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Management Strategies to Improve Employee Engagement in the Credit Union Industry

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Abstract

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MBA, University of New Orleans, 2005

BGS, University of New Orleans, 2003

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Employee engagement is the main topic of discussion among researchers and managers for over 24 years. Managing employee engagement is critical to the success of an organization, but 85% of manager's struggle with engaging employees. The purpose of this single case study was to explore employee engagement strategies that credit union managers use to increase productivity and organizational effectiveness. Expectancy theory was used to explore employee engagement, performance, and motivation of people in the workplace. Data were collected using semistructured interviews and observations with 6 credit union managers and company documents using thematic coding. Analysis of the data revealed that, among these credit union managers, effective communication, training and coaching, and rewards and recognition are management strategies required to improve employee engagement, productivity and organizational effectiveness. These findings may provide credit union managers with guidelines to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of engagement strategies to fit the culture of the credit union. The results of this study may provide credit union managers with guidelines on the causes of disengagement and how employee engagement could be improved within the organization. Researchers may consider conducting a multiple case study that include other credit unions within Louisiana to understand the similarities and differences between strategies used to engage employees. The results of this study may impact positive social change by improving the competitive environment of the credit union industry through engagement within community and society.

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Dedication

To my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for giving me the strength to make it to the finish line. I dedicate this study to my family: my mother, Audrey Chavis; stepfather, Norman Chavis; father, Willie Smith, Sr.; stepmother, Terry Smith; sister, Keyokke' Smith-Burns; brother-in-law, Taghi Burns, Sr., brother, Willie Smith, Jr.; sister-in-law, Cherlyn Robinson-Smith, my nieces and nephews, and last but not least, Carlos Durant. Thank you for the love, support, understanding, and reassurance throughout this journey.

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I would like to acknowledge my committee chair, Dr. Gwendolyn Dooley, who encouraged me to push through those tough times. The road was not easy, but with your support, I made it through. Sincere gratitude to my other committee members, Dr. Ronald Black and Dr. Judith Blando for guiding me through each stage of the doctoral study process. To my colleagues, Dr. Gabriel Warren, Dr. Sherman Arthur, Dr. Seon Levius, Patricia Manning, Nydea Morgan, and Tracy Jones for helping me to stay focused and encouraged throughout this journey. To my colleagues in my 9000 class, thank you for feedback and support.

Finally, I want to thank my research partner and study participants. Your willingness to help has allowed me to complete this chapter in my life. I am forever grateful. My hope is that the time you sacrificed will help other managers be as successful as you are.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Background of the Problem

Investing in human capital is critical for credit union managers to maintain a competitive advantage successfully and improve performance (Grigoroudis, Tsitsiridi, & Zopounidis, 2013). A loss of $300 billion in productivity is a direct result of managers struggle to keep staff engaged (Saratun, 2016). Despite the vast numbers of studies on the antecedents and influences of employee engagement and its impact on organizational performance, 85% of managers continue to struggle with maintaining engaged employees (Goel et al., 2013). Managers who adopt strategies that keep employees engaged may find an increase in profitability, performance, and a reduction in turnover. Employees tend to be more productive in workplaces that promote higher levels of employee engagement, which help leaders retain employees (Kataria, Rastogi, & Garg, 2013). While maintaining an engaged workforce is a challenging task, a need exists to develop strategies that managers can use to engage staff, so productivity and organizational effectiveness are increased (Garg, 2014).

Problem Statement

Disengagement in the workplace contributes to a decrease in productivity (Ye & King, 2016). Ninety percent of managers believe employee engagement can increase productivity and organizational effectiveness, but only 25% of managers have strategies implemented to reduce disengagement (Joyner, 2015). With 14% to 30% of employees considered highly engaged, managers are seeking ways to develop effective and efficient employees that will increase profitability (Albrecht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey, & Saks, 2015; Muthuveloo, Basbous, Ping, & Long, 2013). The general business problem was that some credit union managers in the credit union industry are negatively affected by disengagement, which results in a decrease in organizational performance. The specific business problem was that some credit union managers lack employee engagement strategies to increase productivity and organizational effectiveness.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore employee engagement strategies that credit union managers use to increase productivity and organizational effectiveness. The target population consisted of credit union managers from one Louisiana credit union who successfully implemented strategies to improve employee engagement. The findings of this study may contribute to social change by identifying strategies to improve engagement, which could increase performance and profitability in credit unions. Improving employee engagement may increase customer satisfaction, which may improve the sustainability of financial institutions.

Nature of the Study

The research method for this study was qualitative. Qualitative researchers analyze a phenomenon in the context of the participant's life and social environment (Koch, Niesz, McCarthy, 2014). A researcher uses a qualitative method to explore the depth of the phenomenon (Barnham, 2015). Quantitative research was not useful because the focus of this study was not to examine relationships or correlations between variables (Hoare & Hoe, 2013). Venkatesh, Brown, and Bala (2013) believed a mixed method approach is beneficial to researchers because of the complexity to answer exploratory and confirmatory research questions, which can produce conclusions that have a higher value than a single method, could accomplish. Because of the time constraints of this method, mixed methods were not appropriate for this study. The method selected was qualitative because the opportunity for expanded dialogue will reveal a deeper understanding of the business problem.

The design for this study was a case study design. Researchers using a case study design can focus on why a problem exists instead of the experiences of the participants (Yin, 2014). Researchers using a phenomenological design seek to explore phenomenon by understanding the participant's experience in the situation in question (Koopman, 2015). Although researchers can capture the meaning of an individual's experience using phenomenological research, this design was not appropriate because the purpose of the study was to understand strategies, not the experience of the participants (Tomkins & Eatough, 2013). Ethnographic research involves observation of actions that occur within a selected community to gain insight into a phenomenon (Reeves, Peller, Goldman, & Kitto, 2013). An ethnographic design was not appropriate for this study because researchers are restricted to a particular group (Vesa & Vaara, 2014). Because of the limitations of phenomenological and ethnographic research, a single case study was deemed most appropriate for this study.

Research Question

The objective of the study was to address the following question: What employee engagement strategies do credit union managers use to increase productivity and organizational effectiveness?

Interview Questions

1. How is employee engagement determined?
2. What are the strategies used to engage employees to increase productivity and organizational effectiveness?
3. What circumstances caused you to develop strategies to engage employees?
4. What influence do the strategies have on productivity levels, income goals, and sustainability?
5. What were noticeable barriers during the implementation of the engagement strategies?
6. Describe any implications for disengaged employees.
7. What other information could you share concerning engagement and disengagement in the credit union industry?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework was the expectancy theory developed by Vroom (1964) and later expanded by Porter and Lawler (1968). In the development of the expectancy theory, the researchers explored ways to improve employee engagement, performance, and motivation of people in the workplace. Vroom suggested that employee performance depends on individuals making decisions based on motivational factors (Nimri, Bdair, & Bitar, 2015). According to the expectancy theory, individuals determine motivation by three factors: (a) expectancy, belief that efforts lead to desired results, (b) instrumentality, the behavior will lead to rewards, and (c) valence, the outcome is valuable (Purvis, Zagenczyk, & McCray, 2015). Vroom explained that efforts lead to positive performance, rewards from those efforts link directly to the level of performance, and the value of rewards motivates individuals to perform (Nasri & Charfeddine, 2012). Porter and Lawler expanded the expectancy theory by adding role perceptions, the activities that employees would need to engage in to successfully perform a job (Vroom, 1964). The expectancy theory has associations with employee engagement because motivation stimulates engaged employees to exert efforts on increasing performance to meet organizational goals (Kataria et al., 2013). The expectancy theory is best to explore the strategies credit union managers use to increase employee engagement that lead to higher levels of organizational performance.

Operational Definitions

Employee engagement. Employee engagement is a positive state of mind employees have toward an organization (Kahn, 1990).

Expectancy theory. Vroom (1964) suggested that individuals are motivated to behave in ways that produce desirable results.

Extrinsic motivation: Extrinsic motivation refers to an individual's drive to *complete an* activity to attain a specific outcome or reward (Vroom, 1964).

Intrinsic motivation: Intrinsic motivation refers to an individual's drive to complete a task for satisfaction of completing the task instead of pressure to complete task (Vroom, 1964).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are facts within a study that a researcher accepts as true, without verification (Denscombe, 2013). The main assumption was that participants would provide honest and unbiased feedback on the topic. I assumed that participants would have the required experience and knowledge about strategies to improve employee engagement. The credit union managers had the required experience and knowledge about strategies to improve employee engagement. I assumed that the interview questions are relevant to the study and participants can answer the questions based on their experiences. The interview questions were relevant to the experience of each credit union manager interviewed. Another assumption was that improving employee engagement increases organizational performance.

Limitations

Limitations include potential weaknesses that could affect the study but are useful in eliminating weaknesses in future research (Connelly, 2013). The primary limitation of the study was the sample size. Participants were limited to credit union managers and supervisors, but no perceptions of any other employee at the financial institution were explored. The sample did not include leaders in other industries. The geographical regions posed a limitation because the results may not be relevant to another credit union within other geographical areas.

Delimitations

Delimitations are the boundaries of the study that a researcher chooses to limit (Denscombe, 2013). In this study, I focused on the strategies credit union managers in the credit union industry use to engage employees, but may not necessarily apply to employees in other industries. The population for the study was limited to managers from one financial institution in Louisiana. I also only focused on the manager's perception of strategies believed to be successful in engaging employees.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

Managers value the findings of the study because employee engagement is critical to the sustainability of the organization (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014). Managers may find the strategies mentioned useful in increasing performance standards such as profit and productivity if implemented within the organization (Sarti, 2014). Engaged employees are an asset to organizations, and disengaged employees can hinder growth; therefore, a need exists to develop strategies to engage staff, so productivity and organizational effectiveness can increase (Keeble-Ramsay & Armitage, 2014). The results of this study may contribute to business practices because managers may be equipped with strategies to increase engagement within the organization.

Business practices may improve because expanding managers' knowledge of engagement strategies will help managers keep staff engaged and increase productivity. Gaining an understanding of how other managers, in the same industry, maintain staff engagement can help other managers increase organizational performance by reducing and eliminating the number of disengaged employees. As managers gain an understanding of different engagement strategies, reevaluating the importance of developing an engaged staff and implementing practical strategies for the organization that will fit the need of the organization will become a priority. The results of this study may improve business practices because managers may gain insight and additional tools on how to motivate their employees and create an engaged workforce.

Implications for Social Change

The results of this study may contribute to social change by developing individuals to engage in the workplace, but could also translate into engagement within communities and society. As engagement within the organization increases, employees may become dedicated and committed to helping improve the profitability and competitive advantage of the organization. Engaged employees can reach new customers and could influence communities by offering financial literacy support to schools, churches, and other organizations.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies managers use to improve engagement among employees needed to increase productivity and organizational effectiveness. The literature review is the process of summarizing the history, theory, phenomenon, and gaps in existing studies (Baker, 2016). This review of literature focuses on theories related to motivation and engagement, key areas of engagement such as antecedents and outcomes of employee engagement, disengagement, and strategies to improve engagement.

The purpose of the literature review was to draw from peer-reviewed literature that relates to the research topic. Several databases, including but not limited to ABI/INFORM Complete, Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost, Emerald Management, ProQuest Central, Google Scholar, Science Direct, and Taylor and Francis Online were helpful in locating peer-reviewed articles to develop the literature review. The search keywords included *engagement, Vroom's expectancy theory, work engagement, job satisfaction, motivation, leadership, retention, turnover, qualitative research methods,* and *quantitative research methods.* The 140 works of in the literature review included 139 peer-reviewed articles (99%) and one seminal book (1%).

Expectancy Theory

Motivation may lead employees to perform at a level satisfactory to managers' expectations. According to Vroom (1964), individuals are motivated to behave in ways that produce desirable results. The amount of effort exerted to achieve outcomes depends on the value of the outcome (Ernst, 2014). Sucium, Mortan, and Lazăr (2013) suggested that if managers seek specific performance results, the focus should be on the motivational factors that employees find valuable. To exceed expectations, managers must determine what motivate employees.

The expectancy theory is made up of three variables. Vroom (1964) identified the three motivational factors as expectancy, instrumentality, and valence. First, expectancy is an individual's belief that the possible outcomes will determine the amount of effort exerted to achieve the desired level of performance (Ernst, 2014). Second, instrumentality is the expectation that the rewards received would be equivalent to the level of performance (Bhatti, Battour, Sundram, & Othman, 2013). Third, valence is the degree to which individuals value the reward (Purvis et al., 2015). Nimri, Bdair, and Bitar (2015) concluded that when there is a mixture of expectancy, instrumentality, and valence, employee behavior represents an increase of motivation levels, but if any of these factors are low, then motivation to perform decreases. Therefore, managers should focus on implementing all three factors of the expectancy theory when developing strategies to motivate and engage employees.

Expectancy is an employee exerting effort when certain performance levels are attainable (Nimri et al., 2015). Nimri et al. (2015) identified self-efficacy, goal difficulty, and perceived control as determinates of the level of expectancy. Self-efficacy is the perceived ability to perform a task and meet demands (Malik, Butt, & Choi, 2015). Self-efficacy is a predictive behavior and shows that employees will complete task when motivated (Williams & Rhodes, 2016). Lee, Keil, Wong (2015) argued that some employees confidence deflate when difficult goals are not achieved, but assigning difficult goals is sometimes a strategy manager use to strengthen employee's beliefs that with more effort, difficult goals could be attained. Lee et al. concluded that there are positive effects of goal difficulty on expectancy, but warned managers that if not monitored, employee's beliefs that goals are attainable may diminish. Elst, Broeck, Cuyper, and Witte (2014) proposed that perceived control is the belief that an employee has control over and takes ownership of behaviors and surroundings to bring about desired outcomes. Elst et al. (2014) explained when employees have control over their work environment, toleration levels of internal and external work demand increase.

Managers who expect employees to meet performance standards must ensure performance expectations are attainable.

Roberts, Hughes, and Kertbo (2014) identified instrumentality as the perception that positive behaviors result in desired rewards. Nimri et al. (2015) explained that instrumentality exists when there is trust, control, and policy in place. When employees trust managers and the decisions made within the organization and have clear instructions on how to obtain the rewards linked to increased performance, workflow and performance levels increase (Bhatti et al., 2013). Managers should build trust among employees to ensure employees have the necessary resources in place to achieve goals and rewards.

Valence is the valuation of goals and outcomes (Ghoddousi, Bahrami, Chileshe, & Hosseini, 2014). When outcomes are attractive, employees are motivated to achieve goals (Hsu, Shinnar, & Powell, 2014). Ibrahim and Saheem (2013) contended that managers should identify outcomes with high valence to increase motivation among staff. Therefore, managers should discover what employee’s value to increase valence and engagement.

Researchers have validated the use of the expectancy theory to explain employee motivation, engagement, and performance. Vroom’s expectancy theory helps explains how individuals make decisions to achieve the level of performance desired (Vroom, 1964). Purvis et al. (2015) suggested that when managers understand what influences individual behaviors, environments that foster motivation and engagement increase. Conversely, when individuals understand the expectations of the organization, the choice to exert efforts to meet and exceed performance standards increases (Bembenutty, 2012). Therefore, managers should access employee behaviors and determine what organizational changes are necessary to maintain high levels of motivation and engagement.

Employees perform at higher levels when leaders motivate employees to succeed. Organizational performance is optimized when leaders provide work environments that foster motivation (Nasri & Charfeddine, 2012). Nasri and Charfeddine (2012) used the expectancy theory as a framework to understand what motivated a sales force to engage in marketing intelligence activities. Nasri and Charfeddine (2012) stated that the results confirmed that managers should create an environment that fosters realistic and clear performance goals, positive performance outcomes, and valuable outcomes. Managers might have to examine work environments to determine if employees are motivated then devise a plan that align with the vision of the organization to ensure engagement and productivity increase.

Intrinsic and extrinsic motivators are crucial factors when attempting to increase engagement and performance. Karatepe (2013) found that a reward system encouraged employees to have higher levels of engagement and performance. Extrinsic incentives and intrinsic motivation must jointly exist to achieve the level of performance desired (Sigaard & Skov, 2015). Cerasoli, Nicklin, and Ford (2014) suggested that although extrinsic incentives help in increasing performance, managers should help staff find tasks that intrinsically motivate. Intrinsic motivation occurs because the enjoyment of performing the task is valuable. Cerasoli et al. found that as extrinsic incentives increase, counterproductive behaviors are more likely to exist because incentives overshadow the focus on performance instead of intrinsic motivators. The benefits of implementing intrinsic and extrinsic motivators in the workplace may increase engagement and motivation. Managers who use the expectancy theory to increase motivation and engagement may have success in increasing productivity and organizational effectiveness.

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is an important topic for managers because of its influence on organizational commitment, effectiveness, and competitiveness. The loss of $300 billion in productivity in the United States from a disengaged workforce has caused managers to focus attention on what can increase engagement so that organizational performance could increase (Mahajan & Sharma, 2015). Managers realize that employees are the greatest asset of organizations and are important to maintain a competitive advantage and increase profitability (Albdour & Altarawneh, 2014). Therefore, managers should strategize ways to enhance engagement and commitment.

Employee engagement improves the bottom line within organizations. Engaged employees help increase profitability by contributing more to the organization, accessing available resources, and referring more products and services to current and potential customers that promote customer loyalty (Andrew & Sofian, 2012). Productivity and profits increase as managers equip engaged employees with tools to perform the task at required levels (Heymann, 2015). As engagement increase, managers should continue to evaluate the resources provided to employees to determine whether changes need to be made to maintain high levels of engagement.

Job turnover might be a factor that increases disengagement within the workplace. In August 2013, 2.36 million people quit jobs for better positions; therefore, retaining top talent is a challenge that organizational leaders face (Houlihan & Harvey, 2014). Because employee turnover drains profits, managers primary focus should be on employee engagement to retain talent and reduce turnover rates. While supervisors should focus on employee engagement, Houlihan and Harvey (2014) posited that employees should not be forced or bribed into engagement, but should be a natural process that is a part of the organization's culture. Managers who maintain engagement may decrease the numbers of employees who seek other employment.

Branding the organization attracts candidates who fit the mission of the organization, which will help increase the bottom line (Dabirian, Kietzmann, & Diba, 2017). Houlihan and Harvey (2014) suggested that managers hire staff who want purpose, fulfillment, and advancement within the company builds engagement within the organization. Roy (2013) posited that engagement begins in the recruitment process before decisions are made to consider a candidate for employment. Employer branding is an important driver of employee engagement that human resource managers should focus on during the entire hiring process (Roy, 2013). Engaging employees is about leaders connecting employees to the values of the organization, inspiring staff to achieve goals of the organization, and treating the employees as valued members of the team (Houlihan & Harvey, 2014). Managers may reach potential and existing employees by aligning the brand of the organization with actual experiences within the organization. Therefore, managers should implement strategies that focus on valuing and motivating employees to ensure branding is an effective strategy.

Effective communication has a positive effect on engagement and performance. A key concern for managers is adversely affecting employees work performance because of poor communication between managers and employees (Bradley & Campbell, 2016). Bradley and Campbell (2016) suggested that managers focus on developing communication strategies that will ensure employees do not feel resentment, bullied, or harassed. Bradley and Campbell recommended managers give employees a voice, be empathetic, and solution oriented for communication to be effective.

Definitions of Engagement

Employee engagement has been a main topic of discussion among researchers and managers for over 24 years; however, because of the overlapping with other conceptual constructs such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment, a formal consensus definition has been hard to formulate (Saks & Gruman, 2014). Researchers have a difference of opinion in the name of the construct with examples such as employee engagement, job engagement, and work engagement (Saks & Gruman, 2014). Although engagement has been defined and measured differently, managers understand that engagement might be a cause of increases or decreases in productivity and organizational effectiveness. Because engagement has diverse meanings, managers might have to examine what causes engagement and disengagement within the organization and apply the appropriate meaning of engagement to each situation.

Employee engagement is defined many ways. Bedarkar and Pandita (2014) defined employee engagement as a positive attitude or state of mind of employees toward organizations. Swarnalatha and Prasanna (2013) suggested that managers who help staff develop and grow within the organization increase the chance of employees participating to attain organizational goals. Saks and Gruman (2014) recognized Kahn’s definition that people engage when every part of the cognitive, emotional, and physical selves are brought to the workplace, as the most influential definition of employee engagement. Managers who realize that employee engagement is crucial to business success, help mold employees to become engaged, which might lead employees investing time and energy to be successful within the workplace.

Work engagement is another term used for employee engagement. Bakker, Demerouti, and Sanz-Vergel (2014) defined work engagement as a positive, fulfilling, state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and rigor. Barnes and Collier (2013) asserted that work engagement is a distinct construct that consists of vigor, dedication, and absorption and is different from job satisfaction and affective commitment. Barnes and Collier found that in a study of frontline employees that work engagement begins with the relationship with the front-line employee and supervisors, but also increases when employees are in a satisfying environment that leads to experiencing enthusiasm and motivation. Barnes and Collier suggested that employees who are happy in their positions are more productive and can create useful resources for the organization. Work engagement and its effects on employee performance might increase performance if managers take the necessary precautions to ensure that employees have the resources to complete task.

Factors Affecting Engagement

Disengagement. Managers seeking to improve engagement levels should take the time to refine practices that cause disengagement within an organization such as burnout, distrust, and low performance (Goel et al., 2013). Moreland (2013) contended that disengaged employees are usually unhappy in their current job and can have a negative influence on an organization's bottom line. When disengagement exists, employees tend to burn out quickly and leave jobs in hopes of finding something better, which ultimately lead to high turnover (Moreland, 2013). Moreland suggested that burnout exists because of the misalignment between educational background, experience, and other competencies. Therefore, managers should determine if burnout is an issue within the organization and develop and implement strategies to reduce burnout.

Goel et al. (2013) found employees who worked at Honda Siel Car India Ltd. (HSCI) believed disengagement resulted from a lack of focus on employee development, communication channels, low transparency in HR decisions, and lack of pay parity. Goel et al. (2013) suggested managers should enhance job fitness, job resources, leadership, and training to resolve employers concerns of disengagement. Managers who do not implement strategies to increase job resources, training, and leadership might continue to have disengaged employees.

Disengagement may negatively affect customer satisfaction. Some employee engagement studies are in the context of the consequences of disengaged employees, but researchers understand that disengagement has consequences that influence customers as well (Moreland, 2013). Maintaining organizational effectiveness requires managers to determine what resources would ensure that the performance levels of employees increase and disengagement decrease (Menguc, Auh, Fisher, & Haddad, 2013). Disengaged employees might lead to dissatisfied customers and may decrease profitability.

Poor communication may be a barrier to engagement. Rees, Alfes, and Gatenby (2013) emphasized that denied communications between supervisor and employee cause discord and disengagement. A work environment, which promotes a positive and supportive atmosphere, is a major factor that promotes increased levels of employee engagement (Anitha, 2014). This environment allows employees to receive feedback, develop new skills, and encourage employees to voice suggestions to better the work environment.

Burnout. Maslach and Leiter (2008) explained that burnout is on the opposite end of the burnout-engagement continuum and is the loss of physical and emotional ties to the workplace. While engagement consists of vigor, dedication, and absorption, burnout consists of emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy (Al-Kahatani, 2013). Trépanier, Fernet, Austin, Forest, and Vallerand (2014) defined emotional exhaustion as the critical state where employees are physically and emotionally drained because of an excessive workload; cynicism as detaching oneself from others; and inefficacy as an attitude of failure or lack of achievement in one’s work. An engaged employee might become disengaged because of burnout because of the lack of resources to complete task; therefore, managers should reevaluate the cause of burnout within the organization and develop strategies that would decrease burnout and increase engagement.

Burnout can lead to disengagement. Freudenberger (1974) suggested burnout is evident by employees who work in highly demanding and emotional industries. Trépanier et al. (2014) implied that burnout can lead to long-term adverse organizational outcomes such as poor performance, dissatisfaction, reduced organizational commitment, and increased turnover intentions. The consequences of burnout come into play when there is a person job mismatch (Ahola, Hakanen, Perhonimi, & Mutanen, 2014). Social and organization conditions such as work overload, insufficient reward, the absence of fairness, and lack of control, cause job mismatch (Maslach, Leiter, & Jackson, 2012). Because of the negative outcomes of job burnout, managers should look for ways to prevent burnout and keep employees engaged.

Burnout should be monitored to determine what tools are necessary to maintain an engaged staff. Maslach et al. (2012) suggested managers find ways to monitor and manage burnout at on an organizational-wide level or among numerous departments within the organization. The authors identified the main strategy for discouraging burnout was to change the qualities of the work environment to include increased levels of employee engagement. To do this, managers should determine how much to invest in the necessary resources to produce improvement in a positive work environment that will help employees connect with their work.

Job Demands-Resources. Managers should find a balance between job demands and resources to improve engagement. Li, Jiang, Yao, Li (2013) suggested that researchers categorize working environments into two categories that play a part in developing burnout and engagement: job demands and job resources. Cole, Walter, Bedeian, and O'Boyle (2012) proposed that employees experience burn out when there is an insufficient amount of resources to meet or cope with high job demand. Job demands, often considered as the main cause of burnout, usually cause negative organizational outcomes and job resources, the drivers of work engagement, often lead to positive organizational outcomes (Bakker et al., 2014). Managers should determine what job demands are causing burnout and increase the number of resources that staff could use to reduce the stress of certain job demands.

Job demands can reduce engagement. Job demands are the parts of the job that required constant physical, emotional, and cognitive exertion (Li et al., 2013). Employees who experience high demands may be less willing to exert efforts to perform a task which may cause decreases in engagement (Van De Voorde, Van Veldhoven, & Veld, 2016). Holland, Allen, and Cooper (2013) implied that role conflict, workload, and work pressure often causes an employee to burn out and become physically and emotionally exhausted and remove themselves from daily work duties. Providing employees with the resources to overcome job demands might improve engagement.

Managers who find creative ways to reduce the stress of job demands may increase engagement. Bakker et al. (2014) suggested managers use organizational and individual level interventions such as optimizing job demands and fostering personal resources and job crafting, to prevent burnout and foster work engagement. Optimizing demands include matching challenging demands with adequate job resources to reduce the stress of intricate task and implementing fair procedures when assigning a task. The authors recommended managers redesign the work environment and thorough training to help increase job resources. Redesigning the work environment in ways that give employees opportunities to discuss issues and have constructive dialog help develop a positive work environment and foster engagement. Fostering personal resources also include training employee's optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy. These personal strengths can help employees cope with the daily pressures of job demands without having the feeling of burnout.

Supervisor support. Supervisor support might increases the level of engagement. Supervisors play a role in influencing work conditions by providing performance feedback, supportive relationships, career growth opportunities, and resources to improve work conditions (Bakker, Demerouti, & Xanthopoulou, 2012). Anitha (2014) asserted that supervisors are an important factor to increase engagement when employees think that their supervisor is inspiring, communicate well, and consider employees work as significant. Kang, Gatling, and Kim (2015) emphasized that the support of supervisor's influence employee's perception of the organization. Managers should be aware of the levels of support and behaviors shown towards employees to ensure engagement levels increase.

Supervisor support is an antecedent of employee engagement with certain relationship-oriented, and task-oriented leadership behaviors thought as more likely to engage employees. The relationship should consist of accountability that exists on both sides. Millar (2012) posited that organizational leaders could not change an employee's behavior with normal training and coaching practices, but leaders must find a way to transform the thinking of employees, and the way employees are coached and mentored to change behavior effectively. Relationships between managers and employees might influence engagement within the workplace.

Engagement takes place when managers and employees have a mindset to change behaviors, integrity, and commitment to change (Millar, 2012). Accountability is the first step in integrity, which helps participants evolve and align behavior with the values of the organization (Millar, 2012). Accountability allows employees to become re-engaged and allows a renewed thought process of learning and problem-solving. As both parties embrace accountability, engagement will follow (Millar, 2012). Managers who hold employees accountable may experience higher levels of engagement.

Leaders play an important role in engaging employees. Leaders who exhibit inspirational, visionary, decisive and team-oriented behaviors motivate employees (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014). Bedarkar and Pandita believed employees engage when managers communicate the vision of the organization, keep employees aware of organizational changes, and ensure employees understand goals. Supervisors drive employee engagement when they provide employees with a clear vision and resources to meet organizational goals (Garg, 2014). Bedarkar and Pandita (2014) asserted that supervisors that support work-life balance, the flexibility between work and home life, can help employees buy into the vision that can increase employee performance. When employees believe their supervisors support and understand the need for work-life balance, the level of performance increases.

Managing employee engagement is a task that managers should work towards daily. Sparrow (2013) claimed that engaged employee's help organizations maintain a competitive advantage and increase profitability. Employee engagement increases when employees think work is valuable to organizational goals (Garg 2014). Managers who are primary engagers of employees should take on the role of a prophet, storyteller, strategist, coach, and pilot (Sparrow, 2013). A prophet sets the vision of the organization while a storyteller paints the picture of how the vision will take place. Strategist ensures employee goals align with the mission of the organization (Sparrow, 2013). Coaching allows managers to link goals to the capabilities of the employees and pilot engagement, which ensures the environment is conducive to increase engagement between employees and managers (Sparrow, 2013). Managers may not increase employee engagement and organization performance instantaneously, but will be an ongoing process.

As employees are satisfied with work environments or tasks performed the level of engagement might increase. While maintaining an engaged workforce is a challenging task, managers should continue to strive for an engaged staff so productivity and organizational effectiveness could increase (Garg, 2014). Managers who consistently engage employees help the organization maintain a competitive advantage over other organizations.

Outcomes of Engagement

Job Performance. Increasing job performance may help employees reach organizational goals. A strong organizational culture increases employee performance (Awadh & Alyahya, 2013). Achieving job performance requires managers to provide employees with an environment conducive to reaching organizational goals, but also depends on the employee’s ability and motivation levels (Azar & Shafighi, 2013). Bakker, Demerouti, and Xanthopoulou (2012) contended that managers maximize job performance by directing employees to what task are important to achieve organizational goals. To achieve the best performance from employees, managers need to explore the talents of employees (Goel et al., 2013). An engaged workforce and exploring employee talents require managers to have a strong relationship with employees (Goel et al., 2013). Managers who align job performance with the culture of the organization may increase engagement.

Employee engagement may have a positive impact on performance. Anitha (2014) identified determinants of employee engagement and the direct influence employee engagement have on performance. Work environment, leadership, training, and career development are some of the outcomes of employee engagement that positively affects performance. The work environment has a significant bearing on employee engagement (Anitha, 2013). Performance is the results of progress made at work.

Retaining engaged employees with high levels of performance is critical to the success of an organization. Anitha (2014) argued that engaged employees understand the goals of the organization and commit to meet goals successfully. Shantz, Alfes, Truss, Soane (2013) assessed work engagements effect on job performance and found that the way managers design jobs are strongly related to increasing enthusiasm in employees which drives the levels of performance. Job fit is important to keep disengagement low or non-existent. Job fit increase productivity and engagement (Moreland, 2013). Managers who can match employees to positions within the organization that fits skill set, experience, and personality, can increase engagement and bring positive long-term results that will increase the bottom line and performance.

Managers should provide meaningful work experiences to increase engagement. Shuck and Rose (2013) argued that managers should focus on sustaining performance through different work experiences. Engagement and performance are stagnated until manifested by managers provide a meaningful work experience (Shuck & Rose, 2013). Tummers and Knies (2013) contended that managers could sustain performance through work experiences by steering away from ambiguous goals to ensure employees understand the contributions made to the organization is meaningful. Creating an organizational culture that motivates employees to be creative encourages employees to be engaged with maintaining high levels of performance (Mehrzi & Singh, 2016). Managers who provide innovative experiences for employees may see an improvement in performance and productivity.

Job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is a positive emotional state that results in an optimistic attitude toward work and leads to increased job performance (Ouedraogo & Leclerc, 2013). Factors that influence job satisfaction include supervisor and subordinate relationship, compensation, benefits, rewards, training, and opportunity for advancement

(Kumar, Dass, & Topaloglu, 2014). Kumar, Dass, and Topaloglu (2014) argued that low job satisfaction leads to employee turnover. Kumar et al. suggested that while supervisors attempt to use the same strategies to enhance job satisfaction among employees, supervisors should implement several strategies that will reach several groups of employees. Yeh (2013) found that in tourism, the higher levels of engagement, employees are likely to experience higher levels of job satisfaction. Engaged employees are dedicated, deliver high levels of customer service, reach higher productivity goals, and have a decrease in employee turnover (Garg, 2014). While the drivers of employee engagement are important, job satisfaction is an important factor in driving employee engagement.

Satisfied employees may be willing to exert more effort to be successful in the workplace. Job satisfaction can affect the organizational success and is an outcome of employee engagement (Hanaysha & Tahir, 2016). Abraham (2012) suggested as employees are fulfilled and valued within an organization, job satisfaction increases. When employees are happy at work, individual and organizational performance increase (Bakotić, 2016). Empowered employees are typically more satisfied with their jobs (Hanaysha & Tahir, 2016). Managers who find ways to increase job satisfaction may increase engagement.

Employees may be more committed to an organization when satisfied with the work environment. Ineson, Benke, and László (2013) found that there is a significant relationship between job satisfaction and an employee’s commitment to an organization. Ineson et al. suggested that employers ensure the work environment is conducive to opportunities for development, and recognition and rewards for staff achievements. Zopiatis, Constanti, and Theocharous (2014) concluded that managers would face challenges to keep employees satisfied and engaged, but implementing strategies and policies could increase commitment to the organization.

Organizational commitment. Organizational commitment may be a positive outcome of engagement. Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian (1974) defined organizational commitment as the strength that an individual identifies with and participate in meeting goals, maintaining the value and exerting effort for an organization. Faisal and Al-Esmael (2014) contended that employees with high levels of commitment tend to complete expected task and achieve organizational objectives. Committed employees display positive attitudes and behaviors, which show in performance and satisfaction (Marique, Stinglhamber, Desmette, Caesens, & De Zanet, 2012). To improve engagement, managers should ensure that employees are committed to the success of the organization.

There are different types of organizational commitment. Researchers describe affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment as three types of organizational commitment (Imam, Raza, Shah, & Raza, 2013). Affective commitment is an emotional attachment or sense of belonging that an employee feels toward an organization while continuance commitment is an attachment to an organization because of the uncertainty of loss from leaving the organization, and normative commitment that is a form of commitment where the employee feels obligated to remain with an organization. Managers who identify how employees are committed to the organization may be able to determine why employees are engaged or disengaged.

Engagement and performance may increase when employees are affectively committed to an organization. Employees who are affectively committed to an organization are in tune with the values of the organization, which motivate employees to reach goals and improve engagement. Loi, Lai, and Lam (2012) defined affective commitment as the strongest link with employee behavioral outcomes when paralleled with the other types of organizational commitment. Marique, et al. (2012) explained that attitudinal and behavioral outcomes of affective commitment relate to turnover intentions, absenteeism, job satisfaction, and performance. Employees with strong levels of affective commitment participate in behaviors that are beneficial, but also in behaviors not specified by the organization (van Gelderen & Bik, 2016). Managers who communicate goals and train may increase commitment among employees, which may result in an improvement in engagement and performance.

An enhanced emotional and intellectual commitment to an organization, positive emotional mindset, and involvement in completing the job-related task to meet goals are some reasons engaged employee perceives their organizations to be effective (Kataria et al., 2013). As employees perceive organizations to be effective, there is a decrease in turnover rates because employees are dedicated to the work and contribute to the profitability of the organization (Kataria et al., 2013). Managers who seek to improve employee engagement should empower employees to develop within the organization, provide clarity to the work roles, and increase support from management.

Organizational citizenship behavior. Ludwig and Frazier (2012) proposed that human behavior drives all organizational outcomes. Organizational behavior management (OBM) helps managers focus on improving behavior, which in turn help create an environment where employees are engaged (Ludwig & Frazier, 2012). Reinforcement, adequate resources, management behaviors, are factors that Ludwig and Frazier believed managers could improve employee behavior. Andrew and Sofian (2012) found that managers who effectively communicate, develop, and support employees find an increase in job satisfaction, which results in employees who demonstrate behaviors that lead to positive organizational outcomes.

Employees may react positively to managers if the focus is on improving behaviors that lead to higher levels of engagement. Ensuring that employees have the adequate resources to complete the job is necessary for employee engagement to exist within the organization. Ludwig and Frazier argued that managers must have the desire to provide these resources and understand that exhibiting an interest in employees promote engagement. Management behaviors such as goal setting, performance feedback, posted policies, explicit rules, and checklists encourage engagement from employees.

Menguc, Auh, Fisher, and Haddad (2013) identified autonomy, supervisor feedback and supervisor support from managers as potential factors that can determine whether an employee will be engaged or disengaged during interaction with customers. Engaged employees will interact with customers using behaviors that enhance the customer's experience, which in turn reflects on how the customer assess an employee and organizational performance (Menguc, Auh, Fisher, & Haddad, 2013). The authors found that supervisor feedback and autonomy promoted employee engagement while supervisor support is not significantly related to employee engagement. While autonomy is important, the authors also found that employee preferred supervisor feedback and guidance on how to improve performance (Menguc et al., 2013). Menguc et al. suggested that when managers invest in improving employee engagement, customer's perception of experiences with the organization increase, which increases customer loyalty and profitability.

Employee engagement is a link in enhancing organizational effectiveness (Kataria et al., 2013). Kataria et al. (2013) defined organizational effectiveness as the ability to achieve long-term strategic and operational goals. Engaged employees have a different way of thinking, which allows them to go beyond the normal contribution to the organization, which helps employees meet organizational goals. Kataria et al. (2013) believed the employee's perception of the effectiveness within the organization helps leaders understand any conflicts of stated goals and visions of the organizations. Managers should continuously ensure employees are engaged to increase organizational effectiveness.

Strategies to Improve Engagement

Motivation. Motivation in organizations could be a driving force to increase engagement and organizational performance. A relationship exists between motivation and employee engagement, and managers should improve both factors simultaneously (Evangeline & Ragavan, 2016). Motivation is a tool manager's use to encourage employees to perform at levels required by the organization (Azar & Shafighi, 2013).

Managers who use motivation as a tool to engage employees may see an increase in performance.

Managers must create work conditions that foster and sustain employee motivation and engagement (Fernet, Austin, & Vallerand, 2012). Lazaroiu (2015) contended that managers cultivate a work environment that embraces innovation and transformation to develop intrinsically driven employees instead of relying solely on employees who seek external incentives to be motivated. A primary challenge managers face creating an environment that permits employees to achieve goals is determining to what extent are employees motivated (Parker, 2014). Determining employees levels of motivation may reduce challenges that managers face when creating an environment that fosters engagement.

Intrinsic factors may motivate employees. Evangeline and Ragavan (2016) explained that managers should find a healthy balance between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to maintain an engaged staff and competitive edge. Intrinsically motivated employees tend to convert motivation into levels of higher performance (Yidong & Xinxin, 2013). Engagement has been positively correlated with intrinsic motivation because engaged employees engage in work because the experience is intriguing and satisfying (van Beek, Hu, Schaufeli, Taris, & Schreurs, 2012). Intrinsically motivated employees are more willing to engage in workplace behaviors when they believe the work contributed to the organization is significant and meaningful (Buller & McEvoy, 2012). Shuck and Rose (2013) proposed that employees spend less energy on work-related task when the employee believes the task is meaningless.

Intrinsically motivated employees can be a great asset to an organization (Masvaure, Ruggunan, & Maharaj, 2014). Devloo, Anseel, De Beuckelaer, and Salanova (2015) found intrinsically motivated employees are self-driven, creative, and more likely to engage in challenging situations, which helps organizations explore innovative ways to solve problems. Challenging and meaningful tasks drive an intrinsically motivated employee to higher levels of performance (Putra, Cho, & Liu, 2015). Determining what motivates employees could help managers when implementing employee engagement strategies.

Employees who are intrinsically motivated generate new ideas and share those ideas to help organizations gain new opportunities (Rahman, Osman-Gani, Momen, & Islam, 2015). Intrinsically motivated employees are excited about finding creative ways to complete the task (Wang, Kim, & Lee, 2016). Sharing ideas helps expands employees knowledge base which leads to creative behaviors (Wang et al., 2016). Managers should explore the creativity of intrisically motivated employees to increase organizational effectiveness.

Knowledge sharing is enjoyable and meaningful to employees who are motivated by intrinsic factors (Tangaraja, Mohd Rasdi, Ismail, & Samah, 2015). Choi, Kim, Ullah, and Kang (2016) suggested that innovative behaviors are an outcome of knowledge sharing. Llopis and Foss (2016) agreed and argued that employees behaviors in knowledge sharing are more effective when based on internal factors and values instead of being forced to share knowledge. Managers who encourage knowledge sharing may increase engagement.

Extrinsically motivated employees perform a task to receive a reward or to avoid punishment (Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2013). Dysvik and Kuvaas (2013) explained that extrinsically motivated employees work as hard as intrinsically motivated employees, but the motivation to work hard is different. Yoon, Sung, Choi, Lee, and Kim (2015) found that extrinsic motivation positively relates to creativity, which helps employees find different avenues to gain rewards, however, warns managers to manage rewards because the creativity of employees may result in inadvertent consequences.

Extrinsic motivation can be an effective tool to increase performance and productivity (Mafini & Dlodlo, 2014). Managers who implement reward systems positively reinforce employees behaviors that lead to desired outcomes (Putraet al., 2015). Taylor (2015) contended that managers understand that although extrinsic motivation increases productivity, the successful outcomes may be temporary. To maintain successful outcomes from extrinsically motivated employees, managers have to make sure to balance the performance levels expected compared to the extrinsic incentives employees will receive (Taylor, 2015). Managers who balance performance and rewards may successfully increase engagment.

Leadership. Leadership is the ability to influence group members toward an intended direction to achieve goals (Oshagbemi & Ocholi, 2013). The behaviors of managers have been found to influence the satisfaction and performance of subordinates. Leadership style is a mix of behavior and attitude, which develops into a pattern that describes a leader (Yousif, Hossan, & McNeil, 2015). Leader’s styles are usually composed of up all leadership styles because they exhibit a combination of styles for each situation instead of showing characteristics of just one style (Yousif et al., 2015). As managers analyze his or her behavior, they will tell which behaviors increase or decrease employee engagement and performance.

Transformational Leadership. Introduced by James Burns and extended by Bernard Bass, transformational leadership is a leadership concept organizational leader seek to find in their leaders. Bass (1991) posited that transformational leadership occurs when leaders elevate the interest of employees to accept the mission of the organization, by encouraging growth, stimulating learning, and engaging in visionary behaviors. The engaging behaviors of transformational leader's help employees focus on the collective vision of the organization and go beyond the normal plan of action to achieve the goals of the organization. Changes in the workforce have led to the need for leaders to be more transformational to be successful (Bass, 1999). Carter (2013) identified the leadership model, (a) organizing leadership decision making, (b) providing feedback, (c) identifying needs, (d) framing ideas, and (e) planning of action, as a guide for transformational leaders to follow. Transformational leadership may be a style of leadership that positively influence engagement.

Transformational leaders intrinsically motivate employees (Breevaart, Bakker, Hetland, Demerouti, Olsen, & Espevik, 2014). Researchers found transformational leaders as a major influence on innovative behavior because of their ability to articulate the vision, motivate followers to perform beyond existing expectations, and promote growth and development (Michaelis, Stegmaier, & Sonntag, 2009). Transformational leaders help employees find purpose in work with outcomes that result in more than just extrinsic rewards (Ghadi, Fernando, & Caputi, 2013). Jung (2001) suggested that fostering creativity and an environment that promotes out of the box thinking allows employees to feel free to try innovative approaches without the fear of repercussion. Transformational leaders might produce positive results.

Transformational leaders tend to move followers from self-interest through idealized influence (charisma), inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1999). Charisma provides employees with the vision of change, pride, and a sense of being a part of the change. Inspiration helps leaders communicate expectations in ways that employees can understand. Intellectual stimulation promotes problem-solving, and rationality and individual consideration treats employees as an individual, coaches, and gives personal attention (Bass, 1999). Transformational leaders could use leadership styles that positively influence employee behaviors.

Wang, Tsai, and Tsai (2014) believed transformational leaders tend to have behaviors that promote risk taking and creativity, which has a positive influence on innovation within an organization. Transformational leaders are visionary leaders who have behaviors that articulate the vision of change in an artistic, but realistic manner to gain the attention of employees (Wang et al.2014). Leaders who implement change should possess certain behaviors such as coaching, communication, motivation, and promoting teamwork to implement change (Gilley, Gilley, & McMillan, 2009). When there is effective leadership within an organization, employees would be able to reach full potential especially when positive feedback, praise, or recognition is given (Carter, 2013). Nikezić, Purić, and Purić, (2012) summarized the characteristics of a transformational leader as creative, team player, respectful, coach, and responsible.

Transformational leaders expect high performance, but also tend to employee's individual needs for growth and development in the workplace (Perko, Kinnunen, & Feldt, 2014). Ghadi et al, (2013) argued that leaders who have transformational characteristics identify areas of growth and create programs to ensure employees are productive. Ghadi et al. suggested that managers challenge employees to achieve more than the norm.

Creating a supportive work environment and providing resources that will allow employees to perform at higher levels is a behavior of transformational leaders (Choi, Kim et al., 2016). Providing resources encourages employees to become innovative problem solvers which allow employees to perform at higher levels and overcome challenges (Choi et al., 2016). Choi et al. contended that transformational leaders rouse critical and intellectual thinking which helps employees think outside of the box. Thinking outside of the box forces employees to develop new and innovative ideas which encourage autonomy and self-efficacy.

Transactional Leadership. Odumeru and Ogbonna (2013) described transactional leaders as extrinsic motivators who attempt to maintain order without looking to change the existing organization. Nikezić et al. (2012) asserted that transactional leaders offer employees the possibility of reward when an employee performs well and completes an assigned task. Mahdinezhad, Suandi, Silong, and Omar (2013) explained that leaders who follow transactional behaviors focus on taking corrective actions to ensure staff reaches desired performance levels. Transactional leaders apply different strategies to engage employees.

Ejere and Abasilim (2013) suggested that transactional leaders enhance follower's ability and readiness to perform by offering rewards for performance, which leads to the desired outcome. Pieterse, Knippenberg, Schippers, and Stam (2009) found transactional leadership to be beneficial with high psychological empowered followers. On the other hand, Vaccaro, Jansen, Van Den Bosch, and Volberda (2012) posited that transactional leadership positively influences management innovation. Transactional leader's behaviors contribute to the success of the organization by pushing organizational members to meet targets but doing so by setting a reward system that would exist if employees meet goals (Vaccaro et al., 2012). Carter (2013) suggested leaders who have transactional behaviors can influence employees to perform but are more effective by rewarding employees for completing work task as requested. Leadership styles differ among managers, but managers should be aware of the leadership style that has a positive impact on employee engagement.

Communication. Internal communication is an open dialog between organizational leaders and employees (Mishra, Boynton, & Mishra, 2014). Karanges, Beaston, Johnston, and Lings (2015) defined internal communication as a process to share information that promotes trust and commitment, which results in employee engagement. Constant communication of employee expectations encourages an engaged workforce, which brings about a sense of belonging to the organization (Mishra, Das, Kulkarni, & Sahoo, 2012). Communication between managers and employees might increase trust within the organization and ultimately increase engagement.

Supervisors who communicate the strategies of the organization help employees understand how to reach performance goals (Reissner & Pagan, 2013). Manager's communication must align with the goals and culture of the organization (Polito, 2013). Positive outcomes are a result of manager and employee communication (Bisel, Messersmith, & Kelley, 2012). Polito (2013) contended that engagement and commitment increase as employees a steadily informed of organizational goals. Providing employees with regular feedback about participation and developing opportunities to increase skills may increase engagement.

Reissner and Pagan conducted a qualitative case study to examine the underlying forces of generating employee engagement within a public-private organization. The primary goal was to determine what types of activities managers undertook to engage employees and how the employees perceived the attempts to engage. Reissner and Pagan believed the use of directive and discursive communication methods allow supervisors to communicate, but also, give employees a voice to participate in discussion and debates regarding the organization. Meyer (2013) described the interaction between employee and supervisor as a social relationship, which derives from the social exchange theory where workplace relationships are reciprocal. Supervisors who promote two-way communication foster an environment of participation and engagement.

Developing communication and trust within the organization involves employees establishing an essential relationship between with direct supervisors and senior management (Karanges et al., 2015). Social Exchange is a reciprocal relationship where fair exchanges between employees and supervisors result in favorable behaviors and attitudes. Researchers such as Benner and Tushman (2003) and Pounsford (2007) mentioned communication enhance the bottom line outcomes such as productivity and profitability (Mishra et al., 2014). Mishra et al. suggested that rearranging employee duties and roles could increase productivity and communication strategies such as informal communication and coaching results in an increase in revenue because of greater customer satisfaction.

Mishra et al. investigated the role of public relations (PR) professionals in communication and employee engagement. Mishra et al. identified face-to-face communication as the most effective channel to nurture engagement. Sometimes supervisors of frontline staff shy away from face-to-face communications because they may not be equipped to handle the close interactions, but suggested that leaders should teach listening and feedback skills so the supervisors could feel comfortable in these situations.

Manager's communication quality and style can influence the behavior and satisfaction of employees (Men, 2014). Developing effective communication skills among staff can increase job performance (Eklöf & Ahlborg, 2016). Men (2014) suggested managers chose the appropriate communication channel that would engage staff. Personalized communication channels such as team meetings, problem-solving sessions, and supervisor meetings increase manager and employee relationships and foster a sense of belonging among employees (Men, 2014). Men contented that face to face communication is a communication strategy that shows manager's willingness to listen to employees and a channel that provide employees with an opportunity to express opinions.

Work-Life Balance. Work-life balance is a strategy some leaders use to maintain engagement among staff by coordinating a balance between work-related and nonwork related responsibilities (Zheng, Kashi, Fan, Molineux, & Ee, 2015). Cahill, McNamara, Pitt-Catsouphes, and Valcour (2015) defined work-life balance as an individual's ability to effectively manage the responsibilities of personal, family, and work roles. Although incorporating the work-life balance into policy may be challenging, managers should help employees facilitate the balance to ensure engagement within the organization continues (Zheng et al., 2015). Shockley and Allen (2010) suggested managers adopt policies that include flexible work arrangements to help encourage engagement and reduce turnover. Managers may find employees are productive when work-life balance strategies are implemented.

Flexibility in the workplace encourages engagement (Shockley & Allen, 2015). Managers who implement flexibility strategies enables employees to manage personal and work demands, which leads to more energy invested in the job (Bal & De Lange, 2015; Plester & Hutchison, 2016). Managers consider flexibility as a motivator that helps increase employee's performance and engagement (Alfes, Truss, Soane, Rees, & Gatenby, 2013). Taneja, Sewell, and Odom (2015) contended that managers develop opportunities for employees to balance work and personal goals to ensure higher levels of engagement. Providing employees with flexibility within the workplace might increase engagement.

Work life balance is strategy managers use to ensure improvement in employee and organizational performance (Shockley & Allen, 2015). Managers who develop work life balance policies and programs increase engagement and improve performance (Kim, 2014). Employees can perform at higher levels and commitment to the organization increase when there is a balance between work and family related issues (Kim, 2014).

Job Crafting. Job crafting may be a strategy some managers use to engage employees and reduce burnout. Crafting an employee's job is a resource that may help employees reduce the amount of burnout because of employee's ability to assign meaning to their job and see their jobs differently (Bakker et al., 2014). Managers implement job crafting when employees proactively redesign jobs according to ability, skills, and preferences (Tims, Bakker, & Derks 2013). Tims, Bakker, and Derks (2015) identified the three forms of job crafting as, (a) employees changing how tasks are performed, (b) employees changing relationship boundaries with other employees, and (c) employees changing the meaning of the work experience. Managers should realize that job crafting is important to keep disengagement low and increase productivity and overall engagement.

Job crafting may positively relate to engagement. Employees who proactively find solutions to increase job resources that will assist with job demands enhance engagement levels (Tims, Bakker, Derks, and van Rhenen, 2013). Engagement increases with job crafting because employees are more likely to have a sense of fulfillment in the workplace (Timset al., 2015). Allowing employees to find creative solutions to complete task may increase performance and engagement.

Intrinsically motivated employees benefit from job crafting (Tims et al., 2013). Niessen, Weseler, and Kostova (2016) argued that job resources that promote personal growth and development and yield positive results motivate employees. Employees who are intrinsically motivated welcome challenges and devote more time and effort to develop processes within the workflow that would help improve performance (Guo, Liao, Liao, & Zhang, 2014). Employees are willing to engage in workplace behavior when the task performed is meaningful and enhances the overall performance of an organization (Berdicchia, Nicolli, & Masino, 2016). Intrinsically motivated employees find ways to overcome barriers within the workplace.

Job crafting is initiated by employees, but managers who support employees by providing sufficient opportunities and increase job resources for employees, enhance engagement levels (Harju, Hakanen, & Schaufeli, 2016). Managers who can match employees to positions within the organization that fits their skill set, experience, and personality, can increase engagement and bring positive long-term results that will increase the bottom line and productivity. Employees thrive in job crafting when managers inspire, strengthen, and connect with employees (Schaufeli, 2015). Managers who support job crafting increase trust with employees which may increase engagement.

Employees not only craft their jobs when managers provide adequate support, but also seek to craft jobs to improve the work environment and motivation levels (Petrou, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2016). Employees can improve work environments and motivation levels by seeking resources and challenges to help reduce job demands. By seeking job resources, employees expand options of useful resources to choose from when coping adjusting to new situations (Karatepe & Olugbade, 2016). Employees who seek challenges gain the ability to successively conquer complex situations which help employees adapt and increase engagement (De Beer, Tims, & Bakker, 2016). The involvement of managers and employees in job crafting may contribute to an increase in levels of performance and organizational effectiveness.

Transition

The objective of Section 1 was to introduce the background of the problem and literature that provided an overview of employee engagement. The review of literature included articles relevant to the topic including descriptions of common themes that have aided effective engagement strategies.

In Section 2, I will expand the plan of the study on the research topic of employee engagement in the workplace within financial institutions in the state of Louisiana. The next section will provide details on the role of the researcher, participant population and selection method, research method and design, data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations. In Section 3, I will conclude with the findings and recommendations, and application to professional practice and implications for change.

Section 2: The Project

The focus of this qualitative study was to understand the strategies credit union managers use to improve employee engagement. First, the role of the researcher was established. This section of the study covered (a) the purpose statement, (b) the role of the researcher, (c) research participants, (d) research method and design, (e) population and sampling, (f) ethical research, (g) data collection (h) data collection techniques, (i) data organization techniques, and (j) reliability and validity will identify how the study explored the strategies managers employ to engage employees in the credit union industry.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore employee engagement strategies that credit union managers use to increase productivity and organizational performance. The target population consisted of credit union managers from one Louisiana credit union who successfully implemented strategies to improve employee engagement. The findings of this study may contribute to social change by identifying strategies to improve engagement, which could increase performance and profitability in credit unions. Improving employee engagement may increase customer satisfaction, which may improve the sustainability of financial institutions.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher's role is to recruit participants and collect, organize, and interpret data (Yin, 2014). As the researcher, I recruited participants, developed interview questions, and conducted interviews. In qualitative research, a researcher is an instrument in data collection (Pezalla, Pettigrew, & Miller-Day, 2012). I served as the primary data collection instrument for collecting data using semistructured, open-ended interviews and analyzing data.

For 13 years, I worked with managers, human resource representatives, and consultants to gain an understanding of what employees perceived as a need to stay engaged. In my role as a credit union manager, duties included interaction with staff to build staff morale, team building, coaching, and working with committees to help enhance engagement strategies already implemented. My experience allowed me to understand the importance of implementing employee engagement strategies to improve performance.

During the interview process, researchers must ensure ethical standards are met to maintain participants protection (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012). I used the Belmont Report as a guide when considering the risk and benefits of the study, participants informed consent, and all safeguards to protect participants. The Belmont Report identifies respect for persons, beneficence, and justice as principles of ethical research. I followed the guidance of the Belmont Report by providing participants with a written outline of the purpose of the study, full disclosures of voluntary participation, and confidentiality procedures.

Researcher's bias can affect data collection and analysis (Anyan, 2013). Researchers can successfully mitigate through identification of threats and personal beliefs before beginning research (Yin, 2014). Reducing bias is important to ensure reliability and validity (Petty, Thomson, Stew, 2012). To assist with reducing bias, I applied member checking. A researcher uses member checking to verify accurately interpreted experiences (Harper & Cole, 2012). As a credit union manager for 13 years, I am aware of my professional bias regarding this study. To reduce bias, I remained objective so that my perceptions would not influence collection and interpretation of data. I also requested participation only from a financial institution where I have not worked as an employee or have any personal or professional relationships.

Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton (2013) suggested that researchers use an interview protocol during the interview process. Researchers use an interview protocol to direct the interview process and conduct the interviews the same way with each participant (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). I used an interview protocol (see Appendix A), with open-ended questions, as a guide during a semistructured interview to collect data regarding the strategies credit union managers use to encourage engagement among staff. Using the interview protocol ensured that I asked participants the same questions and was not influenced by my personal views. Pezalla et al. (2012) argued that semistructured interviews help researchers gain an in-depth understanding of the participant's experiences and address the research question.

Participants

Participants of this study were from one financial institution from the geographical area of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The eligibility criteria that I used to select participants included credit union managers working in a small to mid-size credit union with at least 5 years of management experience. Participants who successfully use employee engagement strategies aligned to the purpose of the research. The roles of the credit union managers are to manage branch operations including member service, training, and compliance.

To gain access to participants, I emailed the credit union's chief executive officer (CEO) a letter of cooperation (see Appendix B) with a full explanation of the purpose of the study and requested permission to allow credit union managers to participate. Before engaging with participants, members of the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the study (IRB approval #03-14-17-0443994) and granted permission to contact any potential participant. Once obtaining approval from the IRB and CEO, I emailed a letter of consent to participants.

To establish a working relationship and trust with participants, I openly discussed the purpose of the study and answered any questions via telephone or email. Researchers who are honest about research intentions establish trust, which helps build the respect and comfort level of participants (Doody & Noonan, 2013). Bahn and Weatherill (2012) contended that researchers should establish trust and rapport with participants and empathy to probe into the personal lives of participants. Damianakis and Woodford (2012) emphasized that researchers should purposefully develop a trusting relationship with participants to learn enough from participants to help reach research goals. I established trust by providing an outline of the purpose of the study, full disclosures of voluntary participation, and confidentiality procedures. To ensure the confidentiality of participants, I labeled interviews as P1 through P6. To maintain participant's privacy, I password protected and maintained all emails with participants consent, raw data, and company documents on a USB drive and will destroy the USB drive after 5 years.

Research Method and Design

Research Method

The research method for this study was qualitative. Yin (2014) noted that qualitative researchers engage participants with open-ended questions to uncover personal experiences and meaning of a phenomenon. The goal of this research was to explore strategies credit union managers used to improve employee engagement and increase productivity and organizational effectiveness. Anyan (2013) asserted that using qualitative research could ask participant's questions that delve deep into the participant's experience. Bernard (2013) argued that researchers using qualitative research collect data from the participant's viewpoint. Researchers can benefit from qualitative research because the detailed accounts of participants' experiences allow researchers to explore themes and patterns of a phenomenon (Koch et al., 2014). A qualitative approach was appropriate for this study.

A quantitative method was not appropriate for this study because researchers are unable to explore the experiences of participants. Quantitative research is appropriate when researchers want to confirm or disprove a hypothesis with the results of the study being measurable (Masue, Swai, & Anasel, 2013). Understanding employee engagement strategies is a critical factor in this study and narrowing this topic down to variables and statistics will not be suitable to get to the level of understanding desired. Petty et al. (2012) contended that the quantitative method is ideal for research that explains a phenomenon but does so by collecting numerical data with the purpose of generalizing findings. While the results of a quantitative study might offer valuable statistical explanations of the strategies that credit union managers use to engage their employees, the results of using a qualitative method will help explore the perceptions from participants (Wisdom, Cavaleri, Onwuebuzie, & Green, 2012). Because there were no variables to measure or hypothesis to accept or reject, using quantitative methods was not appropriate for this study.

Mixed method is the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, which increases researchers understanding of the phenomenon when one method alone may not answer the research question (Venkatesh et al., 2013). A mixed method approach is appropriate when a qualitative or quantitative approach is singularly insufficient (Wisdom et al., 2012). Hoare and Hoe (2013) suggested that researchers use a mixed method when multiple approaches are necessary to answer the research question. Although both quantitative and mixed methods could explore strategies credit union managers use to engage employees, the qualitative approach was most suitable for this study. The qualitative method was appropriate compared to quantitative and mixed methods because of the need to explore participants personal experiences.

Research Design

The research design for the study was a single case study. Wahyuni (2012) contended that researchers use case study designs to conduct an in-depth investigation of how or why a problem exists. A researcher uses a case study research design for the flexibility to observe multiple sources of data collection, which helps validate the research (Lalor et al., 2013). Moll (2012) suggested that researchers use case studies to immerse in real-life events and interact with participants to gain awareness of the phenomena and behavior of participants (Moll, 2012). Therefore, a case study design was appropriate for this study.

Researchers using a phenomenological approach seek to capture the personal experiences or insights of the participants (Kumar, 2012). Gaining an understanding of how personal experiences influence behaviors is the goal of researchers using a phenomenological design (Koopman, 2015). Snelgrove (2014) suggested that researchers investigate the subjective viewpoint of participant's experiences in a phenomenological design. Although a phenomenological design is appropriate to explore the lived experiences of managers, the intent of this study was to explore strategies managers use to improve engagement, a phenomenological approach was not appropriate.

Theoretical data saturation occurs when researchers obtain no new insights or identify new themes (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012). Saturation begins with selecting an adequate sample size, but the focus should be on the sampling adequacy (Morse, Lowery, & Steury, 2015). Researchers obtain sampling adequacy by purposefully selecting experts in the area of interest and obtaining other sources of data that will substantiate data from interviews (Robinson, 2014). To reach saturation, I interviewed six credit union managers and review company documents with the purpose of finding no new information.

Population and Sampling

Wahyuni (2012) argued that the research question should drive the selection of the population for studies. The population for this study was credit union managers throughout Louisiana. The sample for this study was six credit union managers of a small to medium-sized financial institution in Baton Rouge, LA. Eligible participants were in management for at least 5 years and experienced success in engaging staff. Sampling in qualitative research allows researchers to explore the variations of opinions of a phenomenon (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012). The selection of participants occurred through purposive sampling. Wahyuni (2012) described purposive sampling as a technique that is effective when researchers intentionally target participants who have experience in a particular area. Researchers who use purposeful sampling gains in-depth insight into the topic that is not available in random sampling (Reynold, Lammert, & Stribling, 2012).

Qualitative research normally has smaller sample sizes than quantitative research because qualitative research focuses on gaining an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon (Dworkin, 2012). With the proper sample size, researchers should achieve data saturation (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012). Dworkin (2012) suggested that the number of participants in a qualitative study might range from five to 50 to reach saturation. Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, and Fontenot (2013) proposed case studies should contain 15 to 30 participants. Researchers suggested several examples of the number of participants needed to reach saturation, but for this study, no new data emerged after six participants were interviewed; therefore, the number of participants were enough to reach saturation. The sample size is important, but sampling adequacy, having enough data to cover all aspects of the topic, is critical to the overall study (Trotter, 2012). To collect data, I emailed a letter to the CEO of a credit union requesting permission to gain access to participants. Once I received permission from the CEO to interview participants, I requested contact information of participants and recruited six credit union managers to reach saturation. Saturation begins with selecting an adequate sample size of participants of experts in the area of interest. I ensured saturation by choosing participants who fit the criteria for this study, which provided rich data that was appropriate for the study. Researchers achieve data saturation once no new ideas or themes emerge from the data collected (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013).

Participants received an email which included an attachment of the informed consent, to participate in the study. The participants who agreed to participate were asked to reply to the email indicating their consent to participate. Within 2 days, all participants replied consenting to participate in the study. With the permission of the credit union CEO, interviews were conducted in a quiet place within the credit union. A spacious conference room within the organization was used to conduct interviews. I made sure the room was comfortable and promoted a confidential environment to increase participants comfort level. Participants were asked to be prepared to participate in a 30-minute to 1-hour interview. All participants agreed to the timeframe requested for the interview process.

Ethical Research

Ethical standards in research are necessary to protect participants. Researchers have an obligation to develop procedures to reduce potential harm to participants and ensure confidentiality (Miyazaki & Taylor 2007). To ensure ethical standards, I requested approval of the IRB (IRB approval #03-14-17-0443994) and the CEO of the organization before contacting participants. Aluwihare-Samaranayake (2012) argued that participants should have a clear understanding of the purpose and intent of the study. Once IRB and the CEO of the organization granted approval, potential participants received an email with a consent form that included an outline of the purpose of the study, eligibility criteria to participate, full disclosures of voluntary participation, confidentiality procedures, and my contact information. Participants who agreed to cooperate in the study had to reply "I Consent" to the email where I sent the consent form. The informed consent form indicated that participation will not involve monetary incentives and contained procedures on how to withdraw from the study. Participants had an opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time verbally or email. All participants replied to the email within 2 days agreeing to participate in the study.

Developing safeguards to ensure confidentiality and privacy are necessary to protect participants. Implementing precautions to protect participant's identity is important to reduce participant's reluctance when agreeing to volunteer in a research study (Floyd & Arthur, 2012). To ensure the confidentiality and privacy of participants, I labeled interviews as P1 through P6, where each participant will have an identifying code. To maintain participant's privacy, I password protected and maintained all consents, data collected, and documents on a USB drive. After 5 years, I will shred paper documents and physically dismantle the USB drive to destroy data, so that the data is not recoverable.

Data Collection Instruments

I was the primary instrument in this study and collected data and interacted with participants. Researchers are the instrument in qualitative research (Yin, 2014). Pezalla et al. Miller (2012) identified a researcher as the primary instrument because researchers interact with participants to obtain rich information to help answer the overarching research question. The single case study involved semistructured face-to-face interviews with six credit union managers. Doody and Noonan (2013) believed the use of interviews help enable researchers to delve into the true experiences of participants. I developed an interview protocol of open-ended interview questions to explore the strategies credit union managers use to engage employees (see Appendix A). Jacob and Furgerson (2012) recommended the use of an interview protocol to maintain structure during the interview process. The semistructured interviews focused on predetermined areas that guided the conversation to explore different areas of the subject at hand (Petty et al., 2012). The interview questions helped participants focus on answering the research question. I encouraged participants to respond to the interview questions based on experiences in the credit union industry.

Secondary data instruments consisted of organizational documents that pertained to the development and tracking of engagement strategies. I requested permission to gain access to organization documents such as performance and goal tracking spreadsheets and documentation used when planning engagement strategies, during the recruitment and informed consent process. During the interview process, as different topics such as communication, rewards, and training were raised, managers allowed me to view goal and incentive spreadsheets, surveys, and action plans which helped me triangulate data from the interviews. Participants explained why the goal and incentive spreadsheets, surveys, and action plans were important to the employee engagement program. I included the participants' explanations to my notes so I could use that information during data analysis. The use of document analysis allowed me to identify and understand the goals, history, and objectives of the engagement program set by managers of the credit union. Researchers use documentation to obtain rich data that will corroborate data collected from other sources (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014).

Ensuring the reliability and validity of data is important in qualitative research. Harper and Cole (2012) suggested that researchers who allow participants to provide feedback during member checking ensure reliability and validity. After the interviews, I applied member checking to allow participants to validate the accuracy of my interpretations of data collected. Member checking involved me paraphrasing participants responses then requesting the participants to review my interpretations for accuracy. I emailed participants my paraphrased responses of the interview responses and gave participants a week to review and respond with comments regarding my interpretations. All participants responded to my email within 2days thanking me for making the interview process comfortable and ensured that my interpretations were accurate and no changes were required. Loh (2013) explained that member checking is a quality control process where participants verify the meaning of researchers interpretations and can elaborate on unclear details. Petty et al. (2012) indicated that member checking is important in establishing the credibility or believability of the findings.

Data Collection Technique

Researchers collecting data in qualitative research focus on the depth of information gathered instead of the number of participants to answer the research question (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012). In qualitative research, researchers can use several sources for collecting data (Yin, 2014). Petty et al. (2012) suggested the use of interviews, observation, and document analysis as the most common form of data collection techniques in qualitative research. I adopted these suggestions in my data collection process. I did not conduct a pilot study. Researchers conduct pilot studies to test the suitability of the interview protocol and improve the quality of the study (Morin, 2013). Jacob (2012) suggested that qualitative researchers choose experts in the field of study to validate the research instrument before conducting the study. To assure validity, I chose a panel of experts consisting of three credit union branch managers who were not a part of the final study. The panel of experts reviewed the research question, interview questions, and conceptual framework to determine whether each component was concise and related to the subject at hand. Using a panel of experts to review components of the study negated the need for a pilot study.

A semistructured interview served as a source of data collection for this study (see Appendix A). Researchers who use semistructured interviews allow participants to be flexible when describing experiences (Wahyuni, 2012). Doody and Noonan (2013) explained that within semistructured interviews, researchers are free to navigate the interview in a way that will help encourage participants to talk about experiences and seek clarification when necessary. Irvine, Drew, and Sainsbury (2012) suggested that because of the flexibility in semistructured interviews, researchers can explore ideas that emerge throughout the interview, which will generate useful data. However, Vogl (2013) indicated that semistructured interviews might pose a disadvantage when researchers discuss sensitive topics because participants may be less likely to reveal personal and intimate information in person (Vogl, 2013).

I followed the interview protocol (see Appendix A) to maintain structure throughout the interview process. The day before each interview, I emailed each participant and asked participants to prepare for a 30 minute to an hour-long semistructured interview. Each participant responded acknowledging that the timeframe for the interviews fit into their schedule. The location of the interview was in a spacious conference room, that could accommodate approximately 15 people, within the organization, free from distractions. Each participant and I were a chair length apart during the interview. Before commencing with each of the interviews, I reminded participants of the purpose and voluntary nature of the study with withdrawal from the study optional at any time. No participant withdrew from the study; therefore, there was no need for me to request participants from other potential participants. I made sure each participant was comfortable and did not want water before starting. To break the ice, I told each participant about some of my professional and personal background and gave participants the opportunity to share anything about themselves. As I began the interview, I reminded participants that I would be audio recording interviews, using a Sony voice recorder. All participants consented to the interviews being recorded. I also had the voice recorder on my Apple iPhone ready as a backup just in case my Sony voice recorder stopped working. The Sony voice recorder remained functional during all the interviews. I tested both recorders before the interviews to ensure the devices work properly and the audio clear enough to transcribe data after the interviews. I made notes during the interview of participant responses that I felt would be important during data analysis to assist with triangulation.

Triangulation, the collection of data from several sources, allows researchers to collect more in-depth information and validate that information (Wahyuni, 2012). During the interview process, as different topics such as communication, rewards, and training were raised, managers allowed me to view goal and incentive spreadsheets, surveys, and action plans which helped me triangulate data from the interviews. and I notated that the information in the documents provided support of managers ongoing nature of engagement as mentioned during the interviews.

Through member checking, participants had an opportunity to validate data for accuracy. During member checking, researchers represent the participants experience accurately (Koelsch, 2013). Member checking involved me paraphrasing participants responses then requesting the participants to review my interpretations for accuracy. I emailed participants my paraphrased responses of the interview responses and gave participants a week to review and respond to confirm the accuracy of the interpretations. All participants responded to my email within 2 days thanking me for making the interview process comfortable and ensured that my interpretations were accurate and no changes were required. Reilly (2013) indicated that member checking establishes credibility in qualitative research. Verifying the accuracy of the data allowed me to analyze data and determine themes.

Data Organization Technique

Data organization is important to manage data collected. For this study, data organization consisted of data checking, maintaining a journal, transcribing interview responses into Microsoft Word, and entering data into the qualitative software NVivo® 10. I had audio recordings and a journal during the study to help record and remember how participants physically reacted to certain questions. I used NVivo® 10 to help organize and categorize the data into themes. NVivo® 10 data analysis software allows researchers to analyze qualitative research by managing data, revealing themes, querying ideas, graphically model ideas and concepts, and reporting the data (Woods, Paulus, Atkins, & Macklin 2015). NVivo® 10 data analysis software helps qualitative researchers make sense of the data collected (Bernauer, Lichtman, Jacobs, & Robertson, 2014). Researchers could use NVivo® 10 software to produce trustworthy results that will help answer the research question (Sotiriadou, Brouwers, & Le, 2014). Compared to other qualitative data analysis software such as Atlas.ti, NVivo 10 is preferred because of the user friendliness and compatibility with sources such as Microsoft Word. Although Atlas.ti and NVivo have similar functionality, preference is set for NVivo because of the ease of use with importing and storing data from transcripts, audio recordings, and literature, sorting, arranging, and examining information (Woods, Paulus, Atkins, and Macklin, 2015). To protect the identity of participants, I labeled interviews as P1 through P6, for recordings, transcripts, and documents. To maintain participant's privacy, I secured all raw data, using a password protected USB drive for 5 years in a locked file cabinet.

Data Analysis

My goal for this study was to understand the strategies credit union managers use to engage employees. Qualitative researchers ask open-ended interview questions to collect data and to explore in-depth meanings within the study (Yin, 2014). I asked the following questions.

Interview Questions

1. How is employee engagement determined?
2. What are the strategies used to engage employees to increase productivity and organizational effectiveness?
3. What circumstances caused you to develop strategies to engage employees?
4. What influence do the strategies have on productivity levels, income goals, and sustainability?
5. What were noticeable barriers during the implementation of the engagement strategies?
6. Describe any implications for disengaged employees.
7. What other information could you share concerning engagement and disengagement in the credit union industry?

In this study, I used multiple sources of data to achieve triangulation. Carter, Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, and Neville (2014) posited that methodological triangulation involves the use of multiple methods of data collection including interviews and observations. Heale and Forbes (2013) contended that methodological triangulation adds depth to strengthen the research and increases the validity of qualitative research. Yimaz

(2013) emphasized that researchers use methodological triangulation to enhance the understanding of a phenomenon and confirm findings. I used methodological triangulation as the data analysis process for this qualitative case study. The process of methodological triangulation included reviewing multiple qualitative methods such as recordings of the interviews, notes, and organizational documents to identify patterns and themes and establish reliability.

I analyzed data to address the research question. Baškarada (2014) described data analysis as an examination of data to discover themes, patterns, and relationships that will help answer the research question. Organization of data was the first step to analyze data. Yin (2014) suggested that qualitative researchers begin data analysis by organizing collected data to translate into themes that to answer the main research question. The interview questions (see Appendix A) served as a guide for analyzing data and responses from the interviews will be organized in a way to identify themes and concepts easily.

Identifying recurring concepts and categorizing those concepts was be the next step to analyze data. After I received confirmation from the participants that my interpretations of the data collected was accurate, I transcribed the audio recordings, by typing, each of the participant responses into Microsoft Word. I then uploaded the transcribed interviews, from my Sony audio recorder, into NVivo® 10 data analysis software to assist with managing and organizing data. Analysis of data allows researchers to extract themes to help organize and grasp a better understanding of the phenomenon in question (White, Oelke, & Friesen, 2012). Using NVivo helped me to code data to identify themes and patterns. Coding is essential to analyze qualitative interviews and important for the researcher to link concepts and ideas to theory and literature (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014). While NVivo 10 assist with organization, reviewing interview transcripts, recordings, and company documents help researchers answer the main research question (Castleberry, 2012). I listened to audio recordings, reviewed notes, and reviewed the codes in NVivo® 10, which helped me identify commonalities among data that led me to the themes that emerged.

The next step in the analysis process involved continuously reviewing and recoding data to develop and ensure themes line up with the focus of the study. Researchers should continuously compare themes to identify similarities, differences, and relationship (Petty et al., 2012). I reviewed the data to answer the research question by identifying recurring themes and noticing patterns in the data. Development of themes help researchers gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon at hand (Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid, & Redwood, 2013).

Findings from data analysis should reference back to the research question and framework (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). I conducted the data analysis through the lens of the conceptual framework, expectancy theory. The expectancy theory suggested that employee performance depends on individuals making decisions based on motivational factors (Nimri, Bdair, & Bitar, 2015). Motivation stimulates engaged employees to exert efforts on increasing performance to meet organizational goals (Kataria et al., 2013). Data from participant interview responses, observations, and company documents led to the themes that emerged, effective communication, training and coaching, and rewards and recognition.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

Reliability involves developing consistent, reproducible, and trustworthy results (Lakshmi & Mohideen, 2013). Trotter (2012) posited that a study is reliable when another researcher could reproduce a study and obtain results with similar findings. Researchers increase dependability by documenting the sequence of events for other researchers to apply when duplicating the research (Anney, 2014). The strategy to achieve dependability was to provide detailed descriptions of each step in developing purpose, participants, data collection, analysis, and interpretation processes. Establishing an interview protocol (see Appendix A), served as a guide to maintain consistency during the interviews and assisted with ensuring reliability. An interview protocol helps other researchers repeat the interview process, which increases reliability (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). Another strategy that I used to increase reliability in this study included applying methodological triangulation by using multiple sources of data. The process of methodological triangulation included reviewing multiple qualitative methods such as recordings of the interviews, notes, and organizational documents to identify patterns and themes and establish reliability. Carter et al. (2014) asserted that researchers who use methodological triangulation add depth to research which increases reliability.

Validity

Validity in qualitative research assures that the findings of the study are accurate (Lakshmi & Mohideen, 2013). Houghton, Casey, Shaw, and Murphy (2013) implied that researchers enhance credibility when the findings of a study are believable. Researchers should provide an accurate picture of the phenomenon under investigation to achieve credibility (Yilmaz, 2013).To establish credibility, I employed observation, methodological triangulation, and member checking. Observations involved observing work environments and interactions between credit union manager and staff (Appendix C). De Massis and Kotlar (2014) suggested that researchers could better understand the culture of an organization through observations. Observing managers allowed me to validate the use of engagement strategies as described during the interview process (Appendix C).

Triangulation will enhance the credibility of the study (Cope, 2014). Wahuyni (2012) described methodological triangulation as a combination of different data sources that adds depth to a study and trustworthy data. Researchers triangulate data to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and to strengthen the credibility of the findings (Anney, 2014). The sources of data for methodological triangulation for this study included semistructured interviews, direct observations, and notes.

Member checking is important in establishing the credibility of research findings (Petty et al., 2012). Member checking is a process where participants verify the meaning of researchers interpretations and can elaborate on any details that are unclear (Loh, 2013). Harvey (2015) asserted that researchers who conduct member checking could verify participants perspectives with the participants, which strengthens credibility. Therefore, to member check, I conducted the interview, interpreted the interview, and shared the interpretations with participants to validate and guarantee the accuracy of data. Credibility was established as participants reviewed and confirmed interpretations.

Achieving transferability occurs when research findings are applicable in different situations (Cruz & Tantia, 2016). I attempted to achieve transferability by documenting rich descriptions of processes, data, and themes. Researchers who provide clear descriptions of processes increase reliability and credibility (Cypress, 2017). As suggested by Watkins (2012), researchers who provide detailed descriptions ensure readers can determine whether the findings of a study are transferable to another context.

Confirmability ensures that the data represents the participant's viewpoint and not the bias of the researcher (Cuthbert & Moules, 2014). Accurately conveying the perspective of participants can diminish bias and increase credibility in qualitative research (Hays, Wood, Dahl, & Kirk-Jenkins, 2016). Anderson (2010) believed bias could affect the credibility in qualitative research, but ensuring the research is valid, trustworthy, and rigorous can reduce or diminish bias. Researchers can apply confirmability by acknowledging the researcher's role in the study, acknowledging any personal biases, and assumptions (Watkins, 2012). Cuthbert and Moules emphasized that confirmability exists within a study when the findings and conclusions of the study are traceable back to the data. Triangulation of data sources, observations, and member checking ensured confirmability in this study.

Data saturation occurs when no new ideas or themes emerge from data collected (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012). Fusch and Ness (2015) argued that researchers should not determine data saturation by the sample size, but by the depth of information. The use of purposeful sampling to choose participants with relevant insight about the research topic ensured data saturation and helped increase validity (Lakshmi & Mohideen, 2013; Suri, 2011). I recruited six credit union managers to reach saturation. Morse, Lowery, and Steury (2014) suggested that the sample size is predetermined, but the saturation of themes determines when there are enough participants. Therefore, if I were unable to reach saturation, I would have used snowball sampling to recruit other participants until I reached the depth of information needed to establish saturation.

Transition and Summary

The purpose of Section 2 was to justify the research method and strategies to conduct the study. The goal of this study was to explore strategies credit union managers use to engage employees. The section identified the role of the researcher, participants and sample size, the research method and design, data collection and analysis, and testing the reliability and validity of the data collection. In Section 3, I will describe the data collection process, research findings, themes, and recommendations.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the employee engagement strategies that credit union managers use to increase productivity and organizational performance. To answer the research question, I conducted a qualitative single case study. I collected data via face-to-face semistructured interviews with a sample size of 6 credit union managers. In addition to the semistructured interview questions, direct observations and document review triangulated and confirmed data. Based on the findings, participants suggested several strategies to implement or reinforce employee engagement in their organization. The consensus among participants was that implementing employee engagement strategies were necessary to improve productivity and organizational effectiveness. Three primary themes emerged from the data analysis. The first theme was to communicate goals effectively. Effective communication is necessary if managers want employees to produce outcomes that align with the vision of the organization. The second theme was training and coaching employees. Developing employees through training and coaching potentially leads to an increase in productivity and organizational effectiveness. The final theme was recognizing and rewarding employees. Managers must be able to find innovative ways to maintain elevated levels of motivation, engagement, and commitment. Through these themes, participants revealed engagement strategies to increase productivity and organizational effectiveness.

Presentation of the Findings

The primary research question in this qualitative multiple case study was as follows: What employee engagement strategies do credit union managers use to increase productivity and organizational effectiveness? There was three primary themes (shown in Table 1) that emerged: (a) Theme 1: effectively communicate goals, (b) Theme 2: training and coaching, and (c) Theme 3: recognition and rewards. Each theme aligned with the expectancy theory by Vroom's (1964), as explained in the conceptual framework.

Theme 1: Effectively Communicate Goals

Effective communication was the first theme to emerge from the data. The analysis of interview and company data confirmed that effective communication is a crucial engagement strategy to increase productivity and organizational effectiveness within the workplace. Feedback and clearly stated and attainable goals and expectations are factors that participants found that keep employees engaged. As represented by Table 1, managers indicated that effective communication is a relevant employee engagement strategy.

Table 1

Frequency of Theme 1: Effectively Communicate Goals

Participants	Theme	Times Mentioned
P1, P2, P3, P4, P5	Effective Communication of Goals	29

The analysis of Interview Questions 5 and 6 revealed that regular feedback is an important strategy to increase and maintain engagement. Five out of six participants interviewed indicated that employees seek feedback about performance. For example, P1 indicated that continuous feedback lets employees know that they are valued. Additionally, P2 explained that there is a need for managers to allow employees to be free to talk about behaviors that cause disengagement. P6 mentioned that encouraging feedback from employees is crucial to overcoming disengagement because having employees come up with ideas on how to engage with them increase trust within the organization. P2 also noted that an open-door policy allows managers and employees sort out problems and determine the best solutions to resolve issues. P2 indicated that employees want confirmation that someone listens to problems or suggestions and help come up with solutions. P5 mentioned employees feel a sense of belonging when managers allow open communication.

Five participants (83%) indicated that communicated and attainable goals are needed to increase productivity and engagement. For instance, P4 stated, in response to Interview Question 2 that managers should communicate goals, but also reinforce and communicate the benefits of meeting goals. P1 emphasized that buy-in is important when communicating goals because when employees are committed to helping reach goals, engagement increases. Through direct observations, I observed an impromptu meeting with staff to reiterate goals, offer steps to achieve those goals, and encourage staff by reminding them of the goals that were achieved during the previous month. Participants' interaction confirmed that constant and effective communication encourage employee participation and the desire to perform at higher levels. A review of internal document allowed me to understand manager's engagement strategies as it pertains to communication. Throughout document analysis of goal spreadsheets, I found that managers tracked goals on a daily to weekly basis and consistently made sure, through notations, that employees were aware of the progress made or not.

P2 emphasized that "managers should ensure goals that are communicated align with the expectations of outcomes expected." P2 stated when goals are assigned managers should make sure to review goals and discuss outcomes of those goals to determine if the goals are still in line with the original goals. P1 indicated that managers communicate performance expectations. P5 explained that "employees who do not understand the desired results are not motivated to produce quality work, on the other hand if employees understand what the desired results are, they are motivated to get the job done." P3 mentioned the importance of management implementing goals that are attainable because if not, "disengagement increase because employees feel like a rabbit chasing unattainable goals." P5 expounded as to why unattainable goals is a barrier to engagement.P5 indicated that when upper management implement a task that does not align with outcomes or makes processes longer and harder, employees become resistant to change. P5 also noted that resistance to change cause disengagement because employees who can do the job become unwilling. P6 explained that managers should focus on presenting employees with different avenues to be successful and to change the mindset from unwilling to willing and able.

Effective communication within this study builds on existing literature. Participants' viewpoints were that effective communication is a substantial engagement strategy to increase productivity and organizational effectiveness and confirmed what previous researchers have mentioned as a priority for managers to engage employees. Findings in current research are consistent that ongoing communication encourages employees to be engaged in the workplace, which in turn improves performance (Walden, Jung, & Westerman, 2017).

Theme 2: Training and Coaching

Training and coaching was the second theme to emerge from the data. Participants expressed the need to train and mentor employees as an employee engagement strategy that increases productivity and organizational effectiveness. P4 explained that "training provides employees with the skills necessary to complete the task." P4 indicated that if managers expect staff to be productive and keep up with the ever-changing credit union world, proactively training is required. Cross training is also beneficial because more staff can assist during busy and overwhelming times.

P1 stated that coaching plays a part in engaging employee and the goal of coaching is to help employees to be better. P1 explained that "the bottom line increases when employees learn how to do more with less and complete task more efficiently." P2 indicated errors are minimized because employees are aware and tuned in when they are engaged. P2 emphasized that developing a process to reduce disengagement, which includes training, coaching, and retraining is crucial to the success of engagement strategies. P5 stated that employing one-on-one training when new products and services are introduced and getting feedback from employees about any changes is a successful strategy used within the organization that increases productivity. Table 2 identifies the frequency with which training and coaching was mentioned throughout the interviews and observations.

Table 2

Frequency of Theme 2: Training and Coaching

Participants	Theme	Times Mentioned
P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6	Training and Coaching	24

All participants referenced evaluations and surveys as a tool to determine engagement. Participants used the results of the surveys and mystery shops for coaching opportunities and to develop a plan of action for instances of disengagement and reward staff for great scores. P2 and P3 both mentioned the implications for employees who receive low scores on surveys by having employees write action plans. Writing the steps may help hold employees accountable for the steps they believe would help improve behaviors. P6 stated that “productivity increases because employees take ownership when they can have action plans.” P2 added that once an action plan is in place and employees are receptive to coaching. Managers should praise improvements, discuss consistency, and reinforce the importance of engagement with employees because engagement is an ongoing process. Document analysis of surveys and action plans helped to support the ongoing nature of engagement and the importance of maintaining documentation of the success or failure of actions plans put into place. I was able to identify and understand the goals, history, and objectives of the engagement program set by managers.

The theme of training and coaching confirms existing literature on employee engagement because the findings of this study show the importance of training and coaching on increased productivity. Participants are identifying training, coaching, and retraining as a successful engagement strategy to increase productivity and organizational effectiveness. Presbitero (2017) contended that training and coaching positively correlated with increased levels of engagement. Mangers who train and coach might experience an increase in engagement, productivity, and organizational effectiveness in the workplace.

Theme 3: Rewards and Recognition

Rewards and recognition was the third theme to emerge from the data. The consensus among participants was that rewarding and recognizing employees is a key engagement strategy that increases productivity and organizational effectiveness. Table 3 identifies the frequency with which rewards and recognition was mentioned throughout the interviews and goals spreadsheets.

Table 3

Frequency of Theme 3: Rewards and Recognition

Participants	Theme	Times Mentioned
P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6	Rewards and Recognition	28

P3 claimed that rewards play a part in meeting goals. P1 stated that implementing reward programs such as the "caught you" award to recognize employees who go the extra mile to help other employees or members increase engagement. Rewards, according to P1 "help employees feel valued and encourages employees to continue to strive for excellence." P5 mentioned that if managers do not recognize the performance and dedication of employees, focus on the ultimate goal would be lost. P6 stated that, "the influence of rewards and recognition positively influences the bottom line." A review of incentive spreadsheets allowed me to gain an understanding of how important rewards and recognition were to the engagement program of the credit union.

Participants equated recognition to value. Some participants (P1, P2, and P4) indicated that when employees feel valued, productivity and organizational effectiveness increase. P2 emphasized that "encouraging staff make employees feel special, noticed, and needed." Similarly, P4 expounded on ways to make employees feel valued by finding employees niche. P4 indicated that managers should find employees niche to increase engagement. P4 explained that managers should determine if employees are proficient at sales or another task. P4 noted that when an organizations culture is sales oriented, but there are employees who are efficient at sales but have other valuable skills, those employees may feel left out. Therefore, when you find an employee's niche, employees feel like they are not forgotten. Focusing on other things, such as community events that have nothing to do with work, helps with engagement.

Participants expressed the importance of valuing the skills and contributions of employees. P2 claimed that when managers use employee's suggestions for projects, employees feel accomplished, which boost morale. P1 suggested that as managers allow employees to go outside of their box or cubicle, the value is added to the team. P6 added that when employees move outside of their comfort zone, the value is added to the department. P1 suggested that managers allowing employees to be involved with different initiatives bring about engagement on multiple levels, which makes employees feel needed and valued, which ultimately allows skills to be developed. P1 stated, "involving my employees brings out loyal, creative, healthier, employees who then become a part of the solution instead of the problem." P1 mentioned that "our goal as managers should be to get employees to the point of wanting to perform because the job is important to them, instead of being bribed to do a job." Participants agreed that engagement within the credit union increased when managers allowed employees to use develop skills that were otherwise suppressed at other organizations.

Participants emphasized that several types of rewards and recognition motivated employees. P5 mentioned that giving spur of the moment rewards, handwritten thank you notes, gift cards, or recognizing an employee who accomplished a goal during a department meeting were examples of rewards and recognition used within the organization. P1 suggested that rewards are offered to show appreciation to employees, but not necessarily used to get employees to get the job done. P5 also claimed that "sometimes every employee would not receive recognition and rewards all the time, but every employee is valued." P5 added that morale increases when each employee is excited when someone else is recognized. Additionally, P1 noted that rewards are not the focus when implementing engagement programs, but having a rewards system in place encourages and motivates employees to increase performance. P4 added that some employees are intrinsically motivated to complete the task because of the employee's self-driven nature, while employees seek rewards and recognition to measure productivity. P4 emphasized that rewards do weigh on engagement and increase engagement, but the rewards do not have to be monetary because recognition plays a big part in engaging my employees. Remembering to say thank you is important. A review of internal documents allowed me to understand manager's engagement strategies as it pertains to rewards and recognition. Throughout document analysis of goal and incentive spreadsheets, I identified an increase in rewards and recognition, which translated into the formation of the rewards and recognition theme. I found that managers met monthly to discuss strategic plans for rewards and recognition and tracked incentives monthly. I found that managers notated meetings where rewards and recognition were evaluated to determine whether the goals set for the month would be met based on the rewards and recognition given to staff for a month.

The theme of rewards and recognition confirms existing literature on employee engagement. Participant viewpoints confirm that rewarding and recognizing employees is an important engagement strategy to increase organizational effectiveness. Findings in current research are consistent in that employee's value rewards and recognition; therefore, managers should develop and implement programs that cater to valuing employees (Presbitero, 2017).

Relevancy to Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework was the expectancy theory developed by Vroom (1964). The expectancy theory suggests ways to explore employee engagement, performance, and motivation of people in the workplace. According to the expectancy theory, individuals determine motivation by three factors: (a) expectancy, (b) instrumentality, and (c) valence (Nimri, Bdair, and Bitar, 2015). The themes that emerged in this study (a) Theme 1: effectively communicate goals, (b) Theme 2: training and coaching, and (c) Theme 3: rewards and recognition directly align to various aspects of the conceptual framework.

Expectancy, the first factor within the expectancy theory, is the belief that increased efforts lead to desired performance levels. Having the necessary resources and information to be productive impacts expectancy (Singh, 2016). The findings in themes 1 and 2, effectively communicate goals and training and coaching, indicated a direct alignment with expectancy. In theme 1, results indicated that managers who do not effectively communicate goals contribute to disengagement; therefore, expectancy levels decrease. For instance, participants noted that employees exert effort and are persistent to complete task when goals are communicated and attainable. Participants also revealed that employees take ownership of behaviors when goals are effectively communicated and as a result, productivity increases. Participants noted that when employees believe that the outcome of a task is attainable, the amount of effort exerted to achieve the goal increases. In theme 2, findings indicated that managers who train and coach provide employees with the tools necessary to exert efforts to reach goals assigned by managers.

Participants explained that employees are engaged, and efforts are increased when training and coaching are a focus to increase productivity. Participants emphasized that employees will exert less effort when job demands are greater than resources provided; therefore, training and coaching should be an ongoing initiative to ensure engagement levels increase.

Instrumentality, the second factor within the expectancy theory, is the perception that performance will lead to desired outcomes. A clear understanding and trust are factors that impact instrumentality (Vroom, 1964). The findings in theme 1, effectively communicate goals, tied in with instrumentality. Participants indicated that employees take the initiative to perform their jobs willingly and at the expected levels when managers provide ongoing communication and guidance. Participants also revealed that when employees trust managers, have clear instructions on how to meet managers expectations, and feedback is given to reiterate progress, workflow and performance levels increase. Thus, managers who are transparent in communication and establish trust within the workplace create engagement and increase levels of productivity.

Valence, the third factor within the expectancy theory is the perception of the value of an outcome. Attractive outcomes influence valence (Hsu, Shinnar, & Powell, 2014). The findings in theme 3, rewards and recognition, indicated a direct alignment with valence. Participants indicated that discovering what employee’s value increase productivity and organizational effectiveness. Participants identified recognition, value, monetary and nonmonetary rewards as factors that increase engagement. In theme 3, the findings indicated participants view rewards and recognition as the link to goals, which cause employees to repeat behaviors that lead to an increase in performance and productivity. Therefore, rewards and recognition is an important factor that increases engagement.

Findings Related to Existing Literature on Effective Business Practice

The results of research from this study contribute to existing literature as it pertains to employee engagement strategies managers use to increase productivity and organizational effectiveness. For instance, the findings on effective communication, training, and rewards link to literature regarding strategies used to engage employees and increase productivity.

Communication is a key strategy that managers should use to stimulate productivity (Kang & Sung, 2017). An effective strategy for communication is for managers to allow upward and downward line of communication to remain open (Sang, 2016). Participants explained that managers who give feedback and allow employees to suggest ways to improve performance encourage engagement. During downward communication, managers are disseminating ideas, goals, and strategies and explaining why decision were made. Engaging in upward communication allows managers to understand how employees feel about the workplace (Sang, 2016).

As participants mentioned, actively listening and genuinely seeking ideas of employees will increase engagement. For instance, Kang and Sung (2017) contended that effective internal communication enhances employee relationships, which in turn increases engagement, innovation, and productivity. Employees take the initiative to perform their jobs willingly and at the expected level of performance when managers provide constant communication and guidance (Tomer, 2016). Therefore, participants encouraged communication to increase engagement, productivity, and organizational effectiveness.

Leadership styles play a role in how managers communicate. Participants believed that when goals are communicated effectively, attainable, and are met, employees take ownership in their success, which increases engagement. Managers contribute to disengagement when feedback and communication are minimal (Mehrzi & Singh, 2016). Managers who communicate strategies of the organization must do so in a way that employees will understand how to reach performance goals (Zerfass & Vietmann, 2016). Active listening and engaging in innovative ways to communicate are some of the characteristics of a transformational leader (Wang, 2014). Direct communication is the preferred communications behavior of transformational leaders because of the desire of those leaders to reinforce any messages that may bring about engagement (Diebig Bormann, & Rowold, 2017). Individuals, who understand organizational expectations, choose to exert efforts to meet and exceed performance standards (Bembenutty, 2012). Therefore, participants explained that managers should communicate goals, but also reinforce and reiterate goals to be effective.

An employee's level of expectancy and effort to perform at higher levels increase when managers effectively communicate goals. Consiglio, Borgogni, Di Tecco, and Schaufeli (2016) suggested that when goals are attainable, employee's self-efficacy or confidence in achieving goals increases, thus increasing engagement and productivity. Managers who communicate goals give employees an opportunity to take ownership of behaviors and surroundings to bring about desired outcomes (Elstet al., 2014). To increase engagement and productivity, communication must align with the goals and culture of the organization at the individual level (Alagaraja & Shuck, 2015). Furthermore, participants noted that when goals are communicated effectively and are attainable, employees exert efforts that would assist in completing task.

The findings on training and coaching link to literature regarding strategies used to engage employees. Vroom (1964) suggested managers who provide employees with sufficient tools to complete work task, efforts increase, which leads to an increase in performance. Conversely, when job demands are greater than the resources, employees will exert less effort, which causes a decline in engagement and productivity (Upadyaya, Vartiainen, & Aro, 2016). Therefore, participants noted that employees are engaged and efforts are increased when training and coaching are a focus to increase productivity.

Employees should have the appropriate resources, skills, and support to be motivated to perform jobs successfully. Managers who do not provide employees with the appropriate resources take the risk of employees experiencing burnout (Schaufeli, 2017). Training is necessary to increase the skills, knowledge, and abilities of employees to increase performance (Mwangi & Omondi, 2016). Job crafting is an innovative engagement strategy some managers could use to provide resources to employees to reduce burnout (Tims et al., 2015). Participants noted that without the proper resources, employee performance decrease. When employees have expectations that the training received will enhance productivity and managers provide the necessary support and resources, employees would be motivated to produce (Harris, Murphy, DiPietro, & Line, 2017). Employees are motivated to learn if the goal of training aligns with the overall organizational goals to increase performance (Hussain, Yusoff, Banoori, Khan, & Khan, 2016). Researchers suggest that managers follow behaviors of the transformational leaders by coaching and encouraging employees to increase expectations of performance (Diebig et al., 2017). Employees who have higher expectations to succeed are motivated to perform. Therefore, participants agreed that managers must apply coaching and training to develop well-trained employees to drive growth, productivity, and a competitive advantage for the organization.

The findings on rewards and recognition link to literature regarding strategies used to engage employees and increase productivity. Employees are motivated differently; therefore, managers must understand how to motivate employees to improve engagement. Researchers suggest that people may be intrinsically or extrinsically motivated (Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2013). Employees who are intrinsically motivated are satisfied with the job without incentives being a major factor in high performance, but those who are extrinsically motivated will perform if incentives or rewards are linked to performance (Kuvaas, Buch, Weibel, Dysvik, & Nerstad, 2017). Participants mentioned that rewards were not the focus of developing engagement strategies because most employees found the jobs enjoyable, but rewards helped increased performance. Employees who are intrinsically motivated are committed to perform without any other motivations (Delaney & Royal, 2017). Participants also identified recognition, value, monetary and nonmonetary rewards as factors that increase engagement. Extrinsic motivation can be as effective as intrinsic motivation because managers could use rewards to drive productivity and performance (Delaney & Royal, 2017). Managers should develop rewards programs to motivate employees, gain commitment, and reward employees for contributions and the value that is created for the organization (Presbitero, 2017). Productivity increases when employees feel valued (Barr, 2015). Furthermore, participants noted when managers allow employees to make suggestions concerning organizational changes, morale increase and employees feel valued, which in turn increases productivity.

Applications to Professional Practice

The objective of this study was to explore engagement strategies that credit union managers use to increase productivity and organizational effectiveness. Improving employee engagement may increase customer satisfaction, which may improve the sustainability of financial institutions. Based on the analysis of the interview responses and relevant archival company documents, I identified three major themes: (a) Theme 1: effectively communicate goals, (b) Theme 2: training and coaching, and (c) Theme 3: recognition and rewards. The findings from this study are relative to the expectancy theory because motivation stimulates employees to engage and exert efforts to increase productivity and meet goals. Managers who implement these strategies may have chances of increasing employee engagement and strengthening organizational effectiveness. This study has applicability to professional practice because managers may use the findings to develop practical business solutions to maintain a competitive advantage.

Leaders may consider the findings useful to improve business operations if there is a commitment to investing in motivating and engaging employees in increasing productivity and organizational effectiveness. Productivity levels are increased when managers focus on engaging employees and performance (Hanaysha, 2016). Focusing on engagement strategies is relevant to improved business practice because disengaged employees affect organizational effectiveness (Khan, 2016). Therefore, managers who apply the main themes of this study, effective communication, training and coaching, and rewards and recognition, within daily operations, may gain relevant knowledge on employee engagement to enhance productivity and organizational effectiveness.

Effective communication is relevant to improving business practice. Because communication is a major factor in competitiveness and strategic advantage, managers should use open and transparent communication techniques (Muscalu, Todericiu, & Fraticiu, 2013). Managers who have characteristics of a transformational leaders are most likely to be find innovative ways to communicate the goals and expectations of an organization (Choii et al., 2016). Communication has been identified as vital to organizational efficiency and change within an organization (Luo, Song, Gebert, Zhang, & Feng, 2016). Thus, managers may find the conclusions of this study useful as a foundation to establish communication strategies relevant to improve business practices.

Training and coaching is applicable to business practices. Using the findings from the study results, managers could develop training methods that would transform the mindset and attitudes of employees to encourage behaviors that align with the culture of the organization. Training is a strategy that influences behaviors of employees and is needed to survive and be competitive in the industry (Hanaysha & Tahir, 2015). Training and coaching is a strategy to reduce burnout and disengagement; therefore, managers should determine how much should be invested through training and coaching to improve work experiences. Through effective and ongoing training and coaching, managers could achieve success in enhancing the skills of employees to perform current and future jobs.

Rewards and recognition to increase engagement, productivity and organizational effectiveness may be relevant to improving business practices. Managers could use findings from this study to develop reward and recognition programs that will enhance performance levels. To develop an effective rewards program, managers should determine whether employees are intrinsically or extrinsically motivated. Rewards and recognition increase engagement because employees feel valued and feel obligated to respond with increased levels of performance (Ghosh, Chauhan, Baranwal, & Srivastava, 2016). Therefore, managers could use the conclusions from this study to assist with evaluating what employee's value and what rewards would be beneficial in improving productivity and organizational effectiveness.

The results of this study may provide credit union managers with guidelines on the causes of disengagement and how employee engagement could be improved within the organization. Consequently, credit union managers may use the results of this study to measure and re-evaluate the effectiveness of existing engagement strategies and make changes that fit the culture of the credit union. Credit union managers may also use the findings of this study to discuss other engagement strategies that may improve productivity and organizational effectiveness.

Implications for Social Change

Managers of credit unions have a challenging task to differentiate one credit union from another because many credit unions offer the same products and services. The demand to maintain relevancy in the credit union industry require managers to invest in employee engagement in order maintain the competitive advantage. The implications for positive social change include the potential for managers to improve understanding of what causes engagement and disengagement, what internal policies are active that cause disengagement, and what benefits would be established if engagement strategies were put in to place.

The results of this study may provide managers with knowledge on employee engagement strategies used to improve productivity and organizational effectiveness within the credit union industry. As engagement within the organization increases, counterproductive behaviors and attitudes of employees decrease, which results in higher levels of productivity (Van De Voorde et al., 2016). Addressing existing or new employee engagement strategies may improve the competitive environment of the credit union industry, which may translate developing individuals who not only engage in the workplace but could also translate into engagement within communities and society.

Recommendations for Action

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore employee engagement strategies credit union managers use to increase productivity and organizational effectiveness. The continuous growth of Louisiana credit unions has resulted in 192 credit unions where employees serve over 1.24 million members (Credit Union National

Association, 2016). Credit union CEOs, human resource managers, and branch managers should pay attention to the findings of this study because credit union managers who understand and implement successful engagement strategies are likely to increase productivity and organizational performance.

Managers should determine whether the strategies presented in this study align with existing strategies and make adjustments that would benefit productivity and organizational performance. I recommend that credit union managers develop and implement employment engagement strategies to increase productivity and organizational effectiveness to effectively to maintain branch locations and service members. Engaged employees produce positive organizational results (Hanaysha, 2016). Recommendations for managers to increase employee engagement include a focus on employee’s emotional mindset, communicate goals, training, coaching, rewards, and recognition.

The first recommendation is that credit union managers should focus on what causes disengagement within the organization. Focusing on the emotional mindset of employees require managers to identify and address negative attitudes and behaviors that cause performance levels to decrease. Managers could begin with disengagement factors such as burnout, job demand and resources, and overall support to determine the causes of emotional distress among employees. Credit union managers may use the findings of this study to develop strategies that focus on building relationships with employees to understand what motivates employees to become engaged.

The second recommendation is that managers should ensure all lines of communication are open, available, and used to communicate goals effectively. Several participants noted that employees valued feedback. Strategies to disseminate feedback should be considered when developing communication strategies. Managers should consider both upward and downward communication so managers voice could be heard, but also allow employees to communicate suggestions and concerns that may help increase productivity. Managers should also consider several personalized communication channels, such as face to face communication and team meetings, when communicating with employees.

Another recommendation to credit union managers would be to provide the necessary training and coaching to help employees meet goals. Effective communication would not be a successful strategy without training staff on how to reach the goals that are communicated. Managers should consider several avenues of training to equip staff with the knowledge to be productive. I recommend that managers determine the needs of employees and base training on those needs. Employees can easily suffer from burnout when there is a job mismatch, so training employees on different jobs may increase production levels of employees. Training methods that could be considered include one on one training, webinars, interactive training, and instructor led training. While training on goals is important, managers should also consider coaching employees. Coaching is an ongoing effort to ensure employees are successful. Managers who coach employees increase engagement and performance because support and feedback is continuously provided on areas that were trained.

The final recommendation is that managers should reward and recognize behaviors that align with the culture of the organization. Several participants noted that different rewards motivate employees. I recommend using different tools to reward and recognize employees such as recognizing employees on a social network and give rewards based on employee's interest. Managers who recognize employees on social network sites may see an increase in confidence, which may result in employees repeating the behaviors that caused the recognition. Managers must realize that all employees are motivated differently, so rewarding based on an employee's interest may increase engagement throughout the organization instead within a certain group.

Publication of this study could be useful in future studies on leadership and employee engagement. I will present my findings with business professionals through journals, business publications, credit union conferences, and workshops. I will also conduct additional research on employee engagement and motivation to be published in the future.

Recommendations for Further Research

The focus of this qualitative single case study was on strategies that credit union managers used to increase productivity and organizational effectiveness. The study was specific to employees within one, small to mid-size credit union in the Southern region of the United States. I selected managers to represent the sample to provide perspectives on engagement strategies to increase productivity and organizational effectiveness. I noted several limitations and areas for further research.

The study limitations included sample size, geographical location, and research method. One limitation of this study is the sample size of participants. Six managers of one credit union do not represent the overall population of credit unions within Louisiana.

One recommendation for further research is to use a larger sample size within the population, which include other credit unions managers within Louisiana, to understand the similarities and differences between strategies used to engage employees. I also recommend that future researchers explore employee engagement strategies from the perspective of the employees instead of managers. Another limitation included a geographic location. I recommend further study include replicating the existing study with credit unions outside the geographical location of South Louisiana to determine if the findings would be similar or different in other locations. Lastly, a limitation included the research method. I conducted qualitative research, but I recommend future researchers to consider conducting a quantitative study to receive a valuable statistical explanation of the strategies that credit union managers use to engage employees.

Reflections

My experience within the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) Doctoral program has been challenging and rewarding. During this journey, there were challenges I faced that would cause many to give up, but because of the encouragement of my chair, classmates, and family, I was able to complete the goals that I set. I have gained new friends who encouraged me throughout this entire process.

The motivation for this study was based on work related experiences related to employee engagement. During my career as a branch manager, I recognized the challenges of disengaged employees that contributed negatively to productivity and organizational effectiveness. My interest prompted me to want to explore employee engagement strategies that would increase productivity and organizational effectiveness.

Conclusion

The study reported on research that explored employee engagement strategies uses in a Louisiana credit union to improve productivity and organizational effectiveness. The central research question was: What employee engagement strategies credit union managers used to increase productivity and organizational effectiveness? The credit union that participated in this study had an employee engagement program in place, required managers to adhere to the engagement program, and considered engagement a priority to maintain a competitive advantage and productivity.

Three themes emerged from the research-effectively communicate goals, training and coaching, and recognition and rewards. I linked the findings of this study to existing literature related to motivation and employee engagement. The findings of this study align with Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory because employees who are motivated become engaged and exert efforts to increase productivity and meet organizational goals.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Preinterview		**Notes**
Selecting Respondents	Initial contact via email. Information on research emailed. Respondent Identifier	
Setting Interview Time and Place	Closed environment within the organization as selected by participant. Interview Time: Approximately one hour There will be a gap of approximately 30 minutes between each interview or conducted on different days to protect the privacy of the participants.	
Building Rapport	Explain purpose of the study and voluntary nature of the study. The purpose of this interview is to explore strategies managers found effective in improving employee engagement to increase productivity and organizational performance in the credit union industry. I have worked in the credit union industry for over 13 years and found employee engagement has a positive impact on performance. My purpose is to help other industry leaders gain an understanding of different engagement strategies and implement those strategies that fit the organization Participation is voluntary. The decision to participate does not impact the participant's current or future relationship with the researcher Inform the participant to stop the interview if any discussion becomes offensive, threatening, sensitive, or degrading.	

	Inform the participant to enhance industry knowledge and establish best practice the participant should avoid providing a response based on perceptions of what the researcher may want to hear and ensure all responses are honest.	
Explaining the Study and Consent	Participant agreed to participate in the study by replying 'I Consent' to the invitational email	
Recording the Interview	Record each interview	
Interview		
Introduction	**Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study. I have studied the literature and identified some of the most successful strategies to improve employee engagement. The open-ended interview questions allow you to elaborate on how you, as a credit union manager, have improved employee engagement within the credit union industry.** **After the interviews, I will record my thoughts of the interview. I will transcribe the interviews and send you an email to verify the accuracy of all the information you provided.**	
Interview Questions	**Notes (Define abbreviated terms)**	**Nonverbal Notes**
How is employee engagement determined?		
What are the strategies used to engage employees to increase productivity and organizational effectiveness?		
What circumstances caused you to develop strategies to engage employees?		
What influence do the strategies have on productivity levels,		

income goals, and sustainability?		
What were noticeable barriers during the implementation of the engagement strategies?		
Describe any implications for disengaged employees.		
What other information could you share concerning engagement and disengagement in the credit union industry?		

Interview Wrap Up	
Thank Participant	**I appreciate you taking time out of your busy schedule to complete this interview. Your practices are important to the credit union industry. I will to ensure I have conveyed the meaning of your responses. I will transcribe the interview and synthesize the responses for your review and approval. I will email you with a synthesis of your interview to ensure my transcription is accurate. This process is called the member checking.**
Member Checking- Sent to participants via email.	
Member Check Email	**Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to validate the responses from our initial interview. I would like to ensure I accurately convey your meaning through the member check process. Please review each question and your response.** **Participants will need to respond to my email with corrections, comments, or 'No Changes'. Reviewing interpretations should not take more than 30 minutes.**

Interview Question	**Synthesis of Response**	**Accurate Y or N (Did I miss anything)**	**Additional Information (Anything you would like to add)**	**Addition al Question s after Synthesis**
How is employee engagement determined?				
What are the strategies used to				

engage employees to increase productivity and organizational effectiveness?				
What circumstances caused you to develop strategies to engage employees?				
What influence do the strategies have on productivity levels, income goals, and sustainability?				
What were noticeable barriers during the implementation of the engagement strategies?				
Describe any implications for disengaged employees.				
What other information could you share concerning engagement and disengagement in the credit union industry?				

Appendix B: Letter of Cooperation

Letter of Cooperation

March 29, 2017

Dear Joy Smith,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled 'Management Strategies to Improve Employee Engagement in the Credit Union Industry' on our premises. As a part of this study, I authorize you to contact credit union managers and supervisors within the organization who used strategies to improve employee engagement. In addition, I authorize you to conduct and record interviews, collect data, and engage in follow-up discussions with our employees related to their interview responses. You may also conduct the participant observation process, within the organization, which covers each participant and will occur at different times. I give you permission to access relevant documentary evidence through performance and goal spreadsheets and documentation used when planning engagement strategies. Individuals participation in the study will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include allowing credit unions managers to participate in the study. We understand that potential participants, whether they decide to participate or not, will not be disclosed to us because of confidentiality. We will provide a conference room to conduct the interviews. We will also provide copies of any documentation regarding employee engagement processes and procedures that the organization is comfortable sharing. We will allow observations of managers and employees that might provide more insight regarding employee interaction and engagement strategies in action. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University Institutional Review Board.

Sincerely,
[redacted]
Name of Authorization Official
Contact Information

Appendix C: Observation Protocol

Observation Protocol		**Observations and Field Notes**
Duration of observations	The observation process will involve each participant and will last for approximately 30 minutes for each participant	
What will I be observing?	Observe how managers communicate and engage with employees. Observe manager's interactions with employees.	
Wrap up	Thank managers for allowing me to conduct direct observations for my research study.	