies do you use to engage your employees?
2. How do the employees respond to those strategies?

3. How do you assess the effectiveness of the strategies for engaging employees?
4. What strategy is most effective when attempting to increase engagement?
5. What strategy is least effective when attempting to increase engagement?
6. Based on your experiences, what organizational changes occurred as a result of employee engagement?
7. What factors were the key barriers to implementing the successful strategies to improve employee engagement?
8. What additional information would you like to share about employee engagement?

Closing & Thanks

- review documents with the interviewee and allow time for reflection and feedback.