2022

Employee Engagement Strategies Call Center Managers Use to Increase Productivity and Profitability

Deirdre N. Skinner
Walden University

Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Deirdre N. Skinner

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Gwendolyn Dooley, Committee Chairperson, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Laura Thompson, Committee Member, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Yvonne Doll, University Reviewer, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2022

Abstract

Employee Engagement Strategies Call Center Managers Use to Increase Productivity and Profitability

by

Deirdre N. Skinner

MBA, University of Maryland University College, 2005

BA, Howard University, 1992

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

July 2022

Abstract

Decreased employee productivity can result in reduced organizational profitability. Call center leaders are concerned with decreased productivity as it cost call center leaders millions of dollars each year in profit loss. Grounded in leader-member exchange theory, the purpose of this basic qualitative study was to learn the employee engagement strategies nine call center managers in five different industries used to improve productivity in call centers. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews and review of company documents that included process improvement guides and publicly posted annual reports. The three themes that emerged from the thematic analysis were developing relationships, effective communication, and performance management. A key recommendation for call center leaders implementing employee engagement strategies to promote healthy exchange relationships. The implication for positive change is engaged employees could increase their support in community activities such as literacy programs, green initiatives, and tutoring programs.

Employee Engagement Strategies Call Center Managers Use to Increase Productivity and Profitability

by

Deirdre Skinner

MBA, University of Maryland University College, 2005

BA, Howard University, 1992

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

July 2022

Dedication

I dedicate this study to my parents, Beverly and George Singleton Jr.; my children Breaunna and Jordan; my grandbabies Cassidy and Breeze; my husband Victor; and my stepparents, Hope Singleton and Louis Stanley.

Mommy and Daddy, I am so grateful to God that you both are still alive to see me reach the end of my doctoral journey. You have been two of my biggest supporters since the beginning. Your unwavering support, encouragement, and prayers have meant the world to me.

Breaunna and Jordan, this journey has been over a decade for us, and it has been a struggle. I fought so hard to complete this journey so that you could see that with God and perseverance, you can achieve anything. With God, there is no limit. Set your sights high, work hard, and don't give up on your dreams. Obstacles will come and may slow your progress, but when you overcome them, understand that they were put in your path to strengthen you and prepare you for something coming in the future. I'm so proud of you both, and I know that God has great things in store for you.

Cassidy and Breeze, you two are the apples of my eyes. I will now have more time to spend with you. I am enjoying watching you grow. I have set an example for you to follow on your educational path. I look forward to celebrating as you achieve your goals.

Victor, we were married halfway through this journey, and your support has been amazing. Thank you for being my sounding board. I appreciate the many nights you burnt the midnight oil with me as I pushed to write my sections. I am grateful you were not a distraction pulling me from my goal. Instead, you were a driving force that pushed me towards my goal of obtaining a Doctorate. You are such a pillar of strength. I feel so blessed to have the yang to my yin.

Hope and Stan, I thank you for your support and for being great partners for my parents. Hope, it’s an incredible feeling to have such a prayer warrior on my team. Stan, you have always been great with the kids, and I thank you for all you do for them.

To my Godson Stefon, I look forward to celebrating all of the great things that God is going to do through you. A very special dedication to my God daughter Faith, who was such a beautiful soul with a bright future. Though you reached the milestone of achieving your Bachelors of Arts Degree, God called you home before we would see you walk across the stage. Your Mommy is doing a fantastic job keeping your dreams alive. Your spirit will live on forever.

Acknowledgments

If not for the favor and grace of God, I would not have been able to achieve this momentous accomplishment. I am so grateful to God for giving me what I needed to complete this journey. In addition, I'm thankful for all the prayers on my behalf; prayer changes things!

My committee chair, Dr. Gwendolyn Dooley, I appreciate the support, push, and guidance you've provided on this journey. We have been together for a very long time. You know my journey and most of the personal and academic challenges that I've faced. My only regret is that you were not my very first mentor. I don't believe I would have experienced most of those academic challenges, and I know I would have finished this journey long ago. Our weekly Team Dooley Zoom meetings were an integral part of my success in this program. You are truly one of a kind, and I am proud to be a member of Team Dooley. Committee members, Dr. Laura Thompson and Dr. Lionel de Souza, and Dr. Yvonne Doll I appreciate the feedback, and guidance you provided to help strengthen my study. Your support of this study is invaluable. I would like to give a special thank you to Dr. Doll for stepping in with such a short notice.

To my sister-friends, Angie, I appreciate your support with the kids when I traveled to attend my residencies. Felicia, thank you for your encouragement and support and for listening to my rants when I hit obstacles. Finally, Paulette, your encouraging words, support, and prayers have meant everything.

Thank you to my family members and friends who have encouraged and supported me. Thank you to my cousin, Pam Draine; you're the best! Finally, a very special thank you to my participants for taking time out of their lives to participate in this study.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Call centers are vital to the operations of companies in many industries. Since the 1990s, call centers have been an area of exploration for researchers (Sato, 2018). Employees in call centers experience a high rate of organizational change that can impact both the employees and the organization (Posey, 2019). It is common for company leaders to use restructurings to increase profitability (Sallehu, 2017). A leader's skillset can distinguish between successfully navigating employees through organizational changes or not (Bergstrom & Arman, 2017). The impact of employee engagement can either positively or negatively affect a company's profits (Caniels et al., 2018) In this section, I provide the business problem, the purpose, nature, and significance of the study. This section also includes a review of the scholarly literature relating to the study's problem, method, and design.

Background of the Problem

Employees in call centers experience organizational change events frequently. Schenkel and Teigland (2018) indicated that implementing downsizings or organizational changes can result in a lack of trust between managers and call center employees. The lack of trust happens when subordinates begin to distance from proactively participating positively, influencing any systemic organizational change effort.

The research regarding work and employee engagement strategies to increase productivity is minimal (Tanskanen et al., 2019). Managers who focus on motivating people through the change process may experience better employee engagement and productivity. George and Massey (2020) noted a need to learn how a leader's strategies impact engagement. Hartge et al. (2019) indicated that a lack of managerial strategies to impact work and employee engagement existed in a utility company in the original equipment manufacturing industry. Yanchus et al. (2020) suggested extending research to gain insight into the relativity of multi-level leadership practices to develop and manage workplace engagement. Therefore, in this study I explored multi-level management strategies that call center managers implemented that positively impacted employee and work engagement. I used the tenets of the leader-member exchange LMX theory to explore engagement strategies that affected employee engagement and organizational performance.

Problem Statement

Multiple, annual organizational change events cost managers $370 billion a year in productivity loss and low employee engagement (Parent & Lovelace, 2018). Specifically, disengaged and low performing call center employees cost companies over $1.41 million a year in profit loss (Adsit et al., 2018). The general business problem was that some call centers have multiple, annual, systematic organizational change events that affect personnel productivity, impacting organizational sustainability. The specific business problem for some call center managers was a lack of employee engagement strategies to increase productivity and profitability.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this basic qualitative inquiry was to explore the experiences and perceptions of call center managers that implemented employee engagement strategies to increase productivity and profitability. The target population included call center managers of call centers located in the United States. This population was appropriate because the call center managers implemented strategies to increase productivity by improving employee engagement. The findings of this study may lead to positive social change through helping improve economic conditions in the local communities of the call centers. Employment opportunities and employment continuity in call centers may result in increased patronage of local businesses and lead to job opportunities and financial stability for local businesses and community members. Call centers that stay open in local communities and do not send work out of the country or to other locations can be employers for local community members. Leaders may also initiate and support employee wellness programs and work-life balance initiatives. Engaged and productive employees may receive paid time off to participate in corporate social responsibility activities relating to literacy programs, green initiatives, and other community service projects.

Nature of the Study

In this study, I used the qualitative method. The qualitative method is a vigorous approach to gather and analyze data through inductive reasoning (Hammarberg et al., 2016). The qualitative method also involves context interpretations, processes, and understanding to learn about a phenomenon through the participant's personal experiences (Hammarberg et al., 2016). The qualitative method was the most appropriate to explore strategies leaders used to increase productivity and employee engagement during organizational changes. Using the qualitative method the leaders were able expound and provide breadth and depth about the employee engagement strategies that were used. The use of the quantitative method restricts subjectivity, so the participants in quantitative studies cannot expound upon individual encounters within the phenomena under study (Mohajan, 2020). The quantitative method was not appropriate for gathering and gaining insight from the first-hand descriptions of strategies used by call center managers. The mixed methods approach is a combination of procedures, ideas, approaches, and language of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies for dealing with phenomena (Tunarosa & Glynn, 2017). A mixed methods approach was not applicable because it is complex, time-consuming, and the numerical component was irrelevant to this study because the aim was to collect deep, meaningful insights into the phenomenon of employee engagement strategies in call centers.

A basic qualitative design was optimal for exploring the experiences and perceptions of leaders who experienced organizational change and were responsible for successfully leading subordinates through the change. The basic qualitative design was useful for learning strategies that call center managers used to motivate employees before, during, and after an organizational change. Use of a basic qualitative design can aid the researcher in undertaking an in-depth exploration of current phenomena (Jahja et al., 2021). The ethnographic design is helpful for researchers desiring to immerse themselves into the participant’s cultural setting to observe and gather data from the participant’s perspective (Bamkin et al., 2016). However, ethnography was not in line with the focus of this research. The narrative design is appropriate for researchers choosing to listen to and tell participants stories (Bruce et al., 2016), which was my objective in this study. Researchers use the phenomenological design to explore the phenomenon through the perceptions and interpretations of an individual’s lived experience (Annansingh & Howell, 2016). The use of the phenomenological design may have been beneficial for understanding how leaders could implement strategies to increase employee engagement; however, the possibility of multiple data collection methods available with a basic qualitative design was most suitable to the current study.

Research Questions

The overarching research questions were: What are the experiences and perceptions of call center managers who implemented employee engagement strategies to increase productivity and profitability? What employee engagement strategies did they implement?

Interview Questions

I asked call center managers the following interview questions to elicit the leadership and employee engagement strategies most effective to motivate employee productivity:

1. What engagement strategies do you use to increase employee engagement after and during an organizational change?
2. What was the impact of the implemented engagement strategies on productivity?
3. How do you determine if the engagement strategies increase productivity?
4. How do you measure productivity and profitability?
5. What challenges, if any, might prevent the deployment of engagement strategies to promote productivity?

6. What engagement strategies do you use to measure the engagement level of employees?
7. How, if at all, were employees involved in developing engagement strategies to increase productivity?
8. How do you address any barriers to employee engagement, such as work-life balance?
9. How did you communicate the engagement strategies to employees?
10. What input would you like to add to this topic that we might not have addressed?

Conceptual Framework

The chosen conceptual theory for this study was the LMX theory developed by Dansereau et al. (1975). The basis of the LMX theory is to understand and improve the leader/subordinate relationship (Liu et al., 2020). The LMX theory focuses on the exchange relationships between leaders and subordinates. The LMX relationships can develop into a relationship of high- or low-quality status depending on the working relationship between subordinate and leader (Arif et al., 2017). The LMX theory relates to job performance, employee engagement, and work attitudes. The theory's concepts of high- and low-quality relationships were applicable for understanding the impact of leader strategies on employee engagement (Bernerth et al., 2016). As leaders seek to remain competitive in specific industries, it is challenging to implement strategies that improve employee engagement (Jutras & Mathieu, 2016). Lloyd (2020) reported that call center managers face difficulty managing efficiency and productivity. Gupta and Sharma

(2018) asserted that high-quality LMX relationships positively impact employee engagement, employee extra-role performance, and employee resilience. This theory provided a lens through which to explore the leader and member relationship exchange regarding employee engagement.

Operational Definitions

Automated call distributor: A computer system that links a person's identification number to the phone system for routing incoming customer calls to their phone (Choi, 2018).

High-quality relationship: A less formal relationship between a leader and a member with high levels of interaction, trust, support, and engagement (Korkmaz, 2020).

LMX differentiation: When followers compare their LMX relationship with their coworkers (Matta & Dyne, 2020).

Low-quality relationship: A formal work relationship between a leader and member with low levels of interaction and little to no support. (Yang, 2020).

Productivity: Metrics, such as individual performance standards or customer calls, that are processed per hour, per employee (Parasuraman, 2010).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are nonfactual conclusions based on cognizance or experience (Armstrong & Kepler, 2018). I made four assumptions in this study. The assumptions were that (a) all participants would give honest and complete answers in the semistructured interviews, (b) the participants would take part in the whole of the study without dropping out, (c) there would be full cooperation of all participants, and (d) the administrator of the LinkedIn professional group that I planned to recruit participants from would grant access and allow me to post the participant recruitment flyer.

Limitations

Limitations are weaknesses in a study that the researcher cannot influence (Greener, 2018). I thought one limitation would be a lack of participation from call center managers. Another possible limitation was coordinating time for interviews with the participants. I was as accommodating as possible when coordinating the participant interviews. I reached saturation, and the data became redundant after the fourth interview; however, it strengthened the validity of the four participants to continue recruiting. I stopped recruiting at the ninth participant.

Delimitations

Delimitations are potential complications impacting the scope of the research (Knapp, 2017). For example, a complication occurred because the administrator of the LinkedIn professional group containing over 18,000 members that I intended to recruit from did not grant me access to the group. However, I was granted access to two other call center manager groups on LinkedIn. Another complication would have been if I were given access to the professional network but prohibited from posting the recruitment flyer. There was no intent to include any participants outside of the LinkedIn network. However, not enough participants responded to the recruitment flyer, so the participant pool also consisted of referrals from participants of individuals not in the LinkedIn network. The participants did not consist of any nonmanagement employees.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

Call center leaders concerned with meeting company objectives regarding efficient customer service, profitability, and having full employee participation may find the results of this study helpful. Call center leaders may also use the engagement strategies shared in the results to motivate employees who experience continuous organizational changes. Bandar and Kleiner (2019) stated that the company's profitability can flourish if strategies exist that (a) foster growth opportunities, (b) improve customer and employee experiences, and (c) attract and retain employees. Budriene and Diskiene (2020) imparted that the actions of engaged employees lead to higher productivity and profitability for organizations. Call center leaders could use the findings to improve processes that increase employee engagement, productivity, and profitability in their organizations.

Implications for Social Change

The results of this study have the potential to empower engaged to participate in community service programs like community clean ups, food and clothing drives and after school programs. Employees often participate in community building projects (Malenfant et al., 2019). The findings of this study could also lead to the organizational development and support of workplace wellness initiatives for employees' mental health, physical health, and work-life balance. Leaders may be able to use the findings to engage their employees to volunteer in corporate-sponsored community events. Leaders may also offer productive, engaged employees paid time off to volunteer at nonprofit organizations and participate in community service projects and event.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the experiences and perceptions of call center leaders who implement engagement strategies to increase productivity. This literature review contains extant literature on the topics of LMX and employee engagement. I used the following databases to collect extensive and relevant research on these topics: ABI Inform Collection, Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, Emerald Insight, Proquest, Sage, Science Direct, Taylor and Francis Online, and Thoreau Multi-Database. The problem statement guided my search for literature, purpose statement, and research question. The search terms used were *leader-member exchange, employee engagement, call centers, productivity, organizational changes*, and a combination of those terms. The majority of the articles included in this study were published within 5 years of my expected graduation year and range from 2017–2021. There are 190 peer-reviewed journal articles referenced in this document. Of the 190 peer-reviewed articles, 15 were published before 2017.

The literature review begins with a discussion of the LMX theory, components of the theory, and comparable and contrasting theories. The review also includes relevant literature on the topics of employee engagement, organizational change, and call centers.

LMX Theory

The conceptual framework for this study was the LMX theory. Developed by Dansereau et al in 1975, LMX theory began from the vertical dyadic linkage (VDL) approach (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). VDL helped describe the outcomes of the differentiated relationship in teams or work units (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Like LMX, VDL was resourceful for studying the relationship between a leader and each member within organizations (Dansereau et al., 1975). Bauer and Green (1996) posited that with VDL, over time, superiors would assume either the leadership (i.e., leading without authority) or supervisory (i.e., leading with authority only) role with their members. Much like the LMX high-quality relationships, the leadership role of VDL was an informal, interpersonal relationship with employees known as the *in-group* (Dansereau et al., 1975). In comparison, the supervisory role of VDL was a member relationship that was formal and contractual with employees known as the *out-group*, just as it is in the low-quality relationship of LMX (Dansereau et al., 1975). Call center leaders need to understand how to navigate LMX relationships with the demanding nature of call center work.

Understanding the LMX framework may benefit leaders who want to enhance their leader/member relationships. The LMX theory is an enhancement to VDL and is the framework researchers use to explain the development and consequences of differentiated relationships within organizations (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Some of the consequences that impact the organization are turnover, performance, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and job climate (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). A few of the outcomes found to impact the direct relationship between the member and the subordinate are loyalty, interaction patterns, decision influence, and frequency of communication (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Most of the outcomes are what leaders contend with daily, either at the group or organizational level. Leaders who become familiar with and implement LMX may see employee engagement and productivity improvements.

The classifications of LMX relationships are high-quality LMX and low-quality LMX. Rashid et al. (2018) conveyed that relationship exchange quality is at the core of LMX relationships. An LMX relationship occurs when leaders and members develop relationships with high or low quality (Liu et al., 2020). Arif et al. (2017) imparted that the LMX leader relationship is built over time and is based on individual interactions that set the tone of either high- or low-quality relationships. Lloyd et al. (2017) noted that the quality of the LMX relationship influences employee engagement, which affects organizational change outcomes. Therefore, leaders should be mindful when classifying subordinates who keep the business running.

Tenets of LMX

Seo et al. (2018) shared that the key tenet of LMX is the differentiated relationships between leaders and followers. A lack of resources, like time, guidance, and support, sometimes forces some leaders to choose between members, which causes differentiation (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Based on the employees' performances, leaders decide which employees will benefit from the resources (Dansereau et al., 1975). Krishnan (2004) also acknowledged that the basis of LMX is the different relationships that leaders develop with their followers, called either in-group or out-group. The in-group is the favored members, and the out-group is the not as favored members (Krishnan, 2004). Leading through organizational changes may leave minimal time for leaders to focus on every member and manage a successful change; therefore, leaders need to choose a select few to implement the changes that come with the overall organizational change. The LMX theory was relevant to this study because it helped me learn strategies leaders used to improve LMX relationships, employee engagement, and productivity in call centers.

Other key factors of LMX are trust, respect, and obligation. Bauer and Green (1996) identified trust building as a key factor in LMX relationship building. Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) shared that leaders implementing LMX develop differentiated relationships based on mutual trust, respect, and obligation. Engaged employees have high levels of mutual trust, respect, and obligation with their leader, while disengaged employees have leader relationships with low levels of mutual trust, respect, and obligation (Yukl et al., 2009). Leaders showing trust, respect, and support to employees found that those same employees reciprocated the same behaviors.

A shift in LMX led to the inclusion of the social exchange concept of reciprocity to explain differentiated relationships Liao et al. (2018). The connection between LMX and reciprocity is the exchange of resources between the leader and member (Liao & Chun, 2021). The reciprocal relationship transpires when both the leader and member perceive that each has value (Wayne et al., 1997). The reciprocal item of value for the member may be support, autonomy, training, or acknowledgment from the leader (Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu, 2018). For the leader, the reciprocal item of value from the member may be a positive attitude, engagement, and willingness to support peers (Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu, 2018). Reciprocity was vital to building successful high-quality LMX relationships. For example, call center managers may benefit from healthy, reciprocal LMX relationships when employees improve their level of productivity.

High-Quality LMX Relationships

High-quality LMX relationships have mutual trust, respect, and influence characteristics (Yukl et al., 2009). Hirvi et al. (2021) indicated that an individual's emotions and social factors affect mutual trust in LMX relationships. Byun et al. (2017) indicated that a positive association exists between mutual trust, employee performance, and the exchange relationship quality between leaders and members. The member's perception of the leader's level of work competence impacted the level of trust and respect the member had towards the exchange relationship (Byun et al., 2017). The leader's depth of mutual trust, respect, and influence may vary from member to member.

High-quality members may experience better performance ratings and work outcomes as well as a stronger sense of organizational support. High-quality members have higher employee engagement, perform well on assignments, and take on extra-role behaviors (Hsiung & Bolino, 2018). High-quality subordinates, also the in-group, experience higher trust levels; better communication channels; and additional resources, rewards, and favors (Joseph, 2016). The in-group experiences lower stress levels and higher job performance levels, which is essential during transitional periods. Leaders developing high-quality relationships may notice a positive shift in employee behavior, productivity, and organizational support.

A high-quality LMX relationship cannot exist without reciprocity. High-quality followers reciprocate for extra resources, favors, attention, rewards, and support from leaders (Lee et al., 2019). Followers applying reciprocity cause behaviors and actions that move the organization towards meeting or exceeding goals (Rashid et al., 2018). Arguably, Liao et al. (2018) posited that reciprocity is not necessarily continual in high-quality relationships and may not result in positively influencing employee engagement. They showed evidence of high-quality members' refusal to reciprocate when members' perception of the leader's resources was less than their output. Consistent reciprocity may be sustainable strategy managers use to boost employee engagement and increase productivity.

Some high-quality employees have difficulty witnessing the unfair treatment of coworkers and may disengage. He et al. (2017) argued that high-quality relationships consist of interactional justice and a leader's treatment of an individual. He et al. posited that high-quality followers witnessing the unfair treatment of a coworker can jeopardize their LMX relationship. Some high-quality followers are willing to sacrifice their high-quality treatment to see their peers treated with fairness (He et al., 2017). Influential leaders are mindful of their treatment of each follower. The behavior of an unconscientious leader could cause previously engaged followers to disengage.

Leaders who have high-quality relationships and good communication with their superiors could have the same with subordinates. Korkmaz (2020) reported that leaders who openly communicate and influence their superiors are more impactful at the operational level. Leaders who have high-quality relationships with superiors develop better exchange relationships with subordinates (Korkmaz, 2020). The superior support that leaders receive may result in enhanced communication and work habits of subordinates. Yang (2020) revealed that high-quality leader-to-leader exchanges positively impact LMX relationships. Leaders in high-quality leader-to-leader exchange relationships are given more work resources for their subordinates (Yang, 2020). Using the cross-over theory, Guttermann et al. (2017) showed that leaders who practice high-quality behaviors within their supervisory network positively influence their leader-follower relationships. Employees watch the interaction between management and may decide to engage or disengage based on their perception of the leader's interaction.

Low-Quality LMX Relationships

Jokisaari and Vuori (2018) posited that LMX leaders have contractual relationships with low-quality members. Employees in low-quality relationships perform their job duties as contractually required (Xu & Wang., 2019). Gupta and Sharma (2018) shared supporting research revealing that low-quality members do not perform work outside their job requirements. Some low-quality employees may not execute any job functions outside their job description.

Out-group employees are not favored and are unlikely to assist when needed; subordinates in low-quality relationships are also known as the out-group (Jian & Dalisay, 2017). Out-group members are less than favored and do not exchange resources with leaders (Muldoon et al., 2019). Leaders may have difficulty managing subordinates in the out-group and, as a result, may be unlikely to engage them unless necessary. The out-group does not benefit from relationship-building opportunities and does not offer assistance with organizational matters (Lee & Varon, 2020). The out-group are not individuals that will go above and beyond to help meet organizational metrics.

The lack of leader attention may lead to health- and job-related issues for low-quality members. Park et al. (2020) conveyed that low-quality members have lower self-esteem and engage in harmful behaviors towards coworkers and customers. Low-quality members are aloof and negatively affect job satisfaction, retention, and health (Vito & Sethi, 2020). Kakkar (2019) stated that leaders are not responsive to the low-quality member's request for support. Low-quality members may not respond well when leaders show no regard for their well-being.

Before placing a follower in the low exchange category, leaders should learn the reason for the disengagement. Lemmon et al. (2020) shared that the lack of engagement could happen for health or personal reasons that deplete the employee's energy. Personal issues outside of work may cause a distraction and be the reason why employees do not perform at work. Wu et al. (2018) shared that low-quality followers experiencing emotional conflict had lower levels of innovation and engagement. An employee's decision to only perform expected job duties may happen for many reasons, so a leader desiring to improve employee engagement should learn the reasons for the lack of engagement.

LMX Differential

Leaders practicing LMX may encounter differentiation among members. The implementation of LMX can lead to differentiated relationships between leaders and members (Seo et al., 2018). Differentiation is when individuals compare their relationships to others (Lapointe et al., 2020). Exchanges between the leader and follower are generally visible within workgroups causing the differentiation (Hassan & Omilion-

Hodges, 2018). Employees may respond negatively to organizational changes if there is a difference in leader treatment (Yoon & Yoon, 2019). Eichenseer et al. (2020) asserted that leaders with high leader-member exchange differential (LMXD) within their workgroup are less effective communicators and leaders. Leaders should try to account for the possible repercussions of LMXD in the workplace.

Leaders need to understand the impact of LMXD on subordinates' feelings and mindsets. Man-Ling and Cheng-Feng (2018) argued that applying LMXD could lead to feelings of isolation and frustration. Yu et al. (2018) contended that LMXD might have benefits at the individual level; however, at the group level, LMXD can cause animosity. Hu and Liden (2018) noted that in-group or high-quality members experience envy and ostracism from coworkers who are not part of the in-group. Wang and Li (2018) showed that envy and ostracism amongst team members positively relates to counterwork behaviors. In a similar context, Wulani and Lindawati (2018) posited that it is common for high-quality members to develop negative feelings towards out-group members and show disrespect. Employees that are jealous or do not feel a part of the team may prevent the team from working together as a cohesive unit. The division that differentiated relationships can create between members can impede the progress of change.

Leaders displaying preferential treatment toward subordinates may create a hostile environment in the workplace. Members on the low-quality side of LMXD consider the preferential treatment of high-quality members as favoritism (Man-Ling & Cheng-Feng, 2018). In contrast, Chen et al. (2018) advised preferential treatment is tolerated if skill level and task performance are the basis for the treatment. The consequences that come with preferential treatment could affect productivity within the workgroup. According to Wang and Li (2018), low-quality followers compare their relationships to high-quality peers to justify snubbing or giving the cold shoulder. In corroboration, Wulani and Lindawati (2018) found that follower-to-follower relationship comparison leads to the low-quality member displaying deviant behavior towards the high-quality member and not the leader. Leaders must consider that despondency can occur when low-quality members perceive treatment as unfavorable (Yoon & Yoon, 2019). Despondent employees are not likely to respond to a leader’s efforts to improve employee engagement.

Circumventing counterproductive behaviors is vital for leaders to successfully lead an organization through multiple changes. In a study of 85 participants, Newton and Perlow (2021) advised that angry low-quality members exhibited counterproductive work behaviors. A leader’s lack of support for low-quality followers can result in counterproductive work behaviors not beneficial to transitioning organizations. (Mao et al., 2019). Researchers Jawahar et al. (2018) posited that low-quality members engage in counterproductive behaviors that can affect productivity after comparing relationships. According to Jawahar et al. individuals with longer work histories at the same company engage in counterproductive activities more frequently. Leaders cannot know how subordinates will respond to relationship differences within a workgroup. However, leaders have to answer to upper management when organizational performance is below objectives.

Supporting and Contrasting Theories

This study's supporting and contrasting themes are social exchange theory, transformational leadership theory, transactional leadership theory, and authoritative leadership theory. The social exchange, transformational, transactional, and authoritative theories are helpful to learn about employee relationships, productivity, and organizational performance (Singh et al., 2020). These theories are all applicable, and the information found will support the areas of study for this project.

Social Exchange Theory

The social exchange theory is fundamental for the development of exchange relationships within the workplace. Founded by Blau in 1964, social exchange functions on the principle of reciprocity. Social exchange is the nonverbal obligation between individuals to exchange resources, also called reciprocity (Pattnaik, 2018). Shaw et al. (2019) argued that the reciprocity of resources and gifts are not usually of equal value. Research by Wang et al. (2019) indicated that employee organizational relationships positively impact high-quality social exchange behaviors and negatively impact low-quality relationships. Leaders understanding the principle of reciprocity may learn how to improve and maintain LMX relationships.

Some followers may be motivated to engage in work based on the leader's treatment. Using the social exchange theory Yin (2018) produced research indicating that the leader-member relationship is motivated by the employee's perception of the leader's intent to provide organizational rewards. According to Parmer and Dillard (2019), a follower's decision to engage or disengage directly results from their perception of the leader’s treatment. To encourage employee engagement, leaders should treat each follower with care.

During organizational change, knowledge sharing may be an effective strategy to encourage employee engagement and successful transition. Using the social exchange theory, Kim et al. (2017) conveyed that high-quality LMX members share tacit and explicit knowledge. In comparison, members in low-quality LMX relationships hoard tacit and explicit knowledge, not sharing information. Kim (2019) imparted that high-performing employees are more willing to share knowledge with fellow employees in trusting relationships. Kim also shared that low-performing employees in less trusting leader relationships are unwilling to share knowledge. In contrast, a study by Weng et al. (2020) indicated that knowledge hiding amongst members is more prevalent with coworkers who envy one another’s LMX relationship. Leaders should engage low trusting employees in knowledge-sharing relationships before, during, and after organizational changes to improve knowledge sharing.

A disengaged follower may change his behavior when he feels that his leader is fair. Haynie et al. (2019) marked a positive influence on social exchange relationships and employee engagement when followers’ perceptions of procedural and distributive justice are positive. According to research results from Gill et al. (2019), followers that feel their leaders are fair and trust them to perform their work duties will reciprocate and, in return, trust their leaders. Leaders need to remember that employees are not the same and should receive fair and equal treatment.

Transformational Leadership

Some leadership styles may be more effective for motivating followers into engagement and productivity. Transformational leadership, started by Burns in 1978 and furthered by Bass in 1980, is a leadership style effective for influencing productivity, employee engagement, and organizational change (Mehrad et al., 2020). Ribeiro et al. (2018) shared that transformational leaders motivate followers to improve performance, exceed organizational goals, and improve organizational outcomes.

Transformational leadership comprises four components: individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and individualized influence (Page & Schoder, 2019). Aymn (2018) posited that the tenets of transformational leadership, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration are successful strategies leaders use to motivate

Idealized influence. Occurs when a leader’s highly ethical behavior becomes the role model for followers (Page & Schoder, 2019). Wang and Lei (2018) produced research results that indicated a positive relationship between ethical leadership and organizational commitment. Committed employees adapt quickly to organizational change and exhibit behaviors that contribute to an organization’s successful transition. Al-edenat (2018) revealed that organizational results improved because transformational leaders provided a good work environment and motivated employees to increase their work performance. Usman et al. (2018) revealed that followers trust transformational leaders and work in unison to exceed organizational goals.

Inspirational motivation. Materializes when leaders promote the visualization of the organization to a point where followers contribute to bringing the new vision into fruition (Page & Schoder, 2019). Islam et al. (2018) disclosed that leaders focused on collectivity, respect, loyalty, and understanding the needs of followers garnered more support from followers during times of change.

Intellectual Stimulation. Transpires when leaders encourage followers to think independently and innovatively, even questioning methods and procedures (Page & Schoder, 2019). Xu and Wang (2019) posited that followers would creatively engage in change management activities when reassured that no punitive actions will result during the trial-and-error period of the creative process. Hicks (2018) offered that followers experience growth and development when leaders use inquiry to encourage followers to think of solutions while working through issues.

Individualized Consideration. Occurs when a leader listens to input from followers and responds with feedback and possibly implementations (Page & Schoder, 2019). Azim et al. (2019) conveyed that employees are more willing to share innovative ideas and engage in organizational activities relating to organizational transitioning when leaders are supportive.

Some followers find it easier to produce and engage when working under the leadership of someone genuine and motivational. Jha (2019) posited that when transformational leaders exhibit behaviors that encourage, inspire, and provide course correction, employees are more engaged and have trust and mutual admiration for leaders. Jangsiriwattana (2019) imparted that the transformational leadership style often leads to intrinsic motivation and extra-role behaviors. Through their behaviors, transformational leaders motivate followers to learn the organization's goals and improve employee engagement and productivity to achieve those goals (Ribeiro et al., 2018). In opposing view researchers, Parveen and Adeinat (2019) argued that transformational leaders create stress and burnout in the workplace. The researchers produced supporting research denoting followers were stressed out and burned out trying to meet the expectations of the transformational leader (Parveen & Adeinat, 2019). Motivational leaders are more apt to inspire followers to stay engaged and work through organizational changes.

Leaders knowing which strategies to use and when to use them may help to increase productivity and employee engagement amongst followers. Gerards et al. (2018) presented study results affirming that transformational leaders who strategize are successful in enhancing work engagement when the focus is on (a) managing the way employees work, (b) allowing employees easy access to organizational knowledge, and (c) creating an office workspace with an open concept design. The results apply to employees working from home or in the traditional brick-and-mortar setting. Chin et al. (2019) supported findings that transformational leaders positively impact employee engagement and productivity by exhibiting motivational, mentally stimulating behaviors and showing genuine interest professionally and personally. Aun et al. (2019) produced research of 1,126 participants who indicated that organizations with transformational leaders have employees who engage. The employees also showed an increase in performance (Aun et al., 2019). Leaders that can be flexible with the strategies to engage followers may prove more successful at increasing the level of engagement in followers.

Followers that experience multiple organizational changes may not trust that leaders are concerned with their best interest and may be unwilling to disengage. Caniels et al. (2018) produced study results indicating transformational leaders do not improve employee engagement of followers who do not have open mindsets and are not proactively striving for growth. Busari et al. (2019) conveyed followers respond positively to change when transformational leaders promote trust and offer opportunities for employees to participate in the change process. Followers experiencing multiple organizational changes could exhibit challenging behaviors perceived as resistance. The challenging behaviors could be fear or a lack of trust in leadership.

Transactional Leadership Theory

Some employees respond better to a more task-oriented style of leadership. Transactional leadership has three components (a) contingent reward - an exchange between leader and follower, where the follower receives rewards based on their efforts (Jangsiriwattana, 2019), (b) active management by exception – the leader scrutinizes and takes punitive measures for employees that make errors or violates rules (Jangsiriwattana, 2019), (c) passive management by exception or passive avoidant - is when a leader disciplines if employees do not meet requirements; or if a problem is identified (Khaola & Coldwell, 2019). Leaders should learn which leadership styles work best for each follower and adapt to that follower.

Leaders that are more concerned with followers completing daily assigned tasks may not promote employee creativity. Jia et al. (2018) offered that transactional leaders are concerned with meeting daily work activities and goals and have no interest in encouraging innovation. Shkoler and Tziner (2020) advised that transactional leaders positively impact employees' drive to complete work; however, the results for employee engagement were just the opposite. Transactional leaders set clear expectations and reward or discipline the followers based on their work performance (Tirmizi et al., 2019). A transactional leader would not be a good fit for an organization promoting employee engagement.

Hiring managers should know the leadership style of potential candidates for a job. Li et al. (2018) presented results indicating that transformational and transactional leadership styles were impactful for engagement. However, transactional leadership was the least effective of the two and is not the type of leader to oversee engagement activities (Li et al., 2018). Kuntz et al. (2019) study results revealed that employees are less likely to (a) engage in extra-role behaviors, (b) feel committed to an organization, or (c) respond positively to an organizational change when led by a transactional leader. Harriss (2019) noted that the behaviors of transactional leaders led to employees having higher rates of absence due to sickness and lower employee satisfaction. Followers led by transactional leaders may not be inclined to go the extra mile to help meet organizational goals.

Authoritative Leadership Theory

There may be environments where authoritarian leadership may be necessary to achieve organizational goals. Tirmizi et al. (2019) indicated that authoritative leaders set clear expectations, high standards, and strict. Authoritative leaders use punitive measures to deal with failures or non-conformance and lead with strict and controlling behaviors (He et al., 2018). Joshi and Jha (2017) collected research from mid and upper-level managers and found that their leadership style of preference is authoritative when the organization's survival is at stake. Some leaders may believe that leading authoritatively is the only effective way to lead.

A leader's authoritative behavior could be why subordinates are not engaging. Brown et al. (2019) shared followers are less likely to engage when a leader's behavior is verbally aggressive, temper mental, dismissive, teasing, and ridiculing. Their results indicated that followers are more apt to engage when a leader's style is inspirational, informative, performance-driven, and team integrator (Brown et al., 2019). Erkutlu and Chafra (2018) posited that leaders exhibiting behavior deemed arrogant, distrustful, nonempathetic, exploitive, unethical, unfair, and unable to take criticism are behaviors that impact a follower's decision to engage more or not. Leaders displaying such behaviors are practicing what Erkutlu and Chafra term despotic leadership, which is behaviors practiced by leaders that are only concerned with their self-interest, dominance, and supremacy. Followers in low-quality relationships following a leader exhibiting a Despotic leader's behaviors may not feel compelled to change their exchange relationship status.

Some leaders may believe that leading with intimidation is the only way to achieve results. Authoritative leaders tend to criticize or ridicule followers for mistakes to illustrate to other followers what could happen to them if errors are made (Duan et al., 2018). Kanwal et al. (2019) denoted that transactional and authoritative leaders are positively associated with creating workplace ostracism amongst frontline employees. However, the results showed a more substantial negative relationship with authoritative leadership (Kanwal et al., 2019). The researchers posit that authoritative leaders are not suitable for leading frontline employees. Sudha and Shahnawaz (2020) explored the relationship between leaders with narcissistic behavior and authoritative leadership and found that narcissistic leaders were also authoritative. Also, neither were successful at motivating employees to perform beyond expectation (Sudha & Shahnawaz, 2020). The leader behaviors best suited for achieving organizational outcomes and encouraging employees to engage in extra-role behaviors and increase productivity do not appear authoritative or narcissistic.

Organizational Change

In a continuous effort to increase profits and remain relevant in consumers' eyes, leaders must continuously look for opportunities for growth and expansion. Creating healthy leader-follower exchange relationships is vital to organizations traversing through organizational change (Muldoon et al., 2019). Leaders use LMX to explore the impact of leader-follower relationships on organizational change outcomes during peak and nonpeak periods of transition (Joseph, 2016). A stratified sample from Arif et al. (2017) denoted that LMX relationships and organizational changes are successful when good governance and flexible (a) policies, (b) regulations, and (c) rules are in effect. Call center leaders leading through organizational change should learn about the LMX. As leaders implement organizational changes such as mergers and acquisitions, downsizings, and restructurings, it would be beneficial to learn how to navigate those changes effectively.

Members who have adequate support for an organizational change can positively affect the results that leaders expect to see from the change event (Ouedraogo & Ouakouak, 2018). Employees need two-way communication and support from supervisors when implementing organizational change strategies (Matthysen & Harris, 2018). The information posted in a Gallup study (2018) indicated leaders who focus and support employees during an organizational change were able to achieve 14%-29% profit and a 9%-15% increase in employees who engage. Vito and Sethi (2020) communicated that the most successful organizational changes include leaders and members in the planning and execution stages. Leaders should consider involving employees in the planning phases of organizational changes.

Organizational change is prevalent in many organizations; learning the many types of changes may benefit leaders. Brandt et al. (2019) disclosed four types of organizational change. The changes are: (a) fine tuning-small expected changes like continuous process; (b) adaptation-pressure from external factors causing leaders to scale up or down within the current framework; (c) new direction-the change that ignites when key stakeholders make decisions, legislation changes, or delegation occurs that forces the organization to transform its culture; (d) major transformation–transpires when a rapid external disruptive event occurs that could disturb the organization's foundation. Kerber and Buono (2018) posited that while there are many different leadership strategies, what worked for one organizational change may not be effective for the following change. Leaders should learn from their followers and carefully ascertain how change leadership strategies may be most effective for change initiatives.

Leaders that can have followers believe and trust them may be very successful with change implementation. Ouedraogo and Ouakouak (2018) divulged that leader communication positively relates to employee trust and employee affective commitment to successfully implementing organizational change. Dumas and Beinecke (2018) offered similar findings that leaders practicing change leadership are versed in the current trends for their field, communicate with their followers, and stimulate employee participation. In contrast, researchers Graaf et al. (2019) shared research indicating that top-down communication was an ineffective strategy. The leaders posit that the best form of communication was in person, and it was concise. Leaders that are transparent and engaged with followers may find that employees are more trusting of leadership, open to change, and engaged in work.

Merger and Acquisitions

Another way executives seek to increase profits, and shareholder wealth is through mergers and acquisitions. Mergers and acquisitions are consolidation strategies leaders use to gain market leverage, increase customer base, and expand into new technology products and services (Shah & Butt, 2019). Marina et al. (2020) posited that companies merge and are acquired for diversification in the market to reach corporate goals for expansion. Leaders should expect that a high level of synergy and high morale will result from the acquisition.

With mergers and acquisitions, leaders need to account for the possibility that the headcount may need to decrease. Leaders should also ensure that employees are ready for the change. Rozen-Bakher (2018) shared that mergers and acquisitions can be effective for achieving profit; however, they can cause unemployment for the employee. Rahi and Ahmad (2020) stated that the implementation of change could be very complicated based on the employees' readiness for change. The researchers posited that employees ready for change exhibited greater perceived autonomy, perceived relatedness with employees, and perceived competence (Rahi & Ahmad, 2020). With any merger or acquisition, there is always a possibility that someone will lose their job.

Leaders have many reasons for pursuing a merger or acquisition; a newer trend is innovations. Dezi et al. (2018) presented results that indicated that innovation is positively related to mergers and acquisitions. In support, researchers Entezarkheir and Moshiri (2019) also produced study results indicating the direct correlation between innovations and mergers. They noted that the drug and electrical industries were the most prevalent, and the least prevalent were the chemistry and computers industries (Entezarkheir & Moshiri, 2019). Therefore, a transformational leader would be optimal for leading employees through a merger or acquisition.

Leaders and employees can benefit from mergers and acquisitions and refine behaviors that increase employee engagement. Chang (2018) offered that both the merged and the acquired company employees need to know that (a) their jobs are secure,

(b) that support is given through and after the merger, and (c) that there will be knowledge sharing and growth opportunities. In support, researchers Aristos et al. (2018) communicated that the new company's culture must exist, and existing employees are encouraged to engage and provide assistance through the change. Leaders and followers working as a team through a merger or acquisition could make the transition successful.

Downsizing

Downsizing is another change strategy leaders use to cut costs and improve profitability. Downsizing occurs for many different reasons. Some are to maximize profits, increase shareholder wealth, technological developments, deregulation, privatization of industries, and industry and firm-specific changes (Carriger, 2018). McClure (2019) described downsizing as a change management strategy to improve organizational efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness through employee elimination. Employee eliminations are associated with many different names, such as downsizing, rightsizing, reduction-in-force, layoffs, early retirement, voluntary separation, outsourcing, and offshoring (Matthysen & Harris, 2018). Known by many different names, the downsizing goal is to cut costs and increase profits for organizations.

Downsizing may not be as effective at reducing costs to the organization as leaders think. Carriger (2018) found that multiply downsizings are ineffective in reducing organizational costs. The researcher found that multiply downsizings harmed the survivors and their intention to continue working. According to Zorn et al. (2017), downsizing events from an organizational change perspective can cause bankruptcy. It is a very disruptive event for organizations, productivity, and employees (Zorn et al., 2017).

As a survivor of downsizing, not knowing when the next downsizing event will be can be unnerving. Not knowing if you will be next in line can cause great feelings of angst.

Employees remaining after a downsizing may have anxiety regarding their future with the downsized company. Employees remaining after a downing sizing are known as survivors. Survivor syndrome was founded in 1992 by Joel Brocker and is a term for expected behaviors and reactions displayed by individuals remaining following an adverse or unwanted event (Bui et al., 2019). Employees who are a part of the attrition may not think of or refer to one another as survivors but may still fear being next.

Leaders failing to engage downsizing survivors could cost the company losses in profits as employees begin to disengage. Downsizing events lacking provisions for remaining employees can lead to a far more significant loss of employees and income than expected (Pandey, 2018). Tiwari and Usha (2018) expressed that leaders must appropriately plan strategies to engage the downsizing survivors. Without a plan of action for survivors, there could be feelings of abandonment, and there may be potential to fall into counterproductive behaviors

Learning how to motivate survivors of downsizing may be imperative for success. Miller et al. (2019) contended that the survivors of their study had feelings of appreciation for not being laid off. There was a felt sense of loyalty, resilience, and motivation to help one another through the change. However, survivors may carry heavier workloads, and leaders should prepare for counterproductive work behaviors. Akanni et al. (2018) asserted that survivors feeling challenged by work conditions, powerless, and insecure about their job exhibited counterproductive work behaviors. In support of researchers, Oluwole et al. (2020) posited results that confirmed counterproductive work behaviors such as sabotage, withdrawal, and disengagement can become problems with downsized survivors. The goal for any leader leading through an organizational change should be to keep followers engaged and productive.

Call Centers

Call centers have evolved into more than operation centers with operators waiting to assist callers. Some have progressed into sophisticated domestic and international mega centers that assist customers despite anyone's global location. Employees working at call centers provide various levels of support to customers for products and services, ranging from customer assistance, billing, provisioning, directory assistance, and technical assistance. Call centers are either inbound agents receiving calls or outbound agents making calls (Oztaysi et al., 2020). For most industries, call centers represent s cost-effective service delivery model and have become one of the fastest growing employment sectors in the world

Call center work environments can be stressful. Call centers have a high turnover rate due to the stressful nature of call center work (Dhanpat et al., 2018). Breaugh (2021) offered research results indicating that employees who experienced higher stress levels had low levels of employee engagement. An exploratory study conducted by Posey (2019) revealed that stress and turnover in call centers are high due to (a) lack of training and resources to perform job functions and (b) dysfunctional work relations with management and coworkers. Zito et al. (2018) produced results indicating that call center employees are less stressed and more engaged when controlling some of their workloads.

Also, when there are resources and support to perform their jobs efficiently. Leaders need to know strategies to reduce stress encountered in a call center.

Employees in call centers are considered frontline employees and are responsible for providing excellent customer and meeting company objectives. Representatives should answer each call, address the customer’s need, and end the call in a specified amount of time (Gorgens-Ekermans & Kotze, 2020). The environment of call centers is unique, and there is no face-to-face contact with customers. The focus of management in call centers is achieving quantitative targets. The customers’ quality can suffer as call center representatives strive to meet the metrics set to measure performance (Sato, 2018). Study results from Choi (2018) indicated that both digital and human knowledge resources positively improve call center performance results. Leaders measure the productivity and performance of the employee using technical equipment called automatic call distributor.

A change in leaders' behavior could be the difference between a disengaged and engaged employee. The findings from research presented by Khan et al. (2019) denoted that destructive leader behaviors significantly impact job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and job stress on call center representatives. Leon and Morales (2018) presented results indicating that when leaders display people-oriented leadership behaviors like (a) being considerate of followers’ needs, (b) including them in discussions, and (c) seeking to develop them, followers were less likely to be disengaged. Disengaged employees may require more of a leader’s time and attention to the transition from disengaged to engaged.

Employee Engagement in Call Centers

Employee engagement is vital to the success of an organization. Employee engagement, a concept developed by Kahn in 1990, is a behavior employees exhibit who are motivated, committed, and enthusiastic about work (Kumar, 2019). Engaged employees often go above and beyond to achieve results (Kumar, 2019). Engaged employees are committed to their jobs.

Call center leaders not familiar with employee engagement should learn about it. Charhar and Hatwal (2018) advised that employee engagement does not just happen; there must be integrity, trust, commitment, and communication between leaders and followers. Parent and Lovelace (2018) informed that leaders could positively impact employee engagement after creating a positive organizational culture. In contrast, Lemmon et al. (2020) argued that leaders should consider that not all employees have the mental and physical capacity to engage fully. Lemmon et al. posited that some individuals might lack personal resources like health and wellness and may have personal issues that inhibit their work engagement. Leaders leading for change should learn how to keep followers fully engaged in achieving organizational goals.

Leaders may need to do a strategic plan of action to determine how to engage their followers. Matthews (2018) conveyed leaders of most companies do not have a strategic plan for achieving employee engagement. Matthews posits that while leaders may send out employee surveys regarding employee engagement, the feedback is used more for rhetorical than proactive measures. When leaders follow up on survey results and address problem areas, employees may feel a sense of belonging and become more engaged in work.

Making someone feel valued and appreciated may be a way to encourage them to do extraordinary things. Danish et al. (2020) posited that employees with good working relationships with their supervisors are also engaged and satisfied in their workplace. De Clerk et al. (2018) revealed that employees who believed their employer is genuine and has their best interest would engage and help out in whatever capacity needed. The research also indicated that participants had job satisfaction and felt their particular job was essential to the organization.

The LMX relationship outcome can negatively or positively impact employee productivity, organizational metrics, and the bottom line. Quade et al. (2020) posited that leaders who focus on meeting bottom-line objectives develop low-quality relationships and struggle to meet organizational objectives. Subordinates perceive the leader’s bottom-line mentality as self-serving, decreasing their work performance and productivity (Quade et al., 2020). Employees engaging in work is a good way for leaders to gauge possible individual-level and organizational outcomes (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). Albrecht et al. (2018) offered that employee engagement is positively associated with individual and organizational outcomes. Employees who participate in their daily expected functions contribute to organizational outcomes. Leaders would like to see extra-role behaviors outside of the daily expected tasks.

Employee Engagement Strategies

To realize the effects that implementing employee engagement strategies could have on organizational goals, leaders must proactively measure the level of engagement, set a plan of action, and determine its effectiveness. In addition, leaders need to know strategies to implement employee engagement successfully. For example, results of a qualitative study conducted by Yanchus et al. (2020) indicated leader strategies most impactful for promoting employee engagement are:

1. Using workforce survey data
2. Encouraging employee-driven improvements
3. Supporting employee growth
4. Engaging in servant leadership

According to Antony (2018), drivers or strategies of employee engagement are:

1. Effective Organizational and Human Resource Policies and Practices- human resource policies and procedures should promote employee-friendly value statements.
2. Enabling performance- ensuring that employees have the necessary tools and resources to perform their job duties effectively.
3. Key results areas to work- provide and measure specific value-added work-related goals that align with the organizational goals for employees and how their work efforts make a difference.
4. Development opportunities- consistently provide and encourage participation in training and development opportunities for career and personal

development.

5. Effective leadership- Engagement is a trickle-down effect and starts with senior leaders. Middle and lower-level leaders are not likely to practice engagement without the support of senior leaders.
6. Engagement- if their leadership is not practicing.
7. Work teams and group dynamics- creating and fully supporting teams performing engagement activities can boost morale.
8. Performance management and employee recognition- measuring previously set employee goals, acknowledging and rewarding achievements, making adjustments, and developing new goals.
9. Employee communication- consistently provide an open forum for employees to engage in communication freely.
10. Compensation and benefits and Employee rewards- create compensation and reward programs for leaders who can effectively incite engagement amongst their followers.
11. Conflict resolution- leaders should hear out and try to address employee issues and concerns when possible.
12. Workplace wellness initiatives and safety programs- to promote and support initiatives related to safety, occupational, mental health, environmental, and physical health.
13. Work-life balance- embrace and promote work-life balance; employees feel less stressed and more committed when there is successful work and family

balance.

14. Corporate Social Responsibility-initiate, promote, and engage followers to participate in events that support the community.

Trust building and communication are strategies that may benefit all leaders, especially those wanting to improve employee engagement. Jawahar et al. (2018) provided results indicating the follower's willingness to trust the leader's intentions dramatically impacts their decision to perform extra-role behaviors. Jawahar et al. posited that leader trustworthiness determines whether or not the follower would consider improving the quality of their relationship with the leader. In support, Erkutlu and Chafra (2018) offered that leader trust and leader behavior impact followers' decision to pursue a higher-quality relationship with their leader. Brown et al. (2019) presented study results indicating that a leader's communication style can affect the workplace climate and be an excellent motivator for exchanging relationships. Anindita and Emilia Seda (2018) provided results indicating employees who valued employee communication, organizational communication, and coemployee support had high levels of organizational commitment. Managers who can encourage employee engagement are likely to foster open and honest communications and trust with subordinates.

Learning successful strategies to encourage engagement and have a positive organizational outcome is paramount to the organization's success. Maotwanyane and Pretorious (2018) offered that multiple themes were necessary to realize positive organizational results for implementing engagement strategies; however, at the helm of it all were the actions of the top and middle managers. The support of top and middle managers is vital to lower-level managers who are implementing engagement strategies to improve organizational results. Maotwanyane and Pretorious shared that followers had more interest in seeing the engagement initiative as a permanent practice throughout the company. Weideman and Hofmey (2020) probed to learn if flexible work arrangements impacted employee engagement. The findings indicated a positive correlation between flexible work arrangements and employee engagement (Weideman & Hofmey, 2020). Employees are more apt to engage if they believe the leader cares about their well-being.

Employee Disengagement

Disengagement is costly to an organization's bottom line. A disengaged employee is one of the most expensive consequences of a dysfunctional leader-member relationship. According to a 2018 Gallup study, disengaged employees cost a company 18% of the disengaged employee’s salary. In addition, disengaged employees negatively impact organizational and employee performance levels (Gupta & Sharma, 2018). Distrust can create a lack of engagement and productivity, affecting the bottom line. Iqbal et al. (2019) posited that managers must initiate the value-adding factor of building impersonal trust to increase productivity and improve disengagement.

Employee Engagement and Productivity in Call Centers

Engaged employees are more apt to be productive employees. Lowery (2018) found that engaged employees’ productivity was higher than those that did not engage. Researchers Moletsane et al. (2019) offered results indicating that healthy employees were less absent from work and had high productivity levels. According to a 2018 Gallup poll, 85% of the workforce does not engage in work, and disengaged employees are not productive. Managers must remember that subordinates perform the actions that keep the business running. To improve employee engagement and productivity, managers should develop and nurture as amicable a relationship as possible with followers.

After an organizational change, managers might find it difficult to increase productivity. Yunus and Emi (2019) shared results that showed that the younger Generation X employees needed privacy to be productive after an office restructuring. The generational workforce should be taken into consideration when redesigning (Yunus & Emi, 2019). In support, Sugden (2019) suggested not to assume one office design works for every generational group. Sugden also noted that selecting a modern office design with everyone in mind is possible. According to Lowery (2018), an employee can engage, and productivity can be improved by

1. evaluating benefits- offer perks
2. environment- create a stimulating office space with quiet and entertainment areas
3. communicate- have honest, open, consistent communication with employees and
4. celebrate- acknowledge everything-victories and accomplishments small and large, birthdays, service anniversaries

Employees who experience autonomy in their organization are more engaged and productive. Kundu et al. (2019) shared that autonomy and empowerment directly relate to employees feeling more committed and having more robust performance and engagement within organizations. According to Alagarsamy et al. (2020), empowered employees have stronger associations to engagement and productivity when they have

1. meaning- employees believe their work is essential to the organization,
2. impact- the employee's ability to affect their work outcome
3. self-determination- how the employee ability to regulate their workload
4. competence- the employee has the skill-level and tools to perform the job

According to Geue (2018), encouraging autonomy in employees attributes to a positive work environment and leads to engaged and highly productive employees. Geue shared that managers can create positive work environments when they encourage

1. Employees to find meaning in their work.
2. Mutual respect and trust among employees.
3. Inspiration, appreciation, and gratitude.

Introducing new products and services to employees could excite them into feeling valued and becoming productive. Bartz-Zuccala et al. (2018) indicated that employee productivity increases when new products and managerial practices such as operations, monitoring, targets, and incentives are in use. From a different perspective, Ozturk et al. (2020) shared that salary is relatable to productivity. The researchers posited that the higher the salary, the more employees feel valued and are more engaged and productive (Ozturk et al., 2020). Leaders should learn the triggers for increased productivity in their work environment.

Opportunities for training and development may make employees feel valued by their organization. Research presented by Shuibin et al. (2020) indicated that training and development directly correlate to productivity. Employees may receive training on or off the job that may consist of in-service training, mentoring, and coaching (Shuibin et al., 2020). Antony (2018) confirmed that training and development are top strategies for improving employee engagement. The idea of career development enhances employees' sense of belonging and improves their loyalty (Antony, 2018). Employees that seek and receive career development will likely be productive and committed to their jobs and organization.

Managers implementing an environment with an organic structure may realize an increase in engagement and productivity among followers. Liao and Chun (2021) posited that employees in organizations with an organic structure are more committed and engaged in change environments. Kessler et al. (2017) noted that organizations with organic structures show positive organizational outcomes in stable and rapidly changing environments. Adjusting a corporate environment to an organic structure may benefit both the leader and member when organizational happens.

Understanding successful strategies for improving productivity can help managers better develop followers and help to achieve organizational and personal goals. S Khurram and Shaiq (2019) revealed that the most valued strategies for improving participants' productivity were direct communication with workers, accessibility to senior management, and entertainment facilities that would help relax them mentally and physically. Sakr et al. (2019) revealed that team spirit, employee loyalty, engagement, and productivity were higher, and employee absenteeism was lower when the workplace had fun activities. Managers may find these strategies helpful on the individual level and may also find them practical at the organizational level.

Transition

Section 1 began with the foundation of the study and then transitioned to the background of the problem. Next, there was a discussion of the problem statement, purpose statement, nature of the study, research questions, interview questions, conceptual framework, operational definitions, assumptions, limitations and delimitations, and the significance of the study. Finally, section 1 ended with the literature review.

In Section 2, there is a discussion on the selection of the basic qualitative design and the rationale for the selection. The purpose of the study is reintroduced and includes a description of the sample of the study. There is a discussion of my role as the researcher and my affiliation with the research site. There is an explanation of the plans to control bias. There is a narrative of eligibility requirements, inviting and obtaining informed consent from the participants. Next, there is an in-depth discussion of ethical research and the protection of the participants. A description of the data collection process; and how I collected and organized the raw data is also part of the section. There is a rich discussion on the coding and analysis process for the raw data. Section 2 ends with the plans for ensuring the reliability and validity of the research.

Section 3 is where I present the findings and discuss the application to professional practice. I address implications for social change that the findings of this study may impact, and provide recommendations for action, recommendations for further research, and reflections. This section ends with the conclusion.

Section 2: The Project

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the experiences and perceptions of call center managers who implemented employee engagement strategies to increase productivity. The population included managers of call centers located in the United States. This population was appropriate because the call center managers have implemented strategies to increase productivity by improving employee engagement. The findings of this study may lead to positive social change through an improvement of economic conditions in the local communities of the call centers. Employment opportunities and employment continuity in call centers may result in increased patronage of local businesses and lead to job opportunities and financial stability for local businesses and community members. Call centers that stay open in local communities and do not send work to other countries or locations can also be employers for local community members. Leaders may also initiate and support employee wellness programs and work-life balance initiatives. Engaged and productive employees may receive paid time off to participate in corporate social responsibility activities relating to literacy programs, green initiatives, and other community service projects.

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher is the sole data collection instrument (Karagiozis, 2018). The role of a researcher in the data collection process is varied. The researcher’s responsibility is to extract data from participants until reaching saturation. Qualitative researchers have the task of identifying a research topic, designing and implementing the strategy for collecting the data, and analyzing and reporting common themes (Clark & Veale, 2018). I was the sole data collection instrument in this study and interviewed call center managers to learn the employee engagement strategies they implemented that increased productivity

I am a nonmanagement employee and have worked in multiple call centers of the same company since 1993. I have worked in four departments of call or control centers providing services ranging from telemarketing to testing and technical support. My association with the research topic required that I acknowledge and set aside any attitudes, personal experiences, viewpoints, or preconceived notions. I did not conduct interviews with anyone I had a personal relationship with.

My affiliation with the research topic required that I controlled for researcher bias. Researchers will have bias and need to figure out how to control it (Vandenberg & Struwig, 2017). The strategies used to control bias for this study were a reflexive journal, bracketing, and member checking. Bracketing is admitting and sidelining any preconceived notions before beginning the research process (Sorsa et al., 2015). Member checking involves the research participant in confirming the researcher's summary of their interview responses (Birt et al., 2016). I sent each participant a copy of their interview summary to ensure that their responses were accurate.

Researchers are responsible for ensuring research ethics concerning human subjects. I had to submit my research proposal to the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) to certify that I met the conditions outlined in *The Belmont Report*. *The Belmont Report* is a set of principles used as a method for ethical regulation and safeguarding study participants from vulnerability issues (Hammersley, 2015). The ethical principles of (a) respect of persons, (b) beneficence, and (c) justice are listed in *The Belmont Report* as guidelines that researchers must follow when obtaining informed consent and conducting research (Adashi et al., 2018). To comply with the respect of persons, each participant received an informed consent letter that disclosed details of the study. To fulfill the principle of beneficence, I maintained the confidentiality of each participant to protect them from any harmful actions that could occur because of their participation. Each participant's name was replaced with a code. The participants' identities remained undisclosed throughout and after the entire research process. Justice occurred by ensuring that participants could freely express their perspectives and opinions in the interviews without interruption.

Before the interview, I emailed each participant their consent. The consent form included a statement that the interview would be recorded for transcription purposes. The participant was informed that there was an expectation to participate in member checking after the interview to clarify the summary of their interview responses. Before data collection, I received a signed informed consent from the participant via email (see Hammersley, 2015). I protected the participant's anonymity or confidentiality before, during, and after the data collection (see Bracken-Roche et al., 2017). Before conducting the semistructured interview, each participant confirmed their understanding of the consent form and was asked if they had any questions or concerns regarding the study.

I used an interview protocol as a guide to help me obtain relevant data from the participants during the interview process. Researchers should ask appropriate questions to garner sufficient raw data to answer the research question and have robust study results

(Roberts, 2020). Researchers use interview protocols as a guide to maintain control of interviews (Yeong et al., 2018). An interview protocol can contain a brief description of the research project, interview procedures, and interview questions (Arsel, 2017). Using an interview protocol helped me focus the interviews and ensure that all participants were asked the same interview questions.

Participants

I required that participants meet particular conditions to be included in this study. Participants had to be call center managers who successfully implemented engagement strategies and increased productivity in a call center to be eligible for the study. Eligible managers also had to be employees in a call center for longer than 2 years. Determining specific eligibility requirements for participants can narrow the participant selection pool and provide a researcher with the most qualified participants (Chrondrogiannis et al., 2017). According to Saunders and Townsend (2016), deliberate participant selection process generates copious, germane information. Efforts to reach data saturation can achieve maximization when research participants experiencing the phenomena are part of the study (Ellard-Gray et al., 2015).

I recruited the participants from my social network on LinkedIn. The call center managers who were not on LinkedIn were referred to me by another participant. I networked with call center managers on LinkedIn to gain access to participants. Social media is a viable way to locate participants for research (Wong et al., 2021). Recruiting through social media is a way to reach a specific target audience (Chambers et al., 2020). A reduction in recruitment time can occur through trusted social networks (Webber-

Ritchey et al., 2021). I requested access to a professional network of call center professionals on LinkedIn with over 18,000 members, including leaders, but I was not granted access to that group. However, I was given access to two other call center professional groups. Once granted access, I emailed the group administrator of each group to request permission to post the participant recruitment flyer. I also emailed the recruitment flyer to other active LinkedIn members that are call center leaders to ask for their voluntary participation The recruitment flyer listed my email address for potential participants to respond to.

I emailed and spoke with the potential participants several times before the interviews took place to build rapport with them. Building rapport is an integral part of gaining a participant’s trust to have an open and honest dialogue with a researcher (Cassell et al., 2020). The idea of reassuring the participant that their participation would remain entirely confidential was that they would feel comfortable and provide unguarded responses to the interview questions. As a result, there is the possibility that participants may trust an unfamiliar researcher and freely share information (Raheim et al., 2016). On the other hand, there was also the potential for participants to feel guarded and not share as much information as I would have liked. However, the participants were very comfortable and shared freely; therefore, it did not take a significant number of participants to achieve saturation.

Some participants saw the recruitment flyer on LinkedIn, and some received the recruitment flyer as a direct inbox message on LinkedIn. Once I received an email from interested participants, I emailed the formal invitation letter and attached the informed consent letter describing the background and purpose of the research study. Hindrance of the data collection can become a reality when participants have ambivalence concerning the proposed research purpose and outcome (Kilb & Herzig, 2016). The informed consent letter included the procedures for collecting the data. The participants responded to the email with the phrase, “I consent,” to participate. In the informed consent form, I advised the participant of their right to back out of the study at any time and ensured them that their participation would remain confidential.

Research Method and Design

Researchers must select the appropriate research method and design for their study. The use of the qualitative method presents the opportunity to capture data from a holistic perspective (Bansal et al., 2018). In qualitative research, the participants’ unrestricted response offers the feasibility for further exploration of emerging themes instead of the inflexibility of quantitative research (Tai & Ajjai, 2016). In qualitative research, a phenomenon can be relatable because of the opportunity for research participants to provide narrative details relating to the phenomena (Clarke et al., 2019). A qualitative study with a basic qualitative design was the most appropriate research method and design to explore call center managers’ engagement strategies.

Research Method

I conducted a qualitative exploratory study. In qualitative research, there is an opportunity to understand and learn about the leader’s actual lived experiences and gain better insight into an organization (Jonsen et al., 2018). Qualitative research is conducted in the participant’s natural setting, and the researcher can observe the environment, capturing conversations and other actions missed when conducting quantitative research (Rutberg & Bouikidis, 2018). Qualitative researchers seek to explore observable events, while quantitative researchers examine the relationships of quantitative research variables (Hammarberg et al., 2016). The qualitative methodology was most suited to understanding managers' strategies to increase employee engagement after an organizational change.

The quantitative research method was not appropriate for this study because I was not trying to prove if leaders' strategies to improve employee engagement were effective; instead, managers shared successful strategies to improve employee engagement. Quantitative researchers use statistics as a measurement to establish the relevance of the phenomena (Zyphur & Pierides, 2017). Quantitative research results are objective, and there is no opportunity for managers to expound upon research questions (Barnham, 2015). Unlike qualitative researchers, quantitative researchers do not establish relationships with respondents that allow the opportunity to revisit any information previously provided by respondents (Baskarada & Koronios, 2018). In this study, I collected data using semistructured interviews in which business managers provided insight and answered the overarching research questions.

Mixed methods research was not suitable for this study because there was no need to confirm leaders' strategies. Researchers use the mixed methods approach to include dual assessments of qualitative and quantitative results (Razali et al., 2016). Researchers use qualitative language in the mixed methods approach to explain the sequential quantitative results (Schoonenboom, 2018). The purpose of the research questions for mixed methods research is to investigate and explore a phenomenon (Tunarosa & Glynn, 2017). The research questions in this study were developed to learn about valuable strategies managers used to improve employee engagement and productivity. The examination element of mixed methods made this method unsuitable for the current study because there were no variables to compare and contrast.

Research Design

I employed the basic qualitative design in this study. Researchers using the basic qualitative design are interested in learning how people describe their experiences with a phenomenon (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Results from the basic qualitative design provide descriptive and adequate data from the research participant's perspective (Merriam, 2002). The basic qualitative design is an effective method of collecting data regarding the experiences, perceptions, and processes used to address and understand a specific phenomenon (Doyle et al., 2020). The research results of basic qualitative studies are thematic, and the researcher categorizes the coded data to relate common themes (Willis et al., 2016).

The basic qualitative design, also known as generic qualitative design, general qualitative design, and qualitative descriptive design, was flexible and less restrictive than other qualitative designs. It is not uncommon to find aspects of different qualitative designs included in the presentation of findings for a basic qualitative design study (Sandelowski, 2000). Researchers using the basic qualitative design present descriptive findings in the words of the participants and not entirely as an interpretation of the researcher's words (Sandelowski, 2010). The basic qualitative design is a reliable research method with less reliance on inference and theoretical frameworks (Tamayo et al., 2021). The findings of a basic qualitative design do not have to line up with the theoretical framework of the study (Colorafi & Evans, 2016). Instead, the findings should align with the direct data from the participants' descriptions (Bradshaw et al., 2017). A description of the call center managers' experiences resulted in rich descriptive findings for this study.

Call center managers shared their experiences and perceptions on using employee engagement strategies to increase productivity during periods of organizational change. Researchers collecting, analyzing, and describing data in its natural state from practitioners are part of a basic qualitative study (Kim et al., 2017). Basic qualitative studies are appropriate to explain, describe, or explore applied business problems (Jahja et al., 2021). Research designs should align with the initial interview questions; however, depending on the participant's response, the researcher may ask more probing questions to learn about the phenomena (Willis et al., 2016). Utilizing a basic qualitative design, semistructured interviews, and probing questions, I collected rich data from the participants in this study to learn about the phenomena.

Other research designs that I considered but did not choose were ethnography, narrative, and phenomenology. Researchers who have the interest and time to engross in the community or cultural research setting may find an ethnography appropriate for their study design. The ethnographic research design is plausible for researchers who want to immerse themselves into the participant's community or cultural settings to acquire an exhaustive collection of data (Beneito-Montagut et al., 2018). In this type of design, researchers are present in the research setting until enough data are collected (Bamkin et al., 2016). However, this method of study can be very time consuming and was not appropriate for the current study.

The narrative design is applicable for researchers interested in hearing the participant's story about the phenomena. Researchers using the narrative inquiry framework seek to collect data from participants through storytelling (Bruce et al., 2016). Unlike the basic qualitative design, data produced from narrative research are left up to interpretation by the researcher, and the participant can confirm the researcher's interpretation (Samah, 2018). However, listening to and interpreting stories told by participants was not the goal of the current study, so the narrative inquiry was not a suitable design.

Researchers who use the phenomenological design query the participants to learn about their lived experiences of the phenomena. The phenomenological design is applicable for researchers that desire to learn how a phenomenon is consciously experienced (Flynn & Korcuska, 2018). This design was not the most appropriate for the current study because I was not concerned with learning about the participant's conscious or lived experiences. Though the phenomenological study may be subjective, the process would have captured the participant's experience rather than the participant's implemented process, so I did not use this design.

Saturation occurred when there were no new emerging themes from the research. Data saturation is the process of gathering information to fully answer research questions to exhaustion (Lowe et al., 2018). Sampling methods impact a researcher's ability to reach data saturation. Efforts to reach data saturation can achieve maximization when research participants experiencing the phenomena are part of the study (Saunders & Townsend, 2016). Sample size does not guarantee saturation; instead, each participant's responses to the interview questions better determine data saturation (Weller et al., 2018). After the seventh participant, I obtained data saturation when the information started to replicate. For validity, I continued to the ninth participant. Analyzing and coding the data until no new themes emanated also led to saturation.

Population and Sampling

The participants encompassed call center managers in five different industries. Purposive sampling and snowballing were the methods of choice to attain the research participants. Purposive sampling is valid when participants can provide expertise and specific knowledge regarding the subject (Sykes et al., 2018). As an active premium member of LinkedIn, I had full access to other LinkedIn members who identified as call center management. The participants saw the recruitment flyer when I posted it in the call center professional networking group. Other participants outside the networking group received the recruitment flyer by direct message on LinkedIn. The target participant's needed specific experience and strategies concerning the research question to answer the interview questions.

Due to the participant response to the recruitment flyer, I also used snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is helpful for researchers with a hard time finding specific participants (Berndt, 2020). Researchers using snowballing ask for recommendations from a participant for more participants (Staller, 2021). I could not garner enough call center managers with specific experience for the study, so I sought referrals from previous participants’ professional networks of call center managers.

The participant's responses to the interview questions determined the achievement of data saturation. In qualitative research, sampling size can vary depending on the number of participants it takes to reach data saturation (Boddy, 2016). An optimal data saturation level is achievable with 5-15 participants (Saunders & Townsend, 2016). Efforts to reach data saturation can be fruitful and achieved when research participants experiencing the phenomena are part of the study and provide rich information regarding personal perceptions and experiences (Saunders & Townsend, 2016). Data saturation occurs once the data starts to repeat and the generation of new data ceases (Hennink et al., 2019). Once the information started repeating, saturation was achieved, and participant interviews concluded. Participants can provide rich information regarding their perceptions and experiences (Saunders & Townsend, 2016). Interviews with managers continued until there was no new information generated.

The criteria for selecting participants were that the participant who managed employees for at least 2 years had experience managing call center employees during and after an organizational change such as restructuring, attrition, mergers and acquisitions, and downsizing. In addition, participants were selected based on their potential to contribute pertinent information that adds value and answers research questions (Farrugia, 2019). Each participant answered the same open-ended interview questions. The participant’s response to the interview questions determined how much probing was necessary.

The interviews occurred outside of regular working hours for both the researcher and the participants. The interviews took place over a Zoom conference call in a quiet setting. Gray et al. (2020) conducted research indicating both the researcher and participant have had positive Zoom interview experiences and prefer Zoom interviews over traditional face-to-face interviews. Interviews were not face-to-face due to the novel coronavirus and observation of social distancing recommendations. I kept the length of time for the interview under 60 minutes. The interview ended once the participant answered all of the interview and probing questions.

Ethical Research

Before collecting data from potential participants, the IRB reviewed the research proposal and ensured there was no plan for unethical treatment of participants. The IRB approves researchers who demonstrate protection measures for the potential participants (Clarke et al., 2019). The IRB requires researchers to submit documents for approval before data collection can commence in an impending study. The informed consent form is a required document researchers share with study participants. The informed consent form contains (a) general study information, (b) participant rights, (c) risk and benefits, (d) compensation, and (e) confidentiality (Capron, 2018). Conducting ethical research and protecting study participants was vital to my research.

After receiving IRB approval, I posted the recruitment flyer on LinkedIn to potential participants and asked for a reply within five days of receipt. I then emailed the informed consent form to each participant and asked each to reply to the email. The participants responded with the words; I consent if the terms of the informed consent were acceptable. In the informed consent, the participants read about their right to discontinue their participation at any point during the research process. If that happened, participants would have received instructions to submit a withdrawal request to me through email. In addition, I informed the participants that their participation was strictly voluntary. I also advised that there were no incentives for participating in the study.

Researchers must conduct ethical research and protect study participants throughout the research process. To conduct ethical research, I followed the guidelines and principles established in *the Belmont Report* (1979). *The Belmont Report* was used as a guide to ensure the ethical principles and protection of participants; and that *the Belmont Reports* tenets of (a) respect for persons, (b) beneficence, and (c) justice (Icy et al., 2019) were followed. In addition, I followed all IRB guidelines to ensure that I was ethical throughout the research process.

To ensure that I was in alignment with the guidelines of the Belmont Report, I reviewed the informed consent with each participant and explained the study. I confirmed that the participant understood their role and the right to discontinue participation at any time without repercussions. The participant's identities were protected by using codes instead of their names. I downloaded each Zoom interview in a password-protected file onto my password-protected computer and deleted the recording from Zoom. All information collected from participants is locked in a secured location in my home and will be disposed of in 5 years to prevent the risk of exposing the participant.

The IRB approval number for this study is 11-09-21-0072636. The names of the participants and the company under study remained confidential throughout the entire research process. The participants received a code in place of their names to associate them with the study. The coding system consisted of a participant number. An example of the coding system used is interviews P1, P2, and P3. All data collected from participants will remain in a locked file cabinet for 5 years to safeguard the participant's confidentiality. At the end of the 5 years, I will shred the raw data and delete all of the data saved to the password-protected portable hard drive, files, and USB.

Data Collection Instruments

As the sole researcher for this study, I was the primary data collection instrument. In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Clark & Veale, 2018). To collect data, qualitative researchers employ various methods such as interviews, observations, focus groups, and document analysis (Carr et al., 2019). For this final study, semistructured interviews and document analysis were the choices for collecting the raw data.

Using an interview protocol helped me stay focused (Appendix A) when conducting the semistructured interviews with open-ended questions. Langley and Meziani (2020) shared that interviews are most appropriate for qualitative researchers, especially those studying organizational change. Interviews are a way of gleaning information concerning the participant's experience regarding the study topic (Roulston, 2019). Researchers use open-ended questions to understand a process and explore a phenomenon (Weller et al., 2018). The interview protocol was helpful with collecting as much relevant data as possible to answer the research question. The interview protocol began with (a)an introduction and description of the study, (b) an explanation of the interview process, (c) a reminder to the participant that the interview would be recorded, (d) a reminder to the participant of their voluntary participation and of the right to back out at any time, (e) a listing of the interview and probing questions for each interview question, (f) an acknowledgment to the participant for their time and participation, (g) and lastly, scheduling a member checking appointment. Yeong et al. (2018) suggested that researchers have an expert review, adjust, and refine an interview protocol before the initial interview. My doctoral chair committee was the expert panel that reviewed my interview protocol and suggested changes before submitting it to the IRB.

Data also came from the interview summaries and the organizational documents about employee engagement strategies. Interview summaries are vital to the data collection process (Phillipi & Lauderdale, 2018). I asked the participant to share any organization documents used for improving employee engagement. Document analysis refers to the process of reviewing company documents intranet, media relations, and the internet (Fusch et al., 2018). The guiding research question and the interview questions were provided on the interview protocol, which served as a guide during the interview.

I conducted member checking, reflexivity, and bracketing to strengthen this proposal's reliability and validity. Multiple data collection methods strengthen the reliability and validity of the research (Gaus, 2017). The researcher should use conformability, credibility, transferability, and dependability to control researcher and respondent bias (Johnston et al., 2017). Reliability and validity are achievable when the researcher ensures that the data is accurate when recording, analyzing, or reporting. To enhance rigor, I used methodological triangulation.

I used member checking to strengthen the validity and verify the accuracy of the interview summary. Member checking is a method for the participants to verify and validate the researcher's interpretation of their interview responses (Birt et al., 2016). Member checking occurs after the participant's interview is summarized and returned to the participant to verify accuracy (DeCino & Waalkes, 2019). Participants that are a part of member checking have an opportunity to challenge, change or add data not presented during the initial interview (Madill & Sullivan, 2017). I set a follow-up appointment with each participant to conduct member checking.

The use of reflexivity helped deflect any bias that I experienced during the research process. Reflexivity enhances member checking and is the opportunity to discover and remove any researcher bias or preconceptions present in the data (Thomas, 2017). To exercise reflexivity, the researcher continuously checks their own biases and preconceptions from the point of data collection to data analysis and ensures to eliminate them (Priya, 2017). Since I am familiar with call center work, I needed to exercise reflexivity or critical self-reflection to control any prejudices or inclinations on the researcher's behalf. I used a reflexive journal to best capture thoughts and feelings that may burden my study.

Bracketing is another measure scholars use to control researcher bias. Bracketing is the process of deliberately putting aside preconceived notions concerning the phenomena (Gregory, 2019). Bracketing commences at the start of the study and is applied throughout so that the researcher's experience with the phenomena does not impact the study results (Wadams & Park, 2018). To bracket, researchers can journal, make field notes, or write in a diary about their values, beliefs, assumptions, interpretations, and experiences related to the topic of research (Hofmann & Barker, 2017). The reflexive journal is where I recorded any issues with bias.

Due to the novel coronavirus pandemic and social distancing recommendations, the semistructured interviews with the participants took place over Zoom meetings rather than traditional face-to-face. Irani (2019) shared that Zoom is an appropriate, secure, and convenient data collection tool for qualitative researchers. Zoom meetings is a video conferencing tool with multiple features that makes it possible for researchers to record and store sessions to their devices securely, offer meeting encryption in real-time, and is available to anyone that has internet (Archibald et al., 2019). I verified that each participant had internet access and could participate in the interview through Zoom.

Data Collection Technique

The data collection techniques for this basic qualitative design were (a) semistructured Zoom video interviews with open-ended questions, (b) the company's public website, and (c) approved organizational documents related to employee engagement and productivity. The Zoom video interviews took place in a setting comfortable for both the participant and myself. The Covid-19 pandemic has made interviewing face-to-face challenging due to social distancing recommendations

Each data collection technique had advantages and disadvantages. In qualitative studies, face-to-face interviews may be the most popular; however, they can also be more time consuming and the most expensive of the data collection techniques (Zeynep, 2017). Conducting Zoom interviews was a cost-efficient way to collect data. It eliminated the expenses of gas, lunch, dinner, or coffee for myself and the participant. An advantage of face-to-face interviews is observing the participant's body language (Farooq & Villiers, 2017). A disadvantage of interviewing over Zoom was that I could not observe the participant's body language entirely depending on the position of their camera. Another disadvantage would have been a poor internet connection for Zoom to work effectively. If there were connectivity issues, I would have had to reschedule the interview session, or the interview may not have happened.

I followed an interview protocol (Appendix A) and started the interview by (a) introducing myself and thanking the participant for taking part in the research; (b) next, the participant was advised of the purpose of the research; (c) participation was voluntary, and the participant was advised of their right to back out of the study at any time without being questioned; (d) I reminded the participant that their identity would remain confidential after the study has ended; (e) I asked the participant if the informed consent form was clear and addressed any questions or concerns; (f) I reminded the participant that the interview was being recorded and asked for permission to begin the interview; (g) I documented my observation of any noticeable behaviors and reactions during each interview; (h) I thanked the participant for their time and participation and scheduled a follow-up appointment to conduct member checking.

There was not a pilot study for this research study. Lowe et al. (2018) advised that pilot studies are used to trial and modify the researchers anticipated research process. Ismail et al. (2018) shared that pilot studies may strengthen and solidify the intended data collection methods and data analysis process. I conferred with my expert doctoral committee to confirm the strength and appropriateness of my research process. I adjusted the research process based on their expert recommendations.

After summarizing the data from the interviews, I conducted member checking. Member checking involves the participant in the research project and allows the participant to add additional raw data (Candela, 2019). Thomas (2017) warned that the participant could also extract data through member checking. Each participant received an email with a copy of their interview summary. Each participant received their interview summary before their member checking appointment date arrived. At their appointment, the participant had an opportunity to correct any response that I may have misconstrued. The participant was also given a chance to add new information at that appointment.

Data Organization Technique

I used Dedoose to organize the data and Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel to keep track of the data. Levin and Levin (2019) shared systems such as Evernote, Microsoft Windows, and Microsoft Excel are suitable for labeling and categorizing research. Dedoose is a helpful system for organizing, storing, and coding data (Fulcher-Rood et al., 2018). I transcribed the semistructured interview responses verbatim from each participant and placed them into individual Microsoft Windows files. While transcribing the interviews, I highlighted any initial codes or themes and kept track of them in Microsoft Excel. To mitigate bias while transcribing the interviews, I used a reflexive journal to note any personal feelings or impressions. I also kept a research log of communication in Microsoft Excel for each research participant. The research log included the date and time of each contact, the purpose of the connection, and the contact outcome.

Once the transcription was completed, I imported each Windows file into Dedoose for coding. Once coding was finished, I categorized and labeled the data looking for prominent themes. Having a systematic method of managing the participants' data responses is pertinent in the research process. According to Mayernik (2019), written descriptions and annotations are helpful when managing, capturing, discovering, assessing, and preserving data from participants. I saved all data and information from Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Windows and exported information from Dedoose on a portable hard drive and a USB. At the end of the research project, I stored the portable hard drive, USB, and raw data in a locked file cabinet, which will all be stored for 5 years. The raw data for this project consisted of interview notes, field notes, and the reflexive journal. At the end of the 5 years, all documents will be shredded. Also, any files stored on the portable hard drive, computer files containing Zoom interviews, and the USB will be deleted.

Data Analysis

l thematically analyzed the data following the six phases researchers Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested are adequate for analyzing the data, which are: (a) familiarizing yourself with your data, (b) generating initial codes, (c) searching for themes (d) reviewing themes (e) defining and naming themes (f) producing the report. Thematic analysis is a process that researchers use to analyze the data to discover themes, patterns, and codes relatable to the research question for the study (Xu & Zammit, 2020). The repetitive process of thematic analysis helped researchers extract codes and themes from the copious amounts of data. Researchers find conducting thematic analysis repetitive, insightful, evolving, and requires continuously revisiting the different phases of the thematic analysis process (Nowell et al., 2017). Lester et al. (2020) acknowledged multiple ways to analyze data and suggest that researchers desiring to identify common themes and phrases might consider using thematic analysis. Below are the thematic analysis steps I used:

1. Phase 1 - I became familiar with the collected data by reading the interview summaries and reviewing the researcher’s notes multiple times. Braun and Clarke (2006) advised that this phase is where researchers should take notes and begin developing ideas for coding. I transcribed each participant’s interview verbatim and noted any potential initial codes. I noted my reflections and any physical gestures made by the participant during the interview process. I read the company’s public online reports and website. I immersed myself in the data by rereading the interview summaries multiple times rereading notes from the interview process and company documents.
2. Phase 2 - I used the interview summaries to identify and generate initial codes. Nowell et al. (2017) relayed that coding is an opportunity for researchers to analyze and focus on particular facets of the data. Researchers use qualitative software tools like NVivo, Atlas ti, and Dedoose to label, code, sort, group, and organize raw data (Pearse, 2019). I uploaded the interview summaries into Dedoose software to organize the data. Next, I analyzed and identified the

initial codes that aligned with my study's research question and conceptual framework. I then identified the initial codes, looked through all of the data, organized and labeled the codes in search of recurring terms, keywords, and phrases of interest. The guiding research question and conceptual framework were essential for categorizing the themes I identified from the coded data.

3. Phase 3 - I searched for themes amongst the codes I identified. This phase involved continuously comparing the coded data looking for as many developing themes as possible from phase two codes. Nowell et al. (2017) imparted that phase three ensues once the researcher codes, collates, and compiles the data looking for different codes. Any codes that did not fit into any of the listed themes were placed into a miscellaneous theme category. I analyzed and identified the key themes and determined if the findings corresponded to the conceptual framework.

Campbell (2020) shared that ideally, at the end of the data analysis process, prevalent themes are integrated with prevailing theoretical or conceptual frameworks related to research questions to establish if the themes relate to applied business practice. Morgan and Nica (2020) offered that themes guide the researcher's analytic process. Key themes derived from the analytical process are part of the summary of the research results shared with readers (Morgan & Nica, 2020). Morgan (2018) posited that themes help readers grasp the essential facets. The key themes that emerged in the data analysis process correlated with the research question and managers' strategies to increase employee engagement in call centers. I also correlated the key themes with recently published studies.

4. Phase 4 – I reviewed the themes developed in phase three to determine if the coded data fit the themes. I used the coded data to generate a thematic “map” of my analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) indicated that researchers refine themes previously identified. I carefully reviewed the themes in this phase and discarded any that did not align with the research question.
5. Phase 5 - I organized, defined, and named each theme and provided an analysis of how the theme related to the research question and the conceptual framework. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested this phase is where researchers will identify and provide specific details that describe each theme’s substance.
6. Phase 6 - I provided a written report with detailed descriptions of the thematic analysis. The final report’s flow should tell a succinct story that covers all of the themes and is easy for the reader to follow (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Finally, I presented the findings in Section 3 and compared the results to current research.

I used methodological triangulation to analyze and strengthen the credibility of the data collected from the participant interview summaries, field notes, company reports, and information from the company’s public website. Fusch et al. (2018) conveyed that researchers use triangulation to strengthen the data analysis process’s validity, ensuring the research finding's worthiness. Dzwigol (2020) suggested that researchers using multiple forms of data strengthen the validity. For this research project, triangulation consisted of semistructured interviews, researcher's notes, company reports, and information from the company's public website. I conducted methodological triangulation by comparing interviews, researcher notes, company reports, and information from the company website.

Reliability and Validity

There are steps researchers demonstrate to show the research results are trustworthy and valid. Xerri (2018) argued that researchers establish trustworthiness using credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1982). Kellam and Cirell (2018) suggested that member checking and triangulation are strategies researchers use to confirm the trustworthiness and validity of research results. Astroth and Chung (2018) offered that researchers who follow specific data collection and analysis procedures will strengthen their research results' trustworthiness and validity. Spiers et al. (2018) posited that researchers are accountable for continually checking for issues and adjusting the research process as the research develops to ensure reliability and validity. I used a reflexive log, member checking, and triangulation to substantiate my findings' reliability and validity. Continuously conducting reliability and validity measures throughout the research process was an opportunity to show the research's trustworthiness.

Reliability

To establish the dependability of interpretations, I used reflexivity and member checking. Brear (2019) shared that the process of member checking presents an opportunity for the participant to verify that the researcher provides accurate interpretations of their interview responses. Caretta and Perez (2019) argued that member checking changes the power of the researcher-participant hierarchy by validating the interpretations of the interview summaries. I allowed each participant an opportunity to verify that my interpretation of their interview responses was correct.

I also addressed dependability by discussing the step-by-step process for coding and analyzing the raw data. Dependability is an extension of reliability and exists when the researcher writes out each study process thoroughly enough for others to replicate the process and achieve similar results (Nassaji, 2020). The method of coding, recoding, categorizing, and extracting themes helps refine the data and ensure that a researcher presents themes related to the research study (Deterding & Waters, 2018). Rose and Johnson (2020) shared that researchers who display the research's coding process increase their study's replicability.

Validity

To ensure creditability, I used methodological triangulation, bracketing, and member checking. According to Stahl and King (2020), researchers can garner creditability for their research using triangulation. Daniel (2019) posited that researchers could ensure creditability by allowing participants to verify that their statements are accurate in the interview summaries. Rose and Johnson (2020) asserted that member checking strengthens creditability when participants validate the researcher's interpretation of their responses in the interview summary. Being the primary instrument and an employee at a call center, I expected bias that I acknowledged in a reflective journal. Stahl and King advised that bracketing, which is the process of journaling researcher bias in a reflective journal, is a valuable strategy when carrying out creditability. I self-monitored and kept a journal of my feelings and thoughts throughout the research process. As a nonmanagement employee in a call center, I set aside my knowledge and personal experiences of the phenomena being studied and opened myself to learning from the study's management participants.

To ensure transferability, I provided a rich description of my research findings in Section 3 of my study. Transferability is possible when researchers give enough information about their results to make their study replicable to other researchers (Peterson, 2019). In addition, Nassaji (2020) shared that when researchers provide sufficient details about their research activities and assumptions, readers may find their findings apply to their particular setting. Therefore, my study's research findings may be helpful to any business leader desiring to improve employee engagement and productivity in call centers in any industry.

To ensure confirmability, I used an audit trail, reflexivity, triangulation, and the interview protocol. I recorded an audit trail with details of the analysis process inside my reflexive journal. Maintaining an audit trail is resourceful for readers to gain insight into the data analysis process and the thought process for decisions (Laumann, 2020). I recorded my thoughts and reasons for my actions at every stage of the research process in my reflexive journal. Kalu and Bwalya (2017) advised researchers to ensure their study's confirmability by documenting details of the research process. I reflected on and updated the reflexive journal with my personal feelings and views at every stage, beginning with the data collection and ending with the data analysis.

To strengthen confirmability, I followed the interview protocol and probed the interview participants beyond the interview questions. I also probed the participants further during the member checking interview. Researchers can use interview protocols as a guide during interviews to garner information that aligns with the research question (Langley & Meziani, 2020). Interview protocols also confirm that the interview questions align with the participant responses and are replicable for future research (Langley & Meziani, 2020). The interview protocol served as an interview guide for the researcher and a source of confirmability for reviewers.

I ensured data saturation by conducting semistructured interviews until no new data generates. I also coded the interview transcript summaries until no new codes or themes developed during the data analysis process. According to Saunders et al. (2017), researchers can determine saturation during interviews based on the participants' similarity in responses. During data collection, I reached saturation when there was no new information in the participants' responses. I looked for recurring codes and themes while summarizing each interview. According to Constantinou et al. (2017), data saturation occurs in data analysis when themes or patterns related to the research questions cease to develop. I identified saturation in both the data collection and the data analysis processes.

Transition and Summary

Section 2 is a detailed description of the research process. I restated the purpose of the study. There is a discussion of my role as the researcher that addressed my relationship with the topic and how I controlled bias. I addressed the participants, discussed the eligibility requirements, and described the plan to access the participants. There is a discussion of the research method and design choices. There is also an explanation that addressed the population and sampling of the participants and the plan to achieve saturation.

In Section 2, I also delved into the importance of ethical research and described how I planned to protect the participants. I further addressed the data collection instruments, the data collection techniques, and the data organization techniques. There is an in-depth discussion on the data analysis. Lastly, I discussed my plans for addressing reliability and validity.

Section 3 has the findings of my research. First, I discussed how my findings might relate to the application to professional practice. Next, I address the implication of social change that my findings may have on society. I then transition to the recommendations for action, recommendations for further research, and reflection. Finally, I end with a conclusion for the study.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the experiences and perceptions of call center managers who have implemented employee engagement strategies to increase productivity and profitability. Martinez-Tur et al. (2020) found that in exchange relationships, the leader's perception of the subordinate was the driving force for the quality of the relationship. Kucuk (2020) stated that leaders set the tone in exchange relationships and impact workflows positively when implementing intrinsically motivating strategies; however, a myriad of factors on the leader level could impair the leader's experience initiating, building, and maintaining exchange relationships with subordinates. Hofslett Kopperud et al. (2021) shared that leaders who are unable to manage multiple tasks can create work conditions that mar exchange relationships. Therefore, managers must implement engagement strategies that lead to higher quality exchange relationships and increased productivity.

In this study, I conducted semistructured interviews with nine call center managers from five different industries to obtain data. Table 1 displays more information on the participants' industries.

Table 1

Participant Industry Information

Type of Industry	Participant number
eCommerce	P8
Emergency services	P5 and P9
Employment services	P6 and P7
Financial services	P2 and P4
Medical	P3
Telecommunications	P1

The findings indicated that through the experiences and perceptions of the call center managers, particular employee engagement strategies are more effective at increasing productivity and profitability. The most impactful strategies are (a) developing relationships, (b) effective communication, and (c) performance management.

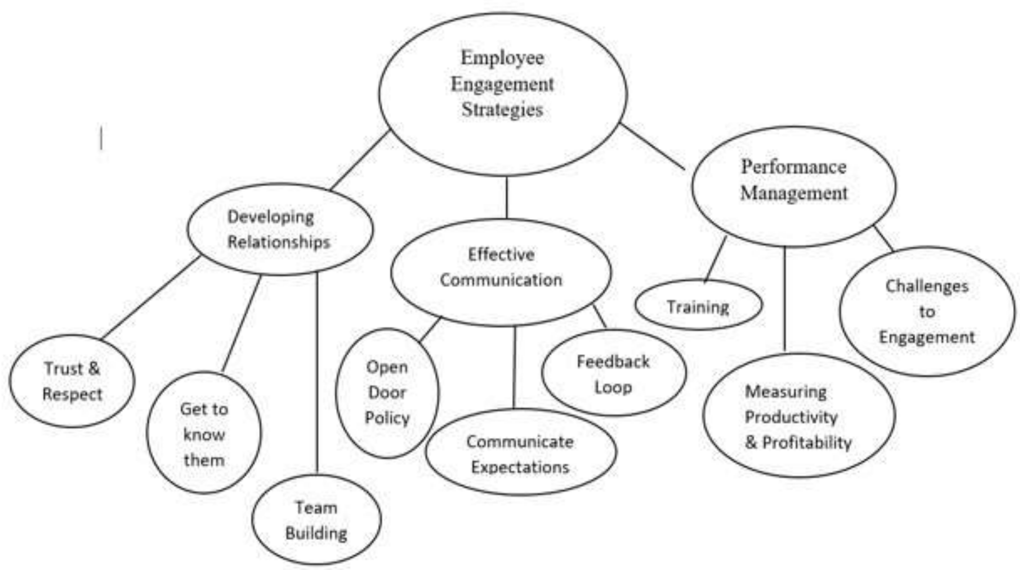
Section 3 includes a presentation of my findings, application to professional practice, the implications for social change, and recommendations for actions. Finally, I conclude the section with my recommendations for further research and personal reflections on my experience during this study.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question for this study was: What employee engagement strategies do call center managers use to improve productivity and profitability? I conducted Zoom interviews with nine call center managers to answer the research question. I used an interview protocol for consistency and asked each participant the same semistructured interview questions. For reliability, company annual reports and process improvement guides provided by participants were also reviewed. To protect the identity of the participants, I replaced their names with identifier codes (e.g., P1, P2, P3, etc.). Member checking was used to ensure reliability and validity. Dedoose was used to help organize the interview summaries, annual reports, and the other documents provided by the participants. The data were thematically analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of analysis. The three emergent themes were (a) developing relationships, (b) effective communication, and (c) performance management.

Figure 1

Thematic Map of Emergent Themes



Theme 1: Developing Relationships

Developing relationships was one of the major themes that emerged from the data analysis of the interview summaries and the company documents. Relationships are an essential aspect of managing and can be the difference between success and failure when implementing organizational changes. Managers who understand the importance of building relationships with their members are more effective at implementing changes (Wilson & Cunliffe, 2021). Out of the data analysis, three subthemes emerged as essential elements for developing relationships with their members: the importance of establishing trust and respect (which are tenets of the LMX conceptual framework), taking the time to get to know employees and encouraging team-building activities.

Establishing Trust and Respect

Trust and respect are not always easy to come by in business relationships; however, managers who consciously make an effort to gain mutual trust and respect from their employees may have higher quality relationships. Employees who feel trusted and respected are more likely to have higher levels of engagement and productivity (Page et al., 2021). Leaders interested in increasing productivity should learn strategies to develop healthy relationships with their employees.

Each participant shared strategies for initiating trust and respect with their employees. P1 imparted, “I establish trust and respect by being open and honest with them. I let them know how it is and what it is; transparency is written on the top of my head.” P2 shared that “trust and respect come when there is follow-through after an implementation and when you are fair and transparent.” P2 also conveyed, “Letting your direct reports know that you will listen to them, care and support them, and always have their best interest at heart will help you gain trust and respect from your team." P3 said, "I demonstrate trust and respect by letting them do their work and not checking on them every 10 minutes asking them: why are you still on that call? or what are you doing?" P4 says she establishes trust and respect by "Following through and owning my mistakes and being open for suggestions from my members."

P5 and P6 discussed gossiping and not disclosing employees' business as strategies to earn respect and trust. Aboramadan et al. (2021) put forward that leaders who gossip or share personal information of others create environments filled with mistrust, dissension, disengaged and unproductive employees. P5 stated,

> One of the ways I have earned the trust and respect of my employees is by keeping my employees' personal and professional matters personal. I don't discuss my team member's business. I don't gossip, and I don't encourage my members to gossip.

P6 shared, "I establish trust and respect by my actions and what I do. I don't tell their business; I keep it personal. I tell them once you tell me something, I'm not going to share it with anyone."

P8 stated, "Trust and respect happen when you do what you say you're going to do." P9 commented, "The best way to demonstrate trust in your followers is by being trustworthy yourself. I earned my team's trust and respect by being knowledgeable, dependable, caring, and empathetic with a subordinate's concerns and needs." Additionally, P7 indicated,

> The relationship is a huge part of being a leader or a supervisor. You have to know what you are talking about as a leader. They have to know that they can come to you and trust that you will give them the correct information. If you prove yourself as a foundational leader, people are more apt to trust and respect you.

The participants shared key factors they use for developing trust and respect. The key elements are openness, honesty, trustworthiness, transparency, listening, supporting, following through, taking ownership, confidentiality, and not micromanaging. The findings indicated trust and respect are foundational for developing healthy relationships between leaders and employees. The participants' strategies align with LMX theory and the findings of Jiang and Shen (2020) who indicated that transparent leaders earn loyalty, trust, and respect positively impacting relationships, employee engagement, and organizational outcomes.

Get to Know Employees

Leaders who take the time to get to know their employees experience healthier work relationships within their organizations. Demonstrating sincerity and a willingness to learn about employees may benefit leaders and organizations because employees feel valued and become more engaged with leaders and team members. Shulga (2021) found that authentic and trustworthy leaders have better relationships with their employees. The participants in the current study acknowledged the correlation between relationship building and organizational success.

P1 said, “Relationships are important, and if I don’t have a relationship with the individuals on my team, I'm not going to be able to influence them to perform. Not having a relationship with my team members makes my job tough.” P2 stated, “Having an open relationship builds trust. If they trust you, they will believe the change, which makes the implementation process more successful.” P4 shared, “At the heart of leadership or management is relationships. Building and fostering that relationship is part of the trust-building process. If you’re not caring and building relationships, you’re not going to lead or inspire others to engage successfully.” P5 shared, “As a manager, I think being relatable to your members is vital when it comes to establishing relationships.” P9 communicated that:

> Establishing a good rapport with someone, is the basics for getting them to do what you want them to do, as well as, what's better for the company. Having a good rapport also works out for the employee because they can benefit from it.

The managers also shared their most effective strategies for building relationships with their employees. Most of the strategies were similar. P1, P2, P3, and P4 spoke about personally getting to know their employees. It was important to ask about their day, weekend, families, vacations, anything thought to be significant. P9 imparted, “It’s essential to treat them like human beings and remember that they are contributing to the main goal.” It's not necessary to micromanage. However, from a different perspective, P6 said,

> First of all, stop trying to be their friend. You are their leader, and they’re not there to like you; they’re there for you to develop them. That often creates

favoritism, and nobody wants that in a work environment. I'm not there to be your buddy. I'm there to help develop you to get to the next level.

P1 said, "I do weekly individual coaching sessions and have interpersonal conversations with my team. I make sure that I share a little piece about myself to open them up to trust and share about themselves." P1 continued, saying, "Virtually, I pay attention to their background. I try to connect with them. If I hear or see kids or pets, I ask about them. I try to get to know them on a personal level."

P2 stated, "I make it a point to get to know my people and I enjoy sharing important things that happen to them. I think it's important to spend time with them, be authentic, present and engaged, share life." She also suggested that managers should let employees "see their human side." She said it's okay to "be silly with them, but at the same time, let them know that there is a time for work and a time for play." P2 also said, "It's important to respect their boundaries."

P4 imparted, "Whether it's my team or other leaders, I realize that connections matter and they can make you feel good as a human." P4 furthered, "I like to find opportunities to find common ground to build and foster that relationship. I like to show up as me and my authentic self, encouraging them to show up as themselves." P4 also stated, "It's also important to acknowledge and appreciate the differences in individuals."

P5 conveyed, "It's important to let your members know that you relate to them and are there for them." She said "For example, I let them know that as a manager, I have a job to do and that when they do their job, it helps me do my job."

The findings indicated that these participants' strategies to get to know their employees are essential in building relationships between leaders and members. The study results also align with Bhandari et al.'s (2022) findings that indicated employee engagement and productivity increase when leaders genuinely listen to and learn about the personal and professional facets of their employees. The study results align with Dominguez-Escrig et al.'s (2021) findings that showed leaders who consider the needs and feelings of their employees will create an environment of empowerment and engagement. Getting to know their employees is a vital aspect of the relationship-building process for leaders and can be instrumental in improving employee engagement.

Team Building Activities

Team-building activities resulted in higher engagement levels, productivity, and quality relationships for managers in this study. During the COVID-19 pandemic, leaders had to develop creative ways to continue team-building activities virtually to keep engagement and productivity up. The managers shared team-building strategies that were most impactful in their teams. The managers' strategies align with Prasad and Mangipudi's (2021) findings that indicated that team-building strategies effectively increase motivation, engagement, and productivity within organizations. The excitement from P5 exuded as she spoke about her team, saying,

> I treat my team to breakfast, lunch, and snacks. I encourage gift exchanges, but only if they want to participate; it's not mandatory. Also, I do team-building exercises outside of the job like bowling, rock climbing, and things that encourage engagement with each other.

P5 continued, stating that she has a great relationship with all of her team members and that her team members have great relationships with each other. She also shared that her team never has productivity issues and that her team always has the highest productivity levels of the other groups in the center. She exclaimed, “I go that extra mile for them, and they go that extra mile for me. I fight for them, and they fight for me.”

P1 divulged that keeping her team engaged is essential, especially being virtual, “We play games as a team and have parties virtually.” P4 stated, “Before COVID, for those who were comfortable with it, we would have team lunches, dinners, or happy hours outside of the office once a month. Since COVID, occasionally we’ll have a virtual happy hour.” P6 was excited when she described an experience engaging her team to improve their tardiness:

> At one time, we had an attendance issue with people signing in late. So, I came up with a challenge for my team, and they were so into it that, in the morning, people would always talk about how my team members race down the hall to try to be the first to sign on in the morning. It was an enjoyable time for my team.

Publicly acknowledging employee performance can be an effective strategy for team building, but it is always important to respect boundaries. For example, P2 shared an experience she had with one of her team members:

> One time, we wrapped caution tape around team members who had high-performance results. We said they were on fire, and we wrapped those employees up in caution tape. One employee was not receptive to having his body wrapped,

> so I asked him if he would rather have the tape around his finger. He was okay with that.

P2 advised that the employee later shared that he was apprehensive because he did not know what to expect; however, after getting to know the team and feeling more comfortable, P2 shared that he became one of her top leaders. P2 admitted that she likes to have fun with her team, saying, “My team knows I love Batman, and sometimes I run around the office in a Batman cape.”

Another team-building strategy P5 uses is rotationally allowing her team members to sit in for her during her absence from the office. She also rotates their assignments daily and feels that no one should be an expert in just one area, and to be proficient, everyone should know how to perform every job function that her team has. Also, P7 acknowledged:

> Sometimes I even take turns allowing them to manage the day. So, they learn how to be a team lead on that day. Don't get me wrong, I'm still the Supervisor, but I allow them to see my position with a different set of lenses. So, when I'm given instructions or directives, they can better understand the job that I have to do."

Call center managers should use team-building strategies to increase engagement and experience higher-quality relationships with their employees. Managers in this study encouraged team-building activities held both inside and outside of work. Having fun at work breaks barriers and creates excitement and cohesion, resulting in increased dedication and productivity in their work and better work relationships Jyoti and Dimple (2021). Lee et al. (2022) conveyed that work fun and team-building brings people together and spawns informal learning as employees become comfortable and share. However, people are not all inspired the same way, and leaders interested in engaging employees must learn what inspires their members.

Theme 2: Effective Communication

Effective communication was another theme that emerged from the findings of this study. Leaders who communicate effectively are transparent with their expectations and are open to two-way communication. Chao et al. (2021) indicated leaders who have clear and open communications with their employees experience increased engagement, employee performance, and better organizational outcomes. Three subthemes were prevalent in the research. The three themes were: having an open-door policy, communicating expectations, and setting up a feedback loop.

Open door policy

Leaders who exercise an open-door policy create an environment of trust, respect, and engagement. Isac et al. (2021) presented results that indicated employees feel valued, appreciated, and empowered to engage when their leader has an open-door policy. P7 stated:

> Making them feel respected and valued impacts their level of performance. I have an open-door policy. I think it's important to empower your employees and make them feel like they're part of the team. I realize that they are the ones on the frontline doing the work. To make them feel respected and valued, I tell them I see and appreciate the good work they do.

P2 advised that she has an open-door policy. She said:

> I encourage them to voice their opinions respectfully. They need to know that their opinions are valued. I don't see them as people I manage; I see them as people I lead with and people I attain goals with. You're nothing without your people.

Communicating honestly without the fear of reprisal is crucial to leaders eager to achieve organizational goals and navigate change effectively. Having an open-door policy indicates a willingness to listen and address the issues and concerns of your employees without retribution. P3 and P4 spoke regarding employees being able to speak without reprisal. P3 expressed:

> Employees have good ideas and suggestions and are the ones doing the work. I believe your employees should be able to openly communicate to let you know what is working and what is not working without the threat of being punished. I believe you should create an environment where your call center is a thriving call center and not a surviving call center.

P4 said, "Creating a space where they feel comfortable enough to come to talk to you is important. They need to feel comfortable coming forward and talking about issues or circumstances that may prevent them from engaging." P5 shared, "I have open conversations, and I make it so comfortable for all my members to come to talk to me. I keep that open door of communication with them.” P5 furthered that "When you have employees that are willing to go the extra mile because they feel appreciated because you've listened as a manager, it's a win-win because their productivity skyrockets." Findings from Rizvi and Popli (2021) indicated that leaders are more effective when their communication with employees is a conversation where leaders are willing to listen and are open to opposing viewpoints and disagreements.

Some employees require more time and attention, and leaders must provide extra coaching to help them reach optimal levels of engagement and productivity. P9 furthered, "A leader has to be a coach, a leader must wear many hats. A leader has to be open, available, and able to listen and listen carefully. A leader should not just impose their point of view." P8 said,

> I expect for them to produce, and I would also like for them to enjoy doing what they do. If they are not enjoying it, my door is always open, and I would like them to talk to me about it. We can see it it’s a matter of training or if it’s just that we’re not a good fit for them.

Communicate Expectations

Communication is essential in any line of business. Influential leaders use communication as a strategy to leverage business objectives and processes. A leader's communication style can influence the message's intent and the employee's perception of the message (Vaar & Langley, 2021). Leaders who communicate organizational and employee expectations have better corporate results. The lack of communication between leaders and employees is often the cause of many organizational failures (Petkovic & Rapajic, 2021). Employees who don't know the expectations are not likely to meet corporate or employee expectations. P1 commented “Communication with each individual about their performance is important. If they don’t know where they stand, they won’t know the areas to improve. Without communication, they can’t know the steps to take to improve performance and become better reps.” P7 declared, "I think that explaining the organizational goals, their performance metrics, and showing them that you can do the work, are important for that individual and organization to be successful. Also, it attributes to building a healthy relationship with employees."

P6 asserted, “With any type of supervisor-employee relationship, the first thing you have to do is make sure they understand the expectations and the standards and hold them accountable to those standards.” P9 shared, “So once they were clear on what was expected and what the boundaries were and how it will affect them and the public, they were very receptive.” P5 said, “If there have been any changes in our policies and procedures, whatever they are measured on, I make sure that everybody is on board.” P1 said:

> One of the most recent organizational initiatives that have emerged is driving teamwork, that’s about being engaged, and being positive. So, we talk about it, and they know what’s expected of them. If I need to, I demonstrate what it looks like, and that way, there is a clear understanding of the expectation.

Having an open-door policy is an opportunity for employees to get clarification and address issues concerning expectations or any other matters off of the work floor. It is not enough for leaders to communicate employee and organization expectations and goals. Riyanto et al. (2021) posited that providing clear communication is offering bi-directional feedback. The bidirectional feedback helps employees process information better, makes them feel valued by management, and shows leader commitment (Riyanto et al., 2021). Leaders need to make sure the employees understand the expectations.

Having a safe space like an open-door policy keeps the lines of communications open with employees and lets employees know that you are always available for conversation.

Setting up a feedback loop

Managers in this study discussed the importance of feedback when implementing organizational changes. Crook et al. (2021) revealed that feedback loops are a holistic work practice useful for leaders implementing change. However, Aguinis and Burgi-Tian (2021) stated that only 2% of employees feel that their company encourages high-quality feedback. Along with sharing the importance of obtaining feedback, the participants also shared their strategies. P2 divulged:

> Setting proper expectations and setting up a feedback loop is essential for successful implementations. After a change is announced and implemented, your people will need time to review and process the change. Then, they will need time to respond. Holding round tables, team meetings, yearly employee interviews, and feedback surveys are ways we capture the employee's responses. Also, employees give good feedback when allowed to respond anonymously with tools like Survey Monkey. We take that feedback, go back out to our people, and get engagement plans. I ask them what they are expecting of me? What do you expect from yourself, and what are you expecting from your leadership? We then we will follow up, and if possible, act on those plans.

P3 shared the strategy her organization uses to engage employees and obtain feedback about organizational changes. She disclosed:

> Before we implement anything, we pull three to four agents from each team, have a meeting and talk about what we are planning to do, we ask for their feedback. We get the agents involved in any changes we try to make because they are the experts. They do the job 8 hours a day, 5 days a week, so you must trust that they will give you good feedback. Once the change is implemented, I look for feedback by following up with them to find out how they are doing with the changes. I ask if there are any questions or concerns about the changes and if so, share them with upper management.

P5 shared, “We have roundtables and town hall meetings for members to give ideas and get input on organizational changes via zoom. Then, as leaders, we sit, listen, discuss the ideas, and try to implement some of their ideas and suggestions.” P4 revealed:

> I like to communicate and share things with my team. I like to get their feedback. I ask for their thoughts and suggestions when we are implementing something. I like to paint the picture of the implementation to bring it to life for my employees. I like to be the change advocate and bring the vision and the purpose behind the change. I like for them to feel it rather than read it.

P7 communicated, “We have touchpoint meetings. In those meetings, there is an opportunity for the employees to express any challenges or barriers with their work. That's also an opportunity to tell them what I'm noticing and ask them for feedback.”

Liao and Chun (2021) posited that when employees are encouraged to provide feedback, the relationship quality between them and their leader is enhanced as employees view their leaders as trustworthy enough to provide honest communication.

P2, P3, P4, P5 & P7 also discussed the importance of getting feedback from the participants and responding to the feedback. P2 shared:

> As a leader, I think there is a responsibility to go back and respond to the feedback and say, this is what we found out, and this is what we're doing about it. Tell them what could and could not be implemented. You want them to know that what they're saying is valuable and then just be very honest.

P3 imparted, “It's vital to get the employees to participate in the change. You have to make them a part of the development process if you want them to engage fully.” Leaders who engage the employees that do the work for feedback when implementing changes are more successful with their change initiatives. P4 furthered, “It is vital to make your people feel needed. It goes back to trust, and my subordinates know that when they give me feedback, I'm going to listen and apply it where I can.” P5 stated, “We get their input because they do the jobs and know best what they need to perform their jobs successfully.” P5 furthered, “I think acknowledging and honoring their request makes employees feel like they are being heard, it makes the work environment better, and they produce more.” P7 advised, “When I get the feedback, and I know their challenges, I'm able to provide them with tools and resources to help them get beyond the barriers and challenges."

Feedback loops get employees engaged and create opportunities for leaders to build healthy relationships with employees. Audenaert et al. (2021) revealed that high-quality feedback leads to higher quality relationships, higher levels of trust, and robust organizational outcomes. The participants' responses coincide with the findings of Elsner

Twesme et al. (2021), which indicated employees who trust their leaders provide honest feedback. In addition, employees appreciate knowing that their concerns were heard, considered, and addressed. Uka and Prendi (2021) presented findings indicating employees who feel valued are more motivated, engaged, and productive when they feel like their voices are heard. Therefore, developing feedback loops is an essential component to communicating effectively.

Theme 3: Performance Management

Performance management was also an emanating theme in this study. Leaders can measure employee performance to determine if they are on target for meeting organizational goals. Leaders track employee performance as often necessary to know the performance standings of their employees. Aguinis and Burgi-Tian (2021) conveyed that performance management is the practice of continually recognizing, measuring, and developing the performance of employees. Leaders use performance measurements to determine the progress of the employee and the success of organizations. Three subthemes emerged from my research. The themes were measuring productivity and profitability, barriers to engagement and productivity, and training

Measuring productivity and profitability

Employee productivity contributes to the profitability of the organization. Leaders should constantly measure employees' productivity to ensure they are on target for meeting organizational goals. Measuring productivity and profitability lets leaders know just how productive and profitable their companies are and gives them an idea of how to adjust their goals (Molinos-Senante & Maziotis, 2021). The participants shared successful strategies they applied to measure productivity, and some spoke on how profitability is determined for their company. P2 revealed:

> We use key KPIs, key performance indicators, and metrics to measure your productivity and your gains year over year. We also assess our opportunities and the culture we're building within the team. Do we have a team that knows what the KPIs are? You also want to measure the integrity behind achieving the KPIs. So, looking at how you're going for your goal, yes, meeting your goal is important, but how you get there is just as important. So that's a major way to see where there is a lapse. Also, gaps in training come to light.

Uddin et al. (2021) posited that KPIs are generally set without the input of the employees that are doing the work and may sometimes be unreachable. Leaders should use the results of the KPIs and other organizational goals as a guide to know whether the goals are unattainable and should be modified. A company document shared by P2 lined up with her comment. The company's leaders utilize a tool called My Performance Score (MPS). MPS helps identify opportunities for focused coaching and performance development. In addition, it also contributes to their incentive award and their overall reward & recognition eligibility. The MPS provides financial rewards to recognize employee contributions to the success of contact center businesses. P5 shared

> We do the performance evaluation semi-annually, so every six months, I meet with my team, and I go over everything with them. From attendance to maybe a training that we are taking. If there have been any changes in our policies and procedures, whatever they are measured on, I make sure that everybody is on

> board. I have open and candid conversations with my members and let them know that we all have to perform well as a team. So, I push my team members to strive to be shining stars.

P1 conveyed, “Revenue is determined by the level of productivity and profitability. To measure productivity, I not only look at the results, but I also look for a behavior change. Their behavior drives the results.” She furthered:

> When you have implemented a change, and the results are low, and you see that the employees are not engaged, you have to go back and see what happened. You have to ask them what they liked about it? What did they not like about it? You also need to make sure they understood the change.

P1's comments align with Aguinis and Burgi-Tian (2021), who shared that results and employee behaviors should measure an employee's performance and productivity. Leaders often know the nonperformers on their team; however, they do not usually know why they are not performing. Therefore, leaders need to check in with their employees, find out why there is a lag in engagement, and try to address the lag. P3 advised:

> Time is everything in a call center. By looking at their results in the different areas like QA and call handling time. I also can look at their daily calls to see if productivity has increased. Productivity is measured by the call volume and by the number of calls taken with good customer service and good QA scores. In regards to profitability. The more calls they can handle, the less money the company spends. Also, the fewer absent agents, the less money the company loses. If we can't cover the calls, we have to bring in temps or do whatever we

> need to do to get the work covered. That may mean paying out overtime. The higher the number of people that call out, the higher the call volume. The higher the call volume, the more likely agents feel stressed and frustrated and take longer on calls because there are so many calls in queue. When a lot of people call out, it's a domino effect.

Public document for P3's company shows a performance sharing program that provides annual payouts for employees when they achieve new mutually agreed-to objectives to address affordability. When employees can improve conditions within the company by reducing added expenses like hiring temps or paying overtime, the employee may be entitled to a performance sharing program reward. Paying out performance awards of offering other incentives, both paid and nonpaid, are effective for increasing productivity.

P4 communicated, “Depending on the individual's role, we have goals; we have metrics that we assess consistently to determine if that is still an appropriate measure.” P4 added, “There is a direct correlation between efficiency and profitability within our organization. I'm held accountable for my team's results, so I pay attention to how I drive those results.” When employees continuously fail to achieve organizational goals, leaders should be receptive to reassessing their behaviors along with the current organizational goals and metrics. The reassessment could be the difference of increasing profitability for the organization.

Olah et al. (2021) posited that efficiency is directly related to profitability, and when there is interpersonal trust between leaders and employees, it leads to organizational trust and innovation. Olah et al. furthered that efficient and innovative employees positively influence the financial performance of their companies. P3, P2, and P4 all made connections knowing the importance of interpersonal trust and employee performance and its impact on their company’s financial performance.P7 revealed:

> Investing the time and training, answering questions, and giving constructive feedback are components that help productivity. I think metrics are the best measure of the employee engagement level. I use metrics every day, and with the use of the metrics, you can readily identify if there is a need for tweaking or making adjustments to promote that person's success. For example, if someone is kicking out a lot of work, it doesn't mean they're doing a great job. They may be doing something that's not right, and their work is all wrong. So, I check to make sure their work is steady, and I pull random cases of the agents. I believe that's an excellent way for me to see if they are doing everything they are supposed to be doing or if we need to tweak some things. However, when productivity increased, the quality of the work decreased. That is usually the case in our industry. They are never equal, and if they are equal, it's a huge phenomenon.

P7 presents a situation where increased productivity is not a good sign. Productivity does not mean efficiency. Employees may sometimes circumvent processes to meet set objectives. Leaders must not only look at the numbers, but they must also evaluate employees' work. An employee having to rework because of something missed the first time is not time well spent and takes away from the company's profitability. P6 said:

> We use performance measurements to measure productivity. Productivity is measured by looking at the numbers, and the numbers tell a lot. I also look at the caseload and the time spent on each case. Looking at the numbers helps me to see any changes in productivity. We try to put quality control processes in place. One strategy that we attempted to implement was to listen to every agent call. I listen to five or six of their calls, and I would grade them. I developed a chart so that leadership would see where they were as far as development. Whether they were hitting each call on the mark or whether they were lacking in certain areas. That gave us a picture of where we were lacking in content from those calls.

P8 explained how her call center uses software to manage on daily basis, weekly, and monthly basis. She also shared how they software is used to discover training needs. P8 conveyed:

> We have our software, where we can see when each person logs in, the calls that each person has taken, how many calls they take, how much time they are spending on each call, how long they take solving an issue. We use the software to see how many hours they are taking in on a weekly and monthly basis how many hours they are working if they worked all of the hours they put in their buckets. We're screening their calls to see if they're answering and up to par or if they need more training. As far as profitability, it's the uptick in the reps logging in to work the hours that they blocked. When they work those hours, it's profitable for them and us as a company. The more calls we can take as a company, the more contracts we can get with other companies.

P9 stated, "I measure the way they perform, whether they are doing the job well, or whether they're just doing what is required and not going that extra step.” P9 added, “Once you see that they are going that extra step to improve, you know that's productivity. Once there is productivity, then you know that profitability comes right along with it." Therefore, leaders must know the standing of each employee's when it comes to productivity. More importantly, leaders need to possess the skill set to engage employees to the productivity levels that positively contribute to profitability for organizations.

Challenges to Engagement

There are many challenges to prevent an employee from engaging and being productive. Leaders should strategize to avoid as many of the challenges as possible. The higher the quality relationship between the leader and the employee, the more likely the employee is to communicate engagement and productivity challenges. The finding in this study can be a tool for leaders needing to engage employees into being more productive. P4 shared:

> When things are really busy, it can be draining, tiresome, and hard to connect. I understand that it can be hard to work through the haze. It's a challenge to be intentional and reassure my people of the important role and make sure that they know the organization's vision and purpose when it's really busy. But it's important to take the time to check in with your employees, even though there maybe be a cost like having calls in queue. I think that's a balance that's worth it. For the employees who are slower to engage or may have a dip in their

productivity, I give them their time to self-assess and to see what can be done differently.

Leaders must understand that while the business needs are essential, the leader-member relationships are equally as important. Periodically checking in with employees shows that you have an interest in them. That check-in may be the spark needed to cause them to engage and drive up their productivity and the organization's results.

P1 stated, “The biggest engagement challenge is having people that are not receptive to change.” P5 communicated:

> Anyone who shuts down is a challenge because that slows up productivity for the team. Some people feel like they are just here for the check, I tell those individuals, in order to make work easier for everybody, everyone should be operating at the same level.

P8 said, “It's a challenge if they don't show up if they choose not to pick up the hours and work. Also, another challenge would be them not giving us feedback at our quarterly meeting about how we can be better.” P7 expressed that “That sometimes, people just aren't getting it, no matter how much training they get, some people just aren't able to connect the dots. Some people just aren't interested in the work and are intimidated by talking to people.” P7 furthered that “Persons may not be engaged in the process and don't want to buy into the process or they may not have the aptitude to do to the work. Aptitude, meaning they may not be able to write professionally.”

P6 discussed how employees personal issues can affect their workflow and describes a process she initiated to circumvent issues with productivity. P6 stated, “I believe that if you're trying to balance personal issues along with your work environment, it's going to slow you down. So I try to give them tools better manage their time." P6 furthered:

> To help with productivity, I created a process that my agents use on each call with the acronym SCRUBS. It's a guide that tells them how they're supposed to treat each of those calls from top to bottom. If they forget a step, it's right there. I tell them to go back to their scrubs, and you'll see where you lacked something. That process keeps the cases and the calls moving. Another challenge is economic conditions. Though the agents are paid wages, some still have challenges getting back and forth to work, childcare issues, and so forth. Those are some of the personal issues that can impact an agent's ability to process and buy into any of the engagement strategies.

The SCRUBS training document shared by P6 supports her comments. The SCRUBS document is a step-by-step process for employees to use on each new call. If they follow each step as listed, getting off task may not be an issue. Process improvement documents help employees keep up with changes that may impact personal and organizational performance (Bernal et al., 2021). Leaders must provide all necessary training documents to not hinder the productivity of their employees.

P2 offered, "As a leader, it's important to remember that they are human, and it's important to be flexible because things will happen. It could mean schedule adjustment to accommodate the needs of themselves or their family." P2 added, "You have to think outside of the box all of the time. I think that helps them to feel valued and respected." P2 also said, "If you do not have buy-in from your people and you have poor communication and can't help your employees work through work-life balance issues, the engagement never works out.” P2 furthered, “I think it's hard, but you have to find creative ways to help them find balance."

P3 shared that “The union can be a challenge. It is more difficult to implement many things when you have a union environment because the union doesn't always agree with what you want to do.” P3 added, “Another barrier is negativity; it becomes infectious across the entire floor when people are negative. Time is another challenge when trying to implement changes.”

P9 conveyed, “If they are not happy with the supervisor or the way they are being treated, that will affect engagement, and you will see a decrease in the morale and the attendance, which is very critical in a call center.” P9 furthered, “If they're not happy, they are more likely to call in sick or take time off.” P9 also identified “Not engaging the people involved and not treating them with respect” as challenges to engagement.

P7 found his older employees to be one of his challenges to engagement. He said, “I noticed some of my older employees were stuck in their old ways of doing business. There was some resistance when we tried innovative approaches with implementing new strategies using technology using applications, such as Zoom and Teams.” P7 noticed that some people grasped the new technology quicker than others. He felt perhaps, some people were afraid of the technology. P7 also acknowledged that work-life balance issues could affect engagement and productivity. P7 voiced:

> With work-life balance issues, I keep them abreast of the organization's different resources, like EAP, family leave programs, leaving bank programs, and everything else. I let them know that from a productivity impact, if you're not producing and it's related to something outside of your job, you need to probably tap into those resources so that you won't be adversely impacted. I advise them that their productivity won't be adversely rated if you've got things going on and you take steps to try to get some assistance from the organization.

The participants felt mental health was a challenge to engagement and productivity. Mental health issues left untreated with therapy can impact employee performance (Fox, 2021). One-on-one therapy can prevent or reverse the decline of an individual's mental health Hutchinson et al. (2021). P5 imparted

> We as individuals take in so much both at work and outside of work that sometimes we can become numb and not even realize it. I am also a huge advocate for therapy, so I advocate for my members to seek a therapist because they're not biased, and I think we all need to talk to somebody.

P1 said, "I stress the importance of mental health, and I tell them. If you aren’t good for yourself, you aren’t good for anyone else, be it family or customers. I encourage them to use the resources that the company offers." P6 furthered, "If they have personal issues they cannot get around, the company has many EAP programs to help. At the end of the day, we don't want the agents to come to work in a situation where they can't focus." Companies investing in well-being initiatives benefit by seeing decreased absenteeism and increased productivity and customer experiences (Litch, 2021).

Individuals are not always capable of leaving personal problems outside of the workplace. Influential leaders create environments that make it plausible for them to have conversations that extend beyond work to possibly help their employees obtain necessary resources that could result in them being able to focus at work better. P3 communicated:

> The reason you need to engage and sit with your employees is not only to talk to them about work but also their personal life. They may be going through something that may affect their productivity and well-being at work. Knowing about situations in their personal life may help me with pointing them in the right direction to obtain special resources for employees. We have a program that helps employees with their mental state. If employees feel like they can trust you, they will share their burden, and maybe you can help alleviate some of that burden by offering options they may have never imagined. You have to help them and guide them.

Public documents from P3's company show an interest in patient and worker safety, emphasizing mental health, psychological safety, and physical health. The company has a joint national committee responsible for integrating the concepts of psychological safety into the company culture. Therefore P3’s statements were validated by the public documents relating concern for employee’s well-being.

P7 advised that employees must do their part communicating when personal issues affect their ability to work effectively. He informed that sometimes he may be able to tell that there is something different about his employees, but he can’t always rely on his perception. He assured that once the employee communicates that there is an issue, he does all that he can to assist them. P7 disclosed:

> I tell them I'm here to support them as long as they let me know what's going on, but if they don't engage me, I can't help them. I understand that if their minds aren't present in their work, they are no good for their co-workers or me. That's when mistakes occur, or something is overlooked, and we can't afford those things.

The challenges to engagement shared by the participants are just a few that call center employees experience. The challenge for leaders is to be creative enough to develop strategies to meet the challenge. Many companies may offer resources to help employees in certain situations. Leaders should learn every employee resource program their company provides. Suppose the leader knows of an employee resource that may be beneficial. In that case, the leader should champion the cause and engage the appropriate company individuals to get the resource put in place.

Training

Training is fundamental in any business operation. Employees that lack training cannot efficiently perform their job duties and are not likely to perform well. Leaders are responsible for ensuring that their employees receive the proper training. Sepahvand and Khodashahri (2021) advised that leaders who provide the most up-to-date training have more competent and engaged employees willing to share their knowledge. The participants in this study understand their responsibility for setting their team and organization up for success by ensuring that they receive ongoing training. P5 articulated:

> I'm not the one doing the work, so I make sure that my members have everything that they need, whether it's training, resources, or whatever. I also have stronger members do in-service training and sit with members that are not so strong in areas. I then use a time frame to determine how much they have grown in their position and see if they understand and implement the material they have learned. I also do continuing education training with them. The continuing educational training also lessens the chance for us making mistakes.

P7 spoke about the important link between training, trust, and productivity. He advised that managers must invest the time needed to get their employees properly trained. Managers who are considered subject matter experts can be extremely beneficial when it comes to training their employees. P7 shared:

> I have worked in every department of my organization and am considered a subject matter expert. I was the go-to person for everyone in my organization. When Covid hit, we had to do a lot of intense training for our staff, and we also had to hire more staff to help with the increased workload. If you train your people well and they trust you, I think productivity will be steady. I watch metrics every day, I do daily and weekly production reports. Those reports are essential, especially after training. For example, after training, we would let them do the work for a week, and then we would spend another week answering questions. Once we provided clarity during the week of the question-and-answer session, I would see a massive uptick in their work productivity.

P7 mentioned a training process of returning employees to work for a week after training and then following up with a week of questions and answers. That allows employees to clarify anything they may have had problems with once they began implementing what they learned in training. Employees who do not receive proper training are likely to become frustrated and leave the job or either remain employed and just become disengaged and unproductive. Akter et al. (2022) suggested that employees are more engaged and committed to an organization when they believe there are opportunities for training and development. Therefore, training that directly impacts job functions should be followed up with a question and answer session.

P9 verbalized, “Leaders fail their employees by not giving them the tools, knowledge, and training they need to succeed. They will be good to go if you give them the tools, especially the training and information needed.” P2 furthered, “Some of the strategies I used were giving them bonuses or giving them certain leeway to do certain things, like providing additional training for non-job-related things, like for areas of personal growth.” When speaking about successfully implementing organizational changes in her organization, P6 said:

> Not only did we inform them, we gave them training, made them a part of the team instead of just pushing policy to them. As long as they are clear about what is expected of them, and you are considering them and not just imposing certain guidelines on them, if you are making them a part of the process, they will better accept the change.

P6 furthered,

> I always tell them you are only as strong as your weakest link. If they were trained recently on a new product, policy, or procedure, I expect them to come back to me with questions. If they don't come back and ask any questions, I will check in on them to follow up properly. I suggest that if they see their peers struggling with something and don't want to go in and coach them, please direct them to me because I don't want them to get misinformation. Once they saw the impact of the tools I gave them, they began to trust and respect that I knew a lot about call centers and had a lot to offer. They became less resistant and more receptive to the changes. I learned them, and they learned from me; it ended up being pretty profitable for the agency because they got more done with fewer people.

Another training issue P6 says happens in many call centers is that agents are not adequately trained to handle irate customers. P6 said:

> I found that many of my agents did not have the skills to deal with irate or angry people. Teaching them the difference between those two is important. Often someone yells at you, but they're not yelling at you; it's not personal. They're yelling at the system and what's going on. Those are the skills that are missing in most call centers. I have to battle that with my team all the time. It's learning to differentiate between the two and not taking it personally.

Schneider (2020) conveyed that frontline employees create better organizational outcomes for companies with resources to manage the daily tensions that come with dealing with customers. Teaching employees not to take irate callers as a personal attack and teaching negotiation skills will help relieve stress and prevent disengagement.

Leaders who understand that the stressful nature of call center work may sometimes require employees to step away from their positions for a moment of downtime, especially after a stressful call, may gain allegiance from their employees. P1 acknowledged, “I realize that when they do well, I do well because their success is a direct reflection of what I pour into them." P1 stated:

> During my weekly coaching sessions, I ask them how they think they are doing in every area of measurement. Depending on their response, I ask them their plan to get engaged. I try to be supportive and give them what they need to succeed. Sometimes that may mean giving them more offline time.

P3 acknowledges peer-to-peer training to be a successful strategy for improving employee performance. Peer-to-peer training is an effective training and knowledge-sharing method when employees are engaged and trust their leaders (Gupta et a., 2021). P3 has the lower-performing agents sit with the higher-performing agents. P3 said:

> After the peer-to-peer training, I monitor the results of the lower-performing employee to see if they have changed. If they have not changed, we can usually determine the problem by sitting down and talking. I can then go back to upper management and tell them what worked and what didn't work. I also have them listen to their calls and ask for their feedback on their call.

P3 added,

> We provide training to help the employees transition into any new changes. After the changes are implemented, I have a one-on-one meeting with them to get feedback on how they are doing with the change. I also monitor their calls to see how they are doing with the change.

As far as training, company documents from P3 indicate a need for problem and dispute resolution training. There is an initiative to increase support for the issue resolution process. There is also an annual refresher training for unit-based teams and labor-management partnership councils to strengthen employee interest-based problem-solving skills.

Training is a critical component of organizational success. Leaders must ensure that their employees have the most up-to-date training for their job. There is a direct relationship between training and development and productivity (Shuibin et al., 2020). Employees not properly trained may work slower, make more mistakes and disengage from work. Successful leaders understand the importance of training and sometimes make short-term sacrifices to experience long-term gains.

Relationship to the Literature

There were three emerging themes from my data analysis and the data collected from semi-structured interviews, the annual reports, and the process improvement guides to answer the research question: What employee engagement strategies do call center managers use to increase productivity and profitability? The themes were (a) developing relationships, (b) effective communication, and (c) performance management. The responses from the call center managers demonstrated that those strategies were used to increase productivity and profitability in their organizations. The themes align with the peer-reviewed research presented in the literature review.

Theme 1: Developing Relationships

The findings confirmed that developing healthy relationships with subordinates is critical for leaders who want to increase productivity by implementing employee engagement strategies. Call center managers conveyed that there must be mutual trust and respect between them and their employees before employees buy-in and fully participate in any change initiative. Byun et al. (2017) posited that mutual trust, employee performance, and the quality of the exchange relationship between leaders and members are correlated. Hirvi et al. (2021) imparted that social and emotional factors impact trust and respect in LMX relationships. In addition, the work behaviors of engaged employees produce results that lead to increased productivity and profitability (Rashid et al., 2018). The participant responses align with this study's peer-reviewed findings, indicating that leaders who build high-quality relationships with their employees will experience better organizational outcomes.

Theme 2: Effective Communication

The findings confirmed that effective communication is a viable way to build healthy relationships between leaders and members. Call center managers recognize that healthy relationships don't happen without effective communication. Antony (2018) imparted that open communication, employee resources, and a myriad of other strategies improve relationships and employee engagement. Some call center managers shared the same awareness as Lemmon et al. (2020), who posited that some employees could have mental and physical wellness issues that may prevent them from communicating and fully engaging. The call center managers found that having open and honest discussions and a feedback loop helps them communicate effectively. Elsner Twesme et al. (2021) asserted a leader receives honest feedback from employees who trust him/her. The call center manager's annotations align with the literature review's scholarly research, denoting that effective communication immensely impacts exchange relationships and engagement.

Theme 3: Performance Management

The findings confirmed that performance management is vital for increasing productivity and achieving organizational goals. The call center managers expressed the importance of ensuring their employees know the expectations on both personal and corporate levels. Alagarsamy et al. (2020) shared that employees are more productive when they know what is expected and are given the autonomy to meet their objectives. The managers understand that their employees could not meet goals that are not shared or are not clear. When employees have adequate resources, they have better opportunities to meet personal and organizational objectives (Choi, 2018). The managers know that acknowledging their employee's performance increases their employee engagement and productivity. The managers' comments align with the extant literature explaining performance management's significance on engagement and productivity.

Relevance to Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is the LMX theory developed by Dansereau et al. (1975). The tenets of LMX are the differentiated relationships established between the leader and the member (Seo et al., 2018). The differentiated relationships are built on the key factors of mutual respect, trust, and support (Sarti, 2019). Istiningsih et al. (2020) posited that employee engagement, commitment, and organizational outcomes increase when leaders develop higher quality LMX relationships with their employees. Mburu et al. (2020) affirmed that in work environments where there are high-quality leader-member relationships, there are also higher levels of employee engagement which leads to increased productivity and profitability for organizations. I used the LMX theory to learn how call center managers use employee engagement strategies to increase productivity and profitability. R

Relationship to LMX.

The themes identified in this study, developing relationships, effective communication, and performance management, show relevance to the LMX conceptual framework. Relationships are at the core of LMX, and how leaders strategize to build quality relationships with employees makes this theme very relevant to LMX. Each participant believed developing relationships built on trust and respect is paramount when engaging employees, increasing productivity, or implementing change initiatives. Brown et al. (2019) ascertained that leaders use effective communication strategies like inquiries, reports, explanations, instructions, motivational messages, vision sharing, and more to build healthy, quality, and productive relationships. The effective communications theme emerged as the participants discussed the strategies and the importance of communication when building relationships with their employees. Neher and Maley (2020) imparted performance management as the catalyst for leaders to guide and support employees' personal development as they work to achieve business objectives designed to meet organizational goals. The participants conversed about the importance of supporting employees using performance management strategies and setting up a feedback loop to address the results.

Call center managers in any industry may benefit from the findings of this study. The results of this study are from interviews with nine call center managers, each from five different industries. The participants' responses to the interview questions led to attributes effective for building relationships that stimulate employee engagement and lead to increased productivity and profitability for organizations. The attributes are: trust and respect, getting to know your employees, initiating team building activities, an open-door policy, communicating effectively, setting up a feedback loop, measuring productivity and profitability, and training which are all relevant to the LMX conceptual framework.

Application to Professional Practice

Multiple organizational change events in call centers that occur annually can lead to disengaged employees. The actions of disengaged employees can negatively influence productivity levels creating a downward spiraling effect impacting profitability and organizational sustainability. Iqbal et al. (2019) posited that managers must initiate the value-adding factor of building impersonal trust to increase productivity and improve disengagement. Any call center leader with disengaged employees may find the results of this study helpful in increasing employee engagement, productivity, and profitability for their organizations. Call center managers may also use the findings of this study proactively to create an environment filled with engaged employees ready to embrace and successfully traverse any change initiative that comes their way.

The call center managers in this study gave detailed accounts of the strategies they found most effective for improving employee engagement. The strategies most effective were (a) developing relationships, (b) effective communication, and (c) performance management. Islam et al. (2018) disclosed that leaders who focused on collectivity, respect, loyalty, and understanding the needs of followers garnered more support from followers during times of change. Employees need two-way communication and support from supervisors when implementing organizational change strategies (Matthysen & Harris 2018). Ouedraogo and Ouakouak (2018) divulged that leader communication positively relates to employee trust and employee affective commitment to successfully implementing organizational change. An exploratory study conducted by Posey (2019) revealed that stress and turnover in call centers are high due to (a) lack of training and resources to perform job functions and (b) dysfunctional work relations with management and coworkers. Call center managers may use these findings to understand how employee engagement strategies may improve relationships with their employees and increase productivity and profitability. This study's findings are pertinent to all call center managers, especially those whose companies have annual multiple organizational changes. In addition, the findings in this study contribute to the gap in the literature on employee engagement in call centers.

Implication for Social Change

An implication for social change of this study is that leaders of companies will see the positive impact on the well-being of engaged employees and institute or increase employee wellness programs. Lemmon et al. (2020) argued that leaders should consider that not all employees have the mental and physical capacity to engage fully. Lemmon et al. posited that some individuals might lack personal resources like health and wellness and may have personal issues that inhibit their work engagement. Employees that are mentally and physically well and have a work-life balance may be more inclined to participate in community initiatives. Employees may champion community causes and inspire their engaged co-workers to participate. Engaged employees may participate in corporate-sponsored community outreach programs in more significant numbers.

Another implication is an opportunity for employment of community members. A thriving call center may not experience offshoring and, therefore, have job opportunities for local community members. Call centers may lose the stigmatism of being a stressful place to work and may attract qualified and talented community members as employees. Call centers have a high turnover rate due to the stressful nature of call center work (Dhanpat et al., 2018). Consistent employment may improve the socio-economic status of the employee, which may give the employee the disposal income to contribute to the local communities.

Recommendations for Action

Call center managers who work for organizations that implement multiple organizational changes annually may find significance in the results of this study.

Leaders in any call center industry could use the findings of this study to develop strategies for increasing employee engagement. More specifically, call center managers who are challenged with engaging employees to increase productivity before, during, and after an organizational change may benefit from the study findings. I recommend call center managers use the findings as a guide to build healthy relationships, learn effective communication strategies, and use performance management tools to support employees as they strive to achieve organizational goals.

Regardless of the industry, the findings may be helpful for any call center manager. Each participant will receive a one to two-page summary of the results. I will provide a summary of findings to the CEO and human resource director of my employer, as multiple departments within the company have call centers. In addition, I will upload a summary of the findings to the two call center manager groups that I am a part of on LinkedIn. I may also submit my research to journals to add to the call center, engagement, and productivity fields. Also, the study will be published and accessible in the ProQuest database for scholars with access.

Recommendations for Further Research

Initially, the imitation for this study was unforeseen access issues. I overcame that limitation and used a basic qualitative study to learn the employee engagement strategies call center managers use to increase productivity. The basic qualitative design proved to be remarkable. The new design is less restrictive than other designs. I included participants across five different industries without going through gatekeepers to obtain letters of cooperation. I recommend continued research with the basic qualitative design with companies that don't have call centers to learn the employee engagement strategies to increase employee engagement and productivity.

In addition, I recommend employee engagement and productivity continue to be studied from the leader's perspective by using a narrative design. Hearing leader stories of how employee engagement, productivity, and profitability increased during an organizational change may benefit leaders challenged in those areas. Another recommendation is to study this topic using a quantitative method. The use of the quantitative method would allow participants to respond to surveys. The surveys may be less time-consuming than interviews, and the participation may be higher. Also, the participants may feel less burdened when they do not have to schedule a time to meet on Zoom or in person for an interview.

Reflections

My DBA doctoral journey has been extremely long, unnerving, and exasperating. However, as of late, it has become rewarding. I have been challenged and stretched in unimaginable ways. However, I will have to admit that it has been all for my good. Learning how to write scholarly has been one of my achievements in this program. I have greatly benefited from the writing center's classes and the library skills seminars. A direct result of participating in those seminars is that my writing and researching skills have improved tremendously. In addition, it strengthens my resolve to continue postdoctoral research to help fill in the gap for employee engagement and call center research.

When I started this process, I knew that I wanted to conduct research in my place of business, a call center. At the time, I was an employee at that company for 17 years. I had worked in five different call centers of that company and witnessed the effects that downsizing and other organizational changes had on the survivors. I obtained preliminary approval in writing to conduct my research within the company. However, it expired, and the new regime provided verbal consent. When it was time for the written approval, there were unexpected challenges. I never received the written permission and was advised to go a different route for data collection.

I began frequently participating in the IRB office hours, each time coming away feeling more optimistic. Attending the IRB office hours was one of the best decisions I could have made for myself and my cohort. I shared two critical procedural changes on two different occasions that were invaluable for me and my cohort based on what I learned when I attended the sessions. The shared information will also pave the way for those who follow.

I appreciate the weekly cohort Zoom meetings hosted by my chair. Those meetings are very productive and have been instrumental in my progress. It's an opportunity to voice issues and concerns, gain clarity, and share and learn with others. There is a sense of community in our meetings. We encourage one another and celebrate each other's achievements, no matter how big or small. Having the Zoom meetings has allowed some of us to make connections that may be life-long.

Having worked in a call center environment for so many years, I knew that I would have preconceived notions that would need to be put aside. During the data collection and data analysis process, I bracketed by journaling any feelings that surfaced. Interviewing the participants provided an opportunity to get nine different perspectives on the most effective employee engagement strategies to increase productivity in call centers. I look forward to sharing the study results with other call centers leaders wanting to improve employee engagement and productivity.

Conclusion

Call center managers who comprehend how to keep employees engaged will realize increases in productivity and profitability before, during, and after an organizational change. Managers who lack strategies to engage employees may understand other call center managers' strategies to increase productivity and profitability by reading this study. The participants in this study shared successful strategies used in their call center environments. The findings revealed that each of the call center managers improved productivity when there was a focus on (a) developing healthy relationships with employees, (b) effectively communicating, and (c) designing performance management plans that support personal employee and organizational goals.

Developing healthy relationships with employees was highly associated with establishing trust and respect. It is assumed that employees are interested in getting to know and developing healthy work relationships with managers. Employees who are unresponsive to a manager's attempt to establish a healthy work relationship may become more of a challenge to engage. The low-quality or out-group does not benefit from relationship-building opportunities and does not offer assistance with organizational matters (Lee & Varon, 2020). Managers who strive to find creative ways to reach the more resistant employees may reach those resistant employees.

Effective communication identified the significance of leaders having an open-door policy and clearly communicating employee and organizational expectations. Isac et al. (2021) presented results that indicated employees feel valued, appreciated, and empowered to engage when their leader has an open-door policy. A limitation of having an open-door policy is availability. It is assumed that managers will make themselves available to talk one-on-one with employees. Managers may find it challenging to make time for employees to drop in for conversation. Clear communication is vital in every aspect of a business. Employees must be clear on employee and organizational expectations. Riyanto et al. (2021) posited that providing clear communication is offering bi-directional feedback. Having consistent touchpoint meetings allows leaders to engage employees to gauge their understanding of the expectations.

Performance management plans identified the importance of measuring profitability. Measuring productivity and profitability lets leaders know how productive and profitable their companies are and gives them an idea of how to adjust their goals (Molinos-Senante & Maziotis, 2021). Call center managers who consistently measure productivity and are amenable to reassessing and modifying the metrics can design effective performance management plans.

Extant literature and Dansereau's LMX conceptual framework support this study's findings. The findings were in response to the research question: What employee engagement strategies do call center managers use to increase productivity and profitability. Call center managers who use this study's findings as a guide to learning employee engagement strategies could see the profitability of their organizations increase as productivity rises.

References

Adashi, E. Y., Walters, L. B., & Menikoff, J. A. (2018). *The Belmont Report* at 40: Reckoning with time. *American Journal of Public Health*, *108*(10), 1345-1348. https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.2018.304580

Adsit, D. J., Bobrow, W. S., Hegel, P. S., & Fitzpatrick, B. G. (2018). The return on investment of rank and yank in a simulated call-center environment. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, *70*(2), 113-128. https://doi.org/10.1037/cpb0000103

Aguinis, H., & Burgi-Tian, J. (2021). Talent management challenges during COVID-19 and beyond: Performance management to the rescue. *BRQ Business Research Quarterly*, *24*(3), 233-240. https://doi.org/10.1177/23409444211009528

Akanni, A. A., Olayinka, O. A., & Oduaran, C. A. (2018). Work-life balance, job insecurity and counterproductive work behaviour among brewery workers. *North American Journal of Psychology, 20*(2), 289-299.

Akter, H., Ahmed, W., Sentosa, I., & Hizam, S. M. (2022). Crafting employee engagement through talent management practices in telecom sector. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management, 20.* https://doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.v20i0.1775

Alagarsamy, S., Mehrolia, S., & Aranha, R. H. (2020). The mediating effect of employee engagement: How employee psychological empowerment impacts the employee satisfaction? A study of Maldivian tourism sector. *Global Business Review*, 1-19. https://doi.org/10.1177/0972150920915315

Albrecht, S., Breidahl, E., & Marty, A. (2018). Organizational resources, organizational engagement climate, and employee engagement. *Career Development International*, *23*(1), 67-85. https://doi.org/10.1108/cdi-04-2017-0064

Al-edenat, M. (2018). Reinforcing innovation through transformational leadership: Mediating role of job satisfaction. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, *31*(4), 810-838. https://doi.org/10.1108/jocm-05-2017-0181

Anindita, R., & Emilia Seda, S. A. (2018). How employee engagement mediates the influence of individual factors toward organizational commitment. *Problems and Perspectives in Management, 16*(1), 276-283. https://doi.org/10.21511/ppm.16(1).2018.27

Annansingh, F., & Howell, K. (2016). Using phenomenological constructivism (PC) to discuss a mixed method approach in information systems research. *Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods, 14*(1), 39-49. https://academic-publishing.org/index.php/ejbrm/article/view/1339/1302

Antony, M. R. (2018). Paradigm shift in employee engagement: A critical analysis on the drivers of employee engagement. *International Journal of Information, Business and Management, 10*(2), 32-46.

Archibald, M. M., Ambagtsheer, R. C., Casey, M. G., & Lawless, M. (2019). Using Zoom videoconferencing for qualitative data collection: Perceptions and experiences of researchers and participants. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 18*, 1-8. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406919874596

Arif, M., Zahid, S., Kashif, U., & IIyas Sindhu, M. (2017). Role of leader-member exchange relationships in organizational change management: Mediating role of organizational culture. *International Journal of Organizational Leadership, 6*(1), 32-41. https://doi.org/10.33844/ijol.2017.60339

Aristos, D., Georgios, S., Miltiadis, C., & Grigorios, K. (2018). The impact of mergers and acquisitions on the corporate culture and employees: The case of the Aegean and Olympic Air. *Academy of Strategic Management Journal, 17*(1), 1-13.

Armstrong, C. S., & Kepler, J. D. (2018). Theory, research design assumptions, and casual inferences. *Journal of Accounting and Economics*, *66*(2-3), 366-373. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jacceco.2018.08.012

Arsel, Z. (2017). Asking questions with reflexive focus: A tutorial on designing and conducting interviews. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *44*(4), 939-948. https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucx096

Astroth, K. S., & Chung, A. E. (2018). Exploring the evidence: Focusing on the fundamentals: Reading research with a critical eye. *Nephrology Nursing Journal*, *45*(4), 381-385. https://library.annanurse.org/anna/articles/2018/view

Audenaert, M., Van der Heijden, B., Rombaut, T., & Van Thielen, T. (2021). The role of feedback quality and organizational cynicism for affective commitment. *Review of Public Personnel Administration, 41*(3), 593-615. https://doi.org/10.1177/0734371X20923010

Aun, I. I., Olata, O. O., Ajayi, O., & Sanusi, I. (2019). Effective leadership styles on employees performance: A study of Seven-Up PLC. *Global Management Review, 13*(1), 11-25. https://doi.org/10.34155/GMR.19.1301.02

Aymn, S. A. (2018). Transformational leadership style and its relationship with change management. *Business: Theory and Practice, 19*, 17-24. https://doi.org/10.3846/btp.2018.03

Azim, T. M., Lou, F., Aftab, U., Munshi Muhammed Abdul, J. K., & Begum, S. (2019). Linking transformational leadership with employees' engagement in the creative process. *Management Research Review, 42*(7), 837-858. https://doi.org/10.1108/MRR-08-2018-0286

Bakker, A. B., & Albrecht, S. (2018). Work engagement: Current trends. *Career Development International, 23*(1), 4-11. https://doi.org/10.1108/CDI-11-2017-0207

Bamkin, M., Maynard, S., & Goulding, A. (2016). Grounded theory and ethnography combined: A methodology to study children's interactions on children's mobile libraries. *Journal of Documentation, 72*(2), 214-231. https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-01-2015-0007

Bandar, J., & Kleiner, B. H. (2019). The effects of continuous improvement tools on a call center. *Industrial Management, 61*(4), 12-17.

Bansal, P., Smith, W. K., & Vaara, E. (2018). New ways of seeing through qualitative research. *Academy of Management Journal, 61*(4), 1189-1195. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2018.4004

Barnham, C. (2015). Qualitative and quantitative: Perceptual foundations. *International Journal of Market Research, 57*(6), 837-854. https://doi.org/10.2501/IJMR-2015-070

Bartz-Zuccala, W., Mohnen, P., & Schweiger, H. (2018). The role of innovation and management practices in determining firm productivity. *Comparative Economics Study*, *60*(4), 502-530. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41294-018-0075-3

Baskarada, S., & Koronios, A. (2018). A philosophical discussion of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research in social science. *Qualitative Research Journal*, *18*(1), 2-21. https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-D-17-00042

Bauer, T. N., & Green, S. G. (1996). Development of leader-member exchange: A longitudinal test. *Academy of Management Journal*, *39*(6), 1538-1567. https://doi.org/10.2307/257068

Beneito-Montagut, R., Cassian-Yde, N., & Begueria, A. (2018). What do we know about the relationship between internet-mediated interaction and social isolation and loneliness in later life? *Quality in Aging and Older Adults*, *19*(1), 14-30. https://doi.org/10.1108/QAOA-03-2017-0008

Bergstrom, O., & Arman, R. (2017). Increasing commitment after downsizing: The role of involvement and voluntary redundancies. *Journal of Change Management*, *17*(4), 297-320. https://doi.org/10.1080/14697017.2016.1252784

Bernal, C., Paipa, L., Yavar, J. N., Agudelo, L., & Millán, J. (2021). Continuous improvement and business sustainability in companies of an emerging market: Empirical analysis. *Journal of Industrial Engineering and Management*, *14*(4), 771-787. https://doi.org/10.3926/jiem.3610

Berndt, A. E. (2020). Sampling methods. *Journal of Human Lactation*, *36*(2), 224-226. https://doi.org/10.1177/0890334420908650

Bernerth, J. B., Walker, J., & Harris, S. H. (2016). Rethinking the benefits and pitfalls of leader-member exchange: A reciprocity versus self-protection perspective. *Human Relations*, *69*(3), 661-684. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726715594214

Bhandari, S., Hallowell, M. R., Scheve, C., Upton, J., Alruqi, W., & Quashne, M. (2022). Assessing the quality of safety-focused engagement leadership. *Professional Safety*, *67*(1), 22-28.

Birt, L., Scott, S., Cavers, D., Campbell, C., & Walter, F. (2016). Member checking: A tool to enhance trustworthiness or merely a nod to validation. *Qualitative Health Research*, *26*(13), 1802-1811. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732316654870

Boddy, C. R. (2016). Sample size for qualitative research. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, *19*(4), 426-432. https://doi.org/10.1108/QMR-06-2016-0053

Bracken-Roche, D., Bell, E., Macdonald, M. B., & Racine, E. (2017). The concept of vulnerability in research ethics: an in-depth analysis of policies and guidelines. *Health Research and Policy Systems*, *15*(8), 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12961-016-0164-6

Bradshaw, C., Atkinson, S., & Doody, O. (2017). Employing a qualitative description approach in health care research. *Global Qualitative Nursing Research*, 4,1-8. https://doi.org/10.1177/2333393617742282

Brandt, E. N., Andersson, A. C., & Kjellstrom, S. (2019). The future trip: A story of transformational change. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, *32*(7), 669-686. https://doi.org/10.1108/JOCM-09-2017-0358

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative*

Research in Psychology, *3*(2),77-101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Brear, M. (2019). Process and outcomes of a recursive, dialogic member checking approach: A project ethnography. *Qualitative Health Research*, *29*(7), 944-957. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732318812448

Breaugh, J. (2021). To stressed to be engaged? The role of basic needs satisfaction in understanding work stress and public sector engagement. *Public Personnel Management*, *50*(1), 84-108. https://doi.org/10.1177/0091026020912516

Brown, O., Paz-Aparicio, C., & Revilla, A. J. (2019). Leaders communication style, LMX, and organizational commitment: A study of employee perceptions in Peru. *Leadership and Organizational Journal*, *40*(2), 230-258. https://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-03-2018-0129

Bruce, A., Beuthin, R., Shields, L., Molzahn, A., & Schick-Makaroff, K. S. (2016). Narrative research evolving: Evolving through narrative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *January-December* 1-6. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609-406916659292

Budriene, D., & Diskiene, D. (2020). Employee engagement: Types levels and relationships with practice of HRM. *Malaysian E-Commerce Journal*, *4*(2), 42-47. https://doi.org/10.26480/mecj.02.2020.42.47

Bui, H. T. M., Chau, V. S., & Cox, J. (2019). Managing the survivor syndrome as scenario planning methodology…and it matters! *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, *69*(4), 838-854.

https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPPM-05-2018-0202

Busari, A. H., Khan, S. N., Abdullah, S. M., & Mughal, Y. H. (2019). Transformational leadership style, followership, and factors of employees' reactions towards organizational change. *Journal of Asia Business Studies*, *13*(2), 181-209. https://doi.org/10.1108/JABS-03-2018-0083

Byun, G., Dai, Y., Lee, S., & Kang, S. (2017). Leader trust, competence, LMX, and member performance: A moderated mediation framework. *Psychological Reports 120*(6), 1137-1159. https://doi.org/10.1177/0033294117716465

Campbell, A. J. (2020). Let the data speak: Using rigor to extract vitality from qualitative data. *Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods*, *18*(1), 1-15. https://doi.org/10.34190/jbrm.18.1.001

Candela, A. G. (2019). Exploring the function of member checking. *The Qualitative Report*, *24*(3), 619-628. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2019.3726

Caniels, M. C. J., Semeijn, J. H., & Renders, I. H. M. (2018). Mind the mindset! The interaction of proactive personality, transformational leadership, and growth mindset for engagement at work. *Career Development International*, *23*(1), 48-66. https://doi.org/10.1108/CDI-11-2016-104

Capron, A. M. (2018). Where did informed consent for research come from? *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics*, *46*, 12-29. https://doi.org/10.1177/1073110518766004

Caretta, M. A., & Perez, M. A. (2019). When participants do not agree: Member checking and challenges to epistemic authority in participatory research. *Field Methods*, *31*(4), 359-374. https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X19866578

Carr, E. M., Zhang, G. D., Ming, J., Hung, Y., & Siddiqui, Z. S. (2019). Qualitative research: An overview of emerging approaches for data collection. *Australasian Psychiatry, 27*(3), 307–309. https://doi.org/10.1177/1039856219828164

Carriger, M. (2018). Do we have to downsize: does the empirical evidence suggest any alternative? *Journal of Strategy and Management, 11*(4), 449-460. https://doi.org/10.1108/JSMA-08-2018-0079

Cassell, C., Radcliffe, R., & Malik, F. (2020). Participant reflexivity in organizational design research design. *Organizational Research Methods, 23*(4), 750-773. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428119842640

Chambers, M., Bliss, K., & Rambur, B. (2020). Recruiting research participants via traditional snowball vs. Facebook advertisements and a website. *Western Journal of Nursing Research, 42*(10), 846-851. https://doi.10.1177/0193394592090445

Chang, H. C. (2018). The different culture management in mergers and acquisitions affecting the fit of personal-organizational values and business performance. *Journal of Accounting Finance & Management Strategy, 13*(1), 27-55.

Chao, R., Zhang, L., & Yang, Y. (2021). How the psychological safety of employees influences job performance in the insurance industry? The mediation role of organizational communication and organizational learning. *International Journal of Organizational Innovation, 14*(1), 130-144. https://doi.org/2021.1166/IJOI

Charhar, B., & Hatwal, V. (2018). Human resource management practices and its impacts on employee engagement and performance. *Opus: HR Journal, 9*(1), 16-35.

Chen, X. P., He, W., & Weng, L. C. (2018). What is wrong with treating followers differently? The basis of leader-member exchange differentiation matters. *Journal of Management, 44*(3), 946-971. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206315598372

Chernyak-Hai, L., & Rabenu, E. (2018). The new era workplace relationships: Is social exchange theory still relevant? *Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 11*(3), 456-481. https://doi/10.1017/iop.2018.5

Chin, T. L., Lok, S. Y. P., & Kong, P. Y. P. (2019). Does transformational leadership influence employee engagement. *Global Business and Management Research, 11*(2), 92-97.

Choi, S. (2018). Organizational knowledge and information technology: The key resources for improving customer service in call centers. *Information Systems and eBusniess management, 16*(1), 187-203. https://doi:10.1007/s10257-017-0359-6

Chrondrogiannis, E., Andronikou, V., Tagaris, A., Karanastasis, E., Varvarigou, T., & Tsuji, M. (2017). A novel semantic representation for eligibility criteria in clinical trials. *Journal of Biomedical Informatics. 69,* 10-23. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbi.2017.03.013

Clark, K. R., & Veale, B. L. (2018). Strategies to enhance data collection and analysis in qualitative research. *Radiologic Technology, 89*(5), 482-485.

Clarke, V., Braun, V., Frith, H., & Moller, N. (2019). Editorial introduction to the special issue: Using story completion methods in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 16*(1), 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2018.1536378

Colorafi, K. G., & Evans, B. (2016). Qualitative descriptive methods in health science research. *Health Environment Research & Design Journal*, *9*(4), 16-25.

Constantinou, C. S., Georgiou, M., & Perdikogianni, M. (2017). A comparative method for themes saturation (coMets) in qualitative interviews. *Qualitative Research, 17*(5), 571-588. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794116686650

Crook, N., Alakavuklar, O. N., & Bathurst, R. (2021). Leader, "know yourself": bringing back self-awareness, trust and feedback with a theory O perspective. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 34*(2), 350-365. https://doi.org/10.1108/JOCM-05-2020-0131

Daniel, K. (2019). Using the TACT framework to learn the principles of rigour in qualitative research. *Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods, 17*(3), 118-129. https://doi.org/10.34190/JBRM.17.3.002

Danish, R. Q., Mehta, A. M., Malik, Q., Saleem, H., Naqvi, F. N., & Ahmad, F. A. (2020). Are engaged employees more satisfied and personally attached? A process model approach. *Academy of Strategic Management Journal, 19*(4), 1-11.

Dansereau, F., Graen, G., & Haga, J. (1975). A vertical dyad linkage approach to leadership within formal organizations: A longitudinal investigation of the role making process. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 13*(1), 46-78. https://doi.org/10.1016/0030-5073(75)90005-7

DeCino, D. A., & Waalkes, P. L. (2019). Aligning epistemology with member checks. *International Journal in Research & Method in Education, 42*(4), 374-384. https://doi.org/10.1080/1743727X.2018.1492535

De Clerk, D., Haq, I. U., & Azeem, M. U. (2018). Why happy employees help How meaningfulness collectivism and support transform job satisfaction into helping behaviors. *Personnel Review*, *48*(4), 1001-1021. https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-02-2018-0052

Deterding, N. M., & Waters, M. C. (2018). Flexible coding of in-depth interviews: A twenty-first-century approach. *Sociological Methods and Research*, 1-32 https://doi.org/10.1177/0049124118799377

Dezi, L., Battisti, E., Ferraris, A., & Papa, A. (2018). The link between mergers and acquisitions and innovation: A systematic literature review. *Management Research Review*, *41*(6), 716-752. https://doi.org/10.1108/MRR-07-2017-0213

Dhanpat, N., Modau, F. D., Lugisani, P., Maboja, R., & Phiri, M. (2018). Exploring employee retention and intention to leave within a call center. *SA Journal of Human Resources*, *16*, 1-13. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.v16i0.905

Dominguez-Escrig, E., Broch, F. F. M., Alcamí, R. L., & Gómez, R. C. (2021). Leaders who empower: A gateway to radical innovation. *Journal of Management and Organization*, *27*(5), 930-947. https://doi.org/10.1017/jmo.2019.73

Doyle, L., McCabe, C., Keogh, B., Brady, A., & McCann, M. (2020). An overview of the qualitative descriptive design within nursing research. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, *25*(5), 443-455. https://doi.org/10.1177/1744987119880234

Duan, J., Bao, C., Huang, C., & Brinsfield, C. T. (2018). Authoritarian leadership and employee silence in China. *Journal of Management and Organization*, *24*(1), 62-80. https://doi.org/10.1017/jmo.2016.61

Dumas, C., & Beinecke, R. H. (2018). Change leadership in the 21st Century. *Journal of*

Change Management, *31*(4), 867-876. https://doi.org/10.1108/JOCM-02-2017-0042

Dzwigol, H. (2020). Methodical and empirical platform of triangulation in strategic management. *Academy of Strategic Management*, *19*(4), 1-8.

Eichenseer, V., Spurk, D., & Kauffeld, S. (2020). Leaders watch out for LMX differentiation: A multi-level model of leader related antecedences and consequences of LMX differentiation. *German Journal of Human Resource Management*, *34*(4), 398-417. https://doi.org/10.1177/2397002220907389

Ellard-Gray, A., Jeffrey, N. K., Choubak, M., & Crann, S. E. (2015). Finding the hidden participant: Solutions for recruiting hidden, hard-to-reach, and vulnerable populations. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *14*(5), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406915621420

Elsner-Twesme, E., Werner, J.M., & Simha, A. (2021). Can we talk? Improving employee contextual performance using motivating language and feedback orientation. *International Journal of Business Communication*, 1-21. https://doi.org/10.1177/23294884211038745

Entezarkheir, M., & Moshiri, S. (2019). Is innovation a factor in merger decisions? Evidence from a us panel of firms. *Empirical Economics*, *57*(5), 1783-1809. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00181-018-1515-7

Erkutlu, H., & Chafra, J. (2018). Despotic leadership and organizational deviance. *Journal of Strategy and Management*, *11*(2), 150-165. https://doi.org/10.1108/JSMA-04-2017-0029

Farooq, M. B., & Villiers, C. D. (2017). Telephonic qualitative research interviews: When to consider them and how to do them. *Meditari Accountancy Research, 25*(2), 291-316. https://doi.org/10.1105/MEDAR-10-2016-6083

Farrugia, B. (2019). WASP (writing a scientific paper): Sampling in qualitative research. *Early Human Development*, 133, 69-71. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.earlhumdev.2019.03.016

Flynn, S. V., & Korcuska, J. S. (2018). Credible phenomenological research: A mixed-methods study. *Counselor Education & Supervision, 57*(1), 34-50. https://doi.org/10.1002/ceas.10292

Fox, J. (2021). A reflection on the value of acceptance and commitment therapy for promoting good mental health in the workplace: a service user perspective. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, *49*(3), 362-370. https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2021.1897087

Fulcher-Rood, K., Castilla-Earls, A. P., & Higginbotham, J. (2018). School-based speech-language pathologists' perspectives on diagnostic decision making. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, *27*(2), 796-812. https://doi.org/10.1044/2018_AJSLP-16-0121

Fusch, P., Fusch, G. E., & Ness, L. (2018). Denzin's paradigm shift: Revisiting triangulation in qualitative research. *Journal of Social Research*, *10*(1), 19-32. https://doi.org/10.5590/JOSC.2018.10.1.2

Gallup. (2018). *How to get people behind a new company vision.* *https://www.gallup.com/workplace/240644/people-behind-new-company-*

vision.aspx

Gaus, N. (2017). Selecting research approaches and research designs: A reflective essay. *Qualitative Research Journal*, *17*(2), 99-112. https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-07-2016-0041

George, V., & Massey, L. M. (2020). Proactive strategy to improve staff engagement. *Nurse Leader*, *18*(6), 532-535. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mnl.2020.08.008

Gerards, R., de Grip, A., & Baudewijns, C. (2018). Do new ways of working increase work engagement? *Personnel Review*, *47*(2), 517-534. http://doi.org/10.1108/PR-02-2017-0050

Geue, P. E. (2018). Positive practices in the workplace: Impact on team climate, work engagement, and task performance. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, *54*(3), 272-301. https://doi.org/10.1177/0021886318773459

Gill, H., Cassidy, S. A., Cragg, C., Algate, P., Weijs, C. A., & Finegan, J. E. (2019). Beyond reciprocity: The role of empowerment in understanding felt trust. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, *28*(6), 845-858. https://doi.org/10.1080/1359432X.2019.1678586

Gorgens-Ekermans, G., & Kotze, C. (2020). Insights into the burnout development process: A study of call center representatives. *Management Dynamics*, *29*(2), 19-35. https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC-1d53a5881d

Graaf, G., Hengeveld-Bidmon, E., Carnochan, S., Salomone, M., & Austin, M. J. (2019). Change communication in public sector cutback management. *Public Organization Review*, *19*(4), 453-472. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11115-018-0408-8

Graen, G. B., & Uhl-Bien, M. (1995). Relationship-based approach to leadership: Development of leader-member exchange (LMX) theory of leadership over 25 years: Apply a multi-level multi-domain perspective. *Leadership Quarterly, 6*(2), 219-247. https://doi.org/10.1016/1048-9843(95)90036-5

Gray, L. M., Wong-Wylie, G., Rempel, G. R., & Cook, K. (2020). Expanding qualitative research interviewing strategies: Zoom video communication. *The Qualitative Report*, *25*(5), 1292-1301. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2020.4212

Greener, S. (2018). Research limitations the need for honesty and common sense. *Interactive Learning Environments, 26*(5), 567-568. https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2018.1486785

Gregory, K. (2019). Lessons of a failed study: Lone research, media analysis, and the limitations of bracketing. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 18, 1-10. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406919842450

Gupta, B., Karen, Y. W., & Cai, W. (2021). Interactional justice and willingness to share tacit knowledge: Perceived cost as a mediator, and respectful engagement as moderator. *Personnel Review, 50*(2), 478-497. https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-08-2019-0436

Gupta, N., & Sharma, V. (2018). Relationship between leader-member exchange (LMX), high-involvement HRP and employee resilience on extra-role performance mediating role on employee engagement. *The Journal of Indian Business Research*, *10*(2), 126-150. https://doi.org/10.1108/JIBR-09-2017-0147

Guttermann, D., Lehmann-Willenbrock, N., Boer, D., Born, M., & Voelpel, S. C. (2017).

How leaders affect followers' work engagement and performance: Integrating leader-member exchange and cross-over theory. *British Journal of Management, 28*, 299-314. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8551.12214

Hammarberg, K., Kirkman, M., & de Lacey, S. (2016). Qualitative research methods: When to use them and how to judge them. *Human Reproduction, 31*(3), 498-501. https://doi.org/10.1093/humrep/dev334

Hammersley, M. (2015). On ethical principles for social research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 18*(4), 433-449. https://doi.org10.1080/13645579.2014.924169

Harriss, A. (2019). Working well. *Occupational Health & Well Being, 71*(9), 24-28.

Hartge, T., Callahan, T., & King, C. (2019). Leader's behaviors during radical change processes: Subordinate's perceptions of how well leader behaviors communicate change. *International Journal of Business Communications*, *56*(1), 100-121. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F2329488415605061

Hassan, B. A., & Omilion-Hodges, L. M. (2018). Relative leader-member relationships within group context. *Corporate Communications*, *23*(4), 82-98. https://doi.org/10.1108/CCIJ-01-2018-001

Haynie, J. J., Baur, J., Harris, J. N., Harris, S. G., & Moates, K. N. (2019). When caring leaders are constrained: the impact of LMX differentiation on leader empathetic concern in predicting discretionary work behaviors. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, *26*(1), 5-17. https://doi.org/10.1177/1548051818767394

He, G., An, R., & Hewlin, P. F. (2018). Paternalistic leadership and employee well-being:

A moderated mediation model. *Chinese Management Studies*, *13*(3), 645-663. https://doi.org/10.1108/CMS-10-2018-0724

He, W., Fehr, R., Yam, K. C., Long, L. R., & Hao, P. (2017). Interactional justice, leader-member exchange, and employee performance: Examining the moderating role of justice differentiation. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 38(0), 537-557. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2133

Hennink, M. M., Kaiser, B. N., & Weber, M. B. (2019). What influences saturation: Estimating sample sizes in focus group research. *Qualitative Health Research*, *29*(10),1483-1498. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732318821692

Hicks, R. (2018). Coach's corner: Get transformative for optimal results. *Physician Leadership Journal*, *5*(1), 62-64. http://doi.org/10.1108/02621711011039240

Hirvi, S. K., Laulainen, S., & Taskinen, H. (2021). Trust as a multidimensional phenomenon in LMX relationships. *Journal of Health Organizations and Management*, *35*(1), 17-33. https://doi.org/10.1108/JHOM-12-2019-0349

Hofmann, M., & Barker, C. (2017). On researching a health condition that the researcher has already experienced. *Qualitative Psychology*, *4*(2), 139-148. https://doi.org/10.1037/qup0000066

Hofslett Kopperud, S., Buch, R., & Skogen, C. (2021). Work overload and leader-member exchange: The moderating role. *Journal of General Management*, *46*(3), 173-184. https://doi.org/10.1177/0306307020942905

Hsiung, H. H., & Bolino, M. C. (2018). The implications of perceived favourtism in the context of leader-member exchange relationships. *European Journal of Work and*

Organizational Psychology, *27*(1), 88-99. https://doi.10.1080/1359432x.2017.1395414

Hu, J., & Liden, R. C. (2018). Relative leader-member exchange within team contexts: how and when social comparison impacts individual effectiveness. *Personnel Psychology*, *66*(1), 127-172. https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12008

Hutchinson, J. A. M., Kellerman, D. M., Kellerman, G. R., & Rosen, G. (2021). A time to change for mental health and well being via virtual professional coaching longitudinal observational study. *Journal of Medical Internet Research, 23*(7). https://doi.org/10.2196/27774

Icy, F. A., Elexpuru-Albizuri, I., & Villardon-Gallego, L. (2019). Revisiting *The Belmont Report*'s ethical principles in internet mediated research: Perspectives from disciplinary associations in the social sciences. *Ethics and Information Technology*, *21*(2), 137-149. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10676-018-9495-z

Iqbal, N., Ahmad, M., & Mc Allen, M. (2019). Unveiling the relationship between e-HRM; impersonal trust and employee productivity. *Management Research Review, 42*(7), 879-899. https://doi.org/10.1108/MRR-02-2018-0094

Irani, E. (2019). The use of videoconferencing for qualitative interviewing: Opportunities, challenges, and considerations. *Clinical Nursing Research, 28*(1), 3-8. https://doi.org/10.1177/1054773818803170

Isac, N., Dobrin, C., Raphalalani, L. P., & Sonko, M. (2021). Does organizational culture influence job satisfaction? A comparative analysis of two multinational companies. *Revista De Management Comparat International*,*22*(2), 138-157. https://doi.org/10.24818/RMCI.2021.2.138

Islam, T., Tariq, J., & Usman, B. (2018). Transformational leadership and four-dimensional commitment: Mediating role of job characteristics and moderating role of participative and directive leadership styles. *Journal of Management Development 37*(9/10), 666-683. https://doi.org/10.1108/JMD-06-2017-0197

Ismail, N., Kinchin, G., & Edwards, J. A. (2018). Pilot study, does it really matter? Learning lessons from conducting a pilot study for a qualitative PhD thesis. *International Journal of Social Science Research, 6*(1), 1-17. https://doi.org/10.5296/ijssr.v6i1.11720

Istiningsih, I. D., Sugandini, D., & Wahyum, P. (2020). Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement in the SMEs of crafts. *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science, 9*(7), 23-31. http://dx.doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v9i7.924

Jahja, A. S., Sri Ramalu, S., & Razimi, M. S. A. (2021). Generic qualitative research in management studies. *Journal Riset Akuntansi Dan Bisnis, 7*(1), 1-13. http://doi.org/10.38204/jrak.v7i1.523

Jangsiriwattana, T. (2019). The relationship between transformational and transactional leadership: Employee perceptions of organizational work performance and employee engagement. *Journal of International Academy of Case Studies, 25*(3), 1-10.

Jawahar, I. M., Schreurs, B., & Mohammed, S. J. (2018). How and when LMX quality relates to counterproductive performance. *Career Development International, 23*(6/7), 557-575. https://doi.org/10.1108/CDI-05-2018-0134

Jha, S. (2019). Transformational leadership as a predictor of employee engagement. *Review of Management, 9*(1/2), 37-40. https://doi.org/10.5958/2321-5763.2019.00033.7

Jia, X., Chen, J., Mei, L., & Wu, Q. (2018). How leadership matters in organizational innovation: A perspective of openness. *Management Decision*, *56*(1), 6-25. https://doi.org/10.1108/MD-04-2017-0415

Jian, G., & Dalisay, F. (2017). Conversation at work: The effects of leader-member conversational quality. *Communication Research*, *44*(2), 177-197. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650214565924

Jiang, H., & Shen, H. (2020). Toward a relational theory of employee engagement: Understanding authenticity transparency and employee behaviors. *International Journal of Business Communications.* 1-28. https://doi.org/10.1177/2329488420954236

Johnston, C. M., Wallis, M., Oprescu, F. I., & Gray, M. (2017). Methodological considerations related to nurse researchers using their own experience of a phenomenon within phenomenology. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 73*(3), 574–584. https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.13198

Jokisaari, M., & Vuori, J. (2018). Leaders’ resources and newcomer socialization: The importance of delegation. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 33*(2), 161-175. https://doi.org/10.1108/JMP-09-2016-0274

Jonsen, K., Fendt, J., & Point, S. (2018). Convincing qualitative research: What constitutes persuasive writing? *Organizational Research Methods, 21*(1), 30-67. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428117706533

Joseph, T. (2016). Developing the leader-follower relationship: Perceptions of leaders and followers. *Journal of Leadership Accountability, 13*(1), 132-144.

Joshi, M., & Jha, S. (2017). Choice of authoritative style when implementing a survival urgency-based strategic change: A middle managers perspective. *Journal of Strategy and Management, 10*(2), 168-186. https://doi.org/10.1108/JSMA-06-2014-0041

Jutras, R., & Mathieu, C. (2016). Person-organization fit relationship with job satisfaction and turnover: The mediating influence of leader-member exchange. *Academy of Strategic Management Journal, 15*(1), 71-86.

Jyoti, J., & Dimple. (2021). Fun at workplace and intention to leave: Role of work engagement and group cohesion. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management. 34*(2), 782-807. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-06-2021-0704

Kakkar, S. (2019). Leader-member exchange and employee resilience: The mediating role of regulatory focus. *Management Research Review, 42*(9), 1062-1075. https://doi.org/10.1108/MRR-03-2018-0116

Kalu, F. A., & Bwalya, J. (2017). What makes qualitative research good research? An exploratory analysis of critical elements. *International Journal of Social Science Research, 5*(2), 43-57. https://doi.org/10.5296/ijssr.v5i2.10711

Kanwal, I., Lodhi, R. N., & Kashif, M. (2019). Leadership styles and workplace ostracism among frontline employees. *Management Research Review, 22*(8), 991-1013. https://doi.org/10.1108/MRR-08-2018-0320

Karagiozis, N. (2018). Complexities of the researcher's role in qualitative research: The power of reflexivity. *The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Educational Studies*, *13*(1), 19-31. https://doi.org/10.18848/2327-011X/CGP/v13i01/19-31

Kellam, N., & Cirell, A. M. (2018). Quality considerations in qualitative inquiry: Expanding our understandings for the broader dissemination of qualitative research. *Journal of Engineering Education*, *107*(3), 355-361. https://doi.org/10.1002/jee.20227

Kerber, K. W., & Buono, A. F. (2018). The rhythm of change leadership. *Organization Development Journal*, *36*(3), 55-72.

Kessler, S. R., Nixon, A. E., & Nord, W. R. (2017). Examining organic and mechanistic structures: Do we know as much as we thought. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, *19*, 531-555. https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12109

Khan, N. Z. A., Imran, A., & Anwar, A. (2019). Destructive leadership and job stress: Casual effect of emotional exhaustion on job satisfaction of employees in call centers. *International Journal of Information, Business and Management, 11*(1), 135-146.

Khaola, P., & Coldwell, C. (2019). Explaining how leadership and justice influence employee innovation behaviours. *European Journal of Innovation Management, 22*(1), 193-212. https://doi.org/10.1108/EJIM-08-2017-0103

Kilb, A., & Herzig, K. (2016). Increasing the efficiency of data collection with research night participation. *Teaching of Psychology*, *43*(1), 53-58. https://doi.org/10.1177/0098628315620881

Kim, H., Sefcik, J. S., & Bradway, C. (2017). Characteristics of qualitative descriptive studies: A systematic review. *Research in Nursing & Health, 40*, 23-42. https://doi.org/10/1002/nur.21768

Kim, S. L. (2019). Enticing high performers to stay and share their knowledge: The importance of trust in the leader. *Human Resource Management*, *58*(4), 341-351. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.21955

Kim, S. L., Han, S., Son, S. Y., & Yun, S. (2017). Exchange ideology in supervisor-subordinate dyads, LMX, and knowledge sharing: A social exchange perspective. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, *34* 147-172. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10490-016-9483-y

Knapp, M. S. (2017). The practice of designing qualitative research on educational leadership: Notes for emerging scholars and practitioner-scholars. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education*, *12*(1), 26–50. https://doi.org/10.1177/1942775116647365

Korkmaz, O. (2020). The mediating role of the leader-member exchange in the relationship between the Pelz effect and job satisfaction. *International Journal of Business*, *25*(3), 291-312. https://ijb.cyut.edu.tw/p/412-1010-5340.php?Lang=en

Krishnan, V. R. (2004). The impact on transformational leadership on followers influence strategies. *Leader and Organization Change Development Journal, 25*(1), 58-72.

https://doi.org/10.1108/01437730410512778

Kucuk, B. A. (2020). Work flow experience in the light of leader-member exchange and person-job fit theories. *Psychological Reports*, 1-34. https://doi.org/10.1177/0033294120981927

Kumar, P. (2019). Development of a conceptual framework: A pragmatic approach to employee engagement. *Indian Journal of Commerce and Management Studies, 10*(1), 1-12. https://doi.org/10.18843/ijcms/v10i1/01

Kundu, S. C., Kumar, S., & Gahlawat, N. (2019). Empowering leadership and job performance: Mediating role of psychological empowerment. *Management Research Review*, *42*(5), 605-624. https://doi.org/10.1108/MRR-04-2018-0183

Kuntz, J., Davies, B., & Naswell, K. (2019). From transactional to transformational: Exploring the role of leadership style on CEO succession outcomes. *Leader & Organizational Development Journal*, *40*(7), 815-827. https://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-01-2019-0012

Langley, A., & Meziani, M. (2020). Making interviews meaningful. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 56*(3), 370-391. https://doi.org/10.1177/0021886320937818

Lapointe, E., Vandenberghe, C., Ayed Ben, A. K., Schwarz, G., Tremblay, M., & Chenevert, D. (2020). Social comparisons, social conceptions, and attributions: Assessing the self-related contingencies in leader-member exchange. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, *35*(3), 381-402. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-019-09628-9

Laumann, K. (2020). Criteria for qualitative methods in human reliability analysis. *Reliability Engineering and System Safety*, *194*, 1-11. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ress.2018.07.001

Lee, A., Garbasi, A., Schwarz, G., & Newman, A. (2019). Leader-member exchange social comparisons and follower outcomes: The roles of felt obligation and psychological entitlement. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *92*, 593-617. https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.12245

Lee, A. Y.-P., Chang, P.-C., & Chang, H.-Y. (2022). How workplace fun promotes informal learning among team members: A cross-level study of the relationship between workplace fun, team climate, workplace friendship and informal learning. *Employee Relations*, 1-20. https://doi.org/10.1108/ER-06-2021-0251

Lee, J., & Varon, A. L. (2020). Employee exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect in response to dissatisfying organizational situations: It depends on the supervisory relationship quality. *International Journal of Business Communication*, *57*(1), 30-51. https://doi.org/10.1177/2329488416675839

Lemmon, G., Jensen, J. M., Wilson, M. S., Posig, M., & Thompson, K. T. (2020). Engagement as a privilege and disengagement as a pathology. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, *29*(2), 220-235. https://doi.org/10.1177/1056492618775842

Leon, F. R., & Morales, O. (2018). Effects of people-oriented leadership and subordinate employability on call center withdrawal behaviors. *Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, *34*(1), 56-62. https://doi.org/10.5093/jwop2018a7

Lester, J. N., Cho, Y., & Lochmiller, C. (2020). Learning to do qualitative analysis: A starting point. *Human Resource Development Review*, *19*(1), 94-106. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1534484320903890

Levin, S. P., & Levin, M. (2019). Managing ideas, people, and projects: Organizational tools and strategies for researchers. *iScience, 20*, 278-291. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.isci.2019.09.017

Li, Y., Castano, G., & Li, Y. (2018). Linking leadership styles to work engagement: The role of psychological capital among Chinese knowledge workers. *Chinese Management Studies, 12*(2), 433-452. https://doi.org/10.1108/CMS-04-2017-0108

Liao, E. Y., & Chun, H. (2021). A resource-based perspective on leader-member exchange: An updated meta-analysis. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management, 38* (1), 317-379. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10490-018-9594-8

Liao, Z., Liu, W., Li, X., & Song, Z. (2018). Give and take: An episodic perspective on leader-member exchange. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 104(1), 34-51*. https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000371

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1982). *Establishing dependability and confirmability in naturalistic inquiry through an audit*

Litch, P. (2021). Workplace wellbeing. *Perspectives in Public Health, 141*(1), 11-12. https://doi.org10.1177/1757913920951388

Liu, Y., Xiao, H., & Wang, D. (2020). Just because I like you: Effect of leader-member liking on workplace deviance. *Social Behavior and Personality, 48*(3), 1-11. https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.8838

Lloyd, A. (2020). Efficiency productivity and targets: The gap between ideology and reality in the call centre. *Critical Sociology, 46*(1), 83-96. https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920518794251

Lloyd, K. J., Boer, D., & Voelpel, S. C. (2017). From listening to leading: Toward an understanding of supervisor listening within the framework of leader-member exchange theory. *International Journal of Business Communication, 54*(4), 131-151. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650214565924

Lowe, A., Norris, A. C., Farris, A. J., & Babbage, D. R. (2018). Quantifying thematic saturation in qualitative data analysis. *Field Methods, 30*(3), 191-207. https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822x17749386

Lowery, J. (2018). Disrupting yourself: How to avoid complacency, build productivity and keep talent engaged. *Strategic HR Review, 17*(5), 267-268. https://doi.org/10.1108/SHR-10-2018-148

Madill, A., & Sullivan, P. (2017). Mirrors, portraits and member checking: Managing difficult moments of knowledge exchange in the social sciences. *Qualitative Psychology, 5*(3), 321-339. https://doi.org/10.1037/qup0000089

Malenfant, J., Nichols, N., & Schwan, K. (2019). Chasing funding to eat our own tail: The invisible emotional work of making social change. *Canadian Journal of Nonprofit and Social Economy Research, 10*(2), 40-54. https://doi.org/10.29173/anserj.2019v10n2a307

Man-Ling, C., & Cheng-Feng, C. (2018). A mediation model of leaders favoritism. *Personnel Review, 47*(7), 1330-1344. https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-10-2016-0283

Mao, J. Y., Zhan, Y., Chen, L., & Liu, X. (2019). Consequences of supervisor self-interested behavior: A moderated mediation. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 34*(3), 126-138. https://doi.org/10.1108/JMP-04-2018-0170

Maotwanyane, G., & Pretorious, M. (2018). Evaluating the strategy implementation gap using the liabilities approach. *E-Journal of Social and Behavioural Research in Business, 9*(2), 29-77.

Marina, K., Mammadova, S., Hamidova, L., & Kashiyeva, L. (2020). About some aspects and features of formation of the domestic market of mergers and absorptions. *Economic and Social Development,* 220-226.

Martinez-Tur, V., Molina, A., Moliner, C., Garcia, E., Andreu, L., Bigne, E., & Luque, O. (2020). Reciprocity of trust between managers and team members. *Personnel Review, 49*(2), 653-659. https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-08-2018-0319

Matta, F. K., & Dyne, L. V. (2020). Understanding the disparate behavioral consequences of LMX differentiation: The role of social comparison emotions. *Academy of Management Review, 45*(1), 154-180. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2016.0264

Matthews, G. (2018). Employee engagement: What's your strategy? *Strategic HR Review, 17*(3), 150-154. http://doi.org/10.1108/SHR-03-2018-0025

Matthysen, M., & Harris, C. (2018). The relationship between readiness to change and work engagement: A case study in an accounting firm undergoing change. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management, 16*, 1-11. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.v16i0.855

Mayernik, S. (2019). Metadata accounts: Achieving data evidence in scientific research. *Social Studies of Science, 49*(5), 732-757.

https://doi.org/10.1177/0306312719863494

Mburu, B. K., Koome, P., & Gichuhi, D. (2020). Influence of employer-employee relationships on service quality in the hospitality industry in Nakuru County, Kenya. *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science*, *9*(5), 166-171. https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v9i5.854

McClure, R. (2019). The influence of mediating variables on market orientation during organizational change. *Academy of Marketing Studies Journal*, *22*(1), 1-25.

Mehrad, M., Fernandez-Castro, J., & Gonzalez Gomez de Olmedo, M. P. (2020). A systematic review of leadership styles, work engagement and organizational support. *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science*, *9*(4),66-77. https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v9i4.735

Merriam, S. B. (2002). *Introduction to qualitative research. Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis.* John Wiley & Sons.

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation. John Wiley & Sons.

Miller, S. M., Kim, J. H., & Lim, D. H. (2019). Everybody needs everyone: A case study of workplace learning after a downsize. *European Journal of Training and Development*, *44*(2/3), 159-179. https://doi.org/10.1108/EJTD-02-2019-0013

Mohajan, H. M. (2020). Quantitative research: A successful investigation in natural and social sciences. *Journal of Economic Development, Environment, and People*, *9*(4), 52-79. https://doi.org/10.26458/jedep.v9i4.679

Moletsane, M., Tefera, O., & Migiro, S. (2019). The relationship between employee engagement and organizational productivity of sugar industry in South Africa: The employees perspective. *African Journal of Business and Economic Research* *14*(1), 113-134. https://doi.org/10.31920/1750-4562/2019/v14n1a6

Molinos-Senante, M., & Maziotis, A. (2021). Drivers of profitability and productivity growth in the English and Welsh water industry since privatization. *International Journal of Water Resources Development. 37*(5), 865-881. https://doi.org/10.1080/07900627.2020.1782851

Morgan, D. L. (2018). Themes, theories, and models. *Qualitative Health Research*, *28*(3), 339-345. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732317750127

Morgan, D. L., & Nica, A. (2020). Iterative thematic inquiry: A new method for analyzing qualitative data. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 19, 1-11. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920955118

Muldoon, J., Bendickson, J. S., & Mayherne, C. F. (2019). Micro-foundations of resources, capabilities, and firm performance: A look at LMX. *Small Business Institute Journal*, *15*(1), 49-68. https://www.sbij.org/index.php/SBIJ/article/view/305

Nassaji, H. (2020). Good qualitative research. *Language Teaching Research, 24*(4), 427-431. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168820941288

Neher, A., & Maley, J. (2020). Improving the effectiveness of the employee performance management process: A managerial values approach. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management, 69*(6), 1129-1152. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPPM-04-2019-0201

Newton, C., & Perlow, R. (2021). The role of leader-member exchange relations and individual differences on counterproductive work behavior. *Psychological Reports*, 1-37. https://doi.org/10.1177/0033294121989298

Nowell, L. S., Morris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *16*, 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847

Olah, J., Hidayat, Y.A., Popp, J., Lakner, Z., & Kovacs, S. (2021). The effect of integrative trust and innovation on financial performance in a disruptive era. *Economics & Sociology, 14*(2), 111-136. https://doi.org/10.14254/2071-789X.2021/14-2/6

Oluwole, O. J., Aderibigbe, J. K., & Mjoli, T. Q. (2020). The attenuating effects of organizational justice on job insecurity and counterproductive work behaviors relationship. *African Journal of Business and Economic Research*, *15*(1), 201-223.

Ouedraogo, N., & Ouakouak, M. L. (2018). Impacts or personal trust and affective commitment on change success. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 31*(3), 676-696. https://doi.org/10.1108/JOCM-09-2016-0175

Oztaysi, B., Onar, S. C., Kahraman, C., & Gok, M. (2020). Call center performance measurement using intuitionistic fuzzy sets. *Journal of Enterprise Information Management*, *33*(6). https://doi.org/10.1108/JEIM-04-2017-00501647-1668

Ozturk, M., Durdyev, S., Osman, N. A., Ismail, S., & Banaitiene, N. (2020). How effective are labor wages on labor productivity? *Technological and Economic*

Development of Economy, 26(1), 258-270. https://doi.org/10.3846/tede.2020.11917

Page, L., Boysen, S., & Arya, T. (2021). Respect: The foundation of a successful nonprofit work culture. *Journal of Nonprofit Education and Leadership, 11*(4), 1-16. https://doi.org/10.18666/JNEL-2020-10293

Page, L., & Schoder, J. (2019). Making change last: Leadership is the key. *The Journal of Business Strategy*, *40*(2), 32-41. https://doi.org/10.1108/JBS-01-2018-0003

Pandey, J. (2018). Managing employee surplus: The cats, rats, camels and elephants of strategic downsizing matrix. *Strategic HR Review, 17*(4), 220-223. https://doi:10.1108/SHR-08-2018-133

Parasuraman, A. (2010). Service productivity, quality and innovation: Implications for service-design practice and research. *International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences*, *2*(3), 277-286. https://doi.org/10.1108/17566691011090026

Parent, J. D., & Lovelace, K. J. (2018). Employee engagement positive organizational culture and individual adaptability. *On the Horizon, 26*(3), 206-214. https://doi:org/10.1108/OTH-01-2018-0003

Park, I. J., Kim, P. B., Hai, S., & Zhang, X. (2020). What matters for employee's daily interpersonal behaviors. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *33*(4), 1210-1229. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-05-2020-0479

Parmer, L. L., & Dillard, J. E. (2019). The way employees are treated predict power feelings. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal, 40*(1), 2-16. https://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-08-2018-0312

Parveen, M., & Adeinat, I. (2019). Transformational leadership: Does it really decrease workplace stress? *Leadership & Organizational Development Journal, 40*(8), 860-876. https://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-01-2019-0023

Pattnaik, A. (2018). Social exchange theory: Revisiting the scaffolding of psychological contract. *The Indian Journal of Management, 11,* 9-12.

Pearse, N. (2019). An illustration of a deductive pattern matching procedure in qualitative leadership research. *The Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods*, *17*(3), 143-154. https://doi.org/10.34190/JBRM.17.3.004

Peterson, J. S. (2019). Presenting a qualitative study: A reviewer's perspective. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, *63*(3), 147-158. https://doi.org/10.1177/0016986219844789

Petkovic, N., & Rapajic, M. (2021). Employees satisfaction with communication in the organization. *Ekonomika, 67*(3), 39-61. https://doi.org/10.5937/ekonomika2103039P

Phillipi, J., & Lauderdale, J. (2018). A guide to field notes for qualitative research: Context and conversation. *Qualitative Health Research, 28*(3), 381-388. https://doi.org/10.1177/104972317697102

Posey, C. N. (2019). Job-shock influence on call center turnover. *Performance Improvement*, *58*(5), 32-33. https://doi.org/10.1002/pfi.21866

Prasad, K., & Mangipudi, M. R. (2021). Gamification for employee engagement: An empirical study with e-commerce industry. *Montenegrin Journal of Economics, 17*(2), 145-156. https://doi.org/10.14254/1800-5845/2021.17-2.12

Priya, A. (2017). Phenomenological social research: Some observations from the field.

Qualitative Research Journal, *17*(4), 295-305. https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-08-2016-0047

Quade, M. J., McLarty, B. D., & Bonner, J. M. (2020). The influence of supervisor bottom-line mentality and employee bottom-line mentality on leader-member exchange and subsequent employee performance. *Human Relations, 73*(8), 1157-1181. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726719858394

Raheim, M., Magnussen, L. H., Sekse, R. J. T., Lunde, A., Jacobsen, T., & Blystad, A. (2016). Researcher-researched relationship in qualitative research: Shifts in position and researcher vulnerability. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health & Well-Being*, *11*, 1-13. https://doi.org/10.3402/qhw.v.11.30996

Rahi, S., & Ahmad, S. (2020). Investigating the role of employee readiness to change on effective organizational change implementation: A theoretical perspective. *Economic and Social Development*: *Book of Proceedings*, *579*-591.

Rashid, S., Dastgeer, G., & Kayaniv, T. (2018). A social exchange perspective through the lens of an individual: Relationship between LMX voice, and organizational commitment in academia. *Business and Economic Review, 10*(3), 1-28. https://doi.org/10.22547/BER/10.3.1

Razali, R., Anwar, F., Rahman, M. A., & Ismail, F. F. (2016). Mixed methods research: Insights from requirements engineering: EJBRM. *Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods, 14*(2), 125-134. https://academic-publishing.org/index.php/ejbrm/article/view/1347/1310

Ribeiro, N., Yucel, I., & Gomes, D. (2018). How transformational leadership predicts employee's affective commitment and performance. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management, 67*(9), 1901-1917. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPPM-09-2017-0229

Riyanto, S., Endri, E., & Herlisha, N. (2021). Effect of work motivation and job satisfaction on employee performance: Mediating role of employee engagement. *Problems and Perspective in Management, 19*(3), 162-174. https://doi.org/10.21511/ppm.19(3).2021.14

Rizvi, I. A., & Popli, S. (2021). Revisiting leadership communication: A need for conversation. *Global Business Review*, 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1177/09721509211061979

Roberts, R. E. (2020). Qualitative interview questions: Guidance for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, *25*(9), 3185-3203. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2020.4640

Rose, J., & Johnson, C. W. (2020). Contextualizing reliability and validity in qualitative research: Towards more rigorous and trustworthy qualitative social science in leisure research. *Journal of Leisure Research*, *51*(4), 432-451. https://doi.org/10.1080/00222216.2020.1722042

Roulston, K. (2019). Preparing researchers to conduct interdisciplinary, multi-method qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, *24*(9), 2259-2292.

Rozen-Bakher, Z. (2018). The trade-off between synergy success and efficiency gains in M&A strategy. *EuroMed Journal of Business, 13*(2), 163-184. https://doi.org/10.1108/EMJB-07-2017-0026

Rutberg, S., & Bouikidis, C. D. (2018). Focusing on the fundamentals: A simplistic differentiation between qualitative and quantitative research. *Nephrology Nursing Journal, 45*(2), 209-212.

S Khurram, K. A., & Shaiq, M. (2019). Healthy organizational environment enhances employees productivity: An empirical evidence to classical concept. *Journal of Business Strategies, 13*(2), 1-8. http://greenwichjournals.com/index.php/businessstudies/article/view/245

Sakr, C., Zotti, R., & Khaddage-Soboh, N. (2019). The impact of implementing fun activities on employee engagement. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis, 27*(5), 1375-1335. https://doi-org/10.1108/IJOA-09-2018-1527

Sallehu, M. (2017). Do restructurings improve post-restructuring productivity? *Journal of Accounting and Finance, 17*(1), 103-123.

Samah, N. (2018). Battling bad weather along the way: Meaning making and in narrative inquiry and its challenges. *International Journal of Business and Society, 19*(2), 205-218.

Sandelowski, M. (2000). Focus on research methods: Whatever happened to qualitative description? *Research In Nursing & Health, 23*, 334-340.

Sandelowski, M. (2010). What's in a name? Qualitative description revisited. *Research in Nursing & Health*, 33,77-84. https://doi.org/10.1002/nur.20362

Sarti, D. (2019). Balancing organizational justice and leader-member exchange to engage workforce: Evidence from social cooperatives in Italy. *Journal of Workplace Learning, 31*(3), 231-246. https://doi.org/10.1108/JWL-09-2018-0116

Sato, H. (2018). Are call centers sweatshops? *Annals of Business Administrative Science*, *17*, 193-202. http://doi.org/10.7880/abas.0180830a

Saunders, B., Sim, J., Kingstone, T., Baker, S., Waterfield, J., Bartlam, B., Burroughs, H., & Jinks, C. (2017). Saturation in qualitative research: Exploring its conceptualization and operationalization. *Quality and Quantity*, *52*(4), 1893-1907. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-017-0574-8

Saunders, M. N. K., & Townsend, K. (2016). Reporting and justifying the number of participants in organization and workplace research. *British Journal of Management*, *27*, 836-852. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8551.12182

Schenkel, A., & Teigland, R. (2018). Why doesn't downsizing deliver? A multi-level model integrating downsizing, social capital, dynamic capabilities, and performance. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *28*(7), 1065-1107. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2015.1130734

Schneider, A., Bullinger, B., & Brandl, J. (2020). Resourcing under tensions: How frontline employees create resources to balance paradoxical tensions. *Organization Studies*, *42*(8), 1291-1317. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840620926825

Schoonenboom, J. (2018). Designing mixed methods research by mixing and merging methodologies: A 13 step model. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *62*(7), 998-1015. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764218772624

Seo, J. J., Nahrgang, J. D., Carter, M. Z., & Hom, P. W. (2018). Not all differentiation is the same: Examining the moderating effects of leader-member exchange (LMX) configurations. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 103*(5), 478-495. https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000262

Sepahvand, R., & Khodashahri, R. B. (2021). Strategic human resource management practices and employee retention: A study of the moderating role of job engagement. *Iranian Journal of Management Studies, 14*(2), 437-468.

Shah, B. A., & Butt, K. A. (2019). A case of acquisition of Avon Organics Limited by Arch Pharma Labs Limited. *Indian Journal of Commerce and Management Studies, 10*(2), 8-14. https://doi.org/10.18843/ijcms/v10i2/02

Shaw, A., Barakazai, A., & Keysar, B. (2019). When and why people evaluate negative reciprocity as more fair than positive reciprocity. *Cognitive Science, 43*, 1-36. https://doi.org/10.1111/cogs.12773

Shkoler, O., & Tziner, A. (2020). Leadership styles as predictors of work attitudes: A moderated-mediation link. *Amfiteatru Economic, 22*(53), 164-178. https://doi.org/10.24818/EA/2019/53/164

Shuibin, G., Benjamin, T., & Naam, Y. D. (2020). An assessment of the impact of training and development on employee productivity in Ghana, education service WA. *International Journal of Information, Business and Management, 12*(1), 42-70. http://ijibm.elitehall.com/index4.htm

Shulga, L. V. (2021). Change management communication: The role of meaningfulness, leadership brand authenticity, and gender. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly, 62*(4), 498-515. https://doi.org/10.1177/1938965520929022

Singh, S., Wang, Y., & Vidyarthi, P. R. (2020). Job embeddedness to citizenship behavior: Role of outcome orientation and relationship with peers. *Journal of Organizational Psychology*, *20*(1), 65-81.

Sorsa, M. A., Kiikkala, I., & Åstedt-Kurki, P. (2015). Bracketing as a skill in conducting unstructured qualitative interviews. *Nurse Researcher*, *22*(4), 8-12. https://doi.org/10.7748/nr.22.4.8.e1317

Spiers, J., Morse, J. M., Olsen, K., Mayan, M., & Barrett, M. (2018). Reflection/commentary on a past article: Verification strategies for establishing reliability and validity in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 17*,1-2. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406918788237

Stahl, N. A., & King, J. R. (2020). Expanding approaches for research: Understanding and using trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Journal of Developmental Education*, *44*(1), 26-28.

Staller, K.M. (2021). Big enough? Sampling in qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Social Work*, *20*(4), 897-904. https://doi.org/10.1177/14733250211024516

Sudha, K. S., & Shahnawaz, M. G. (2020). Narcissism personality trait and performance: Task oriented leadership and authoritarian styles as mediators. *Leader and Organizational Development Journal, 41*(2), 280-293. https://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-09-2019-0399

Sugden, P. (2019). How workplace design drives productivity. *Strategic HR Review, 18*(5), 237-238. https://doi.org/10.1108/SHR-10-2019-170

Sykes, B. L., Verma, A., & Hancock, B. H. (2018). Aligning sampling and case selection in quantitative-qualitative research designs: Establishing generalizability limits in mixed-methods studies. *Ethnography, 19*(2), 227-253. https://doi.org/10.1177/1466138117725341

Tai, J., & Ajjai, R. (2016). Understanding and reporting qualitative research. *The Clinical Teacher, 13,*175-182. https://doi.org/10.1111/tct.122552

Tamayo, N., Lane, A., & Dewart, G. (2021). Qualitative description research: An examination of a method for novice nursing researchers. *International Journal of Nursing Student Scholarship, 7*(51), 1-13.

Tanskanen, J., Makela, L., & Viitala, R. (2019). Linking managerial coaching and leader-member exchange on work engagement and performance. *Journal of Happiness Studies 20,* 1217-1240. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-018-9996-9

Thomas, D. R. (2017). Feedback from research participants: Are member checks useful in qualitative research? *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 14*(1), 23-41. https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2016.1219435

Tirmizi, A., Williams, K., & Tirmizi, N. (2019). Leading responsibly: Relevance of the major leadership theories in the Caribbean context. *Journal of Leadership, Accountability and Ethics, 16*(4), 111-124.

Tiwari, B., & Usha, L. (2018). Engaging workforce in downsized firms: Scenario of the Indian IT/ITES sector. *Industrial and Commercial Training, 50*(1), 32-38. https://doi.org/10.1108/ICT-06-2017-0045

Tunarosa, A., & Glynn, M. A. (2017). Strategies of integration in mixed methods research: Insights using relational algorithms. *Organizational Research Methods,* *20*(2), 224-242. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428116637197

Uddin, S., Popesko, B., & Papadaki, S. (2021). Performance measurement in a transitional economy: Unfolding a case of KPIs. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal, 34*(2), 370-396. https://doi.org/10.1108/AAAJ-11-2019-4231

Uka, A., & Prendi, A. (2021). Motivation as an indicator of performance and productivity from the perspective of employees. *Challenges for the Knowledge Society, 16*(3), 268-285. https://dor.org/10.2478/mmcks-2021-0016

Usman, R., Bouckenooghe, D., Syed, F., & Naseer, S. (2018). Interplay between P-O fit, transformational leadership and organizational social capital. *Personnel Review, 47*(4), 913-930. https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-07-2016-0161

Vaar, E., & Langley, A. (2021). Communicative perspectives on strategic organization. *Strategic Organization, 19*(4), 541-552. https://doi.org/10.1177/14761270211105577

Vandenberg, A., & Struwig, M. (2017). Guidelines for researchers using an adapted consensual qualitative research approach in management research. *Journal of Business Research Methods, 15*(2), 109-119. https://academic-publishing.org/index.php/ejbrm/article/view/1361/1324

Vito, R., & Sethi, B. (2020). Managing change: Role of leadership and diversity management. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 33*(7), 1471-1483. https://doi.org/10.1108/JOCM-04-2019-0116

Wadams, M., & Park, T. (2018). Qualitative research in correctional settings: Researcher bias, western ideological influences, and social justice. *Journal of Forensic Nursing, 14*(2), 72-79. https://doi.org/10.1097/JFN.0000000000000199

Wang, Q., & Lei, H. (2018). The impact of ethical leadership on organizational citizenship behavior: The moderating role of workplace ostracism. *Leadership and Organizational Development Journal*, *39*(1), 100-113. https://doi.org/1108/LODJ-12-2016-0313

Wang, T., Long, L., Zhang, Y., & Hei, W. (2019). A social exchange perspective of employee organization relationships and employee unethical pro-organizational behavior: The moderating role of individual moral identity. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *159*, 473-489. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-018-3782-9

Wang, Z., & Ling, G. (2018). You don't actually want to get close to the star: How LMX leads to workplace ostracism. *Frontiers of Business Research in China, 12*(1), 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1186/s117822-017-0023-5

Wayne, S. J., Shore, L. M., & Linden, R. C. (1997). Perceived organizational support and leader-member exchange: A social exchange perspective. *Academy of Management Journal*, *40*(1), 82-111. https://doi.org/10.5465/257021

Webber-Ritchey, K. J., Aquino, E., Ponder, T. N., Lattner, C., Soco, C., Spurlock, R., & Simonovich, S. D. (2021). Recruitment strategies to optimize participation by diverse populations. *Nursing Science Quarterly*, *34*(3), 235-243. https://doi.org/10.1177/08943184211010471

Weideman, M., & Hofmey, K. B. (2020). The influence of flexible work arrangements on employee engagement: an exploratory study. *SA Journal of Human Resource*

Management, 1-18. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.v18i0.1209

Weller, S. C., Vickers, B., Bernard, H. R., Blackburn, A. M., Borgatti, S., Gravelee, C. C., & Johnson, J. C. (2018). Open-ended interview questions and saturation. *PloS One, 13*(6). https://doi.org/10.137/journal.pone.0198606

Weng, Q., Latif, K., Khan, A. K., Tariq, H., Butt, H. P., Obaiod, A., & Sarwar, N. (2020). Loaded with knowledge yet green with envy: Leader-member exchange comparison and co-workers directed knowledge hiding behavior. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, *24*(7), 1653-1680. https://doi.org/10.1108/JKM-10-2019-0534

Willis, D. G., Sullivan-Bolyai, S., Knafl. K., & Cohen, M. Z. (2016). Distinguishing features and similarities between descriptive phenomenological and qualitative description research. *Western Journal of Nursing Research, 38*(9), 1185-1204. https://doi.org/10.1177/0193945916645499

Wilson, J. A., & Cunliffe, A. L. (2021). The development and disruption of relationships between leaders and organizational members and the importance of trust. *Leadership*, 1-24. https://doi.org/10.1177/17427150211056738

Wong, A., Ho, S., Olusanya, O., Antonini, M. V., & Lyness, D. (2021). The use of social media and online communications in times of pandemic Covid-19. *Journal of Intensive Care Society, 22*(3), 255-260. https://doi.org/10.1177/1751143720966280

Wu, W., Lui, Y., Kim, Y., & Gao, P. (2018). How does emotional conflict affect innovation behavior? The moderating roles of leader-member exchange and team-member exchange. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, *29*(3), 327-346. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCMA-09-2017-0094

Wulani, F., & Lindawati, T. (2018). The co-worker's impression management, LMX and interpersonal deviance: The moderating effect of fellow employees LMX. *Journal of Organizational Culture, Communications and Conflict, 22*(1), 1-14. https://www.abacademies.org/articles/The-coworkers...

Xerri, D. (2018). Two methodological challenges for teacher-researchers: Reflexivity and trustworthiness. *The Clearing House, 91*(1), 37-41. https://doi.org/10.1080/00098655.2017.1371549

Xu, F., & Wang, X. (2019). Leader creativity expectations and follower radical creativity: Based on the perspective of the creative process. *Chinese Management Studies, 13*(1), 214-234. https://doi.org/10.1108/CMS-04-2018-0489

Xu, W., & Zammit, K. (2020). Applying thematic analysis to education: A hybrid approach to interpreting data in practitioner research. *International Journal Qualitative Methods*, 19, 1-9. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920918810

Yanchus, N. J., Brower, C. K., & Osatuke, K. (2020). The role of executives in driving engagement. *Organization Development Journal, 8*(3), 87-99.

Yang, J. (2020). Leveraging leader-leader exchange to enrich the effect of leader-member exchange on team innovation. *Journal of Management and Organization*, *26*(4), 555-570. https://doi.org/10.1017/jmo.2017.54

Yeong, M. L., Ismail, R., Ismail, N. H., & Hamzah, N. I. (2018). Interview protocol refinement: Fine-tuning qualitative research interview questions for multi-racial populations in Malaysia. *The Qualitative Report*, *23*(11), 2700-2713. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2018.3412

Yin, N. (2018). The influencing outcome of job engagement: An interpretation from the social exchange theory. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, *67*(5), 873-889. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPPM-03-2017-0054

Yoon, M. H., & Yoon, D. J. (2019). When and why does relative leader-member exchange enhance service performance? *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality*, *31*(7), 2666-2690. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-07-2018-0592

Yu, A., Matta, F. K., & Cornfield, B. (2018). Is leader-member exchange differentiation beneficial or detrimental for group effectiveness? A meta-analytic investigation and theoretical integration. *Academy of Management Journal, 61*(3), 1158-1188. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2016.1212

Yukl, G., O'Donnell, M., & Taber, T. (2009). Influence of leader behaviors on leader-member exchange relationship. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 24*(4), 289-299. https://doi.org/10.1108/02683940910952697

Yunus, E. N., & Emi, E. (2019). Productivity paradox? The impact of office redesign on employee productivity. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management, 67*(9), 1918-1939. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPPM-12-2017-0350

Zeynep, A. (2017). Asking questions with reflexive focus: A tutorial on designing and conducting interviews. *Journal of Consumer Research, 44*(4), 939-948. https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucx096

Zito, M., Emanuel, F., Molino, M., Cortese, C. G., Ghlislieri, C., & Colombo, L. (2018).

Turnover intentions in a call center: The role of emotional dissonance, job resources and job satisfaction. *PLOS One, 13*(2), 1-16. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0192126

Zorn, M. L., Norman, P. M., Butler, F. C., & Manjot, S. B. (2017). Curse or curse: Does downsizing increase the likelihood of bankruptcy. *Journal of Business Research, 76*, 24-33. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2017.03.006

Zyphur, M. J., & Pierides, D. C. (2017). Is quantitative research ethical? Tools for ethically practicing, evaluating and using quantitative research. *Journal of Business Ethics, 143*(1), 1-16. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-017-3549-8

.

Appendix A: Interview Protoco1

Interview Protocol

Research Question: What Employee Engagement Strategies Do Call Center Managers use to Improve Productivity and Profitability?	
What Will I do? **Send email reminder and Zoom link to participant the morning of the interview.** **Call the participant to confirm receipt of email. Advise I will send an email reminder.**	**What Will I say?** I will remind participant that the interview questions are included in the informed consent
Send 2nd email reminder 1 hour before the interview. Sign into zoom 15 minutes before the interview.	
Greet the participant	Thank you for participating in this research study and agreeing to have this discussion today. My name is Deirdre Skinner and I'm a doctoral student at Walden University. This interview is part of the data collection process for my doctoral study that is a requirement for graduation. The open-ended interview questions that we will discuss will allow you to elaborate on how Call Center Managers use Employee Engagement to improve productivity and profitability.
Informed Consent	Thank you for signing the informed consent and getting it back to me. I would like to make sure that you understand the procedures for the study and that you understand your rights. • The initial interview will not go longer than 60 minutes • I will email interview transcript to you for verification. I will need you to look that over a let me know that everything is okay, if not I will make the adjustments. (This will be a quick turnaround)

	• I will email the interview summary (which is my interpretation of your interview responses) you will have a chance to look that over a verify that I have accurately summarized your responses---This is called member checking and we will setup a member checking meeting when it's time to review the interview summary **Voluntary Nature:** Your participation is voluntary and you may back out at any time. **Risks and benefits of being in the study:** Being in this study could involve some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as sharing sensitive information. With the protections that I have in place, this study would pose minimal risk to your wellbeing. **Privacy:** I am required to protect your privacy. Your identity will be kept confidential. I am only allowed to share your identity or contact info as needed with Walden University supervisors (who are also required to protect your privacy) or with authorities if court-ordered, which is very rare. I will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, I will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. If I were to share this dataset with another researcher in the future, the dataset would contain no identifiers, so this would not involve another round of obtaining informed consent. The data will be kept secure by replacing your name with a code and downloading the audio recorded Zoom interview into a password-protected file onto my password-protected computer. All data will be kept for 5 years, as required by the university and properly destroyed at the end of the 5 years. **There are no payments for participating in this study**

	There are no individual benefits per say. benefits of this study are that call centers leaders may be able to create growth opportunities for the company that could lead to increased productivity, profitability, and employment opportunities. **Once the analysis is complete, I will share the overall results with you by emailing you a summary**
Opportunity to Ask Questions	Do you have any questions about anything that I have said thus far?
Record Interview	I just want to remind you that the audio of the interview will be recorded. I'm ready to begin the discussion and will start the recording now.
Interview Questions	The following interview questions are for call center managers to share leadership and engagement strategies most effective to motivate employee productivity and profitability. 1. What engagement strategies do you use to increase employee engagement after and during an organizational change? 2. What was the impact of the implemented engagement strategies on productivity? a. How do you think your relationship with your subordinates impacts or influences the implementation process of the strategies? b. How do you think your relationship with your subordinate's influences employee performance? c. How do your subordinates contribute to the creation of your performance? d. What is your overall concept of what the relationship between a leader and follower should be like? e. As a leader what do you expect of your followers? f. What has the experience of getting to know your followers been like? g. Are there any specific steps you take to develop a relationship with your subordinates? h. How do you demonstrate trust in for followers?

	i. How can leaders build relationships with subordinates? 3. How do you determine if the engagement strategies increase productivity? 4. How do you measure productivity and profitability? 5. What challenges, if any, might prevent the deployment of engagement strategies to promote productivity? 6. What engagement strategies do you use to measure the engagement level of employees and profitability? 7. How, if at all, were employees involved in developing engagement strategies to increase productivity? 8. How do you address barriers, if any, to employee engagement, such as work-life balance? 9. How did you communicate the engagement strategies to employees? 10. What input would you like to add to this topic that we might not have addressed?
Wrap up Interview	I would like to thank you so very much for participating in this interview
Schedule Member Checking Meeting	I need to schedule a member checking meeting with you to go over my interpretation of your responses. This will be a meeting for you to review the interview summary to make sure that I have accurately summarized your responses.