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Effective Healthcare Administration Strategies that Increase Healthcare Employees' Satisfaction and Reduce Related Turnover Costs

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Walden University

College of Management and Human Potential

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Candace F. Kelly

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Walden University
2024

Abstract

Effective Healthcare Administration Strategies that Increase Healthcare Employees'

Satisfaction and Reduce Related Turnover Costs

by

Candace F. Kelly

MBA, Walden University, 2020

BA, University of Central Arkansas, 2017

Research Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

October 2024

Abstract

Ineffective leadership styles among healthcare administrators can negatively impact employee and patient satisfaction, ultimately reducing organizational revenue. Grounded in transactional, transformational, and servant leadership theories, the purpose of this qualitative pragmatic inquiry was to explore effective strategies employed by healthcare administrators to enhance employee and patient satisfaction. The study involved six healthcare administrators from three rural hospitals in Arkansas, with data gathered through semi-structured interviews and public records. Thematic analysis revealed four key themes: (a) communication, (b) employee engagement, (c) ethics, and (d) monitoring key performance indicators (KPIs). A key recommendation is for healthcare administrators to invest in leadership development by promoting training programs, empowering leaders to foster autonomy, and implementing targeted KPI training. The implications for positive social change include the potential to promote operational success and diversity within healthcare organizations.

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Dedication

This doctoral study is dedicated to the countless healthcare administrators whose tireless commitment to leadership excellence paves the way for healthier communities and brighter futures. Your dedication to innovation, compassion, and the pursuit of better healthcare systems has been a beacon of inspiration throughout this academic journey. May this research honor your unwavering efforts to transform and elevate the field of healthcare administration for the benefit of all.

Acknowledgments

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to my parents, whose unwavering support, sacrifices, and dedication have been the bedrock of my journey. Your hard work and resilience have shaped me into the person I am today, and I am forever indebted for the values you instilled in me.

To my family, thank you for being my constant source of motivation and for encouraging me to push my boundaries. Your belief in my potential has been a driving force, propelling me to strive for excellence in everything I do.

I also want to express my appreciation to my niece, Heidi, whose unwavering love and presence give me the strength to give my absolute best. Your youthful enthusiasm and boundless energy inspire me daily.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Project

Background of the Problem

In the maturing healthcare landscape, understanding leadership dynamics has become a vital focal point, with research delving into nuanced strategies that shape organizational success and patient care outcomes. Leadership can manifest under various circumstances, in any location, and within diverse roles (Kouzes & Posner, 2009, as cited in Kumar, 2022). Notably, job satisfaction is directly influenced by vital leadership behaviors that positively influence patient satisfaction (Durowade et al., 2020). This qualitative pragmatic inquiry aims to identify and explore the effective leadership strategies of healthcare leaders that are used to increase employee satisfaction and reduce related turnover costs.

Turnover costs in healthcare organizations can substantially impact the operational sustainability of the organization. According to the 2023 NSI National Health Care Retention & RN Staffing Report, the existing turnover rate in hospitals stands at 22.7%, with an associated average financial expense of \$52,350 for each bedside RN turnover (NSI, 2023). The report also highlights that hospitals have experienced a turnover rate equivalent to 105% of their workforce over the past five years (NSI, 2023). Understanding the magnitude of turnover costs in healthcare, it becomes evident that these financial implications are not only staggering but also inherently challenge the long-term operational resilience of organizations.

In healthcare, job satisfaction profoundly influences both staff well-being and patient outcomes. Job satisfaction is influenced by how leaders treat their employees

(Eyupoglu et al., 2018, as cited in Curado & Santos, 2022). Satisfied employees are more committed to achieving tasks and expectations and upholding the organization's values (Judge et al., 2001, as cited in Curado & Santos, 2022). Dissatisfied employees are more likely to leave their organization, which notably impacts performance (Boamah et al., 2017, as cited in Curado & Santos, 2022). A notable connection exists between job satisfaction, leadership approaches, and the inclination of healthcare personnel to depart from their organization (Curado & Santos, 2022; Plevova et al., 2021). In healthcare leadership performance, job satisfaction is a full mediator weaving together with leadership and workforce to assume crucial health service management (Durowade et al., 2020; Figueroa et al., 2019; Kumar, 2022).

Business Problem Focus and Project Purpose

The specific business problem is that some healthcare administrators lack leadership strategies that improve employee satisfaction and reduce related turnover costs. Therefore, the purpose of this proposed qualitative pragmatic inquiry is to explore the effective leadership strategies of healthcare leaders to increase employee satisfaction and reduce related turnover costs.

In this doctoral study focusing on three different rural hospitals in Arkansas, the research population comprises healthcare administrators who have successfully implemented strategies to enhance employee satisfaction and reduce turnover costs—the geographical location of interest resides within the rural healthcare sector of Arkansas. The sampling method will consist of administrators that have demonstrated success. The sample size will consist of six healthcare administrators from three different rural

hospitals within Arkansas that facilitate a comprehensive exploration of effective healthcare administration strategies that benefit employees and organizations in this specific context.

To address the research question in this qualitative study, the specific research design will be a pragmatic inquiry. The chosen methodology is suitable for the research since qualitative methods involve a subjective approach employing direct observation and in-depth interviews to explore the international aspects and strategies (Saunders et al., 2019). A pragmatic inquiry has been chosen to analyze healthcare leadership styles comprehensively. This qualitative pragmatic inquiry analysis explores effective strategies healthcare administrators utilize to increase employee satisfaction and reduce related turnover costs.

In my research design, I will begin with a comprehensive recruitment process targeting healthcare leaders operating within the rural hospital landscape of Arkansas. These leaders will be specifically chosen for their proven expertise in effectively addressing the precise business challenge that is the focal point of my study. My research will employ a multifaceted approach, combining in-depth individual interviews with a collection of pertinent public documents related to the identified problem.

An interview protocol will be developed to ensure consistency and rigor in data collection. This protocol is a structured guide, facilitating uniform and systematic interview sessions. Through this multifaceted research strategy, I aim to obtain rich, firsthand insights from these healthcare leaders, thereby shedding light on innovative

solutions and best practices in identifying effective strategies healthcare administrators utilize to increase employee satisfaction and reduce related turnover costs s.

Research Question

What healthcare administrator leadership strategies are used to increase employee satisfaction and performance for reducing related turnover costs?

Assumptions and Limitations

Assumptions

The assumption is that the participants are willing to enter into a data collection agreement, demonstrating an understanding of and readiness to address potential administrative and logistical details. Additionally, a pool of highly qualified participants who possess the necessary expertise and are eager to partake in the interview process, demonstrating their commitment to the study despite potential scheduling conflicts and other prior commitments. Furthermore, the expectation is that the data gleaned from both the partner site and the interview sessions will meet the necessary standards, all while accounting for potential variations in data sources and participant responses, aligning seamlessly with the study's overarching objectives.

Limitations

One potential obstacle that might be encountered during the primary data collection phase pertains to the challenges associated with securing partner site

agreements and the complexities involved in recruiting suitably qualified participants for interview sessions.

Navigating partner site agreements can be multifaceted, requiring meticulous negotiation and alignment of objectives between the research team and the collaborating institutions. These agreements are crucial, as they outline the terms and conditions governing data access, ethical considerations, and logistical arrangements, which are paramount for a successful research venture.

Additionally, recruiting highly qualified participants for the interview process can pose a significant hurdle. Identifying individuals with the requisite expertise, experience, and insights relevant to the research objectives demands a proactive and strategic approach. This challenge underscores the importance of an effective participant recruitment strategy involving targeted outreach, comprehensive screening, and persuasive engagement techniques to ensure that the research benefits from the perspectives of those most qualified to contribute valuable insights. Addressing these barriers with due diligence is pivotal in ensuring the overall success and robustness of the primary data collection phase.

Transition

Through the findings of this study, a thorough investigation has unfolded, meticulously examining the multifaceted implications of effective healthcare administration strategies. This examination emphasizes leadership's profound influence over employee management and patient satisfaction. The study underlines the prominent significance of leaders in navigating these leadership strategies, stressing the crucial need

to meet employees' needs and adeptly leverage available managerial resources. As this study unfolds into the characteristics of transformational, transactional, and servant leadership, the exploration will seamlessly transition to pivotal aspects encompassing project ethics, defining the project's nature, outlining the population, sampling methods, participants, data collection strategies, and culminating in a comprehensive presentation of the study's findings and implications.

Section 2: The Literature Review

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The literature review is composed of an in-depth examination of five distinct topics. The first topic is leadership, which explores the various facets and principles underlining effective leadership. The second topic entails a comprehensive analysis of the transformational leadership theory. The third topic is centered around transactional leadership theory. The fourth topic is dedicated to the study of servant leadership. Lastly, the fifth topic explores employee engagement.

Relevant electronic journals were found utilizing EBSCOHost, Emerald Insight, JSTOR, ProQuest Central, SAGE Journals, and Taylor and Francis Online databases. The following keywords were used to find current studies: *healthcare administration, patient satisfaction, employee satisfaction, leadership behaviors, ethical leaders, leadership styles, leaders, healthcare leaders, nurse satisfaction, employee satisfaction, patient emotional responses, and employee emotional responses.*

Leadership

In the ever-evolving landscape of healthcare services, leadership has emerged as a central component for motivating and galvanizing teams toward exceptional performance. This comprehensive literature review delves deep into the varied field of leadership, shedding light on its profound impact on team motivation and the overarching success of healthcare organizations. At its core, leadership, as expounded by Bennis (2007, as cited in Hussain & Ashcroft, 2022), transcends mere authority; it is about

possessing a compelling vision that resonates deeply with the team, forging trust, and translating vision into action to unlock the latent potential of leadership.

The concept that effective leadership is a complex blend of qualities is combined throughout the collection of leadership studies. This involves exhibiting professionalism, nurturing consistent credibility, adeptly establishing clear and inspiring goals, and employing solution-oriented problem-solving methodologies (Hussain & Ashcroft, 2022). Moreover, the importance of fostering an environment of collaboration that empowers team members to attain their goals emerges as a recurring theme in the discourse on effective leadership (Hussain & Ashcroft, 2022).

As illuminated by Theready (2022), leadership within the healthcare workforce is an intricate dance of artistry and science. Leadership requires a detailed understanding of what drives coworkers and how to continually engage them in providing their best. Burns (1978) underscores the pivotal role of motivation for achievement and power within the leadership model. Leadership plays a key role in shaping organizations beyond just productivity, prioritizing the overall welfare of their employees (Bass, 1985; Kouzes & Posner, 1988, 1995; Peters, 1987; Yukl, 1989; McNeese-Smith, 1999).

Leadership is not confined to a set of practices; it is fundamentally a dynamic relationship between leaders and their devoted followers (Sehanovic et al., 2022; Yucel, 2021). In an era where healthcare facilities transition from rigid hierarchical structures to nimble networked organizations, leadership dynamics changed accordingly (Yucel, 2021). Leaders are challenged to provide their followers with the tools for effectiveness and a profound alignment with common organizational goals (Yucel, 2021; Sehanovic et

al., 2022). The failure to uphold commitments causes discouragement and the decline of self-confidence among employees (Yucel, 2021; Sehanovic et al., 2022). The historical significance of leadership, shaping both smaller organizational entities and entire states, remains a clear determinant of success. (Sehanovic et al., 2022). Leaders must be attuned to their teams' internal and external needs, an essential prerequisite for enhancing overall performance and deepening organizational commitment (Sehanovic et al., 2022).

As postulated by Bass and Avolio (1999), effective leadership can unleash formidable forces that kindle innovation, pivot the focus from quantity to quality, and accelerate the decision-making process (Sehanovic et al., 2022). This shift towards quality and agility furnishes organizations with a competitive edge and lays the foundation for enduring success (Bass & Avolio, 1999 as cited in Sehanovic et al., 2022; Durowade et al., 2020).

Leadership transcends the constraints of time, place, and function (Kouzes & Posner, 2009, as cited in Kumar, 2021). It is a dynamic and omnipresent force permeating every facet of an organization, particularly within the healthcare sector. Here, leadership assumes an even more pivotal role, catalyzing teams, championing quality patient care, and nurturing the seeds of long-term prosperity (Durowade et al., 2020; Kumar, 2021).

Ethical Leader

Ethical leadership extends beyond facilitating an environment conducive to efficient and cost-effective organizational performance (Barkhordari-Sharifabad, 2018; Fletcher et al., 2020; Lawton & Paez, 2015; Robbins & Davidhizar, 2020). It encompasses the active guidance of individuals toward ethical behavior (Barkhordari-

Sharifabad, 2018; Fletcher et al., 2020; Robbins et al., 2020). Ethical leaders adeptly navigate shared values, aligning foundational beliefs with tangible actions (Barkhordari-Sharifabad, 2018; Fletcher et al., 2020; Robbins et al., 2020). Their objective is to foster an ethical community within the workplace, where values are acknowledged and collectively embraced performance (Barkhordari-Sharifabad, 2018; Fletcher et al., 2020; Lawton & Paez, 2015; Robbins et al., 2020).

Leaders, wielding their positional authority and personal influence, are critical in shaping an ethical climate performance (Barkhordari-Sharifabad, 2018; Fletcher et al., 2020; Robbins et al., 2020). They leverage their leadership positions to advocate for ethical behavior and endorse and enforce it (Barkhordari-Sharifabad, 2018; Fletcher et al., 2020; Robbins et al., 2020). Ethical leaders utilize their influential positions to encourage ethical conduct and address unethical behavior within the organization (Barkhordari-Sharifabad, 2018; Fletcher et al., 2020; Robbins et al., 2020).

Ethical leaders recognize and uphold employees' inherent rights to operate within an organizational culture that value, comprehends, and respects them (Meretoja et al., 2004, as cited in Barkhordari-Sharifabad, 2018; Fletcher et al., 2020). They advocate for an ethos centered on mutual trust, unwavering honesty, and impeccable integrity, striving to ensure that each individual feels an integral part of the organizational fabric (Barkhordari-Sharifabad, 2018; Fletcher et al., 2020).

These leaders epitomize ethical behavior and trustworthiness, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to moral principles (Barkhordari-Sharifabad, 2018; Fletcher et al., 2020). Their guidance functions as direction and an ethical compass, steering the

organization toward a culture firmly grounded in ethical conduct and principled actions (Barkhordari-Sharifabad, 2018; Fletcher et al., 2020).

Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leadership, first introduced by Bass in 1978, represents a dynamic and influential process designed to inspire and unite followers in the pursuit of common goals and the realization of success (Elkordy, 2022). Such leaders skillfully guide their employees toward a compelling vision and mission, thereby catalyzing the effective achievement of organizational objectives (Berkovich & Eyal, 2021; Curado & Santos, 2022; Elkordy, 2022; Utley et al., 2011).

At the heart of the transformational leadership framework lie four pivotal elements: individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence (Berkovich & Eyal, 2021; Elkordy, 2022; Utley et al., 2011). Individualized consideration shines through as transformational leaders go above and beyond in showcasing their authentic care and respect for the unique needs and invaluable contributions of everyone within the workforce (Utley et al., 2011; Berkovich & Eyal, 2021; Elkordy, 2022). The facet of intellectual stimulation involves not merely fostering creativity but also kindling the flames of innovation through thought-provoking challenges and creating opportunities for employees to broaden their horizons, further enriching their skills and knowledge (Utley et al., 2011; Berkovich & Eyal, 2021; Elkordy, 2022).

In inspirational motivation, transformational leaders craft an alluring vision that acts as a beacon, igniting the passion and commitment of every employee (Utley et al.,

2011; Berkovich & Eyal, 2021; Elkordy, 2022). This vision is complemented by a skillful orchestration of meaningful challenges, an infectious enthusiasm that resonates with optimism, and the nurturing of a united team spirit that surges throughout the organization (Utley et al., 2011; Berkovich & Eyal, 2021; Elkordy, 2022).

Lastly, idealized influence signifies a profound commitment to serving as a role model for desired behavior, thereby catalyzing a positive transformation of the organizational culture (Utley et al., 2011; Berkovich & Eyal, 2021; Elkordy, 2022). By embodying the principles, they wish to see in others, transformational leaders lead by example, inspiring their teams to follow suit and fostering a dynamic, growth-oriented environment (Utley et al., 2011; Berkovich & Eyal, 2021; Elkordy, 2022).

In organizational change, employee responses assume critical importance, as observed by Oreg et al. (2011, as cited in Mujib & Rosari, 2023). According to Mujib & Rosari (2023), organizations can significantly bolster their members' readiness for organizational change by fostering their psychological capital through the active implementation of transformational leadership.

Transactional Leadership Theory

Transactional leadership represents a well-defined and structured approach to leadership, characterized by a keen focus on the dynamic exchange or "transaction" between leaders and their followers (Richards, 2020; Alqahtani, 2021; Frangieh & Rusu, 2021; Khan et al., 2021). This leadership style places a premium on clear delineation of roles, well-structured tasks, and explicit performance expectations (Richards, 2020; Alqahtani, 2021; Frangieh & Rusu, 2021; Khan et al., 2021). Transactional leaders

employ a systematic framework of incentives and consequences to motivate and oversee their team members effectively (Frangieh & Rusu, 2021; Khan et al., 2021).

The establishment of specific objectives marks this leadership approach, the formulation of precise rules and procedures, and vigilant scrutiny of team members' performance (Richards, 2020; Alqahtani, 2021; Frangieh & Rusu, 2021). Rewards serve as a tool for acknowledging and reinforcing commendable performance, while penalties and corrective measures are utilized when performance falls below the established standards (Richards, 2020; Alqahtani, 2021; Frangieh & Rusu, 2021; Khan et al., 2021).

Transactional leaders are distinguished by their dedication to maintaining organizational order and efficiency, often leaning on established protocols and standardized methodologies (Frangieh & Rusu, 2021). While this style of leadership is adept at ensuring stability and achieving short-term objectives, it may not be as conducive to nurturing innovation, stimulating creativity, or sustaining long-term employee motivation when compared to more transformative leadership paradigms (Frangieh & Rusu, 2021).

In transactional leadership, a structured process has evolved to influence individuals toward the realization of an organization's overarching goals. To boost employee productivity, transactional leaders adopt a "give and take" approach predicated on a reciprocal relationship where efforts are rewarded in kind (Frangieh & Rusu, 2021). These leaders are recognized for their responsiveness to organizational culture, the implementation of a system that balances rewards and punishments, and the judicious exercise of management authority (Richards, 2020; Alqahtani, 2021; Frangieh & Rusu,

2021; Khan et al., 2021). In contingent rewards, two distinct categories emerge contingent positive reinforcements and contingent negative reinforcements (Frangieh & Rusu, 2021). Positive reinforcement entails the bestowal of praise or rewards upon the timely completion of tasks, while negative reinforcement involves the imposition of penalties when deadlines are not met (Richards, 2020; Alqahtani, 2021; Frangieh & Rusu, 2021; Khan et al., 2021). Transactional leaders judiciously employ these contingent rewards and punishments in their interactions with followers (Richards, 2020; Alqahtani, 2021; Frangieh & Rusu, 2021; Khan et al., 2021). It is worth noting that, due to the presence of punitive measures, followers may at times exhibit reluctance towards transactional leaders, underscoring the complexity and nuances of this leadership style (Alqahtani, 2021; Frangieh & Rusu, 2021; Khan et al., 2021).

Servant Leadership Theory

This profound and transformative leadership model was first brought to the fore by Robert K. Greenleaf in the 1970s, and it has since gained prominence in many organizational settings (Canvesi & Minelli, 2022; Silver & Martin, 2022). Servant leaders not only champion ethical decision-making and shared responsibility but also diligently craft an inclusive, trust-based culture, firmly believing that by nurturing the well-being of their team, the entire organization is primed to thrive and flourish (Canvesi & Minelli, 2022; Silver & Martin, 2022).

At its core, servant leadership embodies a holistic approach in which leaders act with unwavering morality, demonstrating genuine concern for the well-being of the organization's stakeholders (Canvesi & Minelli, 2022; Silver & Martin, 2022; Westbrook

et al., 2022). They engage their followers on multiple dimensions, including the emotional, relational, and ethical spheres, harnessing the full extent of their potential and empowering them to evolve into the best versions of themselves (Canvesi & Minelli, 2022; Silver & Martin, 2022; Westbrook et al., 2022). This multifaceted approach is a profound catalyst for sustained organizational excellence (Canvesi & Minelli, 2022; Silver & Martin, 2022; Westbrook et al., 2022).

Servant leadership behaviors prove to be highly effective in mitigating the myriad workplace stressors that often lead to burnout, impact job satisfaction, and trigger high turnover rates (Bennett & Hylton, 2020; Canvesi & Minelli, 2022; Silver & Martin, 2022; Westbrook et al., 2022). Job satisfaction emerges as a pivotal factor, acting as a full mediator between the tenets of servant leadership and subsequent performance and turnover intentions (Bennett & Hylton, 2020; Canvesi & Minelli, 2022; Silver & Martin, 2022; Westbrook et al., 2022).

Servant leadership, as a profound and transformative leadership philosophy, departs from traditional models by placing paramount emphasis on the well-being and holistic development of those under its stewardship (Bennett & Hylton, 2020; Canvesi & Minelli, 2022; Silver & Martin, 2022; Malak et al., 2022; Westbrook et al., 2022). While conventional leadership paradigms often prioritize organizational objectives and the exercise of authority, servant leadership pivots around the core principle that leaders should ardently serve their team members, fostering an environment characterized by unwavering support, empowerment, and a deep-seated culture of collaboration (Canvesi & Minelli, 2022; Silver & Martin, 2022; Malak et al., 2022; Westbrook et al., 2022).

Central to the essence of servant leadership are hallmark attributes such as empathy, active listening, humility, and an unwavering commitment to the personal and professional growth of individuals within their charge (Canvesi & Minelli, 2022; Silver & Martin, 2022). Servant leaders are driven by the profound desire to discern the unique needs and aspirations of their team members, actively working to fulfill those needs while facilitating the unbridled realization of everyone's fullest potential (Canvesi & Minelli, 2022; Silver & Martin, 2022).

The allure of servant leadership lies in its inherent capacity to harmoniously balance the demands of organizational performance and individual development (Canvesi & Minelli, 2022; Silver & Martin, 2022). Rather than neglecting one in favor of the other, servant leadership behaviors inherently seek to sustain robust long-term performance by cultivating a deep sense of organizational commitment within individuals (Canvesi & Minelli, 2022; Silver & Martin, 2022).

In the realm of servant leadership, subordinates are encouraged to take the reins, even as leaders remain modest when receiving accolades, deferring the spotlight when recognition is due, acting as prudent stewards of internal resources, and consistently aligning their actions and words with authenticity (Bennett & Hylton, 2020; Canvesi & Minelli, 2022; Silver & Martin, 2022; Malak et al., 2022; Westbrook et al., 2022).

Employee Engagement

The enduring discourse on whether to prioritize customers or employees within corporate settings has remained an ongoing and unchanging debate throughout the years (Fata et al. in 2022 and Cahyadi et al. in 2023). However, amid this perpetually changing

environment, the importance of employee engagement has surged, emerging as a pivotal determinant for the triumph of an organization (Alqahtani et al., 2021). This shift has underscored the intricate interconnection between employee engagement and the dominant leadership approaches adopted within organizational frameworks. The diverse dimensions of leadership significantly shape the extent of employee engagement evident within a company (Alqahtani et al., 2021; Ritter, 2021; Smama'h et al., 2023).

Effective employee engagement catalyzes enthusiastic contributions from employees, channeling their energy, creativity, and discretionary efforts into their work (Durowade, 2020; Alqahtani et al., 2021; Sehanovic et al., 2022). The outcome is a palpable enhancement in overall organizational performance and outcomes.

The embraced leadership style within an organization is a pivotal determinant in sculpting the landscape of employee engagement (Alqahtani et al., 2021; Ritter, 2021; Smama'h et al., 2023). Leadership efficacy plays a paramount role in the overarching success of any organization, underscoring the fundamental importance of nurturing a contented and motivated workforce (Alqahtani et al., 2021; Ritter, 2021; Smama'h et al., 2023).

In the dynamic healthcare services sector, characterized by rapid transformations and formidable challenges, team motivation amplifies (Alqahtani et al., 2021; Ritter, 2021; Smama'h et al., 2023). Within this context, job satisfaction assumes an exceptionally significant role, acting as a linchpin capable of profoundly influencing individual employee performance and, consequently, the collective success of the

organization (Durowade, 2020; Alqahtani et al., 2021; Ritter, 2021; Sehanovic et al., 2022; Smama'h et al., 2023).

The notion of job satisfaction, reflecting an individual's contentment with their role, intricately intertwines with several determinants (Durowade, 2020; Alqahtani et al., 2021; Ritter, 2021; Sehanovic et al., 2022; Smama'h et al., 2023). These encompass the utilization of one's skills, recognition, and value attributed to contributions, prevailing work conditions, technical dimensions of the role, compensation, benefits, and opportunities for career progression (Durowade, 2020; Alqahtani et al., 2021; Ritter, 2021; Sehanovic et al., 2022; Smama'h et al., 2023).

Acknowledging these factors underscores the multifaceted nature of job satisfaction, emphasizing the imperative for organizations to meticulously address these elements in their pursuit of optimizing employee performance and overall organizational efficacy (Durowade, 2020; Alqahtani et al., 2021; Ritter, 2021; Sehanovic et al., 2022; Smama'h et al., 2023).

The profound impact of employee engagement extends beyond morale and job satisfaction, exerting a direct and measurable influence on organizational revenue (Durowade, 2020; Alqahtani et al., 2021; Ritter, 2021; Sehanovic et al., 2022). Empirical evidence, highlighted in the research by Harter et al. (2009), underscores that organizations with highly engaged employees tend to outperform those with disengaged workforces across crucial aspects such as productivity, profitability, and customer satisfaction (Durowade, 2020; Alqahtani et al., 2021; Ritter, 2021; Sehanovic et al., 2022).

Engaged employees showcase profound commitment not only to their tasks but also to the overarching organizational goals, resulting in amplified productivity and delivery of high-quality output (Durowade, 2020; Alqahtani et al., 2021; Ritter, 2021; Sehanovic et al., 2022).

However, the pivotal role of leadership in this equation must be considered. As observed by Yucel in 2021, the leader's ability to fulfill promises and offer support and guidance is pivotal (Sehanovic et al., 2022). A leader's failure to uphold commitments can lead to employee demotivation and subsequent erosion of confidence, significantly impacting engagement levels (Yucel, 2021; Sehanovic et al., 2022).

Patient Satisfaction

Healthcare staff's perceptions of their interactions with leaders significantly shape job satisfaction within the healthcare setting (Saleh et al., 2018; McCay et al., 2018; Alloubani et al., 2019; Miao et al., 2020; Zaghini et al., 2020). These relationships strongly influence the overall satisfaction levels among the entire staff (Saleh et al., 2018; McCay et al., 2018; Alloubani et al., 2019; Miao et al., 2020; Zaghini et al., 2020). Conversely, adverse perceptions significantly contribute to diminished job satisfaction, exerting an influence on both the duration of employment within the healthcare sector and the quality of care provided to patients (Saleh et al., 2018; McCay et al., 2018; Alloubani et al., 2019; Miao et al., 2020; Zaghini et al., 2020). It becomes essential to establish well-defined policies regarding critical elements such as patient assignment and scheduling to prevent any semblance of favoritism (Saleh et al., 2018; McCay et al., 2018; Alloubani et al., 2019; Miao et al., 2020; Zaghini et al., 2020). Such measures

significantly impact nurses' engagement, motivation, retention rates, and overall job satisfaction (Whipple, 2010; Saleh et al., 2018).

Patients' overall satisfaction with care dramatically relies on the caring behaviors exhibited by healthcare professionals, significantly influencing the perceived quality of care provided (Aiken et al., 2012; Laschinger et al., 2005; Edvardsson et al., 2017; Piredda et al., 2015, 2017; Zaghini et al., 2020). Consequently, patients' assessments of these caring actions serve as an essential indicator of the overall quality of care across the healthcare spectrum (Aiken et al., 2012; Laschinger et al., 2005; Edvardsson et al., 2017; Piredda et al., 2015, 2017; Zaghini et al., 2020).

Patient satisfaction serves as a critical metric that mirrors the provision of patient value, exerting influence on patient loyalty and the selection of healthcare providers (Roth et al., 1995; Patterson & Spreng, 1997; Özer et al., 2017; Zaghini et al., 2020). The healthcare value chain designates patients as healthcare services' principal recipients and consumers. Porter (2010) defined patient value as health outcomes measured by healthcare expenses; patient value encapsulates diverse elements such as health status, recovery processes, and the sustainability of health (Zaghini et al., 2020). Additionally, patient value corresponds to individual preferences and priorities, which undergo constant shifts influenced by factors such as illness, environment, and personal beliefs (Mangin et al., 2016; Lateef, 2011; Zaghini et al., 2020).

The correlation between patient value, satisfaction, and loyalty provides strategic insights for healthcare organizations, empowering them to achieve competitive advantages (Saleh et al., 2018; McCay et al., 2018; Alloubani et al., 2019; Miao et al.,

2020; Zaghini et al., 2020). Examining this relationship assists in comprehending the customer value linked to services, forecasting patient behavior, and harmonizing corporate strategies with patient value (Saleh et al., 2018; McCay et al., 2018; Alloubani et al., 2019; Miao et al., 2020; Zaghini et al., 2020). Miao et al. (2020) stated, "Hospitals need to focus on key services and attributes motivating patients' decisions while ensuring consistent performance across all areas (p. 579)."

Microsystems

Healthcare establishments operate as multifaceted systems encompassing clinical microsystems—compact, interdependent units collaborating consistently to deliver specialized and tailored care directed at distinct patient populations (Bender et al., 2012; Abrahamson et. al, 2020; Thomas, 2022). These microsystems, acknowledged as foundational elements within healthcare structures, involve interconnected teams of healthcare practitioners functioning within a collaborative setting, collectively accountable for providing customized care directed at particular groups of patients (Bender et al., 2012; Abrahamson et. al, 2020; Thomas, 2022). The importance of these microsystems resides in their collective capacity to adjust and address patient requirements, guaranteeing effective care provision, improving patient results, and enhancing the overall performance of the healthcare system (Bender et al., 2012; Abrahamson et. al, 2020; Thomas, 2022). Comprehending and fine-tuning these clinical microsystems represent pivotal factors in driving healthcare excellence, bolstering patient contentment, and enhancing the overall efficiency of modern healthcare frameworks (Bender et al., 2012; Abrahamson et. al, 2020; Leclerc et al., 2020; Thomas, 2022).

Various leadership approaches deeply impact the complex structure of the healthcare workforce. (Negussie & Demissie 2016). The relationship between the smooth administration of patient care, the pervasive impact of organizational leadership, and the encompassing work environment encountered by staff is undeniable. (Marquis & Houston, 2017; Negussie & Demissie 2016).

Resource-Based View

The resource-based view (RBV) is a prominent theoretical framework within strategic management, primarily concerned with scrutinizing a firm's internal resources and capabilities as fundamental sources of sustainable competitive advantage (Park & Matkin, 2021; Lee et al., 2023). According to the RBV theory, a company's success is determined by its distinctive blend of resources and capability to deploy and utilize those resources in its competitive environment efficiently (Lee et al., 2023; Park & Matkin, 2021;). In essence, the company's resources should be unique and valuable enough to provide a competitive advantage over its rivals, and the company should possess the ability to exploit those resources effectively to achieve success (Lee et al., 2023; Park & Matkin, 2021;).

Firms encompass an array of resources, ranging from tangible assets such as physical infrastructure and financial capital to transcendental elements like technological expertise, brand reputation, and organizational culture (Bowman, 2011; Pink, 2019; Enumah & Chang, 2021; Park & Matkin, 2021; Lee et al., 2023). RBV underscores the imperative nature of these resources being valuable but also rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) to maintain sustained competitive advantage (Bowman, 2011; Pink,

2019; Enumah & Chang, 2021; Park & Matkin, 2021; Lee et al., 2023). Beyond the possession of resources, RBV places significant emphasis on capabilities and competencies (Bowman, 2011; Pink, 2019; Enumah & Chang, 2021; Park & Matkin, 2021; Lee et al., 2023). Capabilities denote a firm's ability to deploy resources for specific activities, while competencies encompass amalgamating these capabilities, granting the firm a competitive edge in specific domains (Bowman, 2011; Pink, 2019; Enumah & Chang, 2021; Park & Matkin, 2021; Lee et al., 2023).

RBV's focal point lies in leveraging these unique resources and capabilities that impede competitors' efforts to replicate, thereby creating and sustaining value for the firm (Bowman, 2011; Pink, 2019; Enumah & Chang, 2021; Park & Matkin, 2021; Lee et al., 2023).. Acknowledging the dynamic nature of resources and capabilities, RBV recognizes their evolution over time, driven by technological advancements, market fluctuations, or managerial decisions (Bowman, 2011; Pink, 2019; Enumah & Chang, 2021; Park & Matkin, 2021; Lee et al., 2023). Consequently, RBV stresses the continuous development, updating, and exploitation of resources to retain and augment competitive advantage (Bowman, 2011; Pink, 2019; Enumah & Chang, 2021; Park & Matkin, 2021; Lee et al., 2023).

This framework aims to serve as a strategic guide, aiding firms in identifying, developing, and sustaining their competitive edge by effectively leveraging their internal resources and capabilities (Bryson et al., 2007; Lee & Chen, 2022; Rosenberg Hansen & Ferlie, 2016). In strategic management and academic research, RBV is a critical tool for analyzing diverse facets of firm strategy, encompassing competitive positioning,

identification of advantageous sources, and guidance in resource allocation, particularly in dynamic and competitive markets (Bowman, 2011; Pink, 2019; Enumah & Chang, 2021; Park & Matkin, 2021; Lee et al., 2023).

Within the context of achieving financial sustainability, the convergence of operational efficiency with an organization's core principles and goals becomes crucial (Bowman, 2011; Pink, 2019; Enumah & Chang, 2021; Park & Matkin, 2021; Lee et al., 2023). This pursuit spans optimizing financial resources while aligning operational practices with the intrinsic values and overarching objectives guiding the entity's mission (Bowman, 2011; Pink, 2019; Enumah & Chang, 2021; Park & Matkin, 2021; Lee et al., 2023). The surge in rural hospital closures due to financial strain has notably affected community healthcare accessibility (Bowman, 2011; Pink, 2019; Enumah & Chang, 2021; Park & Matkin, 2021; Lee et al., 2023). Factors contributing to hospitals' financial struggles are varied, impacting smaller hospitals regardless of ownership and rendering them susceptible to heightened financial instability (Bowman, 2011; Pink, 2019; Enumah & Chang, 2021; Park & Matkin, 2021; Lee et al., 2023). Hospitals' financial performance is intrinsically linked to their ability to provide high-quality services, necessitating skilled personnel and specialized medical equipment (Bowman, 2011; Pink, 2019; Enumah & Chang, 2021; Park & Matkin, 2021; Lee et al., 2023)..

RBV has notably contributed to analyzing capabilities and resources within public and nonprofit organizations in public management studies (Hart & Dowell, 2011 as cited in, Tate & Bals, 2018). While traditional RBV emphasizes efficiency, the swiftly evolving social and environmental landscapes have prompted the emergence of Socially

Responsible RBV (SRBV) (Hart, 1995; Hart & Dowell, 2011; Tate & Bals, 2018). SRBV integrates environmental and social values alongside profit-oriented objectives, which is particularly crucial for nonprofits and Public Service Organizations (PSOs) navigating uncertain external environments (Tate & Bals, 2018).

RBV originated within the domain of strategic management, views organizations through resource aggregation. It asserts that the possession and efficient utilization of VRIN resources is imperative for attaining competitive advantage and superior performance (Barney, 1991; Hitt et al., 2007; Brossard et al., 2022). The extension of RBV to explore the role of capabilities in Big Data Analytics (BDA) and its contribution to value creation in hospitals elucidates mechanisms such as transparency, experimentation, customization, prediction, and real-time monitoring (Barney, 1991; Hitt et al., 2007; Brossard et al., 2022). Understanding RBV and its extensions within public healthcare underscores the criticality of resources, capabilities, and adaptive strategies in ensuring sustainable organizational performance within the healthcare domain (Barney, 1991; Hitt et al., 2007; Brossard et al., 2022).

Financial Stability

In achieving financial sustainability, operational efficiency intersects with an organization's core principles and essential goals (Park & Martin, 2021; Lee et al., 2023). This search encompasses not only the optimization of financial resources but also aligning practices with the intrinsic values and overarching objectives that guide the entity's mission and purpose (Bowman, 2011; Park & Martin, 2021).

Numerous elements play a role in hospitals' financial challenges, affecting their stability (Horwitz, 2005; Enumah & Change, 2021; Lee et al., 2023). Irrespective of their ownership, smaller hospitals face an elevated susceptibility to heightened financial turbulence, exacerbating their fragility and posing significant challenges in maintaining sustainable operations (Horwitz, 2005; Bowman, 2011; Enumah & Change, 2021; Lee et al., 2023). Between 2013 and 2017, a concerning trend emerged as rural hospitals faced a twofold increase in closures, a consequence directly stemming from financial pressures (Pink, 2019; Lee et al., 2023).

The financial well-being of hospitals is to maintain their capacity to deliver high-quality care, necessitating a skilled workforce, specialized medical equipment, and comprehensive service provisions (Horwitz, 2005; Bowman, 2011; Pink, 2019; Enumah & Change, 2021; Lee et al., 2023.) Moreover, this link extends to maintaining employee satisfaction, directly influencing the ability to provide superior care and services. (Horwitz, 2005; Bowman, 2011; Pink, 2019; Enumah & Change, 2021; Lee et al., 2023).

Hiring the Right Leadership Team

In the healthcare sector, leaders play a multifaceted role, guiding facilities toward their objectives (Marquis & Houston, 2017). Their influence extends beyond mere guidance, significantly impacting employee decisions to stay or leave their positions (Marquis & Houston, 2017; Negussie & Demissie, 2016). Ethical leadership in healthcare demands strategic team building, where leaders assemble teams tailored to the organization's requirements (Frieder et al., 2018; Enwereuzor et al., 2020). Effective recruitment involves seeking individuals whose skill sets align with designated roles,

fostering a team with diverse proficiencies that balance strengths and weaknesses, and facilitating innovative problem-solving (Frieder et al., 2018; Enwereuzor et al., 2020). This diversity inherently offers multiple perspectives, nurturing creative solutions (Frieder et al., 2018; Enwereuzor et al., 2020).

Moreover, beyond diverse skill sets, cultivating a workforce capable of independently identifying and addressing challenges within programs is vital (Marquis & Houston, 2017; Negussie & Demissie, 2016; Frieder et al., 2018; Enwereuzor et al., 2020). Empowering a team with solution-oriented thinking enhances the organization's ability to innovate and adapt to complex issues, contributing significantly to the resilience of clinical microsystems within healthcare organizations (Marquis & Houston, 2017; Nelson et al., 2002; Durowade, 2020; Sehanovic et al., 2022).

Additionally, committed employees delivering exceptional service foster increased customer loyalty, directly impacting revenue growth (Marquis & Houston, 2017; Nelson et al., 2002; Durowade, 2020; Sehanovic et al., 2022). Effective leadership practices that engage the workforce form the foundation for organizational growth, driving success internally and externally (Marquis & Houston, 2017; Nelson et al., 2002; Durowade, 2020; Sehanovic et al., 2022). Establishing groundwork of respect reduces employee skepticism, nurtured through leaders demonstrating competence, effective decision-making, compassion, and trust (Marquis & Houston, 2017; Nelson et al., 2002; Durowade, 2020; Sehanovic et al., 2022).

Employee trust empowers and motivates them to excel in patient care, ultimately elevating patient satisfaction (Marquis & Houston, 2017; Negussie & Demissie, 2016;

Frieder et al., 2018; Enwereuzor et al., 2020)). Granting employee's autonomy encourages increased participation and improves retention rates (Marquis & Houston, 2017; Nelson et al., 2002 Durowade, 2020; Sehanovic et al., 2022). Conversely, effective leadership, generating positive responses from staff, contributes to enhanced retention rates ((Marquis & Houston, 2017; Negussie & Demissie, 2016; Frieder et al., 2018; Enwereuzor et al., 2020)). Recognition and appreciation reduce dissent within work units, influencing job satisfaction ((Marquis & Houston, 2017; Negussie & Demissie, 2016; Frieder et al., 2018; Enwereuzor et al., 2020)).

Individual contributions are invaluable in healthcare, significantly influencing patient outcomes (Marquis & Houston, 2017; Nelson et al., 2002 Durowade, 2020; Sehanovic et al., 2022). Reinstating a sense of purpose in healthcare rekindles fulfillment, aligning work with inherent motivations and enhancing patient care (Bujak, 2017). Nelson and colleagues (2002) highlight healthcare organizations as complex ecosystems comprising clinical microsystems—cohesive groups delivering care to specific patient populations. Leadership profoundly influences individual job satisfaction and impacts organizational success (Saad et al., 2012; Durowade et al., 2020). Ultimately, an organization's prosperity or downfall hinges on its stewards' leadership style and competencies (Durowade et al., 2020).

Conceptual Framework

Leadership

This study encompasses transformational, transactional, and servant leadership theories. Webber (1947) first identified the transactional leadership style, which revolves

around rewarding employees upon the accomplishment of company objectives (Richards, 2020; Specchia et al., 2021). In 1970, Greenleaf introduced servant leadership, a concept of nurturing individuals' physical and emotional growth by supporting others' needs (Bennett & Hylton, 2020). Burns (1978) uncovered the transformational leadership style, characterized by motivating and coaching employees to exceed their anticipated performance levels (Specchia et al., 2021).

Transformational leadership is typified by individuals being guided by leaders who inspire them through a compelling vision, passion, and profound enthusiasm (Kumar, 2021; Wang et al., 2021; Park & Pierce, 2020). In contrast, transactional leadership uses incentives or disciplinary measures to manage followers (Kumar, 2021; Durowade et al., 2020). Servant leadership, however, places a premium on employees' well-being, combining empathy with effective communication (Silver & Martin, 2022).

Transition

Within this chapter, an in-depth inquiry was developed, encompassing an array of critical facets: leadership, ethical leadership paradigms, employee engagement, patient satisfaction, and an extensive overview of transformational, transactional, and servant leadership theories. This comprehensive discussion highlights the influential sway of various leadership styles, especially during organizational disruption. It emphasizes the profound effect these leadership paradigms exert on molding the intricate interplay between employees and their managers amid the turbulent terrain of change.

This chapter has reinforced the conceptual framework by explaining fundamental concepts crucial to understanding organizational dynamics. It precisely defined and

expounded upon critical elements such as microsystems, delving into their significance as the elemental units within healthcare systems where care is delivered and experienced. Additionally, it unpacked the meaning of the resource-based view, shedding light on the strategic leveraging of internal resources to gain sustainable competitive advantage. Furthermore, it highlighted the criticality of financial stability, emphasizing its role as a cornerstone for the enduring success of healthcare organizations. Lastly, it emphasized the importance of assembling the right leadership team, recognizing its profound impact on steering organizational strategies, and ultimately influencing the organization's revenue. As the study progresses, it will transition into a detailed inquiry of project ethics, ensuring maintained ethical considerations. Subsequently, the focus will shift towards presenting and analyzing the study's findings, shedding light on the implications of the research on transformational, transactional, and servant leadership within organizational contexts.

Section 3: Research Project Methodology

Delving into the complex realm of healthcare leadership strategies necessitates a stringent commitment to ethical guidelines, rigorous methodology, and a nuanced comprehension of contextual nuances. This qualitative study ventures into investigating the strategies utilized by healthcare leaders, aiming to uncover the intricate relationship between leadership methods and their effects on employee satisfaction, turnover costs, and patient well-being in rural Arkansas healthcare settings. Upheld by ethical principles, this research prioritizes participant rights and confidentiality, fostering an environment of

voluntary and discreet involvement while maintaining a stance of impartiality and neutrality.

Project Ethics

As a healthcare professional with experience in the industry, I recognize the importance of maintaining objectivity and confidentiality in research endeavors. Despite my background in healthcare, my role in this study remained neutral and impartial. While I possess insights into the healthcare sector, I will ensure that my professional background did not influence the study's outcomes. I will maintain a detached perspective, refraining from personal biases or preconceived notions about the study topic, the specific organization, or any participants involved. To ensure unbiased data collection, I will meticulously record participants' exact statements and viewpoints, separating my personal opinions from the research findings. In qualitative research, healthcare professionals must acknowledge and mitigate personal assumptions or biases throughout the research process to achieve an impartial and accurate representation of the subject matter.

Potential participants will receive an email outlining the project details and an attached consent form to participate in the pragmatic inquiry study. Clear communication channels will be established and participants will be explicitly informed that they could opt out of the study simply by email notification. This approach ensured that participants felt empowered to make decisions regarding their involvement, maintaining the principle of voluntary participation and ethical considerations throughout the study.

The researcher will protect interviewees' and organizations' identities by anonymizing names and details, using pseudonyms or codes in all documentation. Collected data will be securely stored in encrypted systems for at least five years, accessible only to authorized personnel. These measures ensure confidentiality and data protection for all involved parties.

Participants of this study will be entirely voluntarily, without any form of incentives offered for their involvement. Their participation will explicitly be voluntary, devoid of rewards, compensations, or inducements in exchange for contributing to the research. Adhering closely to the ethical guidelines outlined in the Belmont Report (1979), the study will compliance with vital ethical principles: (a) respecting individual autonomy, (b) prioritizing participant welfare, (c) upholding fairness and justice, (d) obtaining informed consent, (e) meticulously evaluating potential risks and benefits, and (f) fairly selecting participants. Before participating, all individuals will receive comprehensive information and will provide informed consent for their involvement in the study. Walden University IRB approval number 05-29-24-0745293.

Nature of the Project

The proposed qualitative pragmatic inquiry study aims to investigate effective leadership strategies among six leaders in Rural Arkansas hospitals. The qualitative pragmatic inquiry study design is an appropriate method for this study because this design gathers and examines viewpoints on a present occurrence in its real-life context (Yin, 2018). By utilizing a qualitative pragmatic inquiry study design, I aim to explore how implementing these strategies can enhance employee satisfaction, reduce turnover

costs, and subsequently boost patient satisfaction. This, in the larger picture, is intended to fortify business sustainability and elevate care standards. Ultimately, the improvement in healthcare quality has the potential to catalyze positive societal changes by promoting the overall health of the community's members.

The advantages of a qualitative pragmatic inquiry study are evident in gaining valuable insights into leadership strategies and methods employed in the administration of rural hospitals to address turnover issues. The selected qualitative pragmatic inquiry study design is well-suited to the research's specific focus on comprehending leadership approaches among healthcare administrators in rural Arkansas. This is achieved through data collection methods and semi-structured interviews.

The qualitative research designs under consideration encompass (a) case study, (b) phenomenological, (c) ethnography, and (d) pragmatic inquiry study design. The case study methodology seeks to attain a thorough understanding and presentation of an individual, program, or situation over an extended period (Yin, 2018). In contrast, phenomenological study is centered on exploring individual experiences, and ethnographic design comprehends a problem through observations and interactions with participants within a group (Range, 2023; Yin, 2018). Both phenomenological and ethnographic methodologies have been deemed inappropriate for this study.

Population, Sampling, and Participants

For this study, the population comprised 6 healthcare administrative leaders within rural Arkansas hospitals. Utilizing the snowball method, initial contacts made through LinkedIn and other social media platforms within the healthcare sector will

facilitate in the identification of suitable participants meeting specific criteria: possessing a minimum of two years of leadership experience, direct involvement in hospital operations, expertise in process enhancement, and engagement in performance measurement (Griffith et al., 2016). The decision to involve 6 participants was justified to achieve data saturation, ensuring comprehensive coverage of diverse perspectives and roles within the healthcare hierarchy. This purposive and homogeneous sampling strategy, guided by Etikan et al. (2016), Yin (2017), and Saunders et al. (2019), aimed at a meticulous exploration of theoretical concepts within practical contexts. By partnering with healthcare leaders and employing this method, the study will investigate how theoretical frameworks manifest across distinct organizational segments, and will provide nuanced insights into their practical implications. The selection of this specific number of participants aimed to reach data saturation, where no new significant information or themes emerge, as advocated by the iterative approach in qualitative research methodologies.

Data Collection Activities

I plan to obtain consent for participation through email correspondence, ensuring compliance with ethical protocols. Subsequently, interview times will be diligently scheduled and organized with the participants, aligning with their availability and convenience. The semi-structured, face-to-face interviews that I plan to conduct will be in a private, controlled environment where I will ask 10 open-ended questions and records responses by utilizing electronic recorders. Following these sessions, meticulous

transcription of the gathered information ensued. Supplementary to these primary sources, secondary data, such as public documents, will help enrich the study's dataset.

Data Organization and Analysis Techniques

After conducting qualitative interviews and prioritizing participant privacy, I will begin data analysis following Maxwell's (2013) and Patton's (2002) guidelines. I will systematically categorize and review all collected data using open and axial coding methodologies, ensuring equal importance to each segment. To maintain confidentiality, each participant will be assigned a unique code identifier (P1 to P6). Microsoft Word will facilitate meticulous recording, transcription, and documentation of interviews. All data, including files and transcripts, will experience secure coding and storage in encrypted files and will be locked in cabinets for 5 years, aligning with data retention protocols. This meticulous approach will ensure confidentiality while facilitating convenient data accessibility using recommended software like Microsoft Word and Excel.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

Reliability, as highlighted by Saunders et al. (2019) and Yin (2017), focuses on reproducing past methodologies to guarantee consistent findings and reduce errors in data collection. This study will implement measures to fortify reliability by maintaining consistency across the data collection process. Strict adherence to standardized procedures during interviews, transcription, and data analysis will be upheld, complemented by involvement from multiple coders who conducted inter-coder

reliability checks. Regular team meetings will be instrumental in resolving discrepancies, minimizing potential errors or biases, and bolstering the findings' reliability.

Validity

Validity, as delineated by Saunders et al. (2019), relies on exact measurement, precise analysis, and the potential applicability of the findings. The study's structured interview protocol will target specific aspects related to leadership strategies affecting employee and patient satisfaction. Member checking will empower participants to validate their statements, aligning interpretations with intended meanings. Triangulation, incorporating various data sources like interviews, organizational documents, and literature, will validate and reinforce findings, will elevate the overall validity of the collected data. These combined efforts aim to strengthen reliability and validity, ultimately contributing to the robustness and trustworthiness of the study's outcomes.

Transition and Summary

In this study I outline various crucial components, including the study's purpose, the researcher's role, the chosen research method, and the design. I discussed the considerations related to population sampling, ethical implications, the devised data collection plan, methods for data organization, analysis techniques, and reliability and validity assessments.

Section 4 comprises an in-depth discussion of findings addressing the overarching research query. It entails the presentation of data collected, analysis outcomes, theme identification, relevance to professional practice, potential impacts on societal change,

suggestions for future research endeavors, personal reflections on the doctoral process, and a comprehensive conclusion.

Section 4: Findings and Conclusions

Presentation of the Findings

Healthcare systems are experiencing a rapid evolution, prioritizing the development of more cost-effective and efficient models to improve patient outcomes (Aldhamadi et al., 2024). However, the persistent challenges of high staff turnover and subpar institutional performance significantly impede these advancements, ultimately diminishing the overall effectiveness of healthcare delivery (Banks et al., 2021). This qualitative pragmatic inquiry, grounded in transformational, transactional, and servant leadership theories, sought to explore the strategies employed by healthcare administrators to improve employee retention. The central research question guiding this study was, "What healthcare administrator leadership strategies are used to increase employee satisfaction and performance for reducing related turnover costs?"

The study's findings, which provide a comprehensive understanding of leadership strategies, are highly relevant. They revealed four main themes: communication, employee engagement, ethics, and key performance indicators (KPIs). This section delves into these elements through interview excerpts, offering a comprehensive understanding of leadership strategies and their impact on operational revenue. By connecting these elements within the conceptual framework, the analysis highlights various aspects of leadership strategies and operational revenue, including the behaviors of effective leaders and the critical factors influencing organizational revenue.

To protect the identities of the six research participants, I coded participants as P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, and P6.

Theme 1: Communication

This theme encapsulates a fundamental dimension of leadership essential for the effective implementation of strategies by healthcare administrators. Contributions from six participants, comprising 45 references within the study's database of codes, underscored its significance (see Table 1). Three subthemes—consistency, clarity, and conflict resolution—were identified as integral components supporting this theme. Communication emerged as a critical element for fostering effective teamwork, necessitating senior leaders to enhance their communication competencies perpetually (Ilgen et al., 2005; Mazetti & Schafeli, 2022).

Table 1

Communication Subthemes

Stub heading	# of Sources	Frequency
Conflict Resolution	6	20
Clarity	4	13
Consistency	4	12

The findings from various interviews underscore the significance of three subthemes—consistency, clarity, and conflict resolution—in developing communication skills to enhance leadership strategies in healthcare administration. Communication is a pivotal success factor that is frequently underestimated and overlooked during the implementation of solutions (Montano, 2023). All six participants emphasized that

effective communication is one of the most crucial strategies for becoming a successful leader. P2 mentioned, "Communication involves more than just speaking; it requires genuinely listening to the other person. It's important not to listen merely to respond but to receive both subjective and objective information fully. This approach ensures a deeper understanding and more effective dialogue."

On 20 separate occasions, all six participants emphasized that a critical aspect of effective communication as a leader is the ability to manage and resolve conflicts adeptly. P3 stated, "Addressing conflict is never easy, but as a leader, it's essential for ensuring effective communication. Tackling issues head-on helps maintain clarity, resolve misunderstandings, and foster a productive environment." P4 shared, "Active listening is crucial for conflict resolution. Demonstrating that you are genuinely listening and retaining the information helps maintain calm and shows respect for the other person's perspective. This approach fosters a more constructive dialogue and can de-escalate tensions."

Conversely, one participant perceived conflict resolution as a challenge and a valuable learning opportunity. P5 stated, "I see conflict as an opportunity for growth and development in my leadership skills. Each experience allows me to learn and refine my approach, ultimately enhancing my leadership abilities. Once I've absorbed the lessons from these situations, I can share these insights with my team to help them handle conflicts more effectively."

Clear and consistent communication emerged as pivotal themes, with both being referenced almost equivalently by the participants. These qualities were underscored not

merely as crucial for effective conflict resolution but also as essential strategies for achieving exemplary leadership. P6 stated, “You have to be clear and consistent when communicating to your employees. Clarity extends beyond delivering a message without confusion; it also encompasses your body language. When conveying information to an employee, ensure that your non-verbal communication is clear and aligned with your message. This helps reinforce the message and avoids any potential misunderstandings.”

Theme 2: Employee Engagement

A fundamental responsibility of leaders is to develop and optimize team resources, which serve to both inspire and enable team members to achieve peak performance (Mazetti & Schafeli, 2022). The second theme represents an aspect of a leadership to promote employee retention. This theme consists of input from six participants with 45 references to the database of study codes sharing how leaders participate in employee engagement to promote effective leadership (see Table 2). Four subthemes supported this theme: building relationships, building autonomy, recognition, and empowerment.

Table 2

Employee Engagement Subthemes

Stub heading	# of Sources	Frequency
Build Relationships	3	12
Build Autonomy	4	9
Recognition	4	15
Empowerment	3	9

Leaders who demonstrate respect and fairness towards subordinates, and who are attuned to their followers' values, cultivate deeper trust by consistently aligning their values, intentions, and actions with predictability and integrity (Banks et al., 2021; Yang & Yin, 2023). The interview findings promote effective leadership strategies by building relationships to promote employee engagement. P1 stated, "I need to build relationships with both employees and the community to meet its needs. When hospital employees witness my efforts to connect with and support the community, it enhances the relationship between employees and patients." P2 stated, "I engage in meaningful conversations to understand the needs of both individuals and their departments." Building Autonomy was identified an essential aspect that promotes engagement with your employees. Active participation in decision-making enables team members to shape work environments that are more strategically aligned with their needs, thereby enhancing overall effectiveness and productivity (Mazetti & Schafeli, 2022). P3 stated, "I conduct daily employee rounding, engaging directly with all departments. Each week, I also have one-on-one check-ins with one or two employees, discussing their department and the organization. I look to them for advice on how to improve things. You can learn a lot from your front line employees."

Empowerment is a critical aspect of building effective leadership strategies. Empowerment is not only meant for employees, but leaders as well. Team resources—including performance feedback, trust in management, communication among team members, and involvement in decision-making—collectively foster a supportive team climate that is highly conducive to employee growth and development (Rahmadani et al.,

2020; Mazetti & Schafeli, 2022; Yang & Yin, 2023). P4 stated, ““I empower my leaders by supporting their professional development, which encourages them to do the same for their employees. I advocate for the principles in 'The 85% Solution,' a book that I live by and encourage my leaders to follow. Galindo (2009) states, 'the higher the percentage of ownership you believe you have when you begin your day, a project, or your job, the more success day you'll have.'” One participant highlighted empowerment to make leaders promote better leadership strategies. P6 stated, "I allow my leaders to lead in the way they believe is best, observing from a distance and developing performance tools based on my observations. For instance, if I notice a leader micromanaging, I guide them toward trusting their employees more and showing that their team can make decisions independently."

Employee recognition is essential for promoting effective employee engagement. P2 stated, “Everyone wants their hard work to be recognized, even those who prefer to stay out of the spotlight. A simple verbal "Thank You" can go a long way in boosting morale, fostering a positive work environment, and reinforcing a culture of appreciation and respect. Such acknowledgments can significantly enhance employee motivation, loyalty, and overall job satisfaction.

P1 shared, “One of the worst things a leader can do is overlook their team's success. Even when employees are fulfilling their daily duties, they deserve recognition. A personalized thank you makes them feel valued and demonstrates that you appreciate their hard work. Personally, I make it a point to send handwritten thank you cards to my employees' homes, adding a personal touch that reinforces their importance to the team.”

Theme 3: Ethics

This theme encapsulates ethical leadership behavior, crucial in cultivating effective leadership strategies to enhance employee engagement. It incorporates insights from six participants and 33 references from the study's coding database, illustrating how managers effectively develop leadership strategies (see Table 3). The ethical dimension of leadership is underpinned by four critical subthemes: respect, accountability, collaboration, and transparency. These elements collectively contribute to a framework where ethical practices are encouraged and systematically integrated into the core of leadership functions.

Table 3

Ethics Subthemes

Sub heading	# of Sources	Frequency
Respect	4	10
Accountability	4	8
Collaboration	3	7
Transparency	4	8

The findings highlight several crucial qualities of instilling ethical behavior into leadership strategies. Leaders instill honesty by sending ethical signals to employees, colleagues, and clients, should be mindful of their own and others' moral identities, as trust is fundamentally defined by the willingness to be vulnerable to another's actions (Banks et al., 2021; Yang & Lin, 2023).

Four participants pinpointed respect as the primary factor contributing to ethical behavior in leadership. P2 stated, "Respect is closely tied to communication skills. To genuinely respect your employees, you must listen and understand their needs and expectations. Effective communication demonstrates that you truly value and respect them." The substance of communication between the leader and the employee is intricately tailored to align with the specific objectives and goals being pursued, reflecting a nuanced and strategic approaches (Passarelli, 2023).

Four participants in the study emphasized that accountability is essential for fostering effective leadership strategies and enhancing employee satisfaction. Demonstrating accountability to oneself and fellow leaders significantly influences the efficacy of leadership strategies. The interplay between dynamic leadership and the fulfillment of basic needs hinges on providing job resources, which, when adequately met, result in increased work engagement (Rahmadani et al., 2020; Mazetti & Schafeli, 2022). P2 stated, "Observe your leaders and their leadership styles and offer honest feedback. While it may not always be easy, this feedback can help them recognize and address their shortcomings." P1 stated, "I set clear goals and expectations with my employees from the beginning. This clarity ensures they understand what is required of them and allows me to trust that they will strive to meet these objectives to the best of their ability.

Three participants highlighted collaboration as a critical leadership quality that enhances strategic approaches and boosts employee satisfaction. Collaboration transcends focusing solely on organizational leaders by actively engaging all members and

incorporating their perspectives to foster inclusivity and drive collective success. A fundamental duty of leadership involves strategically cultivating robust team resources, which serve to inspire and empower team members, thereby fostering an environment that enhances both individual and collective performance (Mazetti & Schafeli, 2022; Yang & Yin, 2023). By investing in comprehensive support systems, leaders can significantly boost productivity, drive engagement, and facilitate a culture of perpetual advancement and accomplishment within the team (Mazetti & Schafeli, 2022; Yang & Yin, 2023). P4 states, "Fostering teamwork is essential in our facility. Eliminate micromanagement and focus on collaboration. A memorable quote from The 85% Solution captures this perfectly: 'If we succeed, we can all be proud. If we fail, we can learn and keep moving forward as a team (Galindo, 2009).' This mindset should be embodied by all our leaders to inspire and influence the entire team." (p.38) P6 stated, "In my hospital, I delegate responsibilities to individual departments, demonstrating that even as a leader, I rely on others' expertise. This approach shows employees that I trust their abilities and value their contributions, fostering a sense of pride and empowerment. By reinforcing my confidence in their capabilities, I encourage them to take ownership and excel in their roles."

Four participants identified transparency as a key factor that contributes to ethical leadership behavior and helps to promote employee engagement. P2 stated, "Don't hesitate to show your employees that you're human too. Acknowledge and own your own mistakes." P5 stated, "Show your employees that their opinions matter by keeping them informed about organizational updates and ensuring they feel involved in the process." P6

stated, "Establish clear goals and communicate your expectations to your staff from the outset."

Theme 4: Monitor Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Monitoring Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) is a critical strategy leaders can employ to evaluate their leadership effectiveness and manage organizational revenue. This approach was highlighted by all six participants in the study, with 32 references in the study's code database demonstrating how leaders develop effective strategies to control organizational revenue (see Table 4). The overarching theme of Monitoring KPIs is supported by four subthemes: monitoring retention rate, which provides insights into the stability and satisfaction within the organization; monitoring turnover rate, which helps identify underlying issues causing employees to leave and offers opportunities for improvement; monitoring cost per hire, which allows for more efficient budget management and cost control; and monitoring employee surveys, which can reveal areas needing attention and help improve overall workplace culture and performance. By leveraging KPIs, healthcare managers can foster discussions on potential improvements across various pathways, seek advice from their peers, identify gaps in existing processes, and address financial issues stemming from operational plans. KPIs serve as a strategic framework, enabling leaders to make informed, data-driven decisions that enhance organizational performance and optimize revenue management (Khan et al., 2023).

Table 4

KPI Subthemes

Subheading	# of	Frequency
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	Sources	
Retention Rate	6	10
Turnover Rate	6	10
Cost per Hire	5	9
Employee Surveys	3	3

Retention and turnover rates are critical indicators of facility employee satisfaction. Retention and turnover rates are pivotal metrics that gauge employee satisfaction within an organization (Khan et al., 2023). Participant 3 emphasized the importance of this practice, stating, "All leaders should closely monitor their KPIs, particularly retention and turnover rates. These percentages reflect directly on leadership effectiveness and impact the overall success of the team." According to Khan et al. (2023), KPIs are defined as "progress indicators" that guide leaders in their pursuit of excellence.

One participant eloquently integrated the concepts of retention rate, turnover rate, and cost per hire into a cohesive response, highlighting their interrelated impact on organizational effectiveness and resource management. P6 stated, "Monitoring retention and turnover rates is crucial. I believe in being transparent with my leaders about the true costs of replacing an employee. For instance, hiring someone with a \$35k annual salary can actually cost closer to \$60k when you factor in benefits and other expenses. Many people overlook that benefits are a significant part of the total compensation package. Understanding these costs underscores why increasing salaries might not be a viable solution and highlights the importance of effective retention strategies."

Three participants identified employee surveys as a critical tool for reviewing leadership strategies and promoting employee satisfaction. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) present a rigorously quantifiable evaluation framework delineated by healthcare

leadership to organize and assess diverse ongoing hospital-based processes systematically. This structured approach aims to enhance patient and stakeholder outcomes, ensuring continuous improvement and accountability within the healthcare system (Khan et al., 2023). Conducting yearly or even quarterly surveys can provide valuable insights for leaders. Additionally, exit surveys tend to elicit more candid responses from employees, as they are less concerned about potential retribution. P5 stated, "I prefer to review employee surveys annually because they are anonymous, encouraging more honest and open feedback. Additionally, analyzing exit surveys from departing employees provides valuable insights into potential areas for improvement."

Business Contributions and Recommendations for Professional Practice

The findings of this study reveal profound implications for leadership strategies within the realm of healthcare administration, particularly by elucidating the effective strategies healthcare administrators deploy to enhance employee satisfaction and performance, thereby mitigating turnover costs.

The study underscores the critical role of communication in leadership effectiveness. Focused attention on consistency, clarity, and conflict resolution has significantly bolstered employee satisfaction. Leaders must acknowledge the profound impact of adept communication skills on the organization's financial health.

Employee engagement is crucial for enhancing employee satisfaction and performance and reducing turnover costs. Tactics such as fostering relationships, granting autonomy, recognizing and rewarding employees, and empowering leaders and

healthcare staff are instrumental. Practical communication skills are also vital in creating a positive employee engagement environment.

Ethical leadership behavior is a cornerstone of successful leadership, with critical facets of respect, accountability, collaboration, and transparency. Implementing strategies that embed these ethical practices within leadership behavior can cascade these values throughout the organization, enhancing management practices' ethical climate and effectiveness.

A critical component in applying these strategies involves monitoring Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Metrics such as retention and turnover rates, along with employee surveys, provide leaders with crucial insights into the effectiveness of their strategies. Transparency about costs associated with hiring and the direct correlation between strategic leadership practices and the organization's revenue further emphasizes the tangible benefits of these approaches.

To maximize the impact of these findings, healthcare administrators should consider the specific needs of their domains. Leadership development initiatives such as courses, workshops, and conferences can be foundational tools to foster effective leadership strategies. Additionally, regular leadership meetings, engagement with scholarly articles, and exploration of authoritative books on leadership are critical for refining leadership approaches and shaping competent leaders.

Here are concrete recommendations for healthcare administrators aimed at reinforcing leadership capabilities and enhancing organizational outcomes:

Invest in comprehensive leadership training programs. Such programs should educate and deepen understanding of effective leadership strategies, equipping leaders with the skills needed to navigate complex healthcare environments.

Develop a dedicated leadership training camp. This intensive training environment should focus on ingraining robust leadership strategies that retain employees and positively impact organizational revenue.

Empower leaders to cultivate autonomy among staff. Encouraging leaders to delegate and trust their teams cultivates a sense of ownership and responsibility, which are crucial for driving initiative and innovation.

Promote continuous education on diverse leadership styles. Understanding various leadership styles and their strategic applications can significantly improve the adaptability and effectiveness of healthcare leaders.

Implement targeted training on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Training should emphasize how leaders can effectively utilize KPIs to continually assess and refine their leadership practices.

By adopting these strategies, healthcare organizations can cultivate an environment that supports leader development and drives enduring enhancements in employee satisfaction and overall organizational performance. This comprehensive approach to leadership in healthcare administration addresses immediate operational challenges and lays the groundwork for ongoing organizational success and ethical leadership.

Implications for Social Change

The study highlights practical ways to enhance effective leadership strategies. Contextual factors significantly influence leadership capabilities, improving their role in mediating the relationship between team effectiveness and social integration (Martin et al., 2022). This contributes to a unified environment that supports operational success and diversity (Martin et al., 2022). These strategies directly impact employee satisfaction and performance, which are crucial for the organization's revenue. The research has uncovered potential areas for improvement in leadership strategies, such as communication skills, employee engagement, ethical leadership behavior, and education on monitoring Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These enhancements can benefit leaders, employees, and the community.

These insights improve human and social conditions by strengthening the foundations upon which economic activities, livelihoods, and social well-being depend. By enhancing the resilience and effectiveness of leadership strategies, the research supports positive changes in promoting employee satisfaction and performance grounded in the effective leadership strategies of healthcare administrators.

Recommendations for Further Research

Future research initiatives to enhance healthcare administrators' leadership strategies could focus on several key areas. One significant aspect is enhancing leaders' communication skills. This can involve investigating methods such as practical training workshops, role-playing scenarios, and the use of digital tools that facilitate clearer and more effective communication within healthcare teams.

Assessment of the effectiveness of learning management systems (LMSs), such as LinkedIn Learning, and Performance Management Software, such as Workday. Studies could explore how continuous education and targeted training on leadership strategies and goal setting are essential for leadership development. Understanding the specific attributes of these platforms that contribute to successful leadership training could guide more targeted implementations.

Another promising area of research is the integration of digital platforms and artificial intelligence to enhance communication between leaders and their teams. This could include AI-driven analytics to personalize communication strategies or platforms that streamline decision-making processes.

Finally, examining how organizational culture and sustainability practices influence leadership strategies could provide deeper insights into methods for reducing turnover costs in healthcare organizations. This research could investigate how embedding sustainability into core leadership practices aligns team members more closely with organizational goals, potentially leading to higher retention rates. These combined research areas could significantly contribute to developing more effective and sustainable leadership strategies within healthcare settings, ultimately enhancing organizational performance and employee satisfaction.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research paper examined healthcare administrators' leadership strategies to enhance employee satisfaction and performance to mitigate turnover costs. The focal areas of this study included communication, employee engagement, ethical

leadership behavior, and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Through interviews with healthcare administrators, several recurring themes emerged that underscore effective leadership practices.

Communication pinpoints a significant challenge within leadership strategies. It was highlighted that leaders need to maintain consistency and clarity, especially in conflict resolution scenarios. A particular emphasis was placed on conflict resolution, suggesting that clear and consistent communication is vital for resolving disputes as they arise.

Employee engagement also emerged as a critical component of leadership strategies. Techniques for building relationships with employees and promoting autonomy, recognition, and empowerment were identified as key to fostering robust employee engagement within an organization.

Ethical leadership behavior was another significant theme, with findings suggesting that ethical leadership is contingent upon effective communication and strong employee engagement skills.

The use of KPIs within leadership strategies was noted for its quantitative approach, setting it apart from other themes.

Overall, the research enriches knowledge on developing effective leadership within healthcare administration by underscoring the critical roles of communication, employee engagement, ethical behavior, and the strategic use of KPIs. These elements collectively enhance employee satisfaction and performance, ultimately impacting turnover costs.

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Appendix A: Email Invitation for Potential Participants

There is a new study about effective healthcare administration strategies that could help healthcare leaders increase employees' satisfaction and reduce related turnover costs. For this study, you are invited to describe your experience as a healthcare administrator in a rural Arkansas hospital.

About the study:

One 30- 60 minute face-to-face interview that will be audio recorded (no video recording)

To protect your privacy, the published study will not share any names or details that identify you

Volunteers must meet these requirements:

Business leader

Healthcare administrator in a rural hospital within Arkansas

The interview is part of the doctoral study for Candace Kelly, a DBA student at Walden University. Interviews will take place during June 8 – June 9.

Please reach out 501-589-5074 or Candace.kelly@waldenu.edu to let the researcher known of your interest. You are welcome to forward it to others who might be interested.

Appendix B: Qualitative Open-Ended Interview Questions

1. Can you describe your role and responsibilities as a healthcare administrator within your organization?
2. In your experience, how do you define and measure employee satisfaction within the healthcare industry?
3. What are the most significant challenges related to employee satisfaction and turnover costs in healthcare administration today?
4. Could you share examples of successful strategies or initiatives that you have implemented to improve employee satisfaction in your organization?
5. How have these strategies positively influenced the overall work environment and patient care quality?
6. Conversely, can you discuss any strategies that did not yield the expected results or encountered challenges? What lessons were learned?
7. How do you balance the needs for employee satisfaction with the fiscal responsibilities of reducing turnover costs within your healthcare organization?
8. Can you describe any innovative approaches or best practices your organization has adopted to address both employee satisfaction and turnover cost reduction simultaneously?

9. What key performance indicators (KPIs) or metrics do you monitor to assess the effectiveness of these strategies?
10. How do you promote a culture of continuous improvement and employee engagement within your healthcare facility?