

2018

## Mentoring Elements that Influence Employee Engagement

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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Walden University  
2018

Abstract

Mentoring Elements that Influence Employee Engagement

by

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MA, Davenport University, 2006

BS, Davenport University, 2003

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

Walden University

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## Abstract

Employee disengagement is a significant issue for leaders and managers in many organizations. The general problem is the workforce in many American organizations includes disengaged employees. In 2016, only 33% of the workforce in the United States was engaged. The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationship between the independent variables of mentoring, which include role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and mentoring friendship functions with a dependent variable of employee engagement. The moderating variable of perceived organizational support was measured to test the strength or weakness of the effects that mentoring has on employee engagement. The theoretical foundation for this study was social exchange theory. The researcher recruited a convenience sample of 307 technicians and technologists representing 7 industries. The participants completed surveys and questionnaires to provide their views of mentoring, perceived organizational support, and work engagement. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential analysis, including Pearson's correlations, linear, and stepwise regression analysis. The results of the inferential analyses indicated that each part of the mentoring variables (career support, psychosocial support, and role modeling) had an independent impact on work engagement. The interaction between psychosocial support and organizational support was also significant after accounting for the effects of mentoring and organizational support. The findings indicate that managers can achieve positive social change and improve employee well-being within their organizations by being dutifully involved in their employees' work lives. Managers should also be available to apply resources such as mentoring for technicians and technologists when needed.

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## Dedication

I would like to dedicate this paper to my wife Twanette and my mother Louise Fresh. You have been very supportive and very patient with me during this journey.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to dedicate this paper to those engineering technicians and technologists who have worked tirelessly throughout their careers without a mentor or someone to guide you. I am confident that mentoring would have made a significant difference in your careers. The engineering field is difficult to work in without some support. Sandra Forris, you have been an inspiration for me when I was not sure what path I would take. I owe you much gratitude. I would like to give a special thanks to my mother, Louise Fresh: you gave me support at an early age, and I will be forever grateful to you. To my sister Wanda and my brothers Milton and Eric: thank you for supporting me and encouraging me when times were tough. To my wife, Twanette: I could not have made this journey without you being there. I appreciate your patience and tolerance for the times we could not spend together. I would like to give thanks to God. You heard my prayers, and you answered when I was losing faith. I never dreamed I would get this far in life, and you saw something in me that I could not see. Thank you for making all this possible. I am also very grateful to have a supportive committee who has provided excellent support and guidance. To Dr. Donna Brown and Dr. Dean Frost: thank you very much. Last, I would like to thank Mrs. Terri Scandura, Mr. Robert Eisenberger, and Mr. Wilmar Schaufeli for permitting me to use your copyrighted materials in my study. Your prior work has allowed me to be successful in my research.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Managers and senior leaders are continually looking for ways to create a work culture in which employees are motivated and engaged. The presence of a motivated workforce is vital to organizational and operational success. Without a motivated and engaged workforce, managers have difficulty reaching productivity targets (Abraham, 2012). According to Corbin (2017), in 2016, only 33% of the workforce in the United States was engaged. This is a disappointment to managers with the knowledge that engaged employees are critical to the success of the organization (Abraham, 2012). Unmotivated workers negatively affect the financial welfare of an organization (“Increasing employee engagement,” 2015). Globally, the number of disengaged employees results in billions of dollars in productivity losses (Ghadi, Fernando, & Caputi, 2013). More specifically, the economic consequences globally are approximately \$7 trillion in lost productivity (Harter, 2016). Managers who support highly engaged employees benefit from increased levels of competitive advantage (Anitha, 2014; Shuck & Rose, 2013). Engaged employees have better job performance because they are productive, efficient, and they produce a better quality of work (Shuck & Herd, 2012). In this study, I sought to demonstrate that formal mentoring as a form of social support can influence employee engagement. Many organizations do not have effective mentoring strategies due to a lack of corporate level support (Friday & Friday, 2002); however, some organizations have discovered that mentoring is a significant influence on employee retention and engagement (Short, 2013). The employment of effective mentoring strategies could provide substantial benefits to organizations and organizational managers.

An engaged workforce has many benefits. These benefits include improved job performance, productivity, task efficiency and work quality (Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010; Shuck, Rocco, & Albornoz, 2010). Mentoring can also offer many benefits. A mentor provides an essential role that supports, counsels, and guides a mentee in his or her personal and professional career development (Kram, 1988). Through this relationship, the mentee perceives the organization as a caring place to grow and develop. The investment from the mentor will help the mentee become valuable to the organization. Short (2013) claimed that mentoring helps employees cope with organizational change, complexity, and the pressures of employment. Improved job performance, productivity, task efficiency, work quality, and mentoring are a few of many antecedents that can influence employee engagement (Anitha, 2014; Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014; Lo & Ramayah, 2011; Shuck & Herd, 2012).

Mentoring that provides psychosocial support can be beneficial to employees. Protégés often value the psychosocial aspects of mentoring (Vanderbilt, 2010). Researchers have found mentoring that offers psychosocial support to alleviate work-related stress (Craig, Allen, Reid, Riemenschneider, & Armstrong, 2013). Employees who experience less stress are more involved in their work (Craig et al., 2013). Thus, introducing mentoring that provides psychosocial support for employee engagement may produce positive social change for the work culture and the organization. Through interaction and personal involvement, managers may develop stronger bonds with their employees.

## **Background**

The focus of this study was to address the issue of employee engagement by introducing mentoring that provides psychosocial support in engineering organizations. Researchers have estimated that employee engagement is a significant problem in most organizations, with an average of 50-70% of workers who are not engaged (Wollard, 2011). The environment in which the employee works plays an essential role in how much engagement or disengagement exists (Reio & Sanders-Reio, 2011; Shuck & Wollard, 2010). Disengaged employees feel psychologically unaccepted and unappreciated by their workplace (Shuck & Wollard, 2010). Poor workforce engagement can be detrimental to an organization due to a decrease in employee well-being and productivity (Shuck & Reio, 2013). In addition, disengaged employees display behaviors that lead to low job satisfaction attitudes and low productivity. Some employees do not feel engaged because they do not have a bond with their managers (Crabb, 2011). Valentin (2014) declared that the ultimate disengagement occurs when workers withdraw their labor. To avoid disengagement, managers can employ specific strategies. Effective management strategies known to foster employee engagement include knowledge of the employee and building sustainable friendships. Another path for engaging employees in organizations is through mentoring.

Mentored employees possess positive attitudes and a positive attachment to their organization (Dawley, Andrews, & Bucklew, 2010; Finney, MacDougall, & O'Neill, 2012). In this study, I sought to demonstrate that formal mentoring can influence employee engagement. Formal mentoring programs match individuals as part of the employee development process consisting of career and psychosocial development



(Wanberg, Kammeyer-Mueller, & Marchese, 2006). The two individuals in the mentoring dyad must strive to know one another. In contrast, informal mentoring allows individuals to choose the mentors from whom they wish to learn (Joshi & Sikdar, 2015). Although both mentoring schemes may be effective, I focused on formal mentoring in the current study. Kram (1988) defined mentoring as a relationship between an older, more experienced adult who helps a younger individual learn and navigate through the organization. The older adult provides the younger individual with career development and psychosocial skills (Kram, 1988). Kalbfleisch (2002) defined mentoring as a relationship of care and assistance between mentors and mentees. Career functions include networking and providing developmental opportunities. Psychosocial functions include personal bonding such as counseling, friendships, and role modeling (Kram, 1988). Kram and Baranik, Roling, and Eby (2010) further defined psychosocial support as the support that a mentor provides to enhances individuals' sense of competence, identity, and effectiveness in their professional role and a sense of belonging. Establishing a friendship with a mentor helps the protégé to feel appreciated and supported. Functions of mentoring provide individuals with the support that may improve their experience in the workforce.

Mentoring can also set the stage for the development of employee engagement. Employees who have experienced a personal bond with their mentors have shown progress in employee engagement (Finney et al., 2012). Mentors enhance the performance of their employees (Baranik et al., 2010; Rolfe, 2010). Based on the social exchange theory, individuals feel obligated to commit to their organization when they receive support from their agents (Baranik et al., 2010). This commitment results in

increased performance. The socialization and the relationships that employees' experience is influential to their experience with their organization. Mentoring roles that provide support for role modeling, friendship, and counseling are specific causes and critical drivers needed for employee engagement.

The conventional type of one-on-one mentoring ties back to Greek mythology, when Odysseus entrusted the care of his son Telemachus to his friend identified as Mentor (Adams, 2016). Today, in addition to one-on-one mentoring, many types of mentoring schemes exist. A few of those schemes include virtual mentoring, which allows for self-directed and subject-specific mentoring by way of the internet; flash mentoring, which provides an appearance of mentoring that is noncommittal for a predetermined period; and speed mentoring, which compares to speed dating (Adams, 2016). For this study, the mentoring scheme that I examined was the typical one-on-one formal mentoring. In this scheme, a protégé is assigned a mentor to provide career and psychosocial support. Researchers have shown that having a mentor improves employees' engagement. Anaza, Nowlin, and Wu (2016) conducted a study to investigate the influence of emotional labor and job resources on employee's customer orientation and their relationship to the three dimensions of job engagement: vigor, absorption, and dedication. Schaufeli, Bakker, and Salanova (2006) expressed vigor, absorption, and dedication as characteristics of engagement. Participants in these researchers' study consisted of 278 U.S. retail food service employees (Schaufeli et al., 2006). Sixty percent of the participants were women who were an average of 36 years old (Schaufeli et al., 2006). The participants completed surveys used to measure variables associated with emotional labor, job resources, and job engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2006). The findings

indicated that having a mentor and an expressive, emotional network resources increases customer orientation—which, in turn, increases work engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2006).

The type of mentoring that an organization employs may or may not improve employees' level of work engagement. Anaza et al. (2016) concluded that mentoring could be effective for enhancing work engagement. These authors made it clear that the mentor does not have to be a direct supervisor, and that this type of relationship is not the same as mentoring support. Dreher and Chargois (1998) also stated that the standard subordinate/supervisor relationship is not a mentoring relationship. Anaza et al. (2016) also implied that frontline employees need mentors in order to provide emotional support with a long-term focus. Mentoring support helps employees with their current performance and the performance required to achieve their organization's strategic goals. The implications are that managers could benefit from effective mentoring programs.

Employees who do not experience mentoring are subject to challenges such as trying to make their way through the organization and a sense of loss (Tolar, 2012; Vanderbilt, 2010). These challenges are stressful especially when employees need orientation support and encouragement. Short (2014) also hypothesized that employees without mentors are more likely to experience workplace stress and burnout. In a study of the Australian rail company, Short stated that some employees without mentors lost control and vented their emotions, while others became disengaged and lacked the motivation to perform. Such actions by employees can present problems for managers such as low productivity, withdrawal, and employee turnover. The mentee experiences reduced stress when they received mentoring (Baranik et al., 2010; Craig et al., 2013).

Some employees, however, have reported that mentoring is not useful and that not having a mentor was not an issue in their careers (Tolar, 2012). Others have expressed problems with mentoring, such as a lack of shared values and manipulative behavior (Tolar, 2012). The benefits, however, can outweigh the shortcomings of poor mentors. Positive mentoring experiences encourage employees to respond positively to their organization, primarily due to employees' increased perceptions of organizational support (Baranik et al., 2010). Managers can do a great deal to produce a productive and engaged workforce.

Managers who support and invest in their work cultures are looking for positive returns from their employees. To influence reciprocal efforts, managers must ensure that their employees feel valued, respected, supported, and that they are contributing members of the organization (James, McKechnie, & Swanberg, 2011). Most engineers enter the engineering profession unprepared to handle their tasks; these engineers require support to facilitate their development and social engagement into the work culture (Peeran, 2015). Effective career and psychosocial mentoring help engineers integrate into the organization (Peeran, 2015). In addition to developmental support, mentoring helps engineers become employable by improving their soft skills (Nair & Mukherjee, 2005). Soft skills consist of interpersonal skills and personal attributes (Robles, 2012). Robles conducted a study on executives' perceptions of the top 10 soft skills needed in the workplace. The top 10 soft skills that this investigator identified as the most important were communication, courtesy, flexibility, integrity, interpersonal skills, positive attitude, professionalism, responsibility, teamwork, and work ethic (Robles, 2012). Engineers acquire such soft skills from their role models. As a result of the acquisition of these

skills, engineers increase their engagement and strengthen their commitment to the organization.

Social exchange theory is the basis for theories that influence employee engagement (Agarwal, 2014). In social exchange, the first party provides a service to a second party which returns service to the first party (Blau, 1964). The reciprocal action between the two individuals continues until the exchange is unfavorable (Blau, 1964). At the individual level, social exchange is appropriate for dyadic mentoring strategies; however, at the group or team level, social exchange, for the greater good, could extend to a productive exchange (Blau, 1964). According to Emerson (1976), unlike the direct transfer in a simple exchange process, items of value are produced through a value-adding process. When the social exchange efforts diminish, the relationship will also decrease (Emerson, 1976). Consequently, it is essential to establish significant connections within the organization.

Some authors have illustrated the effectiveness of mentoring in improving employee engagement (Baranik et al., 2010; Finney et al., 2012; Rolfe, 2010). Such findings have suggested that positive mentoring experiences for employees will obligate them to give more of themselves to their organization (Baranik et al., 2010). Employees give more of themselves to their managers and their organization when they feel supported (Baranik et al., 2010). Organizations provide support in several ways, but the key is to meet the needs of the employees. Perceived organizational support (POS) and perceived supervisor support (PSS) influence exchange actions from employees (Finney et al., 2012). Finney et al. implied that employees who sense their organizations and leaders as sympathetic feel compelled to remain with their organization. Effective

managers help build enthusiasm, improve productivity, and create results that enhance customer satisfaction (Langford, 2013). Managers who do not actively support their employees and show a lack of concern and interest in the organization will not be effective in employee engagement initiatives (Crabb, 2011). Uncaring leaders show a lack of approval and presence (Crabb, 2011). This form of managerial behavior leads to employee disengagement; therefore, positive mentoring relationships are vital to employee engagement.

The research gap that I explored in this study was the impact of the qualities of mentoring (i.e., role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and friendship) upon employee engagement in the work environment. I also explored how mentoring psychosocial support affects employee engagement. As recent scholars have shown, employee engagement is still a significant concern in many workplaces (Howell, 2017; Rana, Ardichvili, & Tkachenko, 2014; Tucker, 2017). Fully disengaged employees are weary, unproductive, and skeptical; such employees represent 70% of the U.S. workforce (Wollard, 2011). Increased awareness of this problem, as well as possible methods for decreasing, it may help human resource (HR) professionals and managers improve their employees' engagement.

The concepts that I explored in this study, including employee engagement, perceived organizational support, and mentoring, are very important to managers. Managers who understand the concepts underlying employee engagement, perceived organizational support, and mentoring are likely to capitalize on the benefits for organizational gains through increased performance (Tucker, 2017), reduced employee turnover (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, & Sowa, 1986; Richard, Ismail, Bhuian,

& Taylor, 2009), and happier employees (Ragins, 2016). Engaged employees have close relationships with their managers (Howell, 2017). This is important because managers need cooperation, collaboration, and dedication from their employees in order to ensure the alignment of organizational goals and the execution of work (Howell, 2017).

Managers' personalities can enhance or inhibit employee engagement (Saks & Gruman, 2011). The manager/employee relationship is critical when an organization is going through significant changes. Engaged employees help the manager implement change and it helps the manager become an effective change agent (Saks & Gruman, 2011).

Mentoring is important to managers because of the profound positive impact on individuals and the organization (Allen & O'Brien, 2006). Mentors help their protégés develop their own identity in the organization, gain self-confidence, and become more effective in their work roles (Kram, 1988). Mentors can also make their protégés feel accepted and valued (Noe, 1988). This suggests that an employee who feels appreciated and valued would give more of him or herself to the organization. Perceived organizational support is important to managers because employees need to feel the organization cares about their well-being and their existence in the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Employees who perceive managers as supportive and caring will increase their effective commitment to the organization and the employee will provide an increase in performance. The social exchange theory indicates that employees who feel obligated to give back to a manager who demonstrates supportive and caring conduct (Breevaart, Bakker, Demerouti, & Van den Heuvel, 2015). In addition, employees are less likely to leave their organization when they perceive the presence of organizational support (Park, Newman, Zhang, Wu, & Hooke, 2016).

## **Problem Statement**

Employee disengagement is a significant issue for managers in many organizations. Employee disengagement represents a substantial cost to the organization (Wollard, 2011). The general problem of the study was that the workforce in many American organizations includes detached employees. A disengaged employee can cause a decrease in productivity, an increase in employee turnover, and a reduction in customer satisfaction (Shuck & Wollard, 2010). One method of engaging the workforce consists of providing workers effective mentoring. McCray, Turner, Price, and Constable (2014) conducted a study on the impact of social care mentorship on employee engagement. These authors concluded that a mentorship program implemented by the organization was helpful in building positive engagement among the employees. The specific problem of the current study was that the variables of mentoring that can have the greatest impact on increasing employee engagement among technicians and technologists are unknown.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationship between the independent variables of mentoring, which include role modeling, acceptance, and confirmation, and mentoring friendship functions with a dependent variable of employee engagement. I measured the moderating variable of perceived organizational support to test the strength or weakness of the effect that mentoring has on employee engagement. Mentoring consists of career development and psychosocial support; individuals may receive mentoring from multiple people (Kram, 1988). Perceived organizational support refers to an employee's perception that his or her organization values his or her contributions and well-being (Kurtessis et al., 2015). Shuck and Wollard (2010) defined



employee engagement as the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral energy an employee directs towards positive organizational outcomes. Employee engagement also describes an employee that demonstrates active immersion, involvement, and persistence in his or her work (Gruman & Saks, 2011). I used quantitative data from survey instruments to test (a) the impact of independent variables (i.e., role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and friendship) on employee engagement, (b) the impact of the moderator variable (perceived organization support) on each of the mentoring variables, and (c) the influence on the dependent variable of employee engagement. I predicted that the mentoring functions, role modeling, acceptance, and confirmation, and friendship would positively influence employee engagement for technicians or technologists.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationship between the independent variables of mentoring, which include role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and mentoring friendship functions with a dependent variable, of employee engagement. Perceived organizational support is the moderator variable, which predicts the strength or weakness of the independent variables on the dependent variables.

The research question and hypotheses that guided this study were as follows.

RQ1: To what degree do perceived organizational support and mentoring, significantly account for work engagement?

$H_01$ : The overall regression equation, including the independent variable of perceived organizational support and mentoring together, does not account for a significant amount of work engagement.

$H_{a1}$ : The overall regression equation, including the independent variable of perceived organizational support and mentoring together, does account for a significant amount of work engagement.

RQ2: To what degree do the three mentoring functions (role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and friendship) scores result in a significant change in variance accounted for?

$H_02$ : Of the three mentoring function scores (role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and friendship), none of the three will have significant result for the test of change in variance accounted for.

$H_{a2}$ : Of the three mentoring function scores (role modeling, acceptance, and confirmation, and friendship), at least one of the three will have a significant result.

RQ3: To what degree do the three measures of mentoring characteristics, (a) role modeling of the mentor, (b) acceptance and confirmation as a form of mentoring, and (c) friendship with the mentor, when tested in interaction with perceived organizational support predict a significant amount of variance in the dependent variable?

Through Research Question 3, I tested the moderation of mentoring by organizationally provided support to determine if organizational support enhances the positive impact of mentoring on employee engagement. Moderation occurs when the scale and direction of the relation between two variables depend on a third variable called a moderator variable (Fritz & Arthur, 2017). An interaction occurs when the effect of an independent variable (X) on a dependent variable (Y) causes a variance across levels of a moderating variable (Z; Andersson, Cuervo-Cazurra, & Nielsen, 2014). Interactions

provide researchers with the ability to gain an understanding of economic and social relationships by confirming the conditions of the relationships.

$H_03$ : The interaction terms (role modeling and perceived organizational support, acceptance and confirmation and perceived organization support, friendship and perceived organizational support, and work engagement and perceived organizational support) will not be significant predictors of employee engagement.

$H_a3$ : The interaction terms (role modeling and perceived organizational support, acceptance and confirmation and perceived organization support, friendship and perceived organizational support, and work engagement and perceived organizational support) will be significant in predicting employee engagement.

I predicted that in each case, increasing organizational support would lead to increasingly positive impacts for mentoring as it predicts employee engagement. By adding the moderator, perceived organizational support, to the mentoring variables in the regression model, there can be a greater understanding of the relationship between these variables in the model.

I used published surveys to measure the variables in the study. The instruments within the survey measured mentoring functions, work engagement, and perceived organizational support. I used Scandura's (2004) mentoring function questionnaire (MFQ-9) to measure the protégés' mentoring experience regarding career support, psychosocial support, and role modeling. I used Schaufeli and Bakker's (2003) Utrecht Work Engagement scale (UWES) to measure how the employees feel at work. I used the survey of perceived organizational support (SPOS) of Eisenberger et al. (1986) to measure employees' views of their organization.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationship between the independent variables of mentoring, which include role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and the moderator variable, perceived organizational support with a dependent variable, of employee engagement. The social exchange theory provided an avenue to see the problem of employee disengagement in the American workforce. Within this theoretical framework, individuals engage in social exchange by contributing their efforts and endowments, thereby hoping to receive valued outcomes, as if specified in some form of contract.

### **Social Exchange Theory**

The social exchange theory is defined as a series of interactions between individuals who are in a state of reciprocal interdependence (Gruman & Saks, 2011). Blau (1964) summarized social exchange by stating that an individual who supplies rewarding services to another will cause the individual to feel a sense of obligation. Emerson (1976) agreed with Blau (1964) that social exchange could be useful for individual relationships, however; Emerson suggested that a different type of exchange process should occur at the group level. According to Emerson, Blau's social exchange is beneficial at the micro level, but corporations require a conceptual approach to the social process at the macro level. Emerson concluded the idea of productive exchange promptly accommodates a large number of actors, which releases the social exchange theory from its presumed dyadic arrangement. On the basis of this study, however, the mentoring process for employee engagement commences with a single relationship. The overarching goal for leaders would be to improve employee engagement throughout the

organization. Consequently, when managers commit themselves to their employees through adequate support and resources, there is a significant level of engagement from employees. For example, a manager could expect a positive reciprocal response from an employee who requested a temporary flexible work schedule (Guest, 2014). When an employee senses little or no support from his or her organization, the employee may cancel future services or decrease efforts to perform. Employees want to “see and feel” that their organization is supportive and giving before they fully engage themselves in their work.

The implied exchange the employee perceives with his or her organization leads to employee's perception of organizational support (Biggs, Brough, & Barbour, 2014). The employee may also perceive supervisor support through positive leadership exchanges. In a study of ethical leadership, Chughtai, Byrne, and Flood (2015) demonstrated that when supervisors build a trust-based relationship with their subordinates, they are likely to receive increased work engagement and reduced effects of burnout from the subordinates. Opinions of organizational support will often lead the employees to feel valued and recognized (Rich et al., 2010).

Employees view the exchange of leader support of friendship, confirmation and acceptance, and role modeling as a value arising from their participation in the organization. The leader-member exchange bond becomes valuable to the organization. The social exchange theory supports concepts such as employee engagement, mentoring, and supervisor support. In a second theoretically related study, social exchange theory was the basis for testing a model of the antecedents and results of job and organizational commitment. James et al. (2011) used the social exchange theory and the norm of

reciprocity as a basis for examining six principles of job quality. These authors sought to understand the impact on employee engagement. The participants included older and younger workers at different cycles in their careers in a retail setting. The findings of the study revealed discretionary efforts of the organizational representative lead to more engaged and more productive workers during tough economic times. Discretionary effort from the organization's management in the form of goods, materials, and non-materials demonstrated to employees their willingness to be socially involved and connected to their employees. Perceived fairness had no impact on the findings; however, James et al. attributed this to circumstances in the organization. The researchers suggested that mentoring is based on social exchange principles only. James et al. indicated that mentoring psychosocial support would be a significant predictor of employee engagement in engineering organizations.

The implications of social exchange in this study are widespread. As mentors introduce psychosocial elements into their mentoring process, technicians are likely to reach a level of engagement with their organization that will produce desired outcomes. The factors of role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and friendship from the mentor encourage technicians and technologists to reciprocate by going beyond their regular work roles.

### **Perceived Organizational Support**

Perceived organization support was the second theory underlying this study. Perceived organizational support is defined as the belief employees have that their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Eisenberger et al. found that employees' perceived organizational support

improved their affective attachment to the organization. Specifically, Eisenberger et al. demonstrated that enhanced employee POS by the agent and the organization would cause a reduction in employee absenteeism. POS by the employee extends beyond improved attendance and can enhance an employee's performance. This improved performance leads to a higher level of engagement that in turn brings increased value to the organization. In a study to compare the impact of perceived organizational support, supervisor support, and mentoring, Baranik et al. (2010) emphasized that these concepts are about social exchange theory. In their study consisting of 733 substance abuse counselors in the United States, Baranik et al. suggested that mentoring functions relates to POS, as well as that POS correlated with engagement outcomes such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The perception of employees receiving something of value increases the bonding between the employee and his leadership. Consequently, the managers in the organization realize objective and subjective positive outcomes.

The framework of this study indicates that as an employee receives mentoring psychosocial functions, he or she will become more engaged in his or her work roles. It is therefore essential for managers to recognize the benefits of mentoring to engineering technicians and technologists for organizational improvement and social change in the work culture.

The theories of social exchange and perceived organizational support significantly relate to this study. These theories indicate that employee mentoring could entice technicians and technologists to feel that they are appreciated, and that the organization cares about their well-being and existence. It is through this perception that employees

feel obligated to give back to their managers and the organization. Social exchange and perceptions of organizational support could also be the reasons why most employees look forward to coming to work every day.

The theoretical framework relates to the study's research questions, survey instrument, and data analysis procedures. The research questions for this quantitative study were as follows:

RQ1: To what degree do perceived organizational support and mentoring, significantly account for work engagement?

RQ2: To what degree do the three mentoring function scores (role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and friendship) result in a significant change in variance accounted for?

RQ3: To what degree do the three measures of mentoring characteristics, (i.e., role modeling of the mentor, acceptance and confirmation as a form of mentoring, and friendship with the mentor) when each factor is tested in interaction with perceived organizational support will each be found to be significant predictor of variance in the dependent variable?

I tested the moderation of mentoring by organizationally provided support to determine if organizational support enhances the positive impact of mentoring on employee engagement. This research question proved the moderation of mentoring by organizationally offered support to determine if organizational support enhances the positive effects of mentoring on employee engagement. I predicted that perceived organizational support would have an added impact on employee engagement. Perceived organizational support as a moderator would strengthen the relationship of mentoring of



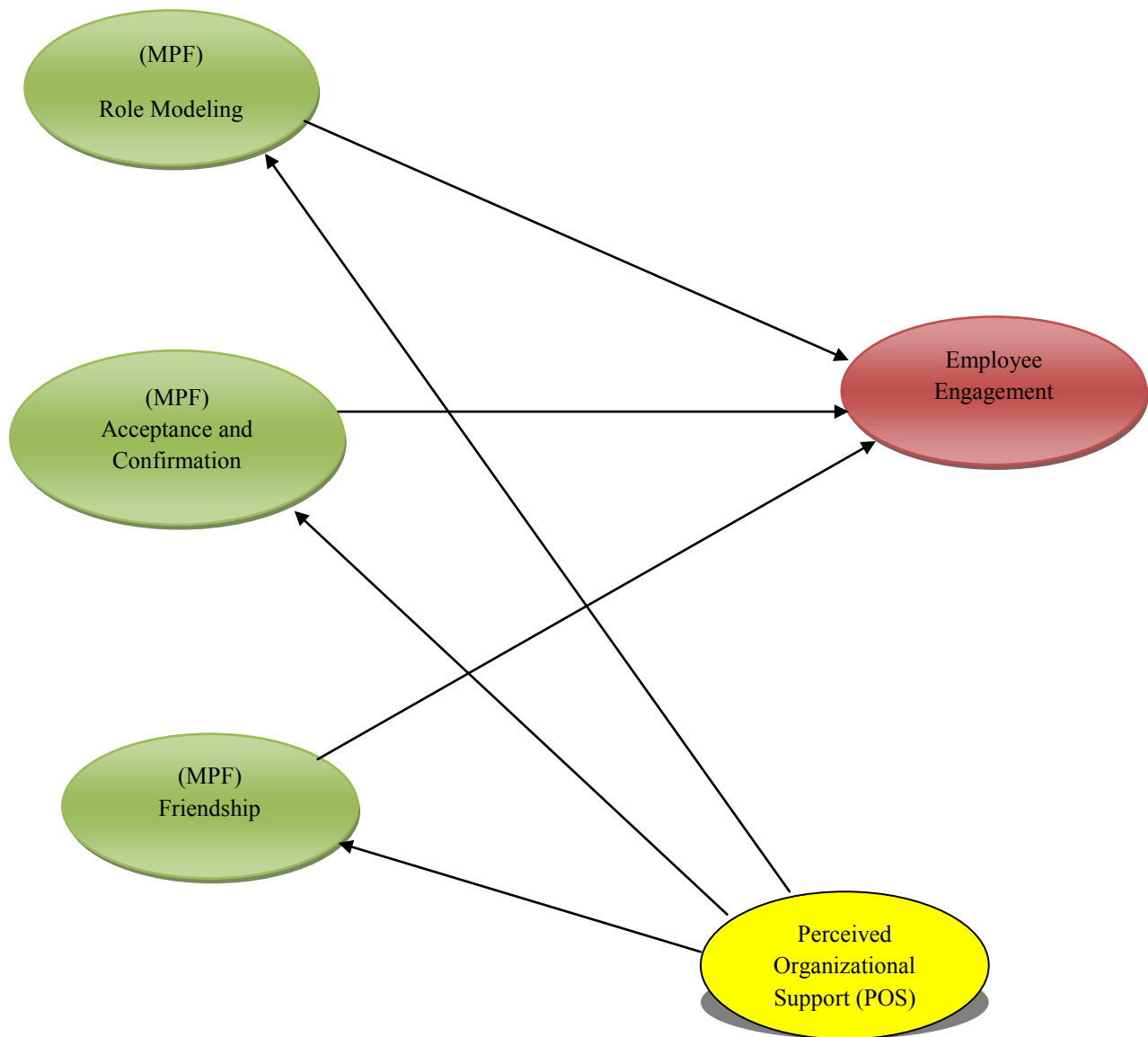
technicians and technologists to improve employee engagement. This relationship would show a substantial interactive effect on mentoring psychosocial functions and employee engagement demonstrating the importance of mentoring in organizations. Employees are likely to feel better when they perceive their organization as supportive. Additionally, employees with these perceptions may feel greater emotional attachment to their organization.

The framework relates to the research questions by drawing on previous research related to mentoring and employee engagement (see Figure 1). Baranik et al. (2010) demonstrated how psychosocial mentoring function relates to employee engagement when mediated by a social exchange. James et al. (2011) also stated that mentoring psychosocial support is a significant predictor of employee engagement. Eisenberger et al. (1986) demonstrated that POS enhances employees' performance, which leads to higher employee engagement. When the mentoring experience is positive and productive, employees' perceptions of organization support could lead to higher levels of involvement and engagement.

The framework also relates to the survey instruments that I used in the study. These survey instruments have been previously used and validated. The MFQ-9 drew upon the technician's mentoring experience. The technicians had the opportunity to state how actively their mentor provided career support, psychosocial support, and role modeling. Although career support is not one of the variables that I observed in the study, the survey instrument has been useful for comprehending all the elements of the mentoring experience. The SPOS is an 8-item survey that I used to measure the technician's perception of organizational support. The focus of the survey was to help the

technicians and technologists determine whether their organization values their well-being as it pertains to their work, accomplishments, and contributions. The UWES survey instrument solicits technicians' responses pertaining to work engagement. The UWES provided specific statements such as, "My job inspires me" and "I am immersed in my work." The UWES had nine statements requesting that participants respond by stating *never* to *always* on the scale. The UWES correlates to the employee variable in the current study.

The framework relates to the data analysis by drawing upon the surveys that correlate with the stated variables. The results of the surveys described the strength or weakness of psychosocial mentoring in relation to employee engagement. I assumed from the data that technicians and technologists who have had a satisfactory mentoring experience would show higher levels of engagement as demonstrated in their responses. Additionally, data analysis from the SPOS could reflect higher perceptions of organizational support. In Chapter 2, I will further explore the theoretical premise of social exchange and perceived organizational support.



*Figure 1.* Mentoring/employee engagement framework illustrating mentoring psychosocial support (role modeling, acceptance, and confirmation, friendship) as the independent variables and employee engagement as the dependent variable.

### **Nature of the Study**

I used a quantitative research methodology to guide this study. Quantitative research is appropriate when scholars aim to understand relationship between variables. Quantitative research was more appropriate for this study than qualitative research. Through the quantitative method, I tested my hypotheses in order to determine whether mentoring psychosocial functions had a positive relationship with employee engagement. Using a qualitative approach would not have allowed me to test whether there is a relationship between these variables. Qualitative research is also more subjective than quantitative research. Quantitative research is more objective, and objectivity was critical to the study. As a researcher, I sought to maintain bias as not to influence the outcome of the study. In quantitative research, the participants do not know the researcher's biases (Johnson & Christensen, 2008); in qualitative research, however, the researcher has to use reflexivity to control his or her preference (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The results of quantitative research are generalizable to other populations. The findings of qualitative research are less generalizable. Last, in quantitative research, participants can complete surveys in the comfort of their environment with little to no involvement from the researcher. In qualitative research, the researcher is present in the setting of the participants, which could potentially influence participant responses (Lichtman, 2006).

Technicians and technologist were the target populations of the study. I collected data from participants in an audience pool through an online organization named Survata. Using the G\*Power 3.1.9.2 sample size calculator, I calculated a required sample size of 304 participants for my study. The study participants had the opportunity to review an informed consent form before completing the online surveys. As a requirement of the

study, participants were required to have received some formal mentoring during their career as a technician or technologist. I provided a definition of formal mentoring to ensure that I identified the correct participants for the study.

The participants completed online surveys through Survata. Survata is an online survey assistance organization that helps researchers and companies create surveys targeting a custom audience in order to provide technology-driven research for organizations and individuals (Survata, 2017). I analyzed the quantitative data using the IBM SPSS© statistics premium grad pack 21.0 using descriptive analyses. The descriptive analysis in the study included the calculation of means and standard deviations. The results of a regression analysis determined the relationships between the key independent variables of role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and confirmation and the dependent variable of employee engagement. I tested whether engagement is highest when perceived organizational support is present. I did not identify the specific type of mentoring dyad that participants received (i.e., supervisory, nonsupervisory, manager, etc.) in the study. The method of inquiry for this part of the study was a cross-sectional survey to measure the views of employee mentoring psychosocial roles, POS, and employee engagement in engineering organizations. In cross-sectional methods, the researcher employs data collection at one time in the study to a random group of people (Fowler, 2014). In a longitudinal survey, the researcher captures observations and measurements over time (Fowler, 2014). The cross-sectional method is consistent with other methods that researchers have used in mentoring and employee engagement studies (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008; Craig et al.,

2013). In order to reduce the time for capturing data from the participants, a cross-sectional approach was more appropriate than a longitudinal method.

### **Definitions**

I will now define the following terms and definitions in the context of the topic of this research.

*Acceptance and confirmation.* This variable refers to relations between the mentor and protégé when both individuals sense support and encouragement within the organization (Kram, 1988). The protégé gains a sense of belonging when he or she views the mentor acknowledges his or her existence as a member of the organization (citation).

*Disengagement.* Disengagement describes the mental state of an employee who physically or psychologically withdraws from his or her organization (Saks & Gruman, 2011). Disengagement is the withdrawal of one's preferred behaviors (Shuck & Wollard, 2010). Disengagement, the antithesis of engagement, occurs when employees are cognitively and physically detached from their work and their organization (Wollard, 2011). Employees can become disengaged due to the absence of supportive leaders, managers, and other key engagement drivers (Wollard, 2011).

*Employee engagement.* Engagement refers to the level of commitment and physical involvement that an employee gives to his/her organization (Anitha, 2014). Employees demonstrate engagement when they become physically involved in their tasks and cognitively and emotionally connected to their work (Rich et al., 2010; Shuck & Wollard, 2010).

*Friendship.* Friendship describes the aspect of mentoring that bridges the social gap between the mentor and the protégé to foster mutual understanding and bonding

(Kram, 1988). Both individuals are pleased with the friendship function because it enhances both members' experiences at work (Kram, 1988).

*Informal mentoring.* Informal mentoring compensates for voids in the formal mentoring process (Chen, Liao, & Wen, 2014; Crumpton, 2014; Desimone et al., 2014; Eby et al., 2013). Informal mentoring often occurs as an unplanned event and happens naturally between two individuals (Chen et al., 2014). Informal mentoring is based on a natural match between a junior individual and a senior one who share mutual interests (Mohtady, Könings, & van Merriënboer, 2016).

*Mentoring.* Mentoring is defined as a relationship between an older, more experienced adult who helps a younger individual learn and navigate through the organization (Kram, 1988). Scholars have also defined mentoring as a relationship of care and assistance between mentors and mentees (Kalbfleisch, 2002).

*Perceived organizational support (POS).* POS describes employees' belief that their organization values their existence and their general well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Employees experience POS when they believe that their leaders and managers provide support, opportunities for learning, and a safe work environment (Shuck et al., 2010).

*Psychosocial functions of mentoring.* This refers to the part of the mentoring process where the mentor provides the client with role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, counseling, and friendship (Vanderbilt, 2010). Psychosocial support from a mentor enhances an individual's sense of competence, identity, and effectiveness in his or her professional role (Kram, 1988) and a sense of belonging (Baranik et al., 2010).

*Role modeling.* Role modeling enables a protégé to learn and model the desired behaviors and values of a senior individual in the organization (Kram, 1988). Brown and Trevino (2014) suggested that based on the social learning theory, role models assist protégés with the acquisition of moral and other positive behaviors. Brown and Trevino (2006) alleged that role models contribute to the development of leadership skills.

*Social exchange theory (SET).* This theory describes that individuals engage in a voluntary exchange of unspecified contracts (Blau, 1964). Blau asserted that social exchange occurs when an individual provides rewarding services to another, which in turn obligates the receiver to reciprocate.

*Technician.* A technician helps engineers design, develop, test, operate, or modify equipment or machines (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017).

### **Assumptions**

The model that I evaluated in this study depicts concepts and theories concentrated in a specific industry. Due to the nature of the industry and the culture, the generality of the results was limited in scope. Researchers should consider future research related to these concepts. Next, participants were regular salary or hourly employees in their organization; the population did not include bundled or contract employees, who receive no compensation from the organization where they perform their physical task. Next, I assumed that the participants have engaged in formal mentoring at some point in their career. Additionally, I assumed that the managers have communicated their organization's mission and vision statements to their employees. Communicating the organization's mission and vision statements ensure that employees support shared



business objectives. I also assumed that all participants answered the survey honestly and openly.

There were also several methodological assumptions of the study. First, there was the assumption of linearity. As the researcher, I verified that there was a linear relationship between the employee engagement variable, the perceived organizational support moderator variable, and the mentoring variables. A nonlinear representation of the relationship between the dependent variable, the moderator variable, and the independent variables, underestimates the real relationship (Salkind, 2010). Next, I verified that two or more of the predictor variables of the multiple regression models were highly correlated. If the independent variables correlate too high, it could be difficult to interpret the *t*-test results for each parameter (Salkind, 2010). The assumption of homoscedasticity required validation. Homoscedasticity indicates that the variance of errors is the same across all levels of the independent variables (Salkind, 2010). I used scatter plots to illustrate any variance of errors. Residuals not evenly distributed around the line indicated a condition of heteroscedasticity. Last, I verified that normality exists. I viewed data plots to verify these assumptions.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

The engineering field is one of many in which employee engagement is a significant issue. Murphy and Salomone (2013) alleged that disengagement could occur as results of cohesive engineering groups operating in silos. These types of behaviors often impede knowledge transfers across groups. These authors further hypothesized that use of social media might facilitate knowledge transfer across groups, therefore, improving employee engagement (Murphy & Salomone, 2013). Murphy and Salomone

provided case examples of Lockheed Martin and Pfizer Corporation, who experienced benefits of incorporating social media technology, including greater employee engagement in the work environment and a competitive advantage (Murphy & Salomone, 2013).

Buse and Bilimoria (2014) illustrated in their study that employee engagement is specifically a problem for women in the engineering profession. The authors alleged that women who have a personal vision of their professions could overcome the challenges that women face in the engineering workplace (Buse & Bilimoria, 2014). This mixed method study included a population of 495 women in the engineering field (Buse & Bilimoria, 2014). The problems that the researchers highlighted in the study include discrimination and other bias against women (Buse & Bilimoria, 2014). The results of this research showed that organizations wanting to recruit, retain, and provide opportunities to women in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields should consider matching women with managers and mentors who can provide adequate support.

In addition to engineers working to develop, build, and design products, technicians and technologists may provide support and service to these engineers. For this match to be useful and productive, leaders and managers need to ensure technicians and technologists have the proper support and resources to keep them engaged. According to Simon (2011), delimitations are under the control of the researcher. Delimitations are those characteristics that limit the scope and define the boundaries of the study. This study will confine itself to collecting survey data from technicians and technologist within the United States. A quantitative approach was used however,

qualitative approach could provide a deeper understanding of the meaning of mentoring to technicians and technologists. Participants selected for the study are also confined to their availability within a participant pool. I found the participant pool to be an appropriate process for access technicians and technologist. Therefore, a convenience sample was used instead of a random sample.

Many studies associated with mentoring include concepts regarding the mentoring dyad such as gender, ethnicity, or age. These concepts were not explored in this study. However, the results provided observations that may imply a need for future research. Employee engagement is a commonly researched topic. Specific antecedents such as managers, work environment, autonomy, resources, and job fit are known to impact employee engagement (Anitha, 2014; Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014; Rich et al., 2010). This study does not aim to show the relationship of these antecedents but instead draws upon the subjective elements of mentoring and the relationship it has on employee engagement.

Many researchers studying mentoring have cited variables that influence the mentoring dyad, such as gender, ethnicity, or age. I did not explore the influence of these concepts in the current study. The results, however, provided observations that may indicate a need for future research. Specific antecedents such as managers, work environment, autonomy, resources, and job fit are known to impact employee engagement (Anitha, 2014; Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014; Rich et al., 2010). In this study, I did not aim to show the relationship of these antecedents, but instead to draw upon the subjective elements of mentoring and its relationship with employee engagement.

### **Limitations**

There were several limitations of this study's results. The study consisted of a cross-sectional design. I collected data at a single point in time, which provided a static perspective on the study. Additionally, I could not determine causal relationships between the research variables. A longitudinal design using repeated measures is better for investigating causality (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). A longitudinal study could have allowed me to make a more accurate assessment of changes in the level of the employee engagement variable as a function of mentoring psychosocial functions. A longitudinal design would have allowed me to detect changes in the target population (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). I selected the participants using a convenience sampling method. An advantage of convenience sampling is that, of all the sampling methods, convenience sampling is the least expensive, is the easiest to implement, and requires less time than other methods (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). A disadvantage of convenience sampling is its inability to generalize to a greater population (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Generalizability is limited to the sample itself. Additionally, convenience sampling provides insufficient power to detect differences among sociodemographic subgroups (Bornstein, Jager, & Putnick, 2013). Another limitation in the study was the participants did not identify who their mentors were. For example, the mentors may have been participants' supervisors, managers, or other non-supervisor partners. Future scholars should establish the relationship of the mentor, identify the age differential of the mentor and protégé, and determine whether the mentor was inside or outside of the organization. These details would enable the researchers to further elucidate the mentoring relationship. The participants completed their surveys using the Internet. A disadvantage of this method

was enlisting the cooperation of all the participants (Fowler, 2014). Because I was not present during the time of the survey, the participants were encouraged to complete the survey. Using the same rater affects the production of the measurement items themselves or the context of the items (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003).

### **Significance of the Study**

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationship between the independent variables of mentoring, which include role modeling, acceptance, and confirmation, the moderating variable of perceived organizational support, and the dependent variable of employee engagement. If appropriately implemented, mentoring can improve employee engagement by improving employee performance (Sun, Pan, & Chow, 2014). Mentoring concepts is most helpful for younger adults who strive to launch a successful career; however, mentoring could also provide the benefits needed to improve employee engagement for all employees. Mentored employees will likely serve as future mentors to repay the organization (Hu, Wang, Yang, & Wu, 2014). The results of the current study may provide significant awareness of the influences mentoring have on employee engagement. The numerical responses gathered from the study revealed the importance of employees' current realized value to their organization. The responses also provided a sense of the impact of role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and friendship within the organization. I collected quantitative data from participants through web-based surveys. According to Fowler (2014), the Internet has become the current frontier for data collection. In addition, Internet surveys are low-cost and have the potential for a high speed of returns. The findings could lead to the creation of a formal or

informal mentoring program with a specially developed structure, as opposed to the usual informal structure of mentoring that is directed towards mainstream employees.

The theoretical concepts of mentoring were linked to POS. In this way, the ideas of mentoring, social support, and managerial support may be improved and related to employee engagement outcomes. Neves and Eisenberger (2012) defined POS as the belief that employees have that their organization values their existence and cares about their well-being. For this study, POS is essential in defining the relationship between mentoring and employee engagement. The role modeling, friendship, and counseling effect of mentoring provide perceptions of support and care for the employees giving the employees the belief they are meaningful to the organization (Kram, 1988). This perception of support could lead to increased work engagement. Managers and mentors are representatives of the organization, and their good or bad judgments reflect directly on the company for which they work.

### **Significance to Practice**

Employee engagement is a significant problem for organizations and their leaders and managers locally and globally (Ghadi et al., 2013). Notably, engaged employees are beneficial to the health and the success of organizations (Lalitha & Singh, 2013). Without the support and the attention of managers, employees will become disengaged, and this can present a considerable cost to the organization (Wollard, 2011). In this study, I aimed to expose significant implications for HRD personnel and organizational managers. The major themes that I identified in the study pertain to managers and their role in employee engagement. Also, themes in the study related to cultural aspects of the organizational work environment, the role of mentors and their impact on the work

culture, and perceived organizational support and its implications for an improved workforce. Central to these themes is the role of the leader.

Leaders and managers play a role in how employees perform their work and how to keep employees engaged. For this to occur, leaders and managers need to demonstrate effective behaviors and attitude (Xu & Thomas, 2011). Organizations spend billions of dollars each year on leadership training and behaviors (Shuck & Herd, 2012). Training is only effective when managers execute what they have learned (Fairlie, 2011). Managers need to ensure the presence of a professional environment that hears and appreciates the voices of the employees. Holding managers and those in leadership roles accountable would improve poor behaviors and attitudes that are counterintuitive to organizational policy and objectives. An implication for HRD professionals and organizations is that proper training of its leaders and managers occurs and is ongoing and that leaders and managers are held accountable. HRD professionals could develop training programs to help managers understand the importance of providing employees with meaningful work (Fairlie, 2011). Most employees feel appreciated when they know they are contributing to the goals of the organization (Neves & Eisenberger, 2012). For leaders who exhibit ineffective behaviors, HRD could ensure that management training for managers and supervisors are designed and available to raise their skills as leaders. Conflict management training can help leaders and managers understand how to handle their incivility and the incivility of others in their culture (Reio & Sanders-Reio, 2011). Leaders and managers need to know what they say and how they act impacts those around them, as well as how employees perform their work (Shuck & Herd, 2012).

A safe work environment is equally crucial to employee engagement (Anitha, 2014). Managers need to ensure that they are supporting HRD practices in their organizations. Employees who feel they have the support of HR are more likely to be engaged (He, Luo, & Jiang, 2014). Organizations and their leaders and managers need to create desirable work environments that are physically and emotionally safe. Desirable work environments help motivate the employee to engage in his or her work (Anitha, 2014). Employees like coming to a workplace perceived as safe and non-threatening. Islam and Shazill (2011) discovered that productivity is related to a favorable working environment, asserting that a physically pleasing work environment leads to higher work output.

Another necessary implication for practice in organizations is the importance of using mentors. Mentors are essential for employee engagement because effective mentors motivate employees to reciprocate in their actions and behaviors. Managers should consider the attributes of having mentors in the workplace. The essential characteristics that mentors provide are reciprocity, developmental benefits, and consistent involvement for a specified time (Haggard, Dougherty, Turban, & Wilbanks, 2011). Mentoring also involves a mutual social exchange, as opposed to a one-way relationship (Haggard et al., 2011). The career and psychosocial benefits that mentors provide to employees will deliver positive outcomes for the organization. Managers should ensure that their employees are provided career development in order to improve promotional opportunity (Lo & Ramayah, 2011). Consequently, organizations and their managers should reinforce the benefits of mentoring to generate positive results (Lo & Ramayah, 2011). Managers should also ensure that their employees are receiving mentoring psychosocial functions,



which reduce employee stress (Baranik et al., 2010) by providing someone to act as a listening ear or a sounding board (Craig et al., 2013).

Last, engaged employees feel supported by their managers and their organization. For this perception to happen, employees need to see their leaders and managers as positive images of the organization. Leaders and managers need to demonstrate the proper behaviors and contribute to the well-being of the employees. Unsupportive leaders and managers increase employee turnover (Newman, Thanacoody, & Hui, 2012). Support requires the presence of good communication with employees (Neves & Eisenberger, 2012), and communication between management and employees should be a part of all organizations' strategic planning (Neves & Eisenberger, 2012). Communication with employees should be frequent and meaningful. Employees recognize POS when there is open communication from their leaders, and POS is useful for improving employee engagement (Rich et al., 2010). POS relates to employees' job satisfaction and affective commitment to the organization (Baranik et al., 2010). Shoss, Eisenberger, Rustubog, and Zagenczyk (2013) suggested that organizations should create a culture that values supportive employee treatment in order to reduce the likelihood of manager and supervisor abuse. Employees who experience abusive leadership may also see the entire organization as uncaring and rude (Shoss et al., 2013).

### **Significance to Social Change**

The potential findings from this study could lead to significant social change. The social change benefit for employees is that they will have leaders and organizations that value them and appreciate their efforts. Mentoring relationships should never be taken for granted. Employees who receive fair treatment and support are more creative (Cheung &

Wong, 2011), which results in an improved sense of pride and self-efficacy (Fairlie, 2011). Employees who feel good about work will want to spend time at work. Organizations could benefit from having a workforce that commits to meeting and exceeding organizational goals and objectives. Having a dedicated and motivated workforce could move the organization from marginal and mediocre standards to a company that is competitive and a company that ranks in the top Fortune 500. Anitha (2014) declared that organizations could achieve high levels of engagement when employees perceive the environment is safe, has an excellent physical surrounding, has job security, and a favorable boss. Consequently, it is the responsibility of management to create the proper work environment.

For mentoring, managers achieve social change by making mentoring activities available to all employees who desire support. Traditional mentoring consists of dyadic structures arranged by senior leaders in the organization (Kram, 1988). Consequently, most employees are not aware of mentoring opportunities and its benefits (citation). Establishing mentoring programs with entire workplace awareness could demonstrate to employees the organization is reaching out to them, and the organization wants to help them grow personally and professionally. Specifically, by providing mentoring psychosocial activities to employees, organizations could help them to deal with the pressures that come with work. Mentors create employees who are productive citizens internally and well as externally to their organizations.

### **Summary and Transition**

Due to the need to remain competitive and profitable, it is difficult to understand how organizations and leaders neglect opportunities to engage their workforce. Frontline

workers are the backbone of most organizations, and these employees require continuous support, resources, learning opportunities, alliance, and autonomy for work engagement. In order to improve employee engagement, leaders and managers should learn what is necessary for their employees and provide the tools required to facilitate a satisfactory environment. Organizations will see significant benefits when they provide mentoring, organizational support, and social support for their employees.

In Chapter 1, I presented the study research problem, the nature of the study, research questions, and hypotheses. I also reviewed the purpose of the research, the theoretical and conceptual basis, the underlying assumptions and limitations, and the significance of the study. In Chapter 2, I will present a review of articles that are specific to the problem of employee engagement. To build a foundation for this study, I used research from other scholars relative to mentoring functions, employee engagement, SET, POS, and management. I also build on these studies to establish support to suggest that mentoring psychosocial function (role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and friendship) positively related to employee engagement. In Chapter 2, I will demonstrate that positive social exchange and perceptions of organizational support are possible to achieve through management involvement and employee communication.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

Employee engagement is a significant issue for leaders and managers in many organizations. Employee disengagement presents a considerable cost to organizations in all fields (Wollard, 2011). The general problem of the study was that the American workforce has detached employees in its organizations. A disengaged employee can cause a decrease in productivity, an increase in employee turnover, and a reduction in customer satisfaction (Shuck & Wollard, 2010). One method of engaging the workforce consists of providing workers adequate mentoring. The specific problem of interest was that there is no significant model for understanding the relationship of mentoring psychosocial functions and its benefits to employee engagement of technicians and technologists. The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationship between the independent variables of mentoring, which include role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and friendship functions with the dependent variable, employee engagement.

Several scholars have demonstrated how mentoring relates to employee engagement. Developmental relationships between a supervisor and his or her employee were shown to improve employee engagement (Spell, Eby, & Vandenberg, 2014). Spell et al. investigated the influence of shared perceptions of developmental climate on the individual-level perceptions of organizational commitment, engagement, and perceived competence. These authors also determined whether these attitudes mediate the relationship between developmental climate and individual voluntary turnover and supervisor-rated job performance (Spell et al., 2014). The findings indicated that employees' shared perceptions of developmental climate positively related to all three

individual work attitudes (Spell et al., 2014). There were no significant mediating effects for engagement at the individual level (Spell et al., 2014). Spell et al. suggested that this may indicate the powerful influence of social context above one's individual experiences. Specifically, descriptive statistics and correlations showed mentoring support had a strong correlation to coworker support, organizational commitment, and engagement. Spell et al. also highlighted the importance of the pathway between social context and emotional reactions to one's environment, which influences behaviors. Also significant was the implications that organizations encourage and reward mentoring between supervisors and subordinates as well as mentoring among peers to create a positive work climate (Spell et al., 2014).

Mentoring significantly relates to employee engagement. Shared perceptions of a developmental relationship between a supervisor and his or her employee were shown to improve employee engagement (Spell et al., 2014). Findings in the study indicated shared perceptions of developmental climate positively related to all three individual work attitudes (Spell et al., 2014). The individual work attitudes were organizational commitment, engagement, and perceived competence (Spell et al., 2014). The results of Spell et al.'s study align with the premise of my study. As demonstrated, employee perceptions of positive leader support can lead to employee engagement. In addition, the social aspects of the supervisor/employee relationship support my suggestion that psychosocial support is a significant driver to improving worker engagement.

In a comparative study of mentoring, the authors found that mentoring influenced employee performance (Rollins, Rutherford, & Nickell, 2014). Although there has been evidence of mentoring in many corporations, the impact of mentoring on salespersons

performance has not been extensively explored (Rollins et al., 2014). The authors conducted qualitative interviews with 33 employees who worked for various organizations in positions related to sales (Rollins et al., 2014). These authors noted the employees' past sales performance, whether they had a mentor, and their tenure at the insurance company (Rollins et al., 2014). In addition to assessing the views of the protégé, Rollins et al. evaluated the knowledge of the mentors. The authors concluded that although training can be effective in improving salesperson performance, mentoring could also be helpful in enhancing salesperson performance as well as reducing training cost (Rollins et al., 2014). The findings suggested that mentoring contributes to salesperson performance in many ways such as mentoring salespeople early in their career (Rollins et al., 2014). Mentoring benefits all salespersons in the organization, including the protégé and the mentor (Rollins et al., 2014). The authors also highlighted the fact that mentoring plays a role in reducing employee turnover and increasing job satisfaction (Rollins et al., 2014). These authors' findings regarding mentoring were similar to those of Spell et al. (2014), who cited that it is possible to improve employee performance through developmental and social aspects of mentoring.

Mentoring was shown to be useful for the growth and development of global employees. Hamburg, Brien, and Engert (2014) alleged Subject Matter Experts (SME's) need to be flexible and fast when working in new working environments and working with new technologies. The authors identified many avenues that consisted of various training methods (Hamburg et al., 2014). However, these training programs and training tools alone will not be enough to meet the needs of corporations. Hamburg et al. alleged that the way to address the knowledge gaps and skill deficiencies is through mentoring.

The authors also concluded that mentoring had been proven as an efficient way to develop workers that are more productive, and this approach has been adopted by many organizations (Hamburg et al., 2014). Regarding social support, Hamburg et al., also alleged that people with special needs could be helped by mentoring in their work life. Similar to Rollins et al. (2014), Hamburg et al. suggested learning is more effective when coupled with mentoring. Mentoring also supports better employee engagement, inclusion, and diversity and a culture of collaborative learning characterized by trust (Hamburg et al., 2014). Mentoring helps employees become productive through career development and various social interactions.

Researchers have shown mentoring to be useful for the growth and development of global employees. Hamburg, Brien, and Engert (2014) alleged that small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) need to be flexible and fast when working in new working environments and working with new technologies. The authors identified many avenues that consisted of various training methods (Hamburg et al., 2014); however, these training programs and training tools alone will not be enough to meet the needs of corporations. Hamburg et al. alleged that the way to address the knowledge gaps and skill deficiencies is through mentoring. The authors also concluded that mentoring had been proven as an efficient way to develop workers that are more productive, and this approach has been adopted by many organizations (Hamburg et al., 2014). Regarding social support, Hamburg et al. also alleged that people with special needs could be helped by mentoring in their work life. Similar to Rollins et al. (2014), Hamburg et al. (2014) suggested that learning is more effective when coupled with mentoring. Mentoring also supports better employee engagement, inclusion, diversity, and a culture of collaborative

learning characterized by trust (Hamburg et al., 2014). Mentoring helps employees become productive through career development and various social interactions.

Researchers have shown that managers' self-efficacy is vital to employees' engagement (Judge & Bono, 2001; Walumbwa & Hartnell, 2001). Walumbwa and Hartnell (2011) maintained that self-efficacy is a cognitive process in the identification of performance relationship. According to Bandura (2015), people's beliefs in their capability influence the goals they set for themselves and their commitment to them in the face of difficulties. Consequently, self-efficacy is associated with excellent outcomes that extend to higher job satisfaction and job performance (Judge & Bono, 2001). Bandura (1982) also stressed that perceived self-efficacy is concerned with judgments on how well one can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations. Having self-efficacy would also suggest that when an individual feels competent to handle a task, the task is likely to be completed based on his or her level of confidence (Bandura, 1982). Self-efficacy belief may also diverge from action because of genuine faulty self-appraisal (Bandura, 2012). Evans and Redfern (2010) stated that managerial self-efficacy is a necessary antecedent to managerial effectiveness. Employee engagement is critical to the organization, and managers can influence employee engagement in the work environment.

Manager's self-efficacy can also influence employee self-efficacy. In a quantitative study of leader creativity in facilitating follower creativity, Huang, Krasikova, and Dong (2016) demonstrated that leaders with higher creative self-efficacy are more likely to engage in behaviors encouraging follower creativity, which in turn increases follower engagement in the creative process. Tims, Bakker, and Derks (2013)



also demonstrated the impact that self-efficacy has on employee performance. The authors asserted that employees would be more likely to engage in proactive job crafting behaviors on the days when they felt more self-efficacious (Tims et al., 2013). Employees who take the initiative to change or modify certain aspects of the work to fit the position are known as job crafters. The authors collected survey data from 47 employees from various organizations (Tims et al., 2013). Results from the study illustrated that job crafting and work enjoyment could be explained by workers' day-level self-efficacy and their day-level performance (Tims et al., 2013). Implications from the study emphasized the relationship that self-efficacy shares with job performance (Tims et al., 2013). Findings from the studies of Huang et al. (2016) and Tims et al. (2013) also suggested that managers who demonstrate characteristics of self-efficacy likely influence employee's self-efficacy. With the need to increase profits by providing better products and services, organizations will need to ensure they have the proper leaders on their teams (Tims et al., 2013). A manager with low self-efficacy can have an adverse effect on his or her organization.

A recent study on managerial self-efficacy has shown that managers with low self-efficacy can negatively influence employee engagement. Fast, Burris, and Bartel (2014) stated that managers could promote learning by encouraging employees to speak up with improvement-oriented ideas; however, this can only occur when employees feel empowered to communicate ideas to their leaders. The study by Fast et al. illustrated that managers with low self-efficacy were less likely to solicit input, leading to lower levels of employees' voice. The authors also posited that managers with low managerial self-efficacy become voice averse when they feel threatened (Fast et al., 2014). Managers

may see the employees' voice of ideas and suggestions as threatening or personally insulting. Consequently, managers of this type will discourage employees' voice, which leads to low engagement (Fast et al., 2014). In such situations, the manager may be viewed as incompetent and unable to handle the pressures of the role. Due to this specific outcome, it would be sensible for leaders with low self-efficacy to find ways to improve their behavior, be receptive, and open to the employee's voice (Fast et al., 2014). Leaders and managers with high self-efficacy raise the self-efficacy of their employees, allowing for increased opportunities to voice their ideas, suggestions, and concerns.

Managers' behaviors and performance are the antecedents to which engagement begins. Consequently, employee engagement can be approached in many ways, and methods exist to influence detached employees. Cherian and Jacob (2013) performed a meta-analysis on the relationship between self-efficacy, employee motivation, and work-related performance of the employee. The authors concluded that self-efficacy theory could be applied to work-related performance as well as organizational pursuits (Cherian & Jacob, 2013). One such approach to increasing employee engagement is through mentoring.

Effective mentoring supports employee engagement and improves the work environment (Baranik et al., 2010). Managers who mentor employees can influence engagement through motivation, effective communication, and role modeling (Baranik et al., 2010; Rolfe, 2010). Technicians and technologists work in highly stressed environments. Technicians and technologists provide technical support to engineers and other customers internal to the organization. Technicians and technologists support engineers for test set-up, testing, and data collection. The role of a technician or

technologist varies from one specific occupation to another. A mechanical engineering technician applies theory and principles of mechanical engineering to modify, develop, test, or calibrate machinery under the direction of engineering staff or physical scientists (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017). An environmental science and protection technician monitors the environment and investigates sources of pollution and contamination (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017). A medical and clinical laboratory technologist collects samples and performs tests to analyze body fluids, tissues, and other substances (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017). The demands placed on technicians and technologists' drive the need to research ideas that support and influence employee engagement. The literature in Chapter 2 covers theories of mentoring, mentoring roles, and employee engagement from various backgrounds. I also explored positive organizational support and social exchange theory in the literature as they mediate the underpinnings of employee engagement and mentoring.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

I obtained the literature for this study from several sources over the course of 6 years. The literature came from scholarly journals, several articles, and a dissertation. I reviewed seminal journals on mentoring, employee engagement, and social exchange for information relevant to the study. I searched several online databases located at Walden University. The databases included SAGE Premier, PsycINFO, PsycArticles, Emerald Management, Elsevier, ScienceDirect, IEEE Xplore Digital Library, Thoreau Multi-Database Search, and ABI / Inform. I also conducted searches on Google Scholar.com. Keyword search terms included: *mentoring*, *mentoring and friendship*, *mentoring and psychosocial functions*, *mentoring and psychosocial support*, *psychosocial support and*

*worker engagement, employee engagement, leadership and work environment, and employee disengagement.* My search terms also included *social exchange theory, POS, employee engagement and leadership, employee engagement and mentoring, engineering technicians, engineers and mentoring, mentoring engineers, mentoring social support for engineers, and mentoring engineers for psychosocial support.* My keyword searches of *engineering technicians, engineers* and *employee engagement* produced few results. In addition to keyword searches, my search terms also included names of authors from other studies. A dissertation study on psychosocial support came from ProQuest Dissertations and Thesis. From the literature reviewed, I discuss the following topics that are relevant to the study: (a) employee engagement and disengagement; (b) the benefits of mentoring; (c) psychosocial functions and employee engagement; (d) social exchange theory; (e) perceived organizational support; and (f) leadership.

### **Theoretical Foundation**

The theoretical foundation for this quantitative study was Blau's (1964) SETS. Blau reflected on Homans' (1958) idea that the process of social association could be conceptualized as an exchange of activity, tangible or intangible, and rewarding or costly, between at least two persons. Blau (1964) further posited that once the concept of social exchange is understood, the act is observed everywhere, such as in market relations, friendships, and other social relations. Social exchange is summarized as when one individual supplies rewarding services to another, which obligates the receiver of those services (Blau, 1964). Blau concluded that as one person perceives acts or services received from another as valuable, that person may be inclined to return the favor in like kind. The individuals can continue to provide incentives as long as they perceive the acts

as favorable (Blau, 1964). SET was an appropriate framework for my study in that it aligns with the argument that mentoring psychosocial functions positively relates to employee engagement.

Several authors have demonstrated how SET relates to work engagement. Agarwal (2014) examined the impact of social exchange relationships on innovative work behaviors. The population included 510 managers in a service organization (Agarwal, 2014). Results from the study revealed there was a positive relationship between social support factors with innovation, as viewed through the lens of SET (Agarwal, 2014). Breevaart et al. (2015) conducted a study to examine the relationship between leader-member exchange, work engagement, and job performance. The authors confirmed that a high-quality leader-member exchange relationship improved employees' performance and work engagement (Breevaart et al., 2015). The authors emphasized the importance of subordinates having a good relationship with their leaders in the work environment (Breevaart et al., 2015). Hu et al. (2014) conducted a study to investigate relationships among mentors' perceived organizational support. The authors' findings supported and extended organizational support theory that the social exchange process between the organization and its employees who perceive support will return the favor to the organization in many ways such as the mentoring provision (Hu et al., 2014). The findings from the studies mentioned above illustrated the mediating effect of social exchange on various concepts.

The research studies mentioned above provide the rationale for using SET in this study. I have demonstrated how positive leadership behaviors and influence through social support, autonomy, and developmental opportunities can lead to improved work

engagement. As the relationship between the manager and employee strengthens, both individuals receive positive outcomes. The manager gains a productive workforce, and the employee obtains positive leadership support, developmental support, and an improved workplace environment. Bagger and Li (2014) declared that the more resources employees accrue from their leaders, the more they see them as attractive exchange partners. Hu et al. (2014) posited prolonged employment relationships involve positive social exchange processes between an employer and the employee. In these types of social exchange relationships, the needs of the individuals are fulfilled. Managers and leaders can influence employee reciprocation by providing adequate resources through relationship building and supportive actions. Relationship building can occur through mentoring activities and supporting actions can occur through positive leadership behaviors. Managers and leaders will in turn, gain increased productivity which leads to improved organizational outcomes.

The SET is relative to my study because mentoring relationships involves social interactions between individuals who seek specific outcomes. Those particular outcomes for the mentee are the role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and friendship gained from the mentor (Kram, 1988). The mentee, in turn, exhibits behaviors that are characteristics of employee engagement. Engaged employees are more content and less likely to leave their organization (Bagger & Li, 2014). Social exchange is a resource from which other resources are built (Breevaart et al., 2015). Those additional resources are developmental opportunities, autonomy, social support, and work engagement (Breevaart et al., 2015). Furthermore, the implications of social exchange are high-quality relationships where mentors contribute to perceptions of help from the mentor, which

leads to positive behaviors and positive outcomes from the mentee (Agarwal, 2014). The current study's results answered the research questions of how mentoring psychosocial functions (i.e., role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and friendship) relate to employee engagement. Social exchange is the basis for which these concepts are interrelated.

## **Employee Engagement and Disengagement**

### **Engagement**

Several scholars agree that managers play a significant role in employee engagement. Managers are a reflection of their organization (Baranik et al., 2010; Shuck et al., 2010; Shuck & Herd, 2012). The way that employees view their management will often determine their level of work engagement or disengagement. Specific tools can help managers become more effective in their roles. Managers should enhance communication networks (Wollard, 2011), be more transparent and honest, encourage team-building projects, and foster group collaboration (Evans & Redfern, 2010; Shuck & Herd, 2012). While these actions should be a requirement for the role of a manager, positive leadership behaviors are not guaranteed.

Scholars and theorists have offered various conclusions of what triggers employee engagement and disengagement. Employee engagement can occur through encouraging leadership and support agencies (Gundersen, Hellesoy, & Raeder, 2012; Rich et al., 2010). Without adequate management, support, and proper resources, disengagement is likely to occur.

Employee disengagement occurs when manager involvement is absent. For some employees, this can be overwhelming and can lead to employee turnover. It becomes

essential to support employees for positive engagement. Engaged employees have a positive involvement with their leader and their organization (Reio & Sanders-Reio, 2011). Organizations that provide individual attention to employees will experience fewer turnovers (Hughes, Avey, & Nixon, 2010). It becomes crucial that organizations and their managers learn what creates an engaged workforce. This review of scholarly literature explains how employee engagement affects the work environment and what factors are required to engage employees.

It is essential that organizations and their managers understand what is required to engage their employees. Organizations that have higher levels of employee engagement outperform their competitors (Evans & Redfern, 2010). Employee engagement is associated with profitability, productivity, customer loyalty, and quality (Zhang, Avery, Bergsteiner, & More, 2014). Work engagement is a significant business concern, especially during times of financial instability and dynamic work environments (Kataria, Garg, & Rastogi, 2013). Managers who understand employee engagement drive engagement through various means. Organizational support through leadership is a crucial driver for employee engagement. Employees who have an emotional connection with their leaders and managers will sense help, and they will give more of themselves to the organization (Anitha, 2014). Effective leadership and mentoring create employee engagement (Anitha, 2014). Mentoring influences work engagement because it puts people at the center of their learning (Short, 2013). Role modeling, a characteristic of mentoring, can be useful for influencing needed employee behavior. A sympathetic manager is a reflection of their organization. Equally, a weak manager is a reflection of the organization when viewed through the eyes of the employee. Managers should take



the necessary steps to ensure employee support. Recent studies provide a link to theories of employee engagement. Theorists have implied employee engagement has many indicators. There are indicators of employee engagement. Cattermole, Johnson, and Jackson (2014) explained how the hotel industry engaged their employees when a significant organizational change occurs. These authors presented a case study where employees at Jupiter Hotels were experiencing management buyouts and joint ventures. The organization had to find employee engagement strategies to improve the company's profitability and reputation. The organization used staff recognition, training and development, and communication as the tools to improve employee engagement. Cattermole et al. showed in their research that recognition, providing attention, and providing the proper capital to employees will help improve employee engagement. The results of these authors' case study captured the real-life essence of employee engagement. The authors offered a realistic depiction of how employee engagement changed over a continued time of 18 months (Cattermole et al., 2014). The authors' results from the study provided evidence that organizational leaders who focus on the proper strategies can engage their workforce (Cattermole et al., 2014).

Employee engagement has gained importance for many organizations since engagement drivers have been identified. Crabb (2011) identified three individual drivers of employee engagement: focusing strength, managing emotions, and aligning purpose. Crabb focused on employee engagement and an employee's internalized state. While other scholars have sought to enlist causes within the organization to motivate and engage employees, this study implied that employees created their engagement. Crabb attempted to determine the individual level drivers of employee engagement and explore

how these drivers relate to employees work. Crabb also asked what drives an internalized state that when combined with organizational drivers can produce high levels of performance that satisfy the employee and the organization.

Crabb (2011) used a qualitative thematic analysis in the study. The findings from the data suggested that through support offered by the manager, employees could use these internalized engagement drivers (i.e., focusing strengths, managing emotions, and aligning purpose) to achieve peak performance. The findings also suggested that personal involvement from a manager who is close to his or her employee could help the employee achieve a higher discovery of one's potential (Crabb, 2011). An internal focus appears to play a significant role in how a person feels about engagement (Crabb, 2011). An internal focus appears to play a significant role in how a person feels about engagement.

An employee's internal belief determines his or her ability to engage. Crabb (2011) asserted that an individual's strengths are inherent. The environment shapes an individual's strengths and allows for increased performance that benefits the organization. This author also alleged that once an individual controls his emotions, he focuses on his task without worry of distraction caused by negative or irrelevant thoughts. Finally, the author postulated that aligning purpose describes how well the individual aligns with the values and the culture of the organization. Tapping the minds of employees is an alternative approach to understanding their talents and ability to engage but believed to be an extension of a larger plan for engagement. As noted organizational involvement, as well as an employee's internalized motivated state, can produce engagement. Organizational involvement means having the proper support. Engaged

leaders and managers create better work cultures, deliver additional social support, and provide the capital needed by their employees (Gundersen et al., 2012; Serrano & Reichard, 2011). Although Crabb (2011) identified the employee as the focal point to engagement efforts, leaders can play a significant role in engagement.

Managers can improve employee engagement through mentoring, but there is contention regarding who the mentor should be. In earlier research, Burke and McKeen (1997) and Day and Allen (2004) identified the supervisor as the best mentor. In contrast, Ostroff and Kozlowski (1993) excluded the supervisor as the mentor. Haggard et al. (2011) posited that studies that excluded the supervisor as the mentor showed a decrease in the number of people who considered themselves as having a mentor. These authors also insisted that studies which identify the supervisor as the mentor provided extra receipt of mentoring for the mentee than non-supervisory mentors. Haggard et al. further suggested that supervisors could provide career mentoring functions such as coaching and challenging assignments. A non-supervisory mentor who may be higher-level executives could provide career mentoring functions such as exposure and visibility. This knowledge would imply that depending on the need of the employee, supervisor or non-supervisor mentoring roles could suffice. Walumbwa et al. (2011) conducted a study of engagement and leader influence on employee performance. These authors suggested that the role of ethical leadership would significantly influence employee performance. Using a quantitative approach, the authors surveyed supervisors and their immediate direct reports from a major pharmaceutical in the People's Republic of China. Walumbwa et al. hypothesized that through the leader-member exchange, follower views of self-efficacy, and organizational identification, leaders can improve employee performance. Results

from the study showed ethical leadership is suitable for enhancing employee performance. Ethical leadership is related to the leader-member exchange, views of self-efficacy, and organizational identification. The findings of this study highlighted the dominant role that leaders have on followers in their organization. Effective leaders and managers who display specific social identities are influential to employee engagement (Walumbwa et al., 2011). The authors of two studies explored the role of leadership and engagement (Walumbwa et al., 2011). Leadership characteristics influenced worker productivity and worker involvement with their leaders and managers (Walumbwa et al., 2011). Walumbwa et al. (2011) described leadership's role in engagement from a broader view.

The authors of two studies explored the role of leadership and engagement. Leadership characteristics influenced worker productivity and worker involvement with their leaders and managers. Walumbwa et al. (2011) described leadership's role in engagement from a broader view. The authors also suggested the leader-member exchange can lead to improved performance. The results of Fairlie's (2011) study of employee engagement suggested that employees see themselves as more involved in engagement outcomes, and employees want more input into what makes them feel engaged.

Some employees feel employee engagement is obtainable through meaningful work and collaborating with their managers. Fairlie (2011) offered insight into meaningful work, employee engagement, and other employee outcomes. The author claimed that employees transform themselves and the world around them while working toward their end goals. Fairlie suggested that in order to obtain engagement, employees

should have meaningful work. Managers and organizations can support employee engagement efforts by working together with the employees to design the proper jobs. Including employees in the decision process creates a positive impact on the employee/manager relationship. The belief is that employees seek partnership and collaboration with their organization to drive engagement.

There were several hypotheses in Fairlie's (2011) study to suggest meaningful work would relate to engagement or disengagement. Fairlie first hypothesized that meaningful work characteristics would positively correlate with engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Second, the researcher hypothesized that meaningful work characteristics would negatively correlate with disengagement, exhaustion, and turnover cognitions. The researcher based this upon the assumption that workers who have the proper job fit would put more effort into their work and would be less likely to leave the organization. Third, Fairlie posited that meaningful work would have a stronger impact on employee outcomes, relative to other work characteristics. Last, the author predicted meaningful work would predict unique variances in levels of engagement while controlling for the effects of different work characteristics.

Results from Fairlie's (2011) study indicated support for all hypotheses. Meaningful work was strongly related to employee engagement and negatively related to disengagement. Meaningful also strongly related to engagement when compared to other work characteristics such as intrinsic rewards, leadership features, supervisor relationships, and coworker relationships. Fairlie alleged that prior studies had overlooked the importance of meaningful work as an indicator of work engagement. While components of intrinsic rewards such as autonomy, creative freedom, and skill

unitization, have strong relationships with engagement, meaningful work is an overlooked source of engagement. Further discussions in the study suggest the importance of managers providing employees with meaningful work for increasing worker engagement and reducing turnover.

Employee engagement is a construct, achieved in many ways. Anitha (2014) demonstrated in her study how specific factors predict employee engagement and employee performance. Anitha presented an engagement model that showed seven factors that determine employee engagement: work environment, leadership, team and co-worker, training and career development, compensation, organizational policies, and workplace well-being. A second model shown in the study outlined that when there is employee engagement, they will demonstrate improved performance. The engagement factors presented in the study were more comprehensive than those shown in prior research. Fairlie (2011) focused on meaningful work as an engagement driver. Walumbwa et al. (2011) focused on leadership as an influence on employee engagement, and Reio and Sanders-Reio (2011) discussed supervisor incivility and the work environment as factors that affect employee engagement. While all these factors are meaningful, Anitha (2014) explored a broadened scope of factors that predict engagement efforts.

Anitha (2014) hypothesized that employee engagement would not relate to workplace well-being, compensation program, team and co-worker relationship, and leadership. Anitha also hypothesized that employee engagement would not relate to working environment, policies and procedures, training, and career development. In contrast, Anitha speculated that the above variables would have a positive impact on

employee engagement as well as employee performance. Participants consisted of employees from middle- to lower-level management from small organizations. Participants were given surveys that pertained to all the factors discussed. Participants also completed a questionnaire regarding employee performance.

Anitha (2014) used a regression model to analyze the data. The results of the regression analysis indicated that all of the independent variable factors significantly influenced employee engagement. The results also showed that employee engagement has a significant impact on employee performance. These findings correlate, in part, to the findings presented by other scholars; however, training and career development, compensation, and policies and procedures were as meaningful to employees regarding engagement. Through training and career development employees can improve their skills. With advanced capabilities, the employees could see more significant levels of compensation. Last, the author argues that these determinants suggest a healthy work environment for employees (Anitha, 2014). Hansen, Byrne, and Kiersch (2014) agreed, positing that engagement relates to a healthy workforce.

Scholars from other employee engagement studies have concurred with Fairlie's (2011) findings. In a case study exploring employee engagement from an employee's perspective (Shuck & Herd, 2012), the employee revealed how she seeks challenges and opportunities to learn and grow as factors that kept her engaged. Shuck and Herd also suggested that without the development of relationships in the workplace, disengagement is likely to occur. Fairlie (2011) noted this in his study as well. Rich et al. (2010) revealed in their conclusions that higher levels of congruence, POS, and core self-evaluations are associated with higher levels of engagement. In addition to meaningful work and other

socialized themes of engagement, direct leadership involvement plays a vital role in employee engagement. The socialization that an employee has with his or her manager amplifies the relationship and creates a sense of bonding and trust. The lack of bonding and the lack of socialization lead to a dysfunctional and distant relationship and a challenging work environment. Therefore it is essential that organizations have influential managers.

Scholars from other employee engagement studies agreed with Fairlie's (2011) findings. In a case study exploring employee engagement from an employee's perspective, Shuck and Herd (2012) revealed how an employee seeks challenges and opportunities to learn and grow as factors that kept her engaged. Shuck and Herd also suggested without the development of relationships in the workplace disengagement is likely to occur. Fairlie noted this in his study. Rich, Lepine, and Crawford (2010) revealed in their research that higher levels of congruence, POS, and core self-evaluations associate with higher levels of engagement. In addition to meaningful work and other socialized themes of engagement, direct leadership involvement plays a vital role in employee engagement. The socialization that an employee has with his or her manager amplifies the relationship and creates a sense of bonding and trust. The lack of bonding and the lack of socialization lead to a dysfunctional and distant relationship and a challenging work environment. Therefore it is essential that organizations have influential managers.

Organizational managers influence employee engagement and the work environment. Reio and Sanders-Reio (2011) conducted a study of workplace incivility its effect on the work environment. These authors provided evidence that supervisors and



coworkers who exhibit poor behavior consisting of incivility would cause other employees to become disengaged. Reio and Sanders-Reio and Shuck and Herd (2012) described the uncivil behavior as an autocratic work environment, downsizing, pressures from leaders and others to improve productivity, reduced cycle times, and budget cuts. Incivility affects employee's job satisfaction and performance, organizational commitment, turnover, and if highly severe, incivility can affect an employee's physical health and well-being (Reio & Sanders-Reio, 2011). These authors enlisted 272 participants consisting of supervisors and coworkers of a computer science company in the United States. Reio and Sanders-Reio developed a framework that suggested supervisor and coworkers who exhibit the ambiguous negative behaviors described as incivility will negatively impact meaningful employee engagement, safety engagement, and availability engagement.

Managers control many of the antecedents that influence employee engagement. Results from Reio and Sanders-Reio's (2011) study supported their claim that incivility significantly affects worker engagement. Nearly 78% of the participants experienced negative behavior from their supervisors, and 81% of the participants experienced negative behavior from their coworkers. A few of the adverse actions experienced by workers ranged from supervisors not turning off their cell phones when talking to employees, talking behind employee's back, and not giving credit when credit was due (Reio & Sanders-Reio, 2011). These findings illustrated the subtle but meaningful damage that uncivil behavior has on employee engagement. Wollard and Shuck (2011) provided similar results from a structured review of literature that suggested among many possible antecedents of employee engagement, employees' perceptions of workplace

safety and positive workplace climate are essential to worker engagement. Proper leader behavior positively influences employee engagement.

Full leader engagement suggests that leaders should expand their view beyond their employees in order to look at the whole work environment. Although many scholars have agreed that no one method of engagement works for all situations, supportive work environments (Anitha, 2014; Dollard & Baker, 2010) and perceptions of non-defensive leadership (Shuck et al., 2010) contribute to the development of employee engagement. Anitha (2014) alleged that a positive boss is a product of a good work environment. Another revelation that Wollard and Shuck (2011) noted in their structured literature review was that of the 42 antecedents of employee engagement identified there was no certainty that the use of one is more successful over the other. Consequently, leaders would have to analyze their organization and ensure processes to aid their culture in engagement are in place. The study of employee engagement and incivility by supervisors and coworkers illustrated behavioral issues; controlled by leader support and training where other cultures may require a change in job functions to provide meaningful work, as Fairlie (2011) suggested. Managers play a significant role in the success or failure of employee engagement in the workplace. Specific leadership styles contribute to employee engagement. Reio and Sanders-Reio (2011) revealed how supervisor behavior in the form of incivility affects employee engagement. Shuck and Herd (2012) conducted a study to examine the conceptual foundation of leadership behaviors and the growth of employee engagement. These authors sought to understand how the two concepts relate to the work environment (Shuck & Herd, 2012). As previously stated, it is possible to facilitate engagement using various strategies.

Shuck and Herd (2012) proposed that leaders emotional intelligence coupled with a specific leadership style would influence employee engagement that promotes performance outcomes. Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2008) defined emotional intelligence as the ability to engage in one's own emotion and the emotions of others and the ability to use this information as a guide for thinking and behavior. Emotional intelligence consists of the following traits: self-awareness, self-management, social competency, and relationship management (Giorgi, 2013). In a study to understand the managers' emotional intelligence impact on employee satisfaction and commitment, Webb (2014) aimed to determine which emotional intelligence factors are most predictive of positive worker commitment and satisfaction to the supervisor and the organization. The participants consisted of full-time employees across multiple industries. The author distributed 600 surveys and analyzed 249 useable surveys using linear regression modeling. The gender ratio in the study was 82% women and 18% men. The author rated participants based on factors such as sociability, emotionality, self-control, and well-being. Using the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue-SF) results from the SEM showed that well-being and self-control did not correlate with worker satisfaction or commitment. The data did show, however, that emotionality and sociability strongly related to worker satisfaction and commitment to their leader and their organization. Webb discovered that promoting and creating positive emotional bonds with co-workers, managers, and leaders reduces negative outcomes in the workforce. Webb also concluded that leaders who exhibit behaviors relating to emotional intelligence characteristics have the ability to significantly engage their workforce.

Employee engagement is likely to occur as results of specific factors within the leaders. The particular factors that Shuck and Herd (2012) identified included idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Individual influence describes a leader's personal charisma. Inspirational motivation entails leadership behaviors where leaders can inspire their workers to perform. Leaders and managers with this type of behavior set challenging but realistic goals for their employees. Intellectual stimulation consists of leader's ability to invoke follower creativity, innovation, and problem-solving. Cheung and Wong (2011) agreed that transformation leaders influence employee creativity. These authors posited that creativity causes employees to feel challenged and energized in their work (Cheung & Wong, 2011). Individualized consideration consists of leaders building a personal relationship with their followers.

Mentoring requires leaders and managers to establish open lines of communication with their followers. This communication creates leader-follower engagement. Shuck and Herd (2012) claimed that employees who have positive relationships with leaders who mentor and coach achieve their full potential and are more likely emotionally, cognitively, and behaviorally to be engaged in their work. What appear to escape most leaders and managers are the thoughts, concerns, and desires of the employees as it pertains to employee engagement. Not understanding the impact of employee engagement can be unfavorable to the organization.

Managers and employees view employee engagement differently. Shuck et al. (2010) and Wollard (2011) explored employee engagement from the standpoint of the employee. It is no doubt that employee's view employee engagement differently than

their managers. Employee engagement studies demonstrate the need for understanding employee engagement or organizations suffer reductions in job performance, productivity, efficiency, and quality (Rich et al., 2010). Employees are often concerned about speaking openly and freely without fear of punishment or scorn. Rich et al. defined this behavior as maintaining psychological safety. Psychological safety includes the worker's ability to express their true selves without threat to their career or self-image. Although most managers do not recognize this behavior, 78% of employees reported being the target of frequent supervisor uncivil behavior (Reio & Sanders-Reio, 2011). Once employees feel free to express themselves, they also feel free to engage (Shuck et al., 2010). For engagement to happen in organizations, employees need to believe that their managers can develop engagement (Wollard, 2011). When leaders do not understand their employees, disengagement becomes prevalent.

The findings of these studies parallel my position and hypotheses about employee engagement. Engagement and the drivers supporting engagement are essential to organizational success. Specifically, engagement drivers such as leadership support, mentoring, social exchange, and organizational support need to occur for success. Leaders' failure to utilize these resources can result in employee disengagement and a discontented work culture.

### **Disengagement**

Researchers have declared that employees must have the right work environment. Engagement occurs in environments where the employees perceive that they have an encouraging climate (Shuck et al., 2010; Wollard, 2011). Second, engagement occurs in environments where employees connect with their co-workers and managers (Reio &

Sanders-Reio, 2011). Westerberg and Tafvelin (2014) stated that a solitary working environment with no access to manager or colleagues during the working day could result in a perceived lack of support. The culture describes what feels right in the organization or what feels wrong (Carder, 2015).

Disengagement can occur when employees feel they lack the needed social involvement at work. Highly disengaged employees are detached, and they limit their physical and emotional energies with other members of the organization (Rich et al., 2010; Shuck & Herd, 2012). In a study on the effects of leadership behavior and engagement, Reio and Sanders-Reio (2011) reported that when employees receive social support from their immediate supervisor, they experience less work-related stress. Leaders and managers who provide a lack of social support affect an employees' ability to engage in meaningful work, psychological safety engagement, and availability.

Managers should provide the social connections required of the employee and other members of the organization. In a study to explore the link between leadership styles and employee engagement, Xu and Thomas (2011) revealed that different leadership styles could affect employee engagement. Ineffective work designs in the environment may also cause disengagement. Fairlie (2011) stated that placing employees in the right jobs is essential. Employees should also have meaningful work roles to keep them engaged and motivated (Fairlie, 2011). Meaningful work occurs when senior management and line managers exhibit positive behaviors, communicate effectively, and effectively organize the work (Evans & Redfern, 2010; Shuck & Herd, 2012). Consequently, managers should bridge the gap between disengagement and engagement in order to provide the social support to help employees be competent in their work.

Effective leadership relates to employee engagement when workers have the right work environment. Reio and Sanders-Reio (2011) conducted a study that was similar to the study of Xu and Thomas (2011). The authors in these two studies explored the effects of leadership on employee engagement. Disengagement can occur when employees perceive that there is no support or involvement from their leaders. Shuck and Herd's (2012) and Wollard's (2011) claims of creating the proper work environment and an encouraging climate are suggestive of the role of leadership. Managers have the power and the ability to influence the work climate. Employees desire to work in a safe and stress-free environment; if employees do not feel safe in the work environment, disengagement can occur.

Scholars have acknowledged that disengagement could have a significant impact on organizations. Disengaged employees affect organizational productivity, profitability, and safety (Wollard, 2011). Disengaged employees have shown to have higher safety incidents. Organizations with high disengagement also have high employee turnover, increased theft, and higher healthcare costs due to mental health issues (Wollard, 2011). Shuck and Herd (2012) also agreed that disengagement leads to less productivity, stating that is also due to a lack of resources. When employees do not have adequate resources to do their work, they lose interest and drive. In most instances, managers provide resources to their employees so that they can perform their job. Employees who experience negative emotions due to disconnected leadership lose their ability to be creative (Cheung & Wong, 2011; Shuck & Herd, 2012). What may be interesting to learn is how employees internalize their engagement to leadership.

In-depth interviews have exposed the factors that cause employee engagement. Shuck et al. (2010) conducted a case study to examine an employee's experience of being engaged in his or her work. Shuck et al. sought to answer two interesting questions: "How do employees describe the experience of being engaged?" and "What factors contribute to the development of engagement?" Most employees demonstrated actions that suggested engagement, but many did not describe the experience of engagement. Researchers have indicated that many factors contribute to engagement, but there is no one-method-fits-all approach. Understanding what engagement strategies work in a particular environment or organization could provide advantages to leaders.

The case study conducted by Shuck et al. (2010) consisted of semi-structured interviews with employees from a large multinational service corporation. Findings from the study illustrated three themes. Those themes were relationship development, workplace climate, and opportunities for learning. Relationships and workplace climate are essential to employee engagement strategies. The authors stated that when employees feel unsupported, lonely, disconnected or isolated; disengagement will occur. This statement reflects the condition of the work environment. Unhealthy work environments are counterproductive to employee engagement. Shuck and Herd (2012) also claimed that personal factors outside of work also affect an employee's ability to engage at work. Consequently, the work environment should be free from fear or intimidation (Rich et al., 2010). One participant expressed concerns about being in a cutthroat, aggressive work environment. Reio and Sanders-Reio (2011) agreed with Shuck and Herd (2012) and described this form of mistreatment as workplace incivility. Specific adverse actions and behaviors by leaders and co-workers can lead to disengagement.



The third theme that emerged in the study was an opportunity for learning. Most employees want to learn new skills and improve their career development. Fairlie (2011) agreed, stating that feelings of personal accomplishment and believing in one's highest career advancement within the organization are overlooked sources of engagement. Without adequate support and resources from managers, employees may become disengaged. One employee in the study expressed his happiness with his manager. This employee revealed how happy he was to be learning, and he valued the learning experience over money (Shuck et al., 2010). Another employee expressed how he liked the challenge and opportunity to learn and grow (Shuck et al., 2010). These statements from the employees showed the value and contribution of effective and supportive leadership. Great leaders connect emotionally with their followers (Cheung & Wong, 2011; Shuck & Herd, 2012; Reio & Sanders-Reio, 2011). Managers who take an interest in their employees' growth and development may see significant gains in their relationships with their employees.

Ineffective managers can cause significant negative actions by previously engaged employees. Wollard (2011) provided another perspective on employee engagement by identifying factors that cause employees to become disengaged. Scholars have shown that an antecedent to employee engagement is good leadership (Evans & Redfern, 2010; Fairlie, 2011; Shuck & Herd, 2012). Wollard (2011) identified two separate but meaningful examples of employees who became disengaged due to poor leadership. The first example described a 20-year senior employee who stole nearly a half million dollars of jewelry because her manager was mean to her. Another example identified in the literature was a top performing employee who left the organization to

work for another company for less money. When asked why she left, she stated that employee morale was awful, employees were frustrated and confused, and she was tired of favoritism and backstabbing. This example illustrated how crucial it is to treat all employees fairly and with respect. The loss of this employee was due to an act of disengagement. When employees sense such treatment, they will withdraw themselves and their preferred behaviors from the organization (Shuck & Wollard, 2010).

Furthermore, losing an engaged employee affects productivity and affects employee morale. This scenario is similar to workplace incivility, as Reio and Sanders-Reio (2011) demonstrated in their study. These authors described backstabbing as a characteristic of incivility acts. Managers that are insensitive to their employee's needs will likely see widespread disengagement. Wollard (2011) asserted that unsatisfied employees make a cognitive decision to disengage from their work and their organization. Wollard further posited that this could have implications for productivity, safety, mental health, turnover, and employee theft.

Disengaged employees can internalize managers as being unfair. Employees expend mental effort attempting to clarify expectations of leaders and finding a way to express their concerns (Shuck & Herd, 2012). Desperate employees look for ways to express their feelings of frustration, helplessness, anger, and resentment. Wollard stated that employee cynicism could be high. Authors have also reported that leaders can detect employee disengagement in some ways. Valentin (2014) claimed that worker disengagement could be a response to unreasonable working conditions. In this situation, the worker may not be productive and withdraw his or her labor. Khan (1990) asserted that employees withdraw and defend themselves physically, cognitively, or emotionally

during their role performances. Organizational managers and leaders may observe these employee actions by measuring performance and productivity. Employee turnover is another observable condition where managers could measure employee disengagement. Turnover intentions are a known standard outcome measure (Soane et al., 2012). Managers need to employ effective strategies in order to re-engage their employees.

Managers who engage with their employees and know the desires of their employees will help the engagement process. Shuck and Herd (2012) and Wollard (2011) provided similar views and strategies to support employee engagement. These authors agreed that employee engagement is required for the health, well-being of the individual and the success of the organization. These scholars also stated that the environment plays a vital role in employee engagement. Employee engagement consists of many inputs. Rana et al. (2014) presented a theoretical model of employee engagement. This model identifies job design and characteristics, supervisor and co-worker relationships, workplace environment, and HRD practices as major antecedents to employee engagement. In particular, managers should consider creating a workplace that is supportive, empowering, safe, and meaningful to employees. In addition, the model indicates that managers should assess employees' needs and align the resources and social support required to garner engagement. The subjective component of mentoring, psychosocial support could be beneficial in meeting the social needs of the employee. In Bedarkar and Pandita's (2014) study on the drivers of employee engagement affecting employee performance, the authors proposed a model of employee engagement. The authors alleged that leadership, communication, and work-life balance are antecedents to employee engagement, employee performance, and organizational performance. These

researchers demonstrated the role of positive leadership in employee engagement. Xu and Thomas (2011) also stated that higher levels of engagement are observed for employees with their supervisor's exhibiting more relationship-related behaviors. Although higher levels of engagement could occur without effective mentoring strategies, I would argue that mentoring assist in employee engagement, primary role modeling, friendship, and social support. Due to the interpersonal involvement of mentoring, it is necessary to increase the social participation needed for improved communication, support with work-life balance, workplace environment, and job design.

Wollard (2011) suggested that some work environments are more toxic than others. Shuck and Herd (2012) emphasized that the environment was a reflection of all items in it including people, physical space, and the climate. Employees can perceive the environment as positive or negative (Reio & Sanders-Reio, 2011; Rich et al., 2010; Shuck & Herd, 2012). These authors concurred that poor job fit and job design could affect engagement. Managers need to understand their employees' strengths and weaknesses in order to determine where they will fit in the organization. Employees yearn for positive feelings about their work experience (Shuck et al. 2010; Shuck & Herd, 2012). Additionally, Wollard (2011) claimed that low quality of work affects an employee's mental health. The inability of a leader to understand what motivates his employees can have adverse outcomes in employee performance.

Managers are the advocates for change and employee well-being in the organization. One thing that Wollard (2011) did not elaborate on in her study was leadership's role in employee engagement. Wollard stated that leaders are agents of change and role models that employees can trust. Shuck and Herd (2012) stated that

leaders need to be supportive, provide opportunities for learning, make employees feel safe, and create a good work environment. In line with social exchange theory, employees who feel supported and safe will often give back to their organization. Rich et al. (2010) claimed that when POS is low, employees do not know what to expect. Employees will have a fear of speaking out which often leads to disengagement often without leaders recognizing the employees are disengaging or disengaged.

A positive work environment encourages employees to work beyond their desired expectations. Leaders and managers can create a positive work environment. Employees view their leader and manager as a representative of the organization (Baranik et al., 2010; Shuck & Herd, 2012). A weak leader or manager will often indicate to employees that the organization supports this type of negative behavior. Evans and Redfern (2010) agreed with Shuck and Herd (2012), declaring that effective leaders create communication networks that are open and transparent, encourage team projects, create avenues to share knowledge, and encourage group collaboration. Fairlie (2011) also agreed with Shuck and Herd, citing that in order for leaders to be successful in creating an engaged workforce, they need the training to provide the appropriate behaviors and actions. Concerning the arguments of Shuck et al. (2010), Evans and Redfern (2010) stated that manager effectiveness equals employee engagement. Manager effectiveness is a requirement for employee engagement. Leadership engagement and leadership style can significantly affect how employees perform their task.

Employees who do not enjoy their job assignments or perceive that their jobs are unimportant will often become disengaged from the organization (Rich et al., 2010). Knowing and understanding what is essential to one's employees is crucial to job fit and

work enjoyment. Building a close friendship with employees will help in bonding and open discussion. The psychosocial role of adviser helps to prevent employee detachment. Organizations cannot ignore the need to have an engaged culture. One way to engage the culture is to employ effective mentoring strategies.

### **Benefits of Mentoring**

Managers should not overlook the benefits of mentoring. Managers can realize benefits between a mentor and a protégé in a formal or informal method. Both younger and older individuals can receive guidance and support to help their careers and receive personal benefits through role modeling, counseling, confirmation, and friendship. An effective mentor will develop an effective employee. An effective mentor helps the employee gain more confidence in their work roles and helps them gain more confidence in themselves (Lim, Clarke, Ross, & Wells, 2015). Lim et al. conducted a study on the mentoring experiences, perceived benefits, and the impact on job positions of African American men and women. The authors found that the mentors helped their mentees develop self-confidence, credibility with others, critical job skills, and technical knowledge. The mentors also benefited from the bonding. Chun, Litzky, Sosik, Bechtold, and Godshalk (2010) conducted a study on the relevance of mentoring programs. These authors claimed that mentoring would cause the client to gain trust in the mentor. The results revealed when the mentoring experience was successful, the mentor continued the procedure with others. Researchers have shown through mentoring, employees experience increased job satisfaction, affective commitment, and improved social capital. Lo and Ramayah (2011) conducted a study to determine the effects of mentoring on employees' satisfaction, concluding that there were positive results for job satisfaction.

Craig et al. (2013) conducted a study to measure the impact of career mentoring and psychosocial mentoring on affective organizational commitment, job involvement, and turnover plans. The results revealed that psychosocial mentoring had a positive impact on affective employee commitment.

Several benefits exist for companies that provide mentoring to their employees. Once companies learn the effects of mentoring given in their work environment, they can begin to realize the benefits gained for the whole organization. Finney et al. (2012) postulated in a study of mentors and mentees that mentees experienced a high level of engagement following the mentoring process. High levels of engagement are especially significant to engineering and production firms.

In the current study, I analyzed and combined research that refers to mentoring functions, psychosocial support, and POS. I also aimed to show how the variables influence employee engagement. The career development part of mentoring consists of helping the protégé progress through the organization in their professional role. The psychosocial part of mentoring helps the client build confidence and feeling self-worth in and out of the organization.

In a recent study of the mentoring experiences of high-achieving women, Tolar (2012) conducted a qualitative study to assess the value of their mentoring experiences. The author sought to answer the question: “What kinds of support, ideas or advantages do women recognize as having an impact on their leadership development?” (Tolar, 2012, p. 175). Seventy-one women took part in interview surveys. Data analysis consisted of the triangulation strategy. The participating protégés expressed excellent and bad mentoring experiences. For role modeling, participants expressed that they felt fortunate to have a

mentor. Their mentors removed barriers and offered encouragement and inspiration. In contrast, participants who had terrible experiences stated that some mentors communicated poorly or sent conflicting messages or advice and lacked understanding of their challenges. Another participant expressed limits with her organization's mentoring program. In the mentoring program, some mentors could not provide the time required for mentees. Other participants stated that the truly exceptional leaders were not available to provide mentoring. According to Tolar, other challenges were that several mentees lost contact with their external mentors. One participant stated that she lost touch with her formal mentor when she moved out of the country. Another participant's mentor retired and passed away. Other issues reported were cross-gender mentoring and mentoring clients of different cultural backgrounds. Of the two studies focusing on the mentoring experiences of clients, Tolar's gave more awareness to the challenges that mentoring presents for women and African Americans.

Although mentoring is effective, it does not mean employees will not seek other opportunities. An effective mentor may not always guarantee fruitful results for the protégé; however, mentored employees have more significant opportunities and benefits than employees' not mentored (Tolar, 2012). Others stated not having a mentor made them more creative (Tolar, 2012). Although no guarantees in the mentoring procedure, most studies support the position that mentoring offers benefits. Having the proper mentor-mentee combination can provide successful outcomes.

Having the right mentor-protégé match can make the difference in the mentoring experience. The mentoring experience works best when there is established consistency, mutual respect, and a safe environment (Carroll & Barnes, 2015). These authors also



suggested that the goal of the mentor is to select a broaching style that creates positive development within the mentee. Benefits for the mentor consists of a sense of collegiality, opportunity for networking, sharing ideas with colleagues and professional development (Schechter, 2014). Benefits for the mentee include improved skills, improved performance in their jobs, and enhanced engagement in their job responsibilities, and motivation to remain in their work roles (Crumpton, 2014). Benefits for the mentee also include the mentor's availability to listen, provide general support, offer informal administrative support, and connect the protégé with others who can assist (Alsbury & Hackman, 2006). The mentor has to commit to transferring knowledge and transferring this knowledge in a manner the protégé feels he or she has gained some understanding. If protégés perceive that they benefited from the mentoring, the mentor will learn from the bonding. The mentoring dyad forms in many combinations. A common type of mentoring consists of a senior person who possesses a higher professional position and one who also is more experienced (Alderfer, 2014). Alderfer also stated that the mentoring support provides professional development of young adults aged 17-40 years old. Although the primary reason for mentoring engagement is to provide career and social support for the protégé, the mentor will occasionally experience some development. In addition to developing the protégé and the mentor, mentoring programs may be used to engage older employees who are looking for a different challenge in their career. Organizations will create mentoring programs to create better employees, bosses, sponsors, and coaches (Alderfer, 2014). The gain for mentors will result in training a colleague, professional networks, building social capital, career advancement and supporting the organizations.

Many mentoring programs exist for formal and informal mentoring (Crumpton, 2014). According to Crumpton, the mentoring programs are often internal to the organization. Although formal programs appear to be the norm, informal mentoring needs to be purposeful as well. The ultimate goal should be to provide adequate mentoring for the mentee. Organizations should design effective formal mentoring training programs to help maintain high-quality relationships (Chen et al., 2014). For different mentoring relationships, specific mentoring programs need development as well. Multicultural training programs that elicit changes in personal awareness and growth, cultural knowledge, cross-cultural skills and sensitivity training have been tested and shown to be useful for diverse mentoring (Parker, Moore, & Neimweyer, 1998).

Several authors have suggested that both informal and formal mentoring are beneficial to the mentoring process (Chen et al., 2014; Desimone et al., 2014; Eby et al., 2013). Required mentoring, as part of the formal process, may have significant effects on protégés perception of the organization and formal mentoring provides more opportunities for protégés to challenge themselves (Chen et al., 2014). Formal mentoring has a positive effect on career outcomes and satisfaction (Eby et al., 2013), and can serve as a facilitator of tenure attainment or achieving promotion standard (Crumpton, 2014). Other characteristics of formal mentoring are that the organization controls the process (Chen et al., 2014). In a teacher setting, formal mentors are assigned by the principal, district, or state (Desimone et al., 2014). The authors maintained this process often prevents matching mentors and mentees on essential dimensions. Formal mentoring programs have gained general acceptance and defined as valuable to mentors and mentees (Schechter, 2014). In their study of formal mentoring, Chen et al. (2014) found

that formal mentoring related positively to protégé affective commitment and related negatively to turnover intentions.

Informal mentoring compensates for voids in the formal mentoring process (Chen et al., 2014; Crumpton, 2014; Desimone et al., 2014; Eby et al., 2013). Informal mentoring often occurs as an unplanned event and happens naturally by the two individuals (Chen et al., 2014). Informal mentoring relationships can be more productive, much more comfortable to support, and it offers more flexibility for the mentor and the mentee (Crumpton, 2014). The unstructured nature of the process allows the participants to meet on their terms and schedules. In a study by Desimone et al. (2014), the authors found that teachers preferred informal mentoring because it allowed them to seek out mentors who shared similar experiences with the students they are teaching, and students within the same grade level. The authors' position suggests assigned mentoring may not account for all requirements of the protégé. Regarding the functions of mentoring, psychosocial support and protégé outcomes may be stronger for informal mentoring relationships (Eby et al., 2013). Because informal mentoring relationships occur naturally, mentees may seek out mentors who have more in common with them in their work roles and personal lives. With informal mentoring, mentors focus more on the social and emotional issues. Dewart, Babinski, and Jones (2003) asserted that emotional support from the informal mentor could boost the confidence of those who are beginning teachers and increase their morale. Informal and formal mentoring can serve similar functions but often provide compensatory and complimentary support (Desimone et al., 2014).

Some organizations have taken the mentoring procedure beyond the norm to improve employee performance and to provide added benefits for the company. Organizations such as General Motors, Unilever, Deloitte & Touche, Proctor & Gamble, and the Wharton School of Business have imposed a reverse mentoring procedure (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012). Chaudhuri and Ghosh stated that the reverse mentoring scheme could be valuable to both the Baby Boomer and Millennial employees in companies. The reverse mentoring scheme consists of younger millennial employees mentoring the aging baby boomer employees in the organization. The authors postulated the two generations are essential to the organization. Through the mentoring and social exchange, each group provides tangible and intangible benefits to one another. Baby Boomers are a dedicated and loyal working generation that remains in organizations. The Millennial generation are more technology savvy and have additional skills (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012). The Millennial generation, however, is not as loyal to the organization as the Baby Boomers, and they are considered job-hoppers. This unconventional reverse mentoring scheme helps the aging Baby Boomers remain engaged and supports efforts to keep the Millennial generation more committed.

Scholars have shown that mentoring and its potential benefits have evolved over time. Chaudhuri and Ghosh (2012) explored the reverse mentoring scheme, which has benefited many organizations. The reverse mentoring scheme contrasts the other mentoring methods that Tolar (2012) employed; however, the results are similar. Employees and the organization will see benefits through employee engagement and successful business results. Combining other theories with mentoring may produce positive results. Variables such as environmental conditions and work roles are as crucial

to mentoring as they are to worker engagement. Mentoring is not only for developing mentors and protégés, but also for individuals looking to create significant change through cultural engagement.

Followers in organizations need good leaders, managers, guidance, and support to perform their work efficiently and productively. Some employees obtain career development and social support through mentoring. Those who are fortunate to have mentors and coaches become good employees attached to their leaders and their organizations. Mentors and coaches produce employees who show engagement in their work and reciprocate extra effort for their organizations. Mentoring and coaching are often used interchangeably, but they have distinct outcomes. Mentoring describes the developmentally oriented relationship between a younger or less experienced individual and an older more experienced individual (Kram, 1988). The ideal mentor is one who is willing to develop and provide an ongoing supportive relationship to a lesser qualified individual (Bloomberg, 2014). Mentored individuals receive career development and psychosocial support (Kram, 1988). Regarding coaching, the coach's job is to provide support to enhance the skills, resources, and creativity that the client already possesses (Silva & Yarlagadda, 2014). According to the authors, coaches are trained to listen, to observe and to customize their approaches to the needs of the client. Coaching is considered a tool that can develop self-confidence is about helping other people succeed (Berg & Karlsen, 2007). The authors alleged that coaching is not about guiding, advising, mentoring, influencing, directing, or manipulating others but more about asking relevant questions. The coach should not give advice or solutions to the individual but allow him or her to develop their talents. Although mentoring is usually limited to a few individuals,

some leaders believe all employees in the organization should have an opportunity (Rolfe, 2010). A fundamental theme is that mentoring can influence employee work engagement. Mentoring also affects personal and organizational change. Individual and organizational change consists of improved employee performance, career development, and social engagement (Baranik et al., 2010; Craig et al., 2013; Rolfe, 2010). Career development and psychosocial support assist in the growth organization at all levels (Kram, 1988).

### **Mentoring Functions**

Many types of mentoring strategies are employed to develop employees for professional development and personal growth. The more customary role of mentoring consists of one mentor and one client. Mentoring processes support developmental growth. The goal is to create a bond that proves fruitful for mentors and clients. Managers can improve their organizational structure by ensuring adequate mentoring programs exist in their organizations.

Mentoring in organizations is especially critical to developing employees. The success of an organization depends on the competency and engagement of its workforce. Researchers have identified two vital mentoring functions as essential to mentoring. Career functions are those characteristics of mentoring that support employee career advancement. Vanderbilt (2010) postulated that psychosocial functions consist of a quality relationship, in which emotional bonding occurs through frequent bonding between the mentor and the protégé. The two meanings suggest that the mentor and the protégé create unique bonds, which could create positive results for the two individuals.

While career roles are a significant part of mentoring, psychosocial roles need more attention. The organizational culture benefits from improved employee behaviors. Mentored employees are more confident and perform better, and better performance can lead to higher engagement. Engaged employees require less direction to perform their work roles. They also possess the autonomy and control required to make critical decisions. The counseling and role modeling given through mentoring allows employees to become more effective. In Vanderbilt's (2010) study of employee and manager bonding, the researcher concluded that psychosocial benefits might occur when individuals feed off one another in a positive way. This aspect of mentoring also provides a practical method of helping new employees socialize in their work environment. Furthermore, researchers have shown that mentor characteristics influence the specific outcomes of the mentee.

Leaders and managers who improve their skills through personal learning can have a positive impact on those they mentor. Pan, Sun, and Chow (2011) conducted a study to measure the effect of supervisory mentoring on personal learning and career results. These authors provided evidence that as a supervisor improves his or her learning, the supervisor would provide more useful mentoring. The researchers also emphasized that a supervisor with high self-efficacy would have a positive impact on employees' self-efficacy. Last, the authors claimed that supervisor mentoring on job performance and career satisfaction would influence the bond depending on the degree of the supervisor's self-efficacy. The participants in this study consisted of employees working for manufacturing companies in China. The findings suggested that supervisory mentoring influences follower career satisfaction and job performance, and subordinate

career results. The findings also indicated that self-efficacy could influence the mentoring procedure between the supervisor and the assistant. The results of this study illustrated the importance and potential benefits of mentoring in the work environment. The research findings compared to those of Vanderbilt (2010), who showed the fruitful effects due to the mentoring bond. Mentoring produces better performers, improves self-efficacy in both the mentor and the mentee, and facilitates career development (Pan, et al., 2011; Vanderbilt, 2010).

### **Psychosocial Functions**

Psychosocial functions are factors of mentoring that afford mentees personal support through role modeling, friendship, counseling and acceptance and confirmation (Vanderbilt, 2010). Mentors engage protégés in psychosocial mentoring to improve socialization in the workforce (Yang, Hu, Baranik, & Lin, 2012). Vanderbilt (2010) aimed to identify mentoring psychosocial functions as the means for improving employee engagement in organizations. To measure the effects of psychosocial functions, Vanderbilt asked the following questions: (a) “What career and psychosocial functions do mentor teachers feel they provide to their client teachers?” (b) “What career and psychosocial functions do client teachers feel they receive from their mentor teachers?” and (c) “How do both parties realize the support they received in their association?” (2010, p. 4). In a comparable study, the researcher delivered surveys to 645 mentor teachers and protégé teachers in a suburban middle-sized Florida school district. The district consisted of 45 elementary schools, 15 middle schools, and 16 high schools. The mentor teachers had 3 years of experience, and the protégé teachers had been teaching for



2 years. Two thirds of the mentors were female (79%), and 21% of the mentors were male. Of the 645 surveys delivered, 322 responded (Vanderbilt, 2010).

The data collection occurred in three stages over the course of 3 months (Vanderbilt, 2010). The results revealed that clients received career and psychosocial functions from their mentors. Regarding acceptance and confirmation, the two groups believed they earned respect from each other. For role modeling, both the mentors and the clients felt that their mentors tried to gain the respect and admiration from their clients. For counseling, the mentors and the clients agreed that the mentors showed concerns with how they felt, and they showed doubts about their competence. For friendship, the mentors socialized with clients at work as well as outside of work (Vanderbilt, 2010). Vanderbilt's study showed positive results to both members within the mentoring procedure. The findings from Vanderbilt's study were similar to those in the study of Yang et al., who alleged that protégés received benefits of socialization from the mentoring experience but to what degree; however, psychosocial mentoring was not a significant factor in the study.

Using the social cognitive career theory, Yang et al. (2012) examined the relationship between mentor and protégé organizational socialization. Yang et al. also studied the role of career, psychosocial, and role-modeling support that the protégés received. The authors declared that although career mentoring and psychosocial mentoring are useful to the mentoring scheme, socialization differences may exist when mentoring through formal and informal processes. The authors proposed the following hypotheses: (a) mentor socialization would positively relate to protégé socialization; (b) career, psychosocial, and role-modeling mentoring functions that protégés receive

mediate the relationship between mentor socialization and protégé socialization; and (c) mentorship formality moderates the relationship between mentor socialization and mentor functions, such that the relationship between mentor socialization and mentor functions is stronger for informal mentoring relationships than formal relationships (Yang et al., 2012).

Participants in the study consisted of executive MBA and continuing education students in a private university located in Northern Taiwan (Yang et al., 2012). Two hundred and fifty-one protégés and 240 mentors completed questionnaires in the study. The average length of a mentoring relationship was 1.43 years. Measures included mentoring functions, which consisted of career development and psychosocial support, organizational socialization, the formality of the mentorship, and demographic information. The results illustrated that mentor socialization positively relates to protégé socialization (Yang et al., 2012). Also, mentor socialization related to career function and role modeling, but had no significant effect on psychosocial functions (Yang et al., 2012).

Yang et al. (2012) also demonstrated that mentoring socialization with the protégé positively related to psychosocial mentoring when the relationship was informal. Formal mentoring schemes showed weak socialization between the mentor and the protégé. Yang et al. alleged that this could be due to the arranged relationship of the mentor and the protégé. When using formal mentoring processes, the organization establishes the connection between the two parties. The mentor and the protégé arrange informal mentoring processes, and this allows for relationships that are more meaningful. It becomes essential that the mentor and the protégé establish a satisfying bond in the relationship. The benefits of developing a satisfying relationship are open

communication, the protégé's confidence in his or her skills, and the mentor's sense of accomplishment (Eller, Lev, & Feurer, 2014). The socialization aspects of mentoring help employees to build rewarding relationships.

Unlike Vanderbilt (2010) and Tolar (2012), psychosocial functions did not provide a significant impact on the mentoring relationship in the study conducted by Yang et al. (2012). This study included the socialization concept, which extends beyond the broad elements of mentoring which are career development and psychosocial support. Most scholars, however, have demonstrated that psychosocial support is useful and meaningful to the protégé in the mentoring process. Germain (2011) posited that dysfunctional mentoring dyads could be the fault of the mentor and protégé. Germain asserted in her study of formal mentoring relationships and attachment theory that proper pairing is essential to prevent dysfunctional relationships. When the mentor and the protégé exhibit secure behaviors, the relationship is likely to survive. When one or the other party exhibits anxiety or avoidance behavior, however, the mentoring relationship may experience a breakdown. As demonstrated in the Yang et al. (2012) study, formal mentoring relationships present many problems. Consequently, informal mentoring offers more opportunities for success.

Mentoring psychosocial functions also proved useful in a study of mentoring and employees emotional intelligence. Chun et al. (2010) provided evidence that in a mentoring procedure a client's emotional intelligence would improve the mentoring bond. The participants in the study consisted of students from a public university. Mentoring given to the students consisted of career development and psychosocial support. Findings from the study showed that mentoring results were valuable for the

protégé. Chun et al. found both career development and psychosocial support to be effective.

Tolar's (2012) study offered similar results. In this study, mentors supplied high achieving women clients with psychosocial functions to help with issues at work and in their personal lives. The protégés in this study also stated that their mentors acted as sounding boards. These support methods are helpful to employees who value social involvement with other members of their organization. Tolar's study was similar to Vanderbilt's (2010) study, in that both researchers measured the responses of the mentoring pair. Although Tolar's (2012) population consisted of all women, the researcher's assessment of the findings showed that mentoring for psychosocial functions give positive results whatever the gender.

Baranik et al. (2010) conducted a study on the role of perceived organizational support in relation to mentoring and work attitudes. The authors sought to answer the question of why does mentoring work. The belief is that POS draws on many reciprocal exchanges from the employee. Drawing from the premise of the social exchange theory, employees who engage in positive relationships with their leaders or their organization are likely to reciprocate in kind. The authors also claimed that career-related mentoring support and psychosocial mentoring support relate to POS. Second, the authors hypothesized that POS relates to affective organizational commitment and job satisfaction. The investigators hypothesized that employees who perceive organizational support are likely to be more committed to their organization and they are more likely to enjoy their work. Last, Baranik et al. (2010) posited that job satisfaction relates to

organizational commitment and both job satisfaction, and that organizational commitment relates to turnover intentions.

The participants in the study of Baranik et al. (2010) included 733 substance abuse counselors and their supervisors. The findings of the study indicated there was support for all the hypotheses. Mentoring functions comprised of career development and psychosocial support positively relates to POS (Baranik et al., 2010). One can assume that employees who have the opportunity to grow in their careers and employees who establish healthy relationships with their mentors will feel they are working for a supportive organization. Most employees will view their mentors, coaches, and supportive leaders as extensions of the organization (Baranik et al., 2010; Shuck & Herd, 2012). Second, POS relates to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Last, employee job satisfaction predicted organizational commitment and employee who were satisfied with their jobs were more committed to the organization and were less likely to leave their company (Baranik et al., 2010; Shuck & Herd, 2012).

These findings were similar to the study conducted by Craig et al. (2013). These authors examined the relationship that career and psychosocial mentoring had on affective organizational commitment, job involvement, and turnover intention. Craig et al. hypothesized that psychosocial mentoring would have a more positive outcome on affective organizational commitment, job involvement, and turnover intention than would career mentoring. The belief was the most subjective of the two mentoring functions (i.e., the psychosocial) would have a stronger impact. Baranik et al. (2010) viewed mentoring from a total perspective on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions.

Results from the study of Craig et al. (2013) indicated support for all of the hypotheses. The study's participants included IT personnel in a south-central state. The researchers concluded that psychosocial mentoring had a more significant positive relationship with effective organizational commitment and job involvement than career mentoring. As projected, psychosocial mentoring had a negative relationship with turnover intentions than did career mentoring. In addition, psychosocial mentoring had a negative relationship with turnover intentions that mediated through affective organizational commitment. Further correlation analyses from Baranik et al. (2010) revealed that the variables associated with psychosocial support significantly correlated with job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention. The findings from both studies are in line with my hypothesis in the current study that psychosocial mentoring may have a positive relationship with employee engagement. Job performance, which relates to job satisfaction and job involvement, would relate to employee engagement (Rich et al., 2010; Shuck & Herd, 2012). Fairlie (2011) and Reio and Sanders-Reio (2011) concluded from their study of meaningful work and incivility that organizational commitment contributes to employee engagement. The psychosocial support provided enhances employees' competence, effectiveness, belongingness, friendship, and role modeling (Baranik et al., 2010; Craig et al., 2013).

Lo and Ramayah (2011) conducted a study similar to Craig et al. (2013) and Baranik et al. (2010). These researchers also examined the effects of mentoring on elements of job satisfaction. The authors claimed that career mentoring and psychosocial mentoring would have a positive impact on job satisfaction. Lo and Ramayah (2011) alleged that organizations could improve employee relationships by understanding how

mentoring impacts job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is important to organizations because it can facilitate positive relationships between employees, their peers, and their leaders. A high level of job satisfaction can also signal that employees are likely to leave their organizations.

When there is a reduction in employee turnover, higher levels of engagement occur. According to Lalitha and Singh (2013), mentoring is an antecedent to employee engagement. Using a survey method, Lo and Ramayah (2011) measured the responses of 156 lower- and mid-level Malaysian executives. The authors hypothesized that there would be a positive relationship between psychosocial mentoring and employees' job satisfaction, such as satisfaction in promotion, supervision, coworkers, and in the job itself. Secondly, the authors hypothesized that there would be a positive relationship between career mentoring and employee's job satisfaction such as satisfaction in promotion, supervision, coworkers, and in the job itself. The findings in this study were in contrast to the findings in the study of Baranik et al. (2010), in which the authors concluded that psychosocial mentoring is positively correlated with job satisfaction. Consequently, psychosocial mentoring in Lo and Ramayah's (2011) research did not have an effect on job satisfaction. The authors maintained that psychosocial mentoring did not contribute to monetary gains for the employees. As Craig et al. (2013) stated, psychosocial mentoring is perceived as the subjective of the two mentoring functions.

In the current research study, I aimed to determine whether mentoring would encourage employee engagement through social interventions between a mentor and members of the work culture. Cheung and Wong (2011) asserted that leaders who provide social support to employees create a positive experience. This positive

experience is acquired through employee creativity. The protégé delivers positive results for the organization when he or she feels that he or she has received something from the mentor. The exchange that exists between the employee and leader is the foundation of the social exchange theory.

### **Social Exchange Theory**

Social exchange is a principle that leaders and managers can use to support employee engagement and mentoring in organizations. Employees and employers need an exchange of sorts for services rendered and services performed for some significant action or production to occur (Blau, 1964). In the context of this research, social exchange is not an economic exchange, but rather an unspecified exchange between two individuals in an organizational context. The unspecified bond may come in the form of discretionary efforts from the employee to the employer. The employer may allow the employee to adopt a flexible work schedule. The discretionary effort from the employee may entail staying late to complete an assignment without direction from the supervisor or other direct leadership. Another reciprocal action by the employer may require rearranging an employee's work schedule to allow for personal duties away work. According to Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005), in a social exchange relationship, one party offers something, and the other party offers something in return. Researchers have highlighted how social exchange theory benefits employers and employees through mentoring, worker engagement, and POS.

The theoretical foundation of social exchange helps leaders and managers to understand the importance of employee support and employee encouragement. Employee support comes in many forms, but in the context of this study, the employee gains



essential benefits through mentoring efforts. The initial procedure should begin with aligning the correct mentor with the client or the employee. Successful mentoring could lead to a healthy and valuable exchange of support, development, and engagement for both the mentor and the client.

The social exchange between a leader or manager and their employee can provide favorable and unfavorable results. Social exchange can be a good moderator for strengthening the bond between leaders and their workers (Walumbwa et al., 2011). Social exchanges, however, may have an effect in the opposite direction. Social exchange may have an adverse impact when connections become strained or when employees feel disconnected from the company. Bal, Chiaburu, and Jansen (2010) conducted a study to illustrate how social exchanges change the association between psychological contract breach and work performance. The authors claimed that social exchange acts would desensitize or buffer negative feelings associated with a contract breach (Bal, Chiaburu, & Jansen, 2010). This contract breach desensitizes the employees who experienced social exchange acts to see the contract breach as less displeasing as those who have not (Bal, Chiaburu, & Jansen, 2010). The authors also asserted that when negative social exchanges occur, employees may respond in kind, causing an added strain on the association (Bal, Chiaburu, & Jansen, 2010). Employees with high social exchanges who experience a contract breach with their organizations may view this as a severe violation of trust. In return, these employees may start a social exchange which includes reduced work performance.

The intensity of the social exchange also determines the level of employee engagement. Bal et al. (2010) used a cross-sectional method to collect data from

employees who worked in a service sector company in the USA. The results indicated that the intensity of social exchanges causes high performing employees to perform less when they perceive a contract breach by their organization. In contrast, employees who do not have a social exchange connection with their organization may view a contract breach as having little or no impact on their performance. These findings highlighted the impact of social exchanges between workers and their organization. The intensity of social exchange has a significant effect on positive and negative relationships; therefore, social exchanges that incorporate with mentoring can produce substantial results.

Incorporating effective mentoring strategies yields productive relationships, which leads to social exchange. Baranik et al. (2010) viewed mentoring as a social exchange. The proper matching of mentoring pairs should yield measurable benefits for both parties, which can help continue the association. These researchers suggested that adequately matched mentoring generates reciprocal actions from both members based on what they received and what they contributed.

The social exchange between the mentor and the mentee positively affects precursors to employee engagement. For employee engagement, James et al. (2011) used social exchange theory and the norm of reciprocity to examining six ingredients of job quality. The participants in this study consisted of older and younger workers at different periods in their careers. James et al. delivered surveys to 6,047 employees from a large retail setting from one specific organization. The authors used an 8-item scale to measure employee engagement. For dependent variables, the authors measured cognitive, emotional, and employee behavior. For independent variables, the authors measured employees' job quality, scheduled satisfaction, career development, and job clarity. The

authors showed an association between worker engagement and social exchange theory. The results of the regression analysis predicted that, for both older and younger workers, there was an association between four specific job conditions and employee engagement. Supervisor support and recognition, scheduled satisfaction, and job clarity were essential causes for employee engagement (James et al., 2011). These findings of this study revealed the importance of the first line leadership's involvement with their employees (James et al., 2011). The findings implied that with the proper alignment of the mentor and mentee, the social exchange would cause similar actions that benefit both parties, as well as the organization (James et al., 2011). The impact of social exchange on the mentee could also deter him from leaving the organization.

Mentoring engagement can reduce employee turnover. Dawley et al. (2010) measured the moderating role mentoring on the relationship between POS, supervisor support, and job fit turnover. These authors used the social exchange theory as a theoretical foundation to develop several hypotheses. The researchers suggested that mentoring would moderate the negative bond between perceived organizational support, supervisor support, and turnover plans. The authors also suggested that the bonding would be stronger for a mentored employee than non-mentored employees (Dawley et al., 2010). The results of this quantitative study conducted on 610 employees in three separate organizations revealed that mentoring would become more effective in reducing turnover (Dawley et al., 2010). The results also showed that as employees experience more significant levels of support from their organization, supervisor, and job fit, they become more unlikely to leave their organization (Dawley et al., 2010). Through the social exchange theory, these researchers showed the impact that support has on the

employee's willingness to stay with their organizations when thoughts of going are prevalent (Dawley et al., 2010). The authors posited that organizations would see a return on investment in efforts to support and recognize employee engagement (Dawley et al., 2010).

The findings in the literature review support the underpinnings of social exchange theory within organizations (Bal et al., 2010; Dawley et al., 2010; James et al., 2011). These findings also aligned with the current study. With mentoring psychosocial roles, leaders can influence behaviors from employees that lead to employee engagement. The social exchange behavior occurred when bonds between the mentor and client were positive and when proper mentoring exist (James et al., 2011). Engaging behaviors from the mentor and the mentee could positively relate to reduced thoughts of leaving the organization.

Although social exchange could lead to positive results, circumstances exist where social exchange produces adverse outcomes. Approaching social exchange from a different perspective, Dawley et al. (2010) proposed that when employees perceive their organizations as encouraging, they will perform reciprocal actions. This exchange of debts and endowments between the two entities broadens employees' intent to remain in their organizations. Bal et al. (2010) explained how social exchange can work against leaders and organizations when the employees sense a contract breach or unfairness. Striking the right balance and staying focused on the intended results should prove this theory fruitful to the study of employee engagement.

### **Perceived Organizational Support**

Employees' view of their organizations often determines how they respond to their peers, customers, and leaders. Employees sense organizational support when they feel that their organization cares about their well-being and actively supports them (Baranik et al., 2010; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Neves & Eisenberger, 2012). Employees need to feel and believe that their organizations value their efforts and their existence in the organization. Employees' view and level of perceived organizational support can produce negative or positive reactions.

Employees can realize support as a leader or manager providing mentoring or consistent and trusted communication. Neves and Eisenberger (2012) alleged that open communication with management provides more than just information; it provides employees with meaning within their organization. Some employees, however, perceive their leaders, managers, and organizations as providing little or no support. A perceived lack of organizational support can result in feelings of separation, absenteeism, and employee turnover (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Finney et al., 2012; Newman et al., 2012). A perceived lack of organizational support also reflects uncaring leaders and results in a lack of employee engagement (Fairlie, 2011; Reio & Sanders-Reio, 2011). A review of the literature on perceived organization support confirmed the importance of organizational support to the topic of the current study. Through this review, I also concluded that reduced mentoring efforts negatively affect perceived organizational support.

One pitfall in the mentoring procedure can be time constraints. Time constraints refer to the amount effort a mentor can put into the bond with the client (Tolar, 2012).

Workers may sense more support from the organization than from their direct leadership. Pressure to perform in the work environment may dampen the quality of the bonding with leadership. When employees and leadership are under highly stressed conditions in the work environment, this can affect the bond in leader-member exchange. Consequently, POS will diminish, changing the relationship between the leader and his or her subordinate.

A lack of perceived organizational support can increase employee turnover. Employee turnover can be a significant problem when employees feel that they do not matter and that they do not receive support from their organizations. Managers who support their employees by encouraging positive relationships with coworkers can improve POS (Madden, Mathias, & Madden, 2014). Madden et al. maintained that employees who perceive their managers and the organization as supportive would have reduced thoughts of leaving the organization. Consequently, employees experience increased commitment and decreased feelings of turnover when their managers help them develop robust relationships.

Perceive organizational support can also be expressed in relation to supervisor support and job fit. In a study of perceived organizational support, supervisor support, and job fit; Dawley et al. (2010) provided evidence that mentoring coupled with strong POS, supervisor support, and job fit had an added effect on employees' intent to stay with their organization. These authors alleged that mentoring would moderate the negative association between perceived organizational support, supervisor support, job fit and turnover intents. The authors also hypothesized that this bond would be stronger for mentored employees than for non-mentored employees. Dawley et al. used a quantitative

method and surveyed employees from three organizations located in the Eastern United States. The three organizations consisted of participants from a heavy equipment manufacturing firm, nursing staff from a regional hospital, and a municipal maintenance firm (Dawley et al., 2010).

The survey variables consisted of POS, supervisor support, mentoring, and turnover intention (Dawley et al., 2010). The results of the hierarchical moderated two-step regression analysis revealed that in all three agencies, perceived supervisor support, mentoring, POS, and job fit was negatively associated with turnover intentions. Looking at the regression model, the link between POS and mentoring on turnover intention was significant. The findings showed support for the hypotheses. Encouraging actions from the organization vary from one employee to another. The authors suggested that POS could induce various behaviors that result in positive outcomes. These findings also correlated with the findings of Newman et al. (2012), who explored the effects of POS, perceived supervisor support, and intra-organizational network resources on turnover intentions (Newman et al., 2012).

Newman et al. (2012) provided evidence that POS, perceived supervisor support, and intra-organizational network resources would negatively relate to turnover intentions in the Chinese sector. The authors used a cross-sectional design and surveyed 437 Chinese employees from five multinational enterprise operations. The authors also considered intra-organizational network resource characteristics relevant to the study because the West Chinese culture emphasizes personal relationships with others. These relationships create obligations for both individuals to maintain the relationship and to exchange favors. Newman et al. developed the following hypotheses: (a) POS effects on

turnover intentions would mediate affective commitment: (b) perceived organizational support mediates the relationship between perceived supervisor support and turnover intentions, and perceived supervisor support positively relates to turnover intentions; (c) POS mediates the relationship between expressive and instrumental networks and turnover intentions; and (d) expressive and instrumental network resources would positively relate to turnover intentions (Newman et al., 2012).

Descriptive statistics and correlation results showed support for all the hypotheses in the study. Perceived organizational support and perceived supervisor support negatively related to turnover intentions (Newman et al., 2012). Perceived organizational support is evident when employees feel they have support from their supervisors and their organization they are not likely to leave their organization. The authors stated that supervisor support is effective; however, it could be detrimental to the organization if there is strong employee attachment to the supervisor (Newman et al., 2012). If their supervisor leaves, employees could disconnect themselves from the organization (Newman et al., 2012).

Dawley et al. (2010) observed that perceived supervisor support was useful for preventing employee turnover, but they did not distinguish the strength of the perceived relationship between supervisors and the organization. One crucial point demonstrated in the study was leadership roles are important to employees in the organization. Newman et al. (2012) asserted that it is less expensive to improve supervisor support than to increase employee compensation, training, and career development. Additionally, managers could improve the morale of their work culture addressing supervisor behavior (Newman et al., 2012).



An analysis of the findings presented in the studies suggested that perceived organizational support is a relevant concept to employee and employer relationships. The results also illustrate that globally, POS and perceived supervisor support are consistent and significant to employee well-being and employee engagement (Newman et al., 2012). Dawley et al. (2010) conducted their study with participants in the United States. Newman et al. (2012) conducted their research with participants in China, and Shoss et al. (2013) conducted their study with participants from the Philippines. Scholars have cited that employees see their supervisors as key representatives of the organizations (Shuck & Herd, 2012). Employees can feel connected to their organizations in many ways; one way is through leaders, because leaders represent the organization (Hansen et al., 2014). If the supervisors display poor behavior and low support, then the employees may view this as the organizational norm. Supervisors act as agents of their organization both independently and when they are providing support to their subordinates (Newman et al., 2012). Once employees develop a negative perception of their leaders, their engagement and loyalty will be difficult to achieve.

Employees need to feel support from their leaders and their organization. In addition, employees are more productive when they sense support from their organization. Researchers have shown that an employee's view of organizational support helps to improve their job performance and their commitment. In a study of leader-member exchange, perceived organizational support, affective commitment, and in-role performance, Casimir, Ng, Wang, and Ooi (2014) provided evidence in research that POS relates to in-role performance. Organizations that provide good leadership can expect

positive results from their employees; correspondingly, organizations that retain poor leadership will affect employee morale, which could lead to disengagement.

Recent researchers have shown that reduced supervisor behavior can negatively relate to POS. Shoss et al. (2013) conducted a study to measure the effects of supervisor behavior with POS. The study participants consisted of MBA students at a Philippines university. The authors declared that when employees see their supervisors as abusive, they will also perceive their organizations as providing low or little organizational support. Second, the authors reported that abusive supervisor behavior affects employees to the degree that their work behavior is counterproductive, decreasing their in-role performance (Shoss et al., 2013). Last, Shoss et al. hypothesized that extra-role performance through POS would be stronger when supervisors' organizational embodiment was high than when it was low. Supervisor organizational embodiment refers to how connected the supervisor is with the organization (Shoss et al., 2013).

The findings suggested that abusive supervisors who had high SOE caused a decline in POS and an increase in employee counterproductive work behavior. An abusive supervisor who had high SOE also caused a decrease in employee in-role and extra-role performance (Shoss et al., 2013). Next, when employees viewed their supervisor's bond to the organization as small, the researchers concluded that abusive supervision was not an essential cause of POS or adverse actions against the organization. These findings illustrated how vital POS is to both employees and their leaders (Shoss et al., 2013). Leaders who understand the effects of POS can positively influence employees' behavior and work roles (Shoss et al., 2013).

In a similar study, the researchers compared POS, organizational based self-esteem, and effective commitment to job performance. Arshadi and Hayavi (2013) measured the effects of POS and organizational based self-esteem on employees' affective commitment and job performance. Arshadi and Hayavi provided evidence that POS associated with organizational based self-esteem. The authors claimed that POS associated with affective commitment and job performance. Additionally, the researchers argued that organization based self-esteem is associated with affective commitment and job performance (Arshadi & Hayavi, 2013). They also hypothesized that organization based self-esteem would mediate the bond between affective commitment and job performance (Arshadi & Hayavi, 2013).

Findings from 318 participants from an industrial organization suggested POS significantly associated with organization based self-esteem and POS significantly influenced affective commitment and job performance (Arshadi & Hayavi, 2013). These authors revealed that organization-based self-esteem positively associates with affective commitment and job performance. Shoss et al. (2013) and Arshadi and Hayavi (2013) produced similar results. Perceived organizational support proved to be a significant influence on employees' performance and employee commitment to their organization. Shoss et al. (2013) were more specific in identifying the supervisor's role in organizational support; however, the theory of POS assumes that the organization and leadership are the means for influence on employee behavior.

Neves and Eisenberger (2012) claimed that communication and POS are useful for positively influencing employee in-role performance and employee extra-role performance. These authors argued that organizations need effective communication to

meet their business objectives. Communicative leaders influence workers to be more productive by facilitating dialog with employees, sharing information, and encouraging employees to think through issues. Neves and Eisenberger hypothesized that communication with the manager would associate with temporal changes in POS. Second, they hypothesized that POS would associate with temporal changes in communications with managers. Third, they hypothesized that POS would mediate the positive bond between management communication and in-role performance. Last, they hypothesized that POS would mediate the positive relationship between management communication and extra-role performance. Participants in the study consisted of subordinates and their supervisors employed by a social services organization. The authors conducted the study at two specific times with the same participants (Neves & Eisenberger , 2012). In time 1, findings revealed that communication and POS associated with in-role and extra-role performance (Neves & Eisenberger , 2012). POS mediated the bond between communication and in-role and extra-role performance. In time 2, however, POS as the mediator was not associated with management communication and employee in-role and extra-role performance (Neves & Eisenberger , 2012). The authors inferred that open communication between leadership and employees was an effective way to improve employee performance in their primary job role and their extra-role work (Neves & Eisenberger , 2012).

Like Arshadi and Hayavi (2013) and Shoss et al. (2013), Neves and Eisenberger (2012) demonstrated how effective POS could be to employee engagement. These scholars demonstrated an increase of in-role and extra-role performance when employees perceive their direct leadership and their organizations as supportive. Supportive

leadership has also been effective at improving employee's commitment and their behavior (Neves & Eisenberger, 2012). When coupled with POS, communication is a useful approach to engage a workforce (Neves & Eisenberger, 2012). Consequently, researchers have shown that leadership influence and leadership characteristics can have a significant effect on employee performance (Neves & Eisenberger, 2012).

Miao (2011) also conducted a study on the effects of POS on employee performance. This author examined the relationship between perceived organizational support and job satisfaction with organizational citizenship behavior and task performance. Miao focused on participants in China. The work culture in China relates differently to concepts such as perceived organizational support and organizational citizenship behavior. Similar to the ideas presented by Arshadi and Hayavi (2013), Shoss et al. (2013), Neves and Eisenberger (2012) and Miao (2011) suggested that POS is likely to improve employee task performance as well as organizational citizenship behavior. Miao postulated there might be cultural differences in cultural organization behaviors with Chinese workers when compared to other cultures. The results of this study, however, have limited generalizability to Western cultures. Miao tested the following hypotheses. Miao's first hypothesis was to determine whether POS is positively associated with organizational citizen behavior. Second, the authors assessed whether perceived organizational support is positively associated with task performance (Miao, 2011). Third, they evaluated whether job satisfaction is positively related to organizational citizenship behavior, and whether job satisfaction relates to task performance (Miao, 2011).

Participants in Miao's (2011) consisted of employees in the Peoples' Republic of China and their supervisors. Each group in the study received Questionnaires. The investigator analyzed the data using hierarchical regression analysis. The results indicated support for all hypotheses in the study, demonstrating significant correlations between organizational citizen behavior and job satisfaction, and task performance. Additionally, these significant correlations showed a relationship between POS, organizational citizen behavior, and task performance. A common theory that resonated in the studies above about POS is social exchange theory. When employees perceive they are receiving support from their organization, they are likely to reciprocate by increasing their in-role or extra- role performance (Arshadi & Hayavi, 2013; Miao, 2011; Neves & Eisenberger, 2012; Shoss et al., 2013). Additionally, POS improved employee behavior with their leaders and the organization. Miao (2011) demonstrated how different cultures responded to subjective concepts such as POS and organizational behavior. The role of leadership in all aspects of the relationship is vital to specific outcomes (Miao, 2011). One limitation of the study was the author's use of a cross-sectional design. Participants' responses could change over time, thereby suggesting reduced effects of the concepts described in the study.

### **Leadership**

One theme that resonates throughout the research literature on employee engagement perceived organizational support, and mentoring, is the role of leadership. The part that supervisors and managers play is critical to results of employee engagement. The part of supervisors and managers is also essential to an employee's perception of his or her organization. Researchers studying employee engagement have

shown that supervisor POS is an antecedent to engagement (Guest, 2014). Leaders and managers at every level represent the organizations which they serve. Employees' perceptions of their leaders' and managers' behaviors and actions often set the stage for employee performance and responsiveness. Disengagement occurs when employees have negative views of their leaders and managers.

Leaders and managers can influence positive relationships and a positive workplace climate in their organizations. Leaders and managers demonstrate acceptable or unpleasant behavior towards their employees. Shuck et al. (2010) described one participant's view that leaders' negative behaviors made employees feel frightened to perform their work. If employees made a mistake, they believed that they would lose their job. Another employee felt "less than" a regular employee, and she did not feel safe asking questions. Rich et al. (2010) expressed in their study that employees felt engaged when they experienced the freedom to speak without being harmed or scorned. The authors identified this feeling as psychological safety. Senior leaders often ignore inappropriate behavior from their leaders (Reio & Sanders-Reio, 2011); however, this inappropriate leadership behavior can be damaging to employee growth and future engagement (Shuck et al., 2010). Unfavorable leadership behaviors affect many aspects of employee well-being, as well as employee development (Reio & Sanders-Reio, 2011).

The actions and behaviors of leaders and managers directly correlate with how employees view their organization. Ineffective leadership can cause employees to see the organization as uncaring. Bedarkar and Pandita (2014) asserted that leaders should seek to provide the right blend of work and fun in the workplace. A lack of effort to engage employees can lead to employees becoming distant or disengaged. Employees who have

a positive perception of their leaders show engagement and provide the discretionary initiatives necessary to meet business needs and satisfy organizational goals. Supervisors and managers must be good role models, good motivators, and act as leaders who have the best interest of the organization and the best interest of the work culture in mind. Employee engagement must consist of continuous learning, improvement, and action (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014). Leaders need to have the right mental disposition and the proper tools to promote an engaged workforce (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014).

### **Leadership Role Models**

Although engagement research has existed for several decades, senior leaders and managers are still unclear of the needs to engage their employees. Consequently, management views employee engagement as one of the most important topics (Saks & Gruman, 2014). To add to the struggles of employee engagement, many leaders fall short of the requirements to engage their employees. Some leaders lack social involvement with their employees, which is critical to building relationships. Burch and Guarana (2015) demonstrated in their study that social interaction between leaders and their employees leads to more energy in the workplace. Other leaders lack employee motivational and communication skills (Guest, 2014). Welch (2011) maintained that effective communication is required for employee engagement. Current scholars have illustrated that leaders need to network with their employees to foster employee engagement (Baranik et al., 2010; Cheung & Wong, 2011; Shuck & Herd, 2012). Leadership behavior and competencies, therefore, should be the forefront of engagement efforts. Mentoring and employee engagement encourage leaders' unswerving commitment to their workers (Finney et al., 2012; Hoffmeister, Cigularov, Sampson,



Rosecrance, & Chen, 2011). One way to measure leadership effectiveness is through employee surveys.

Several scholars have developed effective instruments to measure leader behaviors and other antecedents of employee engagement. There are employee surveys that researchers have used to gauge effective mentoring (Scandura, 2004); perceived organizational support (Eisenberger et al., 1986), and work engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004); these instruments seek employees' opinions of their leaders, managers, and their organizations. Through such surveys, leaders, managers, and organizations can determine the pulse of their work culture. If management takes the results of these surveys seriously, the findings may assist them in planning for improvement. In order for leaders to receive favorable results, their employers must perceive that they have competent and effective leadership (Serrano & Reichard, 2011).

### **Leadership and Culture**

Leaders and managers are the catalyst for an engaged work environment. Leaders and managers play an essential role in influencing the work culture and engaging employees (Serrano & Reichard, 2011). Scholars have claimed that employee engagement is linked to a positive work culture (Fairlie, 2011; Shuck & Wollard, 2010; Wollard, 2011). Employee job satisfaction is also related to leader performance (Gundersen et al., 2012; Xu & Thomas, 2011). Managers that build and support a positive work environment may achieve real and measurable workplace results. Scholars have also implied that when employees see their leaders and organizations as providing a supportive work climate, they are more likely to support the organization's mission. This view is comparable to that of Serrano and Reichard (2011), who posited that leaders need

to encourage positive relationships that employees have with one another. The role that an employee's direct manager plays in the culture shapes the organizational culture and is critical to the results of employee engagement (Fairlie, 2011). It is, therefore, crucial that leaders and managers develop behaviors and actions that foster and breed positive cultural results.

When it comes to engaging the work culture, all members of the workforce matter. In a study to measure the effects of employee engagement in an age-diverse retail workforce, James et al. (2011) stated that managers should consider all members as valuable contributors to the work environment. These authors declared there are two distinct groups of workers in an organization, consisting of younger and older groups. The authors also proclaimed that less engagement occurs with older workers. The scholars indicated that some managers see older workers as less critical to the organization and less engaged, and therefore focus their efforts on keeping the younger workers engaged. Despite the different characteristics of the two groups, managers should recognize provide support and well-being to all employees in order to improve employee engagement (James et al., 2011). Excluding the individuals that want engagement and those individuals that remain productive will likely affect morale and lead to disengagement. The leadership strategy should include employee engagement. James et al. suggested that all members of the organization are valuable contributors and, therefore, need the same attention to promoting engagement. The findings of the study revealed that managers gave less attention to the new older workers and focused more on developing the younger workers (James et al., 2011). The authors claimed that this focus on younger workers encouraged them to stay with the organization; however, neglecting

specific demographics in the work culture could be detrimental to the culture as a whole (James et al., 2011).

Engagement of all employees will help the work environment. Welch (2011) agreed that creating an atmosphere of engaged employees improves organizational effectiveness, innovation, and competitiveness. Using a proposal model, Welch suggested that effective communication from senior leadership focused on organizational change, organizational goals, commitment, and a sense of belonging, influences employee engagement. This proposed method of employee engagement proved effective compared to the model of James et al. (2011). James et al. emphasized that all members of the organization are valuable contributors to an environment of employee engagement. An employee's direct manager or supervisor must effectively communicate organizational goals and organizational policy. Frontline supervisors and managers spend the most time with their employees, and they have the most contact with employees (Tucker, 2017). I argue, therefore, that affirmative cultural involvement from all leaders is essential to promote employee engagement (Tucker, 2017).

### **Leadership and Organizational Support**

Perceived organizational support is a theory that is essential to employee engagement, mentoring, and leadership. Perceived organizational support relates to the perception that employees feel their organization values their well-being and their contributions (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Employees' direct leadership influences their view of POS. An unsupportive leader or manager creates a negative culture. Effective leaders and managers create positive organizational support and promote positive lifestyles. Consequently, adequate leaders and managers create encouraging programs

and fair job conditions (Cheung & Wong, 2011). It is essential for an organization to ensure the proper leaders and managers are in place with correct behaviors to cultivate a supportive work environment (Shuck et al., 2010). A productive work climate is safe, confident, and meaningful for its employees. A good leader or manager is an effective mentor who cultivates organizational support.

For mentoring, several scholars have claimed that leadership's role in POS can provide favorable results for the mentee (Dawley et al., 2010; Finney et al., 2012). Employees mentored by leaders display higher levels of perceived organizational support than those not mentored (Dawley et al., 2010; Tolar, 2012). Dawley et al. (2010) conducted a study to examine the moderating role of mentoring on the bond between POS, supervisor support, and job fit turnover. These authors suggested that for organizations that have high levels of organizational support, mentoring acts as a supplement to improve employee retention (Dawley et al., 2010). Mentoring also provides employees with the emotional supports that are needed as workloads increase (Dawley et al., 2010).

The environment and the work setting can have an impact on the leader-member exchange, which affects the quality of support. As a tool, mentoring can support employee engagement efforts and help employees overcome burnout. Although these networks can provide valuable support, conditions exist when one or all the networks can fall short of providing the required support to meet the needs of the mentee; however, having a network that consists of several mentoring support methods is much better than not having any support mechanisms at all (Tolar, 2012). Short (2014) agreed, stating that

it is essential to improve management support for mentoring, as mentoring can provide holistic outcomes beyond the typical education and training aspects.

There are many approaches to effective mentoring. Finney et al. (2012) measured the effectiveness of a matrix mentoring pilot project in a healthcare setting. These researchers stated that clients need several mentors throughout their career. They also noted a mentor did not provide the needed guidance and direction that a client required. Finney et al. developed research questions that review development of managerial competencies, mentoring systems, matrix mentoring, and mentee projects. The results of this mixed method approach suggested that mentors and clients experienced positive results that ranged from increased visibility and improved relationships to improved employee engagement. These results are in line with the implications of Dawley et al. (2010). The authors suggested needs for diversity in managerial competencies for mentees in the healthcare setting. Other suggestions for leaders and organizational support in the study included that POS was stronger under certain conditions when perceived supervisor support was low. In addition, perceived organizational support was less critical when perceived supervisor support was high. Finney et al. stated that supervisors often act as agents or independent players when providing support for employees. Employees are direct reports to supervisors; therefore, the relationships formed between these groups are critical to employees' perceptions of organizational support.

Leaders and managers must work in supportive organizations if they are to provide quality support to their employees. Finney et al. (2012) asserted that supervisors could be in a challenging position if they work in unsupportive organizations.

Undeniably, the support of an employee's direct supervisor or leader leads to positive employee results and organizational results. Excellent communication from managers improves the effects of mentoring and enhances the impact of employee engagement (Finney et al., 2012). Leaders who have these desired characteristics can positively influence their employees' work culture.

### **Leadership Characteristics**

Workers in the organization have diverse backgrounds and varying characteristics. These characteristics also apply to leaders and managers. Effective leaders and managers bring skills to the environment to provide support and drive results. Interpersonal skills can be valuable (Crabb, 2011; Hansen et al., 2014). Employee engagement occurs in the workforce when leaders demonstrate encouragement and engagement. Leaders and managers that are encouraging and engaging make the culture more productive, which, in turn, drives positive business results (Crabb, 2011; Hansen et al., 2014). These leaders and managers also act as mentors who positively influence their followers.

Leaders and mentors that act as mentors have many characteristics that will influence employee engagement. In a study to examine essential mentor characteristics as perceived by construction professionals, Hoffmeister et al. (2011) found that the participants perceived that an adequate mentor is an active listener, shares information and knowledge, is comfortable around supervisors, and allows clients to make mistakes. The participants in this study noted that an active mentor provides negative feedback, has a vision, is a satisfactory role model, and is objective. Walumbwa and Hartnell (2011) also suggested that effective leaders communicate in such a way that encourages

followers to form an emotional attachment and relational identification. Short (2014) suggested that a functional aspect of a mentor is one who is trustworthy. When employees feel stressed and want to vent their frustrations, they need to know that there is someone with whom they can engage.

The presence of a good leader or manager, however, does not always ensure a pleasant work environment (Tolar, 2012); however, using the characteristics in the literature review would ensure employee engagement through effective mentoring practices. If correctly matched to one another, mentors can improve the work experience of the employees, as well as the overall work environment. Leaders and managers who are capable of establishing positive relationships with their employees are likely to develop a positive and engaged work environment.

Leaders and managers with excellent interpersonal skills can affect employee engagement. In a study to understand how leadership relates to employee engagement, Hansen et al. (2014) posited that leaders who exhibit interpersonal skills facilitate employee engagement. These authors created a model to demonstrate the relationship between interpersonal leadership, organizational relationship, and employee engagement. In their structural model, these researchers cited several qualities that determine interpersonal leadership: informational justice, transformational leadership, and interpersonal justice. The definition of informational justice is a leader who is fair to their employees by providing explanations and information as required. Transformational leadership includes the motivating characteristics that leaders use to change the attitudes and beliefs of their employees. Interpersonal justice indicates that leaders will treat their employees with respect. Hansen et al. hypothesized that the transformational leadership

style alone is not sufficient to engage employees. This argument is similar to the beliefs of other scholars such as Rich et al. (2010), and Xu and Thomas (2011). Treating employees with respect (i.e., interpersonal justice) is correlated with psychological safety. Respectful relationships allow employees to speak freely and openly. The interpersonal characteristics described in this model are similar to the personal qualities of transformational leaders that Xu and Thomas (2011) identified. These authors also alleged in their structural model that organizational identification would positively relate to organizational commitment and negatively relate to job tension. Hansen et al. (2014) posited that leaders who are good at establishing relationships create cultures that have strong identifications with their organizations.

From the structural model, Hansen et al. (2014) developed the following hypotheses. First, the researchers posited that employees' perception of interpersonal relationship positively relates to their organizational identification. Second, they posited that employees' organizational identification positively relates to their engagement. Third, they posited that employees' organizational identification mediates the relationship between their perceptions of interpersonal leadership and engagement. Next, they posited that employees' engagement mediates the relationship between their organizational identification and commitment (Hansen et al., 2014). Fifth, they posited that employees' engagement negatively relates to their job tension (Hansen et al., 2014). Last, they posited employees' engagement mediates the relationship between their organizational identification and job tension (Hansen et al., 2014).

Participants in the study of Hansen et al. (2014) consisted of 451 full-time employees from a firm located in the United States and Canada. Due to a series of layoffs



taking place during data collection, there was a response rate of 15%. The participants completed questionnaires that measured interpersonal leadership, interpersonal and informational justice perceptions, organizational identification, work engagement, organizational commitment, and job tension (Hansen et al., 2014). The results indicated support for all of the hypotheses (Hansen et al., 2014). Additionally, Hansen et al. concluded that engaged employees experience a reduction in job tension (Hansen et al., 2014).

The authors of this study demonstrated the specific leadership characteristics that influence employee engagement. The results were in line with the studies conducted by Tolar (2012), who concluded that leaders who act as mentors improve the work experience of their employees. The results were also in line with those of Hoffmeister et al. (2011), who cited that mentors are good listeners, share information and knowledge, provide feedback, and allow for mistakes. Crabb (2011) declared that leaders have excellent interpersonal skills.

### **Summary**

Maintaining employee engagement is an issue in many organizations. Global leaders and managers have expressed concern regarding employee engagement. Employee disengagement affects organizational effectiveness, innovation, and competitive advantage (Welch, 2011). A work culture that gives willingly and purposefully is critical to the success of an organization. Scholars that I have discussed in this literature review have analyzed and tested several theories that are influential to employee engagement. The theories that I explored and examined included employee engagement, mentoring, psychosocial functions, and perceived organizational support.

Scholars have asserted that a supportive climate, organizational commitment to employees, trust, job clarity, and supportive leadership are conducive to employee engagement (Agarwal, 2014; Farndale & Murrer, 2015; “Increasing employee engagement,” 2015; Rana et al., 2014; Zhang et al., 2014). Other units of employee engagement include engagement drivers, which consist of emotions, internal alignment of oneself with organizational goals, and tapping into one's internal strength. Researchers have suggested that employee efforts also play an essential role in supporting organizational goals to improve the work culture.

Mentoring is useful to the organization and useful to partners in the mentoring relationship. When supervisors and managers act as mentors, they have the advantage of improving employee performance as well as employee engagement. Benefits gained by the mentoring relationship include social and developmental support, POS, organizational commitment for the protégé, and reinforcement of self-worth and confidence for the mentor. The organization benefits from having employees who feel good about themselves and employees who feel adequate in their organization; however, not all mentoring relationships produce positive results (Tolar, 2012).

For psychosocial functions, previous scholars have revealed that most mentees benefit from receiving psychosocial support from their mentors. Organizations that achieve positive results do so because employees know that their leaders and managers understand how they feel and care about their well-being. Psychosocial support can be helpful in changing employees' behavior and producing positive engagement efforts. This behavior from leaders and managers can lead to a productive work environment. Research studies have shown that causes such as fairness, procedural justice, and

opportunities for learning will cause reciprocal actions from employees; workers will become more engaged and more productive. Perceived organizational support also has a significant impact on plans to quit, normative and affective commitment, and both job and organization engagement (Dawley et al., 2010; Finney et al., 2012). Employee perception of their leaders and manager, and the organization is powerful. Employees who view their leaders as abusive may become disengaged in their work. In addition, employees with abusive supervisors may engage in counterproductive behaviors (Restubog, Scott, & Zagenczyk, 2011). Organizations should avoid leaders and managers with self-defeating behaviors and address leadership as necessary. Organizations that enlist these concepts and the theoretical underpinnings of social exchange theory may experience significant improvements to the environment and the growth of the organization.

In Chapter 2, I reviewed a selection of scholarly literature on employee engagement and the supporting theories that improve the organizational effectiveness of technicians and technologists in organizations. In Chapter 3, I will discuss the study methodology, details of the research design, the target population for the study, and the survey instruments that I used for data collection. I will also discuss the procedure for conducting the surveys and collecting the responses to address the research questions.

### Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationship between the independent variables of mentoring, which include role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and the moderator variable, perceived organizational support with a dependent variable, of employee engagement. In this chapter, I discuss the study methodology, details of the research design, the target population for the study, and the survey instruments that I used for data collection.

The study methodology was quantitative. This method was consistent with other studies about mentoring and employee engagement. Participants completed a questionnaire, a scale, and surveys that detail their responses for mentoring functions, work engagement, perceived organizational support, and demographic information. I used the MFQ-9 to assess participants' responses about their mentoring experiences (Scandura, 2004). The responses on the questionnaire ranged from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. I used the UWES to measure participants' responses about their work engagement experiences. The responses on the work engagement scale ranged from *never* to *always*. I used the SPOS to assess participants' responses about their experiences of support received from their organization and leaders. The responses on the survey ranged from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. I administered a demographic questionnaire to seek information about the respondents; gender, age, level of education, years of service, and ethnicity.

The authors of the instruments granted permission for use in this study (see Appendices D, E, and F). The authors also validated these instruments in previous studies (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Scandura, 2004; Schaufeli et al., 2006). The participants in the

study were technicians and technologists. I selected the sample using an online survey organization, Survata.com. Before completing the surveys, participants reviewed an informed consent form online. Participation in the study was not mandatory. The participants who agreed to participate in the study received surveys through Survata.com. I excluded participants who were not previously mentored from the study. The participants completed their survey instruments at a time that was convenient for them. The surveys were available to participants until I had obtained 307 responses. I will discuss the internal and external validity of each questionnaire further in Chapter 3.

### **Research Design and Rationale**

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the independent variables of mentoring, which include role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, the moderating variable of POS, and the dependent variable of employee engagement. I measured POS, as the moderator variable, to test the strength of the relationship between the mentoring variables and employee engagement. I used a quantitative approach to determine whether a relationship exists between the variables mentioned above. Quantitative studies focus on numbers and analysis to conclude relationships of measured variables (Simon, 2011). One of the advantages of using quantitative methods in the research is that the method can manage data from a large number of samples (Simon, 2011). Larger sample sizes can bring generalizable results for the study (Simon, 2011). Results from these measurements enabled me to answer the research questions. I also tested my hypotheses by examining relationships among the variables.

The participants completed cross-sectional Internet-based surveys to ascertain whether mentoring functions and perceived organizational support related to employee engagement. Cross-sectional surveys occur at a single point in time (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). The advantages of Internet surveys are low costs, that the participants can return the surveys quickly, and that the participants can complete the surveys without the assistance of the interviewer (Fowler, 2014). The disadvantages of Internet surveys are a limited sample of users, the location of a comprehensive Internet address list, getting participants to complete the surveys, and that the interviewer is not present to collect the data (Fowler, 2014). In qualitative research, the researcher seeks to describe the phenomenon from the view of the participants (Simon, 2011). Instead of numbers, the researcher collects verbal information through dialog with the participants and the content of that information is explained in a narrative format (Simon, 2011).

The research questions for this quantitative study were as follows:

RQ1: To what degree do perceived organizational support and mentoring, significantly account for work engagement?

RQ2: To what degree do the three mentoring function scores (role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and friendship) result in a significant change in variance accounted for?

RQ3: To what degree do the three measures of mentoring characteristics, (i.e., role modeling of the mentor, acceptance & confirmation as a form of mentoring, and friendship with the mentor) when each factor is tested in interaction with perceived organizational support will each be found to be significant predictor of variance in the dependent variable?

Based on these questions, I tested the moderation of mentoring by organizationally provided support to determine whether organizational support enhanced the positive impact of mentoring on employee engagement. Individually, I tested role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and friendship with organizational support to see how each—separately and together—would impact employee engagement. In survey research, the presence of interaction effects is necessary because it explains how two or more independent variables work together to influence the dependent variable (Lavrakas, 2008). The results provided an adequate representation and understanding of the relationship between the dependent variables (employee engagement) and the independent variables (role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and friendship). Examining the effects of the interaction terms helps explain more of the variability in the dependent variable. I predicted that each of the independent variables would have a significant impact on employee engagement.

The central concepts in the study were mentoring psychosocial functions and employee engagement. Mentoring psychosocial functions consist of three elements (Kram, 1988). These elements were role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and friendship (Kram, 1988). Mentoring psychosocial functions are the subjective parts of mentoring that provide a protégé with the support required to establish bonding relationships at work and beyond the work environment (Kram, 1988). According to Kram, psychosocial mentoring focuses on instilling competence and identity in the protégé. Psychosocial functions concentrate more on the quality of the interpersonal relationship between the mentor and the protégé (Kram, 1988). When executed successfully, mentoring has the potential to improve employee engagement in the

workplace (Kram, 1988). According to Kram (1988), psychosocial mentoring focuses on instilling competence and identity in the protégé. Psychosocial functions concentrate more on the quality of the interpersonal relationship between the mentor and the protégé (Kram, 1988). Mentoring, when executed successfully, has the potential to improve employee engagement in the workplace (Kram, 1988). To improve social support, mentoring psychosocial support can be a viable tool for improving the health of the work environment. Psychosocial support can enhance employee behavior by building employee confidence and improving the employees' overall work experience. The role of the mentor is critical for executing role modeling, acceptance and confirmation and friendship to the protégé. Developing positive relationships is crucial to improving employee engagement.

Employee engagement is an elusive concept in most organizations. Most leaders seek to identify ways to motivate and keep employees engaged (Sahoo & Sahu, 2009). As one of the first scholars to study engagement, Kahn (1990) defined employee engagement as the “harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during their performance” (p. 694). Organizations require engaged employees in order to meet business objectives and to adjust to the challenges of global competitiveness (Sahoo & Sahu, 2009). Sahoo and Sahu suggested that employee engagement is about building a great relationship with the workforce. Higher levels of employee engagement could imply employees are self-starters and the employees believe in supporting the organization in all its endeavors. The social connection that engaged employees have with their organization could increase their productivity and performance.



Social exchange and POS were relevant theories in the study that supports mentoring and employee engagement. A social exchange occurs when the employee feels that he or she has received something of value in the mentoring relationship; such employees are inclined to demonstrate a significant level of engagement with the organization (Blau, 1964). Blau suggested that social exchange is about the social relationship. In those relationships, the individual who supplies rewarding services to another obligates him (Blau, 1964). Scholars studying mentoring have shown that mentors who provided emotional support and counseling to their protégés have helped protégés reduce higher levels of stress (Kao, Rogers, Spitzmueller, Lin, & Lin, 2014), and improve organizational commitment (Kim, Im, & Hwang). Perceived organizational support describes an employee's belief that the organization values his or her well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Leaders who build trust-based relationships with their employees can enhance employees' work engagement (Chughtai et al., 2015). Consequently, POS is a significant precursor to positive organizational results.

### **Role of the Researcher**

The role of the researcher is essential and critical in social research. As the researcher, I administered an instrument via the Internet; thus, there was limited contact with the participants. Unlike qualitative research, there was no face-to-face interaction in this quantitative study. I obtained participants' consent and provided instructions and the instruments to them. The participants in this study completed the instruments online, consisting of surveys, scales, and a questionnaire. Once the participants completed the instruments, I analyzed the data using SPSS software. A professional statistician reviewed the analysis for the accuracy of data and interpretation.

As the researcher, I managed all segments of the study, including research design, participant selection, data collection and analysis, and data reporting activities.

Participants were unknown to me, so there was no prior relationship or potential bias.

Participants had the opportunity to end their participation in the study at any time.

### **Methodology**

I used descriptive statistics to summarize data from sample participants and their views of mentoring, POS, and work engagement. I used data tables to express the results of the descriptive analysis (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). I developed these data tables to show the results of the demographic data, descriptive statistics, correlations, regression analysis, and ANOVA. Through such tables, I aimed to display large numbers of data in a simple, easy-to-view, and easy-to-comprehend form (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008).

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationship between mentoring (role-modeling, acceptance and confirmation, friendship), POS, and employee engagement for employees that assume the roles of technicians and technologists in organizations. The sample population was technicians and technologist who participated in an online audience pool. Participants were required to have received formal mentoring at some time in the career in their current roles as technicians or technologists.

Participants were required to be aged 18 years and older. Participants completed previously used and validated surveys. The four surveys that I used in the study were the MFQ-9, the SPOS, and the UWES. I also administered a demographic questionnaire. As the researcher, I received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval before reaching out to the participants and before collecting any data. I analyzed data using IBM SPSS statistics premium grad pack 21.0 software. Using descriptive statistics, I presented the

data in a tabular and graphical approach, including data from the demographic questionnaire. The data analysis showed whether there was a significant relationship between the independent variables of mentoring role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and friendship, the moderating variable of perceived organizational support, and the dependent variable of employee engagement.

### **Population**

The target sample population was technicians and technologists who participated in an online survey audience pool. The surveys were available to participants through an online survey organization named Survata. The study population consisted of those individuals who have received formal mentoring at one or more times during their career as a technician or technologist. The study population also included full-time salaried and hourly employees. Participants were at least 18 years of age. The technicians and technologists were required to have been employees of their organization for at least 1 year.

### **Sampling and Sampling Procedures**

I used a convenience sampling strategy for this quantitative study. The targeted participants were employed as technicians or technologists. The participants were full-time salary or hourly employees in their organization. The population did not include contract employees (Kintner & Feit, 2004). Participants had a minimum of 1 year of employment with their organization. Only those participants who have received formal mentoring were included in the study. The surveys were available to the participants through Survata.com. I used the G\*Power 3.1.9.2 calculator to determine the sample size for the study. Using the G\*Power 3.1.9.2 sample size calculator, I calculated that a

sample size of 304 participants was required for my study. The statistical tests were an  $F$ -test linear multiple regression. The effect size selected was 0.04. Ferguson (2009) provided effect size interpretation suggestions for social science. For squared association indices for  $R^2$  adjusted  $R^2$  a recommended minimum effect size of .04 practically represented a significant effect size for social science data (Ferguson, 2009). The alpha level and the power level that I selected were 0.05 and 0.80, respectively.

### **Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection (Primary Data)**

I recruited the participants of the study using Survata.com. Survata is an organization that provides technology-driven research for every business decision (Survata, 2017). Survata helps organizations in various industries collect consumer data using surveys and other data collection methods (Survata, 2017). Survata staff posted the study's recruitment requirements, informed consent forms, and the surveys online through their website. The participants reviewed an informed consent form at the survey site. The results were available at the completion of the study. I made a copy of the results available to the participants upon request.

Survey questions came from three unmodified survey instruments that scholars have confirmed in previous studies. The authors of the surveys have granted permission to use each instrument (see Appendices A, B, and C). The survey instruments were the MFQ-9, the SPOS, and the UWES. Schaufeli and Bakker's (2003) UWES consists of nine questions. A sample statement from the scale is: "At my work, I feel bursting with energy." The SPOS consists of eight statements rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale. The scale ranges from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (6). A sample question from the survey is: "Strongly considers my goals and values." Scandura's (2004) MFQ-9 consists

of nine questions. The mentoring function questionnaire has three categories. The first category was vocational support. The second category was psychosocial support, and the third category was role modeling. A sample statement is: "I share personal problems with my mentor." I also collected demographic information on participants' gender, age, education, years of service, and ethnicity.

In keeping with principles of protection of human subjects, I submitted this research study for IRB review at Walden University. The participants received an informed consent form to review before participation in the study. The consent form consisted of a brief description of the study, the purpose of the study, and a description of the procedures that I used in the study. The consent form also consisted of voluntary participation statements and the identification of any risks and benefits to the participants. Participants received no compensation in the study. Any information that I gathered from the participants remained confidential and anonymous. Participants received the contact information of myself, the committee chair, and the IRB. The participants acknowledged the consent form, stated that they have read the information on the form, and agreed to the terms as reported. There were no conflicts of interest. There was no relationship between myself and the participants. All participants were at least 18 years of age. Participants' participation was voluntary, and they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. There were no consequences for those who chose not to participate in the study. There were no incentives or pressuring participants to engage in the research. The original data remained in my care only, and I appropriately stored the data in a safe location per the requirement of the IRB. I will retain these data in a locked place for 5

years before shredding or erasing. As the researcher, I ensured that any risk associated with the study was minimal.

I collected data from a sample of technicians and technologists through an online survey organization name Survata.com. Surveys were available to the technicians and technologists to complete at a time that was convenient for them. The surveys completed were the Work Engagement Scale by Schaufeli and Bakker (2003), Scandura's (2004) MFQ-9, the SPOS created by Eisenberger et al. (1986), and a questionnaire to gather participants' demographic information. Participants received numerically coded surveys before completing the surveys. For example, when completing the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, regarding the question "At my work, I feel bursting with energy," I coded the word "never" as 0 and the words "almost never" as 1. I used the same coding strategies for the mentoring functions questionnaire and the survey of perceived organizational support scale. I then uploaded the coded values into the SPSS software for data analysis.

All aspects of this study were in compliance with the IRB ethical guidelines set up by Walden University and the American Psychological Association. I provided the participants with a contact number which enabled them to contact me to follow-up on any issues or concerns associated with the study. I did not receive any calls or emails from the participants at any time during the study. My goal as the researcher was to ensure that the participants would not endure any unnecessary discomfort or psychological stress from the study.

## **Data Analysis Plan**

IBM SPSS© 21 program was the software that I chose for the quantitative component of the study. SPSS is a software program that social science researchers use for statistical data analysis. I used this software package as the database for storing and analyzing survey data collected in the study. The data came from the MFQ-9, SPOS, and UWES survey instruments, as well as the demographic questionnaire. The SPSS software package was the tool that I used for data cleaning. Data cleaning is essential because incorrect or inconsistent data could lead to issues, including false assumptions. Data cleaning involves the process of detecting errors and inconsistencies in the data and then removing, replacing, or modifying the data (Fowler, 2014). Quantitative data cleaning consists of using statistical techniques and other analytical techniques to detect, quantify, and correct data quality problems or glitches. The data collected for this study required data cleaning to format variable labels, convert participant responses from text to numeral characters, data type (i.e., numeric, string, date), and to define measures for each entry (i.e., scale, nominal, ordinal). In the current study, I accounted for all 307-participant data, with no missing or incorrect values.

I tested the hypotheses of this study using IBM SPSS© Grad Pack 21.0 software. Based on the statistical results, I drew conclusions regarding whether a link exists between mentoring psychosocial roles (i.e., role modeling, acceptance, and confirmation, and friendship), perceived organizational support, and employee engagement. The SPSS software provides the researcher the ability to perform descriptive analysis and make predictions based on the results. I performed regression analysis to examine the predictive relationship of the independent variables of role modeling, acceptance, and

confirmation, friendship, the moderating variable of perceived organizational support, and the dependent variable of employee engagement. From the IBM SPSS© regression and linear selection, I analyzed descriptive statistics for the means and standard deviation of the independent and dependent variables. I also examined Pearson correlations, stepwise regression tables, and model summary tables that shows selected models and their R<sup>2</sup>, standard error, and change statistics values. Finally, I examined results from ANOVA, coefficients, excluded variables, and collinearity diagnostics. I used the IBM SPSS© PROCESS software plug-in to test the interaction effect of the moderator variable of perceived organizational support.

The study population consisted of technicians and technologists who participated in an audience pool through an online survey organization at Survata.com. Specific demographic information for the sample was available only after data collection. Using the G\*Power 3.1.9.2 sample size calculator, I calculated a sample size of 304 participants for the study. The statistical test was an F test linear multiple regression.

The hypotheses for the quantitative component were as follows.

$H_01$ : The overall regression equation including the independent variables of perceived organizational support and mentoring together, does not account for a significant amount of work engagement.

$H_a1$ : The overall regression equation perceived organizational support and mentoring together, does account for a significant amount of work engagement.

$H_02$ : Of the three mentoring function scores (role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and friendship), none of the three will have significant result for the test of change in variance accounted for.



$H_{a2}$ : Of the three mentoring function scores (role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and friendship), at least one of the three will have a significant result.

$H_{03}$ : The three interaction terms (e.g., role modeling and perceived organizational support, acceptance and confirmation and perceived organization support, friendship and perceived organizational support, and work engagement and perceived organizational support) will not be significant predictors of employee engagement.

$H_{a3}$ : The interaction terms (e.g., role modeling and perceived organizational support, acceptance and confirmation and perceived organization support, friendship and perceived organizational support, and work engagement and perceived organizational support) will be significant in predicting employee engagement.

I predicted that in each case, increasing organizational support would lead to increasingly positive impacts for role modeling as it predicts employee engagement. By adding the moderator of perceived organizational support to the mentoring variables in the regression model, there can be a greater understanding of the relationship between these variables in the model. A significant interaction would indicate that perceived organizational support would moderate the relationship between mentoring and employee engagement.

The statistical test was an F test multiple linear regression. Because the focus was to understand the relationship between the independent variables, moderator variable, and the dependent variable, this model fit the study. I presented the data results through descriptive statistics in tabular and graphical summaries. I presented the descriptive statistics to illustrate the effects of mentoring and perceived organizational support on

employee engagement. I presented the means, standard deviations, alphas, regression analysis, ANOVA results, and correlations to articulate the data results.

### **Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs**

This section contains a review of each instrument as to its validity and reliability as tested in prior studies. Each instrument assessed the constructs of the study, which included mentoring (i.e., psychosocial functions, career development, role modeling), perceived organizational support, and employee engagement. Operationalization of the constructs consisted of defining the exact definition of the variables in the study and determine how each instrument for the variables has been tested for validity, reliability, and robustness (Shuttleworth, 2008). I tested the mentoring functions questionnaire against four rival models and determined that it demonstrated satisfactory convergent and discriminant validity. I determined that the survey of perceived organizational support had adequate construct validity with the organizational commitment questionnaire and the affective commitment questionnaire. The Utrecht work engagement scale showed sufficient internal consistency over time with adequate stability, reliability, and reliability. Each of the self-reported surveys and questionnaires were operationally adequate for use in the current study.

### **Demographic Questionnaire**

The participants provided demographic information for the study. In a self-report questionnaire, participants provided information regarding their location in the U.S., their gender, and their age. Also, the participants were asked the following questions: "Which of the following industries do you currently work in?" "What type of employee are you? [Hourly or Salaried]" "How long have you been in your current role?" and "Have you

received formal mentoring at some time in your career or are you currently being mentored?" The participants were instructed to complete all questions.

### **Mentoring Functions Questionnaire**

I measured the variables of role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and friendship using the MFQ-9 (Scandura, 2004). The MFQ-9 is a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. The scale measures participants' vocational support, psychosocial support, and role modeling. The questionnaire takes 5 to 10 minutes to complete. The mentor is often an older individual, and the client is a younger person. In some circumstances, however, the age of the mentor is irrelevant. The mentoring functions given by the mentor consist of career development and psychosocial functions. In career development, the mentor provides the client with training and challenging work, and teaches the client how to navigate through the organization. These mentoring functions, when adequately given to the client, offer benefits to both the client and the organization.

The purpose of this study was to measure the effectiveness of mentoring psychosocial functions and its bearing on employee engagement. The purpose of the mentoring function questionnaire (Scandura, 2004) was to measure the variables, career support, psychosocial functions, and role modeling. (See Appendix A). The MFQ-9 enables participants to assess their views of mentoring functions offered by a mentor. The vocational support portion of the instrument measured the participant's view of their mentor's ability to provide career and professional development. This part of the instrument did not have a direct influence on the study; however, the results presented insight on the mentoring bond. The psychosocial support section of the instrument

measured the participants' view of their mentor's involvement in their relationship. The role-modeling portion of the instrument weighed the participant's view of their mentor's ability to motivate, teach, and display behaviors that a client seeks to copy. The three mentoring components of the instrument were relevant to the study, and the results enabled me to answer the study's research questions and to test the hypotheses.

Castro, Scandura, and Williams (2004) conducted three studies to test the validity of Scandura and Ragins' (1993) MFQ-9 mentoring questionnaire. In Study 1, the authors conducted an empirical assessment of the content validity of the measurement. Study 1 consisted of a sample of 169 students from a private university in the southeastern United States. Fifty percent of the students were male. The students' role in the study was to conduct a content adequacy assessment of the 15-item scale. The results of two analyses were identical. The first four unrotated eigenvalues for the Scandura and Ragins' 15-item measure were 3.45, 2.55, 1.89, and .86, supporting the extraction of three factors. The total variance explained was 41%. The results of the study supported the content validity of Scandura's and Ragins' measure. In Study 2, the researchers used the same 15-item scale. The purpose of Study 2 was to assess scale reliability, concurrent validity, and convergent and discriminant validity. To test concurrent validity, the authors included job satisfaction, anxiety, and organizational commitment. The study participants consisted of employed MBA students who attended medium-sized private university in the southeastern United States and completed surveys. The total sample size consisted of 474 students, of which 54% indicated having a mentor at some point in their careers. The participants' jobs ranged from supervisor to CEO, and 54.7% were male. The measures consisted of Scandura and Ragins' (1993) 15-item scale, Ragins and McFarlin's (1990)

33-item measure mentoring construct, and the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, which consists of 20-items (MSQ; Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, 1967), The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ; Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974), and the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (Spielberger, Gorsush, & Lushene, 1970). Results for the fit statistics for the MFQ-9 and the rival models revealed the MFQ-9 was statistically better than the other models. The fit statistics values were a chi-square of 61.07 and  $df = 24$ , SRMSR = .031, GFI = .98, TLI = .96, NFI = .96, CFI = .98, and RMSEA = .04. The standardized factor loadings were statistically significant ( $p \leq .01$ ). The reliability and item-total correlations were significant. The reliability estimate for the MFQ-9 was .78. Item-total correlations for the all the scales were as low as .38 and as high as .66 (Scandura & Ragins, 1993). For career support, the item “My mentor helps me coordinate professional goals” scored .38. Deleting the career support item could improve the coefficient alpha (from .67 to .70). Findings from the study showed moderate support for Scandura and Ragins’ 15-item scale. Additionally, the researchers revised and reduced the 15-item measure to a 9-item scale with repeated analyses, and provided substantial support to maintain the 9-item scale.

In Study 3, Castro et al. (2004) tested the validity of Scandura and Ragins’ (1993) MFQ-9 mentoring questionnaire. The authors tested the MFQ-9 for its reliability and convergent and discriminant validity. The participants consisted of employed CPAs who completed 1,024 surveys. Of the CPAs who completed the survey, 795 indicated that they were mentored at some point in their career. Sixty-eight of the participants were male, and the average age of the participants was 30 years old. The fit statistics obtained for the theoretical model indicated an excellent fit of the model to the data and all the factor

loadings were statistically significant. The study results provided substantial evidence of the instrument's discriminant and convergent validity, indicating that the MFQ-9 had adequate reliability. There were three scales with three items per scale in the questionnaire: career support, psychosocial functions, and role modeling. The reliability of each scale was as follows: .67 for career support, .77 psychosocial support, and .69 for role modeling. The reliability rule-of-thumb is .70. Scandura and Ragins (1993), however, considered values of .67 for career support and .69 for role modeling to be acceptable for their study.

### **Survey of Perceived Organizational Support**

Perceived organizational support is the view that an employee feels that his or her organization values their efforts and their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Employees that feel valued and appreciated by their organization feel a duty to give more of themselves through work performance, reduced turnover, and engagement. Perceived organizational support is helpful in reducing employee turnover (Newman et al., 2012), improving employee bonding through mentoring (Baranik et al., 2010), and improving job and organizational engagement (Dawley et al., 2010). POS correlates well with other constructs such as mentoring, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, perceived supervisor support, and the social exchange theory.

The purpose of the perceived organizational support 8-item self-reported survey (Eisenberger et al., 1986) was to assess employees' perception of the support available from their organization (see Appendix B). The focus of this survey is to evaluate participants' views of how well their organization values their contributions, concerns, and well-being. The SPOS has good construct validity with several concepts. In an earlier

study to measure perceived employer commitment, Shore and Tetrick (1991) used the SPOS. These authors used the SPOS and other constructs to decide the distinctiveness of the construct, including the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ; Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979), the Affective Commitment Scale (ACS), and the Continuance Commitment Scale (CCS; Meyer & Allen, 1984).

Hackman and Oldham (1975) conducted other comparisons with the Specific Satisfaction Scale. According to Meyer and Allen (1984), the affective commitment scale assesses commitment described by a person's positive feelings of bonding and interest in their work or their organization. The continuance commitment scale evaluated the extent of an employee's commitment to their organization and related cost associated with leaving the organization. The specific satisfaction scale offered measures for (a) job security (b), pay and compensation (c), social satisfaction with peers and coworkers (d), supervision, and (e) growth satisfaction related to the job (Hackman & Oldham, 1975).

The study sample consisted of 330 employees working for a multinational firm headquartered in the southeastern United States. These employees held various jobs such as mechanics, secretaries, and supervisors. The average age of the employees was 47.39 years, and the average tenure was 22.48 years (Shore & Tetrick, 1991).

The authors used a randomized, stratified sample and mailed surveys to 1,071 employees (Shore & Tetrick, 1991). The study did not include newly hired employees (Shore & Tetrick, 1991). Three hundred agreed to engage in the research, and 348 participants presented their surveys (Shore & Tetrick, 1991). The measures consisted of the SPOS, OCQ, ACS, and ACC. Additional measures consisted of the Specific Satisfaction Scale and the Overall Job Satisfaction Scale (Shore & Tetrick, 1991).

Questions on the survey focused on employees' work attitudes, ratings of job performance, development experiences, and demographic information (Shore & Tetrick, 1991).

Shore and Tetrick (1991) used a two-step procedure to assess the data collected in the study. In the first step, the authors checked the scale determine whether it was one-dimensional (Shore & Tetrick, 1991). The scale estimated covariance of the items for each measure against a one-factor model. The authors then tested the distinctiveness of POS, organizational commitment, affective commitment, continuance commitment, and satisfaction (Shore & Tetrick, 1991). Using a Lisrel-PC, an assessment of the goodness of fit of the models estimated was the ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom, the goodness-of-fit index (GFI), the adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), and the root-mean-square residual (Shore & Tetrick, 1991). The authors also used the normed fit index (NFI) and the parsimonious fit index (PFI) (Shore & Tetrick, 1991)..

Shore and Tetrick (1991) used a one-factor model to check each scale for unidimensionality. The NFI for SPOS, OCQ, ACS, and CCS, were .906, .917, .887, and .870 respectively (Shore & Tetrick, 1991). For the satisfaction scale, the Overall Job Satisfaction Scale and the Organizational Satisfaction item did not account well and had a covariance result of .663 on the NFI indices (Shore & Tetrick, 1991). A seven-factor model received adequate support raising the NFI to .907 (Shore & Tetrick, 1991).

The findings demonstrated the distinctiveness of the SPOS with affective and continuance commitment but reduced support for lack of redundancy with satisfaction (Shore & Tetrick, 1991). The results from zero-order correlations among of the Survey of Perceived Organizational Scale (SPOS), the Continuance Commitment Scale (CCS), and



Specific Satisfaction (Security, Pay, Growth) showed that SPOS correlated higher with values ranging from .80 to .87, with a *p*-value of .05. In a related study, Eisenberger et al. (1986) conducted a study with 361 employees across various disciplines. The participants' backgrounds were as manufacturing workers, electrical workers, telephone company line workers, bookkeepers, law firm secretaries, high school teachers, and postal clerks. The participants completed a 36-item SPOS survey (Eisenberger et al., 1986). In two factor loadings, the SPOS loaded higher on every one of the 36 statements in the first factor (Eisenberger et al., 1986). The item-total correlations ranged from .42 to .83, and the reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) was .97 (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

### **The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale**

A previous literature review suggested that the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale was internally consistent over time, had excellent stability over time, had good validity and was a reliable sign of work engagement. The purpose of the Utrecht Work Engagement scale (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003) was to measure the variable, work engagement (see Appendix C). The scale consists of three scales that measure an employee's vigor, dedication, and absorption. Although Schaufeli and Bakker developed several versions of the UWES, the 9-item version is the preferred survey instrument, and is the one that I selected for this study. Work engagement is a "positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption" (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). Employees with these characteristics are more productive, valued, and serve as role models for their peers (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003).

An individual characterized as having vigor has high-energy and cognitive resilience while working. An individual described as having dedication is enthusiastic

and heavily involved in his or her work. Employees who demonstrate absorption show engagement in their work. These individuals also have difficulty in detaching themselves from their task (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). Schaufeli and Bakker identified these characteristics as traits of highly engaged employees.

One statement on the vigor scale is: “At my work, I feel bursting with energy.” A statement on the dedication scale is: “I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose.” A sample statement on the absorption scale is: “Time flies when I am working.” The statements in these scales represent employee work engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003).

**Development of the UWES.** The UWES initially started with 24 items. After psychometric evaluation with two groups consisting of employee and students, the authors reduced the UWES to 17 items. According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), seven of the original items named as unsound and removed from the 24-item scale. The additional psychometric analysis uncovered two other weaknesses in the absorption scale and the vigor scale. Therefore, the authors reduced the UWES to 15 items (Schaufeli & Bakker 2004). A psychometric analysis of the UWES revealed the following results (Schaufeli & Bakker 2004). A factorial validity test confirmed that a hypothesized three-factor model was superior to a one-factor model. Schaufeli and Bakker gathered data from various samples from the Netherlands, Spain, and Portugal.

Regarding inter-correlations, either a one-dimensional or a three-dimensional structure were acceptable; however, the authors preferred the three-dimensional structure. The authors declared that correlations between the three scales exceeded .65. Correlations between the latent variables determined to be between .80 and .90 (Schaufeli & Bakker,

2004). Other data revealed the student version of the UWES was significantly invariant across samples from Spain, The Netherlands, and Portugal (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

All three scales of the UWES (i.e., vigor, dedication, absorption) showed favorable internal consistency (Schaufeli & Bakker 2004). All values were equal to or exceeded the critical value of .70 (Schaufeli & Bakker 2004). Cronbach's  $\alpha$  values that are equal to or greater than .70 are satisfactory (Schaufeli & Bakker 2004). The Cronbach  $\alpha$  for these researchers' study ranged from .80 to .90 (Schaufeli & Bakker 2004).

According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), the UWES has acceptable stability. The 2-year stability coefficients were .30, .36, and .46 respectively, for vigor, dedication, and absorption.

**UWES validity.** The authors tested the validity of the UWES in several studies (Schaufeli & Bakker 2004). The authors examined the UWES with a burnout scale, which measured on a Maslach Burnout Inventory (Schaufeli & Bakker 2004). The Maslach Burnout Inventory is a 22-item scale used by organizations and researchers to measure professional burnout in the fields of human services, business, education, and government (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1986). Burnout is the opposite of work engagement and does not relate when weighed against one another. As a contrast to work engagement, burnout describes a negative side to work behavior. The characteristics of burnout include exhaustion, cynicism, and lack of professional efficacy (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001).

To test the validity of the work engagement scale, Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) hypothesized that work engagement would relate negatively to burnout. Results suggested there were negative correlations between vigor and exhaustion and dedication

and cynicism as expected (Schaufeli & Bakker 2004). The association between a lack of professional efficacy was stronger, however, when measured against all parts of engagement (i.e., vigor, dedication, and absorption) (Schaufeli & Bakker 2004).

Schaufeli, Bakker, and Salanova (2006) also conducted a cross-national study to measure work engagement with a short questionnaire. The authors identified several purposes for the study (Schaufeli et al., 2006). First, the goal was to shorten the UWES from its 17-item length (Schaufeli et al., 2006). Second, the authors sought to compare the one-factor model of the short version to a three-factor model and evaluate it from a cross-national invariance view (Schaufeli et al., 2006). Third, the authors sought to analyze the psychometric features of the shorter version (Schaufeli et al., 2006). Last, the authors aimed to present a descriptive analysis of the shorter version of the UWES and its link to gender, age, and occupation (Schaufeli et al., 2006).

The study consisted of 27 studies conducted between 1999 and 2003 in different countries. Participants received both the burnout questionnaire and the work engagement questionnaire. The participants' occupations comprised of social workers, blue-collar and white-collar workers, health-care workers, teachers, management, and police officers (Schaufeli et al., 2006). Fifty-three percent of the participants were male, and roughly 47 percent were women. The age of the participants ranged from 16 to 68 years (Schaufeli et al., 2006).

**UWES data analysis.** Schaufeli et al. (2006) analyzed the data using a structural equation modeling performed by Amos. The Analysis of Moment Structures (Amos) is a program that allows the user to change a structural equation model using simple drawing tools (Arbuckle, 2010). For fit indices, the authors proposed that a check on the normal

distribution of all the scale items revealed the skewness and the kurtosis were within the acceptable range of  $\pm 1.96$  (Schaufeli et al., 2006).

Schaufeli et al. (2006) developed a short version of the UWES using an iterative process. The authors analyzed a sampling of data for each of the 10 countries. The authors began by using the essential item in each scale and regressed that item onto the next item on the scale. Schaufeli et al. added the elements having the highest  $\beta$  value to the initial most characteristic item. The addition of the items continued until there were no significant variances with subsequent items in the scale.

For example, the essential item in the vigor scale was: “At my work, I feel bursting with energy.” This item then supplemented to the next item: “At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.” Based on the data collected in the study, this item had the highest  $\beta$  value across all countries (Schaufeli et al., 2006). These two items then summed and regressed on the remaining four items. This procedure continued in the vigor scale until there were no significant  $\beta$  values on the items (Schaufeli et al., 2006). The same iterative procedure continued for the dedication and absorption scale (Schaufeli et al., 2006). The results lead to the development of the 9-item version of the UWES (Schaufeli et al., 2006).

### **Threats to Validity**

#### **External Validity**

The MFQ-9, SPOS, and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) proved to have acceptable reliability and acceptable validity. A test of the MFQ-9 against four other rival models has shown good convergent validity, discriminant validity, reliability, item-total correlations, and concurrent validity. Except for the one item in the career support

scale, the MFQ-9 is a robust instrument. Reliability test against four rival models also showed a coefficient alpha of .91, .86, .73, and .93.

The SPOS had acceptable construct validity with several concepts. Eisenberger et al. (1986) conducted a study using a one-factor model to check each scale for unidimensionality. The normed fit index for SPOS, OCO, ACS, and CCS were .906, .917, .887, and .870 respectively. Evidence had also shown the distinctiveness of the SPOS with affective and continuance commitment but reduced support for lack of redundancy with satisfaction (Shore & Tetrick, 1991).

Shore and Tetrick (1991) asserted that in multiple studies when SPOS is used in organizations, employee responses showed consistent evidence that SPOS had significant reliability. Exploratory confirmatory analysis with employees from diverse occupations has proven that SPOS has high reliability and unidimensionality (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Using data taken from 10 countries, the UWES was externally consistent over time, had acceptable stability, acceptable reliability, and was a reliable indicator of work engagement. The authors developed and compared several versions of the UWES. There was a decline of the SPOS instrument from its 24-item version to its current 9-item version using an iterative regression process. The UWES was comparable to the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) burnout scale. Burnout is the antipode of engagement. Eisenberger et al. (1986) hypothesized that engagement would correlate negatively with burnout. The results suggested that vigor and dedication associated negatively with exhaustion and cynicism; however, professional efficacy was stronger when measured against work engagement.

For factorial validity, a three-factor model showed better results than a one-factor model (Eisenberger et al., 1986). The one and three-dimensional structure were acceptable, however; the authors preferred the three-dimensional structure (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Intercorrelations for the scale were good. Correlations between the three scales were .80 and .90 (Eisenberger et al., 1986). The Cronbach alpha values were greater than .70 (Eisenberger et al., 1986). For stability, 2-year coefficients were .30, .36, and .46 for vigor, dedication, and absorption, respectively (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

As the researcher of this study, I have a strong affinity for mentoring and the benefits it can bring to individuals and the organization in which his or her works. Although I have received limited formal mentoring throughout my working career, I have seen the personal and developmental gains from having a mentor.

### **Ethical Procedures**

I addressed all ethical issues during all phases of the study. Upon required approvals, participants were invited to participate in the survey via email. In compliance with Walden University, participant engagement cannot occur until approval by the Institutional Review Board. I received IRB approval on July 27, 2017. My IRB approval number is 07-27-17-0052368. I also completed the “Protecting Human Research Participants” training course on November 18, 2016 as a requirement to conduct the current study. There is a combination of issues that I was required to be aware of before the execution of this study. The first concern was to ensure no harm to the participants. My goal was to provide participants were comfortable in the environment of their choice so they could feel free to disclose information. Participants did not confront any situation where they could have encountered harm or injury. The next concern was to ensure

participant privacy and anonymity. In order to ensure privacy and anonymity, my records contained no participant information. There was no concern with exposure through written documentation or images. Informed consent was another issue that I addressed as a researcher. Participants knew what to expect with their involvement in the study. Participants were able to remain in the study or withdraw. As the researcher, I provided Survata with a defined number of participants required for the study. Survata located participants who met my requirements as written on the informed consent form. From these requirements, participants were allowed to access my surveys and complete the surveys at a time that was convenient for them. The total number of participants required for my study was 304, and the total number of participants who completed the surveys was 307. Because I obtained the exact amount of the participants that I needed, I concluded that none of the participants withdrew from the surveys. I assured the participants of the confidentiality of their responses before they completed the surveys. There was a possibility of personal disclosure information during the interview process. I did not share this information. Next, I ensured appropriate behavior on my part. I exhibited proper professional conduct and integrity during my interaction with the participants. Regarding the data, it was my responsibility as the researcher to ensure data was interpreted correctly meaning there were no misinterpretations or incorrect analysis. Readers will need to know and understand that the data is valid and reliable. I ensured that the data were secured and archived. The data currently reside in my care in a safe under lock and key.



## Summary

The study methodology was a quantitative method. I used a quantitative approach to capture participant responses with previously developed and tested survey instruments. The central concepts in the study were mentoring psychosocial functions (i.e., role-modeling, acceptance and confirmation, friendship) and employee engagement. I measured perceived organizational support to test the moderating effect on mentoring and employee engagement. Social exchange theory and perceived organizational support were relevant theories in the current study. The research population consisted of technicians and technologists. Technicians and technologists support engineers for test set-up, testing, and data collection. The role of a technician or technologist varies from one specific occupation to another. A mechanical engineering technician applies theory and principles of mechanical engineering to modify, develop, test, or calibrate machinery under the direction of engineering staff or physical scientist. An environmental science and protection technician monitors the environment and investigates sources of pollution and contamination. A medical and clinical laboratory technologist collects samples and performs tests to analyze body fluids, tissues, and other substances. I chose the participants for the study through convenience sampling. I analyzed the data using IBM SPSS© software. The survey instruments used in the study were the MFQ-9, UWES, and the SPOS, as well as a demographic survey. Walden University IRB required the protection of human subjects. I did not seek out participants until approval was granted.

In Chapter 4, I will discuss the descriptive and statistical results of the quantitative data analysis. I will present the demographic data. I will then discuss the results of the

correlations, regression analysis, and ANOVA results in tabular form, as well as a summary of the results.

## Chapter 4: Results

The study population consisted of individuals who have received formal mentoring at one or more times during their career as technicians or technologists in a small, medium, or large organization. The participants did not state whom they were mentored by, nor did they disclose whether they were mentored inside or outside of their organization. The underlying goal for this population was to understand whether the elements of mentoring and perceived organizational support positively influenced participants to demonstrate higher levels of work engagement. The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationship between the independent variables of mentoring, which include role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, with a moderator variable of perceived organizational support, and the dependent variable of employee engagement. I selected the technicians or technologists as participants through an online survey company, Survata.com. Survata is an online survey assistance organization that assists researchers and companies in creating surveys to target a custom audience (Survata, 2017). The surveys that I used in the study included a demographic questionnaire, MFQ-9, the SPOS, and the UWES. The following research questions and hypotheses guided the analyses in this chapter:

RQ1: To what degree do perceived organizational support and mentoring, significantly account for work engagement?

$H_01$ : The overall regression equation including the independent variables of perceived organizational support and mentoring together does not account for a significant amount of work engagement.

*H<sub>a</sub>1*: The overall regression equation perceived organizational support and mentoring together does account for a significant amount of work engagement.

RQ2: To what degree do the three mentoring function scores (role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and friendship) result in a significant change in variance accounted for?

*H<sub>0</sub>2*: Of the three mentoring function scores (role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and friendship), none of the three will have significant result for the test of change in variance accounted for.

*H<sub>a</sub>2*: Of the three mentoring function scores (role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and friendship), at least one of the three will have a significant result.

RQ3: To what degree do the three measures of mentoring characteristics, (i.e., role modeling of the mentor, acceptance and confirmation as a form of mentoring, and friendship with the mentor) when tested in interaction with perceived organizational support predict a significant amount of variance in the dependent variable?

*H<sub>0</sub>3*: The three interaction terms (role modeling and perceived organizational support, acceptance and confirmation and perceived organization support, friendship and perceived organizational support, and work engagement and perceived organizational support) will not be significant predictors of employee engagement.

*H<sub>a</sub>3*: The interaction terms (role modeling and perceived organizational support, acceptance and confirmation and perceived organization support, friendship and perceived organizational support, and work engagement and perceived organizational support) will be significant in predicting employee engagement.

### **Descriptive Statistics**

A total of 307 individuals participated in the study. Based on the a priori sample size calculation that I conducted using G\*Power v3.1.0, a minimum of 304 participants was necessary to achieve statistically valid results; therefore, the 307 participants were sufficient for this study. I performed data collection over the course of 3.8 days in November 2017. Survey data collection began on November 17, 2017 and ended on November 20, 2017. The original data collection plan consisted of obtaining participants directly from the organizations for which they are employed; however, due to difficulties reaching this population, it was more fitting to obtain participants from an audience pool through an online survey organization. Participant recruitment occurred through a Survat.com (Survata, 2017). Survata targeted and located the participants based on the specified criteria (Survata, 2017). The participants in the study were employed as technicians or technologists representing various industries. All of the participants have received formal mentoring for at least 1 year at some time in their career. Table 1 presents the frequencies and percentages of the participants' demographic characteristics. A total of 154 participants (50.2%) are female while 153 participants (49.8%) are male. The age of participants was categorized into age groups. The majority of participants are from the IT industry. For the employee type, 182 participants (59.3%) were salary-based while 125 participants (40.7%) were hourly-based. The years in a position of employees were grouped categorically.

Table 1

*Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic Characteristics (N = 307)*

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	153	49.8
	Female	154	50.2
	Total	307	100.0
Age	18 to 24 years old	27	8.8
	25 to 34 years old	131	42.7
	35 to 44 years old	83	27.0
	45 to 54 years old	38	12.4
	55 to 64 years old	23	7.5
	65 and over	5	1.6
	Total	307	100.0
Industry	IT	148	48.2
	Telecommunication	51	16.6
	Bio-Tech	20	6.5
	Automotive	64	20.8
	Computer Hardware	15	4.9
	Consumer Electronics	8	2.6
	Aviation	1	.3
	Total	307	100.0
Employee Type	Hourly	125	40.7
	Salary	182	59.3
	Total	307	100.0
Years in Current Position	1-3 years	90	29.3
	4-6 years	96	31.3
	7-9 years	38	12.4
	10 or more years	83	27.0
	Total	307	100.0

I considered three variables in this study. These variables included the independent variables of mentoring functions such as career support, psychosocial support, and role modeling, the moderating variable of perceived organizational support, and the dependent variable of work engagement and its constructs of vigor, dedication, and absorption. Table 2 presents the measures of central tendencies for subscales of mentoring functions. Each subscale includes three 5-point Likert-scale items. The minimum score for all subscales is 3, while the maximum score for all subscales is 15. The highest mean score was for role modeling ( $M = 12.33$ ,  $SD = 2.20$ ). The second highest mean score was for career support ( $M = 12.32$ ,  $SD = 2.12$ ) while the lowest mean score was for psychosocial support ( $M = 11.29$ ,  $SD = 2.70$ ).

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics of Mentoring Functions Questionnaire Subscales*

	<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	<i>SD</i>
Career Support	307	4.00	15.00	12.32	2.12
Psychosocial Support	307	3.00	15.00	11.29	2.70
Role Modeling	307	3.00	15.00	12.33	2.20

The moderating variable was perceived organizational support. The questionnaire consisted of eight items, with four reverse-scored items. I measured the items using a 7-point Likert type scale ranging from 0 to 6. The highest possible score is 48, while the lowest possible score is 0. The mean SPOS score was 33.49 ( $SD = 9.44$ ), with a range of 5 to 48.

Table 3

*Descriptive Statistics of Perceived Organizational Support*

	<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	<i>SD</i>
SPOS	307	5	48	33.49	9.44

The dependent variables of the study were the subscales of work engagement, which include vigor, dedication, and absorption. Each subscale consists of three items measured using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 0 to 6. The highest possible score was 18, while the lowest possible score was 0. For vigor, the range of values is from 2 to 18, with a mean of 12.15 and a standard deviation of 3.67. For dedication, the range of values is from 5 to 18, with a mean of 13.50 and a standard deviation of 3.26. For absorption, the range of values was from 3 to 18, with a mean of 12.80 and a standard deviation of 2.99. The highest mean score was for dedication, followed by absorption and vigor. Regarding overall work engagement score, the mean was 38.45 ( $SD = 9.06$ ), with a range of 16 to 54.

Table 4

*Descriptive Statistics of Work Engagement Subscales*

	<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	<i>SD</i>
Vigor	307	2.00	18.00	12.15	3.67
Dedication	307	5.00	18.00	13.50	3.26
Absorption	307	3.00	18.00	12.80	2.99
Work Engagement	307	16.00	54.00	38.45	9.06

## Results

To analyze the data gathered in the study, I conducted correlation analysis, linear regression analyses, and ANOVA tests. I performed correlation analyses to test whether



there were significant relationships between the dependent variables of work engagement and the independent variables of mentoring and perceived organizational support. Table 5 presents the results of the correlation analyses. All mentoring variables and perceived organizational support variables were significantly related to the work engagement variables of vigor, dedication, and absorption, as well as overall work engagement scores ( $p$ -values < .05).

Table 5

*Pearson's Correlation Analysis Results of Relationship of Work Engagement Variables on Mentoring and Perceived Organizational Support*

		Vigor	Dedication	Absorption	Work Engagement
Career Support	Pearson Correlation	.492**	.503**	.423**	.520**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	<i>N</i>	307	307	307	307
Psychosocial Support	Pearson Correlation	.489**	.469**	.375**	.491**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	<i>N</i>	307	307	307	307
Role Modeling	Pearson Correlation	.500**	.533**	.401**	.527**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	<i>N</i>	307	307	307	307
SPOS	Pearson Correlation	.458**	.532**	.267**	.465**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	<i>N</i>	307	307	307	307

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

To test the hypotheses posed in this study, I conducted a linear regression analysis for overall work engagement scores, as well as each of the three subscales of work engagement. Table 6 presents the regression result for work engagement as the criterion

variable. According to the results shown in Table 6, career support, psychosocial support, role modeling, and SPOS variables were significant predictors of work engagement. The ANOVA result presented in Table 7 determined that the regression model for work engagement was a good fit, wherein the independent variables explain 39% ( $R^2 = .390$ ) of variance in the dependent variable. Through the collinearity statistics, I also determined that there was no issue of multicollinearity because the values of VIF were about 2.5 or less. Consequently, the results support rejecting the null hypothesis for RQ1.

Table 6

*Regression Results for Criterion Variable Work Engagement*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	<i>t</i>		Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	5.512	2.572		2.144	.033		
Career Support	.781	.280	.183	2.787	.006	.470	2.126
Psychosocial Support	.707	.209	.211	3.386	.001	.522	1.915
Role Modeling	.591	.295	.144	2.008	.046	.395	2.532
SPOS	.240	.050	.250	4.811	.000	.747	1.339

Table 7

*ANOVA Result for Regression Analysis using Work Engagement as Criterion Variable*

Model	Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
1 Regression	9796.030	4	2449.008	48.290	.000
Residual	15315.833	302	50.715		
Total	25111.863	306			

I also conducted regression analyses to test whether the mentoring variables and perceived organizational support variables were significant predictors of each of the subscales of work engagement. I evaluated each subscale separately to determine their impact on mentor behavior functions. Tables 8 to 13 demonstrate the impact of each mentor behavior that I tested concurrently. Table 8 presents that mentor psychosocial support best predicts vigor of work engagement. Table 10 references that mentor psychosocial support best predicts dedication of work engagement. Table 12 shows that mentor career support best predicts absorption of work engagement. Table 8 presents the regression result for vigor as the criterion variable. I determined that psychosocial support and SPOS variables were significant predictors of vigor. The ANOVA results indicated that the regression model for vigor is a good fit, wherein the independent variables explain 37% ( $R^2 = .370$ ) of variance in the dependent variable. Through the collinearity statistics, I also determined that there was no issue of multicollinearity because the values of VIF were about 2.5 or less.

Table 8

*Regression Results for Criterion Variable Vigor*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	<i>t</i>		Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	-.526	1.057		-.498	.619		
Career Support	.265	.115	.153	2.298	.022	.470	2.126
Psychosocial Support	.336	.086	.247	3.916	.000	.522	1.915
Role Modeling	.178	.121	.107	1.473	.142	.395	2.532
SPOS	.102	.021	.263	4.970	.000	.747	1.339

Table 9

*ANOVA Result for Regression Analysis using Vigor as Criterion Variable*

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1522.585	4	380.646	44.387	.000
	Residual	2589.819	302	8.576		
	Total	4112.404	306			

The second dependent variable that I considered in the study was the dedication subscale of work engagement. Table 10 presents the regression results for dedication as the criterion variable. I found that career support, psychosocial support, role modeling, and SPOS variables were significant predictors of dedication. The ANOVA results indicated that the regression model for dedication is a good fit, wherein the independent variables explain 41.8% ( $R^2 = .418$ ) of variance in the dependent variable. Through the collinearity statistics, I also determined that there was no issue of multicollinearity because the values of VIF were about 2.5 or less.

Table 10

*Regression Results for Criterion Variable Dedication*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t		Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	1.648	0.904		1.824	.069		
Career Support	.195	.098	.127	1.985	.048	.470	2.126
Psychosocial Support	.214	.073	.177	2.912	.004	.522	1.915
Role Modeling	.250	.104	.169	2.413	.016	.395	2.532
SPOS	.118	.018	.341	6.722	.000	.747	1.339

Table 11

*ANOVA Result for Regression Analysis using Dedication as Criterion Variable*

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1359.814	4	339.954	54.294	.000
	Residual	1890.928	302	6.261		
	Total	3250.743	306			

The third dependent variable that I considered in the study was the absorption subscale of work engagement. Table 12 presents the regression results for absorption as the criterion variable. I found that career support and psychosocial support variables were significant predictors of absorption. The ANOVA results indicated that the regression model for absorption is a good fit, wherein the independent variables explain 21.4% ( $R^2 = .214$ ) of variance in the dependent variable. Through the collinearity statistics, I also determined that there was no issue of multicollinearity because the values of VIF were about 2.5 or less.

Table 12

*Regression Results for Criterion Variable Absorption*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t		Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	4.390	0.963		4.557	.000		
Career Support	.321	.105	.227	3.056	.002	.470	2.126
Psychosocial Support	.157	.078	.142	2.009	.045	.522	1.915
Role Modeling	.163	.110	.120	1.478	.140	.395	2.532
SPOS	.020	.019	.064	1.081	.280	.747	1.339

Table 13

*ANOVA Result for Regression Analysis using Absorption as Criterion Variable*

Model		Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
1	Regression	586.662	4	146.665	20.605	.000
	Residual	2149.612	302	7.118		
	Total	2736.274	306			

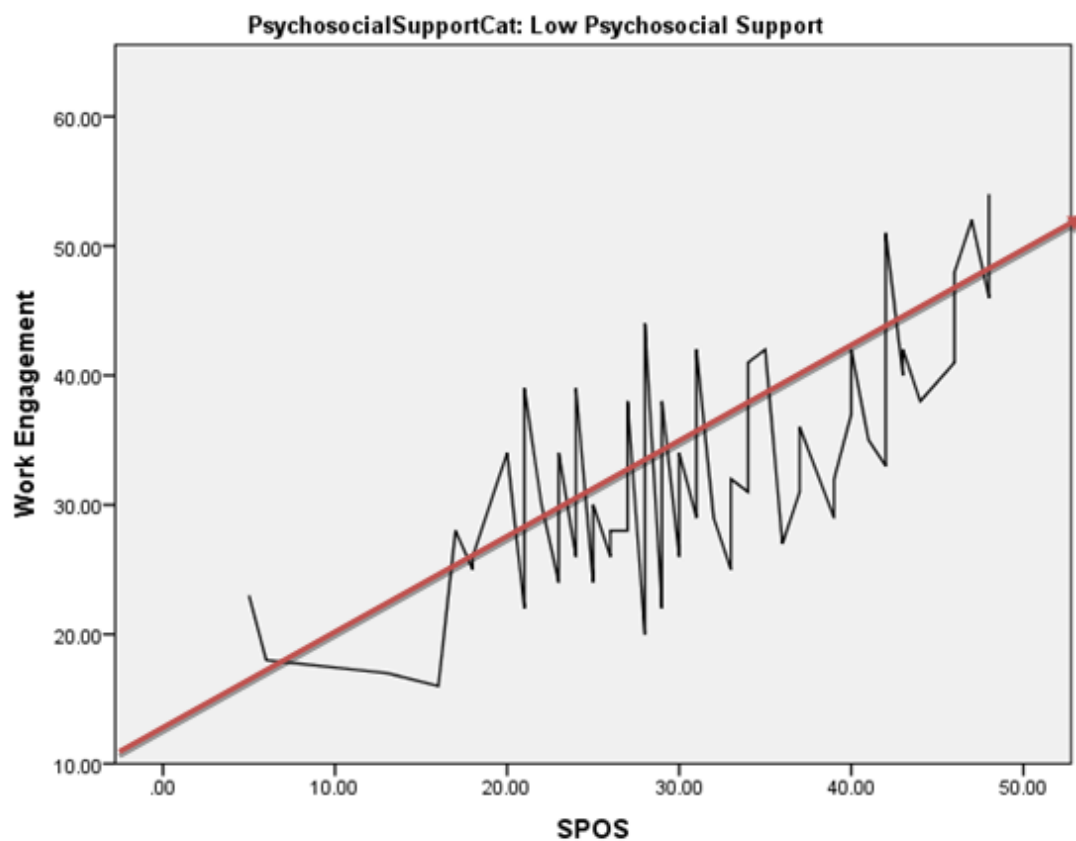
Based on the findings from Tables 8, 9, and 10, I found significant differential impacts for the mentoring functions. I concluded that psychosocial support, career support, role modeling, and perceived organizational support were significant predictors of vigor, dedication, and absorption. I therefore rejected the null hypothesis for Research Question 2.

To test the third hypothesis, I created interaction terms to determine whether the three interaction terms (e.g., role modeling and perceived organizational support, acceptance, and confirmation and perceived organizational support, friendship and perceived organizational support, and work engagement and perceived organizational support) were significant predictors of work engagement. Table 14 illustrates that only the interaction of psychosocial support and organizational support is a significant predictor of work engagement ( $B = -.945$ ,  $p\text{-value} = .015$ ). The regression model explains 39.2% of the variance in the dependent variable. Consistent with my predictions, one of the three interactions (psychosocial support and organizational support) was significant; therefore, I rejected the null hypothesis of Research Question 3.

Table 14

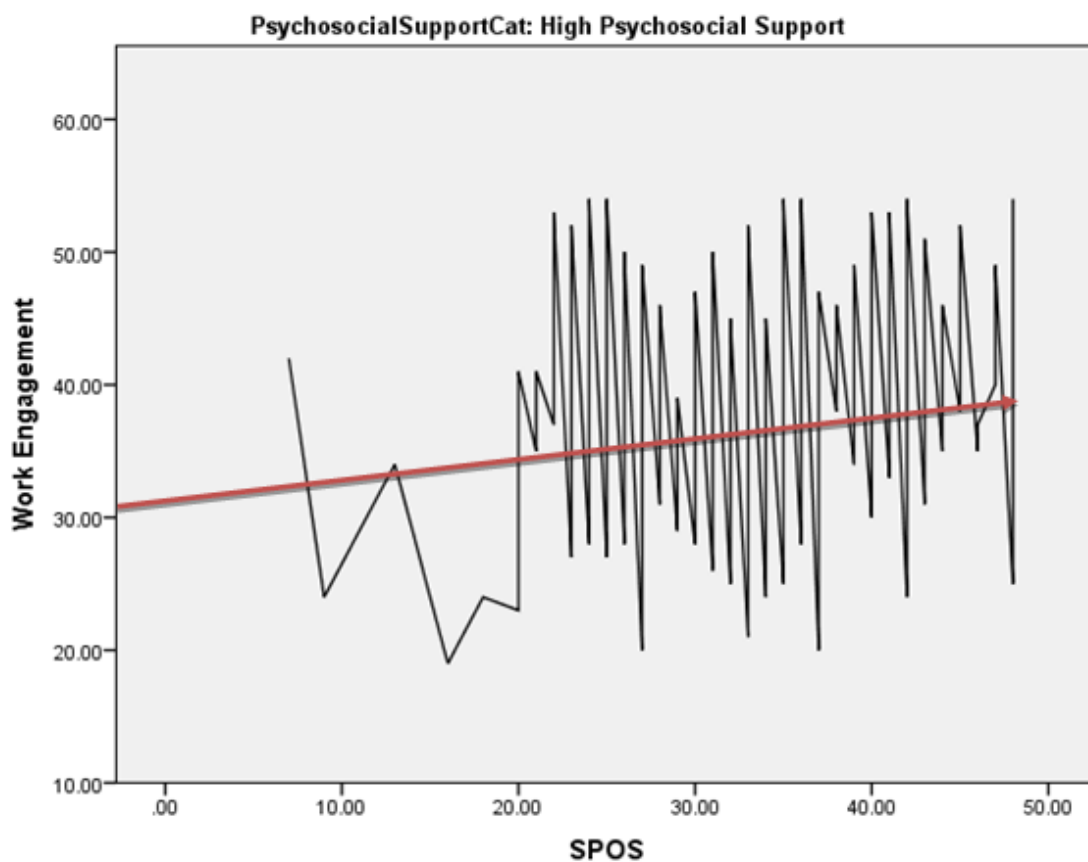
*Stepwise Regression Result of Work Engagement*

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Collinearity Statistics		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	<i>t</i>	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	5.512	2.572		2.144	.033		
	Career Support	.781	.280	.183	2.787	.006	.470	2.126
	Psychosocial Support	.707	.209	.211	3.386	.001	.522	1.915
	Role Modeling	.591	.295	.144	2.008	.046	.395	2.532
	SPOS	.240	.050	.250	4.811	.000	.747	1.339
2	(Constant)	6.432	2.578		2.495	.013		
	Career Support	.738	.279	.172	2.648	.009	.468	2.135
	Psychosocial Support	.746	.208	.222	3.592	.000	.519	1.926
	Role Modeling	.522	.294	.127	1.780	.076	.391	2.555
	SPOS	.250	.050	.260	5.026	.000	.742	1.347
	Psychosocial Support_SPOS	-.945	.385	-.111	-2.454	.015	.977	1.023



*Figure 2.* The low psychosocial support graph shows that those reporting low Psychosocial Support do report more work engagement scores in high organizational support conditions.





*Figure 3.* The high psychosocial support graph shows that organizational support does not matter when there is a mentor providing social support. But when the mentor does provide much social support, then organizational support does matter.

## Summary

The 307 participants of this study included technologists from seven industries who had been professionally mentored. The participants completed questionnaires to measure variables such as mentoring function, perceived organizational support, and work engagement variables. I conducted correlation analysis, linear regression analyses, and analyses of variance to test whether mentoring and perceived organizational support variables were significant predictors of work engagement variables. Through the statistical results, I determined that psychosocial support and SPOS variables were significant predictors of vigor. I also determined that career support, psychosocial support, role modeling, and SPOS variables were significant predictors of dedication. For absorption, variables of career support and psychosocial support were significant predictors. In analyzing the effect of interaction terms on work engagement, I determined that only the interaction of psychosocial support and organizational support was a significant predictor of work engagement.

In Chapter 5, I provide further interpretations of the findings that I have discussed in Chapter 4. I will also discuss the limitations associated with the study, recommendations that lead to specific actions, recommendations for future research. I will also provide implications for positive social change and conclusions that emphasize the significance of this research.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

### Introduction

Employee engagement is a significant problem for many employers (Shuck & Wollard, 2010; Wollard, 2011). It is critical to develop an understanding of how to increase employee engagement, and introducing mentoring functions in the work environment is one such function that has potential for increasing engagement. The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationship between the independent variables of mentoring, which include role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and mentoring friendship functions, with a dependent variable of employee engagement. I used POS as the moderating variable to test the strength or weakness of the effects of mentoring on employee engagement. Technicians and technologists across multiple industries were the target population of this study. Those industries included IT, telecommunications, bio-tech, automotive, computer hardware, consumer hardware, and aviation. The participants completed the survey instruments online through the online survey organization Survata. Survata provided the surveys online, as well as targeted a population within their databases with the outlined criteria for the study's participants. A total of 307 participants—154 female and 153 male—participated in this study. The participants had been formally mentored for at least 1 year. The technicians and technologists worked in seven industries in the United States. The highest concentration of participants worked in the IT field ( $n = 148$ ), followed by the automotive ( $n = 64$ ) and telecommunications ( $n = 51$ ) fields. The participants were comprised of hourly and salary workers. The participants self-reported the data based on their beliefs about mentoring, work engagement, and perceived organizational support. I used quantitative data from the

MFQ-9, UWES, and SPOS to measure mentoring functions, work engagement, and perceived organizational support, respectively. I conducted correlation analysis, linear regression analysis, and ANOVA to analyze the data that I obtained from the surveys.

I developed the following research questions and hypotheses to guide the study:

RQ1: To what degree do perceived organizational support and mentoring, significantly account for work engagement?

$H_01$ : The overall regression equation including the independent variables of perceived organizational support and mentoring together, does not account for a significant amount of work engagement.

$H_a1$ : The overall regression equation perceived organizational support and mentoring together, does account for a significant amount of work engagement.

RQ2: To what degree do the three mentoring function scores (role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and friendship) result in a significant change in variance accounted for?

$H_02$ : Of the three mentoring function scores (role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and friendship), none of the three will have significant result for the test of change in variance accounted for.

$H_a2$ : Of the three mentoring function scores (role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and friendship), at least one of the three will have a significant result.

RQ3: To what degree do the three measures of mentoring characteristics, (i.e., role modeling of the mentor, acceptance and confirmation as a form of mentoring, and friendship with the mentor) when tested in interaction with perceived organizational support predict a significant amount of variance in the dependent variable?

*H<sub>03</sub>*: The three interaction terms (e.g., role modeling and perceived organizational support, acceptance and confirmation and perceived organization support, friendship and perceived organizational support, and work engagement and perceived organizational support) will not be significant predictors of employee engagement.

*H<sub>a3</sub>*: The interaction terms (e.g., role modeling and perceived organizational support, acceptance and confirmation and perceived organization support, friendship and perceived organizational support, and work engagement and perceived organizational support) will be significant in predicting employee engagement.

The results of the statistical analyses indicated that all mentoring variables (career support, psychosocial support, and role modeling) and POS were significantly associated to the work engagement variables of vigor, dedication, and absorption. The results of the Pearson correlation demonstrated positive correlations between all interactions, indicating that one variable increases, the other also increases, and vice versa. The analysis of the predictive role of mentoring subscales and the moderating role of POS revealed the following relationships: (a) psychosocial support and POS subscales were significant predictors of vigor, (b) career support, psychosocial support, role modeling, and POS variables were significant predictors of dedication, and (c) career support and psychosocial support variables were significant predictors of absorption. The relationship between career support, psychosocial support, role modeling, and POS with vigor, absorption, and dedication showed a satisfactory fit, indicating that the mentoring subscales significantly account for the variance in the work engagement subscales. Each part of mentoring has an independent impact on work engagement. I determined that the interaction was significant after accounting for the impacts for the mentoring and

organizational support. In addition to these findings, I concluded that the interaction of psychosocial support and organizational support significantly predicted work engagement. The results indicated significant main effects and an interaction. Mentoring significantly contributed an independent effect beyond organizational support.

The findings of this study offer an understanding of the different relationships of mentoring functions and work engagement. My conclusions also highlight the critical role of POS as a moderating variable in influencing the vigor, dedication, and absorption of employees in their workplace. Evaluating these associations helps in identifying the specific and general steps to be taken to integrate mentoring as a viable and reliable program for employees to engage and socialize with their co-employees, while also increasing valuable output for the company itself. Leaders and managers have a very important role to play in the creation of a work culture. Effective managers know and value the distinctive abilities of their employees, and great managers discover what is unique to each person in order to capitalize on it (Buckingham, 2005). This can be accomplished through mentoring, as mentoring requires leaders and managers to develop close relationships with their employees. Employee mentoring can occur through many methods and programs. Managers should ensure that their supervisors and other organizational leaders are properly trained to execute successful mentoring. Every employee deserves the opportunity to be mentored, not just a select few (Kram, 1988). When employees view their leaders and managers as supportive, there are increased opportunities for the organization to improve employee engagement.

In Chapter 5, I will interpret the results of the statistical analyses in light of the current literature on mentoring and work engagement. I will discuss the findings from

each research question and the corresponding hypotheses within the broader context of perceived organizational support and mentoring and their influence on employee engagement. Next, the limitations of the study are discussed. This includes all conceptual and methodological limitations that arose during the study. I will discuss my recommendations for practice and research based on the study's limitations, as well as the social and organizational implications, in order to situate the findings within the organizational and social paradigms that surround mentoring in organizations. I will then conclude the chapter with a discussion of the finding's contributions to social change concerning people, organizations, and overall quality of life.

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

Employee engagement is critical in determining an employee's productivity (Shuck & Wollard, 2010). Organizational leaders and managers are tasked with the creation of a workplace that motivates and engages employees. Researchers have found mentoring to benefit employees (Craig et al., 2013; Vanderbilt, 2010); thus, furthering knowledge on the benefits of mentoring entails a nuanced discussion of how mentoring affects the work engagement of employees. I will base the current discussion of the results on the order of the research questions. First, I will discuss the predictor role of mentoring functions on work engagement based on Research Question 2. Next, in the following subsection, I will explain the moderating role of perceived organizational support by analyzing the interactions between the mentoring subscales and POS on work engagement. I will then discuss the study limitations, provide recommendations, and summarize the results.

### **The Role of Mentoring and Work Engagement**

Through Research Question 2, I explored the impact of the mentoring variables of role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and friendship on the work engagement of employees. I determined whether career support, psychosocial support, and role modeling can predict the vigor, dedication, and absorption of employees. Mentoring and work engagement are especially important to managers. Mentoring employees can lead to several positive outcomes for the organization. Career mentoring has a significant association with job satisfaction, the job itself, promotions, and supervisor relationships (Lo & Ramayah, 2011). Researchers have shown psychosocial meeting to have a negative relationship to employee turnover (Craig et al., 2013). Engaged employees feel supported and valued by their organization. In general, engaged employees develop high self-efficacy and become more absorbed their tasks, demonstrating vigor and dedication (Caesens & Stinglhamber, 2014). Engaged employees also have a close relationship with their managers (Howell, 2017) and want to help the organization achieve greater performance (Tucker, 2017). Managers should consider the positive outcomes of mentoring because it can lead to increased organizational improvements such as work engagement. Building upon Blau's (1964) notion of SET, in which the author applied reciprocal interdependence in the context of organizational work engagement, I hypothesized that at least one of the three subscales of mentoring would have a significant effect on the changes in work engagement.

The results indicated that at least one of the three subscales of mentoring was a significant predictor of at least one of the subscales of work engagement. Specifically, I obtained the following results: (a) psychosocial support significantly predicted vigor; (b)



career support, psychosocial support, and role modeling significantly predicted dedication; and (c) career support and psychosocial support were significant predictors of absorption. These relationships were also significantly mediated by perceived organizational support, which I will discuss in detail in the following subsections. The meaningful relationships between the subscales of mentoring and work engagement confirmed the findings of previous researchers demonstrating the positive effects of mentoring on the attitudes and attachment of employees to their organization (Dawley et al., 2010; Finney et al., 2012). Previous researchers had highlighted that each mentoring function could affect each work engagement subscale differently, and provided an understanding of how these variables interact. For managers, the current results showed that mentoring functions of developmental and psychosocial support have a significant impact on employee engagement. The results also indicate that managers, leaders, and organizations should take a vigorous role in the implementation of high-quality mentoring at work (Ragins, 2016). By establishing high-quality mentoring programs, managers could establish high-quality relationships with their employees.

### **Psychosocial Support as a Predictor of Work Engagement**

The results regarding the predictor role of psychosocial support on all three subscales of work engagement (vigor, dedication, and absorption) extend the study by Rana et al. (2014). Rana et al. outlined the significant antecedents of employee engagement based on job design and characteristics, supervisor and coworker relationships, workplace environment, and HRD practices. One of the antecedents is that leaders and managers should assess employees' needs and align the resources and social support required to garner engagement, which included mentoring as a subjective

component that could provide psychosocial support to meet the employees' social needs. A second antecedent is that in addition to traditional one on one mentoring, psychosocial support and role modeling can be achieved through team engagement. Through daily interactions, new team members can establish friendships and adapt to other highly engaged team members (Rana et al., 2014). Bakker and Albrecht (2018) researched the current trends in work engagement, hypothesizing that engaged workers were more inclined to help their colleagues (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). The benefits of a committed workforce also suggest that the elements of work engagement could explain improved job performance. Bakker and Albrecht indicated that aspects of psychosocial support could have a direct correlation with work engagement, as I also demonstrated in this study. Although scholars have shown team engagement to be an effective contribution to work engagement, it was not within the scope of this study. Consequently, psychosocial mentoring can positively impact the affective commitment of employees (Craig et al., 2013), which could also indicate dedication and absorption of the employees within the company.

The predictor role of psychosocial support confirms the notion that psychosocial functions are factors of mentoring that afford mentees personal support through friendship, counseling, and acceptance, and confirmation (Vanderbilt, 2010). Having a mentor also provides an avenue for employees to socialize and engage in the company (Yang et al., 2012). This result showed that while adequate relationships between a mentee and a mentor increase the socialization of the former (Yang et al., 2012), psychosocial support can also predict the level of vigor and dedication that an employee experiences. Relating to social exchange, this finding demonstrated that psychosocial

mentoring entails reciprocal action among the mentor, employee, and employer (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). The employee obtains an avenue to improve his or her socialization skills through mentoring, and consequently becomes more dedicated and committed to the company (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). With mentoring psychosocial roles, leaders and managers can influence behaviors from employees that lead to employee engagement (Bal et al., 2010; Dawley et al., 2010; James et al., 2011). According to Blau's (1964) SET and the law of reciprocity, leaders and managers who reach out to their employees and provide support through mentoring should expect some form of engagement. Although the results of these previous scholars revealed a positive mentoring experience, there are also mentoring relationships that do not work. Scandura (1998) argued that dysfunctional mentoring relationships can occur through negative relations such as a protégé with a tyrannical mentor, sabotage, and difficulties due to psychosocial problems and betrayal. When the mentoring relationship is at its worst, the mentee can perceive the experience as toxic and destructive (Ragins, 2016). Ragins also suggested that the quality of a mentoring relationship is not static, but shifts as the relationship evolves; it is, therefore, critical that the mentor and the mentee establish a meaningful social relationship consisting of friendship.

The results for research question three revealed that psychosocial support with organizational support is predictive of work engagement, which supports the notion that affective commitment from employees is influenced interpersonal and institutional factors (Dawley et al., 2010; Vanderbilt, 2010; Yang et al., 2012). Furthermore, this suggests that the support from leaders and camaraderie with peers and managers plays a critical role in the perceptions and commitment of employees concerning their

organization. This finding also supports the notion that employee engagement can occur through encouraging leadership and support agencies (Gundersen et al., 2012; Rich et al., 2010). It is essential to support employees to achieve positive engagement (Reio & Sanders-Reio, 2011). Organizational social support is critical to building work engagement when there is no mentor provided social support, but if the mentor does provide social support, then the organizational social support adds very little to the effect.

### **Career Support as a Predictor of Work Engagement**

The findings of the current study also showed that the mentoring subscale of career support was a significant predictor of the dedication and absorption subscales of work engagement. This result extends Anitha's (2014) notions that the provision of mentoring has a positive impact on the career development of employees, which could result to greater dedication and absorption (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). It is interesting to note, however, that career support did not significantly predict the work engagement subscale of vigor. This could be because dedication and absorption involve a specific commitment to the company and are more relevant to career development (Schaufeli et al., 2006), while vigor is more related to resilience and energy at work (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

This result also confirms the importance of mentoring as a way for social exchange to occur, in which leaders and managers commit themselves to their employees through adequate support and resources and enabling a significant level of engagement from employees (Guest, 2014). Full employee engagement can transpire from employers' efforts to be supportive of their career development (Guest, 2014). Thus, changes in leadership entail the establishment of trust-based relationship between mentors and

mentees, which is likely to increase work engagement (Rich et al., 2010). Supporting subordinates' career choices is also an effective way of ensuring that employees are more engaged and dedicated to the company.

### **Role Modeling as a Predictor of Work Engagement**

In this study, role modeling significantly predicted the work engagement subscale of dedication. Extending the results of the study by Rich et al. (2010), this finding showed that role modeling could also positively affect the commitment of employees. There is evidence that role modeling as a mentoring function can reduce stress because employees are more comfortable sharing their feelings with their mentors (Baranik et al., 2010). This confirms that not only can managers influence their employees' work engagement through role modeling (Baranik et al., 2010; Rolfe, 2010), but that role modeling can predict the level of dedication of employees.

Based on the social exchange theory, specific outcomes are expected during social interactions. For this, role modeling can result in behaviors that influence employee engagement (Bagger & Li, 2014). It is interesting to note, however, that role modeling does not significantly predict vigor and absorption. The insignificance of this relationship may be due to the notion that a role model is usually a source of motivation for an employee (Carroll & Barnes, 2015). The mentoring experience can be beneficial to the mentee through improved skills, improved performance in their jobs, and improved engagement in their job responsibilities, and motivation to remain in their work roles (Crumpton, 2014), which are arguably related to dedication to work.

In summary, the findings showed that each subscale of mentoring could predict at least one of the subscales of work engagement. This prediction illustrates how the

independent and dependent variables interact in the context of mentoring and work engagement. Each predictor variable impacts work engagement based on the aspects that are most relevant to the mentoring functions. Psychosocial support predicts all three subscales. Due to socialization, psychosocial support can have a positive impact on motivation, dedication, and commitment of employees. Career support is predictive of dedication and absorption, which are two essential aspects in the development of an employee's career. Role modeling predicts dedication due to the benefits of the mentoring experience on mentees' skills and engagement in their job responsibilities. In the next subsection, I will discuss the moderating role of perceived organizational support.

### **Mentoring, Perceived Organizational Support, and Work Engagement**

In the previous subsection, I discussed the predictor roles of psychosocial support, career support, and role modeling. In order to better understand the influence of perceived organizational support on work engagement, I developed Research Questions 1 and 3 to explore the effects of POS and mentoring on work engagement, as well as how the interactions of the three subscales of mentoring and POS can predict work engagement. I hypothesized that POS and mentoring together would have a significant effect on work engagement. I also hypothesized that the moderating role of POS would yield positive predictor roles of mentoring functions.

The results indicated that all mentoring variables and POS were significantly associated with work engagement variables of vigor, dedication, and absorption. The specific relationships that I found were: (a) psychosocial support and POS were significant predictors of vigor; (b) career support, psychosocial support, and role

modeling and POS were significant predictors of dedication; and (c) career support and psychosocial support were significant predictors of absorption. It can be noted that only the vigor and dedication subscales of work engagement were mediated by POS.

Furthermore, the results also revealed that only the interaction between psychosocial support and organizational support is significantly predictive of work engagement.

Perceived organizational support is vital to understanding how interpersonal relationships and social exchange can contribute to overall organizational outcomes (Eisenberger et al., 1986). When the mentoring experience is positive and productive, perceptions of organization support may lead to higher levels of employee involvement and engagement. The current results confirmed previous conclusions that employees' perceptions of receiving something of value increases engagement (Baranik et al., 2010). The moderating role of POS on the subscales of work engagement emphasizes that social exchange is innate in such interactions. The dynamics in the workplace are complex, and this discussion requires a nuanced understanding of specific interactions of mentoring functions and POS and its outcomes related to work engagement variables. Although POS has demonstrated to be useful in this study, it is crucial that protégés are matched with the proper mentors. Ragins (2016) suggested that organizations should carefully select and train mentors and protégés. An improper match could lead to a dysfunctional relationship. Additionally, managers should conduct careful matching in alignment with the program goals. Structured mentoring programs would ensure that protégés have a high quality mentoring experience. The organization should evaluate the program frequently to ensure a successful outcome.

Perceived organizational support as a moderator variable of dedication, with all three mentoring subscales as predictor variables, indicates that POS is a useful measure to understand the feelings of commitment of employees in their company. This formula clarifies how the relationships between mentoring and POS can impact the commitment of employees, and in turn, affect work engagement. The role of the mentor or leader is pivotal in ensuring that employees are more engaged in their work. Managers can influence employee mentoring by arranging mentoring programs and connecting employees to the right expert (Tucker, 2017). In essence, the actions and behaviors of leaders and managers can be a direct correlation of how employees view the organization. Ineffective leadership can cause employees to see the organization as uncaring (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014); in contrast, employees who have a positive perception of their leaders and managers show engagement and provide the discretionary efforts necessary to meet business needs and satisfy the goals of the organization (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014).

Regarding role modeling, these results address the gaps in the unclear perceptions of leaders and managers regarding the needs of their employees to increase engagement (Saks & Gruman, 2014). Many leaders fall short of the requirements needed to engage their employees (Burch & Guarana, 2015). By providing evidence that role modeling, as mediated by POS, is a predictor of work engagement, the current results confirm that effective management means enabling employees to feel more accepted and appreciated in their workplace (Eisenberger et al., 1986) by providing a safe, confident, and meaningful environment for employees (Shuck et al., 2010). Where constraints exist for leaders to provide direct engagement with their employees, managers should look for other methods and opportunities to provide positive role modeling. Managers who are not



able to offer mentoring services could delegate this responsibility to their employees' direct supervisors. Making mentoring part of the supervisor's job role would facilitate consistent involvement in mentoring programs, thereby increasing employee satisfaction for POS. According to Sosik and Godshalk (2005), protégés may acquire more significant resources and support from supervisory mentoring than non-supervisory mentoring.

Many researchers studying POS have disconfirmed the study of Guest (2014), in which the author indicated that POS is an antecedent to employee engagement. This could be due to the methodological limitation of Guest's research, in which the researcher only focused on POS as a dependent variable. Thus, POS is not just an antecedent, but it also mediates the relationships between mentoring and work engagement. The current study results provide new avenues of inquiry that could potentially help researchers understand the intricacies of the relationships of each variable to one another. Further studies are recommended to shed light on this aspect.

The moderating role of POS on the vigor subscale work engagement, with psychosocial support, extends the notion that employers who support employees through positive relationships with co-workers and managers can improve skills, supportive commitment, and reduce motives to leave the company (Madden et al., 2014). When managers help their employees develop robust relationships, employee commitment increases and feelings of turnover decrease (Madden et al., 2014). The current results showed that POS mediates vigor by enhancing employees' social relationships through psychosocial support.

In summary, the results showed POS is a moderator of dedication and vigor subscales of work engagement. These findings shed light on how POS is related to the

different subscales of mentoring and work engagement. Increasing POS entails providing mentoring services for positive organizational outcomes. Employees feel more committed and appreciated when they perceive support from their leaders, managers, and organization. In the next section, I will discuss the limitations of the study.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Despite the significant results of the study, it is essential to discuss the findings in the context of the limitations that arose throughout the research. First, the limitations of the data analyzed entail that I was not able to account for the changes in perceptions of the respondents. Because this was a cross-sectional study, the data that I gathered were more static. I cannot apply the results of this study to topics involving the time-based analysis of changes and effects of mentoring on work engagement. It would be possible to employ a longitudinal study to analyze the temporal changes that occur in the psychosocial functions of mentoring and its impact on employee commitment over time.

Another disadvantage was the use of the Internet as a data collection method. While this was convenient regarding saving time and monetary costs, surveys are still prone to attrition, and there could have been instances that might have discouraged respondents not to complete the survey. A qualitative method of inquiry allows for one-on-one interviews. One-on-one interviews would also entail a more in-depth set of data because insights are not limited to a scale, and interviewees can further express their experiences and feelings more freely than what an internet survey can provide. The participants could have provided a deeper understanding of their mentoring relationship and how it impacted the perceptions of their leaders, managers, and their organization. Additionally, a qualitative approach could have provided the impact of mentoring on the

participant's experience as it pertains from one industry to another. A deeper understanding of the participant's experience could lead to a further explanation of the phenomenon.

Convenience sampling can be a limitation, due to the uneven distribution of participants based on their demographic background. Convenience sampling provides insufficient power to detect differences among sociodemographic subgroups (Bornstein et al., 2013). Using this method limits the generalizability of the result itself. It is recommended to focus on these sociodemographic subgroups that could potentially yield nuanced results that are more cultural. The use of self-report measures was another limitation in the study. When researchers measure constructs through self-reports, there is a potential for common method variance bias. Common method variance bias occurs when data are collected from a single source (Reio & Sanders-Reio, 2011). Last, I did not ask the participants in the study who mentored them; their mentors could have been their supervisor, manager, trainer, or other persons outside of their organizations. Future scholars should identify specifically who mentored the participants in order to compare the results. A clear identity of the mentor could provide more details on the impact of mentoring in specialized industries.

In summary, the limitations of the study originate from its methodological design. The cross-sectional design of the current study limited the analysis on time-based changes in the subscales of mentoring and its effects on work engagement functions. Despite the advantages in cost and convenience, the use of the internet for the survey may have hindered some respondents to complete the surveys. The use of convenience sampling did not account for the perceptions that were related to the socio-demographic

background of the participants. In addition, the study instrumentation included self-report measures. Last, there was no clear identity of who mentored the participants in the study. In the next section, I will identify my recommendations for future study on this topic.

### **Recommendations**

The results of the present study provided understanding on the different relationships of mentoring functions and work engagement. The findings of this study also helped clarify the role of perceived organizational support on the vigor, dedication, and absorption of employees in their company. By using a survey method through a quantitative, cross-sectional design, I was able to address the research gap on the relationships of mentoring elements, POS, and work engagement. To add further knowledge of the mentoring elements that influence work engagement, future researchers may employ qualitative designs that focus more on the underlying socio-psychological processes that occur in the mentor-mentee dynamics. Most scholars have supported the position that mentoring offers benefits, specifically that the proper mentor-mentee combination can provide successful outcomes (Carroll & Barnes, 2015; Tolar, 2012). It would be helpful to have a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of both mentors and mentees about their work relationships and engagement with the company. Qualitative research also provides an understanding of the inter-subjective meaning-making of mentors and mentees, as well as how both parties navigate their work relationships considering the challenges and issues that are present in the workplace.

In the current study, I utilized a cross-sectional design to understand the interactions of the variables. Future researchers could employ a longitudinal design to account for the temporal changes in the work engagement of employees through

mentoring. Understanding the behavioral changes over time could help researchers understand the possible stages of mentoring and how each phase could reflect on the work engagement of the employees. Managers can use the knowledge from longitudinal studies to identify at which stage does the effect of the mentoring peak. The results from such a longitudinal study could assist leaders in the development of mentoring programs geared towards long-term results. Mentoring programs for long-term effects could consist of mentor and mentee training. The relationship that a mentor and mentee have is crucial to the success of the program. This type of mentoring program could detect potential problems early in the process. Other mentoring programs could be mentor/mentee matching, cross-generational mentoring, diversity mentoring programs, and mentoring programs for the development and support of women leaders. I also recommend that future researchers use data collection methods other than the survey to understand how mentoring functions and work engagement are related. For instance, the findings suggest that each subscale of mentoring can predict only a set of work engagement variables. By using an interview method, the researcher can clarify these relationships and shed light on the non-significant associations. In addition, future researchers may seek to identify the underlying psychological processes that occur in these relationships. Understanding these psychological processes is essential in developing a theoretical model that can help delineate the roles of the mentor and the mentee and determine how each role affects the other.

Future scholars should also consider comparative studies of how a team approach could produce similar outcomes associated with the mentoring variables discussed in the study. For example, in a study to predict positive relationships between mentoring and

various support resources for individual performance and team performance, Hetty van Emmerick (2008) suggested that team experiences can contribute significantly to the professional and personal development of individual team members. Additionally, future investigators should consider the impact of informal mentoring on employee engagement with employees across various industries and various jobs. I conducted this study using participants who were mentored for at least 1 year. Future researchers should consider the exact length of time that a technician or technologist has been mentored, as well as the type of mentoring that the employee has received. Another consideration is to comprehend the impact of mentoring when the mentor is the employee's direct boss or an external mentor. A study of this magnitude could significantly add to the body of knowledge associated with the technician and technologist work culture. Last, future scholars may examine the impact of role-modeling and psychosocial support as it pertains to the various mentoring programs.

In summary, I recommend that future researchers design studies employing a qualitative design in order to understand the lived experiences of mentors and mentees amidst other issues in the workplace. Regarding methodology, I recommend an interview method in order to obtain more nuanced insights on the inter-subjective meanings of the employees. A longitudinal design is also essential to understand the time-based effects of mentoring on the work engagement of employees. Researchers should explore mentoring influences at the team level, compare mentoring influences across various industries, and determine the interaction of mentoring within multiple programs. In the next section, I will discuss the theoretical and social implications of the results and limitations.

## Implications

The results of this study revealed that mentoring functions affect the vigor, dedication, and absorption variables of employee engagement. Specifically, the results showed that the variables of mentoring could predict the subscales of work engagement, and that POS had a moderating effect on work engagement. The results are especially relevant for researchers to understand the nuances of mentor-mentee relationships in the workplace. The results of the study may increase awareness regarding the influences of mentoring on employee engagement. Practical and social implications could contribute to the acceptance of mentoring as a reliable means to create a safe and positive environment for employees.

The population of this study included formally mentored technicians technologists in various industries. Although I did not address who mentored these participants, it is essential for managers and organizational leaders to understand the impact of supervisory mentoring and non-supervisory mentoring on workers in the organization. Supervisors and non-supervisors are known to mentor employees, but the debate about which model is more successful depends on specific variables. In the teaching field, Brondyk and Searby (2016) defined a mentor as the sponsor, a friend, advisor, tutor, developer, teacher, supervisor, or counselor. Ragins (2016) argued that mentoring relationships exist within a constellation of relationships which include formal and informal mentors, peer mentors, supervisor mentors as well as other associations outside of the organization. It is important to note, however, that managers can arrange for mentoring activities for their employees by connecting employees to experts and others who could support their development (Tucker, 2017). I would suggest to managers that if accurately

implemented, mentoring is essential for the health and well-being of their employees, regardless of who provides the mentoring. The person that mentors the employee should tailor their mentoring to the specific needs of the individual.

The supervisory-mentoring model has been in existence for many years. Prominent research on supervisory mentoring occurred between 1990 and 1994 (Haggard et al., 2011). Within the supervisor-subordinate mentoring model, subordinates reported better mentoring outcomes when their values align with the values of their supervisor (Richard et al., 2009). In addition, employees perceive supervisors who act as mentors as more accessible than mentors who are non-supervisors (Arora & Rangnekar, 2015). In many situations, this would appear to be advantageous for the employees because most supervisors work closely with their employees by design of the job. Raabe and Beehr (2003) also supported the comments by Arora and Rangnekar (2015) by stating that due to the proximity between the mentor and the protégés with supervisors, the protégés receive greater career mentoring support. If the protégé wants to explore career opportunities outside of the organization, however, he or she may not gain adequate support from their supervisor as the mentor. The supervisor's first commitment is to his or her organization, and mentoring to employees who wish to leave the company could cause problems (Richard et al., 2009). A mentor outside of the organization may be appropriate for an employee who has career aspirations outside of their organization. Also, having an external mentor could help the protégé build external networks which results in career development (Jyoti & Sharma, 2015). I would also argue, however, that it may be possible to enhance the protégés' psychosocial support through supervisory mentoring. Supervisors as mentors would also provide for the employee; coaching,



greater exposure and visibility, challenging assignments, sponsorships and enhanced performance (Scandura & Williams, 2004). Haggard et al. (2011) argued that mentors outside of one's organization may not be able to provide a full range of career assistance function, thereby limiting the opportunities of the protégé. Feeney and Bozeman (2008), however, argued that outside mentors can introduce the protégé to influential contacts that the protégé would not likely be exposed to on the inside of the organization. Expanding the network outside of the organization could be equally important to the future development of the protégé. In their study of mentoring and networking, Feeney and Bozeman showed that when the mentor support was external, protégés were more than six times as likely to receive outside network contacts and less than half as likely to build networks inside of their organization.

Scholars have shown supervisory mentoring to be an adequate process for the growth and well-being of the protégé; however, others have argued for the effectiveness of supervisory mentoring and the exposure of other potential modes for mentoring employees. A mentor who is not the supervisor of the protégé may have more ability to focus on the individual needs of that protégé and may be able to provide personalized guidance and career advice (Seibert, 1999). Seibert suggested that the mentor is at the end of the continuum, and is not one's manager or immediate coworker. Although the supervisor of the protégé has more contact with his or her employees, I would argue there are certain circumstances where an outside mentor could provide a high level of positive influence. The mentor and protégé may not have a supervisory relationship, and the mentor and the protégé could be working at different organizations (Ragins, 2016). This

type of mentor provides technical or career advice, coaching, or information on an informal basis.

Dreher and Chargois (1998) argued that the standard supervisor/subordinate relationship is not at all a mentoring relationship. The supervisor and the subordinate could have conflicting views of the organization, and this could impact the relationship. One's mentor could be from inside or outside of one's organization, but may not be one's immediate supervisor (Van Emmerik, Baugh, & Euwema, 2005). Scandura and Williams (2001) defined a mentor as a person who is influential in an individual's work environment, an expert in his or her field, and is committed to providing upward mobility and support to an individual's career. While scholars have expressed contradicting views of who is a mentor, a substantial argument exists that mentoring is often beneficial to all that have the opportunity to be mentored. Managers can act as change agents to improve business outcomes in their organization by ensuring their employees are supported, receive developmental opportunities and the employees establish effective team relationships.

### **Practical Implications**

If implemented properly, mentoring can improve employee engagement by improving employee performance (Sun et al., 2014). The results of the current study addressed the research gap on the influences of mentoring elements on employee engagement. Also, the associations that I found in the present study relate to the culture of the workplace and how the effectiveness of mentoring can be extremely subjective. Central to these relationships is the role of the leader. Through their actions and behaviors, managers and leaders have the ability to influence the work culture and the

work environment by knowing their employees and valuing their employees. Managers play a critical role in developing the level of organizational commitment to their employees (Tucker, 2017). Managers' commitment shapes their employees' behaviors and attitudes toward their organization. Future researchers can use the knowledge from this study to develop models that explain the underlying theories and processes of mentoring.

Organizational leaders and managers may utilize the insights from this study to create programs that develop the socialization and interpersonal relationships of employees and managers. This relationship is critical to ensuring that employees have a positive experience with the company, while at the same time, contributing valuable output for better organizational outcomes. Although mentoring can be useful for most employees, the mentoring one chooses may or may not improve one's level of work engagement. A supervisor as a direct employee's mentor may not be sufficient. Anaza et al. (2016) posited that the mentor does not have to be an immediate supervisor and this type of relationship is not the same as mentoring support; however, mentoring support helps employees with their current performance and the performance required achieving their organization's strategic goals. Holding leaders and managers accountable would improve poor behaviors and attitudes that are counterintuitive to organizational policy and objectives. For employee relations managers, the findings of this study may be useful in developing employee mentoring programs that are potentially beneficial for the company and ultimately beneficial for the individuals. One such mentoring program to assist leaders and managers could be a mentoring match program which allows employees to select their mentors based on a mentor profile. Leaders and managers

would need to ensure employees are encouraged to participate in the program, employees are knowledgeable about the program, and the program would need to be easily accessible. A program of this type would afford leaders and managers the assistance needed to provide career development opportunities and psychosocial support. For organizational leaders and managers, it would also be beneficial to screen potential mentors to ensure employees are receiving adequate candidates to be mentors.

### **Positive Social Change**

The findings of the study may contribute to positive social change, especially considering the stressors that affect the employees' engagement with a company. From this study, I found that mentoring elements have specific effects on the variables of work engagement, and that perceived organizational support is critical to the commitment of employees. This knowledge may serve as a foundation of policy changes to highlight the accountability of management to provide a safe and positive working environment for employees. Managers can achieve social change by making mentoring activities available to all employees who desire support. Mentors inspire, give astute advice, share their perspective, motivate and encourage mentees in developing new skills, and help generate new ideas. The psychosocial aspect of mentoring can help mentees create a sense of social impact. Mentees will have the courage to speak up and speak freely to impact change in the work environment and across the globe. Access to mentoring programs illustrates that a company values the welfare of its employees, which could increase perceived organizational support and consequently mediate employee work engagement. For extended benefits, employee engagement is essential to all organizations because employees become committed to their employer which leads to critical improvements in

business outcomes, including reductions in absenteeism, employee turnover, reduction in safety incidents and a reduction in product defects (Robinson, 2012). Robinson argued that the best advocates and perpetrators for employee engagement are the employees. Engaged employees work with passion, and engaged employees feel a bond with their company.

### **Conclusion**

Engaged employees are more inclined to help the company achieve its organizational goals. One way to increase employee engagement is mentoring in a variety of formulas and providers. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the independent variables of mentoring, which include role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and mentoring friendship functions with a dependent variable, of employee engagement. The findings showed that each subscale of mentoring could predict at least one of the subscales of work engagement, with perceived organizational support as the moderator. The results provide a nuanced picture of how the independent and dependent variables interact in the context of mentoring and work engagement. These revealed complex dynamics between the mentor and the mentee, in which mentoring elements can be mediated by POS to increase employee engagement in the workplace. Managers and lawmakers can use these insights to instigate institutional changes that promote employee engagement through safe and positive practices such as mentoring. Future researchers can explore the underlying socio-psychological processes that occur in the mentor-mentee relationship in the workplace. Based on the findings of this study, I concluded that mentoring plays a significant role in employee engagement. More specifically, mentoring psychosocial support and perceived organizational support

were significant predictors of the elements associated with work engagement (vigor, absorption, and dedication). The participants in the study were technicians and technologist who received formal mentoring. Mentoring in most organizations is provided for a select few employees who may be targeted for upward mobility. My contention is that mentoring, as shown in the results of this study, has the ability to provide significant results to all employees. More emphasis on the inclusion of mentoring strategies as part of leader's standard operating process could elevate an organization's levels of employee engagement. The competitive challenges that organizations face in the marketplace create the need to keep their employees engaged to help their organizations achieve business objectives, obtain desired results, and stay relative to consumer demands. One way that organizational leaders can optimize their greatest assets and resources is by leveraging mentoring concepts within their managers, as well as in specific programs by personnel other than their supervisors.

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## Appendix A: Mentoring Functions Questionnaire (MFQ-9)

### Questionnaires

#### Mentoring Functions Questionnaire (MFQ-9)

#### Responses:

Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree

#### Career Support

1. My mentor takes a personal interest in my career
5. My mentor helps me coordinate professional goals.
6. My mentor has devoted special time and consideration to my career.

#### Psychosocial Support

7. I share personal problems with my mentor.
9. I exchange confidences with my mentor.
10. I consider my mentor to be a friend.

#### Role Modeling

12. I try to model my behavior after my mentor.
13. I admire my mentor's ability to motivate others.
15. I respect my mentor's ability to teach others.

## Appendix B: Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS)

### SURVEY OF PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT (SPOS)

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Survey directions for completing SPOS: Listed below are statements that represent possible views that may have about working at \_\_\_\_\_. Please rate your agreement or disagreement with each statement by selecting the answer that best represents your point of view about \_\_\_\_\_. Please choose from the following responses.

(R) – indicates that the item is reversed scored.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree

1. The organization values my contribution to its well-being.
2. The organization fails to appreciate any extra effort from me. (R)
3. The organization would ignore any complaint from me. (R)
4. The organization really cares about my well-being.
5. Even if I did the best job possible, the organization would fail to notice.  
(R)
6. The organization cares about my general satisfaction at work.
7. The organization shows very little concern for me. (R)
8. The organization takes pride in my accomplishments at work.

## Appendix C: Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)

## Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)

The following 9 statements are about how you feel at work. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about your job. If you never have this feeling, cross the "0" (zero) in the space after the statement. If you have had this feeling, indicate how often you felt it by crossing the number (from 1 to 6) that best describes how frequently you feel that way.

Never	Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always
0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

1. At my work, I feel bursting with energy. (VI1)
2. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous. (VI2)
3. I am enthusiastic about my job. (DE2)
4. My job inspires me. (DE3)
5. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work. (VI3)
6. I feel happy when I am working intensely. (AB3)
7. I am proud of the work that I do. (DE4)
8. I am immersed in my work. (AB4)
9. I get carried away when I am working. (AB5).