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Strategies to Reduce Information Technology Employee Absenteeism in the Manufacturing Industry

Camilla Henry
Walden University

Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Camilla Henry

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Review Committee
Dr. Krista Laursen, Committee Chairperson, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Douglas Keevers, Committee Member, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Jorge Gaytan, University Reviewer, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
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Abstract

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Manufacturing Industry

by

Camilla Henry

MS, Columbia Southern University, 2014

BS, Columbia Southern University, 2012

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Employee absenteeism costs organizations billions of dollars annually in losses in revenue and productivity, temporary labor costs, and low morale. The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies information technology (IT) managers in the manufacturing industry used to reduce employee absenteeism. The theory of planned behavior provided the conceptual framework for the study. Data collection included semistructured interviews with 5 IT managers in Maryland and a review of organizational documents addressing nutritional education information, employee participation rates in health programs, and physical activity. Data were analyzed using compilation, disassembly, reassembly, interpretation, and development of conclusions. Through thematic analysis, 4 themes emerged: workplace wellness and health programs, employee engagement, work–life balance programs, and organizational culture. Findings of this study may be used by IT managers to bring about positive change by reducing employee absences, encouraging employment opportunities, contributing to organizational sustainability, and improving quality of life for community members.

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Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral study to my mother, Jacquline (Jullet). Thank you for your prayers, love, support, and sacrifices throughout this doctoral journey. Thank you for believing in me. To my darling sons, Nicholas (Jr.) and Cameron, you are my heroes, my pride and joy. Thank you for understanding when I could not spend time with you and take you to the movies or other events. My dad, Neville, and stepmother, Earla, thank you for your kind words of encouragement. To my stepdad, Dudley, my siblings, Dowayne, Katrina (Trina), Jovian, and Ryan, thank you for your constant words of reassurance. To my late great grandmother, Mazie, I wish you were here to witness this milestone in my life. You encouraged me to take my education seriously and with hard work and commitment, I would attain my dreams. Thank you all for reminding me that nothing is too hard for God when he has predestined me for success.

Acknowledgments

First, I want to give God thanks and praise for keeping me going when at times I was on the brink of quitting. Thank you, Lord, for all your mercies. I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to my committee chair, Dr. Krista Laursen, for your patience, feedback, and kind words of encouragement to remain focused and stay the course. I could not have asked for a more dedicated mentor and teacher. To Dr. Doug Keevers, my second committee member, thank you for your perceptive comments that motivated me to attain a higher level of excellence. To my university research reviewer, Dr. Jorge Gaytan, thank you for your insightful feedback and guidance, and your role in ensuring my research met the requirements of the university. Lastly, I would like to thank my Army family and friends for supporting me on this challenging yet rewarding journey.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Employee absenteeism costs organizations billions of dollars annually in lost productivity. Employers face the challenge of reducing costs while increasing productivity. Employers are unable to track the associated direct and indirect costs of employee absenteeism (Onikoyi, Awolusi, & Ayodeji, 2015). The direct and indirect costs of employee absenteeism can amount to 15-20% of payroll, while illness and injuries can account for approximately 2.8 million lost workdays annually (Kocakülâh, Kelley, Mitchell, & Ruggieri, 2016). Gifford (2015) posited that workplace factors such as low motivation, inadequate day care, and safety concerns may influence employee absenteeism rates. Employers who do not proactively manage employee absenteeism miss the opportunity to save billions of dollars annually. Managers able to solve absenteeism problems and associated productivity issues may increase the overall health of the organization through improvements in morale and an increase in the organization's budget (Gifford, 2015).

Background of the Problem

Organizations in the United States experience losses of approximately $260 billion annually due to loss of productivity (McCarthy, Trougakos, & Cheng, 2016). Additionally, nearly 2.8 million workdays each year are lost because of employee absenteeism (Kocakülâh et al., 2016). Employee absenteeism is not just costly; it is disruptive to business operations. Kocakülâh et al. (2016) cited family issues and personal illnesses as the leading cause for unplanned employee absences. For many organizations, absenteeism can be the largest expenditure and the primary reason for loss

of productivity (Onikoyi et al., 2015). Employee well-being issues that result in absenteeism are one of the main reasons for a decrease in profitability and employee productivity (Onikoyi et al., 2015). Organizational effectiveness directly and indirectly relates to managers' focus on employee well-being. The economic costs associated with employee absenteeism affect employers through lower productivity and employees through lower wages.

Employee absenteeism has long engaged the attention of managers in organizations from varying industries including health care, information technology (IT), manufacturing, financial services, and food services (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2016). Employer-employee relationship and job satisfaction are among the top determinants of employee productivity and the prevalence of absenteeism (Buckley, Wheeler, & Halbesleben, 2015; B. Y. Lee, Wang, & Weststar, 2015). The ability and willingness of managers to empower employees can influence job satisfaction and employee motivation, which can lead to active engagement of employees in workplace activities and result in an increase in productivity and job performance (Mone & London, 2014). Job related factors including organizational commitment and trust significantly affect employee motivation and absenteeism (Tezergil, Köse, & Karabay, 2014). Managers in the manufacturing industry might improve employee resource management and improve organizational performance by developing and implementing strategies to reduce employee absenteeism in the manufacturing industry to improve organizational performance (Onikoyi et al., 2015).

Problem Statement

Employee absenteeism leads to a decrease in organizational profitability and productivity, with companies losing an estimated $260 billion annually (McCarthy et al., 2016). Additionally, nearly 2.8 million workdays each year are lost to absenteeism (Kocakülâh et al., 2016). The general business problem was that some companies are negatively affected by profit loss and diminished worker productivity caused by employee absenteeism. The specific business problem was that some IT managers in the manufacturing industry lack strategies to reduce employee absenteeism.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies IT managers in the manufacturing industry use to reduce employee absenteeism. The study population consisted of five IT managers of a manufacturing company in the manufacturing industry in southern Maryland with successful experience in using strategies to reduce employee absenteeism. The implications for positive social change include the potential for IT managers in the manufacturing industry to identify and implement strategies to reduce employee absenteeism, thereby increasing organizational profitability, improving employee productivity, and supporting the development of financially stronger companies that can positively contribute to communities' growth and development.

Nature of the Study

I used the qualitative research method for this study. A qualitative researcher investigates experiences and actions of social reality using natural languages and

expressions to generate fruitful original knowledge (Levitt, Motulsky, Wertz, Morrow, & Ponterotto, 2017). Conversely, a quantitative researcher focuses on deduction, theory and hypotheses testing, confirmation, statistical analysis, standardized data collection, and prediction (M. N. Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2015). A quantitative method was not appropriate for this study because the objective was to explore the strategies used by IT managers in the manufacturing industry to reduce employee absenteeism. Mixed-methods research involves the collection of qualitative and quantitative data when research questions require the subjectivity of the qualitative approach and the statistical analysis of the quantitative approach. A mixed-methods approach was not appropriate for the current study because the purpose was to explore strategies IT managers in the manufacturing industry use to reduce employee absenteeism.

A qualitative case study design is useful when the phenomenon under study is broad and complex, and the existing body of knowledge is insufficient and does not allow for causal questions (Dasgupta, 2015). Additionally, a case study design is suitable for a holistic in-depth investigation (Dasgupta, 2015). According to Bevan (2014), a phenomenological design addresses the lived experiences of a phenomenon from the participants' perspective. A phenomenological design was not appropriate for this study because the intent was not the documentation of lived experiences. A narrative design involves gathering participants' stories about one or more phenomena (Barkhuizen, 2014). A narrative design was not appropriate for the study because the intent was not to document narrated versions of participants' stories. A researcher using a grounded theory design generates an explanation for a social process built on the views of participants

(Baskerville & Myers, 2015). A grounded theory design was not suitable because the purpose of the study was not to conceptualize social patterns of a phenomenon. An ethnographic study is a qualitative method in which the researcher is immersed in the day-to-day lives of the participants' culture in their real-life environment (Case, Todd, & Kral, 2014). An ethnographic design was not appropriate because I did not describe the participants' culture.

Research Question

What strategies do IT managers in the manufacturing industry use to reduce employee absenteeism?

Interview Questions

1. How have employee absences affected your organization's productivity and profitability?

2. What strategies did you use to reduce employee absenteeism?

3. How did you determine the best strategies for reducing employee absenteeism?

4. What barriers did you encounter when implementing strategies to reduce IT employee absenteeism?

5. How did your organization address the key barriers to implementing successful strategies to reduce IT employees' absenteeism?

6. What responses did employees exhibit to strategies implemented to reduce employee absenteeism?

7. What are the benefits of implementing strategies to reduce employee absenteeism?

8. What other information would you like to share regarding the development of strategies to reduce absenteeism that we have not discussed?

Conceptual Framework

The theory of planned behavior (TPB) is a conceptualization of the probable outcome of behavior (Ajzen, 1991, 2011). Ajzen (1991) proposed the TPB in 1985 as an extension of the theory of reasoned action to include the concept of perceived behavioral control to help understand the behavior of people based on the premise that behavior is planned and deliberate. Key considerations fundamental to Ajzen's theory are behavioral beliefs and likely consequences, normative beliefs and expectation of others, and control beliefs and the factors that inhibit or enable the behavior. Ajzen's three propositions are essential in circumstances in which the aim is to change the behavior of people. For this study, I used the TPB to explain the elements of the intention to engage in absenteeism as behaviors related to an individual's self-control. The TPB provided a lens to support the exploration of how IT managers in the manufacturing industry develop and deploy strategies necessary to change employee behaviors for reducing absenteeism.

Operational Definitions

Behavioral beliefs: An individual's beliefs about the outcome of a particular behavior (Glanz, Rimer, & Viswanath, 2015).

Control beliefs: The presence or absence of facilitators and barriers to behavioral performance (Glanz et al., 2015).

Employee absenteeism: The manifestation of a decision made by an employee to remain absent from work during a period when the employee should be present at work (Randhawa, 2017).

Employee engagement: The employee's emotional, cognitive, and behavioral state toward the desired outcome of the organization (Jose & Mampilly, 2015)

Normative beliefs: The belief of whether an important referent individual will approve or disapprove of performing a particular behavior (Glanz et al., 2015).

Workplace wellness programs: An organization wide health initiative designed to support healthy behaviors and improve health outcomes in the workplace (Astrella, 2017).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Researchers recognizing the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of their studies can identify the strengths and weaknesses of their work (Pyrczak & Bruce, 2016). In any study, the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations are important to acknowledge. Researchers can identify the strengths and weaknesses of a study to bring focus to the noteworthiness of the study and to draw the reader's attention to the applicability of the findings (Pyrczak & Bruce, 2016).

Assumptions

Assumptions are claims the researcher accepts to be true without evidence (Zitomer & Goodwin, 2014). First, I assumed that the TPB was an appropriate and useful theory for understanding the strategies IT managers in the manufacturing industry deploy to change employee behaviors and reduce employee absenteeism. Second, I assumed that

the IT managers would respond truthfully to the interview questions. Third, I assumed that interviewing IT managers having successfully implemented strategies to reduce employee absenteeism was sufficient to answer the research question. Fourth, I assumed that results of the study would help IT managers understand strategies to reduce employee absenteeism, thereby increasing profitability, improving employee productivity, and supporting the development of stronger companies that positively affect community growth.

Limitations

Limitations are gaps in a study that may affect the outcome of the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). First, I used a small population of five participants, which limited the generalizability of the findings. A small population might not represent the views of all IT managers in the manufacturing industry. Second, I did not include employees of my study organization in the population because of the possibility of biased results. Third, I explored only the perspectives of IT managers, which may have prevented the identification of other factors outside the scope of the IT managers' influence on absenteeism.

Delimitations

According to Childers (2014), delimitations are boundaries or restrictions set forth by the researcher that affect the scope of the study. The delimitations of this study included my focus on IT managers in the manufacturing industry and the geographical location of the research. For this study, I used a single IT company in which managers had successfully implemented strategies to reduce employee absenteeism within 3 years

of this study. Second, I included only IT managers as interview participants to focus on exploring the strategies for reducing employee absenteeism in the manufacturing industry. Third, I included a single IT company in southern Maryland. Finally, I narrowed the scope of this study to one major U.S. city versus multiple cities.

Significance of the Study

Employee absenteeism adversely affects organizational profitability and employee productivity. The increased prevalence of employee absenteeism has economic and societal implications including loss of productivity, increased cost for replacement staff and overtime pay, increased workplace accidents, and conflict with absent workers (Jinnett, Schwatka, Tenney, Brockbank, & Newman, 2017). Identification of strategies for reducing employee absenteeism might enable IT managers to enhance recruitment, improve performance and productivity, increase retention, and reduce turnover. By understanding and assessing these strategies' relevance, business leaders might notice a positive impact on employee commitment, increased job satisfaction, increased cost savings and profits, and a reduction of absenteeism (see Després, Alméras, & Gauvin, 2014).

Organizational profitability benefits communities by supporting increased employment. The implications for positive social change included a greater understanding of the strategies IT managers in the manufacturing industry use to reduce absenteeism, thereby positively influencing communities by reducing the unemployment rate, workplace anxiety, and related mental health issues. Annual health care costs associated with employee absenteeism may be attributable to how many U.S.

organizations manage their workforces (Goh, Pfeffer, & Zenios, 2015). Understanding the strategies IT managers in the manufacturing industry use to reduce employee absenteeism might be useful for exploring the policies, strategies, and processes that can reduce IT workers' absenteeism rates.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

I included more than 200 references from peer-reviewed articles and textbooks obtained from the Walden University library's databases including Business Source Complete, Science Direct, EBSCO Primary, SAGE, ABI/INFORM, and ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. I also used the Google Scholar search engine. The focus of this study was to explore the strategies IT managers in the manufacturing industry use to reduce employee absenteeism. The purpose of the literature review was to analyze the current state of knowledge regarding absenteeism strategies employers can use to minimize absenteeism rates among employees. In my review of the literature, I included journal articles and books relevant to the theory of planned behavior, effects of absenteeism, factors contributing to absenteeism, and strategies managers use to help reduce employee absenteeism. I used the following key words in my searches: *employee absenteeism*, *theory of planned behavior*, *cost of absenteeism*, *effects of absenteeism*, *wellness programs*, *employee engagement*, *contributing factor of absenteeism*, and *organizational productivity*.

I organized the literature review by the following themes: (a) conceptual framework, (b) other health behavior theories, (c) employee absenteeism, (d) workplace wellness programs, and (e) employee engagement. The research process for this literature

review consisted of 258 journal articles, 36 books, and two dissertations organized by topics pertaining to employee absenteeism. Of the 296 references, 279 (94%) had a publication date between 2014 and 2018, which was 5 years from the expected approval of the final study. Table 1 includes detailed information about the sources used for the literature review for this study.

Table 1

Literature Review Source Count

Literature type	Total	<5 years	>5 years	%<5 years
Peer-reviewed journals	237	224	13	95%
Dissertations	2	2	0	100%
Books	36	35	1	97%
Non-peer-reviewed journals	21	18	3	86%
Total	296	279	17	94%

Theory of Planned Behavior

The foundation of the TPB is to determine or anticipate deliberate behavior. The TPB is an extension of the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen, 1991). Ajzen (as cited in Madden, Ellen, & Ajzen, 1992) extended the theory of reasoned action by including perceptions of behavioral controls as a predictor of intentions and behaviors. Researchers used the TPB extensively to predict and understand the motivational influences on behavior (Madden et al., 1992). Behavioral intentions are indications of a person's willingness and effort to perform a behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Lortie & Castogiovanni,

2015). Ajzen (2015) detailed three significant determinants of behavioral intention to predict a person's behavior: (a) attitude toward the behavior, (b) subjective norms, and (c) perceived behavioral control. The three determinants and a person's intention to perform a behavior correlate strongly with the behavior (Ajzen, 2015). The relationship between the three variables is jointly dependent on motivation (intention) and ability (behavior) to influence performance (Ajzen, 2015).

An individual's intention is a predictor of behavior (Lortie & Castogiovanni, 2015). A person's attitude determines their individual beliefs about an outcome of behavior, which is weighted by evaluating those attributes (Glanz et al., 2015). An individual holding a firm belief that a particular behavior results in a positive outcome can have a positive attitude toward the behavior (Glanz et al., 2015). Researchers have employed the TPB as a health behavior change theory to provide organizations with information regarding determinants that influence behavior change and maintenance (Teixeira et al., 2015). According to Teixeira et al. (2015), behavioral modification is an effective way to target lifestyle behaviors. The TPB is useful to understand many types of health and other behaviors including (a) intent to exercise, (b) smoking, (c) alcohol and substance use, (d) condom use, (e) nutritional choices, (f) contraceptive use, and (g) health services utilization (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Glanz et al., 2015). Employers can apply the TPB to understand the strategies IT managers use to reduce absenteeism. The attitude an employee displays toward a behavior whether positive or negative can impact the strategies managers use to reduce employee absenteeism (Eldredge et al., 2016).

Self-motivation affects cognitive functions through the influence of information processing. The stronger the belief, the more effort the individual devotes to an endeavor. Bandura (1986) hypothesized that human behavior is governed by determinants that operate through a wide-range mechanism such as cognitive self-motivation. Self-motivation is mediated by affective self-evaluation, self-efficacy, and personal goal setting (Bandura, 1986). Researchers using the TPB depict behavior as a function of behavioral intention and perceived behavioral control (PBC; Armitage & Conner, 2001). PBC is the extent of the ease or difficulty that some individual experiences when performing a behavior (Armitage & Conner, 2001). Regarding the influence of PBC on intention, Ajzen (1991) postulated that the relative importance of attitude, subjective norm, and PBC in predicting intention varies depending on behaviors and situations. In circumstances where a person's attitude is strong or normative influences are influential, PBC might be less predictive of intentions (Sheeran et al., 2016). Ajzen argued that the extent of the PBC intention relationship depends on the kind of behavior and the type of situation. Implementing intentions into action is partially determined by individual and environmental barriers. The addition of PBC to the TPB is useful as volitional control over behavior decreases (Armitage & Conner, 2001).

Behavioral intentions are plans and goals individuals accompany with measures of perceived control. Behavioral intention is a central factor in the TPB and is an individual's perceived likelihood to engage in an act based on motivational factors that influence the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Behavioral intention consists of three determinants to predict people's behavior. The first determinant is the attitude toward the behavior,

which is the extent to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation of the behavior (Asare, 2015). The second predictor is subjective norms, which are perceptions of social pressure to perform or not perform a behavior (Asare, 2015). PBC is the third determinant and is a critical component of the TPB, which refers to an individual's level of ease or difficulty in performing the behavior because of previous experiences and probable obstacles (Ajzen, 1991, 2015). Ajzen (1991, 2011) argued that perceived behavioral control plays an integral role in determining intentions, a person's attitude toward an act, and social norms concerning the act. The combination of each behavioral construct forms the behavioral intention.

A person's intention to change is thought to be related to his or her behavior change. Ajzen (as cited in Fertman & Allensworth, 2016) postulated that people are motivated to change based on (a) perceptions of norms, (b) attitudes, and (c) control over behavior. These factors can result in an increase or decrease of an individual's intent to change his or her behavior (Zolait, 2014). Researchers use the TPB to examine a variety of health related behaviors to predict the likelihood of an individual performing a behavior (Fertman & Allensworth, 2016). PBCs are the most recent construct of the TPB and are the beliefs about a person's ability to accomplish a behavior (Fertman & Allensworth, 2016). The performance of behavior is determined by behavioral intentions or the ease with which an individual performs a behavior based on the views of others (Wang & Wang, 2015). Wang and Wang (2015) noted that researchers using the TPB were successful in predicting and explaining employees' intention to remain absent from the workplace.

Employees who engage in regular physical activity might experience improved well-being and exercise behavior. Positive attitude and greater behavioral control might result in stronger intention to carry out a behavior. Chronic low back pain is a costly health problem, which can lead to disability (Heidari & Tavafian, 2017). Heidari and Tavafian (2017) conducted a study to predict the factors for physical activity behavior among patients at a pain clinic. Heidari and Tavafian found patients' beliefs about physical activity and their PBC as well as subjective norms and attitudes of the patients could predict physical activity behaviors. The results of the study may help managers set up the proper training programs and include the significant predictors of physical activity. Rich, Brandes, Mullan, and Hagger (2015) found that patients were more inclined to do physical activities if an important person was performing the behavior with them. Furthermore, the patients' subjective norm, which is a component of normative beliefs, strongly influenced whether the patient was more inclined to perform the behavior because an important individual approved of doing the physical activity (Heidari & Tavafian, 2017). Patients who believe that important referents think they should perform physical activities will hold a positive subjective norm and will do the physical activities (Glanz et al., 2015). Conversely, if the patients believe important people think they should not do physical activities, the patients will have a negative subjective norm and will be less motivated to perform the behavior (Glanz et al., 2015).

Employees who work long hours and stay seated for long periods are at risk for immobility. Consistent physical fitness is essential in reducing approximately 25 factors that contribute to harmful health, such as diabetes, obesity, depression, and heart failure

(Shafieinia, Hidarnia, Kazemnejad, & Rajabi, 2016). Researchers have successfully used the TPB to predict physical activity behavior using the PBC as the key determinant of physical activity intentions (Shafieinia et al., 2016). Darker, French, Eves, and Sniehotta (2010) used the TPB to develop and evaluate whether an intervention to boost PBC would increase an employee's attitude and intention to participate in physical activity. Darker et al. found that the effects of the intervention on the individuals' intention and behavior were mediated by PBC. However, the individuals' PBC was not mediated by controls beliefs. Ryan et al. (2017) and Berenguera et al. (2016) also used behavioral change interventions to reduce sedentary behavior to increase physical activity in people with multiple sclerosis and type 2 diabetes.

Effective leaders support innovation and enhance employees' willingness to engage in creative involvement at work. Binyamin (2018) expanded the TPB to explore the role of leaders' normative expectation in driving employee performance. A leader's normative expectation enhances the employee's service performance by a deep-rooted process of internalizing the leader's normative expectations into the employee's role identity (Binyamin, 2018). The normative component of the PBC can influence behavior directly in situations where the person does not have control over the behavior (Godin & Kok, 1996). Godin and Kok (1996) observed that an individual's attitude toward a behavior is a positive or negative evaluation of performing the behavior. The individual's perceived normative beliefs represent a perception of whether a person should or should not engage in a behavior (Armitage & Conner, 2001).

Primary care physicians use differing methods to prescribe sick leave to patients. According to Nantha, Wee, and Chan (2018), primary care physicians lack a robust psychological framework to guide their efforts to prescribe sick leave. To address the lack of robust research accuracy, Nantha et al. employed the TPB to explore the intentions and other significant predictors of sick leave prescribing among primary care physicians. Nantha et al. found that attitudes and subjective norms were essential predictors of primary care physicians' intention to prescribe sick leave. Researchers can use the findings of the study to evaluate sickness absenteeism among employees. Kankaanpää, Putus, and Tuominen (2014) postulated that the average number of sick leave days prescribed for a group of 19 patients was 85.8 days. Kankaanpää et al. also observed that primary care physicians with more than 20 years of experience have a tendency to excessively prescribe sick leave to their patients. Kankaanpää et al. highlighted the cost of lost productivity to employers and observed that sick leave is costlier than drug prescriptions.

Researchers use the TPB to analyze and predict behaviors such as maintaining physical activity, smoking, drinking, wearing a seatbelt, and the use of a helmet (Frater, Kuijer, & Kingman, 2017; Hodge, Wright, & Bennett, 2017). Ajzen (2015) asserted that a person's behavioral intentions influence behaviors, and that attitude, subjective norm, and PBC govern people's intentions. Frater et al. conducted a study to predict adolescents' intention to cycle to school using the variables of the TPB. Hodge et al. (2017) posited that although researchers use TPB to predict future behaviors, the predictive significance of each principle of the TPB varies across behaviors. Ajzen

(1991) explained that the relative importance of attitudes, subjective norms, and PBCs

varies across behaviors and situations. To effectively measure and predict intention, it

might be necessary to capture individual differences to determine behavior change. Frater

et al. found that people predominantly base their decisions to ride a bicycle to school on

behavioral intention rather than the inclination to engage in the behavior. Frater et al.

noted that subjective norm had the greatest influence on the students' decision to cycle to

school.

Gambling problems are a significant issue for employers. Flack and Morris (2017)

pointed out that gamblers and their employers experience the negative consequences

linked to gambling behaviors. Researchers have used the TPB to explain intention to

gamble. Flack and Morris (2017) conducted a study on gambling frequency to explain

problematic gambling using the TPB construct. St-Pierre, Derevensky, Temcheff, Gupta,

and Martin-Story (2017) also used the TPB model to study gambling prevention

programs. Flack and Morris and St-Pierre et al. both highlighted the ability of the TPB to

explain gambling behaviors, gambling prevention, and gambling frequencies. St-Pierre et

al. identified intentions, attitudes, subjective norms, and PBC as valid predictors of

gambling problems and behaviors. Flack and Morris found that intentions, attitudes, and

PBCs directly relate to gambling frequencies and gambling problems. The behaviors of

others and believing in gambling prowess play an integral role in shaping an individual's

intention to gamble (Flack & Morris, 2017; St-Pierre et al., 2017).

Brooks et al. (2017) conducted a study examining the roles of self-determination

theory (SDT) and the TPB in influencing physical activity and exercise behavior. Brooks

et al. used the measures of SDT relevant to physical activity and exercise (perceived autonomy support, autonomy, competence, and relatedness) and also used TPB measures pertinent to physical activity and exercise (intention, attitudes, subjective norms, and PBCs). Brooks et al. found that SDT accounted for 37% of the TPB variance while TPB accounted for 32% variance of the SDT. Chevance, Caudroit, Romain, and Boiché (2017) posited that a combination of physical activity and healthy eating habits could prevent obesity. Chevance et al. (2017) conducted a study using the TPB to identify the psychological behaviors of physical activity and healthy eating behaviors. Brooks et al. and Chevance et al. highlighted the importance of sustained exercise, which according to the authors are important health outcomes. Chevance et al. noted a significant association between attitude and physical activity. The association between exercise behavior and attitude was not significant, which could be as a result of the score from the type of questionnaire used by the researchers, which yielded both qualitative and quantitative aspect of exercise behavior (Chevance et al., 2017).

Other Health Behavior Theories

Researchers use health behavior theories to help explain why people and community members behave the way they do. Managers can use behavior models and theories to increase the effectiveness of the design, implementation, and evaluation of organizational programs (Rimer & Brewer, 2015). Employees require a program tailored specifically to their needs. Managers may need to consider several theories to support different employee lifestyles, behavior changes and provide the optimal support to workers as they work toward healthier lifestyles (Zolait, 2014). Rimer and Brewer (2015)

noted that many researchers use theories to focus on health and risk related behavior and that human behavior depends on the value people place on a goal and the likelihood that an action will achieve the goal.

Health belief model. The health belief model (HBM) is a health behavior theory that researchers use to address health behavior change. Skinner, Tiro, and Champion (2015) noted that behavioral change requires the belief that an action is beneficial, and change is possible. Researchers use the HBM to predict health promoting behaviors and to inform the development of interventions to improve health (Jones, Smith, & Llewellyn, 2014). An individual's readiness to act upon a health behavior is based upon five behavioral constructs of the HBM: (a) perceived susceptibility, (b) perceived severity, (c) perceived benefits, (d) perceived barriers, and (e) cues to action (Jones et al., 2014; Li, Lei, Wang, He, & Williams, 2016).

Jones et al. (2014) described perceived susceptibility as beliefs concerning the susceptibility to a condition. Perceived severity is the belief concerning the severity of a condition, while perceived benefits are the perceived values or benefits of behavior changes when considering reducing the risk of a condition (Jones et al., 2014). Zolait (2014) noted that perceived barriers refer to any barriers to the behavior changes, and cues to action refer to internal stimuli regarding information about a disease or illness. People might decide to engage in a health action because of these five components (Li et al., 2016).

Employers providing health promoting advice can successfully prevent and manage conditions that affect employees. The HBM and the TPB are two widely used

health behavior theories to predict and change behavior (Montanaro & Bryan, 2014).

Researchers using the TPB posited that perceptions of social influences and behavioral

control determine an individual's behavior, including health related behavior (Fishbein &

Ajzen, 2010; Montano & Kasprzyk, 2015). According to Montanaro and Bryan (2014),

various authors have commented on the similarities between the constructs of the HBM

and the TPB, arguing that the theories contain identical concepts that merely use different

terminology. For example, both theories contain beliefs about attitudes, which is the

extent to which a person quantifies the importance of positive or negative consequences

of behavior (Montanaro & Bryan, 2014). Additionally, employees might take action to

protect their health if the employees believe they are susceptible to ill health (Kamran,

Ahari, Biria, Malpour, & Heydari, 2014).

The HBM is a cognitive model that researchers use to understand the reasons

people engage in health risk taking behaviors and to improve the predictability of self-

efficacy (Li et al., 2016). Researchers can use the HBM to address issues such as

smoking, obesity, sexually transmitted infection, and substance abuse (Li et al., 2016). Li

et al. noted that several researchers have examined the characteristics of HBM to predict

risk taking behaviors, yet the results from these studies are inconsistent with partial

evidence that support the HBM. In contrast, other researchers suggested that HBM can be

used to predict health related behaviors (Li et al., 2016). Romano and Scott (2014)

suggested that researchers could integrate HBM through one-on-one coaching sessions,

which might assist in explaining and predicting health behaviors.

Social cognitive theory. People are more inclined and committed to carrying out an action if they believe they can take steps to solve a problem (Young, Plotnikoff, Collins, Callister, & Morgan, 2014). According to the social cognitive theory (SCT), individuals change their behavior because of their personal sense of control and a desire to regulate their motivation and action by forethought (see Young et al., 2014). Researchers apply SCT to diverse areas such as emotional disorders, school achievements, career choices, and mental and physical health (Stacey, James, Chapman, Courneya, & Lubans, 2015). Managers understanding the relevance of SCT might be able to design better interventions to help employees make health behavior changes (Glanz et al., 2015). Researchers using SCT believe that cognition, behavior, and personal factors have a reciprocal relationship with the environment and, therefore, it is a continuous influential relationship (Glanz et al., 2015).

Social outcome and self influence regulate and motivate human behavior (Bandura, 2001). SCT is self-regulated by three main sub functions: (a) self monitoring of behaviors, determinants, and its effects; (b) judgment of behaviors as it relates to individual standards; and (c) affective self-reaction. Additionally, self-regulation includes self-efficacy, which is central to exercising personal agency (Bandura, 1991). Bandura (2001) defined personal agency as a broad network of socio structural influences where a person is a product of social systems. The core agentic features of personal agency are (a) intentionality, which refers to the act of doing something intentionally; (b) forethought, where an individual sets goals, anticipate consequences of actions, and create courses of actions to produce favorable outcomes; (c) self-reactiveness; and (d) self-reflectiveness,

the act of self-examining one's own functioning (Bandura, 1991, 2001). These core features of personal agency pertain to the capability to exercise control over the nature of one's life.

PBC is comparable to self-efficacy in SCT and includes control beliefs based on secondary information. The concept of self-efficacy is the individual's perception of one's belief in the performance capability while PBC is more about influencing behavior through intention (Eldredge et al., 2016). Self-efficacy influences how people think, act, and feel (Schwarzer, 2014). The beliefs of self-efficacy regulate how humans function through four processes: (a) cognitive, (b) motivational, (c) effective, and (d) selective (Schwarzer, 2014). The basic tenet of SCT is that reflexive thinking guides human motivation and behavior to act upon intentions of whether to attend work (Cooper & Lu, 2016). Moreover, the individual controls the assumptions of self-efficacy and PBC through cognitive processes and by the environment through social situations (Cooper & Lu, 2016). Similarly, self-efficacy makes a difference in how people act and feel by triggering the cognitive representation of the situation and placing emphasis on certain aspects that fit with the individual's expectations (Yu, Wang, Zhai, Dai, & Yang, 2015). Self-efficacy is based on subjective inferences and discernments of accomplishments.

Employee Absenteeism

Absenteeism has an effect on the organization through direct and indirect costs. Absenteeism is the manifestation of a decision by an employee to remain absent from work during a period when they should be present (Randhawa, 2017). Many factors may contribute to absenteeism such as sickness, accidents, poor working and welfare

conditions, occupational diseases, lack of trained personnel, and lack of interest (Randhawa, 2017). Organizational conflict has become a serious contributor to employee absenteeism in the IT Sector (Saranya, 2017). Dale-Olsen (2014) suggested that employers adopt measures to handle conflict to increase employee commitment level and reduce employee absenteeism. The extent to which individuals feel about an aspect of their job, such as pay and working hours, directly influences their job satisfaction (Dale-Olsen, 2014). Job satisfaction represents the negative or positive feelings an employee has for their job (Saranya, 2017).

Employers implement absence management programs to reduce employee absenteeism. According to Saranya (2017), employers in the IT industry have sought ways to improve employee resource management by focusing on reducing employee absenteeism and maintaining a low level of employee turnover. Employers in the IT industry employ measures such as employee motivation strategies, shift work systems, and teamwork to enhance employee happiness and job satisfaction (Mudaly & Nkosi, 2015). Notwithstanding the efforts of employers to bring awareness to the adverse effects of absenteeism on the overall productivity and performance of the organization, the level of employee absenteeism remains high (Saranya, 2017). Researchers put substantial effort into understanding the complexity and multifactorial phenomenon that exist with absenteeism (Dale-Olsen, 2014).

Employee absenteeism results in an estimated loss of productivity up to $40 billion in the United States annually (Nguyen, Groth, & Johnson, 2016). Nguyen et al. (2016) posited that there are significant indirect costs to organizations in the form of

reduced productivity, lower morale for those covering for other employees, and increased

supervisory load. For many organizations, employee absenteeism disrupts the natural

workflow and result in underutilized human resource capacity (Nguyen et al., 2016).

Nguyen et al. (2016) cited absenteeism as a consequence of emotional labor. Emotional

labor is the employee's self-regulated feelings and emotional expressions when dealing

with clients, customers, or patients (Nguyen et al., 2016). Burton, Chen, Li, Schultz, and

Abrahamsson (2014) believed that self-reporting of physical activity could address the

growing prevalence and cost of employee absenteeism. Johns and Miraglia (2015) noted

that there is not a clear understanding of self-reported absenteeism. Employees often

underreport absenteeism, making it difficult for researchers to measure the accuracy of

self-reported absenteeism (Johns & Miraglia, 2015).

Employers should consider costs when dealing with absenteeism. The cost of

employee absences has a significant impact on organizations' economic growth (Waye,

2017). In some organizations, depending on company size and employee type, employee

turnover costs can typically range from $20,000 to $90,000 per employee (Hodgin &

Chandra, 2014). Researchers found a link between work stresses and physical and

psychological illnesses related to employee absenteeism and high employee turnover

(Oyserman, Smith, & Elmore, 2014). High turnover and health related absenteeism

directly correlate with a decrease in productivity of the organization. Waye (2017) noted

that the cost of employee turnover for high performing employees result in a diminished

return on investment, human capital loss, and social capital loss. These costs typically

begin with increased absenteeism and have a lasting effect on profitability (Waye, 2017).

Absenteeism generates a substantial amount of additional costs and issues for organizations. Despite the influence productivity cost has on cost-effectiveness, many researchers omit productivity costs from economic evaluations (Krol & Brouwer, 2014). There is a lack of standardization concerning the approach of estimating productivity costs. Productivity costs are the costs associated with production loss and the replacement costs of paid and unpaid workers due to illness, disability, or death of a productive employee (Kigozi, Jowett, Lewis, Barton, & Coast, 2016). Productivity costs are benefits forgone to society because of absenteeism or presenteeism, which result in productivity loss (Kigozi et al., 2016). Absenteeism is a major challenge for society, and Mahy, Rycx, and Volral (2016) noted that the main reasons for absenteeism are health problems, work-related stresses, and physical conditions. In a Belgian firm with at least 200 employees, leaders spent an estimated 1 million euros on sickness absenteeism (Mahy et al., 2016). Because absenteeism is one of the primary determinants of productivity loss, employers are innately interested in employing strategies to reduce employee absenteeism (Mahy et al., 2016).

Productivity losses resulting from employee absenteeism negatively affect businesses. Employee absenteeism hinders employers from reaching an expected level of output and revenue (Bankert, Coberley, Pope, & Wells, 2015). Bankert et al. (2015) found that the costs of employee absenteeism ranged from $0.7 million to $6.8 million for three employers. Employers are using a new approach to estimate the indirect costs of health related absenteeism. Employers incur indirect cost related to labor force

participation, including lost wages of individual and family caregivers and employer

costs such as absenteeism, presenteeism, and sick leave (Patel, Nagar, & Dalal, 2014).

Presenteeism could contribute to employee productivity costs when employees

work despite illness. Reduced work performance can be a consequence of absenteeism

and can contribute to organizational productivity costs (Strömberg, Aboagye, Hagberg,

Bergström, & Lohela-Karlsson, 2017). Employers estimate the effect of absenteeism on

productivity by using wages to proxy the value of marginal productivity (Zhang, Sun,

Woodcock, & Anis, 2017; Strömberg et al., 2017). Employers underestimate productivity

costs when using wages because a reduction in employee performance can also affect the

performance of coworkers (Strömberg et al., 2017). Zhang et al. (2017) argued that

despite sound arguments favoring the inclusion of productivity loss in economic

evaluation studies, there are insufficient methods to value productivity loss. Furthermore,

Krol and Brouwer (2014) noted that productivity costs are often omitted from evaluation

studies notwithstanding the strong impact economic evaluations have on cost

effectiveness outcomes. According to Krol and Brouwer, the lack of inclusion of

productivity costs in evaluation studies might be partly because of the lack of

standardization regarding the methods of estimating productivity cost.

Employee absenteeism is costly and disruptive for organizations. Kocakülâh et al.

(2016) found that employers struggle to determine the validity of illnesses, and therefore

offer incentives to mitigate employee absences. Employers use incentives and

disciplinary means to try to solve absenteeism problems (Kocakülâh et al., 2016).

However, Bankert et al. (2015) suggested a new approach, the Regional Productivity

Loss (RPL) Model, to estimate the indirect cost employers incur because of employee

absenteeism. Bankert et al. suggested the use of lost output instead of lost wages to

monetize productivity losses and employee replacements for the absentee workers.

Kocakülâh, Bryan et al. postulated that it is imperative for employers to conclude if they

have an absenteeism problem and if so, to consider utilizing methods to reduce employee

absenteeism.

The imbalance between delivering high quality service and coping with a stressful

workplace can lead to employee burnout. Burnout is the state of physical and emotional

depletion and results from prolonged exposure to stressful working environments

(Khamisa, Oldenburg, Peltzer, & Ilic, 2015). Work-related stress can affect job

satisfaction as well as an employee's physical and mental health (Khamisa et al., 2015).

Shemueli, Dolan, Ceretti, & Nuñez del Prado (2016) cited poor supervision, high job

demands, overtime, and conflict with peers as the main contributing factors to burnout.

Similarly, work-related stress resulting from high workloads and lack of resources

correlates with poor job satisfaction (Shemueli et al., 2016).

Stress can occur in different work settings and can worsen when the demands and

pressures of work exceed the knowledge and abilities of the employee, thereby

challenging the employee's ability to cope (Bakker, Demerouti, and Sanz-Vergel 2014).

Burnout affects health outcomes through the depletion of resources the employee needs

for coping (Khamisa et al., 2015). Bakker et al. (2014) classified the antecedents of

burnout as situational factors, such as work overload and individual factors such as self-

efficacy. Furthermore, prolonged exposure to highly demanding jobs may cause an

employee to become exhausted and subsequently distance themselves from their work (Bakker et al., 2014). Bakker et al. (2014) posited that the most significant job demands were role ambiguity, work pressure, stressful events, and role conflict. Bakker et al. noted that individual factors are personal characteristics that are somewhat stable over time and that individuals with certain personalities are better able to cope with job demands.

Long-term stress can have negative psychological consequences, such as job strain and psychological experiences. Work-related stress develops because of a burden on an individual's wellbeing, which can lead to psychological disorders, diseases, and unhealthy behaviors (García-Campayo, Puebla-Guedea, Herrera-Mercadal, & Daudén, 2016). According to García-Campayo et al. (2016), occupational pressures and fears are the leading cause of stress in American adults. Janssens et al. (2014) conducted a study of the psychosocial risk factors of sickness absence and found job demands and job strain as psychosocial risk factors for sickness absence. Janssens et al. found psychological risk factors can lead to stress and musculoskeletal disorders. Back problems, mood disorders, and migraine account for a significant increase in productivity loss (Zhang, McLeod, & Koehoorn, 2016). Chronic conditions such as mood disorders and back problems result in substantial losses in productivity. Managers can prioritize their programs and resources to reduce absenteeism in the workplace for employees with chronic conditions (Zhang et al., 2016). The health risk factors of absenteeism correlate with workers' compensation claim costs (Schwatka et al., 2017). In their study, Schwatka et al. suggested that stress at home and in the workplace is one of the health factors of absenteeism that results in future workers' compensation claim occurrences. The employee's social environment such as

their community and workplaces can promote lifestyles that lead to illnesses (Clercq et al., 2015).

Inadequate sleep is a significant problem affecting employee absenteeism. Employees who participated in workplace health and sleep programs experienced reduced stress levels, increased energy levels, and improved quality of life (Steffen et al., 2015). Hui and Grandner (2015) studied the existence of the association between sleep disorders such as obstructive sleep apnea, restless leg syndrome, and insomnia, three of the most prevalent sleep disorders affecting the quality of life of workers. Hui and Grandner (2015) suggested that sleep disturbances are key factors of absenteeism and previous researchers posited that insomnia and sleep apnea are both prophetic of subsequent sick leave. An employee suffering from insomnia cost employers an estimated $3,156 per year (Hui & Grandner, 2015). Additionally, employers incur significant health care costs because of employees who suffer from insufficient sleep. According to Magnavita and Garbarino (2017), sleep apnea is a common cause of excessive sleepiness, which can result in diminished performance, obesity, and other health issues that can impair the quality of life of workers. Employers who offer a healthy sleep program through workplace wellness programs might increase awareness of sleep disorders, stress management techniques for sleep, and behavioral interventions that promote sleep (Magnavita & Garbarino, 2017).Employers might experience benefits of higher productivity, reduced absenteeism, and overall better quality of products (Magnavita & Garbarino, 2017) with the implementation of programs to support employee health and healthy lifestyle. Increasing employee wellbeing and employee

engagement through health programs might be useful in counteracting employee absenteeism and enable employees to become active and more productive.

The interrelated factors that influence employees' decisions not to attend work lead to distinctions between voluntary and involuntary employee absenteeism. Absenteeism is a contributor to reduced workplace productivity and has financial implications for overtime wages, healthcare costs, and legal claims (Magee, Caputi, & Lee, 2016). Additionally, employee absenteeism can result in long-term effects on employee productivity by contributing to health issues such as depression, which can lead to withdrawal from the workplace (Magee et al., 2016). Frey, Osteen, Berglund, Jinnett, and Ko (2015) noted that chronic health conditions on organizational productivity are prevalent and costly. Although researchers have investigated the antecedents and consequences of employee absences, many aspects of employee absenteeism remain unclear (Magee et al., 2016). Magee et al. investigated whether distinct trajectories of absenteeism exists for employees to understand better the nature of employee absenteeism.

Health researchers are concerned about unhealthy working conditions and physical and mental workload. The relationship between absenteeism and job satisfaction depends on guilt proneness (Schaumberg & Flynn, 2017). Low guilt prone employees fulfill their own desires rather than the desires of others and thereby exhibits traits that moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and absenteeism (Schaumberg & Flynn, 2017). Lee et al. (2015) argued that employees' attitude and behaviors including effective communication, job satisfaction, reduced absenteeism, and employee retention

can help the organization achieve its business goals. The extent to which job satisfaction predicts absenteeism depends on fulfilling normative expectations of others, which motivate individuals' behavior (Schaumberg & Flynn, 2017). Health researchers stress the importance of workplace atmosphere, employee working conditions, job satisfaction, and employee motivation (Lechmann & Schnabel, 2014). According to Lechmann and Schnabel (2014), employees' state of health is a prime determinant of employee absenteeism.

Absenteeism is a complex phenomenon involving contributing factors such as the workplace, societal, and personal factors and can be classified as either voluntary or involuntary (Shantz & Alfes, 2015). Employees can be absent because of the inability to attend work because of involuntary conditions that exist in the employees' life or the unwillingness of an employee to attend work, which is voluntary in nature (Shantz & Alfes, 2015). Birioukov (2016) proposed the use of voluntary and involuntary absenteeism as a framework to study employee non-attendance at work. When an employee perceives the workplace as a hostile environment, the employee might voluntarily choose to avoid the workplace (Birioukov, 2016). Employee engagement is an antecedent of voluntary employee work attendance since employee engagement is central to a motivational workplace process (Shantz & Alfes, 2015). Engaged employees exert persistent energy when facing difficulties and experience a sense of enthusiasm toward their work (Shantz & Alfes, 2015).

Not all employees with chronic diseases have limitations that hinder their activities in the workplace. In January 2015, approximately 3.5 million employees were

absent from the workplace because of illnesses, injuries, and medical issues (BLS, 2016).

Absences due to anxiety, stress, burnout, and chronic diseases result in a burden on

society in the form of functional limitations in the workplace (Vignoli, Muschalla, &

Mariani, 2017; Vuong, Wei, & Beverly, 2015). The costs associated with chronic

diseases account for more than 75% of overall healthcare costs in the United States, with

the total healthcare expenditure reaching approximately 2.6 trillion dollars in 2010

(Vuong et al., 2015). Illnesses that result in long-term absences incur an impact on the

organization, resulting in over 40% of working being time lost (Kocakülâh et al., 2016).

In addition to rising healthcare costs, loss of productivity due to employee absenteeism is

concerning for employers. Alternatively, employees are concerned with the loss of

income, which may occur in various ways for employees, such as early retirement and

unpaid days off due to illnesses (Vuong et al., 2015).

The impact of reduced performance on productivity varies among different

occupations. Reduced work performance could be a consequence of absenteeism or

presenteeism (Strömberg et al., 2017). Furthermore, Strömberg et al. noted that

employers have no general reference to monetize the impact of low employee

performance on their organization's productivity. Strömberg et al. suggested the use of

wage multipliers to estimate the costs of health and workplace related productivity loss

from an employer's perspective. Krol and Brouwer (2014) explained that in earlier

research, managers measured productivity loss by counting the number of days an

employee was absent and the decrease in performance resulting from health related

issues. The reduction in performance multiplied by the number of hours and translated

into productivity costs using the minimum wage rate (Krol & Brouwer, 2014). In contrast, Strömberg et al. posited that employers underestimate productivity losses when using the minimum wage because of discrepancies between marginal productivity and wage. By using wage to value the cost of productivity resulting from absenteeism, organizations may undervalue the cost resulting from teamwork and the difficulty of finding substitute workers for short-term absences (Strömberg et al., 2017).

The complexity of employment situations and the growth of technology are reasons employers are experiencing an increase in the cost of absenteeism. Productivity loss as a result of work environment related problems has a more significant impact on productivity parallel to presenteeism problems (Lohela-Karlsson, Hagberg, & Bergström, 2015). Lohela-Karlsson et al. further noted that wage multipliers that take into account the totality of costs relating to productivity loss might be of value. To establish multipliers, Strömberg et al. (2017) examined the effects of job characteristics in relation to health and workplace related problems as the extent of teamwork, ease of substituting workers, and sensitivity of output. The effects of absenteeism can affect an organization's productivity, efficiency, and profitability (Kocakülâh, Bryan, & Lynch, 2018). Collings (2014) postulated that the globalization of the workforce results in the expansion of the influence managers has on managing the workforce and organizational challenges such as employee absenteeism.

Employers can reduce employee absenteeism and lost productivity by understanding the causes of absenteeism within their organization. Illness related absenteeism costs employers and policymakers $153 billion annually (Rybczynski,

2017). Rybczynski (2017) explored the relationship between complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) and absenteeism by investigating whether employees exhibit an improvement in health or miss fewer workdays after visiting a CAM practitioner. Mongiovi, Shi, and Greenlee (2016) estimated that more than half the adult population in the United States has one or more chronic conditions. Several researchers suggested that integrating a CAM approach might be advantageous for managing employee treatment, lifestyle changes, and physical and psychological consequences resulting from chronic illness (Mongiovi et al., 2016; Rybczynski, 2017). By the year 2020, approximately 157 million people in America may be living with a chronic illness, which is projected to account for over 80% of total health expenditure to include job productivity loss and medical costs (Mongiovi et al., 2016). Researchers suggest CAM is more effective in preventative care, managing chronic conditions, and treating non-acute illness (Rybczynski, 2017). Both Mongiovi et al. and Rybczynski postulated that CAM healthcare approaches are effective in reducing absenteeism in employees suffering from chronic conditions.

Posadzki et al. (2015) achieved positive results when evaluating the effectiveness of CAM in the prevention of migraine headaches. Migraines affect over 324 million people worldwide and contribute to reduced quality of life, pain, and absenteeism (Posadzki et al., 2015). Incorporating CAM into management models can potentially introduce an innovative and practical approach to manage and improve the quality of pain management (Goldstein, Ibrahim, Frankel, & Mao, 2015). The success of CAM programs relies on the motives and interests of the employees to utilize them. Goldstein et al.

(2015) noted that chronic pain is an expensive medical problem in the United States, with costs resulting in lost productivity amounting to $635 billion annually. High annual costs for diabetes, heart diseases, and cancer are among some of the chronic health conditions employees encounter, which result in lost productivity for employers (Goldstein et al., 2015). CAM is widely used in the European Union (EU) with the growth and prevalence of 86% dependency on the population (Jong, Lundqvist, & Jong, 2015). In Europe, the most common CAM practice is herbal medicine (Jong et al., 2015), while the most common CAM practice in the United States is nonvitamins and nonmineral natural products (Goldstein et al., 2015).

Some employees attend work despite poor health, while others go to work with minor health issues. Sickness presence (presenteeism) is as prevalent in the workplace as sickness absence (absenteeism; Gerich, 2015). Gustafsson and Marklund (2014) suggested that sickness presence and sickness absence are predictors of physical complaints, low workability, poor future health, and low mental wellbeing. Krane et al. (2014) discovered that sickness presence and sickness absence are interrelated, and both are related to various aspects of employees' work situation, job insecurity, high workload, and time pressure.

Employers who want to improve employee productivity should also focus on reducing employee presenteeism. Presenteeism is attending work even though one has an injury or illness that limits some aspect of their work performance (Ammendolia et al., 2016). Ammendolia et al. also noted that presenteeism results in loss of work productivity in employees who are present in the workplace. Presenteeism is a hidden

cost to employers because workers are physically present at work but are unable to perform at their best because of a health issue (Vänni, Neupane, & Nygård, 2017). According to Ammendolia et al., in the U.S. presenteeism costs employers over $180 billion annually. Employers are looking for strategies such as workplace health promotion and wellness programs to target presenteeism (Ammendolia et al., 2016). People engage in work activities while sick for different reasons. Vänni, Neupane, and Nygård observed that people engage in presenteeism for reasons such as a sense of obligation to their employees or customers, excessive job demands, fear of losing their jobs, and because they enjoy their work too much to take time off. Employees who work while sick can threaten the health of coworkers.

Workplace Wellness Programs

As employers become more aware of the productivity losses resulting from absenteeism and the significant economic impact, employers can implement workplace health promotion programs to help combat employee absenteeism. Employers use workplace health and promotion programs to focus on improving the health and wellbeing of employees (Baxter et al., 2015). Government stakeholders and business managers recognize workplace health and promotion programs as beneficial for economic advantage (Baxter et al., 2015). Wallace and Joss (2016) defined health literacy as the cognitive and social skills to determine an individual's level of motivation and ability to understand, gain access to, and use the information to promote and maintain good health. Low health literacy among employees might result in inadequate levels of knowledge and higher occurrences of chronic diseases (Wallace & Joss, 2016). A healthy

workforce can provide social and economic benefits to communities and businesses in the form of a reduction in absenteeism, increase in employee productivity, healthcare costs reductions, and a decrease in turnover rates (Baxter et al., 2015). Workplace health and promotion programs vary in size and elements. Employers can use comprehensive programs to provide employees with health education, integrate health promotion into the organization's culture, screen employees and offer a follow-up, and provide links to employee services (Ammendolia et al., 2016).

Employers in the workplace can offer a setting that supports the promotion of health and affects the well-being of employees. Health promotion is the process by which employees can increase control over and improve their health (Röttger et al., 2017). Employers play a vital role in the responsibilities for the health of employees, and equally, share an interest in health promotion to maintain a healthy and motivated workforce. According to Röttger et al., (2017), the employee also shares the responsibility to improve their health and maintain a healthy lifestyle. An unhealthy lifestyle can contribute to absences due to sickness, ill health, and productivity loss (Guazzi et al., 2014). Consequently, workplace health and promotion programs might improve an employee's lifestyle; improve health, work productivity, and workability (Guazzi et al., 2014). Fujishiro and Heaney (2017) postulated that employers who provide their employees with opportunities to utilize their skills might notice an improvement in health and enhancement of employees' likelihood to engage in healthy behaviors. Notwithstanding the possibility that high levels of skills correlate with physical health and in some cases, the effects are interceded by behavior.

Employers can use health education to change the behaviors of employees, thus improving employee health and productivity. Employers implement wellness programs to save on healthcare costs, enhance employee productivity, and improve organizational culture (Otenyo & Smith, 2017). Employee wellness programs can have a positive impact on employee productivity and performance. Additionally, employees might exhibit lower levels of stress, decreased absenteeism, and fewer sick days (Otenyo & Smith, 2017). Furthermore, employees might demonstrate satisfaction, morale, and lower employee turnover when participating in wellness programs (Astrella, 2017). Workplace wellness programs can reduce high employee healthcare costs, increase productivity, and deliver a positive return on investments (Astrella, 2017). According to Astrella (2017), employers can create a healthy workforce by focusing on the health and wellness of employees through employee wellness programs.

Employers share the responsibility for the health of the workforce with employees. According to Röttger et al. (2017), the workplace has an impact on the wellbeing of employees and is, therefore, an ideal setting to support the promotion of employee health. Health promotion is the process whereby employees increase control over and improve their health (Röttger et al., 2017). Although there is ample research on promoting the health of employees and the effectiveness of workplace health programs, research on the social cognitions that determine employee participation in health programs is still scarce. Based on several studies, employees who have high motivation to engage in specific behaviors are more likely to perform the behavior (Wang & Wang,

2015). One prominent social cognitive model to predict an employee's decision to remain absent from work is the TPB.

Wellness programs are not without issues, as employers often face challenges when determining the amount and type of incentives to reward for participation in wellness programs. Batorsky et al. (2016) conducted a study to understand the relationship between incentives and participating in wellness programs. Batorsky et al. explored the participation rates in wellness programs when employers use incentives to promote participation. Some employers offer incentives in the form of financial rewards such as discounts on a gym membership (Batorsky et al., 2016). Wellness programs are not without issues, as employers often face challenges when determining the amount and type of incentives to reward for participation in wellness programs. Batorsky et al. noted that some researchers believe that the higher the incentive, the more employees will participate, while other researchers argue that rewards only increase participation to a degree and that higher rewards replace the employee's motivation to participate in healthy activities (Cerasoli, Nicklin, & Ford, 2014).

A healthy workforce is necessary for a healthy economy. However, approximately 3% of employees are absent in any given week resulting in 1.5% of hours lost to absenteeism (Kirkham et al., 2015). Likewise, employees who work despite feeling unwell are less productive than healthier workers (Kirkham et al., 2015). Health and lifestyle risks such as obesity and smoking are modifiable and affect employee productivity (Kirkham et al., 2015), unlike age and sex, which are not amendable. As a result, many employers invest in programs to decrease health and lifestyle risks to

improve productivity. Employee wellbeing strategy can improve employee wellbeing and productivity (Hamar, Coberley, Pope, & Rula, 2015). Employers who support wellbeing programs to improve health and reduce lifestyle risks experience improvements in health, job performance, and productivity (Hamar et al., 2015). Chen et al. (2015) conducted a study to examine the relationship between workplace health support and worker productivity. Higher perceived workplace health support is individually linked with higher work productivity, and employers see the productivity benefits from employee wellness programs through workplace health support (Chen et al., 2015). Employers use health risk assessments to provide insights into occupational risks. Additionally, health risk assessments can help raise awareness of personal health risk factors.

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement affects the longevity of an organization. Disengaged employees have lower productivity levels, which impact the financial performance of many organizations in the United States (Purcell, 2014). Employee engagement is a factor in the financial performance of an organization. In contrast, employee effort and engagement help determine organizational productivity (Musgrove, Ellinger, & Ellinger, 2014). Additionally, authentic leaders can help influence employee engagement (Osborne & Hammoud, 2017). Leaders must work hard to engage their employees, as the bond between leaders and employees is critical for engaging employees, which in turn might increase organizational profitability. The adverse effects of productivity loss include negative interpersonal behaviors, which result in lower employee engagement. Purcell (2014) believed that leaders who employ strategic employee engagement behaviors could

experience high employee productivity. Osborne and Hammoud (2017) suggested that

organizations should invest in leaders that can communicate, support the company's

vision, and safeguard employees' support in accomplishing the goals of the organization.

Employee engagement is crucial to any organization. Dedicated employees who

are doing meaningful work can help employers realize how invaluable they are to the

organization. Employee engagement is a predictor of high organizational performance

(Elbaz & Haddoud, 2017). Positive organizational performance is a good indicator of a

two-way relationship between the employee and employer (Elbaz & Haddoud, 2017).

Engaged employees are involved in their work and show enthusiasm for the success of

the organization (Elbaz & Haddoud, 2017). Ruck, Welch, and Menara (2017) noted that

employee engagement is important for organizational effectiveness and achieving

innovation and competitiveness. Employee communication behavior is essential for

organizational effectiveness, and the physical employee engagement manifest in the form

of employee behavior, such as the exercise of voice (Ruck et al., 2017). Employee voice

is the intentional expression of work ideas and opinions and consequently manifests in

different ways, including (a) conversing with colleagues over drinks, (b) raising critical

work issues with the first-line supervisor, and (c) expressing opinions through employee

surveys (Ruck et al., 2017).

The focus of employee engagement involves job and organizational engagement.

Chen, Yen, and Tsai (2014) indicated that a positive relationship exists between job

engagement and job performance. Chen et al. (2014) also found that employees who

engage in higher job levels and proactive work behaviors exhibit a more significant

personal innovation. In addition, researchers have suggested that job engagement is a state of wellbeing (Chen et al., 2014). Poor employee work engagement resulting in a decrease in employee wellbeing and productivity is detrimental to an organization (Shuck & Reio, 2014). Maintaining employee engagement is important and can be challenging. According to Jin and McDonald (2017), the challenge of maintaining employee engagement is due to shrinking budgets, pay freezes, and furloughs. Li and Liao (2014) noted that organizations with high levels of engagement outperform organizations with low engagement, indicating there is a strong correlation between employee engagement and employee performance.

Employee engagement involves both the employee and the employer. Employees might feel valued if they are contributing to the success of the organization and if they feel their employer value them and vice-versa. Employees consider jobs that emanate feelings of accomplishment, promote helpfulness, and contribute to people's lives (Geldenhuys, Laba, & Venter, 2014). Bedarkar and Pandita (2014) explored the concepts of employee engagement and three key drivers of employee engagement: (a) communication, (b) leadership, (c) and work-life balance. According to Bedarkar and Pandita, managers across the globe recognize employee engagement as a vital element in determining the extent of organizational innovation, effectiveness, and competitiveness. Additionally, Bedarkar and Pandita noted that communication plays an integral role in ensuring employee engagement because employees require clear communication from leaders as it relates to their role and the leadership's vision. There is evidence of an association between positive leader behaviors, employee attitude, and employee

engagement (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014). Mas-Machuca, Berbegal-Mirabent, and Alegre (2016) considered the effect of work-life balance on job satisfaction and found that a direct relationship exists when taking into consideration organizational pride as a possible mediation.

Transition

Section 1 included the problem statement, purpose statement, and the nature of the study to support the selection of a qualitative methodology and a case study design for this study. In Section 1, I also presented the interview questions; operational definitions; and assumptions, limitations, and delimitations for the study. The last two components of Section 1 are the significance of the study and a review of the professional academic literature. In the literature review, I presented a comprehensive analysis of research relevant to employee absenteeism, behavioral theories researchers use to understand employee absenteeism, and other themes researchers use to gain an exhaustive understanding of the research topic.

In Section 2, I provide a restatement of the purpose of the study, an explanation of the role of the researcher, a description of the participants, the population and sampling methods, and ethical concerns related to this study. Additionally, I provide a justification of the research method and design and discussed my plans for data collection, organization, and analysis. I conclude Section 2 with a description of reliability and validity concerns as they pertain to this study. Section 3 includes the following: (a) the introduction, (b) a presentation of the findings, (c) the application to professional

practice, (d) implications for social change, (e) recommendations for action, (f)

recommendations for further study, (g) reflections, and (h) conclusion.

Section 2: The Project

The focus of this study was to explore the strategies that IT managers in the manufacturing industry use to reduce employee absenteeism. The targeted population for the study included IT managers at a manufacturing company in southern Maryland. This section includes the (a) purpose statement, (b) role of the researcher, (c) participants, (d) research method and design, (e) population and sampling, (f) ethical research, (g) data collection instruments, (h) data collection techniques, (i) data organization techniques, (j) data analysis, and (k) reliability and validity.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies IT managers in the manufacturing industry use to reduce employee absenteeism. The study population consisted of five IT managers of a manufacturing company in the manufacturing industry in southern Maryland with successful experience in using strategies to reduce employee absenteeism. The implications for positive social change included the potential for IT managers in the manufacturing industry to identify and implement strategies to reduce employee absenteeism, thereby increasing organizational profitability, improving employee productivity, and supporting the development of financially stronger companies that can positively contribute to communities' growth and development.

Role of the Researcher

During the data collection process, the researcher serves as an accurate measuring instrument to develop a plan of inquiry as the study progresses (M. N. Saunders et al.,

2015). In a qualitative study, the researcher is the data collection instrument (Fusch &

Ness, 2015) to facilitate a real-life perspective by espousing appropriate responses such

as empathy to induce the disclosure of sensitive and in-depth data (Darawsheh, 2014). In

my role as the researcher, I served as the primary data collection instrument. I conducted

face-to-face semistructured interviews and reviewed organizational documents. I had the

responsibility to search, select, and solicit companies when recruiting participants. My

responsibility also included orienting my thinking to observe events and settings and to

record notes of the participants' experiences in their own words. I was also responsible

for following ethical standards, ensuring confidentiality of participants, and storing data

for 5 years.

I have over 17 years of experience as a human resource professional dealing with

employee productivity losses from employee health related absenteeism, disabilities, and

other health related issues. Although I possess experience managing employee

absenteeism, I had no prior relationship with anyone from the study site organization. My

education and experience dealing with employee absenteeism was one of the factors that

influenced my decision to research employee absenteeism in a different industry.

According to B. Johnson (2014), the researcher has an obligation to ensure the

confidentiality of everyone participating in the study. I obtained approval from Walden

University's institutional review board (IRB) before conducting this study. I bracketed

my ideas and opinions when evaluating the research data by acting in accordance with the

ethical principles outlined in The Belmont Report (1979). Respect for persons,

beneficence, and justice are relevant guiding principles for conducting research (Sloan &

Quan-Haase, 2017). Informed consent is one way to ensure respect for participants (Sloan & Quan-Haase, 2017). I obtained informed consent from the participants. Beneficence involves weighing the risk of participants against the benefits of the research study (Sulmasy, 2017). I minimized the risk to participants by ensuring their confidentiality. Fairness in the selection of participants is a tenet of justice, and the selection of the research participants should not cause undue hardship on a particular group while another group reaps the benefits (Sloan & Quan-Haase, 2017). I ensured justice for the participants by ensuring the selection of the participants did not cause a specific group to bear the cost of the research study while another group benefited from the research. I successfully completed the training course, Protecting Human Research Participants, from the National Institutes of Health's Office of Extramural Research (Certificate #2829044).

According to Ritchie, Lewis, Lewis, Nicholls, and Ormston (2014), the role of a researcher in a qualitative research study is to mitigate potential damaging effects of predeterminations that may flaw the research process. The qualitative researcher controls any biases by becoming cognizant of subjective influences during the study (Ritchie et al., 2014). Cronin (2014) posited that researchers could increase research objectivity by understanding and acknowledging personal biases. My role as the researcher was to gain an understanding of how my beliefs, experiences, and biases may influence the outcome of the study. I acknowledged and bracketed my prior experience and knowledge relating to employee absenteeism. Hancock and Algozzine (2016) specified that if researchers do not recognize and address their predispositions and inherent biases, they risk prejudicing

their interpretations of the findings. Hancock and Algozzine recommended that researchers recognize and monitor their responsiveness and receptivity to findings that repudiate preconceived ideas. In response to this recommendation, I resolved to remain unprejudiced and to assess my findings repeatedly to recognize biases that could influence my interpretation of the findings.

My data collection process included interviewing five participants from a manufacturing company in southern Maryland, following a prescribed interview protocol using semistructured interview questions. McIntosh and Morse (2015) indicated that it is advantageous to follow a prearranged interview protocol when the phenomenon lacks statistical data. Researchers using a defined interview protocol encourage participants to elaborate on their real-life experiences, thereby providing the opportunity for the researcher to gather in-depth and extensive information (McIntosh & Morse, 2015).

Participants

The participants included five IT managers with successful experience in using strategies to reduce employee absenteeism at a manufacturing company in southern Maryland. I selected participants with expertise in the topic of study. Researchers selecting a smaller number of participants can reach data saturation and achieve accurate and meaningful results. According to Adesoro et al. (2016), researchers must select participants with knowledge of the topic of study to ensure the integrity of the study. For my study, I selected managers of a manufacturing company who identified and deployed successful employee absenteeism strategies so that I could gather information about employee absenteeism strategies and to ensure the integrity of the study.

The process of locating and recruiting participants in a study is essential to control bias and to obtain a purposeful sample (Arcury & Quandt, 1999). Bell (2014) noted that researchers must obtain permission from the organization to which the participants belong. Equally important is informing the participants prior to the research regarding why the study is taking place and who will see the final report (Bell, 2014). Because the participants' selection is purposeful, the selected participants should provide data to answer the research question and enhance the understanding of the phenomenon under study (Sargeant, 2012).

I obtained approval by requesting permission for the participants' involvement in the study through the company's HR department (see Appendix A). After receiving approval from the HR department, I e-mailed the participants. Karjalainen, Niemistö, and Hearn (2015) added that a strategy to gain access to participants is to send a letter or e-mail detailing the purpose of the study, selection criteria, and the interview process. Adesoro et al. (2016) noted that gaining access to potential participants requires the researcher to contact the organization and provide the organization with a description of the study, request availability, and ensure the privacy and security of the data gathered during the interview. In my e-mail, I (a) described the purpose of the study, (b) requested confirmation of eligibility to be a participant, (c) described the interview procedure, (d) requested time commitment of participants' availability, and (e) detailed my commitment to ensure privacy and security of data gathered during the interview process.

Developing a relationship with the participants for the study is essential (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Trust and empathy are important when establishing a relationship

with the participants (Holloway & Galvin, 2016). For the relationship to be successful, I developed trust and empathy with the participants. By sharing my professional background and enthusiasm about my research phenomenon with the participants, I established a trusting relationship and helped participants feel more comfortable during the research process. The participants might feel more valued if they receive an introduction from the researcher during the process of the interview (Elo et al., 2014). According to Patton (2015), the researcher can develop a healthy relationship with participants when the researcher shows interests in the participants' experiences. I showed interest in the participants by building a relationship, maintaining contact, and providing assurance that I would protect their privacy, rights, and well-being. Holloway and Galvin (2016) posited that researchers should adopt a person-centered and holistic approach to help develop an understanding of the participants' experiences, which is essential for researchers who focus on communication and interaction. Establishing a relationship with the participants required that I maintain communication with the participants to discuss relevant information pertaining to the study.

According to Marshall and Rossman (2016), the researcher must ensure the participants' characteristics align with the overarching research question. The primary criteria for participating in the study were that the participants must be IT managers with successful experience in using strategies to reduce employee absenteeism at a manufacturing company in southern Maryland. Ibrahim and Sidani (2014) suggested that researchers identify suitable participants who could contribute to the research. Corbin, Strauss, and Strauss (2014) noted that the research question helps to establish the research

method and boundaries of the phenomenon under study. I outlined in the invitation to participate in the study (see Appendix B) the characteristics of the participants to partake in the study.

Research Method and Design

Selection of the most appropriate research method and design is a critical component of the doctoral research process (Flick, 2014). I used the research question to guide my decision about the research method and design. After carefully reviewing the distinction between qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods approaches to research, I selected the qualitative method. I selected the case study design as most appropriate to explore individuals' behaviors, experiences, views, and actions regarding IT employee absenteeism in the manufacturing industry.

Research Method

I selected the qualitative method because the objective of the study was to explore and not measure the phenomenon. Qualitative researchers explore human behavior using interviews, case studies, and surveys (Salkind, 2017). The central features that guide qualitative research are different from those that guide quantitative research. Flick (2014) listed the essential features of qualitative research as (a) appropriateness of methods and theories, (b) perspectives of the participants, (c) reflexivity of the researcher, and (d) variety of approaches and methods. The appropriateness of the methods and theories allows the researcher to distinguish his or her methodological standards from other disciplines by allowing the method to become the point of reference for suitability of ideas for exploring a phenomenon (Flick, 2014). The goal of the study then becomes

discovery and development of new theories. Marshall and Rossman (2016) and Flick (2014) postulated that the perspectives of the participants and their diversity helps the qualitative researcher to explore the different perspectives of the participants and study their knowledge and practices.

Researcher reflexivity is essential in qualitative research (Noble & Smith, 2015). Unlike quantitative research, the communication between the participants and the researcher becomes an explicit part of the study and is not an intervening variable (Flick, 2014). Qualitative research is not based on a unified methodological concept. Marshall and Rossman (2016) argued that in qualitative research, the researcher assumes that (a) knowledge is not objective but rather intersubjective, (b) the researcher learns from the participants but remains neutral, and (c) society is predictable.

The quantitative and qualitative research methods belong to distinct epistemological paradigms (Brannen, 2017). The quantitative method was not appropriate for this study because the intent was not to test a hypothesis or the relationship between independent and dependent variables. A quantitative researcher isolates and defines categories of variables (Brannen, 2017). Qualitative researchers look for patterns of the interrelationship between previously unspecified concepts, and quantitative researchers look at a specified set of variables through a narrow lens (Brannen, 2017; Salkind, 2017). Brannen (2017) opined that quantitative research is appropriate when the questions to respondents require ambiguous answers. In mixed-methods research, the researcher uses both qualitative and quantitative methods to answer the research questions (Morse, 2016). A mixed-methods researcher collects and analyzes qualitative and quantitative data to get

a comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon (Morse, 2016). Because of the inclusion of the quantitative method, the mixed-methods approach was not appropriate for this study.

Research Design

Dasgupta (2015) described the research design as a plan that guides the researcher in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data. Researchers can use the research design to determine generalizability to different situations or populations (Dasgupta, 2015). There are several research designs associated with qualitative research, including (a) case study, (b) ethnography, (c) phenomenology, and (d) narrative (Dasgupta, 2015). I chose to use the case study design. Hancock and Algozzine (2016) observed that a case study design is appropriate when the researcher hopes to gain an in-depth understanding of situations and the participants' meaning of the situations. A case study design involves an intensive study of the participants through an exploratory form of inquiry to provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon (Thomas, 2015). Thomas (2015) stated that a case study design could have single or multiple locations.

An ethnographic researcher looks beyond what the participants say to understand the participants' culture by using descriptions and interpretations of a cultural group (Padgett, 2016). The ethnographic design is labor intensive and involves lengthy direct contact with the participants as the researcher looks for holistic explanations of the phenomenon under study (Padgett, 2016). Padgett (2016) added that an ethnographic researcher is required to work with study participants in their natural settings. I did not select an ethnographic design because I did not want to immerse myself in a specific

culture to observe and record behaviors. Researchers using the phenomenological research develop an understanding of complex issues not immediately implicit in surface responses (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, & McKibbon, 2015). Additionally, the phenomenological design is one in which the goal of the researcher is to develop new understandings of the participants' lived experiences (Charmaz, 2014; Padgett, 2016). The phenomenological research design was not appropriate for this study because my intent was not to collect information and understand how individuals perceived their lived experiences.

A researcher using the narrative research design acknowledges the power of storytelling (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). According to Roller and Lavrakas (2015), the narrative researcher allows the participant to be the guide and welcomes the stories of the participants. Eriksson and Kovalainen (2015) agreed that the narrative research design is a means by which the researcher organizes, explains, and understands the lives and social relations of the participants. The narrative design was not suitable for my study because the intent of the study was not to investigate the stories of the participants. Furthermore, the narrative design does not account for the complexities and contradiction of the interviewees during interviews (Ritchie et al., 2014).

Data saturation has an effect on content validity and the quality of the research (Fusch & Ness, 2015). A researcher reaches data saturation when the researcher collects enough information with no new themes emerging (Horter et al., 2014). Researchers can achieve data saturation by using methodological triangulation by comparing findings from different data sources such as interview responses and document reviews (Fusch &

Ness, 2015). Yu, Abdullah, and Saat (2014) suggested that to reach data saturation, the researcher must use at least two sources of data, such as reviewing organizational documents and conducting interviews. To achieve data saturation during this single case study, I interviewed IT managers of a manufacturing company one at a time, took extensive notes, reviewed organizational documents, asked follow-up questions, and repeated the process until I achieved data saturation. I achieved data saturation after interviewing five study participants.

Population and Sampling

The sample for this study included five IT managers in southern Maryland with successful experience in using strategies to reduce employee absenteeism, increase organizational productivity and employee productivity. I used purposeful sampling to recruit participants. Gentles, Charles, Nicholas, Ploeg, and McKibbon (2016) indicated that purposeful sampling supports the generation of in-depth and interpretive findings because it affords the researcher the flexibility to select participants according to their knowledge and experience with the study phenomenon. According to Malterud et al. (2016), it is difficult to determine the exact sample size to conduct a qualitative study. Boddy (2016) suggested a small sample size of five or fewer participants could provide more in-depth data when the participants are from a homogeneous population. According to Boddy (2016), researchers should ensure the sample represents the population. I selected a small sample size of five participants to collect more intense and in-depth data to answer the research question.

Padgett (2016) and Boddy (2016) suggested that a small sample size of five or fewer participants might provide more in-depth and full data when the participants are from a homogeneous population. Boddy (2016) noted that researchers should ensure the sample is a good representation of the population. The rationale for selecting the participants must be clear and fulfill a specific purpose that relates to the research question (Cleary, Horsfall, & Hayter, 2014). Malterud et al. (2016) noted that researchers could use the aim of the study to define and guide the adequate sample size to achieve data saturation. Likewise, Cleary et al. (2014) and Malterud et al. highlighted the importance of congruity in the selection of participants and noted that selection of participants is conceptually driven by established theories and a smaller sample size of participants studied intensively can produce acceptable data saturation.

Purposeful sampling is a method researchers use to select information-rich participants to yield insights and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon (Benoot, Hannes, & Bilsen, 2016). In qualitative research, purposeful sampling is a solution for a pragmatic limitation of time, resources, and access to information (Benoot et al., 2016). Benoot et al. (2016) emphasized that the primary interest of the researcher when using a purposive sampling is not to seek a single correct answer but rather to examine the complexity of the different conceptualization of the participants. Sim, Hattingh, Sherriff, and Tee (2014) opined that a purposeful sampling method is most appropriate for a qualitative study because it allows the researcher to select an appropriate sample size to facilitate comprehensive data collection, which improves the credibility and reliability of the research findings. I used purposeful sampling for the proposed research study and

selected managers of a manufacturing company with successful experience in using

strategies to reduce employee absenteeism. Use of purposeful sampling allowed me to

seek information-rich participants to serve the intent of the research best and increase

credibility and reliability of the research findings.

One of the ultimate goals of data gathering and analysis is to achieve data

saturation (Saldana, 2015). Saldana (2015) defined data saturation as the point during

data gathering when no new information emerges during coding; the researcher finds no

new conditions, interactions, actions, or consequences within the data. Likewise, Fusch

and Ness (2015) opined that in a qualitative study, a researcher achieves data saturation

when the researcher is unable to discover new themes and the amount of data obtained by

the researcher is sufficient to allow other researchers to replicate the study. According to

Fusch and Ness (2015), the researcher must decide the number of interviews it will take

to reach data saturation. Fusch and Ness noted that failure to reach data saturation could

have an adverse effect on the study and affect the validity of the research. By using

several sources of data, such as interviews, organizational documents, and journal notes, I

was able to fortify the information leading to accurate findings and identify strategies

used to reduce employee absenteeism in a manufacturing company in southern Maryland.

I determined I had reached data saturation when I had completed the collection and

analysis of data from interviews, organizational documents, and journal notes and

determined that no new themes or codes emerged.

Researchers can also use member checking or transcript review to explore the

credibility of results to ensure data saturation (Saldana, 2015). The researcher returns the

data or results to the participants to check for accuracy and reverberation with their experiences (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). Researchers can use follow-up interviews or have the participants validate the findings as part of the member checking process to reach data saturation, which can enhance academic rigor. The transcript review is not as rigorous as member checking; however, a researcher can use transcript review to ensure accuracy when recording participants' responses during interviews (Richards, 2014). Richards (2014) noted that transcript reviews are an essential part of the data analysis process. Researchers use transcripts reviews to ensure the trustworthiness of results. While an important part of analyzing data, transcript reviews are not as rigorous as member checking. Member checking is a technique researcher use to ensure credibility of results by returning the data or results to the participants to check for accuracy (Birt et al., 2016). Therefore, I used member checking to augment the trustworthiness of the study by emailing the participants my interpretation of their responses to interview questions to confirm that I truthfully represented their responses in developing my findings.

Researchers should ensure they develop robust inclusion and exclusion criterion that aligns with the research question (van Hoeven, Janssen, Roes, & Koffijberg, 2015). I focused exclusively on interviewing current managers of the organization and included managers with successful experience implementing strategies to reduce employee absenteeism. Ensuring the participants feel comfortable in their surroundings was critical during the interview process. Johnson and Easterling (2015) stated that the researcher should ensure the interview setting is secure to protect the privacy of the participants and

no one else is privy to the participants' responses. The interview setting can affect the quality of responses from the participants. Gagnon, Jacob, and McCabe (2015) asserted that the interview location plays a vital role in shaping the perceptions of the participants and their willingness to participate in the study. I ensured that participants felt comfortable with the surroundings of the interview setting and that the interview location was secure to protect the privacy of the participants.

Ethical Research

Researchers must use specific procedures to protect the study participants (Flick, 2014). I conducted this study only after receiving approval from Walden University's IRB. The Walden University IRB approval number for this study is 07-18-18-0542175. Ethics in research is essential in guaranteeing ethical practices during data collection and analysis (Taylor & Thomas-Gregory, 2015). A researcher can prevent or reduce harm to the participants by applying appropriate ethical principles. Human subject research requires an awareness of ethical issues that may derive from such interactions (Oquendo, Stanley, Ellis, & Mann, 2014). Therefore, it was imperative to protect the participants of a research study.

Oliver and Barr (2014) identified three main problems that could affect a qualitative study: (a) the design, (b) the researcher-participant relationship, and (c) the researchers' subjective interpretations of the data. To avoid deception or disclosing damaging information, Oquendo et al. (2014) suggested researchers consider and anticipate potential ethical issues that may arise during the research process such as: (a) confidentiality; (b) informed consent; (c) data generation and analysis; (d) reporting

outcomes; and (e) researcher-participant relationship. As a result of Oquendo et al.'s

suggestion, I considered the participants' right to be informed about the study, including

the right to decide whether to participate in the research and the right to withdraw from

the study at any time without any negative consequences.

One of the ways to ensure ethical treatment of the participants is by securing

informed consent (Oquendo et al., 2014). Consequently, I ensured ethical research by

obtaining informed consent and outlining the study procedures and participants' rights.

The informed consent form included a description of the purpose of the study and the

requirements of the participants. The informed consent form should include the

participants' right to decide whether to participate in the study and the right to withdraw

at any time, which is a primary concern in ethical research (Nguyen, 2015). Nguyen

(2015) also added that researchers must include the purpose of the study. Giles et al.

(2015) noted that there is an ethical concern such as coercion when researchers offer

financial incentives to participants. According to Fiske and Hauser (2014), the researcher

has the responsibility to inform the participants if there will be incentives for

participating in the research study. To mitigate any ethical concerns, I informed the

participants that they would not receive compensation for participating in the study.

My process for ensuring ethical practices began with the study invitation, which I

emailed to the prospective participants after I received permission from Walden

University's IRB to conduct research with the organization (see Appendix B). Once the

participants agree to the study, I emailed the participant a consent form and the interview

protocol (see Appendix C). I asked the participants to sign and return the informed

consent form to me via email. Marshall and Rossman (2016) noted that securing the participants' consent to take part in the interview to include, reviewing the risks and the voluntary nature of the participants' participation is key to ensuring a quality research process. After I received consent forms from participants, I scheduled the semistructured interviews and addressed any questions and concerns from the participants. I plan to retain all information on an external flash drive in a locked safe for a period of 5 years and will destroy the flash drive and any notes thereafter.

Marshall and Rossman (2016) and Renert, Russell-Mayhew, and Arthur (2013) pointed out that researchers should assign pseudonyms rather than participants' name to the interview responses and when reporting the study results and conclusions. To ensure the protection of the participants' confidentiality, I assigned a unique code to each participant in all study materials, such as P1 (Participant 1) through P5 (Participant 5). I notified the participants of the use of pseudonyms instead of their names to protect their identity. I also informed each participant that I plan to retain all information in a locked safe at my home, as the sole person with access, and that I plan to destroy all files 5 years following approval of my study by the Walden University Chief Academic Officer. Opalka-Bentler (2016) suggested that researchers store study data for five years following the research. Another way in which I ensured transparency in the research process was by full disclosing of the steps I took to conduct the research. I reiterated and reassured the participants of their rights to privacy and their rights to participate or withdraw from the study.

Data Collection Instruments

In qualitative studies, the researcher acts as the primary instrument in the collection of data (Alshenqeeti, 2014). As the primary data collection instrument, I conducted semistructured interviews to elicit an authentic view of the participants' perspectives for this study. A researcher can use a wide variety of data collection techniques for a qualitative study, such as interviews, observations, and examination of archival documents and administrative records (Wildemuth, 2016). Wildemuth (2016) identified three categories of interviews: (a) structured interviews, (b) semistructured interviews, and (c) unstructured interviews.

A structured interview is an interview where the researcher asks a set of predefined questions and the researcher asks the questions in the same order for all the participants (Wildemuth, 2016). The structured interview was not appropriate for this study because structured interviews will minimize the researcher and the participants' effect on the research results. According to Wildemuth (2016), semistructured interviews are one of the most advantageous data collection methods when the aim of the researcher is to study a wide range of information on behaviors. Semistructured interviews involve in-depth conversations with the participants to gather facts and opinions (Cridland, Jones, Caputi, & Magee, 2015). An unstructured interview is a form of interview in which the researcher elicits participants' social realities, and the interview questions are spontaneous (Wildemuth, 2016). I did not choose the unstructured interview because my intent was not to rely on the social interactions with the participants. The semistructured

interview was appropriate for this study because my aim was to ask open-ended questions and adjust the sequence of questions based on the participants' responses.

The interview protocol (see Appendix C) included the scripts I used for data collection and the interview questions. Qualitative researchers can strengthen the reliability of their interview protocol and increase the quality of data they obtain from the interviews by (a) ensuring the interview questions align with the research questions, (b) constructing inquiry based conversations, (c) receiving feedback on interview protocols, and (d) piloting the interview protocol (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). I ensured congruency by developing a well vetted interview protocol (see Appendix C).

Researchers employ specific strategies in each phase of the research process to enrich the credibility and trustworthiness of the study (Cope, 2014; Morse, 2015). Triangulation is the process researchers use to draw conclusions from multiple sources to achieve a precise, all-inclusive view of the phenomenon (Cope, 2014). I enhanced the reliability and validity of the study findings through triangulation by using organizational documents to compare against the participants' interview responses. According to El Haddad (2015), researchers can use secondary document collection as an excellent source to collect historic organizational data. I used secondary data collection sources, such as journal notes and historical organizational documents, to add value to the case study.

Marshall and Rossman (2016) noted that researchers use reflexive journaling to remember essential details and document decisions and assumptions. Researchers use member checking to enhance credibility in qualitative research (Cope, 2014). I used member checking and applied reflexivity to ensure the validity and reliability of the

study. At the completion of the semistructured interviews, I emailed my interpretation of the participants' responses to the participants and requested participants to verify that my interpretation of their responses was accurate. Through the process of member checking, study participants will have the opportunity to validate their responses (Elo et al., 2014).

Data Collection Technique

I collected data from one primary data source and two secondary data sources. The primary data source was semistructured interviews. The two secondary data sources included journaling notes and organizational documents. I conducted face-to-face semistructured interviews, as outlined in the interview protocol (see Appendix C). In semistructured interviews, the researcher allows some structure based on the interview guide and the researcher's interest (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). The researcher remains flexible when learning about the participants' perspectives regarding an experience. Researchers conducting semistructured interviews have a planned list of questions but allow room for dialogue and follow-up questions (Kendall & Halliday, 2014). At the end of the interview, I gave the participants the opportunity to provide additional relevant information. Ashton (2014) noted that allowing the participants to provide information they consider relevant might enable them to feel valued and confirm the importance of their experience. The use of journaling in research enables the researcher to document the participants' responses (Cope, 2014). I used a journal to log and review the participants' interview responses. Analyzing organizational documents can serve as supporting evidence for the researcher to gain a better understanding of the research phenomenon

(Corbin et al., 2014). I analyzed organizational documents to gain a better understanding of the inquiry.

Tran, Porcher, Falissard, and Ravaud (2016) noted that an advantage of semistructured interviews is the flexibility the researcher has in searching for clarification from the participants. Additionally, Tran et al. (2016) added that the open nature of the interview questions is an advantage of semistructured interview because it adds depth and validity, which enables the researcher to develop new themes. McIntosh and Morse (2015) posited that a disadvantage of semistructured interview is that participants may feel self-conscious and nervous during the interview. An advantage of using secondary data sources is that it is less time consuming when collecting organizational documents (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2015). Tran et al. (2016) asserted that a disadvantage of secondary data sources includes the misalignment of the research question and obtaining inaccurate data.

Male (2016) asserted that researchers could use nonconventional tools to record interviews, such as digital recorders, audio recorders, and LiveScribe pen. I used the Livescribe pen to record the interviews. During the data collection, data transfer, and data archiving process, I ensured all data were secured, and my laptop was password protected. I backed up all data on a thumb drive to ensure the protection and safeguarding of collected data. A well designed data collection, data transfer, and data storage process will significantly impact the protection of participants (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).

According to Dikko (2016), conducting a pilot study is an important element of research. However, the use of a pilot study may not ensure study success (Dikko, 2016).

Ivey (2014) explained that a pilot study is optional when the researchers use open-ended semistructured interview questions. Researchers conducting a pilot study might require additional time to complete the research study (Ivey, 2014). I did not conduct a pilot study because I used semistructured interviews. I used the interview protocol (see Appendix C) to eliminate the need to conduct a pilot study.

Semistructured interviews allow the researcher to engage in real-time dialogue with the participants. According to Onwuegbuzie and Byers (2014), semistructured interviews are an effective way to collect data because the researcher has the opportunity to capture the stories of the participants. Male (2016) suggested that researchers share the results of the interview with the participant to ensure accuracy. Member checking is an important aspect of qualitative research. Member checking enhances trustworthiness and enriches a research study's validity and reliability (Patton, 2015). According to Birt et al. (2016) and Morse (2015), researchers use member checking to provide the participants an opportunity to review the summaries of the interview responses and to authenticate the accuracy of the researcher's interpretations of the participants' responses. I used member checking by emailing the participants and asking them to review my interpretation of the interview responses to validate the accuracy of my analysis of their responses (see Appendix D). I allowed the participants the option to respond within 3 business days and provide edits to the interview transcripts.

Data Organization Technique

Researchers conducting a qualitative research study generate a significant amount of data that must be organized and stored securely (Feldman & Lowe, 2015). Feldman

and Lowe (2015) noted that researchers could use databases to store research data for subsequent access and analyses. Researchers can manage qualitative data by organizing files in folders by date range and topic. In addition, researchers can encrypt sensitive information and backup data regularly to increase data security (Pinfield, Cox, & Smith, 2014). I created a secure electronic filing system to store interview transcripts, interview recordings, consent forms, and journal notes.

The researcher must create codes to appropriately group and organize data according to pattern or themes (Johnson, Dunlap, & Benoit, 2010). According to Sotiriadou, Brouwers, and Le (2014), researchers must use quality-tested software for data analysis and data organization. NVivo 12 is a software program that qualitative researchers use for data organization, analysis, and management (Castleberry, 2014). Researchers use NVivo to access their data and generate codes in a flexible and straightforward manner (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). I used NVivo 12 to organize, analyze, and manage interview transcript and document data I imported from Microsoft Word files. I summarized all interviews and saved in a folder I labeled for each participant. I created a backup copy of research information on a thumb drive and kept hard copies of signed consent forms and the LiveScribe notebook in a locked safe. After 5 years following completion of the study, I will erase all electronic data and shred hard copies of documents.

I concealed the identity and maintained the confidentiality of the research participants using an alphanumeric labeling system. Saunders, Kitzinger, and Kitzinger (2015) indicated that researchers must assign generic codes to participants in order to

keep data confidential. Researchers should implement strategies necessary to remove information that could allow others to identify the participants and the participants' organization (Killawi et al., 2014). I assigned letter P and a sequential number (e.g., P1, P2, etc.) to represent IT managers in the order interviewed. Killawi et al. (2014) noted that researchers can use categorized codes to support the storage and retrieval of data. Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2015) suggested that the researcher divide the data sources into components to create organized cataloging and facilitate the grouping of data from various sources.

For this case study, I grouped the different sources of data from the participants' interviews and organizational documents. Killawi et al. (2014) highlighted the importance of data protection. Consequently, I transferred all data to an electronic form and physically secured hard copies of data in a safe. I maintain password protection for all study data. According to Opalka-Bentler (2016), researchers should store study data for 5 years following the completion of the research study. I will keep the data secured for 5 years following the completion of the research study.

Data Analysis

Qualitative researchers use triangulation to gather rich and full data to confirm research results and demonstrate trustworthiness of the research (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). There are four types of triangulation: (a) data triangulation, (b) investigator triangulation, (c) theory triangulation, and (d) methodological triangulation (Wilson, 2014). According to Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, and Neville (2014),

qualitative researchers choose the type of interview based on the purpose of the study and resources available.

Data triangulation involves collecting data from different kinds of people such as groups, individuals, communities, and families with the aim of gaining several perspectives to validate data (Carter et al., 2014). Carter et al. (2014) posited that investigator triangulation involves two or more researchers participating in the same study. Furthermore, Manganelli et al. (2014) postulated that a researcher using theory triangulation utilize different theories when analyzing and interpreting data. Methodological triangulation is the use of multiple methods to collect rich data about a phenomenon using interviews, field notes, and observation (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Manganelli et al., 2014). I used methodological triangulation as the appropriate data analysis process for this study and used semistructured interviews, organizational documents, and journal notes to ensure study validity.

According to Cope (2014), a logical and sequential process for data analysis includes (a) compiling data, (b) disassembling data, (c) reassembling data, (d) interpreting data, and (e) drawing conclusions. I used this five-phased logical and sequential approach for the analysis of my study data and began with importing member-checked interview responses from the five participants, journal notes, and organizational documents into the NVivo software. Rowlands, Waddell, and Mckenna (2015) noted that researchers organize raw data in the compiling phase. During the disassembling phase, I divided the compiled data and labeled the disassembled data through a coding process. According to Rowlands et al. (2015) and Thomas (2015), the coding process includes

identifying fragments of data to create themes based on relationship and patterns. I used

features in the NVivo software to reassemble the data through sequencing and grouping

and arrange the emerging patterns and themes.

Researchers reassemble data by clustering and categorizing the labels into

sequencing and grouping (Thomas, 2015). During the interpreting phase, the researcher

creates narratives from the sequencing and grouping of data (Thomas, 2015). I focused

on establishing narratives and meanings using the NVivo software to help create links

with the emerged themes. Researchers link core themes from the interview results with

other sources such as organizational documents and journal notes to authenticate and

triangulate their interpretations (Rowlands et al., 2015). To conclude my data analysis, I

checked for shared patterns and themes that aligned with the conceptual framework,

evidences from previous published literature, and common themes that would indicate

successful strategies IT managers use to reduce employee absenteeism.

Researchers use coding to develop and refine interpretations of data by analyzing

and assigning a symbol or number to the themes (Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2015).

Some qualitative researchers use Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software

(CAQDAS), such as ATLAS.ti, NVivo, and MAXQDA to analyze and transcribe data

(Zamawe, 2015). I used NVivo 12 software to transcribe and code journal notes and

interview transcripts to identify emerging themes. Oghuma, Libaque-Saenz, Wong, and

Chang (2016) suggested that researchers should correlate the themes with literature, other

studies, and conceptual framework. I correlated the themes from the journals and

interviews with literature, the study conceptual framework, and other published studies

from the date of the completion of the proposal to identify relationships, patterns, and core themes. I used this process to identify links and meanings of the themes I discovered during the data collection and analysis process.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity in qualitative research are two critical factors researchers should consider when designing, analyzing, and judging the quality of the study (Liang & Chia, 2014). According to Morse (2015), researchers must consider multiple factors that could affect the research findings and implement various strategies to avoid threatening factors in the study. Qualitative researchers incorporate methodological strategies such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability to judge the soundness of qualitative research (Noble & Smith, 2015). Researchers use reliability and validity as a guide to determine the trustworthiness and rigor of their qualitative research studies (Noble & Smith, 2015).

Reliability

In qualitative research, reliability is the repeatability of research findings (Elo et al., 2014). Qualitative research is reliable when a researcher obtains the same results using the same data collection procedures used in the original study (Polit, 2014). Reliability also entails minimizing errors and bias in a research study. The researcher must carefully select the method for establishing reliability based on the process the researcher uses for collecting data (LoBiondo-Wood & Haber, 2014).

In qualitative research, dependability refers to the constancy of data over time (Elo et al., 2014). Elo et al. (2014) asserted that dependability of a research study is high

if other researchers can readily follow the same decision context and use similar methods

to achieve the same results as the initial researcher. Holloway and Galvin (2016) noted

that to achieve dependability, the researcher must describe in detail the context of the

research and provide an audit trail. Readers can use the detailed description and audit trail

to follow the path the researcher took to achieve their conclusions (Holloway & Galvin,

2016). A researcher prepares an audit trail to demonstrate rigor and dependability of the

study (Darawsheh, 2014). I enhanced dependability of the study by describing the context

of the research and providing an audit trail.

Qualitative researchers ensure dependability by conducting member checking

with study participants. Harvey (2015) described member checking as the process of

presenting ideas back to the research participants to capture their confirmation.

Qualitative researchers use member checking to solicit participants' insight on the

research findings (Kornbluh, 2015). Kornbluh (2015) introduced a set of strategies that

researchers can use to employ member checking and establish trustworthiness: (a)

understand the population, (b) detail the data analysis process, (c) reconstruct the data

collection process, (d) identify and compare themes, and (e) incorporate member

checking in the data analysis process. I used member checking to provide the participants

with my interpretations of their responses to allow participants to validate the accuracy of

my interpretations of their interview responses. Member checking is essential to ensure

dependability and trustworthiness of research study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Validity

Researchers judge the validity of research findings by applying various criteria: (a) credibility, (b) transferability, and (c) confirmability (Noble & Smith, 2015). According to Sandelowski (2015), validity is one of the most critical components of research. Validity in qualitative research refers to the accuracy and correctness of the research findings (Elo et al., 2014). Furthermore, Wildemuth (2016) defined validity as the extent to which a conclusion measures the characteristic it was intended to measure.

Credibility. Credibility refers to the acceptable depiction of the constructs under study (Wildemuth, 2016). Credibility provides a lens for evaluating the findings of a qualitative study (Golafshani, 2003.) Researchers can improve the credibility of research findings using member checking and triangulation (Wildemuth, 2016). I established study credibility using member checking throughout various stages of data collection and data analysis. First, I discussed the interview questions with participants at the end of the interview. Second, during the interview, I engaged in dialogue with the participants to refine and get clarification as needed. Finally, I provided each participant with the opportunity to provide feedback on my interpretation of their interview responses to validate their responses to interview questions. I also demonstrated credibility through methodological triangulation by comparing participants' interview responses with information I obtained from the review of organizational documents and journal notes.

Transferability. Thomas and Magilvy (2011) described transferability as the ability to transfer research findings from one research setting to another, while Morse (2015) stated transferability is the extent to which the findings of a study is applicable

with other participants or contexts. Qualitative researchers enhance the transferability of their studies by enabling other researchers to apply findings to other research. Elo et al. (2014) explained that researchers must adhere to strict protocols and processes for data collection and analysis in their research studies.

To enhance transferability, I provided a rich description of the participants, population, demographics of the study, analysis, data collection process, and findings of the research study. This action will enable readers and researchers to make an informed decision about the transferability of my research study. I adhered to the interview protocol, data collection process, data analysis, member checking, and data triangulation to enable other researchers to apply the findings from my study to their own work.

Confirmability. Thomas and Magilvy (2011) observed that the confirmability of qualitative research is an outcome of study credibility and transferability. Confirmability is the researcher's assurance that data collection was conducted in a neutral manner and does not represent the researcher's biased account of the participants' experiences (Noble & Smith, 2015). Qualitative researchers can achieve confirmability by demonstrating that the research findings emerge from the research data and not from the researcher's own biases (Shenton, 2004). Shenton (2004) emphasized the role of triangulation and member checking in enhancing the confirmability of research and reducing the effect of researcher bias. To achieve confirmability, I demonstrated that my findings are linked to the data by showing the close similarities between data and research findings from the literature.

Bailey and Bailey (2017) noted researchers must be aware of ways in which their values might drive the research and suggested researchers provide more detail about the

study to better enable others to judge the confirmability of the research. I used member checking to allow study participants the opportunity to review my interpretation of their responses to interview questions. I also collected data from multiple sources, such as interviews, organizational documents, and journal notes to avoid biases and enhance confirmability of the research findings.

Audit trails and reflexivity are additional strategies for ensuring confirmability (Bailey & Bailey, 2017). An audit trail consists of exhaustive recordkeeping of the entire research process, and reflexivity involves the researcher critically thinking about how their own values, history, and characteristics can affect the results of the research (Bailey & Bailey, 2017; Morse, 2015; Wildemuth, 2016). My proposal served as my audit trail as it provided an outline and justification for data collection and data analysis along with the NVivo 12 analysis record. I used reflexivity to reduce my own research bias. I also used a reflective journal to document my position and personal beliefs concerning the study topic and to ensure I recognized and remained aware of any personal biases.

Researchers achieve data saturation when no new information emerges from the research (Horter et al., 2014). Fusch and Ness (2015) noted that data saturation has an effect on the quality of the research. Researchers can use open-ended questions during interviews, member checking, and organizational document reviews to promote validity and credibility of a research study and achieve data saturation (Yu, Abdullah, & Saat, 2014). I conducted in-depth face-to-face semistructured interviews, analyzed organizational documents, and conducted member checking to achieve data saturation.

Transition and Summary

In Section 2, I provided a restatement of the purpose of the study, an explanation of the role of the researcher, a description of the participants, the population and sampling methods, and ethical concerns related to this study. Additionally, I provided a justification of the research method and design and discussed my plans for data collection, organization, and analysis. I concluded Section 2 with a description of reliability and validity concerns as they pertain to this study. Section 3 includes: (a) the introduction, (b) a presentation of the findings, (c) the application to professional practice, (d) implications for social change, (e) recommendations for action, (f) recommendations for further study, (g) reflections, and (h) conclusions.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies some IT managers in the manufacturing industry use to reduce employee absenteeism. The population included five IT managers from of a manufacturing company from southern Maryland with experience developing successful strategies to reduce employee absenteeism. Data were collected from semistructured interviews and review of organizational documents. Several themes emerged from the data analysis: (a) workplace wellness and health programs, (b) employee engagement, (c) work-life balance programs, and (d) organizational culture. The five participants reported that workplace wellness and health programs, employee engagement, work-life balance programs, and organizational culture are strategies for reducing employee absenteeism. The findings of this study may affect business practices and positive social change by helping organizations mitigate the adverse effects of employee absenteeism on organizational productivity and profitability.

Presentation of the Findings

The research question for this study was the following: What strategies do IT managers in the manufacturing industry use to reduce employee absenteeism? I analyzed the data using NVivo 12 to identify and group emerging themes. I assigned the alphanumeric codes of P1-P5 for Participant 1 to Participant 5 to maintain the confidentiality of the participants. I identified four major themes: (a) workplace wellness and health promotion programs, (b) employee engagement, (c) work-life balance programs, and (d) organizational culture. The themes identified in this study were related

to factors identified in the TPB that influence employees' willingness, desire, and decision to attend or miss work.

Theme 1: Workplace Wellness and Health Promotion Programs

Developing workplace wellness and health promotion programs was the first theme that emerged from in-depth analysis of participants' responses and organizational documents. Employers implementing workplace health promotion programs can reduce absenteeism and improve employee performance (Dement, Epling, Joyner, & Cavanaugh, 2015). Hammerback et al. (2015) noted that employees are interested in workplace health promotion programs if these programs address behaviors employees value. Health promotion programs include health promoting and illness prevention approaches to (a) improve physical fitness; (b) achieve weight reduction; (c) lower levels of stress; (d) increase productivity/performance; (e) increase well-being; (f) lower blood pressure; (g) improve nutrition; and (h) reduce dependency on alcohol, tobacco, and other substances (Dement et al., 2015; Malik, Blake, & Suggs, 2014).

Employers who incorporate wellness programs in their organization can focus on absenteeism measures, productivity improvement, and cost savings from insurance by monitoring the wellness program participation rate and post-program health changes (Gubler, Larkin, & Pierce, 2017). Gubler et al. (2017) noted that employees could improve their health and increase productivity by taking advantage of workplace wellness programs. All five participants in the current study shared that by improving the health and well-being of employees through workplace health promotion programs, participants

were able to create a wellness culture that focused on the employees and were able to build a supportive environment in which safety and health were a priority. P1 stated,

Managers are an essential determinant in influencing employees' participation and use of health promoting programs in the workplace. In this organization, managers incorporate employee wellness programs within the business strategy and provide employees the opportunity to receive access to several resources not readily available to them.

P3 added,

The well-being of an employee is important to the organization, and so, we ensure the organization's culture plays a vital role in understanding the employees and develop wellness programs for employees to improve their psychological and physical well-being.

Dailey and Zhu (2017) highlighted the importance of communities, particularly organizations taking an active role in disseminating wellness information to their employees. Dailey and Zhu added that workplace wellness and health promotion programs might include nutritional education, occupational health services, physical exercise programs, and health information screening and education. All five participants provided organizational documents such as flyers, brochures, and gym participation rates to corroborate the inclusion of nutritional education, occupational health services, physical exercise programs, and health screening in their workplace wellness and health programs.

P1 and P3 provided health screening and education flyers of previous events the organization hosted to support employee health and wellness. P3 stated, "One of our events earlier this year was Spring into Health; it was quite catchy, and employees were drawn to the theme." In the monthly health events, the organization partnered with other companies in the community, such as the community college, and in some cases the local news outlet was onsite. The organization invited vendors to educate the employees on diabetes prevention and management, physical activity, healthy diet, dental care, cholesterol management, and glucose screenings. P2 and P4 provided brochures on nutritional education. P4 noted, "Our goal was to communicate key and relevant health messages to our employees in a way that was engaging and noteworthy." The nutrition education materials were a collection of materials that addressed body mass index, weight loss, physical activity, heart health, and portion control. The brochures were easy to read, and employees could use the information to make life changing decisions about their health. P5 provided the gym participation rates of employees who took part in the gym activities. P5 added, "Our employees make use of the gym; we have trainers on site and we monitor participation rates and whether employees feel they are meeting their goals." According to the participation rates P5 provided, the same employees participated in gym activities an average of three times per week.

According to Lewis, Napolitano, Buman, Williams, and Nigg (2017), approximately 49% of working Americans engage in the recommended level of physical activity despite the increase of health risks due to a sedentary lifestyle. P3 noted that technology has contributed to sedentary behaviors in employees, stating that, "Over half

of the employees' day is spent sitting expending very little energy, which severely limits

the number of calories the employees burn." P3 further added that a key strategy was to

investigate behaviors that can replace sedentary behaviors and employ controlled trials.

Bann et al. (2015) investigated whether light intensity physical activity and lower

sedentary activities were associated with lower body mass index (BMI). The results of

Bann et al.'s study were consistent with the supposition that substituting sedentary

actions with light intensity physical activities can lead to lower BMI. P5 noted that

initially, some employees were less engaged in taking steps to lower sedentary behaviors;

as a result, management introduced health advocates to promote and provide educational

information to employees. P3, P4, and P5 observed that employees having invested time

in the wellness programs were more productive and willingly shared their experiences

with the programs.

Employers are encouraged to implement workplace wellness and health

promotion programs to reduce health care costs (Burke & Cooper, 2016). The health care

reform legislation encourages employers to implement health promotion programs as a

tool to cut health care costs (Beck, Hirth, Jenkins, Sleeman, & Zhang, 2016). In addition

to reducing health care costs, health promotion programs could reduce the economic

burden of employee absenteeism and contribute to organizational profitability, thereby

increasing employee performance and morale (Beck et al., 2016). Healthy employees

may carry lower health insurance premiums. P2 and P3 observed that by implementing

health promotion programs, they were able to contribute to significant improvements in

employee retention. P1 noted,

Our employees spend about one third of their day, five days per week in the workplace. The company provides a safe and hazard free environment; we strive to ensure we provide many opportunities to our employees to promote individual health. We love when our employees make use of the programs we have in place to reduce health risks and most importantly improve their quality of life.

P5 added that the health programs are comprehensive strategies that include benefits, policies, and information about the surrounding communities. According to P5, "The company designed the health programs to meet the health needs of all employees." All five participants highlighted the importance of health education classes, health insurance coverage and screenings, and access to fitness facilities as some of the workplace health programs and strategies. P1 noted that the employees receive e-mails when there are health education classes and other events. The employees also receive brochures, flyers, and pamphlets to guide them in making health decisions.

Mitchell, Ozminkowski, and Hartley (2016) concluded that employers who use health promotion programs in combination with health risk surveys could effect significant improvements in retaining employees. Incorporating management and employee needs into the development and implementation of wellness programs increases the likelihood of success of workplace wellness programs. P3 indicated that asking employees to share their attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions concerning workplace wellness programs demonstrates a commitment to designing and implementing workplace wellness programs. P3 further added,

Including the employees' opinions of workplace wellness program adds value to

the role the organization and the employees play in maintaining a healthy

workplace. It was important for management to get feedback from the employees.

Management believed that if the employees were part of developing the wellness

program, they would be more willing to partake in the program.

P1 noted,

We were able to successfully implement a wellness program by taking steps to

ensure we had a comprehensive program in place. We began by conducting an

organizational assessment, establishing a wellness committee, obtaining employee

input, and developing goals and objectives.

These findings are consistent with the findings of Caperchione, Reid, Sharp, and

Stehmeier (2016), who identified three areas of focus for successful workplace wellness

programs: (a) role of the organization, (b) elements of workplace wellness programs, and

(c) participation in workplace wellness programs. Meyer-Weitz, Baasner-Weihs, and

Weihs (2015) added that a comprehensive workplace wellness program should focus on

participation rates and evaluation. P3 emphasized,

The workplace health programs were successful because managers considered

safety and health in the design and execution. In fact, when we integrated

occupational safety with health promotion, we saw an increase in the program's

participation rate. Managers involved the employees in the process from the

beginning, thus reinforcing the shared responsibility and commitment between

employee and the organization to employee health, and the success of the program.

The participants shared that their goal was to support developing healthy employees and a healthy work environment by identifying the values, beliefs, attitudes, and health practices workers bring to the workplace. The responses from all five participants supported Burke and Cooper's (2016) assertion that organizations must be proactive in creating a working environment that supports positive experiences among employees. Burke and Cooper also suggested that a healthy organization is financially successful. Workplace wellness programs incorporate a combination of educational and behavioral modification activities (Gubler et al., 2017). P3 noted that top management displayed a positive attitude and participated in the health promoting program. P2 added that it was important that managers were practicing what they were preaching. P4 noted that managers were attending health classes and participating in different wellness programs. P5 recalled,

> On several occasions, we had what we termed "breakfast walk." We took 30 minutes to walk the trail adjacent to the park. We converse with the employees and discovered they are starting to do similar activities with their families during their time away from the office. It was great hearing the positive effects the wellness program had on the employees and their families.

Workplace wellness and health programs align with Ajzen's (1985) TPB. Ajzen (1991) claimed that an individual's attitude toward a behavior is either a favorable or an unfavorable evaluation of the results from performing an act. The participants in the

current study considered workplace and health promotion programs as a key strategy for promoting employee productivity and organizational profitability. The result of participating in workplace wellness and health programs will either increase or decrease an individual's intent to change a behavior (Rhodes, Blanchard, Courneya, & Plotnikoff, 2009). The participants believed that managers should implement workplace and health promotion programs that will improve the health and well-being of all employees. The employees' participation rate in the wellness program increased over time as management became more involved in the program. This is in line with Ajzen's (1991) claim that an employee's intent to perform a behavior strongly correlates with the behavior and is jointly dependent on motivation (intention) and ability (behavior) to influence performance.

Employers who develop a healthy workplace setting by engaging managers and implementing healthy workplace policies are most effective in creating and maintaining a healthy workplace (Ettinger, Adams, Joy, & Flint, 2016). Researchers use the core tenets of the TPB to explain physical activity behavior in employees (Ettinger et al., 2016). An employee's attitude is reflected in a positive or negative behavior of performing an act (Ajzen, 1991). Subjective norm is the employee's perceived social pressure to perform the behavior, while perceived behavioral control is the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). The current study participants noted that the employees reacted positively toward the workplace and health promotion programs. Table 2 includes information about the number and frequency of themes for workplace wellness and health programs by each participant.

Table 2

Frequency of Themes for Workplace Wellness and Health Programs

Participants	Number	Percentage of frequency occurrence
P1	7	14.3%
P2	12	24.4%
P3	11	22.4%
P4	10	20.4%
P5	9	18.4%

Theme 2: Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is the level of involvement and commitment employees have to their organization (Anitha, 2014). An engaged employee is one who demonstrates commitment, feels empowered, and is passionate about their job (Mone & London, 2014). P4 noted that employees demonstrated commitment and passion for their job. P4 also added that during first and fourth quarters, which are their busiest time, the employees displayed true commitment and motivation to accomplish their jobs. P4 believed the employees' efforts were a result of the level of involvement and feeling of empowerment the employees have to the company. Managers can drive employee engagement by (a) establishing a foundation of trust, clear developmental goals, and empowerment with employees; (b) communicate regularly with employees about their goals and the goals of the organization; and (c) monitor the overall climate of the organization to ensure the demand of the organizations does not lead to employee burnout (Mone & London, 2014). P1 observed that fostering team-level learning can result in employee engagement and improved performance. P2 noted that encouraging the employees to be innovative established a sense of empowerment within employees.

The concept of employee engagement has evolved taking into account the various behaviors employees exhibit, which positively affects productivity (Mone & London, 2014). P2 emphasized,

> Managers should build a culture that fosters employee engagement. When employees are engaged it drives performance. Employees view the entire organization and understand their purpose and how they fit in within the company.

Employee engagement has become a widely studied phenomenon for many researchers. Popli and Rizvi (2016) noted that top executives realize the need to be accountable and responsible for employee engagement. P1 observed that fostering employee engagement was a key strategy for organizational success. P2 suggested managers pay more attention to the needs of their employees and address any concerns of the employees. P2 clarified, "It was when management began to listen to the concerns of employees that we saw a significant change in employee's attitude and productivity." All the participants in the current study highlighted several behaviors engaged employees display that benefit the organization, including: (a) working extra hours, (b) assisting colleagues, (c) sharing knowledge, (d) collaborating, and (e) participating in organizational dialogue. Moreover, Thurlings, Evers, and Vermeulen (2015) emphasized various benefits employee engagement has on the organization, including improved employee performance, reduced employee turnover, improved health and wellbeing, reduced employee absenteeism, increased self-efficacy, and receptivity to organizational change.

I reviewed organizational documents such as flyers showing the various activities the organization had planned to improve employee engagement. In reviewing organizational documents such as flyers, I observed that employees were fully engaged in the happenings of their organization, which provided benefits to the organization. Additionally, engaged employees exhibit extra-role behaviors which, according to Tims, Bakker, and Derks (2015), are positive outcomes of employee engagement for the organization and the individual. P4 observed that employees exhibited initiative and demonstrated leadership skill never seen before. P4 believed the change in employees were a result of managers becoming more engaged with the employees. P5 noted that their employees exhibited a positive state of mind, dedication, and absorption in their work. P4 further noted the employees displayed some form of decision latitude regarding work schedule because they had reliable colleagues. P2 shared a similar observation and noted that employees reacted positively in the absence of their colleagues and work was not backed up because the team was more cohesive.

P1 and P3 both highlighted the importance of employers creating jobs and a working environment with motivating potential. Employees share the responsibility for shaping their work-related wellbeing and creating an environment that is conducive to their preferences and skills (Tims et al., 2015). P2 noted that the employees began bringing their innovative ideas to their managers and in turn, managers were taking the ideas seriously. Engaged employees display innovative behaviors in a process where they generate new ideas, develops, applies, and promotes social changes in society (Thurlings, Evers, & Vermeulen, 2015).

According to Bailey et al. (2017), employee engagement positively correlates to employee morale, extra-role performance, and task performance. P5 stated that employee engagement resonates strongly with top management and that employee happiness is fundamental to their organization. Employers spend over $720 million annually on employee engagement (Delaney & Royal, 2017). P4 stated that employee engagement is an essential component of strategies managers use to attract and retain the organization's best talent. P2 noted that to attain favorable outcomes from employee engagement, management must invest in long-term strategies. P5 added that management was invested in ensuring the company was on the right track to improving employee engagement. P5 further added,

It took fresh ideas to help rejuvenate the employees and increase their productivity. We encouraged employees to speak up and not to be uncomfortable with the idea of speaking their minds. If the employees feel they cannot speak up then we run the risk of missing valuable ideas that could help propel the organization. We made it a priority to help employees get to know each other. It was important for me as the manager to place focus on helping employees get to know each other.

P1 noted,

I really enjoy my role serving as a mentor. I think my most important job in the company is helping anyone who has a problem. When employees begin to experience issues with engagement, it is important to act quickly so the problem

does not progress further. You also cannot always take a canned approach, you

might have to take a personal technique to help raise engagement levels.

Employee engagement must be embedded within human resource management

(HRM) procedures and in practices used by managers to effectively measure the level of

employee happiness (Albrecht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey, & Saks, 2015; Guest, 2014).

P3 emphasized the importance of the onboarding process, and stated managers must

make themselves available for new employees. P3 added that managers making

themselves available can negate any issues that arise early in the onboarding process.

Some employees leave their jobs because of their managers' behavior (Reina, Rogers,

Peterson, Byron, & Hom, 2018). Reina et al. (2018) noted that tactics employed by

managers directly affect employees' turnover. According to P1, flexibility played an

integral role in the employees' performance and level of engagement as employees could

work from home. P4 and P5 agreed that flexibility increased the employees' performance

and those employees were still completing their work on time. Employee engagement

and job satisfaction might mediate the relationship between managerial behaviors and

employee turnover. P2 cautioned the need for managers to pay attention to how some

employees respond to extra flexibility. P2 did not encounter any instances of employees

taking advantage of flexibility.

Lee, Idris, and Delfabbro (2017) posited that organizational culture and leadership

styles influence employee behavior. P5 noted that managers could empower employees

through work engagement and meaningfulness to influence their employees' behavior.

Additionally, Reina et al. (2018) asserted that managers should implement strategies to

retain valued employees, because of the cost associated with employee turnover, which ranges from 90% to 200% of annual salary resulting from recruitment, selection, and training expenses. Employers can use the Gallup Q12 questionnaire to evaluate employee engagement (Sahu, Pathardikar, & Kumar, 2017). Managers use the Gallup Q12 questionnaire to operationalize resources and opportunities to boost employee engagement (Sahu et al., 2017). P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5 mentioned using the Gallup Q12 questionnaire. According to P1, managers were able to identify specific conditions within the organization to better facilitate employee engagement. P2 added that the questions in the Gallup Q12 questionnaire helped to identify areas where management should place emphasis on to improve employee engagement. P3 noted that the results of the one of the Gallup 12 questionnaires were that managers needed to place emphasis on team building activities and more organizational updates from top management. P3 further added that management appreciated the feedback and quickly addressed the issues identified from the Gallup 12 questionnaires.

Holland, Cooper, and Sheehan (2017) highlighted employee engagement as a significant interest in the field of HRM and noted the positive impact that engaged employees have on the organization and the employee. According to Holland et al. (2017), supervisor support and trust are positively associated with employee engagement. P1 highlighted trust as a key element in engaging employees. P1 also added, "What is a team without trust?" Without trust, the team will underperform and eventually fall apart (Participant 1). P3 and P5 also highlighted trust as a key determinant in engaging employees. P3 noted that establishing trust was forefront and something management

also believed in. P5 added, "trust is essential in everything we do." Our employees know they can trust us and that gives us an advantage when getting the most out of our team (Participant 5). Aktar and Pangil (2018) conducted a study examining the mediating role organizational commitment has on the relationship between employee engagement and HRM. P1 added that employees responded well to the support from managers. P4 also noted employees had a positive reaction to the support from managers. Aktar and Pangil observed that HRM practices such as (a) job security, (b) career advancement, (c) rewards and recognition, (d) performance feedback, (e) training and development, and (f) employee participation were significant predictors of employee engagement.

Organizational commitment was a partial mediator on HRM practices and employee engagement (Aktar & Pangil, 2018). Employees engaging in a positive relationship with their employer often remain with the organization (Shantz, Alfes, & Latham, 2015). P4 opined that employees had a positive relationship with their managers and reacted positively to the strategies to promote employee engagement. P5 added, "We have a very dedicated team, our employees are more involved and are providing a lot of feedback." P5 further added, "We act on every feedback we receive so our employees know we are committed to them and in turn we cultivate motivated and committed teams of people." According to P2, "The employees are able to see their ideas come to life and that really drives their commitment, and so they want to stay with the company."

Srivastava and Madan (2016) asserted that managers should recognize the potential of organizational citizenship behaviors that contribute to organizational effectiveness. P2 noted, "We encourage the behaviors and principles that comprise the

organizational citizenship behaviors." P2 reported, "As managers we must exemplify the behaviors we want our employees to emulate." P3 noted, "The organizational culture begins at the top, and when employees see leaders stepping in to help and fully participate in activities outside of the workplace then employees will have a positive reference for engaging in organizational citizenship behaviors." Srivastava and Madan further noted that understanding how organizational citizenship behaviors can help in the role of trust and employee engagement will provide direction for work behaviors of employees in the organization. P5 reported that occupational citizenship behaviors have a significant effect on strengthening the bond between colleagues. P3 noted that in a culture that supports collaboration, managers must encourage teamwork early on so employees can view themselves playing a vital role in the organization.

Organizational citizenship behavior is an individual's voluntary commitment to an organization and those behaviors an employee exhibits that exceed the requirements of the job (Tinti et al., 2017). An employee's organizational citizenship behavior tends to promote organizational effectiveness (Anvari et al., 2017). The success of the organization largely depends on the employees and the employees' job performance is dependent upon the environment in which they work (Srivastava and Madan, 2016). P1 added, "Some employees displayed organizational citizenship by going above and beyond the scope of their duties." P4 noted, "On numerous occasions the employees promoted organizational effectiveness by exceeding the requirements of their job." P1 and P4 noted that the employees knew organizational citizenship behavior was not part of their formal company structure and that their employees understood that there was no

monetary reward. However, P1 and P4 both had employees who displayed organizational

citizenship behaviors despite no additional monetary rewards for their actions. P3 added,

> The behaviors some of the employees exhibited contributes to the maintenance of
>
> the organizational culture and reinforces employee engagement, commitment,
>
> motivation, and job performance. Engaging employees is a part of the change
>
> process that managers regard as essential for management success.

Employee engagement supports the TPB in understanding workers' intentions to

support organizational change through employee engagement. Ajzen (2015) opined that

the extent to which an employee's attitude, belief, perceived behavioral control and

subjective norm of the TPB could predict employee intention to perform an activity is a

reliable indicator of future behavior. The participants believed that employee engagement

is a key differentiator for growth and innovation. Moreover, the participants noted that

highly engaged employees were top performers. Employee participation strategies can

help foster an individual's intention to engage in a behavior. Working environments that

lack opportunities for employees to voice their concerns and participate in decision

making negatively contribute to employee engagement (Holland et al., 2017; Sahu et al.,

2017). The employees were able to provide suggestions and opinions that management

implemented. Ajzen (2011) asserted that tenets of the TPB, such as an employee's

beliefs, attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral controls can predict an

employee intention to carry out an act to change an event. Managers can implement

employee engagement interventions to align the employee behavior with the

organizational goals. Table 3 includes detailed information about the frequency of themes

for employee engagement by each participant.

Table 3

Frequency of Themes for Employee Engagement

Participants	Number	Percentage of frequency occurrence
P1	21	21%
P2	20	20%
P3	19	19%
P4	22	22%
P5	20	20%

Theme 3: Work-life Balance Programs

Work-life balance emerged as the third theme and a key variable when addressing

issues with employee absenteeism. Work-life balance is a term used to describe the

separation of the demands of work and the other aspects of life that brings a person

happiness (Honigman, 2017). Moreover, Kim (2014) defined work-life balance as a

person's ability to establish an acceptable combination of work and life commitments, as

well as other nonwork activities and responsibilities. P2 stated, "We support our

employees in ensuring there is a balance between work, home, and life." P5 noted that

"The organization, employees and their family suffer when there is not a good balance

between the employee's workplace and home." Supervisor support and work-life balance

influences job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and life satisfaction (Talukder,

Vickers, & Khan, 2018). P1 added, "Employees are happy, they show up to work

energized and ready to work." Talukder et al. (2018) postulated that work-life balance

influences job satisfaction, and consequently managers can implement policies to promote balance between the workplace, home and life. According to P1, developing work-life balance strategies helped in providing a healthier lifestyle for the employees, which positively affected family and social relationships. P4 noted,

> Factors such as employees having time off from work, work schedule flexibility, work support for work-life balance, and securing allegiance in the workplace can be used to influence employee absenteeism strategies.

According to P5,

> Emotional stress and work overload contributed to some employees exhibiting low job performance. The interrelationship between work-life balance, employee job satisfaction, and organizational commitment was essential in increasing employee job performance and organizational productivity.

A major challenge facing employees is successfully balancing work and personal life (Kim, 2014). Cahill, McNamara, Pitt-Catsouphes, and Valcour (2015) found that microeconomic circumstances influence an employee's attitude toward work and can interfere with the employee's economic wellbeing. Cahill et al. (2015) noted that employers might not realize that the state of the economy can affect employees' attitude and alter the employees' actions. P1 added, "Managers could scan their working environment and consider the economy when assessing their current circumstances." P3 noted, "Understanding environmental shifts, employees' value changes, and an increased desire for work-life balance were essential in enhancing employee engagement." P4 noted, "Work-life balance plays an integral role in an employee's psychological

wellbeing and the overall sense of unison in the employees' life" which according to P5

is an indicator of work-life balance.

Employers managing work-life balance experience positive results such as work

engagement, low turnover, increase in job satisfaction, organizational productivity, and

organizational commitment (Kim, 2014). According to Rofcanin, Heras, and Bakker

(2017), flexible work policies are becoming more prevalent. Additionally, P3 added,

"Flexible work policies afford employees the opportunity to vary their arrival and

departure times from work." Rofcanin et al. (2017) posited that flexible work policies

afford employees the flexibility and control over how, when, and the amount of time they

work. P2 observed, when employees feel they have a greater sense of control over their

lives, they have a better relationship with their managers. P2 added, "Employees are able

to leave work issues at the workplace and home issues at home." Rofcanin et al. noted

that flexible work policies help predict desirable employee behaviors and attitudes. P3

and P5 both noted a positive relationship between flexible work policies and employee

performance.

Kim (2014) asserted that when there is work family conflict it has a negative

effect on the employee's commitment to their organization. P2 indicated that work-life

balance had a positive effect on workers' affective commitment to their organization.

According to Kim (2014), affective commitment is the emotional attachment employees

have toward their organization or employer. Additionally, P3 stated, "Employees

generate a feeling of loyalty to the organization," while P5 added, "Loyalty increases

affective commitment and employees remaining with the organization." According to P3,

managing work-life balance is a critical managerial strategy to ensure employees'

performance and secure improvements in organizational performance. P1 added that

when employees experience psychological wellbeing and harmony, the employees can

concentrate more on their work, which results in better performance.

Through member checking, P1, P2, P4, and P5 affirmed that a positive correlation

exists between employees' motivation and the organization's profitability due to flexible

work policies in place. P3 stated, "Management increased the amount of focus on work-

life programs by introducing family friendly policies, such as flexible work

arrangements." P3 added that such policies made manager's responses to issues of work-

life balance programs more critical. The participants mentioned policies such as job

sharing; part-time employment; telecommuting; flexible start/stop times; and child care

and leave options. Gilley et al. (2015) found that work-life balance programs could have

health benefits and may lead to positive outcomes for the organization, such as (a)

employee attendance behaviors, (b) overall job satisfaction, and (c) retention rates.

Work-life balance programs relate to the TPB. According to Ajzen (1991) TPB, a

person's intention to carry out a behavior positively correlates with their behavior.

Additionally, Zheng et al. (2016) found that managers having positive attitudes toward

work-life balance programs would have greater intention to implement work-life balance

programs. In terms of the TPB, managers' support is a form of behavioral intention that

signals employees' intentions and attitude towards the employer and employee

relationship (Holland et al., 2017). An employee's intentions and attitudes toward

management positively can correlate to the positive attitudes of managers in the

organization (Gilley et al., 2015). According to Ajzen (2015), when a person carries out a behavior, it elicits either a positive or a negative consequence. Table 4 includes detailed information about the frequency of themes for work-life balance programs by each participant.

Table 4

Frequency of Themes for Work-Life Balance Programs

Participants	Number	Percentage of frequency occurrence
P1	18	28%
P2	14	22%
P3	10	16%
P4	10	16%
P5	12	19%

Theme 4: Organizational Culture

The fourth theme that emerged was organizational culture. Organizational culture consists of a set of shared beliefs and values, which help to shape employees' behavior patterns (Szczepańska-Woszczyna, 2015). According to Lee, Shiue, and Chen (2016), organizational culture significantly affects the way employees think, act, and respond to improvements within the organization. Specifically, Lee et al. (2016) highlighted employees' willingness and behavior of knowledge sharing and stated that organizational culture may impede or encourage employees' knowledge sharing activities. According to P1, "Having the support from top management greatly enhanced the level of knowledge sharing within the organization." P3 added, "Top management support along with the appropriate employee incentives facilitated knowledge sharing and inspired employees to

share their knowledge, which contributed to organizational success." P1 stated, "The organization has a set of values and beliefs that every employee is aware." P1 further noted, "Each employee is afforded the opportunity to learn about top management and the shareholders' values."

Innovation is one of the key factors to organizational survival and long-term success in a competitive market (Hogan & Coote, 2014; Naranjo-Valencia, Jiménez-Jiménez, & Sanz-Valle, 2016). Managers should focus on factors related to people and behavior (organizational culture) as influences that can both inspire or restrain innovation and ultimately influence the organization's performance (Naranjo-Valencia et al., 2016). According to P5, "The culture of the organization stimulated innovative behavior among employees." P5 further added, "The shared values of the organization became the basis of communication and mutual understanding." P1, P2, and P4 emphasized that the organization's culture closely relates to the clan culture. P1 added, "I see a clan culture mainly because of the friendly working environment we have, and I see a lot of similarities between our employees". P3 and P5 highlighted the clan culture and flexibility of the adhocracy culture as organizational cultures that closely related to their organization's culture. P3 said, "Some of the characteristics of our organizational culture are similar to the adhocracy culture, such as innovation and risk takers." P3 provided a printout of one of the signs highlighting the company's core values and beliefs. The sign depicted core characteristics of the organization's culture. P3 added, "This is just one of many things we get to see as we walk in to the building."

Naranjo-Valencia et al. (2016) posited that there are four organizational cultures: (a) adhocracy, (b) clan, (c) market, and (d) hierarchy. Characteristics of the adhocracy culture are entrepreneurship, risk taking, and creativity while the key values of a clan culture organization are employee involvement, teamwork, and corporate commitment to members of the organization (Naranjo-Valencia et al., 2016). Naranjo-Valencia et al. also described the core values of organizations with market culture as consistency, goal achievement, and competitiveness while organizations with a hierarchy culture focus on rules and regulations, efficiency, and close adherence to norms. P3 emphasized, "Managers should know the type of culture of the organization, and how the culture aligns with the values and beliefs of the organization."

The participants reported, in recent years the top management introduced, and in some cases changed policies and processes to minimize the use of resources and address pollution to improve community and stakeholder relationships. P3 reported,

> The organization had to undergo significant cultural changes to respond fully to social and environmental challenges. One way we ensured a sustainable organizational culture was by engaging the organization in feedback and prioritization techniques. We used feedback and prioritization, which resulted in identifying top improvements to improve weak areas and leverage strengths.

Linnenluecke and Griffiths (2010) argued that organizations must develop a sustainable organizational culture to move towards corporate sustainability. P5 reported,

> The key characteristics of our organizational culture are innovation, risk taking, attention to detail, outcome and people orientation, stability and team orientation.

I view our organizational culture as one that is concerned with how the

organization is perceived. Sometimes, it is not just about job satisfaction.

P1 stated,

We have a common perception within the organization and we always work to

express the core values shared amongst the members of the organization. A strong

culture does exist, and it is shared and held among all members of the

organization. Our culture conveys a sense of identity for our employees and I

must say, our employees are proud to be a part of the company. We strive to

enhance social system stability. Our employees go out and contribute positively in

their communities, something we are extremely proud of in the organization.

Gilley et al. (2015) noted that an employees' perception of the organization is

dependent on how he/she views their direct supervisor. P4 stated, "A positive relationship

existed between employer and employee due to the organizational culture." P2 added,

"We encourage our employees to be innovative and team oriented." P3 added,

"Employees' perception of the company was positive and that a positive relationship

exists between employees and managers". P3 also added, "Our organizational culture is

made up of several elements that our employees live by, these are shared meaning that

distinguishes our company from other company."

Organizational culture supports the TPB. The relationship between an employee's

attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control is equally dependent on the

employee's motivation and the employer's ability to influence the organization's culture

(Lortie & Castogiovanni, 2015). All participants in the current study noted the

importance of building a positive relationship between employee and employer. All

participants in the current study emphasized that managers must consider what motivates

the employees. A change in the organizational culture could cause favorable or

unfavorable reactions from others, which can result in a change in behaviors, norms, and

control beliefs. Likewise, employees' desire to remain as a member of the organization

strongly correlates with the employee's intentions, beliefs in the values, and norms of the

organization (Kim, 2014). Table 5 includes the frequency of themes for organizational

culture by each participant.

Table 5

Frequency of Themes for Organizational Culture

Participants	Number	Percentage of frequency occurrence
P1	7	16%
P2	12	27%
P3	9	20%
P4	10	22%
P5	7	16%

Applications to Professional Practice

Current and future managers could use the results of this study to develop

strategies that (a) effectively manage employee absenteeism, (b) increase employee

productivity, (c) improve employee performance, (d) support business growth, and (e)

increase organizational profitability. Effective strategies to reduce employee absenteeism

might diminish the gap in business practices related to mitigating the adverse effects

employee absences have on growth and profitability of an organization and employees'

productivity and performance. Moreover, managers might use these results to obtain actionable solutions to reduce employee absenteeism.

Employers should track all costs associated with employee absenteeism. The direct and indirect costs associated with employee absenteeism, including the cost to replace workers, payroll, productivity loss, and overtime, affect the *bottom line* of the business (SHRM, 2014). The findings of this study could inform managers of their responsibility to effectively manage the cost of employee absences. Managers understanding the drivers of employee absenteeism may influence the strategies for improving employee productivity and organizational profitability. A manager's first responsibility regarding employee absenteeism is to ensure that practices are in place to accurately measure and track the costs of employee absenteeism (SHRM, 2014). According to Kocakülâh al. (2016), many employers are unaware of the substantial cost of employee absenteeism within their organization partially because only approximately half of employers have practices in place to track absenteeism. Kocakülâh et al. postulated that employers have no idea about the extent of the problem of employee absenteeism. Kocakülâh et al. further posited that because employers are not aware of the substantial cost associated with employee absenteeism, only about 16% have tools in place to reduce absenteeism once they develop systems to track employee absences.

Managers can use the findings and themes from this study such as developing workplace wellness and health programs, employee engagement strategies, creating work-life balance programs, and setting an organizational culture to promote shared beliefs and values to help shape employees' behavior patterns. According to Kocakülâh

and Powers (2015), employers implementing wellness and health programs experience a decrease in medical costs by about $3.27 for each dollar spent on employee wellness programs. Kocakülâh and Powers added that employee absenteeism costs fell by about $2.73 when employers implement employee wellness programs. By implementing strategies, such as employee wellness and health programs, employers are better able to bargain with health insurance companies because of the demonstrated lower health risks among employees participating in wellness initiatives (Kocakülâh & Powers, 2015).

According to Spanos and Strigas (2018), an individual's lifestyle, physical activity, and nutritional habits are important factors that affects a person's health. Despite the manifestation of strong indications that a person partaking in exercise is heathier than a person who does not, most people do not incorporate enough exercise into their daily routines (Spanos & Strigas, 2018). Jones, Molitor, and Reif (2018) highlighted that workplace wellness programs cover more than 50 million employees and that the intent of such programs is to reduce medical costs, improve employee wellbeing, reduce employee absenteeism, and increase productivity. With these benefits, Jones et al. (2018) emphasized that more employers should investigate the added benefits of investing in employee wellness and health programs.

Managers have many ways to recognize their employees. Through employee engagement, managers can (a) build trust, (b) create conditions of empowerment, (c) manage team learning, and (d) maintain communications about employee performance, all of which are essential to employee engagement (Mone & London, 2018). Without effective employee engagement strategies, managers will not be able to assess employee

engagement. Managers could use the strategy of work-life balance programs to improve conditions for the employees and improve the organization's productivity. According to Adame-Sánchez, González-Cruz, and Martínez-Fuentes (2016), a manager's decision to implement a work-life balance program is dependent on the manager's perception of the benefits of the program. A greater degree of benefit of organizational performance might make implementing work-life programs more attractive to managers. Employees feel more satisfied with their job if they are able to enjoy the benefits of work-life programs (Arif & Farooqi, 2014).

Managers encouraging work-life balance can attract and retain workers who in turn support the growth of the organization (Arif & Farooqi, 2014). A strong and supportive organizational culture is a good indicator of an employee's intention to remain with the organization. Managers face the challenge of improving organizational effectiveness. Peretz, Levi, and Fried (2015) identified cultural practices as a link between absenteeism and diversity programs. Moreover, Peretz et al. noted that absenteeism affects the organization's performance and innovation. Organizational culture helps to shape the employees' leadership experiences. Researchers found that the cultural expectations within the organization influence the organizational culture and the beliefs, experiences, and behaviors of employees within the organization (Huhtala, Tolvanen, Mauno, & Feldt, 2015; Longman, Daniels, Lamm Bray, & Liddell, 2018). An imbalance in the organization's culture can create negative influences, such as gender bias, sexism, and microaggressions (Huhtala et al., 2015; Longman et al., 2018).

Managers could use the organizational culture finding that emerged from this study to

learn effective strategies to shape the values and culture of the organization.

Implications for Social Change

The results of this research study could contribute to positive social change by

providing insights on how managers can implement effective strategies to reduce

employee absenteeism. Managers in IT and in other industries could use these strategies

to implement workplace wellness and health promotion programs and to improve

employee engagement, work-life balance programs, and organizational culture. The

objective of this study was to explore the successful strategies IT managers in the

manufacturing industry use to reduce employee absenteeism. Employee absenteeism

affects not only the organization and the employees but also the community (Vermeeren

et al., 2014). The negative effect of absenteeism on employee productivity and

organizational profitability can reduce the quality of life and amount of services rendered

to the community (Vermeeren et al., 2014). Employee absenteeism is an issue that affects

everyone and can have grave economic and social consequences on an entire community

(Werang, Leba, & Pure, 2017). Across the United States, absenteeism due to worker

illness and injury costs organizations over $225 billion annually, according to The

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention (2015).

A healthy community is essential to an organization's success. Healthy employees

produce more for their organization and, in turn, increase organizational profitability

(Werang et al., 2017). Fully engaged and productive employees help to increase the

quality of products and services delivered to the community, thereby boosting economic

growth and job opportunities within the community. Community members can benefit from organizations that provide lasting career opportunities and diversity. As such, the community can also benefit from companies that include the community and families in events that promote employee health, which can create a strong foundation for success. According to Huggins and Thompson (2015), organizations that promote health in their employees are more successful and competitive. Employers fully engaged in all aspects of safety, health, and the environment could positively respond to the views, concerns, and opinions of the employees and the community (Huggins & Thompson, 2015). Developing effective strategies to address issues of absenteeism requires a deeper exploration of not only how absenteeism affects local communities but also understanding how financially stable organizations affect the livelihoods of people in the local communities.

Recommendations for Action

Managers developing effective strategies to combat employee absences may provide all-inclusive measures on ways to reduce employee absenteeism to (a) improve employee productivity, (b) increase organizational profitability, and (c) improve employee wellbeing. Managers are encouraged to consider the value of strategies that could reduce the costs and time lost when employees are absent from work (Kocakülâh et al., 2016). Lally (2014) suggested that managers should track the cost of employee absenteeism, including the hard-dollar costs, such as salary, replacement workers, and benefits and soft-dollar costs, such as low morale. An organization can significantly reduce the effects of employee absenteeism by carefully designing policies to implement

employee wellness and health programs, employee engagement strategies, improve work-life balance, and organizational culture.

From the research findings, I propose four actions that current and future managers in IT and in other industries could adopt to increase organizational profitability and improve employee productivity. The first action is for managers to develop and implement wellness and health programs aimed at promoting health and productivity. According to Ammendolia et al. (2016), there is a clear link between absenteeism and managing healthcare and ensuring productivity remains high. If workers are absent from work or are at work but not fully healthy then productivity suffers (Ammendolia et al., 2016). The second action is for managers to develop strategies to measure employee engagement and key performance outcomes. Managers can measure performance outcomes of employee engagement, such as productivity, profitability, turnover, absenteeism, customer ratings, and safety incidents (Batorsky, Taylor, Huang, Liu, & Mattke, 2016), thereby providing a framework for positive change. The third action managers could take is to improve work-life balance for their employees. Finally, the fourth action managers may take is to improve the culture of the organization. According to Musarra, Robson, and Katsikeas (2016), improving the organization's culture can help shape the way employees think, act, and feel about changes occurring in the organization.

Managers in IT and in different industries can use the information from this study to develop and implement successful strategies to reduce employee absenteeism. Managers can use the strategies in this study to build a positive working environment, thereby improving employee engagement and improving the organizational culture to

reduce employee absenteeism. I plan to disseminate the research findings using several methods. The participants will have the opportunity to receive a summary of the findings of the study. I will also publish and make available the study in the ProQuest/UMI dissertation database for use by scholars.

Recommendations for Further Research

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the successful strategies IT managers use to reduce employee absenteeism. Although the research participants in this study provided valuable information and insight that expanded upon existing research on strategies managers can use to reduce employee absenteeism, I recommend further research on the phenomenon. I used a small population of five participants from a single organization in southern Maryland. Consequently, I recommend that future researchers increase the population size and conduct similar studies involving multiple IT companies. By increasing the population size, researchers could increase the generalizability of the findings. In addition, by expanding the study to several IT companies, researchers can compare successful strategies of other IT managers.

I did not include employees from the participating organization in the population of my study. Therefore, I recommend for future studies that researchers include employees in their study to gain a better understanding of the drivers of employee absenteeism and the factors that determine the reasons employees decide to attend or not attend work. Future researchers could conduct a study including employees and HR

managers to understand the role HR managers play in developing programs and policies to help reduce employee absenteeism.

Future researchers could consider conducting comparable case studies using the quantitative or mixed method to explore or examine employee absenteeism reduction strategies to determine which method is most effective. I also recommend researchers consider conducting similar studies on the economic cost associated with employee presenteeism compared to the cost related to employee absenteeism. Additionally, I recommend researchers conduct studies on the link between job satisfaction and employee absenteeism.

Reflections

The Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program at Walden University was a challenge that weighed on me emotionally, physically, and financially but proved to be a rewarding process. The process at this level had to be rigorous to ensure doctoral students met the requirements of the university. The rigorous requirements of the program helped to strengthen my writing skills and refine my research skills to gain a better understanding of employee absenteeism. During this program, I quickly realized the importance of remaining patient, staying focused, and not taking constructive feedback personally. My interest in employee absenteeism resulted from my experiences dealing with the effects of employee absences on organizational profitability and employee productivity. I did not know any of the participants prior to conducting this study. Preparing the interview questions helped to limit my personal biases. In addition, the planned interview protocol served as a guide to limit my bias. I also limited my bias

by incorporating member checking. Overall, I found my journey rewarding and challenging and my professors were an instrumental part of my journey.

Conclusion

The annual cost associated with lost productivity due to employee absenteeism in the United States is four times the cost in the United Kingdom (BLS, 2016). A high percentage of U.S. employees with less than ideal health significantly lowers productivity for U.S. organizations (BLS, 2016). Absenteeism contributes to productivity losses in excess of $74 million per year and is a major disruption in daily workflows (Kocakülâh et al., 2016; Lally, 2014). However, employers and employees can potentially increase productivity and profitability by addressing health issues, developing an organizational culture, and engaging employees (Lally, 2014). Therefore, managers face the challenge to find solutions to remedy the adverse effects of employee absenteeism. From the findings of this qualitative single case study, I revealed that IT managers can minimize employee absenteeism through workplace wellness and health programs, employee engagement, work-life balance programs, and changes to organizational culture.

The participants in this study shared their knowledge and indicated that managers can help shape the behaviors of employees and those employees react positively to programs implemented in the organization. I used the TPB as the conceptual framework to guide my exploration of reasons employees adopt certain behaviors in their decision to attend or not attend work. Ajzen (2015) and Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) posited that the TPB is useful to understand varying behaviors, such as nutritional choices, utilization of health services, and a person's intention to exercise. Managers in IT and in other

industries can benefit from the findings of this study by implementing strategies and

programs aimed at reducing employee absenteeism and improving the lives of

employees.

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Appendix A: Cooperation Letter from a Research Partner

Community Research Partner Name
Contact Information
Date

The doctoral student, Camilla Henry, is conducting a case study involving our organization and is therefore approved to collect interview data from leaders (which I will identify to the student) in support of that effort, in addition to analyzing internal, de-identified organization records that I deem appropriate to release for this purpose.

At the discretion of the partner organization's leadership, the student may analyze the partner organization's de-identified records, including: aggregate personnel/client records that have been de-identified before being provided to the doctoral student, other de-identified operational records, meeting minutes, digital/audio/video recordings created by the organization, training materials, protocols, manuals, reports, agreements, questionnaires that were collected under auspices of the partner organization as part of continuous improvement efforts, and other internal documents.

I understand that, as per the student doctoral program requirements, the student will publish a scholarly report of this case study project in ProQuest as a doctoral capstone (withholding the names of the organization and participating individuals), as per the following ethical standards:

a. In all reports (including drafts shared with peers and faculty members), the student is required to maintain confidentiality by removing names and key pieces of evidence/data that might disclose an organization's/individual's identity or inappropriately divulge proprietary details. If the organization itself wishes to publicize the findings of this project, that is the organization's judgment call.

b. The student will be responsible for complying with our organization's policies and requirements regarding data collection (including the need for the partner organization's internal ethics/regulatory approval, if applicable).

c. Via an Interview Consent Form, the student will describe to interviewees how the data will be used in the doctoral project and how all interviewee's privacy will be protected.

d. The doctoral student will not use these data for any purpose other than the project outlined in this agreement.

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

Signed,
Authorization Official
Contact Information

Appendix B: Invitation to Participate in Study

Date *mm/dd/yyyy*

Dear *Name of Participant*

My name is Camilla Henry and I am a doctoral student at Walden University. I am working on my research study to complete my Doctor of Business Administration degree with a concentration in Human Resources Management. I am conducting my research study on what strategies IT managers use to reduce employee absenteeism.

I am inviting you to participate in the research study because I identified you as a manager of an IT company in southern Maryland with firsthand experience dealing with employee absenteeism. Your voluntary participation in my research study will help to explore strategies to reduce employee absenteeism. The interview process will last approximately 30-45 minutes and will include eight open-ended questions (attached to this email). If you decide to participate in this study, you can carefully read the enclosed informed consent form.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact me at the information below. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Camilla Henry

camilla.henry@waldenu.edu

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol	
What I will do	What I will say—script
Introduce the interview and set the stage-over coffee (beverage)	Hello, thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. My name is Camilla Henry and I am a doctoral student at Walden University. I am conducting my doctoral study on the strategies IT managers use to reduce employee absenteeism. You were chosen to participate in this interview because of your role in implementing strategies to reduce absenteeism and improving productivity and profitability in your organization. The interview will last approximately 30 to 45 minutes and I will be asking semistructured open-ended questions. Your responses will be kept confidential and the information you provide will not be used to identify you or your organization. At this time, I would like to review the consent form you signed to participate in this study and give you the opportunity to ask follow up questions (at this time I will provide the participant a copy of the signed consent form for their records). At any time during the interview you may ask me to stop the interview. Do you have any questions or concerns at this time? If there are no questions, let us begin.
• Identify non-verbal queues • Paraphrase as required • Ask follow-up questions to get more in-depth information	1. How have employee absences affected your organization's productivity and profitability? 2. What strategies did you use to reduce employee absenteeism? 3. How did you determine the best strategies for reducing employee absenteeism? 4. What barriers did you encounter when implementing strategies to reduce IT employee absenteeism?

5. How did your organization address the key barriers to implementing successful strategies to reduce IT employees' absenteeism?
6. What responses did the employees exhibit to strategies implemented to reduce employee absenteeism?
7. What are the benefits of implementing strategies to reduce employee absenteeism?
8. What other information would you like to share regarding the development of strategies to reduce absenteeism that we have not discussed?

Potential follow up questions	1. How did you determine the appropriate wellness/health programs for your employees? 2. How does your organization track the effects of employee wellness programs? 3. How effective were your strategies in improving productivity and organizational profitability?
Wrap up the interview and thank the participant	Thank you for participating in this research study on employee absenteeism. I truly appreciate your time and information you provided to me.
Schedule follow-up member checking interview	In the coming days, I will contact you via email to provide you an opportunity to verify your responses to the interview questions.
Member checking follow-up email	Dear (Participant's name), Thank you for taking the time to participate in my doctoral research. I am emailing you as a follow up and to provide you the opportunity to validate my interpretation of your responses to my interview questions on (insert date). The attached file is my interpretation of your responses. I kindly ask that you respond to this email within 3 days any changes to my interpretations. Additionally, please email any relevant organizational documents that are public records that could benefit my research on strategies to reduce employee absenteeism. Thank you very much for your time and participation in my doctoral research.

Provide a copy of the succinct synthesis for each individual question	Enclosed in the email is a copy of my interpretation of the participant's responses.
	Question 1 and a succinct synthesis of the interpretation—one paragraph or more as needed
Information must be related and adhere to the IRB approval. I will go through each question and interpretation and ask the following:	Question 2 and a succinct synthesis of the interpretation—one paragraph or more as needed
	Question 3 and a succinct synthesis of the interpretation—one paragraph or more as needed
	Question 4 and a succinct synthesis of the interpretation—one paragraph or more as needed
Is there anything you would like to add?	Question 5 and a succinct synthesis of the interpretation—one paragraph or more as needed
	Question 6 and a succinct synthesis of the interpretation—one paragraph or more as needed
	Question 7 and a succinct synthesis of the interpretation—one paragraph or more as needed
	Question 8 and a succinct synthesis of the interpretation—one paragraph or more as needed

Appendix D: E-mail to Validate Researcher's Interpretations

Date: *dd/mm/yyyy*

Re: Doctoral Study Research: Strategies to Reduce Information Technology Employee Absenteeism in the Manufacturing Industry

Dear *(Participant's name),*

Thank you for taking the time to participate in my doctoral research study "Strategies to Reduce Information Technology Employee Absenteeism in the Manufacturing Industry." I am emailing you as a follow up to provide you the opportunity to validate my interpretation of your responses to my interview questions on (insert date). The attached file is my interpretation of your responses. I kindly ask that you respond to this e-mail within 3 days any changes to my interpretations. Additionally, please email any relevant organizational documents that are public records that could benefit my research on strategies to reduce employee absenteeism. Thank you very much for your time and participation in my doctoral research.

Regards,

Camilla Henry

DBA Candidate

Walden University