

6-19-2024

Strategies to Address Employee Concerns About Workplace Wellness Program Privacy in School Districts

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Walden University

College of Management and Human Potential

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Kimberly Rivers-Blackmon

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the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2024

Abstract

Strategies to Address Employee Concerns About Workplace Wellness Program Privacy
in School Districts

by

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MBA, University of Phoenix, 2004

BS, Florida State University, 2000

Research Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

June 2024

Abstract

Although workplace wellness programs (WWPs) reduce healthcare costs and work-related illnesses and increase employee retention and productivity, approximately one-half of employees with access to these programs do not use them because of privacy concerns. School districts risk increased employee turnover and reduced productivity if employees do not participate in WWPs, increasing education delivery costs. Grounded in communication privacy management theory, the purpose of this qualitative pragmatic inquiry was to identify and explore strategies used by WWP administrators in Georgia, USA, school districts to address employee concerns about privacy successfully. Data were collected from six WWP administrators from school districts in Georgia, USA, using semistructured interviews and a review of public documents about WWPs in their organizations. Data were analyzed using Yin's five-step process. Three key themes emerged from the data analysis: (a) employee perception, (b) privacy concerns, and (c) employee engagement. The key recommendations for school district leaders include increasing employee involvement through engagement strategies such as incentives, flexible scheduling, and a supportive culture. The implications for positive social change include the potential for improved education program quality and decreased costs, which would benefit the communities through reduced taxpayer costs and a better-educated workforce.

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Dedication

I want to dedicate this dissertation to my loving family, especially my mother Carolyn Jackson and my daughters Adiah and Abrielle Blackmon. Their endless support, encouragement, and sacrifices have been the primary driving force behind my successful journey toward achieving this academic milestone. Their unwavering enthusiasm has been essential to my journey, from helping me with my research to providing emotional support through the ups and downs. I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to my advisers and mentors, for their insightful feedback, constructive criticism, and willingness to answer my endless questions. A special thanks to Dr. Kathy Simmons: Her guidance and expertise, like a compass, have played a critical role in shaping the direction of my research. Without support and encouragement, this dissertation would not have been possible. Lastly, I dedicate this dissertation to all those who have paved the way before me, inspiring me to pursue knowledge and make significant contributions to my field of study. I hope this dissertation will inspire future scholars to continue pushing the boundaries of knowledge.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my committee chair, Dr. Walter McCollum, and my second committee member, Dr. Chris Beehner, for sharing their knowledge and expertise during the dissertation process. I am sincerely grateful to Dr. Kathy Simmons for her exceptional and pointed feedback throughout this doctoral journey and for talking me off the ledge several times. I also extend my heartfelt appreciation to my amazing parents, Carolyn and Michael Jackson, Grandmother Lottie Young, and my brother, Leroy Smith, for being the world's best cheerleaders. Your support and encouragement have always been outstanding. My Aunties Joannette Thomas and Curlie Harris have played a significant role in my development, and I would like to thank them for always pushing me to see more in myself. Special thanks to Katherine King, Shanika Asher, Kimberly Matos, and Kaylise Leach for countless phone calls and mini celebrations every time I hit a milestone. Finally, I dedicate this major accomplishment to my most significant accomplishments: my beautiful daughters, Adiah and Abrielle. Thank you for inspiring me to pursue knowledge and make meaningful contributions to the universe, even when it meant sacrificing time with mommy.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	iv
List of Figures	v
Section 1: Foundation of the Project.....	1
Background of the Problem	1
Business Problem Focus and Project Purpose	2
Research Question	3
Assumptions and Limitations	4
Assumptions.....	4
Limitations	4
Transition	5
Section 2: The Literature Review	7
A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature.....	7
Conceptual Framework.....	8
Supporting Theories.....	11
Application to the Business Problem.....	18
Wellness Programs.....	18
WWP History	18
WWP Benefits	19
Summary	20
Transition	21
Section 3: Research Project Methodology	23

Project Ethics	23
Nature of the Project	26
Population, Sampling, and Participants	27
Data Collection Activities	31
Interview Questions	32
Data Organization and Analysis Techniques	33
Reliability and Validity	36
Reliability	36
Validity	36
Transition and Summary	37
Section 4: Findings and Conclusions	39
Presentation of the Findings	39
Participant Insight	44
Theme 1: Employee Perceptions	45
Theme 2 Employee Engagement	47
Theme 3 Privacy Concerns	48
Successful Strategies	49
Business Contributions and Recommendations for Professional Practice	51
Implications from Social Change	51
Recommendations for Further Research	52
Conclusion	53
References	55

Appendix: Interview Protocol.....	64
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List of Tables

Table 1	<i>Sources of Professional and Academic Literature</i>	8
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List of Figures

Figure 1 <i>Data Saturation Bar Graph</i>	40
Figure 2 <i>Sankey Diagram: Key Code Grouping</i>	41
Figure 3 <i>Venn Diagram Key Themes</i>	42
Figure 4 <i>Word Frequency</i>	43

Section 1: Foundation of the Project

Background of the Problem

A workplace wellness program (WWP) is designed to foster a healthy workforce. The intended benefits include increasing productivity, preventing work-related illnesses like stress and burnout, retaining employees, and reducing healthcare costs. Despite the positive benefits, there is ongoing debate about the effectiveness of WWPs (Unsal et al., 2021). According to Perrault et al. (2020), 80% of large companies offer WWPs, but the participation rate is only 40% in the United States. Employee concerns about privacy is the number-one reason individuals choose not to participate or limit participation in activities that could result in unauthorized access and sharing of personal information (Abdelhamid, 2021; Brassart Olsen, 2020; Fleming, 2020; Kummer et al., 2021; Seward et al., 2019). Employee privacy concerns present a barrier to participation in WWPs. Organizations that administer WWPs must understand the nature of employee privacy concerns and implement strategies to overcome this barrier. Organizations that fail to do so are more likely to experience continued low program participation and a negative impact on the program's intended health-related benefits. The purpose of this study was to identify and explore strategies WWP administrators in Georgia school districts use to successfully address employee concerns about privacy to improve participation and increase the positive impact of the program's intended health-related benefits. The results of this study may help WWP administrators in Georgia school districts identify the root cause of employee privacy concerns and take steps to successfully address the concerns.

Business Problem Focus and Project Purpose

The specific business problem is that some WWP administrators in Georgia school districts lack strategies to successfully address employee concerns about privacy to improve participation and increase the positive impact of the program's intended health-related benefits. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative pragmatic inquiry study was to identify and explore strategies WWP administrators in Georgia school districts use to successfully address employee concerns about privacy to improve participation and increase the positive impact of the program's intended health-related benefits.

The target population for this study was WWP administrators in Georgia school districts located in multiple counties. Potential participants were identified from a list provided by the state of Georgia of school districts with WWPs. Six participants were selected using non-probability, purposeful sampling. The participant selection criteria were: (a) participants must be administrators of WWPs, (b) participants must have at least 2 years of experience administering a WWP, and (c) the school district must have a score of 80 or better for wellness promotion and marketing on the WellSAT school district assessment. The data for the study was collected using semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions to address the problem and purpose of the study. The data included participant responses to interview questions, information collected from publicly available sources, and information provided by participants to support data saturation and triangulation.

The theory that grounds this study was communication privacy management (CPM_ theory introduced by Petronio (1991). The theory was first presented as the

communication boundary management (CBM) approach. The premise of CBM was that individuals regulate disclosure of their private information by forming boundaries that set limits on what they are willing to share and what they are not. Petronio studied boundary management between marital partners when one partner needed or wanted to disclose personal information to the other. Petronio argued that, while it is understood how individuals manage private information, less is known about how couples manage privacy. Petronio believed that the CBM approach would help individuals understand the unspoken rules for disclosing confidential information within relationships. Individuals could strengthen their connections with partners by negotiating privacy boundaries and balancing the need for disclosure with the desire for privacy.

CPM theory evolved from the concept of CBM. While CBM focused on boundaries within family relationships, CPM is a broader approach that encompasses all types of interpersonal communication related to personal and private information. Petronio identified three underlying constructs of CPM: privacy ownership, control, and turbulence. CPM theory provided a framework to explore the perceptions of WWP administrators and the strategies they use to address employee concerns about WWP privacy in Georgia school districts.

Research Question

What strategies do WWP administrators in Georgia school districts use to successfully address employee concerns about privacy to improve participation and increase the positive impact of the program's intended health-related benefits?

Assumptions and Limitations

Assumptions

Assumptions in a research study are propositions accepted to be true or plausible without the verification of facts (Gossel, 2022). For this study, my first assumption was that privacy concerns are a barrier to participation in WWPs. My next assumption was that the wellness administrators I identified as potential participants would be willing to participate. Another assumption was that open-ended interview questions would be sufficient to understand the perceptions of administrators of WWPs about privacy concerns of potential program participants and that open-ended interview questions would be sufficient to address the research question. I assumed that participants would answer the interview questions truthfully and to the best of their ability. My last assumption was that I could achieve data saturation based on the data collected through the interview process and documentation provided by the participants.

Limitations

There are inherent limitations in qualitative research. Limitations are characteristics or constraints of a methodology or design that can impact or influence the findings in a study (Gossel, 2022). Qualitative research typically involves small sample sizes. There is no single directive or rule on how to determine an adequate sample for qualitative research although sample size limits the generalizability of a study (Marshall et al., 2013). The sample for this study was six WWP administrators in Georgia school districts. The small sample size and the single geographical area of the study limit the generalizability of my study to other populations or locations. In addition, qualitative

studies can be time consuming (Marshall et al., 2013). A small sample size and single focus help researchers contain the scope of their study, saving time and money. In the essence of time, my study was limited to a sample of six WWP administrators.

Subjectivity and bias are two other limitations of qualitative research. As the current workplace wellness manager for a school district in Georgia, I had preexisting knowledge of WWP operations that could have led to unintentional bias limiting the reliability and validity of my study.

Transition

Section 1 included the background of the problem and an overview of the business problem and purpose of the project. A description of the target population, sampling method, and criteria for selecting participants was provided. The conceptual framework that grounds the study was explained. The research question, assumptions, and limitations related to the study were documented.

Section 2, a review of professional and academic literature, contains an opening narrative including an explanation of the purpose of the literature review and the plan for searching and selecting the literature. A critical analysis and synthesis of the literature related to the study topic and the conceptual framework are presented. Section 2 concludes with a summary and transition.

In Section 3, I cover ethical research, the research method and design used for this study, and my approach for data collection and analysis. I expand on the target population, sampling method, and the criteria I used to purposefully choose participants.

Reliability and validity in qualitative research are discussed. Section 3 concludes with a summary and transition. The results of the study are presented in Section 4.

Section 2: The Literature Review

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

A researcher must conduct a systematic and thorough review of existing literature related to the topic and purpose of their study. A researcher can gain an in-depth understanding of an existing body of knowledge by conducting a literature review (Efron & Ravid, 2018). A thorough examination and presentation of the literature establishes the credibility of a researcher (Joshi et al., 2020). The steps for conducting a literature review include identifying the research question, developing a search strategy, and critically reading the literature to select sources that are most relevant to the current study (Barry et al., 2022). The research question provides context for the literature review and the search strategy helps a researcher remain focused. A researcher should select literature that supports the research purpose and that comes from credible sources such as academic journals, government reports, and professional organizations.

In this section, the approach for searching, selecting, and organizing the literature is explained. I will describe the databases I searched, the keywords used, and the type of resources selected (articles, books, etc.). I based the literature review on current and past workplace wellness and privacy studies. I reviewed the literature on privacy, wellness, and participation studies conducted by experts in the field. Published studies included in this literature review came from peer-reviewed scholarly journals and current textbooks regarding workplace wellness, privacy, and the benefits of implementing wellness programs. To strengthen the industry-specific information for the study, I used industry-related studies in reference to the wellness industry. I used the Walden University library

portal to access the following databases: ProQuest Dissertations and Theses at Walden University Global and EBSCOhost. I also used Google Scholar, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website, and Amazon to locate applicable sources, articles, and textbooks. The keywords and phrases used to search for applicable information included *workplace wellness, obesity, privacy, privacy theory, wellness program administrators, and confidentiality*.

Table 1

Sources of Professional and Academic Literature

Sources	Literature published before 2019	Literature published after 2019	Percentage (%)	Total references
Peer-reviewed journals	12	44	89%	56
Non-peer-reviewed journals	0	0	0%	0
Books/Other	6	1	11%	7
Total	18	45	100%	63

Conceptual Framework

The theory that grounded this study was Petronio's (1991) CPM theory. The theory was first presented as the CBM approach. The premise of CBM was that individuals regulate disclosure of their private information by forming boundaries that set limits on what they are willing to share and what they are not. Petronio studied boundary management between marital partners when one partner needed or wanted to disclose personal information to the other. Petronio argued that, while it is understood how individuals manage private information, less is known about how couples manage privacy. Petronio believed the CBM approach would help individuals understand the

unspoken rules for disclosing confidential information within relationships. Individuals could strengthen their connections with partners by negotiating privacy boundaries and balancing the need for disclosure with the desire for privacy.

CPM theory evolved from the concept of CBM. While CBM was focused on boundaries within family relationships, CPM theory is a broader approach that encompasses all types of interpersonal communication related to personal and private information. Petronio identified three underlying constructs of CPM theory: privacy ownership, control, and turbulence. CPM theory provided a framework to explore the perceptions of WWP administrators and the strategies they use to address employee concerns about WWP privacy in Georgia school districts.

There is a risk in revealing or receiving personal information. According to Petronio (1991), individuals in a relationship manage the risk of revealing or receiving personal information by establishing psychological boundaries to protect themselves from conversations that could be difficult, uncomfortable, or embarrassing. Petronio grounded her work in Altman and Taylor's (1973) social penetration theory (SPT). The premise of SPT is that the depth of the connection or relationship between two people becomes deeper and less superficial as personal information is increasingly shared. Petronio expanded on Altman and Taylor's research by proposing that while SPT provides insight into relationship development, it does not account for matters of privacy or how individuals manage disclosure of personal information. Petronio believed that individuals possess a set of rules or criteria by which they manage and control disclosure of personal information to and from others. CPM theory emerged from the study of

interpersonal communications but has application across disciplines. Petronio noted that the theory has been studied in multiple contexts including organizations. In that context, CPM theory could serve as a framework to understand how employees manage information privacy in their work relationships.

Individuals choose to disclose personal and private information by weighing certain factors. Petronio (1991) identified three underlying dimensions of communication privacy: ownership, control, and turbulence. According to Petronio, these dimensions collectively define how individuals manage their private information in relationships with others. The dimensions identified by Petronio provided a lens through which I could explore strategies WWP administrators in Georgia school districts use to successfully address employee concerns about privacy to improve participation and increase the positive impact of the program's intended health-related benefits.

A review of the current literature revealed that privacy and security of personal information, especially health-related information, is a significant concern in this age of digitization. Privacy concerns are the number-one reason individuals choose not to participate or choose limited participation in activities that could result in unauthorized access to and sharing of personal information (Abdelhamid, 2021; Brassart Olsen, 2020; Fleming, 2020; Kummer et al., 2021; Seward et al., 2019). WWPs typically use electronic health monitoring and tracking devices, raising employee privacy concerns, and introducing risk to both the employee and employer should personal health information be shared without consent. Organizations that administer WWPs must understand the nature of employee privacy concerns and implement strategies to

overcome this barrier to participation. The results of this study may help WWP administrators in Georgia school districts determine the root cause of employee concerns and take steps to successfully address them.

Individuals have a sense of ownership over their personal and private information and the right to control the disclosure of that information. According to Petronio (1991, 2002, 2004, 2007, 2013), ownership refers to the view that individuals own their personal and confidential information. Control is the right of an individual, as owner of the information, to choose who is allowed or denied access (Petronio, 1991, 2002, 2004, 2007, 2013; Petronio & Child, 2020; Zimmer et al., 2020). Individuals establish psychological boundaries to protect and control access to their confidential information (Petronio, 1991, 2002, 2004, 2007, 2013; Petronio & Child, 2020; Zimmer et al., 2020). The boundaries are not static but range from open to closed depending on how willing and comfortable an individual is with sharing personal information (Bhave et al., 2020; Petronio, 2002). Turbulence refers to violations of privacy boundaries that are intentional or when the boundaries protecting confidential information are ambiguous (Petronio, 2002, 2004, 2007, 2013; Petronio & Child, 2020). Boundary management is one way for individuals to retain ownership and control over their confidential information. Maintaining good boundaries helps individuals avoid boundary turbulence.

Supporting Theories

There is no single theory on communications management. The topic has been studied in many settings across disciplines resulting in the emergence of new theories that reflect communications in the digital age (Bhave et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2021). CPM

theory has been widely cited and applied as a framework for research in interpersonal communications and privacy. To date, Petronio's work (2002, 2004, 2007, 2013) has been cited more than 1,000 times. This indicates that CPM theory is still a current and relevant framework.

In a recent study, Balapour et al. (2020) applied CPM theory to explore user privacy perceptions about the security of mobile applications. The authors concluded that the perception of mobile application security is influenced by perceived risk. Users who perceive a high risk of using a certain mobile application are more likely to have a negative view of the security of that application. Siregar and Puspasari (2023) used CPM theory as the framework for exploring how Instagram users manage privacy when using the application. Siregar and Puspasari found that privacy violations are due to a lack of awareness of how to use the privacy settings in Instagram. The studies discussed above highlight the need for continued study to further evolve theories on interpersonal communications and privacy as technology continues to advance and become more complex.

Many different communications-related theories emerged in the 20th and 21st centuries. The theories are categorized by focus area of study such as mass communication, interpersonal communication, organizational communication, cross-cultural communication, and communication in the digital age (Dimbleby & Burton, 2020). CPM falls under the category of interpersonal communication theory. Other theories in that category or that are closely related include SPT (Altman & Taylor, 1973), social exchange theory (SET; Homans, 1947), and the theory of engagement (Kahn,

1990). As already discussed, Petronio (1991) grounded her work in SPT that was developed by Altman and Taylor (1973). Therefore, SPT was not covered here to avoid redundancy. In the next section, I will present an analysis of the relationship between CPM theory and two supporting theories, SET and the theory of engagement.

Social Exchange Theory

SET is an interpersonal communications theory. SET was introduced by Homans (1947). Homans proposed that social exchanges were reciprocal and that individuals consciously weigh the potential benefits versus the costs of the exchange before engaging. When individuals perceive that the benefit (e.g., money) of the exchange is greater than the cost (e.g., effort), they are more likely to actively engage and invest in that relationship (Davlembayeva & Alamanos, 2023). Relationships develop and positive behavior between individuals in the exchange occur when the exchange is mutually beneficial (Chen & Wei, 2020; Cropanzano et al., 2017; Davlembayeva & Alamanos, 2023). In a work setting, SET could help organizations understand the nature of social exchanges and how those exchanges influence employee behavior.

Organizations are social networks. Employees interact with leaders, subordinates, peers, and the organization itself. The quality of those interactions influences employee motivation and engagement (Chen & Wei, 2020; Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu, 2018; Cropanzano et al., 2017; Latifoglu et al., 2023). According to Chernyak-Hai and Rabenu (2018), establishing relationships at work is a process of socialization. Positive and mutually beneficial exchanges between an employee and a supervisor in the workplace result in increased employee engagement and productivity (Latifoglu et al., 2023).

Supervisors reciprocate with support, resources, and awards in exchange for improved engagement and productivity (Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu, 2018). Long-term, lasting relationships develop when the cycle of employee and supervisor exchanges remains positive and with benefits for both.

Leaders influence employee engagement and productivity by the way they engage in social exchanges with subordinates. Latifoglu et al. (2023) explained that the leader–member exchange (LMX) is the leading factor that affects employee performance. Positive and high quality LMX leads to improved employee performance (Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu, 2018; Latifoglu et al., 2023). Leaders are more likely to invest in employees who are engaged and productive, which continues the cycle of positive and beneficial LMX (Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu, 2018; Latifoglu et al., 2023). The converse could be inferred. Negative or low quality LMX could lead to disengaged employees and loss of productivity. Leaders would be less likely to reward low performers, which would continue the cycle of dissatisfaction (Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu, 2018; Latifoglu et al., 2023). In the context of this study, it is important for WWP administrators to understand how their interactions with participants can influence the decision to join the program. WWP administrators should build trusted relationships with participants through positive and high-quality interactions. Doing this may lessen employee privacy concerns and lead to increased participation in the program.

SET relates to CPM theory around the idea that social interactions are reciprocal. Homans (1947), the original author of SET, focused on the mechanics of social exchanges, proposing that decisions to engage are based on a calculated cost–benefit

analysis. Individuals engage and then reciprocate when the perceived cost (e.g., effort) is less than the perceived benefit (e.g., money) of the exchange. Petronio (1991), the original author of CPM theory, focused on the relationship aspects of social exchanges related to personal and private information. According to Petronio, it is the reaction to sharing or receiving private information that prompts reciprocal behavior. When an individual discloses personal information, they expect the other party to reciprocate by also disclosing private information.

SET and CPM theory, together, offer a holistic view of the process of social exchange in organizations and how engagement decisions are made to manage personal privacy. Employee concerns about privacy is the number-one reason individuals choose not to participate or to have limited participation in activities (e.g., WWPs) that could result in unauthorized access and sharing of personal information (Abdelhamid, 2021; Brassart Olsen, 2020; Fleming, 2020; Kummer et al., 2021; Seward et al., 2019). Perrault et al. (2020) surveyed employees of a large organization in the Midwest United States and found that employee privacy concerns present a barrier to participation in WWPs. SET supports the fact that employees make deliberate decisions by assessing the risk of participating in a WWP (disclosure of private information) against the potential benefits of the program (better health, employer incentives; Perrault et al., 2020). The principles of CPM indicate that boundary turbulence and loss of ownership of private information are too costly when weighed against potential rewards (Petronio, 2013). The relationship between employees and organization could erode due to lack of trust that personal health information will be protected (Latifoglu et al., 2023). The lack of trust could result in

lower employee engagement and performance. SET could help organizations understand how employees make decisions to engage based on the perceived costs and benefits of the engagement. CPM theory could provide insight into the psychological aspects of social exchange related to managing personal and private information.

Theory of Engagement

The theory of engagement is a closely related theory that aligns with CPM theory. Kahn (1992) introduced the theory of engagement. Kahn focused on the psychological aspects of employee engagement. In a 1990 study, Kahn identified three underlying dimensions of psychological conditions for engaging at work: meaningfulness, safety, and availability. In 1992, Kahn conducted additional research, introduced the theory of engagement, and defined four factors of psychological presence at work: attentiveness, connection, integration, and focus. Kahn (1992) believed that there was a reciprocal relationship between the three psychological conditions for engagement and the factors that indicated psychological presence at work. For example, positive behavior resulted when employees found meaningfulness (more than just a job) in their work. Meaningfulness was increased when supervisors were attentive (focused on employees) to the needs of employees. Employee engagement and productivity improved when the conditions for engagement were met and aligned with the indicators of psychological presence at work (Kahn, 1990, 1992). Relationships developed and were strengthened when exchanges between employee and manager were reciprocal.

Reciprocal exchange is a common theme among CPM theory and the theory of engagement. Employees form work relationships and feel connected to an organization

when interactions with supervisors are reciprocal, positive, and mutually beneficial (Wang et al., 2021). Feeling connected means that the employee formed an emotional bond and had trust in the organization (Camarillo, 2020). Connection and trust are factors that influence employee engagement and their willingness to participate in company sponsored programs (Perrault et al., 2020). These concepts could be applied to the problem of low participation in WWPs.

Successful organizations focus on the health and well-being of employees. Happy and healthy employees are more engaged and productive and therefore have a positive effect on company performance (Camarillo, 2020). Employers offer WWPs to encourage employees to adopt healthy lifestyles (Unsal et al., 2021). There are many benefits associated with WWPs, but they are not always successful due to low participation rates (Marin-Farrona et al., 2023). The decision to participate or engage in the program depends on the relationship between the employee and the program. In relation to the theory of engagement, employees decide to participate (engage) in a WWP if they feel a connection with the program and if they believe their personal information is safe. The absence of either condition would lead to a decision not to join (Keida et al., 2021). In relation to CPM theory, employees decide to participate (engage) and commit to the program when they feel psychologically safe because they trust that their personal information will be protected (Walrave et al., 2022). CPM theory and the theory of engagement are frameworks for understanding the factors that influence how individuals interact and form relationships. Organizations could apply these theories to explore strategies to continuously improve business communications.

Application to the Business Problem

Wellness Programs

WWPs are important to introduce preventive strategies to improve employee health. On average, working Americans spend 54% of their waking hours at work (Adams, 2019). Studies showed that large businesses reported the most success in implementing WWPs compared to small businesses. In a 2018 study, it was found that only 46% of small employers (defined as those with 3-199 employees) offered any kind of wellness program to their employees, compared to 85% of large employers (defined as those with two hundred or more employees; Kaiser Family Foundation, 2018). Cultivating a workplace culture that prioritizes employee health and wellness was key to promoting healthy behaviors and supporting employee needs.

WWP History

In 2019, Song and Baicker conducted a comprehensive study to investigate the impact of a multi-component WWP on employee health and economic outcomes. The clustered randomized trial design was utilized in the study, with data collected from administrative claims, employment data, surveys, and biometrics. The study revealed that employees who took part in WWPs offered by a large U.S. warehouse retail company reported significantly higher rates of positive health behaviors when compared to those who did not participate (Song & Baicker, 2019). However, no significant differences were observed in clinical measures of utilization, employment outcomes, health, and healthcare spending after 18 months.

In a study conducted by Terry (2019), the Workplace Health in America survey was analyzed to provide health promotion professionals with a better understanding of a comprehensive approach to workplace wellness. The results indicated that organizations that offered both social and physical environment support services saw an increase in participation in WWPs. Health education was typically voluntary and providing effective programs for those who chose to participate was the best way to encourage healthy behaviors. While Song's study showed that 35% of employees were willing to learn together, most of those who were ready for change opted for a limited program offering (Song & Baicker, 2019).

WWP Benefits

The primary objective of this study was to analyze WWPs and their characteristics. The study included an exploration of the prevalence of these programs and their impact on employee health and medical costs. Additionally, the research aimed to identify the success factors and the role of incentives in such programs. To achieve these goals, the authors employed various data collection and analysis techniques. These included reviewing scientific and trade literature, conducting a nationwide survey of employers, performing a longitudinal analysis of medical claims and wellness program data from organizations, and conducting five case studies of active wellness programs in diverse employers.

The study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of wellness programs and assess both employee and employer experiences with these programs. This research was the most comprehensive analysis of worksite wellness programs to date and evaluated

current program participation, program effects, and the role of incentives. Baid et al. (2021) reports were based on data from the U.S. Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS) and found that obesity was responsible for about 6 percent of medical costs in 1998, or about \$42 billion (in 2008 dollars). According to the authors, by 2020, obesity was responsible for 16-18% of medical costs of approximately \$260.6 billion a year (Cawley et al., 2021). It is important to take steps towards a healthy lifestyle and eating habits to prevent the negative consequences of obesity. The studies examined highlight the need for prevention and interventions to reduce obesity.

Summary

Successful organizations focus on the health and well-being of employees. Happy and healthy employees were more engaged and productive and therefore had a positive effect on company performance (Camarillo, 2020). On average, working Americans spend 54% of their waking hours at work. Worksite wellness programs were a great way to introduce preventive strategies to improve employee health. It is important for organizations that administer WWP to understand the nature of employee privacy concerns and implement strategies to overcome this barrier to participation.

A review of the current literature revealed that privacy and security of personal information, especially health-related information, was a significant concern in this age of digitization. Privacy concerns were the number-one reason individuals chose not to participate or limited participation in activities that could result in unauthorized access to and sharing of personal information (Abdelhamid, 2021; Brassart Olsen, 2020; Fleming, 2020; Kummer et al., 2021; Seward et al., 2019). The theory that grounded this study was

the CPM theory introduced by Petronio (1991). The topic has been studied in many settings across disciplines resulting in the emergence of new theories that reflect communications in the digital age (Bhave et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2021). Individuals had a sense of ownership over their personal and private information and the right to control the disclosure of that information (Petronio, 1991, 2002, 2004, 2007, 2013; Petronio & Child, 2020; Zimmer et al., 2020).

CPM theory and the theory of engagement are frameworks for understanding the factors that influence how individuals interact and form relationships. Organizations could apply these theories to explore strategies to continuously improve business communications. The connection with the theory of engagement related to the need for a give and take approach in work relationships. Regarding WWP participation, employees might be more willing to participate if they felt there was a personal benefit to disclosing private information. The CPM and other supporting theories highlighted above provided a framework that enabled me to explore the perceptions of WWP administrators and the strategies they use to address employee concerns about WWP privacy in Georgia school districts.

Transition

In Section 2 I provided an opening narrative where I explained the purpose of the literature review and my plan to search for and select the literature for my study. A critical analysis and synthesis of the literature related to my study topic and the conceptual framework was presented. Section 2 concluded with a summary and transition.

In Section 3, I cover ethical research, the research method and design that will be used for this study, and my approach for data collection and analysis. I expand on the target population, sampling method, and the criteria I used to purposefully choose participants. Reliability and validity in qualitative research are discussed. Section 3 concludes with a summary and transition. The results of the study are presented in Section 4.

Section 3: Research Project Methodology

In Section 3, I cover ethical research, the research method (qualitative) and design (pragmatic inquiry) that was used for this study, and my approach for data collection and analysis. I expand on the target population, sampling method, and the criteria I used to purposefully choose participants. Reliability and validity in qualitative research are discussed. Section 3 concludes with a summary and transition.

Project Ethics

The role of the researcher in the data collection process for this study was to explore the factors that could affect individuals' views and perceptions involving privacy of their personal information. In qualitative research, a researcher is the primary instrument for data collection (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Therefore, I was the primary data collection instrument for this study. The aim of this study was to understand the various forms of information people consider private, the reasons people share or withhold information, and the potential risks and benefits of doing so. It was also important for me to identify any gaps or weaknesses in existing privacy policies, practices, and barriers that may lead to non-participation in WWPs.

I am a WWP manager in a school district in Georgia. I may have a professional relationship with some of the potential participants as it is a part of my job to engage with and communicate information about WWPs to my colleagues. I am also responsible for providing tools and information to promote participation in the WWPs. I did not select participants if I encountered any possibility of bias or conflict of interest. Because of my job, I have preexisting knowledge of WWP operations that could lead to unintentional

bias. I used reflexive practices to ensure objectivity and non-bias in data collection, analysis, and reporting.

Researchers must understand and abide by ethical research practices. The Belmont Report (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979) emphasizes the importance of recognizing the autonomy and dignity of individuals and protecting their rights. This includes obtaining informed consent from participants and ensuring they fully understand the nature, purpose, and potential risks of research. In this study, participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time by notifying me by email. Participants were also informed there was no payment or incentive for participation. Researchers are responsible for ensuring that all participants are well-informed about the study's privacy and their individual rights (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). In addition, a researcher should explain that privacy and confidentiality are protected throughout the research process. The researcher should remain objective and impartial throughout the research process to mitigate bias and avoid viewing data through a personal lens or perspective. I achieved this by using standardized procedures and processes during the interview process and throughout the study and by avoiding personal biases or preconceived notions.

I adhered to all ethical research requirements outlined in the Belmont Report and as prescribed by the institutional review board (IRB) at Walden University. The IRB approval number to conduct the research is 03-19-24-0263311. Ethical standards were

upheld when collecting data, and participant names do not appear on any documents. I used codes to represent the participants to protect their privacy. All participants are anonymous, and the responses are confidential. To ensure data security, all programs on the computer used for this study are password protected. Moreover, a backup copy of the data files is stored on a separate computer software cloud for added data preservation. Raw data collected will be securely stored for 5 years. A printable version of the informed consent form will remain available through a hyperlink to participants who prefer a printed version. After conducting the interview transcription, I provided participants with a copy of the transcript to review for accuracy through member checking. In addition, I shared the preliminary findings with participants to see if they wanted to provide additional clarification or information.

As a part of my research, I meticulously documented every aspect of the data collection process, including the development of the tools and instruments used, the participants' recruitment, the data collection procedures, and any deviations from the initial plan. By thoroughly documenting the entire process, I ensured transparency and replicability of my study, which is crucial for establishing its validity. Moreover, I maintained detailed records of the data collection process, including dates, times, locations, and any unexpected events that occurred. To avoid depending solely on a single data source or method, I employed triangulation by analyzing and comparing data obtained from different sources or methods including participant interviews, data collected from publicly available sources, and information provided by the participants. My goal was to look for convergence or divergence in the results. By implementing these

strategies, I improved the accuracy and credibility of the data collection process and instrument, which resulted in a higher quality worksite wellness study. These steps also highlighted a rigorous and systematic approach to data collection and analysis, which was crucial for producing reliable and trustworthy research.

Nature of the Project

The qualitative research method was used for this study. Qualitative research is used to investigate complex phenomena and to gain insights into human behavior, attitudes, beliefs, and cultural contexts (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Researchers can gain more detailed information about the subjects involved in a study using qualitative rather than quantitative methods. Qualitative research provides opportunities to engage in more open-ended and interactive approaches to gather vivid data from participants. Interviewing participants is a common data collection technique in qualitative research. The qualitative research method was appropriate for this study because I intended to use semistructured interviews with open-ended questions to interview WWP administrators in Georgia school districts to address my research question.

I used pragmatic inquiry as my research design. Pragmatic inquiry is a type of qualitative research used by researchers to study organizational processes (Kelly & Cordeiro, 2020). One of the principles of pragmatic inquiry is that research is undertaken to produce practical, action-oriented results that are designed to solve a business problem (Kelly & Cordeiro, 2020). Pragmatic inquiry was appropriate for this study because I intended to identify and explore strategies WWP administrators in Georgia school districts use to successfully address employee concerns about privacy to improve

participation and increase the positive impact of the program's intended health-related benefits.

Population, Sampling, and Participants

The target population for this study was WWP administrators in Georgia school districts located in multiple counties who have successfully addressed employee privacy concerns related to WWP participation. Potential participants were identified from a list provided by the state of Georgia of school districts with WWPs. Six participants were selected using non-probability, purposeful sampling. The participant selection criteria were: (a) participants must be administrators of WWPs, (b) participants must have at least 2 years of experience administering a WWP, and (c) the school district must have a score of 80 or better for wellness promotion and marketing on the WellSAT school district assessment. WWP administrators who did not meet these criteria were not eligible to take part in this study. The data for the study was collected using semistructured interviews with open-ended questions to address the problem and purpose of the study. The data included participant responses to interview questions, information collected from publicly available sources, and information provided by participants to support data saturation and triangulation.

To gain access to potential participants, I emailed WWP administrators who met the selection criteria to determine interest in participating in this research study. In the email, I identified myself as the researcher and provided contact information. The email provided an overview of the purpose of the study and covered the basic procedures I would use to collect data from the participants. I informed potential participants about the

voluntary nature of participation and that their privacy would be protected. An email response was requested to indicate interest in participation. This process continued until I confirmed six WWP administrators who were interested and agreed to participate.

Establishing working relationships with research participants is an ongoing process. It starts with initial contact from a researcher to potential participants (Rashid et al., 2019). A well written and informative introduction to the study and request for participation assures potential participants that the study is legitimate and that it will be conducted ethically and with rigor (Rashid et al., 2019). Casual conversation can be used to break the ice before the interviews begin (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Before beginning the interviews, a researcher should reiterate the purpose of the study, the basic procedures that will be used to collect data, the voluntary nature of participation, and that participant privacy will be protected. During the interview process, researchers must build trust with participants by being attentive and accepting participant responses without judgment or bias (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019; Hunter, 2012). To collect data for this study, I worked to establish good working relationships with my participants by communicating effectively, being responsive to questions or issues, being open to participant perceptions that were different from my own and using member checking to ensure my interpretation of participant responses accurately reflected participant input.

Sample size is influenced by the chosen research design, the complexity of the research phenomenon, and the available resources. In qualitative research, the sample size should be sufficient to support the study's objectives by enabling comprehensive data collection and achieving data saturation (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). While

research employing four to five participants allows for identifying prevalent themes, the research may be confined by a small sample size (Kalu, 2019). There are no specific guidelines for determining sample size in qualitative research (Guest et al., 2020). According to Malterud et al. (2016), a sample of six to 10 participants should be sufficient to reach data saturation. The target population for this study was WWP administrators in Georgia school districts located in multiple counties. Six participants were selected using non-probability, purposeful sampling.

Non-probability, purposeful sampling was used to select potential participants for this research. Probability sampling methods are used when researchers aim to find representative samples and make statistical inferences about a population. Non-probability sampling methods are used when probability sampling is not practical or is too expensive. Probability sampling methods are more likely to produce a representative sample because every element in the population has an equal or known probability of being included. As a result, the sample is more likely to mirror the characteristics of the overall population. Common methods of probability sampling include simple random sampling, stratified sampling, systematic sampling, and cluster sampling (Kalu, 2019).

In non-probability sampling, the probability of any element being included in the sample is unknown or not calculable. This means that some members of the population may have a higher chance of being selected than others, and some may have no chance at all (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Common methods of non-probability sampling include convenience sampling, purposive or purposeful sampling, quota sampling, and snowball sampling.

Purposeful sampling allows researchers to focus on a specific subset of a population to choose those who are most closely aligned with the research purpose and question. Purposeful sampling serves as a foundational approach to sampling (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This method empowers researchers to discern and choose cases that align with the central phenomenon under investigation in their qualitative study. Kalu (2019) stated that purposeful sampling centers on selecting a limited number of participants as opposed to a larger group. This deliberate choice enables a researcher to align the sample with highly specific criteria. Moreover, purposive sampling can enhance research credibility and offer a means to gather data promptly and accurately.

To ensure data saturation in qualitative research, a researcher needs to continue collecting data until no new information or themes emerge from the data. This means that the researcher should keep collecting data until the point where additional data do not provide any new insights or perspectives on the research phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The process of achieving data saturation involves analyzing the collected data, identifying emerging themes, and comparing them with the existing literature. I kept detailed notes on the data collection process, including the number of participants, the data collection methods used, and any other relevant information. By doing so, I ensured that the sample size was sufficient to support the study's objectives and that the data collected were comprehensive and representative of the research phenomenon.

Data Collection Activities

Data collection for qualitative research is often done using semistructured interviews with open-ended questions. It is important to collect data from multiple sources to support data triangulation and saturation (Rashid et al., 2019). Collecting data from multiple sources also provides depth and rigor to the study (Rashid et al., 2019). In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Therefore, I was the primary data collection instrument for this study.

An interview protocol provides a defined and systematic guide for collecting participant data. Using an interview protocol ensures the consistency of the process and helps researchers focus on collecting the most relevant data. A variety of interview protocols exist that can guarantee the ethics and consistency of my research study. I utilized standardized procedures (Appendix) for conducting interviews and collecting data to ensure that the process was consistent across all participants. I obtained informed consent from all participants. Prior to participation, all individuals were presented with a comprehensive explanation of the study's objectives, methods, risks, and benefits. The participants had the opportunity to ask questions and provide written consent. The participants were reassured that their responses would remain confidential and that their identity would not be disclosed in written works or reports. All participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Participants were not coerced or pressured into participating in the study. The participants were made aware that their decision to participate or not would not impact any services or benefits they receive. Participants were given a chance to ask questions and receive

feedback on the results of the study, as well as any potential implications for their own well-being.

Data was collected via semistructured interviews with open-ended questions. Semistructured interviews are flexible, offering opportunity for dialog between the researcher and participants (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Open-ended questions allow participants to freely share their thoughts and perceptions. The researcher can probe participant responses and ask follow-up questions to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Due to varying schedules the interviews were conducted virtually rather than face-to-face. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, and coded. After conducting the interview transcription, I provided participants with a copy of the transcript to review for accuracy through member checking. In addition, I shared the preliminary findings with participants to see if they wanted to provide additional clarification or information.

Interview Questions

1. What are the main privacy concerns potential participants have when deciding to participate in a workplace wellness program?
2. How do different informed consent procedures affect potential participants' perceptions of privacy and their willingness to participate in workplace wellness programs?
3. What are the most effective ways to communicate privacy policies and procedures to participants to enhance their willingness to participate in the workplace wellness programs?

4. To what extent do you think demographics (age, gender, education level) affect participants' reluctance to share personal information and complete a workplace wellness program?
5. What strategies have you used to address the privacy concerns of participants?
6. How can wellness program administrators foster greater trust and transparency with participants to improve overall program satisfaction and willingness to participate in future wellness programs?

Data Organization and Analysis Techniques

For my planned research design, I recruited six WWP administrators in different Georgia school districts as my study participants. I collected data from my participants using semistructured interviews with open-ended questions. Participants were selected based on their administrative responsibilities for WWPs and who have successfully addressed employee privacy concerns in their school districts. I also collected documentation on the WWPs provided by the participants as additional data for my study. Privacy of responses were protected by only granting access to the survey to the primary investigators of the research. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded. Confidentiality was maintained by assigning each participant a number.

After conducting the interview transcription, I provided participants with a copy of the transcript to review for accuracy through member checking. In addition, I shared the preliminary findings with participants to see if they wanted to provide additional clarification or information. As part of my study, I documented every aspect of the data collection process. This included the development of the instruments used, how

participants were recruited, the procedures used to collect data, and any deviations from the original plan. The information gathered from the interviews underwent transcription and was securely saved on my computer. I used Atlas.ti software to code the data. Additionally, any personal notes or observations made during the interviews were integrated into the coding process, as recommended by (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Coding is an essential part of qualitative research, particularly in analyzing interview data. Before conducting interviews, it is essential to develop a coding framework that outlines the themes and categories that will be used to analyze the data. This framework should be based on the research questions and objectives. When coding interview data, it is important to do so systematically. This means that I read the data multiple times, identified key themes and categories, and assigned codes to each piece of data that related to these themes. It is important to maintain consistency when coding interview data. I used the same coding framework and criteria throughout the analysis process to ensure the data was analyzed consistently. Once the initial coding is complete, it is essential to review and refine the codes to ensure that they accurately reflect the data. To ensure data security, all the programs on the computer used for this study were password protected. Moreover, a backup copy of the data files was stored on a separate computer software cloud for added data preservation. Raw data collected will be securely stored for 5 years.

Data for this study was acquired through interviews and stored as audio files. The initial step in data analysis involved transcribing each interview into written text files. After transcription, each participant received a written copy of their interview transcript for review. This practice, known as member checking, enables participants to offer

feedback and endorse the researcher's data and interpretation, as recommended by previous qualitative studies. Following this, the principles of pragmatic inquiry that research is undertaken to produce practical, action-oriented results designed to solve a business problem was explored (Kelly & Cordeiro, 2020). The data was categorized into themes and structured around the research questions established for the study.

This study's second phase of data analysis involved the crucial coding process, which is fundamental in pragmatic inquiry qualitative research for identifying themes, as emphasized by Creswell & Creswell (2017). Once these themes were identified, I structured them to align with the research questions. Atlas.ti software was utilized to facilitate this process, enabling the analysis of data to be obtained from the open-ended interview responses, as outlined by Gaya and Smith (2016). Coding software also served the purpose of reducing bias in the study.

In my coding process, the transcripts were deconstructed into categories, words, and phrases and then input into the Atlas.ti software program. I harnessed the tools provided by the software to systematically organize, code, and categorize the data. Data from the transcripts was categorized based on keywords, sentences, and paragraphs. Subsequently, these essential concepts extracted from the interview transcripts were grouped into thematic clusters, enabling the clear identification of the research's core themes.

Triangulation, a term used to describe the incorporation of corroborating evidence in establishing core themes within a study, as described by Creswell and Creswell (2017), plays a significant role. Drawing from multiple data sources, I employed corroborating

evidence to substantiate themes and enhance the study's credibility, in line with Gaya and Smith (2016) recommendations. I cross-referenced common themes identified in the literature review and the interview transcripts and applied them to address the research questions effectively.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

Reliability in qualitative research contributes to the dependability of the results of a study. Reliability demonstrates that the researcher has used a systematic and consistent approach for collecting, analyzing, and reporting research results (Rashid et al., 2019; Rose & Johnson, 2020). There are several tools a researcher can use to ensure the reliability of their work. Member checking is one way to validate that the researcher has accurately interpreted participant responses to interview questions (Coleman, 2021). I used member checking to support the reliability of my study. Data triangulation is another method for ensuring not only the reliability of the results, but it contributes to validity as well (Coleman, 2021). Data triangulation involves collecting data from multiple sources to corroborate the analysis and synthesis of the data (Coleman, 2021). For this study, the data included participant responses to interview questions, information collected from publicly available sources, and information provided by participants to support data saturation and triangulation.

Validity

Validity in qualitative research is associated with the rigor of the research process and how well the results apply to the research purpose and question. There are four

factors that indicate the validity of a study, credibility, transferability, confirmability, and data saturation (Johnson et al., 2020). Credibility means that the researcher can demonstrate that the results have been carefully analyzed and that they reflect the study objective (Johnson et al., 2020). Member checking is one way to determine credibility. Member checking is a way to validate that the researcher has accurately interpreted participant responses to interview questions (Coleman, 2021). I used member checking to support the validity of my study. Transferability refers to the ability of the participants to relate the results to their own or others' situations (Johnson et al., 2020). According to Johnson et al., contextual information, provided by the researcher, allows participants and others to determine transferability. A researcher demonstrates confirmability when the participants feel that the data was objectively processed without bias (Johnson et al., 2020). I used reflexive practices to address confirmability and ensure objectivity and non-bias in data collection, analysis, and reporting. Data saturation occurs when no new ideas or perspectives emerge in the data. Until then, a researcher must continue collecting data until no new information or themes are uncovered. This means that the researcher should keep collecting data until the point where additional data does not provide any new insights or perspectives on the research phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Through the research process I documented my activities and reflected on the possibility of personal bias to support the reliability and validity of my study results.

Transition and Summary

In Section 3, I covered ethical research, the research method and design that will be used for this study, and my approach for data collection and analysis. I expanded on

the target population, sampling method, and the criteria I will use to purposefully choose participants. Reliability and validity in qualitative research were discussed. The results of the study are presented in Section 4.

Section 4: Findings and Conclusions

Presentation of the Findings

The specific business problem is that some WWP administrators in Georgia school districts lack strategies to successfully address employee concerns about privacy to improve participation and increase the positive impact of the program's intended health-related benefits. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative pragmatic inquiry study was to identify and explore strategies WWP administrators in Georgia school districts use to successfully address employee concerns about privacy to improve participation and increase the positive impact of the program's intended health-related benefits. The research question was: What strategies do WWP administrators in Georgia school districts use to successfully address employee concerns about privacy to improve participation and increase the positive impact of the program's intended health-related benefits?

Data was collected from six participants using semistructured interviews with open-ended questions. Semistructured interviews are flexible, offering dialogue opportunities between researchers and participants (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Open-ended questions allow participants to share their thoughts and perceptions freely. Data for this study, acquired through interviews, were stored as audio files; each interview lasted no more than 30 minutes. The initial step in the data analysis process involved transcribing each interview into written text files. The data was categorized into themes and structured around the research question established for the study. Member checking was used to support the reliability of the study.

Data triangulation is another method for ensuring the results' reliability and contributing to validity (Coleman, 2021). Data triangulation involves collecting data from multiple sources to corroborate the analysis and synthesis of the data (Coleman, 2021). For this study, the data included participant responses to interview questions, information collected from publicly available sources, and information provided by participants to support data saturation and triangulation. Figure 1 shows a bar graph of the data saturation in the study.

Figure 1

Data Saturation Bar Graph

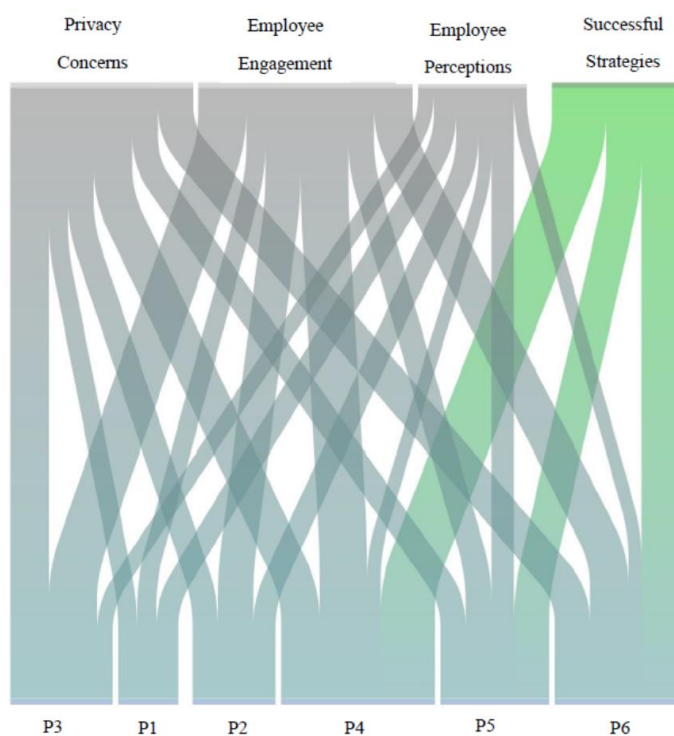


To maintain confidentiality, the workplace wellness administrators were referred to as Participant 1 (P1), Participant 2 (P2), Participant 3 (P3), Participant 4 (P4),

Participant 5 (P5), and Participant 6 (P6). After a thorough analysis of the data, three key themes were identified along with successful strategies. The analysis of the data revealed three themes: employee perception, privacy concerns, and employee engagement. Figure 2 displays a Sankey diagram showing the key grouping derived from 51 relevant codes. These codes were identified using ATLAS.ti to qualitatively analyze the research responses from the interviews and other supporting documents.

Figure 2

Sankey Diagram: Key Code Grouping



The Sankey diagram created by the researcher using ATLAS.ti shows the thickness of the lines that correspond consistently to the identified connections between

the analysis and other codes produced during the interview process. This diagram serves as a visual representation to display the research findings obtained from the study.

During the coding and thematic analysis of my qualitative research, three key themes emerged that are visually represented in a Venn diagram in Figure 3. These themes were employee perception, employee engagement and privacy concerns. Successful strategies are crucial to understand the dynamics of workplace wellness. In addition to these key themes, several subthemes, such as initial consent, building trust, confidentiality, and transparency, were identified as recurrent in participant responses.

Figure 3

Venn Diagram Key Themes



The key themes were derived from the relevant codes. These codes were identified by using ATLAS.ti to analyze the responses obtained from interviews and

other supporting documents. In Figure 4, the size of the words indicates the frequency of the words mentioned during the interview. The different colors portray the emphasis of the words.

Figure 4

Word Frequency



The purpose of the study was to identify and explore effective strategies used by WWP administrators in Georgia school districts to address employee concerns about privacy. The goal was to improve the wellness program's health-related benefits, increase participation, and have a positive impact. Six participants were interviewed using semistructured interviews with open-ended questions, and the data obtained were analyzed thematically. From the data analysis, three main themes emerged: (a) employee perception, (b) employee engagement, and (c) privacy concerns. The study indicates that employees' privacy concerns were the main barrier to participation in WWP, and addressing these concerns is vital to increasing participation. Participants highlighted the

importance of being transparent about privacy policies and providing opt-in/opt-out options to encourage compliance. The findings confirm the existing literature that privacy and security of personal information are significant concerns in this age of digitization. Privacy concerns were the number-one reason individuals chose not to participate or had limited participation in activities that could result in unauthorized access to and sharing of personal information (Abdelhamid, 2021; Brassart Olsen, 2020; Fleming, 2020; Kummer et al., 2021; Seward et al., 2019). Additionally, the study shows that transparent communication and employee involvement are crucial in addressing privacy concerns and increasing participation in WWP. These findings align with previous studies that have demonstrated the importance of these factors in promoting employee engagement and participation in wellness programs. In addition, the study emphasizes the importance of addressing employee privacy concerns to improve participation in WWPs.

Participant Insight

P1 defined workplace wellness as comprehensive health initiatives and emphasized privacy concerns around personal health information sharing. P2 recognized the impact of generational and cultural differences on privacy concerns highlighting the need for transparent communication in wellness programs. P3 emphasized the importance of confidentiality and time constraints as significant barriers affecting privacy concerns in WWPs. P4 addressed privacy concerns by discussing the transparency and consent procedures, highlighting the impact of different informed consent methods and participants' perceptions. P5 shared experiences on how workplace demographics and incentives affect privacy concerns, stressing the need for upfront communication and

open access to consent forms. P6 advocated for transparency through wellness champions and involvement in program development to build trust and address privacy concerns effectively.

Based on the data analysis, I found that employee perception, privacy concerns, employee engagement, and successful strategies were the key themes that emerged from the study. According to Petronio (1991, 2002, 2004, 2007, 2013), individuals could strengthen their connections with partners by negotiating privacy boundaries and balancing the need for disclosure with the desire for privacy. These themes are in line with the CPM theory, the primary conceptual framework for this study, and the theory of engagement, a supporting theory. These frameworks were used to understand the factors that influence how individuals interact and form relationships. Privacy concerns in WWPs vary, requiring tailored communication and consent procedures for increased participant trust and engagement. Maintaining consistency in privacy practices while adapting to feedback can enhance trust and participation in WWPs, fostering a healthier and more inclusive environment. To address employee concerns about privacy in WWPs, it is recommended that organizations develop clear and concise privacy policies, obtain informed consent from employees, and ensure that all personal information is securely stored and protected. Additionally, organizations should regularly train employees on data privacy and security policies to promote awareness and understanding.

Theme 1: Employee Perceptions

Individuals choose to disclose personal and private information by weighing certain factors. Petronio (1991) identified three underlying dimensions of communication

privacy: ownership, control, and turbulence. According to Petronio (1991, 2002, 2004, 2007, 2013), these dimensions collectively define how individuals manage their private information in relationships with others. Petronio believed that the CBM approach helps individuals understand the unspoken rules for disclosing confidential information within relationships. Individuals could strengthen their connections with partners by negotiating privacy boundaries and balancing the need for disclosure with the desire for privacy.

The participant responses in this study covered various aspects of employee perceptions. P5 discussed workplace wellness as extensive healthy morale, a good work environment, and the encouragement of healthy activities. P5 highlighted the privacy concerns related to sharing current wellness status and the potential impact of different informed consent procedures on program participants' willingness to engage in wellness programs related to employee perception. Additionally, P5 emphasized the importance of effective communication of privacy policies and procedures, considering demographic factors, and using strategies such as surveys to address privacy concerns.

P6 discussed workplace wellness as encompassing a range of policies and environmental factors, employee perceptions related to data sharing, and potential impact on participants' reluctance to participate. Additionally, P6 emphasized the importance of upfront communication of privacy policies and procedures, the impact of demographic factors on program participants' reluctance to share personal information, and the strategies used to address negative employee perceptions, such as providing access to consent forms and being transparent about data usage. Furthermore, P6 stressed the

significance of fostering trust and transparency with participants by involving workplace champions, maintaining program consistency, and being open to feedback.

The participants in this study highlighted several aspects of employee perceptions, including generational differences, cultural norms, concerns, privacy, WWPs, and personal experiences. These factors were emphasized as influential in shaping employees' attitudes and behaviors toward WWPs and privacy concerns. The participants discussed the significance of creating trust and value, making programs fun and engaging, and ensuring the information shared is applicable and impactful for the program participants. Additionally, study participants addressed the impact of demographics, such as age, gender, and education level, on program participants' reluctance to share personal information and shared strategies to address privacy concerns, including providing options for individuals to choose whether to share their information.

Theme 2 Employee Engagement

There are many benefits associated with WWPs but are not always successful due to low participation rates (Marin-Farrona et al., 2023). The decision to participate or engage in the program depends on the relationship between the employee and the program. In relation to the theory of engagement, employees decide to participate (engage) in a WWP if they feel a connection with the program and if they believe their personal information is safe. The absence of either condition may lead to a decision not to join (Keida et al., 2021). In relation to CPM theory, employees decide to participate (engage) and commit to the program when they feel psychologically safe because they

trust that their personal information will be protected (Walrave et al., 2022). All participant responses shared a common focus on the importance of employee engagement in WWP. P6 emphasized the need for clear communication as a successful strategy for engaging employees in the program and addressing employee perceptions and privacy concerns. P4 stressed the importance of being upfront and transparent about privacy policies and providing opt-in/opt-out options to encourage compliance. P5 highlighted the importance of individualized employee support in WWP. All participants mentioned successful employee involvement and engagement strategies, such as incentives, flexible scheduling, and a supportive culture. They also suggested that personalized plans and supportive environments are essential for engaging employees and helping them achieve their wellness goals.

Finally, participants recognize that WWP require a thoughtful and individualized approach, considering employees' unique needs and concerns. They suggested that programs should be tailored to the workforce's specific needs and should provide support and resources to help employees achieve their wellness goals. Overall, the common success strategies in the participant responses—transparency, trust, clear communication, individualized support, and tailored programs—suggest that these are key factors for success in WWP.

Theme 3 Privacy Concerns

The participants mentioned various privacy concerns that potential WWP participants have when deciding to participate in a WWP. Privacy concerns were the number-one reason individuals choose not to participate or limit participation in activities

that could result in unauthorized access to and sharing of personal information (Abdelhamid, 2021; Brassart Olsen, 2020; Fleming, 2020; Kummer et al., 2021; Seward et al., 2019). P1 mentioned that people might be hesitant to join a wellness group or a disease-specific program as they would worry that someone might use their condition against them in the future. P2 highlighted that “everyone has the right to privacy and that joining a WWP may cause them to lose some aspects of their privacy.” P2 also mentioned that it is essential to be transparent about what information is shared with coworkers. P3 noted that confidentiality is a crucial aspect of privacy and that people want to ensure their privacy is respected. P4 mentioned that the main privacy concern is that their information or data may be shared, and they may receive unwanted calls or emails. P5 mentioned that people would have to share their current wellness status, which may lead to discussions that they are not comfortable sharing. P6 highlighted that data sharing is a significant concern and that people want to know that their data is safe and that their activity or inactivity is not held against them. All participants stressed the importance of ensuring that privacy is respected, and people’s information is private.

Successful Strategies

The findings of this study carry significant implications for organizations. They reveal that organizations can elevate employee participation and engagement, resulting in numerous positive outcomes. WWPs are instrumental in enhancing employees’ overall health and well-being, subsequently leading to reduced healthcare costs, heightened productivity, and increased job satisfaction. The success strategies identified in this study can serve as a blueprint for developing best practices for WWPs. By specifically

addressing employee concerns about privacy in these programs, organizations can cultivate a more engaged and productive workforce, leading to positive outcomes for both employees and organizations.

To address employee concerns about privacy in WWPs, successful strategies identified by the study participants include the development of clear and concise privacy policies, obtaining informed consent from employees, and ensuring the secure storage and protection of all personal information. Additionally, participants stated that organizations should regularly train employees on data privacy and security policies to promote awareness and understanding. Prioritizing transparent communication and employee involvement in developing strategies to overcome this barrier can help organizations design more effective wellness programs that promote employee health and well-being. Future research could explore the effectiveness of different privacy and security strategies in WWPs and their impact on employee participation and engagement. Further studies could also investigate the role of organizational culture in promoting employee privacy and security in WWPs and how it affects overall program success. Finally, it is recommended that future studies use larger sample sizes and diverse populations to increase the generalizability of the findings.

Through a deeper understanding of privacy concerns, more effective strategies can be developed to promote health and well-being in the workplace, thus positively impacting individuals, communities, organizations, institutions, cultures, and societies. Furthermore, these programs contribute to fostering a culture of health and well-being within organizations, thereby positively impacting the broader community.

Business Contributions and Recommendations for Professional Practice

The findings of this study have important implications for business and organizational leaders, as well as the research-scholar community, in terms of tangible improvements to individuals, communities, organizations, institutions, cultures, or societies. By addressing employee concerns about privacy in WWP, organizations can improve employee participation and engagement, which can lead to a range of positive outcomes. First, WWP can improve the health and well-being of employees, which can lead to reduced healthcare costs, increased productivity, and improved job satisfaction. Second, WWP can help to create a culture of health and well-being within organizations, which can have a positive impact on the wider community. Third, WWP can help to promote social change by encouraging individuals to take responsibility for their health and well-being, and by providing them with the tools and resources they need to make positive lifestyle changes. Furthermore, the findings of this study could serve as a basis for developing best practices for WWP that can be implemented across different organizations and industries. By promoting the use of effective strategies to address employee concerns about privacy in WWP, organizations can create a more engaged and productive workforce, which can lead to positive outcomes for both employees and organizations.

Implications from Social Change

WWP can play a crucial role in promoting social change by encouraging individuals to take charge of their health and well-being. These programs provide people with the tools and resources needed to make positive lifestyle changes. The findings of

this study can be used to develop best practices for WWPs that can be implemented across various organizations and industries. By addressing employee concerns about privacy in WWPs, organizations can create a more engaged and productive workforce, leading to positive outcomes for both employees and organizations.

Finally, the findings of this study could contribute to the broader scholarly discussion on the role of privacy and security in WWPs, and how these programs can be designed and implemented to promote positive outcomes for employees and organizations. By advancing our understanding of these issues, we can develop more effective strategies for promoting health and well-being in the workplace, which can have a positive impact on individuals, communities, organizations, institutions, cultures, and societies.

Recommendations for Further Research

The data analysis found that the key themes that emerged from the study were employee perception, privacy concerns, and employee engagement. These themes align with the CPM theory and the theory of engagement, the frameworks used to understand the factors that influence how individuals interact and form relationships. WWPs are important to introduce preventive strategies to improve employee health. On average, working Americans spend 54% of their waking hours at work (Adams, 2019). To address employee concerns about privacy in WWPs, it is recommended that organizations develop clear and concise privacy policies, obtain informed consent from employees, and ensure that all personal information is securely stored and protected. Additionally, organizations should regularly train employees on data privacy and security policies to

promote awareness and understanding. Future research could explore the effectiveness of different privacy and security strategies in WWPs and their impact on employee participation and engagement. Further studies could also investigate the role of organizational culture in promoting employee privacy and security in WWPs and how it affects overall program success. Finally, it is recommended that future studies use larger sample sizes and diverse populations to increase the generalizability of the findings.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study aimed to investigate the strategies implemented by WWP administrators in Georgia school districts to address employee privacy concerns successfully. The goal was to improve participation and enhance the program's intended health-related benefits. Six participants were interviewed using semistructured interviews with open-ended questions. The data obtained was analyzed thematically, and three key themes emerged: (a) employee perceptions, (b) employee engagement, and (c) employee concerns and successful strategies for involvement. The study revealed that employees' privacy concerns were the primary barrier to participation in the WWP. The findings have important implications for businesses. Organizations can enhance employee participation and engagement, leading to positive outcomes such as improved overall health and well-being, reduced healthcare costs, heightened productivity, and increased job satisfaction. WWPs can play a pivotal role in achieving these outcomes and fostering a culture of health and well-being within organizations, positively impacting the wider community. The study highlights the importance of addressing employee privacy concerns to improve participation in WWP. Therefore, organizations should prioritize

transparent communication and employee involvement in developing strategies to overcome this barrier. The practical implications can help organizations design more effective wellness programs that promote employee health and well-being.

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Appendix: Interview Protocol

1. I will conduct all interviews from her private home office using the phone and the recording application program, iRecorder or zoom audio.
2. Prior to scheduling an interview, I will obtain informed consent from each participant by explaining the nature of my research, the procedures involved, and any risks or benefits. At this point I will have them sign a consent form.
3. I will provide the participants with information about the study's purpose, expected outcomes, and how the data collected will be used.
4. I will start by introducing myself to the participants and explaining the purpose of the interview. I will emphasize that their participation is voluntary, and they can opt out at any time.
5. I will use an icebreaker or warm-up question to help each participant feel at ease. This can help establish rapport and build trust with the participant.
6. I will begin the interview and ask the interview questions one at a time, in a clear and concise manner.
7. I will listen attentively to the participant's responses and ask follow-up questions to clarify their answers or collect additional information.
8. I will use probing techniques to encourage participants to elaborate on their responses. Probing can help to uncover deeper insights and improve the quality of data collected.
9. I will conclude the interview by thanking the participants for their participation and answering any questions they may have.
10. I will also remind the participants of their right to withdraw their data from the study.
11. I will record the interview data using appropriate methods such as audio or video recording and written notes. I will inform the participants that I will keep the data secure and confidential.
12. I will transcribe the interview data accurately, ensuring that all relevant information is recorded.

13. I will analyze the interview data using appropriate qualitative or quantitative methods to identify themes and patterns.
14. I will present the findings in a clear and concise manner, supported by appropriate evidence.
15. I will remember to treat each participant with respect, maintain confidentiality, and ensure that the data collected is used for its intended purpose.