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Employee Engagement in a Clinical Ambulatory Setting

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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Walden University
2022

Abstract

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MBA, Walden University, 2014

BA, Robert Morris University, 2004

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Low employee engagement can result in adverse business outcomes. Healthcare
managers who lack strategies to increase employee engagement risk lower employee
productivity and overall profitability. Grounded in organizational support theory, the
purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies healthcare
ambulatory managers use to increase employee engagement successfully. The
participants were four mobile clinic managers from one organization in the northwest
suburban region of Illinois who successfully implemented strategies to increase employee
engagement. Data were collected using semistructured interviews and reviewing
company documents and reports related to employee engagement. Through thematic
analysis, three themes were identified: perceived organizational support, job satisfaction,
management engagement strategies, and quality patient care strategies. A key
recommendation is for business leaders to provide training for employees to ensure they
can complete their operational tasks. The implications for positive social change include
the potential to reduce healthcare costs by providing improved quality of patient care,
thereby benefiting the community and the local economy.

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Dedication

I dedicate this study to my loving mothers (Brenda Zolicoffer and Viola Williams) who has always given me the support and ambition to be the best I can be throughout this journey. I also dedicate this to my husband (Melvin Williams Jr) and children (LaZerick) and (Melvin) who faced and overcame many challenges while I worked to finish my study. Without the support of my loving family, this journey would have been impossible to achieve.

Acknowledgments

I acknowledge my family and most importantly my Walden University support staff and systems that assisted me through this journey. I offer my gratitude to Dr. Beehner for his excellent support and for believing that I'd make it eventually through this tough process. Thank you everyone for all the guidance and support.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Patient satisfaction and employee engagement strategically influences consumer loyalty (Albdour & Altarawneh, 2014). Healthcare leaders of organizations play a strategic role ensuring that: (a) all employees are completing the expectations of their positions, (b) all patients are safely taken care of with the providing of quality patient care, and (c), the productivity with providing excellent services in an ambulatory clinical setting is adhered to. Perceived organizational support is pertinent within a healthcare ambulatory clinical setting. When employees are committed to the organization, they are more productive and committed to the organization through a sense of feeling cared about and having mutual respect with others. Employees will not maintain engagement if they do not believe they are being respected (Lipman, 2017). Employees who appear to be more engaged in their work performance feel their working efforts are being acknowledged and feel that organizational leaders care about their own personal wellbeing. Toxic working environments can cause employees to become disengaged, which can put employees at risk of health problems and employers at risk of losing due to low performance (Lavinga, 2015).

Background of the Problem

Lost productivity from disengaged employees will cost U.S. companies $450 billion to $550 billion every year (Yohn, 2018). Disengaged employees in a healthcare ambulatory setting can hurt the organization financially and can also jeopardize patient safety. Clinical organizations are facing many challenges with reimbursements because healthcare accounts for quantity, quality of care, and complexity (Britton, 2015).

Managers who have utilized employee engagement in an ambulatory clinical setting

using motivational strategies have improved the quality of employee job performances,

meeting and sometimes exceeding organizational goals (Ghaffari et al., 2017).

The team will consist of the providers, medical assistants, front desk staff, and

social workers who are actively involved with providing patient continuity of care in an

ambulatory clinical setting. However, many organizations are struggling with employee

engagement due to leadership style, lack of communication, and employees not feeling

challenged in their roles. Diligent leadership styles and human resource practices

ultimately drive employee engagement that is fostered and implemented through

structured strategies in an effort to have good performance (Popli & Rizvi, 2016).

Employee engagement and emotional intelligence are vast components that contribute to

the success of organizations (Deshwal, 2015). Employees who are typically involved in

providing excellent patient care and teamwork in a healthcare environment are

emotionally engaged in their work ethics, responsibilities, and commitment to the

patients and organization.

Problem Statement

Employees who are disengaged in their work performance cost U.S. organizations

between $250 and $350 billion annually (Bulkapuram at al., 2015). Organizations with

low employee engagement are 18% less productive, 16% less profitable, experience 37%

less job growth, and share prices are 65% lower over time (Seppala & Cameron, 2015).

The general business problem is that healthcare managers lack knowledge, resources and

training to engage employees. The specific business problem is that some healthcare ambulatory managers lack strategies to increase employee engagement.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies healthcare ambulatory managers use to successfully increase employee engagement. The targeted population comprised four ambulatory clinic managers who are employed with one organization in the northwest suburban region of Illinois who have successfully increased employee engagement at their facilities. Increasing employee engagement in a healthcare outpatient clinical environment will potentially contribute to positive social change by providing higher quality patient care, leading to higher patient quality of life, and reduced healthcare costs to the patients, employers, or government agencies that subsidize healthcare costs.

Nature of the Study

I used a qualitative method for this study. The qualitative method was appropriate for my study because researchers use qualitative research to gather an abundance of data from personal experiences of participants (Sutton & Austin, 2015). The goal of qualitative researchers is to understand certain groups or populations that contribute to knowledge by describing the phenomenon using an interactive approach with a discovery focus (Wu et al., 2016). Researchers use quantitative research to develop an objective interpretation of data using statistical analysis based on mathematical principles (Carr, 1994; Denscombe, 2010). Quantitative research was not appropriate for this study because I did not examine variables or gather data in a numerical form. The mixed

method is a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies; therefore, this method was not appropriate.

I used a single case study design consisting of semistructured interviews along with reviewing documents from staff meetings, training, and internal employee engagement surveys conducted through the organizations. The selected documents will add credibility to the research results (Yin, 2018). A single case study design is appropriate for providing a detailed analysis, bounded in time and place, for the purpose of developing insights from interviews and observations performed in real-life settings (Campbell, 2014). The other types of qualitative designs are narrative, phenomenology and ethnography. The narrative design is a unified approach between one or two people by collecting extensive information about the participants based on their individualized experiences (Nguyen et al., 2013). The narrative design is not appropriate because the purpose of this study is to explore strategies on how healthcare ambulatory managers successfully increased employee, not with the personal experiences of one to two individuals. The phenomenological design is used by researchers to understand the meanings of several individual's lived experiences of a phenomenon or a concept (Khan, 2014). Therefore, the phenomenological design is not appropriate for this study because the focus of this study is not with the lived experiences of individuals of a phenomenon or concept. Researchers use the ethnographic design to explore the cultural values and beliefs of a group of participants (Shover, 2012). Therefore, the ethnographic design is not appropriate for this study because the focus of this study is not with the cultural values or beliefs of participants.

Research Question

The research question for this study was: What strategies do healthcare ambulatory clinic managers use to increase employee engagement?

Interview Questions

1. What strategies did you use to motivate and increase employee engagement?

2. What strategies did you use to train and engage employees in teamwork?

3. How did the employees respond to your employee engagement strategies?

4. How did the employees respond to your training strategies with engaging employees in their role in clinical operations?

5. What strategies did you find have worked out better with motivating and engaging your employees?

6. What challenges did you overcome with engaging employees in teamwork and their expectations?

7. What additional information do you have for managers that work in a clinical ambulatory environment who are seeking strategies on how to get their employees more engaged?

Conceptual Framework

Eisenberger et al. developed the organizational support theory in 1986. This theory was created in an effort to meet socio-emotional needs and to assess the benefits of working efforts increased by employees forming a general perception in regards in which the organization values their well-being and cares about their overall contributions. The organizational support theory emphasizes how employees assign human-like

characteristics to the organization in which encourages the perceived organizational support (POS) development. The organizational support theory key constructs are: (a) evaluating the relationship between the employee and the organization from the employees' perspective, (b) the clarity of the perceived organizational support construct, and (c) the robust associations of POS with affective organizational commitment, job satisfaction and other attitudinal outcomes (Kurtessis et al., 2015). The organizational support theory applied to this study by providing a framework to understand how healthcare ambulatory clinic managers may increase employee engagement through the development of perceived organizational support. Perceived organizational support fulfills socioemotional needs, resulting in greater identification and commitment to the organization, greater psychological wellbeing and an increased desire to help the organization succeed (Kurtessis et al., 2015). Collaboration and buy-in with employees is pertinent, and will help employees feel more empowered in their roles and more of a lead within clinical operations.

Operational Definitions

The following definitions of terms were applicable to the study:

Ambulatory clinics: Ambulatory clinics are defined as facilities that you can receive any healthcare treatment without an overnight stay in a hospital (Goodell, 2018).

Employee engagement: Employee engagement is defined as employees who are emotionally dedicated and committed to the best outcomes and highest services in their work performance by displaying enthusiasm, energy, and teamwork (Pruthiet al. 2015).

Job satisfaction: Job satisfaction is defined as an emotional feeling that is positive in which employees have from working at an organization (Scheers & Botha, 2014).

Perceived organizational support: Perceived organizational support (POS) refers to employees' perception on how employers value their work ethics based on their feelings and well-being (Caesens et al., 2019).

Quality patient care: The term quality patient care is defined as the best interest of the patient's health is the only to be considered (Pruthi et al. 2015).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are unverifiable facts that reflect the truth (Ormrod & Leery, 2016). I have made a few assumptions in my research study. My first assumption was that I will be able to gather data in an unbiased manner from managers who are employed with three different ambulatory healthcare organizations. My next assumption was that the managers will answer each question honestly.

Limitations

Limitations of any study are potential weaknesses that are usually out of the researcher's domination (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019). There were two limitations identified in this study. The first limitation was the potential weakness of the sample size being clinical practice managers in an ambulatory setting instead of a hospital organizational setting. The second limitation was that the study is restricted to business leaders who are validating their proficiency through surveys the company will distribute

to get employee and provider scores, and may not be reliable representatives of the presented organizational data.

Delimitations

Delimitations describe the boundaries or limits of the study in which it does not become impossible to achieve (Helmich et al., 2015). This study consisted of interviewing three clinic managers who have successfully implemented employee engagement strategies in an ambulatory clinical setting. The managers had five years or more of experience and currently employed in the healthcare field as a clinical manager in the Northwest Suburbs of Illinois.

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Significance of the Study

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Employee engagement is essential to employee productivity and patient care quality in an ambulatory clinical setting. This study is of value because it may contribute strategies to assist healthcare clinical ambulatory managers with increasing employee engagement. With the knowledge of how to engage employees in a healthcare clinical setting will increase patient safety, improve the patient's quality of life, and decrease costs for the patient, stakeholders, and the organization.

Contribution to Effective Business Practice

The findings of this study may contribute to effective business practice by identifying strategies for motivating and engaging employees. Managers may apply these strategies to create a culture of POS, empowering employees to increase productivity through teamwork, job efficiency, and best working practices. Unsatisfied, disgruntled, and disengaged employees are far less creative, and may generate less productivity,

costing the company more in overall expenses (Clifford, 2015). Employees who: (a) feel

empowered, (b) have the necessary information and knowledge, and (c) are recognized

for their work efforts are more engaged and will perform their work at the highest level at

all the times (Furst, 2018).

Contributions to Social Change

The implications for positive social change include the improved healthcare

employee productivity achieved by engaged employees. Engaged employees provide

higher quality of care, thereby increasing patient quality of life. Higher quality of care

will reduce the cost of healthcare, providing savings to the patient, employers providing

health insurance, and the government agencies that partially subsidize healthcare costs

through Medicaid, Medicare, and local hospital taxing districts. The decreased employer

healthcare costs may enable employers to offer additional or lower cost employee

benefits. Decreased healthcare costs at the government level will enable government

leaders to allocate saved revenue to other areas that may benefit the community.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies

healthcare ambulatory managers use to successfully increase employee engagement. The

conceptual framework for this study surrounded the construct of evaluating the

relationship between the employee and the organization from the employee's perspective,

clarifying the perceived organizational support construct and identifying the robust

associations of POS with affective organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and other

attitudinal outcomes (Kurtessis et al., 2015). The literature review is to observe the past

research to orchestrate reliable data with answering the research question as well as utilize (Eisenberger et al., 1986) theory to assist with understanding how perceived organization support impacts employee engagement.

The review of the academic literature provides the basis on how perceived organizational support has an impact on employee engagement. The literature review pertains to professional studies from the field of psychology, human resources, healthcare management, and industrial management relations. I utilized healthcare reports, peer-reviewed articles validated using the Ulrich Web Directory, books, and the 1986 scholarly works of Eisenberger et al., who developed the organizational support theory.

The strategies used for locating literature included searching Google Scholar, NCBI resources, National Institutes of Health, Academic Search Complete, electronic databases for Health Sciences and Health Administration (CINAHL, MEDLINE), Business (ABI INFORM), and Psychology (Psych INFO). Keywords used in this search include: *employee engagement, healthcare management, social exchange, self-enhancement, socio-emotional needs, job satisfaction, organizational support theory, psychological well-being and perceived organizational support.*

The literature review includes one book and 94 peer-reviewed journal articles for a total of 95 sources. Sixty seven percent of the sources were peer-reviewed and I included 45 peer-reviewed academic and professional sources published five years from the completion date of this study.

Organizational Support Theory

The conceptual framework for this proposed study was the organizational support theory developed by Eisenberger et al. in 1986. The organizational support theory has key constructs that evaluates the relationship between the employee and the organization from the employee's perspective. This clarifies the perceptional organizational support POS construct and identifies the robust associations of POS with affective organizational commitment, job satisfaction and other attitudinal outcomes (Kurtessis et al., 2015).

Eisenberger et al. (1986) indicated that employee's social exchange ideology with perceptions on the organizations commitment to them strongly influences their commitment to the organization. Employees have a propensity to perceive that actions by representatives of the organization tend to be the actual functions of the organization itself (Levinson, 1965). The perception is that the action of the representative is: (a) the responsibility of the organizations from a moral, financial and legal standpoint; (b) that norms are given by continuity and prescribed behaviors through traditions, policies, and organizational leaders; and (c) the organizational leaders represent power over the employees, indicating a perception of employee opinions in regards to others who have domination over the employee's resources (Levinson, 1965).

Perceived organizational support increases the employee's commitment with meeting goals when the expectancy is that a reward will be received for reaching the goal. Rewarded goals increase work efforts, dependent upon the employee's strength of exchange ideology giving preference to working efforts for symbolic and material benefits (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Motivated employees are more engaged in their work

efforts. Favorable treatment from supervisors ultimately enhances perceived

organizational support because managers and others in high positions are viewed as

organizational representatives (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

In comparison with emotional ties to an organization, affective attachment places

identity with the employee's personality on organizational commitment based upon the

level of employee engagement and commitment to performance and working efforts

(Mowday et al., 1979; Porter et al., 1974). Employee engagement, outcome expectancies

and affective attachments is believed to have a prodigious impact on the employee's level

of working efforts, attendance and level of work performance (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Baran et al. (2011) examined how organizational support theory related to other

studies examining perceived organizational support, and how employees perceived their

employers cared about their wellbeing, based on their work organizational values. The

researcher's primary focus was to review how perceived organizational support research

themes in 2000 have enhanced or appeared to be significant with the organizational

support theory in the twenty first century (Baran et al., 2011). Four theoretical themes

have developed since the year of 2000 that increases the value of the organizational

support theory. Those themes are: (a) multilevel role modeling with developmental ties;

(b) caring of the employee's wellbeing; (c) nontraditional workers; and (d) cultural,

diversity, and international issues.

Lam et al. (2015) proposed that employee's perceptions of intraorganizational

cues are pertinent with influencing their identity with the organization. The study was

conducted using collective perceptions of perceived organizational support,

identification, and extra-role behavior (Lam et al., 2015). A three-wave data collection

method was used with the involvement of 363 nurses in China (Lam et al., 2015).

According to Chenet al. (2009), Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) reported the meta-

analytic finding of relations between perceived organizational support and extra role

performance assessing POS and extra role performance two times in 3-year intervals

among 199 employees. Both studies were quite similar in findings in which POS was

positively associated with extra-role performance. Employees that feel appreciated will

perform at the best interest of the organization.

Multilevel Role Modeling with Developmental Ties

This theory states that employees should feel some sense of having positive

relationships with their leaders without favoritism over others. Work engagement is

referred to having a positive and fulfilling state of mind (Salanova et al., 2005).

Organizations are considered to be multilevel systems with relationships (Hitt et al.,

2007) and with this perspective, its pertinent for leaders to make every effort to engage

employees in the organizations overall vision and mission. Employees in a diverse

climate share perceptions amongst one another in working groups that are treated fairly

and intertwined in the working environment (Chung et al, 2015). Therefore, this

engagement would positively develop the relationship ties in the organization.

Developmental ties are pertinent to the diversity climate in a working

environment. Structuring a diversity working climate and practices surrounding diversity

would benefit all employees, as this would ultimately cater to their positive behavior and

attitudes (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015). When developmental ties are positive,

employees are inclined to perform their working tasks with positive behavior and

attitudes, in the means of sharing positive feedback and perceptions and engaging with

motivation in their roles in an effort that will assist with a social exchangeable

relationship (Li & Frenkel, 2017). Employees perception on culture exchange within an

organization can exert effects on job satisfaction (Hicks-Clarke & Lles, 2000), as well as

orchestrate a strategical sense of psychological empowerment (Chrobot-Mason &

Aramovich, 2013), in which this can ultimately lead to loyal behavior that is structuring a

strong working engagement environment (Chung et al., 2015). Developmental ties can

also be illustrated as positive or negative in any working environment, depending upon

the employee's motivation, the culture of the organization and the training and

development tactics. Some perceive a climate as catering to a diverse workforce, in return

may experience less with role confliction (Madera et al, 2013), with an outcome of more

proactive working engagement in their clinical roles. Role modeling plays a strategical

role in leadership positions as this is their responsibility to the employees to engage them

with their learning and team work efforts.

Leaders play a strategical role in providing social-informational cues that shape

employee's perceptions (Ferris & Rowland, 1981). Leaders who treat employees fairly

and encourage employees to be open-minded to their differences amongst their fellow

coworkers tend to have a more diverse group of employees that are willing to go far and

beyond their scope of duty and appear to be motivated with interacting and supporting

each other to highly engage in their working roles. Employees who positively have

motivational developmental ties with self-expression and sharing their personal identities

feel psychologically safe (Nishii, 2013). The perception and experience of an employee's

social exchange may be conducive to attitude and behavior responses that can be

beneficial to the organizations working engagement strategies (Ashikali & Groeneveld,

2015).

Caring of Employee's Wellbeing

It is pertinent that employees feel as though the company cares about their

wellbeing and working performance. Employees are motivated by organizational leaders

who express these specific traits. This theory indicates that employees that feel as though

the employer cares about their own personal well-being are found to be more productive

and committed to organization. Relatedness of these employees is reliant upon a sense of

caring, and mutual respect with others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Harlow, 1958).

Employees feel as though they are cared about by the organization when investments are

made to improve their well-being, performance and employee competence. Caring for the

wellbeing of an employee's working performance gives the employee motivation to want

to continue to develop, engage in team efforts, and strategically grow professionally

within the organization.

Employees have their shared perspective of organizational structures; however

shared perceptions of the polices and procedures that explicitly communicate the extent

that fosters and maintains diversity by removing discrimination and negative nuances is a

priority in the success of the employee and the organization (Gelfand et al., 2005, p. 104).

Diversity is viewed to be a shared climate unit level perception in which an organization

values and integrates diversity through its structured policies and procedures (Chrobot-

Mason & Aramovich, 2013). Employee engagement provides the stance for an employee's own personal performance and the performance of their team by understanding the workflows, policies and procedures that address employee engagement and employee diversity contributions to a variance in which their working engagement becomes salient (Costa et al., 2016). Members with long professions and with higher expertise have a tendency to operate in silos (Mithell et al, 2015) that can ultimately lead to a working environment that is silo with not sharing different perspectives on job related duties (Mitchell et al, 2015).

Employees want to feel as though they are valuable assets to the success of the organization and their working efforts are being acknowledged. Although culture has been found to influence employee cognition, behavior, and identity (Earley, 1994), it is pertinent to show employees that they are respected and appreciated for their organizational contributions to the team, regardless of age, gender, and expertise. Demonstrating to an employee that they are cared for within the organization is a sense of making and allowing them to feel involved in organizational decision-making tactics and team efforts. Empowerment may be the most strategical effort that an organization can apply to an employee's efforts for input, decision making and understanding of the organizational needs. Empowering managers to engage their employees in strategical working efforts through observation, listening and training will assist with employees feeling as though the organization cares about their professional growth and personal wellbeing. Empowering managers to work with their employees and develop teams over

time will effectively increase employee engagement and the perceptions that employees have that are positive in regards to leadership and organizational growth.

Nontraditional Work

Women are starting to take an interest in working in specific positions that typically men would work in. This brings upon great competitiveness amongst men and women competing for these specific types of roles. Workers who are nontraditional, in which this is a socioeconomic terminology that explains the profession or organization who has a very low percentage of women employed in comparison to men (Baran et al., 2011), in which a reasonable explanation would be that the position may not spark as much interest in women over men. Through the efforts of sending fair and supportive signals to demographic groups, such as women, diversity-oriented practices may attenuate relationship conflicts amongst member in return catalyzing their communication and connection that leads to high motivational engagement in the workplace (Costa et al., 2017). Research has shown that female employees have much more positive perceptions toward diversity and the participation in diversity programs (Abramovic & Traavik, 2017), although perceptions toward diversity may vary through life stages (Ng & Sears, 2012; Sawyer et al., 2005).

Although nontraditional work has been highly enthused within the workforce, its pertinent to understand how everyone fits into the organizational model of care goals set in healthcare organizations. It is not that men are taking on more non-traditional work in healthcare environments, as they have extensive careers in the fields of nursing and environmental healthcare services. Engaging male genders in an environment that was

highly recognized as employment assignments for women has been a huge culture shock, however has not taken away from employee engagement strategies implemented by healthcare executives.

Healthcare organizations have implemented strategies for everyone, regardless of sex or culture from "putting in their time" to being committed to their work by utilizing the four steps to improve employee engagement in which they are:

(a) measuring what matters most for employee's performance; healthcare leaders focus on metrics that do not necessarily tie strongly to employees' psychological needs;

(b) acting quickly by having employees who strongly agree that organizations that act on survey results are 1.9 times more likely to be more engaged,

(c) not making it an ongoing process, in which this is considered to be a common mistake leaders make, as they sporadically exercise this in an effort for their employees to feel happy for the moment, in which employees need ongoing purpose and development,

(d) empowering managers to drive engagement, as they account for 70% of the variance with team and employee engagement. It is pertinent that managers effectively interact with their team to develop their skillset and keep them motivated (Gallup, 2022).

Cultural Diversity and International Issues

Cultural, diversity and international issues are barrier issues (Baran et al., 2011). Culture and diversity illustrate a strategical role with perceived organizational support

and employee engagement. Diversity and HR practices were designed to enrich differences that can contribute to organizational goals such as leveraging innovation, enhancing satisfaction of diverse patients or gaining competitive edge (Manoharan & Singai, 2017). Employees will be engaged in their working ethics based off the diversity in the organization and the culture that the organization represents. Many employees will engage when they recognize opportunities to become engaged based on the feeling of empowerment to perform work their way, and at their own individualized pace. When cultural competency is encouraged throughout the whole organization, this excels employee competency, and the major significant topics for skill development and evaluation will in turn promote competency enhancement (McDaniel et al., 2015).

Employees have an obligation to the organization to follow policies and procedures, provide teamwork and to also manage cultural diversity by providing diligent working ethics and teamwork. Implementing improvement and training strategies will assist with growth and opportunity amongst everyone is pertinent, however understanding that cultural diversity plays a strategical role with structuring organizational goals and success amongst employees. Employee engagement that has best achieved employee emotional enhancement, cognitive daily working efforts, engagement from all organizational zones has improved as a multidimensional process (Eldor & Harpaz, 2015). Group diversity in terms of gender, age, and experience was founded to strengthen the effect of working engagement strategies in a healthcare clinical setting. Leaders are responsible for providing a culture that engages employees from a psychological ownership perspective, as this creates a psychologically safe environment

and workplace for their employees (Dollard & Bakker, 2010). Employees desire to feel respected, accepted and included with the organizations decision making, as this enhances their self-esteem and shows value with their self-worth for the organization (Belle et al., 2014). Leaders persuade culture by allowing everyone to embrace and accept core values of the organization and also by providing clear and concise communication that compliments employee engagement (Men & Stacks, 2013). Open and clear communication enhances the confidence of employees and it orchestrates an environment that employees would like to be involved in as they learn to enhance their skillsets while working with patients and their fellow coworkers.

Technology has significantly improved employee engagement by implementing strategies that improves accuracy, communication, productivity and clinical operational workflows in a healthcare environment (Taddeo & Floridi, 2018). Integrated approaches, including design training and guidance checklist have been researched in the essence of improving employee engagement tactics in the healthcare sector (Benjamins et al., 2019). Cultural diversity is pertinent when working in healthcare clinical settings. Employees and patients want to feel respected and understood when interacting with one another in a professional setting. Satisfaction from the human autonomy and value of human input in pertinent decisions in a healthcare environment can ultimately contribute to healthcare providers psychological wellbeing (Weinstein & Ryan, 2010). It is pertinent to understand human motivational strategies in healthcare, (Calvo et al, 2020) to assist with the ability to implement employee engagement strategies from any given cultural

perspective. Understanding patient care cultural needs is pertinent to the health and development of the patient.

Employee engagement is a motivational sector that describes the relationship between work performance and guidance (Karatepe, 2013). Employees that do not feel engaged with the organization, leadership or their fellow coworkers typically will not be dedicated in providing excellent patient care or improving their working performance. Employees that are dissatisfied with the culture of the organization tend to leave and pursue employment opportunities elsewhere or will show to be very unproductive in their job performance. Leaders that are involved with providing coordination and structure to their operations have reduced turnover rates because employees feel more involved and apart of the culture within the organization. The reduction of turnover intentions has been proven with employee job satisfaction through employee organization commitment (Madera et al, 2017). Strategies on empirical work ethics have been dedicated to the exploration of diversity practices of work engagement amongst all employees (Downey et al., 2015). Considering diversity-oriented practices strategically contribute to the promotion of cooperative norm in a diversely-composed group (Downey et al., 2015) as these increases employees' motivation to engage in their working efforts (Gerards et al., 2018), employees in a group of functional diversity may respond much more strongly to diversity practices than those of a homogeneous group.

Related and Contrasting Theories to Organizational Support Theory

Another type of theory is the self-determination theory that is very similar to the expectations of the organizational support theory in which perceived organizational

support is one of the elements that illustrates a strategical role in both theories. The self-determination theory defines three nutriments that are considered to be crucial with employee's growth, survival, and integrity (Ryan et al., 1996). Those nutriments are: (a) autonomy, in which the person they can initiate actions through their choice and feeling (deCharms, 1968); (b) competency, in which the person is successful with the completion of challenging job duties with achieved results (Skinner, 1995); and, (c) relatedness, which demands mutual respect and care from others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Harlow, 1958). Research on diversity management has focused on performance outcomes at the organization (Boehm et al, 2014) and individual level (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015). Knowingly that the role of an employee engagement is a strong contributing factor to the employee's performance on an individual and collective level (Costa et al, 2016), more attention has been giving to job satisfaction, turnover intention and organizational commitment (Madera et al, 2013, 2017) besides from employee working engagement strategies. When employees feel involved in their working performance, it guides their engagement with employees tending to empathize and connect with people regardless of their experience and diverse backgrounds (Truong et al, 2017).

Perceived Organizational Support

Eisenberger et al. (1986) conducted the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support in an effort to present evidence that (a) employees who are members of an organization form global beliefs in regards to the whether the organization values their commitment and cares about their well-being, (b) perceived organizational support reduces absenteeism and (c) the relationship between POS and absenteeism is greater for

employees with strong exchange ideology (Eisenberger et al., 1986). The *Survey of*

Perceived Organizational Support technique determined the outcome. It was based on a

7- point Likert scale *(1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)* that included

commitment statements that represented positive and negative wordings in an effort to

remain bias (Eisenberger et al., 1986). The findings indicate that the social exchange

view on employee's commitment with the organization is determined by how employees

perceive the organization's commitment to their well-being. The organizational support

theory provides clarity on the importance of employee engagement strategies with health

care employees in an ambulatory clinical setting, in which this will contribute to

improving employee morale, working efforts, performance, patient satisfaction and

patient safety. Benefits that stem from when employees feel engaged are increased

employee performance, quality patient care, talent retention and achievement with goals

of the organization (Kuntz & Roberts, 2014).

Perceived organizational support upsurges these benefits because employees are

feeling as though the organization cares about their well-being. Employers are looking at

the true value of employee engagement because the benefits are intuitive with the

organizations vision and mission. Human resource consultants, healthcare organizations

and academia universities validate the importance of employee engagement, as it

increases productivity, patient and customer satisfaction and it assist with the

accomplishment of the overall goals (Kuntz & Roberts, 2014). The organizational

support theory which evaluates the relationship between the employee and the

organization from the employee's perspective appears to have much more benefits
overall.

Deshwal (2015) investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and
employee engagement. Deshwal used primary and secondary data, including structured
questionnaires administered by email. The sample of 60 respondents was from Hisar,
Faridabad and Sirsa with 50% of respondents being males, and 50% females. The age
grouping was 30 – 40 years and the data was interpreted and analyzed using the Yule's
coefficient of association (Deshwal, 2015). The findings showed that individuals with
high emotional intelligence display a high degree of employee engagement at the
workplace because they are considered to develop better interpersonal employee
relationships, be less involved in conflicts and they tend to align their goals with
organizational goals (Deshwal, 2015).

Giorgi et al. (2016) developed a regression tree model predicting that perceived
organizational support comes from many job characteristics that includes lack of
leadership support, training, lack of job control and job demand. The model pointed out
many factors, in which training was one of the key dominants (Giorgi et al., 2016).
Regression has list of requirements that include linearity, normality, independence of
error terms and continuous variance of error terms that were crucial to meet in
determination to perform well (Giorgi et al., 2016).

The regression tree model is based on graphs that identify each circle in the
diagram, as it reflects binary splitting points in the model (Giorgi et al., 2016). Multiple
dimensions in different categories for perception organizational support includes a

combination of items such as working conditions, work stress and social support in which they all illustrate a distinguished role in an employee's perception (Scott et al., 2011). The data aimed to measure work related stress and perceived organizational support (Giorgi et al., 2016) with a target population of employees working for multiple site location of an Italian national bank. The data was collected through the Stress Questionnaire and was used for this particular study considering the validity Italian tool that measures organization perceptions and work-related stress (Giorgiet al., 2016). The Italian banking sector appears at risk of developing less perception organizational support (Quaglia & Royo, 2015).

This scale ranges from 1 (absolutely agree) to 5 (absolutely disagree) and consists of 25 items and 5 sub scales that included training, reporting, lack of job control, lack of support and job demand (Giorgi et al., 2016). The dominant factor for perception organizational support was training which in a recent study met analysis by Kurtessis et al. (2015) showed that training and development opportunity was the key factor and most indicative of POS.

The findings showed that perceived organizational support was a result of a combination of items such as job demands, lack of job control, role conflict, lack of supervisor support, lack of colleagues' support, training, POS and reporting (Giorgi et al., 2016). Reporting in combination with other organizational items might create lesser perception organizational support because safety conditions can illustrate a strategical role on well-being (Caricati et al., 2016).

Productive employees decrease patient safety issues and increase providing quality patient care. Employees who are productive are more engaged in their working efforts in which this will ultimately improve patient satisfaction (Albdour & Altarawneh, 2014). Psychological ownership describes when employees feel connected to the organization, are willing to apply themselves, and become more actively engaged with work. Employees who are psychologically committed to the organization ultimately improve innovation, employee satisfaction, patient satisfaction and productivity (Zhang et al., 2014).

Negative Impacts of Perceived Organizational Support (POS)

Perceived organizational support (POS) is negatively related to employee's interpersonal eccentricity behaviors, such as acting rude towards coworkers or taking actions that are hurtful towards another employee (Caesens et al., 2019). According to Shore and Coyle-Shapiro (2012), employees form an attribution to the organization because of their own personal negative treatment, which is deemed malicious by the organization, and is perceived organizational cruelty (POC). Employees who have this perception may file organizational malpractice suits alleging discriminatory treatment of employees and unfair practices, which cost organizations up to $64 billion annually (Center for American Progress, 2012). The culture and processes of an organization can stand to have a negative perception in upfront practices that are explicit with disciplinary policies and unintended practices in which supervisors are harmful to their employees in a manner in which they are unaware of their malicious treatment towards their employees. Employees are enthused through the expressions of equality and being treated

fairly (Gouldner, 1960), and can display behaviors that are retaliatory when they feel as though they are experiencing POC, by engaging in lagged working performance, consistency with absenteeism and taking advantage of employee benefits.

Perceived organizational support can be managed from different aspects when leadership are closely monitoring employee engagement activities and how employees are completing their working performances. Different aspects of working conditions from employee behaviors, task being asked to complete and environment can assist with playing a strategical role in the perception of the organizational support from an employee's perspective. Improving working conditions along with increasing employees support levels can represent opportunities for leaders to experience positive perceived organizational support in the workplace. Different aspects of a working environment that has to do with physical working conditions, interactions with co-workers and leadership support can impact the organization in a negative or positive manner, depending on the leadership style that's represented to the employees. Perceived organizational support captures a positive organizational environment that can emphasize the pertinence of the employee's welfare and their contributions (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011).

In an ambulatory clinical environment, POC can lead to mistakes with documentation, decreased quality of care to patients and unsafe medical practices that can be harmful for patients and employees. Perceived organizational support (POS) and perceived organizational cruelty (POC) are both constructs that are congruent with fairness, equality, socio-emotional needs, and social exchange that views the relationship of the organization and employee as similar in contrast that is considered to be

psychologically integrated (Shore & Shore, 1995). POS and POC are congruent to state

that employees humanize the organization through their experiences in which this can be

perceived as positive or negative.

Leadership and Employee Engagement

Leadership is the key element to ensuring that the organization and the employees

of the organization can work in congruency to the expectations of the vision and working

goals. Leadership navigates difficult issues that are set to navigate competencies by

demonstrating successful cross-sector solutions (Goh & Low, 2014). Leaders who can

ultimately demonstrate and cultivate on partnerships to drive performance and value, as

well as transform healthcare to it greatest extent with providing quality patient care are at

the core of their working efforts. Organizational leaders have a strategical role in

influencing employees by developing an employee-leader relationship built on trust and

respect (Goh & Low, 2014). When employees perceive that they can trust their leaders,

they are willingly more engaged in providing excellent patient care services in healthcare.

Leaders who are engaged with the opportunity to gain the trust of their employees are

more willing to improve communication barriers and understand their employees

concerns with possibly creating an emotional connection (Loi et al., 2012).

Leadership is the key to navigating issues that can be challenging such as seeking

connections with others, taking steps to enable groups to come together and build

relationships, acknowledging respect for diverse expertise, interests and values as well as

encouraging boundaries (Duberman & Sachs, 2019). Managing boundaries and obstacles

can be difficult for leaders, especially in the field of healthcare. It is pertinent to develop

relationship boundaries as a leader; however, leaders should demonstrate care for employee well-being in order to keep them on the positive side of perception organizational support (POS).

While balancing these relationships may be difficult, constructive conflict can be supported by: (a) encouraging productive behavior, maintaining an open mind with disagreements, and reaching a cohesive decision that would benefit all parties; (b) listening to objections, acknowledging concerns, and seeking opportunities for all parties to contribute to the discussion; and, (c) seeking ways to recognize tension, and balancing shared interests to achieve a common goal in which everyone is engaged in the discussion (Duberman & Sachs, 2019). Healthcare believe that utilizing the HELM (healthcare ecosystem leadership model will enhance employee engagement by: (a) accepting and receiving feedback in an effort to increase employee engagement in communication; (b) initiating and outlining steps that identifies performance indicators; (c) taking steps that are responsible to maintain expectations without overanalyzing inefficiencies; and, (d) by engaging everyone in feedback by identifying achieved expectations, and coming up with solutions on items that were not achieved together as a team (Duberman & Sachs, 2019).

The belief is that the ecosystem approach in leadership is pertinent to realizing significant changes to the health of the community and the growth and development of the organization (Duberman & Sachs, 2019). Leadership structures are developed in a vertical hierarchy integrated community in healthcare (Winkler et al., 2014) in which this can create communication barriers and a disconnection amongst senior leadership and employees. Leaders are responsible for building transparent relationships with their

employees. Transparency occurs between employees and leaders when there is open communication and a trusting relationship developed amongst the two (Tims et al., 2011). Perceived organizational support is improved amongst employees when transparency is present within the organization; however, POS can be reduced significantly by having too many hierarchy level senior leaders in which this makes it difficult for transparency and open communication.

This perceived organizational support disconnect can cause employees to be less engaging with improving clinical operations, in return, decreasing their commitment with the organization and with providing quality patient care. Horizontal hierarchy appears to be a much better approach because it reduces roles of hierarchy with senior leaders (Zwingmann et al., 2014) providing a more robust relationship amongst leaders and employees. By strategically implementing a horizontal hierarchy approach in healthcare, the organization can expect to build eminent employee-leader relationships that provide great transparency, allowing employees to feel as though the organization cares about their well-being.

Organizations that implement strategies that engage employees in their work efforts have great results with high productivity (Blattner & Walter, 2015). Hospital organizations that have productive engaged employees increase the profit margins and patient satisfaction (Bowen, 2016). Leaders who motivate and communicate with their employees helps empower and engage employees to have positive work attitudes (Mowbray et al., 2014), that result in fewer turnovers and less patient mistakes (Barrick et al., 2014). Effective communication is considered one of the basic needs that keep

employees feeling engaged and even more involved and committed (Vandenabeele, 2014) in their working efforts. Efficient communication eliminates redundancy and contributes to teamwork with assigned delegated tasks that is applicable with achieving the expectation (Xaxx, 2019).

Leaders are expected to represent organizations by providing the necessary tools, open communication and a safe work environment for their employees. The American College of Healthcare Executives states that leadership executives have the responsibility to challenge their employee's abilities to grow and engage in an effort to support the growth of the vision and mission (ACHE, 2019). It is an investment to develop managers and leaders and should ultimately be supported on all levels because it caters to leadership talent and assist with sustain the organization to optimize on growth opportunities, as well as develop employees with increasing employee engagement (ACHE, 2019). According to ACHE (2019), in an effort to engage fully in leadership activities, healthcare executives should undertake leadership assessments to understand their own strengths and weaknesses, participate in both employer based and external offerings that contributes to the development of healthcare management and attend face to face education that initiates ways to engage employees in feedback and also educate them on different learning opportunities (ACHE, 2019).

The behaviors that leaders display can ultimately give employees either perceived negative or positive support. The behavioral theory of leadership focuses on three types of leadership styles that were designed by Kurt Lewin in 1939 (Lewin et al., 1939). The first one is the autocratic leadership style in which subordinates are expected to do what

they are informed by their leaders with no consult or input on decision-making (Lewin et al., 1939). This leadership style is efficient when making quick decisions and can also be very effective when the goals and expectations are clear and concise (Lewin et al., 1939). The second is the democratic leader, in which this specific style is very engaging with their employees by seeking their input on decision-making (Lewin et al., 1939). This leadership style can be difficult with extreme diverse cultures; however, can be also highly effective if everyone's goals are well-aligned together and work cohesively to achieve expectations (Lewin et al., 1939). The third is the laissez-faire leader. This leadership style does not involve themselves with their subordinates but would allow them to make their own decisions pertaining to their work (Lewin et al., 1939).

Psychological Engagement

Employees assign psychological human-like characteristics to the organization that is based on their perceived organizational support. Organizational leaders have an obligation to ensure that all employees feel the leaders care about their well-being. Employees that feel emotionally connected will increase their desire to help the organization succeed (Kurtessis et al., 2015). Healthcare organizations are constantly changing and evolving with the way they are providing quality patient care, in which this ultimately would affect how employees are receptive to following protocols and being engaged in their roles and responsibilities. Employee's perception plays a diligent role in how employees will perform and be engaged in their job performance. Employees that are motivated and believe the employer cares about their well-being will be more willing

and engaged with organizational success (Al Mehrzi & Singh, 2016; Kurtessis et al., 2015).

In some cultures, parents are pertinent influencers with career choices for their children (Dang, 2015), similar to leaders influencing employees through motivation and engagement. Perception from any aspect can influence decisions (Dang & Tanya, 2014). A constant change in healthcare that includes disruptive innovation has increased the competition (Eldor, 2016) amongst ambulatory clinical operational healthcare organizations. With high patient care expectations and organizational outcomes, the need to ensure that all employees are engaged is pertinent in clinical workflows and performance. Patients are more involved in the decision-making process of their healthcare and they demand their rights to receive professional care (Graffigna et al., 2016). In ambulatory clinical settings, it is pertinent to have the staff, administration team and providers engaged with providing excellent quality patient care in an effort to share the vision and build team continuity. Active participation and psychological commitment from a team perspective will ultimately produce better results for the organization and the patients (Graffigna, 2017). While employee engagement is defined as one individual engaged with providing quality patient care, work engagement is a combination of individuals feeling connected emotionally together to provide excellent patient care (Eldor, 2016). Work engagement drives the performance of the organization as a whole (Graffigna, 2017), while psychological support drives the performance from one employee's perspective, which can ultimately trickle down to other employees in the organization.

Psychological perceptions from individual characteristics can hinder work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Bakker & Leiter, 2010). Individualized psychological feelings about their jobs (Mackay et al., 2017) and own personalized goals (Adriaenssens et al., 2015) can have a significant impact on work engagement through attitudinal persuasion. Employee and patient engagement are a psychological process (Graffigna et al., 2014), that affects emotions and behaviors in clinical operations.

Employees who are engaged have more of an emotional psychological connection with the organization (Kompaso & Sridevi, 2010). Motivation and commitment are ultimately based on the individuals need to feel a sense of gratitude and satisfaction (Vandenabeele, 2014). Positive employment psychology allows organizations the understanding of how employees stay motivated in their working ethics and commitment. Autonomy is pertinent with employee engagement because control over life is considered a psychological fundamental human need (Chambers, 2018). Human needs are engraved in three different categories that consist of growth, relatedness and existence. Growth internalizes self-esteem. Relatedness is grounded in the need of social interactions. Existence plays a strategical role in physical safety and physiological awareness (Chambers, 2018). Intrinsic motivation is orchestrated by a psychological need that cultivates individual engagement and commitment (La Guardia, 2009).

The feeling of having an impact on the organizations mission plays a strategical and psychological role in employee engagement (Chambers, 2018). Psychological desires are related to competency in which motivation is shown through behavior that is considered suitable for psychological well-being that can ultimately lead to growth,

enhanced productivity and prosperity (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Engaged employees have a

very strong impact on organizational performances and outcomes.

In an ambulatory clinical setting, engaged employees contribute to pertinent

factors that involves patient safety and productivity with patient satisfaction (Mann &

Darby, 2014). Care management involves the clinical team working together to ensure

that the patient is utilizing and is knowledgeable about decision-making tools to take care

for themselves, in an effort to decrease emergency room visits and inpatient hospital

stays. Ambulatory clinics that contribute to influencing great work ethics through

employee engagement activities are more profitable, in which this impacts the quality-of-

care services their patients are receiving and employee satisfaction (Mann & Darby,

2014).

Employee engagement affects how long an organization will possibly survive

because it ultimately will have a huge impact on the employee's work performance.

Employee engagement and productivity filters down to the financial performance of the

organization (Bersin, 2014). Excellent employee engagement strategies utilized in an

ambulatory clinical setting will retain the employee's motivation that leads to great

outcomes and positive (POS), perceived organization support.

Work progress, commitment and accomplishments within an organization is

related to psychological experiences, in which this strategically plays a role on how

engaged employees are willing to perform based on their POS (perceived organization

support). Employees who are engaged would definitely perform better because they have

a physical, emotional and cognitive engagement with assigned daily tasks (Eldor &

Harpaz, 2015).

Safety Impact of Employee Engagement in Healthcare Setting

In an effort for organizations to increase employee engagement in which

employees feel motivated about their assigned tasks, (Nasomboon, 2014), leaders of the

organization should genuinely acquire strategies that would enhance employee

engagement activities (Nicholas & Erakovich, 2013). Ambulatory clinics are utilizing

different models of care with employee engagement strategies that would contribute to

cost efficiency, the elimination of waste and overall, the increasing of profit margins

through performance and productivity. Employee engagement plays a strategical role in

the productivity (Musgrove et al., 2014) and quality of care patients will receive in an

ambulatory clinical setting. Every 1 in 4 patients are harmed in an ambulatory clinical

setting.

Medication errors are one of their largest liabilities costing an estimated $42

billion (World Health Organization, 2019). Every patient care contact initiative contains

some level of safety that needs to be involved for both the patient and the staff members.

Engaged employees are usually very tentative and more involved with patient safety,

their working efforts with being very attentive to detail and the quality of care the patient

receives while in their care. Teamwork is pertinent along with having ethical and moral

working ethics in an ambulatory clinical environment. Safety in an ambulatory clinical

environment is the priority for patients and staff members; however, unengaged

employees can increase the chances of unsafe issues arising causing serious medical

problems and even death. In comparison, while there is a one in a million in which a person would be harmed on an airplane, there is a one in 300 chance a person would be harmed in a clinical setting (World Health Organization, 2019).

Employees who are not engaged in patient care can have a detrimental impact in patient safety and their own. It is pertinent for leaders to have well trained staff members and providers who are diligent with performing their necessary appointed duties. When employees and providers are engaged in their working efforts, it increases their satisfaction and decreases the chances of any safety issues arising.

There are nine facts documented by the World Health Organization (2019) as follows:

- Out of an estimated number of about 421 million hospitalizations in the world, there are approximately 42.7 million adverse actions that happen with patients during their hospitalizations, with patient harm being the 14th leading cause of death in the world.

- While hospitalized, 1 in 10 patients are harmed from incidents or adverse events, in which this number increases in an ambulatory clinical setting when employees are not engaged in their performance or working efforts

- Unsafe use of medications that causes medication errors when there are poor workflows/systems and/or through human error from being fatigue, unengaged in their working performance so not paying close attention to detail and poor working conditions

- Adverse events in other countries take up about 15% of total hospital activity and expenditure in OECD (Organization of Economic Corporation and Development) with the likely events being ulcers and infections.

- Safety improvements can have an extreme positive impact on financial savings. The U.S. saved an estimated $28 billion in Medicare hospitals between 2010 and 2015 by focusing and improving safety standards of operations.

- With hospital infections, around 3.2 million patients are infected with HAIs across the European Union and a 37,000 of them die.

- Annually, more than one million patients die from complications of surgical methods. The death rates are higher due to patient safety issues and employee engagement in an ambulatory surgical clinical setting.

- In clinical ambulatory outpatient settings, at least 5% of adults in the U.S. experience an error with their diagnosis each year. Employees who are disengaged in their working efforts illustrate about 3.6%.

- Radiation overall in an outpatient clinical ambulatory setting is a safety concern. Employees who are not engaged, inappropriate use of medical radiation, or unskilled use of medical radiation can be seriously hazardous for both patients and health care professionals.

Physical work conditions, supervisors and coworkers, social support, role and responsibility empowerment have known to show in a positive or negative way with perceived organizational support (Caesens et al., 2019). Psychological conditions of safety and availability affects employee engagement (Kahn, 1990) significantly in a

healthcare environment, whether inpatient hospital or outpatient clinical ambulatory. The domains that describe why employees engage in work are: (a) meaningfulness, defined as self-return for the employee based on self-investment in job performance; (b) safety, defined as the employee being able to express themselves, and offer feedback without fear of consequence; and, (c) availability in which that is defined as the employee's intellect to keep the physical, emotional and psychological resources to do their job efficiently and effectively (Kahn, 1990). Safety can also be in the means of environmental situations that does not protect the well-being of the patient or employee.

Patient-Centered Medical Home

The patient-centered medical home model of care entails a dominant workforce that consists of physicians, nurses, medical assistants, care managers and social workers who provide team based primary care to improve the overall quality of patient care (Peikes et al., 2016). The patient centered medical home model practices orchestrate transdisciplinary care teams to assist with the improvement in care management and care coordination of patient populations that are aiming to improve aspects of the quality of care, safety and efficiency (ACU, 2020) in the way patients are cared for by their providers and with the way that patients self-provide for themselves according to instructions given by their providers. The patient centered medical home model is a diligent model of care that needs to be implemented and orchestrated through healthcare clinical operation facilities by staff members that serve in different experiences of expertise, in which that includes, nurses, providers, certified nursing assistants and the

administration team that consists of patient support representatives and billing administration staff members.

Ensuring that patients are clinically well and financially stable to continue or start services that's needed for the clinical experiences is pertinent to the development and growth of that individualized patient as a whole. This model of care is consistent with ensuring great medical health from their providers and it involves the patients in their care by including the patients in their own self-care assignments that holds patients fully responsible for ensuring that they are following all the necessary steps and protocols with at home instructions provided by their clinicians. Clinicians have the responsibility of following up with patients after their appointments and making sure that they are following the instructions as provided to assist with improving their care.

The patient centered medical home model (PCMH) offers a model for transformation on the way health care is delivered overall. Since the inception of the model, recognition has been given to the importance of engaging the consumer as a participant who is actively involved in their care and health management, as well as the provider who's providing the care to stay abreast on the patient's well-being. The patient centered medical home model is based on a team effort and it involves everyone from the primary care providers, health IT developers, employers, caregivers, policy coordinators and the broad arena of clinical team members (Grundy, Crosby & Rogers, 2010). It's been proven that better the better the employee engagement is for the healthcare system, the better it is to engage the patient in their overall healthcare goals. Better patient experience yields better experience with health outcomes. Tool assessments have

become more dominant with health outcomes by assisting with improving the quality of care provided to the patient and the organizational healthcare patient goals. Providers have found that it's pertinent to involve patients in the design of their medical home itself by involving patients, consumer organizations and family members in the deciding on how to facilitate the workings of the medical center based on the patient population and also based on what's working and what is considered useless. Engagement orchestrates as a pertinent role for the health care clinicians, the patients and family members involved in the patient's care.

There has been five frameworks identified below involving patient/family engagement: (a) the foundations for effective engagement, in which this consist of mutual goal and expectation setting, mutual progress feedback, patient-provider relationship development and availability with use of appropriate health care settings, (b) accurate and complete information flow between the patient and provider that consist of medical history and current medication list, behavior risk factors, current issues and concerns and the review and communication of care coordination issues, (c) patient activation for self-management that entails the patient's knowledge of key health targets and actual values such as blood pressure and cholesterol, healthy lifestyle attributions such as eating, drinking, smoking and exercise and adherence to therapeutic regimens and other chronic disease management behaviors, (d) shared decision making that consists of the provider understanding of the patient's goals and preferences, the patients knowledge of options, risks and benefits and the patients participation in their decision process and (e) the family engagement and activation that entails congruent goal setting, family members

present at visit for dependent patient, family members actively involved in the patient care process and family as a support network for patient self-management, including non-dependents (Grundy et al., 2010).

Team-based care illustrates a strategical role in employee engagement in an ambulatory clinical setting. Team-based care is outlined by the National Academy of Medicine as heath care services by two or more providers that work in collaboration with each other to care for individuals, their communities and families, in an effort to accomplish goals through shared decision making to achieve high quality patient care (Schottenfeld et al., 2016).

Team-based care represents employees being very diligently engaged in their working efforts in a team-oriented environment. Greatly implemented team-based care can definitely improve the effectiveness, value of care, quality of care, efficiency, with also improving the satisfaction with the employees, providers and patients (Schottenfeld et al., 2016). Employee engagement is pertinent in their working efforts in an ambulatory clinical setting because this would decrease the chances of safety issues occurring with patient care. Addressing the patient needs as a whole person includes collaborating with the patient and family members to obtain a clear justification and understanding of the patient's unique care needs (Peikes et al., 2016). This particular model of care strategically entails high levels of patient care expectations and great patient experiences through employee engagement. Employee engagement methods through teamwork efficiency from the employee's perspective and the patient's perspective enhances the provision of quality patient care through this model of care services.

Patient-centered care allows patients to become more engaged, involved and knowledgeable about their healthcare needs and concerns (Peikes et al., 2016). Patients feel respected when they are more involved in their care. Physician-patient communication improves drastically with the enhancements of systems that allow patients 24/7 access to care. Performance reviews on a regular basis can increase employee engagement and participation (Cooper-Thomas et al., 2014); however, leading by walking around (LBWA) can also positively impact employee engagement with patient safety and providing quality patient care in an ambulatory clinical setting.

There are many forms of care that has been implemented, in "health IT" in the patient centered medical home model. The focus for patient engagement is centered around employee engagement in the sense that all employees are working diligently together to ensure that the patient will receive the best patient experience and continue to have good health with the assistance from not just one provider, however a team of clinical professionals at all times. Health IT has come in the form of what we call electronic medical record systems in which patients can communicate with their healthcare providers and their providers can also send them communication pertaining to their health and their appointments through a portal. This form of communication is very efficient in a way that it provides on the spot resources to patients, patients direct contact with their provider and immediate care services by the provider to the patient. It also can assist patients with keeping tabs on their financial obligations as well. The providers are more anxiously excited about this implementation because the system provides a way that providers can monitor their patient's performance and health at a more strategic level and

also benefit from financial incentives based on the providers performance and the health of their patients. There are many trends in health care that physicians and health care professionals will need to stay on top of with more advanced electronic health record (EHR) features. The Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) collection of surveys and quality improvement items assist with the support of a patience experience and the systematic collection of data (Browne, et al., 2010). This allows the reports and data collections to provide accurate and updated information at all times when reporting clinical data surveys and information.

The focus of the patient center medical home model is with providing quality patient care in a team-oriented environment, in which employees from every level and medical career professions are engaged in their working efforts (Peikes et al., 2016). Employees who are engaged in a clinical environment may improve the quality of care for the patient and increase patient safety in an ambulatory clinical setting. A robust number of employees who are actively engaged in the organization and feel a sense of job security will improve patient quality measures, productivity and the organizations profit margins (Nasomboon, 2014).

Transition

The organizational support theory is the relationship between the employee and the organization from the employee's perspective. The perceptional organizational support constructs and identifies the robust associations of (POS) with affective organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Perceptional organizational support plays a strategical role with employees feeling as though the organization cares about

their working contributions and well-being. Employees that feel as though their talents and working efforts are praised and rewarded are more productive and engaged with their job performance.

Increasing employee engagement in a healthcare outpatient clinical environment will potentially contribute to positive social change by providing higher quality patient care, leading to higher patient quality of life, and reduced healthcare costs to the patients, employers, or government agencies that subsidize healthcare costs. The general research question for this study focuses on how perceptional organizational support influences employee engagement in healthcare ambulatory clinical settings.

The focus of the literature review was with organizational support theory, perceived organizational support, leadership, psychological engagement, the impact of employee engagement in an ambulatory clinical setting and the (PCMH) patient centered medical home model of care. The literature review content also justifies how leaders in organizations can influence employee perceptions of the organization itself. Section 2 contains descriptions of the role of the researcher, including appropriate ethical conduct, the participants, research method and design, population and sampling, data collection, organization, and analysis, and study reliability and validity. In Section 3, I will present all of the findings of the study related to employee engagement in a healthcare ambulatory setting.

Section 2: The Project

The focus of this study was with strategies ambulatory managers use to successfully increase employee engagement in a healthcare setting. This section contains information including the role of the researcher and participants and the research method and design with clarity on the chosen research method and design. This section will also provide information pertaining to the population and sampling and data collection instrument's reliability and validity of the study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies healthcare ambulatory managers use to successfully increase employee engagement. The targeted population comprised four ambulatory clinic managers who are employed with one organization in the northwest suburban region of Illinois who have successfully increased employee engagement at their facilities. Increasing employee engagement in a healthcare outpatient clinical environment will potentially contribute to positive social change by providing higher quality patient care, leading to higher patient quality of life, and reduced healthcare costs to the patients, employers, or government agencies that subsidize healthcare costs.

Role of the Researcher

In this qualitative case study, I performed the role of data collections and the research design as well as reporting of the findings for this study. The data collection instruments included interviews, member checking, organizational quality surveys, and staff meeting minutes. Qualitative research is utilized to gain knowledge into individuals'

thoughts and feelings and researchers should be able to efficient communicate their position so readers can clearly understand the filters through which questions were asked (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

Each participant had the right to withdraw from participation at any time without any obligation. To assist with safety in research participation, there is a strong belief that is choice and understanding of what the study is about and what the risks and benefits are as a participant (National Institutes of Health, 2016). Ethical issues are discussed in regards to confidentiality and their rights. To meet confidentiality guidelines, each participant used their initials instead of their full first and last names. The confidentiality of each participant was protected but the anonymity of the participant my not only because the researcher will be aware of whom the participant will be. Each participant received a consent form to ensure their participation is "at will" and strictly confidential. All information will be stored on an external hard drive and secured for 5 years, and will be destroyed at the end of the 5-year period.

I was able to gather data in an unbiased manner from managers who are employed with three different ambulatory healthcare organizations. I only considered technology, methodologies developed in the collection of data and concept evaluations to determine the outcome of this study without any judgement. I also considered other metrics to consider the overall outcome.

I selected a qualitative case study design based on the nature of the research question and topic. The interviewer ensured that all information is confidential. Each interview was one hour in length, allowing the participant sufficient time to answer the

interview questions and elaborate on their responses if they choose to do so. As a follow-up, a member check was performed to ensure validity in their responses.

Participants

The study participants were four ambulatory clinic managers who were employed with one healthcare organization in the northwest suburban region of Illinois. The participants had five or more years of experience with managing ambulatory clinics and structuring out strategies that will engage employees in healthcare clinical operations. Participants chose the office environment of their preference to conduct the interviews in to ensure the participants are comfortable, safe and the environment non-threatening. Each participant received a statement of purpose and an explanation of the intentions of this research. Each participant received a consent from to ensure their participation was "at will" and strictly confidential. All information will be stored on an external hard drive and secured for 5 years, and will be destroyed at the end of the 5-year period.

Research Method and Design

I chose a qualitative case study in an effort to gain a clear and concise understanding on the pertinence of employee engagement in a healthcare ambulatory setting and employee perceptions on engagement.

Research Method

The qualitative method was appropriate for this study because researchers use qualitative research to gather an abundance of data from personal experiences of participants (Sutton & Austin, 2015). Employee engagement is pertinent in an ambulatory clinical setting because it increases quality patient care, productivity and

decreases risk pertaining to patient safety. This qualitative study was to assist with gaining clear and concise knowledge from the perspective of healthcare ambulatory managers and understand through their lenses their challenges, connections with their employees and POS. This knowledge was gained through interviews, organizational employee satisfaction and patient satisfaction surveys, observation of staff meetings and minutes from prior meetings.

Interviewing healthcare ambulatory managers assisted the managers with strategizing on collaborative employee engagement opportunities with their employees. This in turn will allow employees to feel more appreciated and engaged in their working efforts. The quantitative and mixed research methods do not provide an opportunity to gather this type of information in a personable manner.

Quantitative research method was not appropriate because it focuses on numerical data and examining variables. Reliability of a qualitative research is determined through consistencies (Leung, 2015) with using surveys and questionnaires giving an emotional connection. Quantitative research does not provide the emotional connectivity surrounding employee engagement and perceived organizational support such as a qualitative research study. Employee motivation illustrates a linkage with leaders, POS, team orientation, and organizational culture (Al Mehrzi & Singh, 2016). The goal of my research was to gain a clear and concise understanding on how ambulatory healthcare managers strategize on employee engagement tactics, in which a quantitative study would not be beneficial or appropriate for this research method. The mixed method approach is

a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies; therefore, this method was not appropriate.

Research Design

I selected a single case study design consisting of semistructured interviews along with reviewing documents from staff meetings, training and internal employee engagement surveys conducted by the organizations. Case study research provides more opportunity to expand on resources and strategies with building a conceptual framework and data collection involving intricate concerns (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

The other designs were narrative, ethnography, and phenomenology. The purpose of a narrative design is to provide a unified approach between one or two people (Nguyen et al., 2013), therefore making this inappropriate for this study. The purpose of ethnography is to study through observing people and cultural values through beliefs of the group participants, therefore making this inappropriate for this study (Shover, 2012). The phenomenological design is used by researchers to understand the meanings of several individual's lived experiences of a phenomenon or a concept (Khan, 2014). Therefore, the phenomenological design was not appropriate for this study. The goal was to complete data saturation by reviewing all data and materials and by conducting member-checking.

Population and Sampling

The population for the study consisted of four ambulatory healthcare managers working for one healthcare organizations in an ambulatory clinical setting. The healthcare managers had five or more years of experience implementing strategies on employee

engagement in an ambulatory clinical setting. I selected a small group of managers to interview and data collect from their individualized organizations with the advantage of using triangulated data that would provide validity in the research along with data saturation. Data saturation occurs when data received from participants becomes redundant and no new themes are identified in the research process (Silverman, 2013). I continued the interview process, and if necessary, identified and interviewed additional participants until no new themes emerging.

The sample size justification was achieved through the interviewing of the four healthcare clinical managers, observations in staff meetings, organization employee and patient surveys and member checking until data saturation occurs. Creswell (2015) stated when completing a qualitative research study, at least five to 25 participants would result in better data saturation, although Glaser and Strauss (1967) do not evaluate based on sample size but states that data saturation occurs when the data starts to repeat itself.

Ethical Research

All participants were required to complete an informed consent form that justified that the study is confidential and at the will of the participant. I thoroughly reviewed the consent with each participant to clarify that all participants are (a) informed of the study expectations, and (b) understood how to withdraw from the study without any consequence.

Participants participated in the study on a voluntary basis and could withdraw from the study with written or verbal notification. There were no incentives for participation in the study and it was strictly up to the participant whether they would like

to participate in the study. All data, files, and communications collected for the study will be strictly confidential and held in a safe locked place for five years in an effort to protect the rights of the participants.

After five years, the items related to the study will be destroyed. All information will be held confidential under the ethical standards of practice and no organization name will be given or no participant will be identified to anyone. Study of the findings will be shared with other study participants; however, no one participant will be identified in the study. Ethical research is a system of principles that can possibly change or acknowledge the need for change to previous actions and choices (Fouka & Mantzorou, 2011).

Data Collection Instruments

I used open-ended interview questions see Appendix B and company archival documents related to my study. A person's assets can be recognized with the use of semi-structured interview questions that are left open-ended (Doyle, 2018). Open-ended interview questions assist the interviewee opportunity to become knowledgeable of the systems, in which lists, lengthy narratives along with short answers can be created (Blattner & Walter, 2015). I used the methodological triangulation of the collected information, and analyzed the information based on recognition rewards, leaders and employee relationships and employees feeling empowered to complete their given tasks. Triangulation is considered a contribution of multiple methods and sources to reach data saturation (Johnson et al., 2017).

Data sources used included semistructured interviews, in which some will possibly be unstructured as questions will be randomly asked upon responses received

from the interviewee. These one-on-one interviews with four managers in the field of

ambulatory healthcare. I took notes, and the interview was recorded to validate

consistency with the responses. I also followed up with other questions pertaining to

responses that I received to assist with validation. Proper techniques ensure collection

occurs in a scientific and consistent manner to assist with enhancing the validity,

reliability and accuracy in research (Harrell & Bradley, 2009).

Other data sources included member checking, minutes from staff meetings,

company surveys and organizational reports on data collected metrics for employee

satisfaction and patient satisfaction will also be utilized. The interview protocol is located

in (Appendix A). Because interpreting data sources requires a degree of judgement, it

was pertinent to control the sources for errors, and report reliability and validity

(Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008). Documents measuring employee satisfaction and

patient satisfaction were examined.

Data Collection Technique

For this qualitative case study, I relied on the responses that I received from the

interview questions (see Appendix B) that were provided to the ambulatory clinic

managers. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with the managers in the beginning of

the study. Follow-up probing questions were based on the employee's experience and

responses to the first round of interview questions. The reason for the probe questioning

was so the interviewee could collaborate more on their experience with engaging

employees in a clinical environment. I also relied on other data collected from each

organization that entailed employee satisfaction surveys and company employee job

satisfaction surveys to justify validity on strategies with employee engagement in an ambulatory clinical setting. After transcription of interviews, the preliminary results were shared with each participant to confirm accuracy. This process is known as member checking and is important for achieving validity and reliability, in which validity is considered the extent to how instrument is measured (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008). Reducing error in the measurement process has different means of estimating the reliability of the measure in which includes the identifying the sources that could be damaging to the overall score and reliability (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008). Several meetings were observed to determine how the employees interact. The clinic managers were asked follow up questions after each meeting observation. The advantage to this data collection technique is that it is inexpensive, permits examination of past trends, and provides the possibility of collecting more detailed information. The disadvantages are obtaining accessibility of the managers, the possibility of ethical issues, the results can be influenced by the researcher, and the information could be presented as incomplete.

Data Organization Technique

I created a separate electronic and manual file for each participant. I did not place the name of participant on each file folder; however, I secured the participants identities by using fictitious names. The files contained data collected from interviews, notes taken during staff meetings, organizational questionnaires and surveys, along with any recordings. All information, including electronic and digital records will be stored in a lockbox on a disc drive for 5 years, and destroyed at the end of the 5-year period.

Data Analysis

For this study, the data analysis technique consisted of a combination of open-ended semi-structured interview questions, my notes taken during observation of staff meetings, minutes taken from staff meetings, organizational internal employee and patient surveys.

Yin (2018) identified the five stages of data analysis as: (a) compilation of data, (b) disassembling of data, (c) reassembling of data, (d) interpretation of the meaning of the data, and (e) concluding the data. I transcribed all interview responses and requested participants review summaries of the transcripts for accuracy. I obtained all of the previously identified secondary information from the selected organization and checked for consistencies and inconsistencies of the data provided by comparing with the interview transcripts. I used data triangulation to confirm the themes received from the multiple data collection methods, multiple sources of the data, and multiple areas of experience. I used NVivo software to perform the data analysis.

Comparison of all participant responses to identify the commonalities was pertinent for this study. NVivo was used to analyze and organize unstructured text, video, audio and image information. I also utilized NVivo software to import notes and citations. The data collected was compared for consistency with the research study question: What strategies do healthcare clinical managers use increase employee engagement in an ambulatory clinical setting? The interview questions in Appendix A will serve as an outline for the research study.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

Reliability of a qualitative research study is determined through consistencies (Leung, 2015). The purpose of reliability is to maintain accuracy and consistency of a specific measure (Middleton, 2019). Qualitative researchers describe reliability as dependability to explain the extent in which analysis results in consistent and stable results (Mohajan, 2017). Marshall and Rossman (2016) stated reliability and validity are concepts associated with quantitative studies. In qualitative research, data trustworthiness is an essential aspect of reliability and validity (Ali & Yusof, 2011), and researchers must perform research that is transferable, credible, confirmable, and dependable (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). The goal of reliability is to achieve similar findings and conclusions from multiple data while ensuring that nothing pertinent to the study is overlooked.

Validity

The purpose of validity in qualitative research is to ensure that the data, process and different selected tools are appropriate with the method for answering the research question (Leung, 2015). Validity describes the quality and accuracy of a research instrument in measuring outputs of the phenomenon being studied (Singh & Gibbs, 2013). Validity of qualitative research is determined by the credibility, transferability, and confirmability of data accuracy (Anney, 2014). To ensure credibility I used member checking, participant transcript review, and data triangulation with relevant organizational documents. The participant transcript review process improved credibility and validity by confirming the participant responses with the participants. Triangulation

is a method of analysis used to compare multiple data sources to verify accuracy of documents and manage researcher bias (Joslin & Müller, 2016).

Credibility is achieved by confirming the accuracy and credibility of data collected with the study participants (Yilmaz, 2013). Researchers use credibility to ensure data collected is accurate according to participants (Birt et al., 2016). I confirmed data credibility through a member checking process. Member checking is used in qualitative research to increase the validity and accuracy of collected interview data (Birt et al., 2016). Data saturation was achieved by continuing the interview process with additional participants if necessary, until no new themes were identified. Transferability ensures that study findings can be generalized by other researchers, and transferred to other research contexts (Yilmaz, 2013). Researchers can improve transferability by following a methodical interview protocol and being consistent with participant criteria and geography. Researchers confirm data collected through multiple research strategies and include probing questions and triangulation. Confirmability refers to the objectivity and interpretation of research data (Yilmaz, 2013). Researchers achieve confirmability by consistently discussing and verifying study findings in the research process (Yin, 2018).

Transition and Summary

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore strategies clinical managers use to engage employees in an ambulatory clinical setting. In Section 2, I described the method and design for this particular study. I also described the participants, the role of the researcher, the data collection and organization techniques, and data analysis process. The importance of and process of achieving reliability and validity were identified.

In section 3, I will present and describe the findings and themes of this study. The implications for practical application and the proposed social change benefits will be described. Recommendations for action and future research will be identified, and conclusions will be described based upon the study findings.

Section 3: Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies healthcare ambulatory managers use to successfully increase employee engagement. The targeted population comprised four clinic managers who are employed with the same healthcare organization in the northwest suburban region of Illinois who have successfully increased employee engagement at their facilities. Increasing employee engagement in a healthcare outpatient clinical environment will potentially contribute to positive social change by providing higher quality patient care, leading to higher patient quality of life, and reduced healthcare costs to the patients, employers, or government agencies that subsidize healthcare costs. The four themes that emerged were:

(a) perceived organizational support;

(b) job satisfaction;

(c) management engagement strategies; and,

(d) quality patient care strategies.

All four leadership participants agreed that employee engagement in a healthcare clinical setting is pertinent to the growth and development of the organization, the patient's care needs, and the needs of the employees working for the organization.

Presentation of Findings

The research question was: What strategies do healthcare ambulatory clinic managers use to increase employee engagement? I used semistructured interviews with open ended questions (Appendix B) and data from SHRM (Society for Human Resource Management) to assist with data triangulation. The four themes that emerged from the

data were: (a) perceived organizational support; (b) job satisfaction; (c) management

engagement strategies; and, (d) quality patient care strategies. Triangulation is a method

used to increase the validity and to credit the research findings (Noble & Heale, 2019) in

data was collected from one healthcare organization from four clinical practice managers

in regards to employee engagement.

How Findings Relate to Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study relates to the construct of evaluating the

relationship between the employee and the organization from the employee's perspective,

clarifying the perceived organizational support construct and identifying the robust

associations of POS with affective organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and other

attitudinal outcomes (Kurtessis et al., 2015).

Providing employee feedback through direct management support with managing

by walking around assists employees with feeling as though the managers are directly

involved in their success with the organization. Psychological employee ownership

assists in developing positive attitudes and behaviors which are pertinent with engaging

an excellent workforce team (Kim & Beehr, 2017). Leaders have acknowledged the

importance of engaging and empowering their employees with knowingly that this gives

them a sense of ownership with their own personal goals and development with the

organization. Managing by walking around is one way to show employees that leadership

is actively involved in their working performance, how the employees are working

efficiently in their working zones, keeping employees responding to the organizational

mission and allows the manager's the ability to know what's happening across the

company on a much more intimate basis (McKendrick, 2022). Motivating employees

through acknowledgement of their contributions and by showing them with compensation

and award recognitions has built sustainable teams of individuals who have their own

positive work ethics that they contribute back to the team through engagement and strong

team efforts. Work environments that offer psychological support foster workers ability

to dedicate their efforts to work tasks (Van de Voorde et al., 2016). Employees value the

organizations mission through their own perceived organizational support that they are

receiving from their leadership and the organizations commitment to their happiness.

Empowered employees who exercise control over pertinent aspects of their work

situations have been able to manifest positive work-related situations and attitudes

through organizational based self-esteem and job satisfaction as this improves their sense

of ownership (Han & Garg, 2018). The promotion of care and autonomy allows

employees to experience organizational attachment through positive perceived

organizational support (Han et al., 2015).

Four managers from the same healthcare organization were asked seven interview questions and they all gave identical responses, per the table below:

Table 1

Perceived Organization Support "Leadership Style"

Participant	Interview questions	Common Shared Theme Patterns Between Participants
M1	1,3,4	M2, M3
M2	1,2,5,6,7	M1, M3
M3	2,3,4,6,7	M1, M2
M4	1, 2, 3, 6,7	M1, M2, M3

Engaged leaders would typically have staff members that are very proactive and considered dedicated workers based on their personal analysis of their leaders and the organization. This leads into the first question of: What strategies and tactics did you use to motivate and increase employee engagement? Managers (2, 3 and 4) all shared common languages that would assist with praising the employees on their performance and involving the employee in other projects to keep the employee engaged. They utilized this as a motivational tactic to keep employees engaged in their work performance and to also remind employees that their supported and their input is pertinent for the development of the organization, staff and patients. Three (75%) participants noted that asking employees for their opinion and work strategies motivates employee's involvement. If employees believe leadership is well involved in their growth, employees would work harder to accomplish organizational goals. Alnajem

(2021) described Gemba as a projection tool in which leaders and team members are actually engaging in assisting proactively on the floor, in which it was described in the past as a method to engage through observation and onsite questions and assistance if needed. M2 and M3 both stated that staff meetings are weekly and sometimes daily with "huddles" on the clinical floor grounds before seeing the patients. Huddles are great engagement tactics to (a) engage all shift employees (providers and staff) in discussion before patients' arrival; (b) be better prepared for their working shifts and patients; and, (c) work together as a team to find the best patient resolution.

M2, M3 and M4 shared identical commonalities with engaging employees within clinical operations and knowingly how to do this through motivation and strategical tactics. All three managers stated that they involve their employees in on majority decisions because it keeps the employees engaged and considering the employee performs the actual hands-on experience, they can give better resolutions to some commonalities regarding patient issues. This benefits the employees and employer relationship by allowing employees to feel more involved in the decision-making process with organizational growth.

Theme 1: Perceived Organizational Support

Employees have an understanding that their employer organization recognizes that they are professional dedicated workers. Employees who understand this model and feel appreciated by the organization will exceed the scope of their assigned tasks to ensure that the organization succeeds in providing promised services. POS describes when employees have their perceptions on the organization based on their personal

feelings of wellbeing and organizational treatment. Managers and leaders of an

organization show their employees that their valued in different manners. Clinical staff

members are being asked to perform even more stringent work tasks because this field

has become increasingly demanding and complex (Berta et al., 2018). Leaders should be

more involved with organizational perception to keep their employees satisfied and

involved in their working tasks. The promotion of care and autonomy allows employees

to experience organizational attachment through positive perceived organizational

support (Han et al., 2015). Leaders who lead by walking around and by providing

feedback and support can improve work engagement (Slemp et al., 2015). Leaders who

provide positive, encouraging feedback assist with the promotion of learning and

increases job competence (Guest, 2017). Positive encouragement and feedback

consequently allow the team to feel involved and motivated to perform their given tasks

and responsibilities.

Perceived organizational support follows: (a) rewards and conditions of the

organization, (b) fairness, and (c) supervisor support, in which falls along the lines of the

employee's outcome and turnover intension. The following diagram illustrates the

manner of how employees begin perceiving and having their opinions on the organization

and their leadership. The POS diagram shows how employees can illustrate their

perceptions through behaviors that affect their (a) condition of environment and rewards,

(b) what is considered exceptional and fair, and (c) leadership support.

Condition of Environment and Reward

Employees condition of environment and rewards are based on the factors in which employees feel as though their managers care about their involvement and working performance by rewarding and acknowledging their capabilities. Employees want to feel engaged through their own perception of feeling needed by the employer through compliments, acknowledgements and rewards. Employees can become unengaged when they're environment is not rewarding and engaging to their working capabilities. Rewarding consist of everything the employee perceives to be of significant value resulting from the employment relationship that includes all types of rewards and recognition (Cherotich et al., 2015). Employees that feel rewarded for their work have a perception that their leaders care about their working ethics and the morale that their bringing to the organization. Rewarding employees leads to employees perceived organizational support as positive in which they'd apply themselves to (1) the commitment of the organization by (2) being more involved in their job and (3) by illustrating fulfillment and contentment through performance and reliability.

What is Considered Acceptable and Fair?

Employees want to feel like they are engaged in their working performance as well as they would like to acknowledge what is considered acceptable and fair. If employees feel as though the organization is not being fair with job tasks and responsibilities or employee request, the employee could possibly become less involved in the organizational mission through their own perception of organizational support. Harnessing employee efforts through engagement and teamwork to fulfil the

organizational missions (Salas et al., 2015) is pertinent to embrace with the employees' feelings on what is acceptable and fair. Managers who exercise leadership skills that fosters to a culture with acceptability and fairness of cooperation will have reliable employees with positive attitudes towards fulfilling the mission of the organization (Sahu et al., 2018). Employees that do not perceive that the organization is being fair with their working ethics may cause perceived organizational support in a negative way that could lead to employee turnover.

Leadership Support

Managers who exercise leadership support have employees that are truly engaged with the mission of the organization. Leaders should embrace motivating their employees on their job performances and working ethics. Teamwork plays a pertinent role in leadership support because employees want to feel as though their leaders are just as involved in the organizational mission and their own personal working ethics. Healthcare leadership managers have been encouraged to treat problems as opportunities for innovation and to encourage people to improve on their productivity and approach towards certain situations that may arise (Patterson & Zibarras, 2017). According to the figure below, leadership support plays a vital role in perceived organizational support because this can ultimately lead to employee turnover or the employee's overall commitment in a positive manner to the organization. Employees work performance and behavioral manners at work determines the employees perceived organizational support in which could have a positive or negative affect on the organizational outcomes. It's important that leaders are involved in certain aspects of their employee's work

performance in an effort to build a team filled with confidence and motivation to perform

their required working tasks in which the workers are usually working seven days a week

shift schedules (Goncalves et al. 2018). Their schedules along with the working demands

can cause levels of anxiety to increase affecting home and working situation of POS

(perceived organizational support). Job satisfaction is described as individuals enjoying

their job or at the least are satisfied with their working job and environment. Performance

is one of the key elements for organizational growth and even though working demands

have changed in this field, employees must feel satisfied in their jobs to be effective in

their performance. Finding ways to engage and inspire employees in even the most

vulnerable situations is by building and enhancing culture through social recognition

(Workhuman, 2020). Healthcare organizations that are aiming to improve their work

engagement culture for continuous improvement will evolve overtime with their

development, employee growth strategies and technologies (Elsback & Stigliami, 2018).

Showing employees gratitude is one of the most powerful and proven forces in creating

buffers with possible stress related personal and work issues (Workhuman, 2020). Job

satisfaction is shown through employees' performance and their dedication to the

organization. When employees are dissatisfied, it's shown in ways of employees not

performing to the best of their abilities and with extensive call offs from work. Managers

who exercise leadership skills could foster a positive working environment that will cater

to perceived organizational support in a manner of employees engaging with their

performance and teamwork capabilities (Sahu et al., 2018). Managers that showcase

leadership skills will build an environment that employees will have the capability to

develop and excel (Mittal & Dhar, 2015). Gratitude influences engagement and powerful employee connections in a very inspiring manner (Workhuman, 2020), so it is pertinent that employees feel connected with their families, co-workers and the company's overall vision more pertinent than ever (Workhuman, 2020).

Theme 2: Job Satisfaction

Clinical care workers are typically exposed to physical and emotional tasks in which the workers are usually working seven days a week shift schedules (Goncalves et al., 2018). Their schedules along with the working demands can cause levels of anxiety to increase affecting home and working situation of POS (perceived organizational support). Job satisfaction is described as individuals enjoying their job or at the least are satisfied with their working job and environment. Performance is one of the key elements for organizational growth and even though working demands have changed in this field, employees must feel satisfied in their jobs to be effective in their performance. Finding ways to engage and inspire employees in even the most vulnerable situations is by building and enhancing culture through social recognition (Workhuman, 2020). Healthcare organizations that are aiming to improve their work engagement culture for continuous improvement will evolve overtime with their development, employee growth strategies and technologies (Elsback & Stigliami, 2018). Showing employees gratitude is one of the most powerful and proven forces in creating buffers with possible stress related personal and work issues (Workhuman, 2020). Job satisfaction is shown through employees' performance and their dedication to the organization. When employees are dissatisfied, it's shown in ways of employees not performing to the best of their abilities

and with extensive call offs from work. Managers who exercise leadership skills could foster a positive working environment that will cater to perceived organizational support in a manner of employees engaging with their performance and teamwork capabilities (Sahu et al., 2018). Managers that showcase leadership skills will build an environment that employees will have the capability to develop and excel (Mittal & Dhar, 2015). Gratitude influences engagement and powerful employee connections in a very inspiring manner (Workhuman, 2020), so it is pertinent that employees feel connected with their families, co-workers and the company's overall vision more pertinent than ever (Workhuman, 2020).

Theme 3: Management Engagement Strategies

Based on the responses from the managers, there are known factors that perform a strategical role in engaging employees in an ambulatory clinical setting. These factors include communication, teamwork, relationships among employees, motivation and training. When observing staff meetings, employees appeared very engaged by asking questions and being heavily involved in the discussion. I noticed that the managers were very open and treated all employees with equal respect. The employees were very involved and open to discussing shift responsibilities and new operational workflows. The managers engaged the employees by treating everyone equal regardless of titles and working grades. Everyone was treated equally and for the most part, the employees appeared motivated and excited after each meeting engagement. Upon further observation, all employees who attended the staff meetings were actively involved with asking questions, which showed great congruency amongst staff and teamwork efforts.

Managers that have the ability to lead by walking around are much more engaged in their

employee's performance from the employee's perspective. Considering the global

workforce in 2022, working from home has stagnated the managing by walking around

approach, however with the use of new technological tools that engage employee and

management discussions through zoom and other interpersonal technology strategies has

freelanced the market with creative strategies on how to efficiently involve employees

with the organizational mission while keeping their focus on their own personal

employee goals (Mckendrick, 2022). Gallup defines engaged employees as highly

motivated about their work performance and place of work, in which its based upon four

dictations of the following:

(1) measurement of what matters for the employees' performance,

(2) acting quickly to employees' responses to surveys,

(3) engaging consistently with employees as an ongoing process, and

(4) empowering managers to enhance their engagement with employees, because

this accounts for a 70% of variance with overall team engagement and performance

(Gallup, 2022).

Each team member will have their engagement over time so there are no actual

quick fixes when referencing human relationships, as it is pertinent to grow each member

of their team at their own individualized pace over time and skill development (Gallup,

2022). Managers who are fully engaged in their employees (1) work performance, (2)

work enhancement, (3) work life, and (4) work capabilities can excel with having quality

workers on their team who will be dedicated to the organizational mission and vision based upon their own perception of their leadership and organizational mission.

Theme 4: Quality Patient Care Strategies

Teamwork is a strategical method highly utilized in employee engagement activities. Being able to provide quality patient care takes a team of clinical staff members and providers working together to ensure the good health of the patient. Direct patient care strategies are designed as strategies that informs patients of their own self behaviors, treatment decisions and their overall outcomes, that includes and not limited to self-management support, communication and shared decision making amongst all (AHRQ, 2020). It's pertinent for providers to communicate with their patients in an effective and efficient manner to obtain the right treatments for their variant circumstances. Providers and patients have to work together in strategical manners with patient care needs and treatments based upon their own individualized situations. Different zones of communications amongst the provider and the patients were invented to improve strategies in how to care for patients in a quality patient care manner. Multiple technology-based modalities are used in congruent with regular in office visits and self-care plans (AHRQ, 2020). In an effort to express quality patient care strategies, it has to come from the providers in which the patients will have an obligation as well to follow with teamwork being a combined congruent effort amongst all.

Application to Professional Practice

Managers and upper leadership have strategically developed ways to actively engage employees in a clinical setting. Realizing that it is important for employees to

provide quality patient care for patient safety and security reasons, managers and upper

leadership have established different strategies to assist with engaging employees in

clinical operations. Their overall goals are to keep employees excited and engaged in

their working efforts and performance. Managers have made efforts with engaging

employees by acting on employees' feedback, listening to employee concerns,

implementing steps and strategies that would assist with team growth and by displaying

and welcoming open communication from all sectors of the organization. Employee

engagement is pertinent with establishing a positive working environment and can assist

with less employee turnovers. Positive employee engagement increases the morale and it

also assist with improving the employee's productivity. Employee engagement means

solidifying a culture in the workplace in which employees feel as though they are part of

a team and highly valued as an employee of the organization. In the field of healthcare,

employee engagement has the power to positively impact supervisors, employees and

patients (Hospital Careers, 2018). Research has shown that it has been an average of 20

percent of employees are disengaged and 40 percent are mainly content other than

actively engaged (Hospital Careers, 2018). Employee engagement is defined as

employees are committed to the organization from an emotional standpoint. It furthers

shows the commitment to the organizational goals, vision and values through employees

feeling that emotional connection that assist them with wanting to become successful and

more engaged in their own performance. Employees feel enjoyment when they are aware

of new employee initiatives and are working with a team who respects one another's

input with open and honest communication. Through recognition and rewards, open and

honest communication and leadership displaying involvement in the employees work performance will increase the perception of organizational support in a positive influential manner. Leaders that tailor reward and recognition reflects on the culture and that will ultimately reflect on the employee silks, involvement and knowledge of their own capabilities to succeed with the organizational mission.

Implications for Social Change

The implications for positive social change include the improved healthcare employee productivity achieved by engaged employees. Engaged employees provide higher quality of care, thereby increasing patient quality of life. Higher quality of care will reduce the cost of healthcare, providing savings to the patient, employers providing health insurance, and the government agencies that partially subsidize healthcare costs through Medicaid, Medicare, and local hospital taxing districts. Social recognition strengthens teams, increases employee engagement, improves the turnover rate while capturing workplace insights clustered around diversity, organizational culture while building staff moral (Workhuman, 2021).

Recommendations for Action

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore employee engagement strategies that managers utilize to engage their employees and improve overall performance. I identified four themes during the data analysis process which were (1) perceived organizational support, (2) job satisfaction, (3) management engagement strategies and (4) quality patient care strategies. The results from this study may be proven useful to leaders in the healthcare ambulatory sector. The implementation

strategies for employee engagement highlighted in this research paper may be of great assistance to healthcare leaders to improve the organizational goals, mission and performance. Recognizing that employee engagement increases staff productivity, drives and motivates higher productivity, improves turnover rates and improves patient care services, it is pertinent to continue with strategical and different employee engagement activities. Some employees are less motivated or not very proactive with their job capabilities and it is pertinent for managers to recognize those employees, provide them with strategies around their work performance and most importantly include them in the overall process with providing quality patient care and great team work efforts. Knowing what employees' strengths and weaknesses are can assist with improving work performances with employees. When managers are very involved in employees work performance with giving good and constructive feedback, this allows employees to feel more involved in the expectations of the organizational goals and vision. Involving employees by engaging them with team efforts will assist with keeping employees more involved in the mission and vision of the organization. I recommend three key strategies healthcare clinical leaders could adopt to enhance employee engagement in an ambulatory clinical setting and they are the utilization of employee engagement strategies through (1) effective and consistent communication (2) motivation through incentives and recognition and (3) leading by walking around showing employees that you are involved in their success and performance with the organization. Healthcare leaders who are communicating with their employees, displaying appreciation by recognizing the employees' performance personally or at employee meetings and who are committed to

being involved by leading by walking around are likely to have a highly efficient

employee engagement environment that would ultimately provide teamwork that would

reflect by the showings of excellent patient care and organizational growth.

Reflections

        Through my DBA doctoral journey, I have tremendously enhanced my

knowledge and skillset in clinical and business research. I have learned how to intertwin

two factors that are of professional business practices and research practices. This

journey and my personal experiences of employee engagement in a healthcare clinical

setting has influenced my abilities to implement more engagement strategies within my

own personal professional setting. Throughout this journey, I have recognized strategies

on how to engage employees that were not very proactive and also, as mostly important, I

found out the why employees become unengaged in their performances and the

organizational mission. This has pleasantly allowed me to utilize certain measures like

"leading by walking around" and open and effective communication to assist with

employees' growth and development.

        Retention is one of the most common signifiers of employee engagement in the

healthcare industry. When employees are satisfied with their job and leadership team,

they will work diligently hard to achieve the vision of the organization. As for my own

personal reflections with employee engagement that will increase in a healthcare

environment is to (1) start recognizing people or a specific team for their performance,

(2) thank and celebrate employees that are performing their jobs diligently, (3) show that

you are 100% committed to their goals and career success with the organization, and (4) promote teamwork and inclusion in meetings and lead by observing and walking around.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to address employee engagement in an ambulatory clinical setting and its pertinence. Employee engagement in an ambulatory clinical setting is pertinent with driving productivity, patient care revenues, organizational performance, turnover rates and teamwork bonds. Recognizing employees for their work performance and providing them with the necessary tools that would produce diligent results will increase employee morale and working ethics. Employee engagement with perceived organizational support (POS) was guided by how employees perform and interact in their working environments and why this is pertinent to the growth of the employee and the organization. Recognizing employees for their performance motivates them to keep up the great work and possibly push to do more that would improve organizational performance. Motivating employees keeps them involved in the organizational mission and allows them to feel as though they are pertinent in which the organization needs them as an employee. Recognition and motivation allow employees to feel more involved in their role, in return improving healthcare outcomes for patients. Providing healthcare managers with efficient employee engagement tactics will provide the increasing of operational clinical workflows, quality patient care and effective employee engagement (Eric, 2019). Employees that feel like they have great involvement in the mission of the organizational goal are much more dedicated to achieving optimal success for themselves within the organization. There were four themes that made up the conceptual framework

for employee engagement in a healthcare clinical setting in which they were: (1) perceived organizational support; (2) job satisfaction; (3) management engagement strategies; and, (4) quality patient care strategies. Leaders in healthcare have great advantages to accomplish employment engagement strategies by their influencing tactics with assisting employees with feeling involved and by leading through effective and positive communication. Leaders in healthcare can apply the identified strategies to enhance and improve clinical operational workflows, quality of life for patients and organizational performance measures.

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Appendix A: Interview protocol

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding on how perceived organizational

support can influence employee engagement in an ambulatory clinical setting.

Procedures:

If you agree to participate in this study you will be asked to:

1. Partake in one initial interview that will be approximately an hour long and one

    follow up interview from the initial interview that will be about 30 minutes long.

2. Allow the researcher to review minutes from meetings and employee engagement

    organization surveys.

Some of the sample questions are as follow:

1. What strategies and tactics did you use to motivate and increase employee

    engagement?

2. What strategies did you use to train and engage employees in teamwork?

3. How did the employees respond to your employee engagement strategies?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. Your decision to participate in this study is at your discretion and

will be respected. If you decide to partake in this study, you will still be able to

change your decision later.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Participating in this study will not put your safety or wellbeing at risk. Some risks might

involve very little stress and uncomfortable emotions that's typical in life.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. What strategies and tactics did you use to motivate and increase employee engagement?

2. What strategies did you use to train and engage employees in teamwork?

3. How did the employees respond to your employee engagement strategies?

4. How did the employees respond to your training tactics with engaging employees in their role in clinical operations?

5. What strategies did you find have worked out better with motivating and engaging your employees?

6. What challenges did you overcome with engaging employees in teamwork and their expectations?

7. What additional information do you have for managers that work in a clinical ambulatory environment who are seeking strategies on how to get their employees more engaged?