Impact of Employee Engagement on Retention Strategies

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Abstract

Employee retention remains a critical challenge for organizations seeking long-term success and stability. This article explores the integral role of employee engagement in shaping effective retention strategies. Drawing on recent research and case studies, the paper examines how factors such as communication, recognition, professional development, and organizational culture influence employee commitment and reduce turnover rates. The analysis highlights that engaged employees are more likely to exhibit loyalty, productivity, and a stronger connection to organizational goals, making engagement a key driver in retaining top talent. Practical implications for HR professionals and managers are discussed, emphasizing the need for proactive engagement initiatives aligned with employee values and aspirations. The study concludes that fostering a culture of engagement not only enhances employee satisfaction but also serves as a sustainable strategy for improving retention outcomes.

Keywords: Retention, HR professionals, engagement effort, programs

1. Introduction

For organizations to succeed in any industry, attracting and retaining the best employees is essential to creating a competitive advantage. High turnover results in poor customer service, wasted time and money, and overall lower morale in the workplace. Talent can be lost due to a multitude of reasons, including a perception of positive movement to a new position or organization, a feeling of dissatisfaction with the current position or organization, and a perception of negative movement to a position with less responsibility, prestige, or pay. These ideas fall into three broad categories: a view of the organization that changes, a desire to act positively that is thwarted, and a commitment to the organization that diminishes. Even if engaging employees is deemed an important goal for an organization, business leaders may struggle with the breadth, complexity, and pace of an engagement effort. Because each organization functions differently, customization of engagement strategies is needed to fit the unique corporate culture of the institution (Edward King, 2017). Business leaders must be cognizant of issues involving engagement strategies and actively monitor engagement levels within their organization. The level of engagement of an entire workforce can affect perceptions of the organization, recruitment, retention, and eventually the profitability of the organization. In order to retain talent, organizations need to build a workforce of engaged employees that are committed to the organization and that address employees' psychological needs. Levels of engagement for individuals are not always a result of their specific job; individuals who have the same job can have different levels of engagement. Engaging employees is critical to an organization's success. The success they bring an organization is

due to engaged employees understanding the business; wanting to do the right things for their company; and willing to attack challenges. Engaged employees enhance performance, innovate, and embrace change. Engaged employees become committed to their organization, which leads to higher job performance, positive behaviors, and lower turnover. Investing in engaging employees is investing in developing individuals who will hold the knowledge, skills, and relationships needed to create a successful organization. If this investment into engaging employees does not occur and employees become disengaged, those disengaged employees start to have a negative effect on otherwise engaged individuals. Engaging employees is an investment into a successful future of an organization.

2. Understanding Employee Engagement

Relying on external rewards to motivate an employee to achieve goals puts the employee on the entirely wrong course of action. The employee comes to solely focus on achieving the reward rather than attempting to exceed expectations. Business leaders may feel they are doing well by offering higher pay or a bigger office (Edward King, 2017). However, in situations where the leader cannot provide increasingly greater rewards, attrition rates match or exceed the industry average. It is hypothesized that the best way for a business leader to proactively engage employees with the intent to retain that talent lies in the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) perspective.

Employee engagement is a term used to express the amount of ownership and energy an employee puts into their job physically, cognitively, and emotionally. This concept represents a range of engagement levels, or degrees of involvement, and can be seen as a continuum. Near the lower end is the disengaged employee, who has little emotional investment in their job. In the middle of the spectrum lies the engaged employee, who actively and positively goes above and beyond expectations to excel in their role. At the positive end of this scale is the fully engaged employee, who experiences positive excitement and enthusiasm for their work and organization.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, the disengaged employee displays frustration and hostility towards the organization and its management. Engagement can vary by goals and timeframes as well. For example, an employee may feel fully engaged with their organization's annual goals but become disengaged when asked to address a quarter-to-quarter question. Alternately, an employee may be fully engaged in a project for a software release but disengaged from the organization for months prior and months after. Employee retention will be used here to better understand an organization's ability to retain its employees. Attrition is a term that describes the loss of employees from the organization.

2.1. Definition of Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is a term used to express the amount of energy and ownership an employee puts into their job physically, cognitively, and emotionally. It reflects an employee's involvement and enthusiasm for their work and includes both the level of engagement and disengagement. If an employee is engaged in their work, then they can not only be physically active, but may also feel energised, enthusiastic and happy about their job or the company.

On the other hand, if an employee is not fully engaged, they may feel tired, apathetic, worried or frustrated about their work (Edward King, 2017).

There are different definitions of employee engagement throughout the academic literature. The self-determination theory is a description of how searching for satisfaction to the needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (A, C, and R needs), employees will move towards the positive behaviors of being proactive, learning, and becoming part of a team. Satisfaction of A, C, and R needs results in the increase of the sense of self-initiative, self-development, knowledge and skill acquisition, and employee engagement. The opposite effects may emerge with the dissatisfaction of A, C, and R needs within the workplace. Employee's sense of self-initiatedness will be reduced, leading to a low level of engagement, a less desire for intragroup interaction, and a tendency for knowledge hoarding, as opposed to sharing the knowledge (Priya, 2014).

2.2. Importance of Employee Engagement

Given the tumultuous employment landscape influenced by economic, market, and technological changes, rising talent scarcity, fierce competition, and rising customer expectations, organizations that attract and retain talented workers can emerge as market leaders. For organizations to be successful, it is critical for them to know how to successfully retain talent. Organizations that do not retain their needs aligned talent can have output suffer, become burdened with replacement costs, and find it painful to replace staff. As the organization grows and evolves, employees sometimes find their career desires do not align with organizational developments. To combat this, organizations must recognize the potential of their talented employees, especially when companies cannot bring on new staff, and aspiration to adopt employee retention strategies that develop and adapt employees' knowledge, skills, and career paths. Let's delve deeper into the employee engagement definition, importance, and benefits (Edward King, 2017).

With respect to engagement, organizations have three choices. One is to develop an active disengagement workforce, which will be unreceptive and consistently critical of the organization. The second is to have a disengaged workforce, which will not promote change, take the initiative, or innovate, and often have a toxic environment towards changes and those bringing change. The last option is to have an engaged workforce, which is self-motivated, excellent at work, and promotes the brand financially and socially. The level of engagement of an entire workforce can affect perceptions of the organization, recruitment, retention, and eventually the profitability of the organization. Each individual can engage in a different way, and it is thus necessary for organizations to understand the different type of engagement each group of employees has and how to engage with them.

2.3. Factors Influencing Engagement

The current literature offers various definitions of employee engagement, focusing primarily on how engagement could be measured and how it affected an employee's performance. However, there has been very little exploration of the emotional factors leading to engagement or their impact on retention strategies. Understanding how an employee views their work regardless of their performance outcomes gives some insight into how they can be

valued as an asset and why it's important to invest in their engagement. Engagement can be defined as the amount of energy and ownership an employee exerts into their job physically, cognitively, and emotionally. Likewise, employee retention is a way of understanding an organization's ability to retain its employees (Edward King, 2017).

Though the latter definition is less conclusive, it delivers a greater insight into the various areas leading to engagement. Traditionally, factors such as a solid salary and benefit plan, a comfortable work environment, and a generous work-life balance have been seen as appropriate incentives for a workplace. However, simply providing a better external reward will not guarantee employee engagement, buy-in, or retention. Relying solely on external rewards for motivation can risk the employee solely focusing on achieving the reward rather than exceeding expectations with their work or potentially leading to other negative factors by putting a value on their efforts that does not match their own valuation thereby lessening their intrinsic motivation.

On the other end of the spectrum, organizational commitment has been researched as a way of assessing buy-in or as an antidote to turnover potentially leading to engagement or retention. Though highly regarded and found positively correlated to employee retention, the largest critique of this focus area and its success is its inability to distinguish why an employee is committed to their organization.

3. The Relationship Between Engagement and Retention

The purpose of support is to make employees feel they belong to the organization, that the organization cares about their well-being, and to acknowledge the employees' value as a person and worker. All participants agreed this was focused on engagement. Participant 4 acknowledged much of the engagement effort is via high-up effort methods, such as birthday, funeral, and family notices, and said it is generally effective. All participants agreed that efforts are good and have increased in the last five to seven years. Participant 2 believed there is still room to improve from the employee side of things, identifying increased transparency, clear communication flows, and getting more people involved in these efforts as things that could improve employee engagement. Participant 1 said some high-up efforts have been misdirected, going too far into someone's personal life and making others jealous of others. Recognizing the employees according to their value to the organization is believed to be a good basis for engagement efforts. However, the recognition should be started by peers but over time ideally should be top-down as well. All participants agreed this was focused on engagement, and positive effects of these actions had been observed.

The second theme was the stress caused by much happening at once. Participants generally observed that many major company-wide changes were happening all at once, resulting in a lot of stress. Currently, processes of things changing, like balancing between inclusion in the community and remote success in daily life due to the large effect of COVID-19 and its aftermaths, and compliance under a newly established governance structure, were given as examples of observation. Participants believed that all those should be addressed but would take time. What was criticized, however, and agreement on were the concentration and timing of such company-wide changes (Edward King, 2017).

3.1. Engagement as a Retention Tool

Despite the prolonged recession, many organizations are pursuing growth opportunities by hiring new employees. However, organizations are facing highly competitive job markets in which employees can pick and choose employments. Talent loss is rapid; many individuals quit within the first 30 to 90 days of employment, and companies often overlook these early exiters. The aim of the research is to uncover retention strategies that organizations can deploy to hold onto talented employees. Often associated with a company-wide culture of management commitment, engagement strategies are a proactive approach to retention. For organizations to embrace engagement strategies in the quest to retain talent, effective communication strategies must be developed and employed. Each interviewed leader identified, prioritized, and elaborated on retention strategies currently deployed or envisioned for the future (Edward King, 2017).

Employee engagement is defined as the level of an employee's emotional connection to their organization and its values. The level of engagement of an entire workforce can affect perceptions of the organization, recruitment, retention, and profitability. This is a measurable entity. Employee engagement will vary among organizations, industries, and sectors. As a result, strategies to build an engaged workforce must consider individual organization's needs. The motivation levels of research study participants varied. An organization should build a workforce of engaged employees committed to addressing employees' psychological needs. Engaged employees will view the organization's values as aligning with their own values and desires. Effective communication and strong relationships must exist throughout the organizational structure, particularly between executives and entry-level workers.

The target population was mid-level managers in one southeastern state insurance company. The individuals interviewed have had success with implementing communication strategies to engage employees with the organization, the mission of the organization, and the values of the organization. Engagement strategies that promote talent retention were discussed in the context of the three realms of engagement: emotional, intellectual, and rational. Levels of engagement for individuals are affected by the organization, but are not always a result of the specific job that the employee performs. Employee engagement strategies are employed in each company in the context of boundaries established by the industry and organization.

3.2. Statistical Correlations

The frequency of responses for perceptions of employee engagement and employee retention strategies used showed a directly proportional curve. As perceptions of employee engagement decreased, the mean rating on retention strategies used was lower. Conversely, as perceptions of employee engagement increased, the mean on retention strategies used rated higher. It seems clear that respondents who rated negatively on perceptions of engagement perceived the retention strategies as minimally used. The mean rating for the questions with the lowest perception was in the 1s. Conversely, respondents who rated more highly on perceptions of engagement perceived their organization as using retention strategies more heavily. The ratings are mostly above 4s (Edward King, 2017). To ensure the appropriateness of a parametric test, the data was examined for normality. A visual

examination of the histogram shows an almost normal distribution. There are two low outliers to the left investigated further. The test for normality indicated that the data was normally distributed with a non-significant Shapiro-Wilk value. Therefore, the parametric test for correlation was utilized.

Employee engagement was operationalized using the percentage of points achieved of the possible. Responses with the lowest perceptions of increase in engagement with executive management were analyzed in-depth via individual case studies. Retention strategies used were calculated by the frequency of "mostly" or "very much" used to describe retention strategies used with a value of 1 point assigned to each of these criteria (and 0 assigned to "not at all" and "slightly" used). The retention category "career development" was removed from further analysis due to the low frequency of applicability. The Spearman correlation coefficient (r) indicates the degree to which the two variables have a predictable relationship. The role of α was to control for type I error. Statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level, $r = 0.942$, which indicates that total employee engagement significantly correlated with total retention strategies used. The Pearson correlation results offered similar conclusions with a statistical significance of $p < 0.01$ for total employee engagement and total retention strategies used with $r = 0.941$ which indicates that there is a very strong, positive linear relationship between variables. It should be noted that the sample size was small using either Pearson or Spearman, which affects overall power and should be cautiously interpreted.

3.3. Case Studies

The first case study is of a Fortune 500 retail organization with over 5,000 employees in the United States comprised of various formats including hypermarkets, supermarket and pharmacy stores, and department stores (D. Smith, 2017). The current study investigated the employees of this organization involved in service and assigned duties in pharmacies, deli departments, and meat processing areas. Surveys were completed by 272 employees, yielding 94 usable responses, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with 7 organization leaders. Results indicate retention strategies such as involving employees in decisions related to training and development, designing schedules that allow employees to accomplish personal tasks, ensuring equitable distribution of work schedule changes, and adhering to in-schedule means of discipline affect employee commitment through perceived organizational support.

The organization studied can be described as a traditional type of organization adhering to mechanistic principles with some modernistic qualities. Employee roles in this organization were mostly finely defined with imprisonment of output to attain standardization, which is consistent with traditional terminology. With the exception of pharmacy and corporate business positions, it is likely to anticipate positions requiring management or strategic decision-making are minimally filled by employees promoted from hourly roles. Employees are accompanied in their first few training shifts to complete checklists. Complex tasks typically are not formally taught by a trainer based on the knowledge prior to leaving a training program but learned through on the job training. As both retention strategies and organizational tenets originate in tenure, traditional retention strategies were expected to impact employee commitment greater than more modernistic work scheduling and discipline

strategies. However, it is important to note employees possess opinions of the organizations they work for that hold independently of observations made through roles.

4. Retention Strategies

Retaining talent remains a major consideration for organizations. Organizations may consider implementing one or more best practices in retention strategies in order to reduce employee turnover. Of the organizations that participated in this study, Siemens USA was thought to have effective retention practices. Many organizations have policies and strategies designed to attract and retain qualified candidates. For management hiring practices to be successful, it was vital to consider company and employee values. During a job interview, when an organization's values aligned with a candidate's job values, employment offers were extended. This sponsored transparency encouraged organizations to reveal values, ethics, and morals that a candidate would be working under in order to make informed career decisions. The integration of performance on a level playing field was an advantage that would serve well compared to operations located in lower cost regions. Those organizations seeking higher quality standards and unskilled labor were at a disadvantage due to excessive costs. Nevertheless, to do so led to a discussion of competitive advantage. Recruiting and retaining well-qualified employees has been a challenge for human resources (HR) (Krzan Merla, 2018). An organization's goal when recruiting and retaining well-qualified employees was employee retention. This meant that benefits accumulated over time such as enhanced productivity, better morale, and fewer interruption to work processes would be lost. Talented employees leave when their company's provided career path did not align with their desired career path. The researchers' loss of such employees was a challenge to the organization's stability, and continuity suffering disruption, damage to momentum, and loss of efficiency. A review of the general business problem and specific business problem followed.

The general business problem was the apparent churning of talent within the organization of interest. Losing talent can be detrimental to an organization. For example, when a restaurant's executive chef leaves for better pay and a job at a competitor, that restaurant would pay a premium to attract a replacement, requiring extensive retraining. If that departure continued, the restaurant would struggle to maintain operations as interfaces among those who do the work were interrupted and a lack of corporate memory impeded the ability to function. Worse, there would be no end in sight because such loss was so disruptive. The specific business problem was that some business leaders lacked engagement strategies necessary to retain talent. Gathering a workforce of engaged employees that aspired to address employees' psychological needs was vital to the retention of talent. These employees were the organization's champions, committed to each other, their teams, and the firm. In order to build a workforce of engaged employees, an overall strategy had to be developed along with precise tactics to implement it. This was a daily task of each manager, conducted at multiple levels. In every interaction with each employee, they had to have the physical, managerial, and technical capabilities to handle the job. They had to feel themselves participants in the firm; they had to have a voice in its operation and changes that might affect them personally. They had to be respected as individuals. Management must help develop relationships among coworkers and between line staff and management. Most importantly, they had to be

interested in the work, have the zeal to do it well, and feel that their individual efforts mattered to the enterprise.

4.1. Overview of Retention Strategies

Employees take on a diverse set of roles and responsibilities. It is also known that employees have a life outside of work. The complex nature of these competing interests makes it incredibly difficult to predict employee behavior and the variables that actually matter (Krzan Merla, 2018). Facilitating a successful work/life balance for employees can be a challenge for organizations seeking to maximize performance in this environment. Protecting their business interests while also rewarding loyal employees is the balancing act leadership seeks to master.

Effective hiring and retention programs are integral for any organization. Documented successful strategies are always evolving and yielding new ideas. Recruiting on the basis of matching job candidates to not only the characteristics of the job, but also the culture and values of an organization helps get a better fit. Ensuring that recruiting teams have insight into the motives and personalities of the hiring executives will help facilitate this. Training is another best practice for organizations to implement. Providing training to facilitate a newly hired employee's acculturation helps reduce turnover. Although training white-collar positions can be tricky, well documented training procedures systematically shared through team members can help facilitate this process. Organizations should continue to invest in the professional development of employees through training programs, educational reimbursements, succession plans, mentorships, and stretch assignments.

When managerial philosophy aligns employee values and goals with the organization's bigger picture, job satisfaction and employee retention should escalate (Edward King, 2017). Organizations seeking to retain highly trained and productive employees must develop and implement systems that involve and engage employees in the organization's business and success at every level. To maintain a workforce of highly skilled, productive, seasoned employees, organizations must engage employees by providing them with reason and opportunity to develop a stake in their organization's success. Organizations need systems that invoke employee involvement, creativity, and accountability.

4.2. Role of Engagement in Retention Strategies

The level of engagement of an entire workforce can affect perceptions of the organization, recruitment, retention, and profitability. For organizations with a desire to retain talent, they need to cultivate a workforce of engaged employees who are committed to addressing the psychological needs of employees. It is important to note that while the level of engagement for individuals can covary with their specific job, it is not always the result of this. An employee can be an engaged accountant within a company, but if he or she is promoted, it could lead to a situation where he or she becomes disengaged. Individuals can have many levels of engagement due to various factors. Engaging employees is critical to the overall success of an organization. Engaged employees enhance performance, seek to innovate, and embrace change (Edward King, 2017). Engaged employees find what is positive about their work environment and commit to it. When employees become engaged with their organization or work, they do their present jobs better, leading to higher job performance, less absenteeism

and turnover, and more effort in organizational citizenship as compared with less engaged employees. An organization's health is more than its financial status; it is about having engaged employees dedicated to the success of their firm. Responsible organizations invest in engaging their employees. By investing in engaging employees, organizations are investing in their future. Every individual is accountable for their knowledge, skills, and relationships needed for an organization to be successful. Irresponsible organizations take for granted that engaged employees will remain engaged over the long term. Disengagement is contagious. The final engagement strategies of managers could move otherwise engaged employees to become disengaged, and once this happens, it is even harder to re-engage them. Engaging employees in their organization is a large investment into a successful future.

The literature has provided much evidence for the factors that drive employees to become engaged in their organizations and the benefits that can be gained as a result of a highly engaged workforce. But the literature has neglected the other side of this story, the eventual loss of talent (especially key talent) and the cognitions that surround the chance that an employee will disengage from his or her organization. Many key employees always leave and form a talent stream that is challenging to reverse. The real question is: why do employees ultimately leave their organizations? Talented individuals leave a company when their desired career path does not align with the company's path. When an employee departs, a huge number of costs are incurred. First, there are the direct costs associated with the recruiting, selecting, and training of a replacement. In addition, the loss of talent results in less effective teams leading to lost productivity. Employee engagement strategies have to be executed effectively for a business to survive. Without talent, an organization cannot achieve its operational goals. Business leaders do recognize the importance of having talent to achieve these goals, but they lack the engagement strategies necessary to retain this talent.

4.3. Best Practices for Retention

Research Question 1 focused on how the company's culture emphasizes the importance of employee engagement. Retention has become a key consideration for organizations as competition for qualified employees becomes difficult and employee turnover increases (Krzan Merla, 2018). The respondents felt strongly about the question being imperative in order to seek an understanding of what influence company culture has on employee engagement and retention. All participants felt the company culture had a positive influence on employee engagement and retention, and Participant 1 highlighted that "the culture of the company also enhances overall engagement by being open, honest, relaxed and family, and life-focused." Participant 2 stated "the culture of the agency is also a point of focus in enhancing retention of talent and engagement of employees." Consistent communication and an open-door policy were suggested by Participant 3 as signs of a positive culture. Each participant's opinion on the agency's culture as it relates to employee engagement was summarized in the analysis.

The purpose of Question 9 was to understand participant views on any additional practices the company should consider implementing to further enhance employee engagement and retention of talent. "Train middle management to promote culture, encourage tight mid-management culture, and enhance alignment between agency ownership and mid-

management" were additional thoughts offered by Participant 4 (Edward King, 2017). Each respondent felt that while there was continuous improvement in the culture of the organization to promote retention of talent and employee engagement, this aspect could receive additional consideration.

5. Employee Engagement Programs

With ongoing mistrust around governmental corruption and corporate behavior, stakeholders are assessing the engagement of all organizations, non-profits included. As such, both large and small non-profit organizations must create a culture of engagement for their staff, volunteers, board members, and donors. One means of addressing how engagement systems within organizations may be improved is to understand engagement levels once they are initially set. In regards to how engagement is initially set and subsequently maintained is largely dependent on initial upper management behaviors and the emergent organization culture that accompanies this, length of time spent in the organization, and individual expectations of engagement. Ultimately, commissioner-facing behavior and attitudes were perceived as motivational and detrimental to engagement levels, respectively. Three recommendations were offered to maintain organizations' engagement environments.

Employee engagement can affect business strategies on many levels. The effects can be immediate if the business is undergoing a significant change. This change can lead to a decline in engagement levels that requires a change in retention strategies. The speed at which engagement declines after a change can determine the lack of pressure for upper management-level engagement. Overall of business practices, the strong declarative attitude tone of customers may adversely affect morale. At a more systemic level, the recently implemented performance appraisers may negatively affect engagement. All changes, both environmentally and individually driven or used toward achieving organizational goals, create anxiety. While these individual systems may have a number of intended benefits, it can take some time for the dust to settle and for the benefits to outweigh the costs of misadministering change. Situations where loss of employee respect are present may require a change in upper management before change at lower levels can be enacted. As the restructuring future approaches, participants expressed a disheartening concern that the it along with the external pressure will create a scenario wherein valuing engagement or retention initiatives will not be necessary. Participants expect engagement levels to decline because of a lack of upper management engagement and therefore understand that employee resignation will most likely occur before the organization's current structure or use of engagement systems changes (Edward King, 2017).

5.1. Types of Engagement Programs

All participants in this study described programs or initiatives that centered on engagement efforts within their organizations. Participant 2 described a quarterly meeting that included breakout sessions allowing all employees to discuss a topic with upper management. Other engagements were described as monthly group meetings by middle management used to discuss employee concerns or provide information from the upper management level. Participant 3 referred to the real-life examples that middle management relayed as

engagement methods. Participant 3 specified that the topics discussed by upper management at the quarterly meetings were usually company-wide topics, and all employees were encouraged to participate, including the upper management. Then during the monthly meetings, middle management usually described a real-life experience that pertained to a lesson learned or impacted engagement. Participant 4 noted a few different programs used to score engagement levels in the organizations in regard to retention. One program is an annual survey that all employees would be required to complete. The analysis of the results foretold how middle management weighted their goals concerning retention. While this program scored engagement levels, it is not specific enough to generate initiatives for engagement efforts. Participant 4 explained that this program was lacking because the results lagged the current state of retention. A second program touted as a replacement for the existing annual survey only asked three engagement-heavy questions once a month. This method of measuring engagement levels was touted as better as middle management could generate initiatives to help lower scoring areas prior to an employee exiting the organization. This method of measuring engagement levels was formerly intensive but was now virtually automated with just a few real-time centrally located dashboards. Also noted by Participant 4, but not widely discussed, were the various surveys or reports used to emphasize engagement. An example of this type of survey was described as a targeted survey sent out to all engineers after a notable technical engineer left the company for a minor competitor.

5.2. Measuring the Effectiveness of Programs

The key to measuring the effectiveness of an employee engagement program is identification of key performance indicators (KPIs) – quantifiable metrics that reflect the success of the program. Any one of several globally accepted models of employee engagement can be utilized, and the best results come from comparing to other similar organizations. Unless there is something unique about the industry sector, job type, location, etc., it is usually advisable to choose a measure that facilitates a broader comparison. Organizations with higher engagement or satisfaction scores tend to perform better in terms of revenue, operating income, earnings per share, and customer loyalty, retention, and sales performance (Edward King, 2017). By adhering to any one of these processes, reciprocity is established. The implementation of changes based on employee feedback results in a further engagement survey down the line. But human nature is such that a gap needs to be filled, so while a moderate sample of employees across a company-wide initiative is usually justified, there is often the creation of narrower engagement 'champion' groups who are charged with monitoring the effectiveness of the changes and reporting the effectiveness of the initiative through to a leader of the champion group. Those leadership roles tend cul-de-sac, where any broader positive changes to employee engagement cannot take force and changes become diluted.

With regard to conducting employee engagement surveys specifically, the most critical element to the process is the communication of the intent and purpose of the survey to the employee base. Most organizations initiate these surveys on a 12- to 18-month cycle – anywhere between one and two times a year would be ideal (White, 2017). The data collection could take a variety of forms: personally administered, postal, or computer-based

and anonymous. The baseline data should be made available to employee in a usable format and easily digestible way, while allowing for benchmarks – with either historical data or against similar organizations using the same survey.

5.3. Implementing Engagement Programs

To create lenses through which an organization views employee engagement, it is recommended to: 1) have an individual focus on employee engagement at the executive level; 2) include employee engagement metrics in executive performance reviews; and 3) include employee engagement question wording in employee satisfaction surveys. The rationale for the recommendations is presented last. Although implementation won't be direct, these recommendations provide a definite starting point.

The most immediate action for an organization to take is to get an executive to own engagement. This position could take the form of a chief engagement officer, senior vice president of employee engagement, or simply have a current executive with an existing title focus on engagement, at least on a part-time basis. Having a member of the executive committee or senior management owning engagement will elevate the message that engagement is a priority.

Next, it is recommended that each executive's performance review include employee engagement metrics. Few organizations currently tie executive compensation to employee engagement metrics; an executive will be moved to care about something that has impact upon his or her pay. This is a bold recommendation and could be viewed as overstepping the bounds of the study.

Finally, executive sponsorship could be enhanced by utilizing an external company to manage the organization's wider organizational engagement survey. External validation will mitigate bias in the results and supplement the study's executive engagement champion actions. Additionally, organizations that utilize an external company can include engagement question wording in wider organizational surveys. This joint approach will exponentially level up the exposure level of employee engagement and its importance.

The rationale for these recommendations can impact implementation forces. Engagement may be viewed as an HR issue. Executives may have assigned ownership of engagement, but this designation may be perceived as unimportant. Tasks and responsibilities under control may be viewed as the responsibility of HR versus other business units. Also, members of the executive committee may doubt whether employee engagement could have performance impacts. Finally, even if executives wanted to act upon recommendations there may be doubt as to how best to do so. Each of these implementation forces would be addressed with the recommendations.

6. Challenges in Enhancing Engagement

It can be difficult to facilitate the necessary company-wide changes and structure to increase an organization's engagement level. Most challenges surrounding employee engagement stem from a lack of understanding of employee engagement drivers. For example, the majority of organizations conduct employee satisfaction surveys, take action, and then repeat

the process the following year. This may improve satisfaction, but not engagement (Edward King, 2017). Engaging the workforce, recruiting a higher caliber employee, and retaining those employees are more complex tasks that require skilled managers adept at conducting strategy, culture, and process interventions similar to those set forth by elaborate organizational development plans. Organizations sometimes implement initiatives such as at-work arenas where employees can socialize, but this does not increase engagement. Certain aspects of the office environment can impact how many factors are needed to implement engagement initiatives. For example, some organizations need a shift in the level of trust in management before a company can implement new initiatives successfully. System-wide engagement initiatives often necessitate a shift in the company's structure, processes, and culture. It is more complex for organizations and companies to attempt to increase levels of engagement rather than satisfaction. Most organizations are set up to measure the satisfaction level of the employees.

With the rise of employee-driven technologies, it has never been easier to enable anonymous feedback from employees on any and every topic. Generally, organizations have been quite responsive to employee input around topics including office conditions, vacation days, and dress code (Malia Ulfig, 2019). On the other hand, companies are often skeptical about implementing initiatives to keep their employees engaged. Even though research indicates that this behavior is tied to lower productivity and higher turnover, risk-taker problem-solving solutions are hard to implement- namely, transparent meetings, an emphasis on integrity, a move toward egalitarian management, or giving the employees stock options. The more serious the risk for the company, the harder it is to advocate for worker benefits, even though these actions are advantageous to the company. This resistance to constructive change is a barrier to the engagement of employees.

6.1. Common Barriers to Engagement

In 2016, Gallup published its latest meta-analysis of employee engagement. It covered 2.4 million employees across 192 organizations and 490,000 teams in 55 countries. It scrutinized over two million interviews with employees, managers, and CEOs across a range of work environments, and analyzed 80,000 work groups. They found that engagement is relatively new and has not been fully researched and understood. Engagement is also one of the least actionable drivers of business success: organizations need a work environment that actively promotes work-related pride, caring, respect, collaboration, and teamwork-jobs that pose continual challenges in whatever form suits each employee. Most organizations rate employee engagement chances between 30 and 90, sometimes even higher. Therefore, engaging employees is a tough challenge for organizations and continues to be employed in engagement-fostering workplace practices. Engagement is a matter of degree. Co-linearity relations exist among all variables. Precedence tests indicate that engagement is variable, while preliminary exploration shows that distracting factors as common barriers cause disengagement. Organizations and researchers should consider these social dynamics sub-factors when assessing engagement chances. It was found the situation as a whole matters more than the mean. Engagement chances describe the social dynamics in a workplace regarding a given job, organization, country, or culture. The level of engagement of the entire

workforce affects perceptions of the organization, recruitment and retention choices, and profitability. Therefore, it is upon organizations to build a workforce of engaged employees, fully committed to addressing their employees' psychological needs (Edward King, 2017). Engaging employees is critical to an organization's performance and success. Engaged employees enhance their performance, innovate and embrace change, committed to their organization.

6.2. Overcoming Engagement Challenges

Building a workforce of engaged employees who are committed to the organization requires that the organization addresses employees' psychological needs. Even in organizations with similar structures, roles, and functions, individual levels of engagement may vary. There are also definitions of engagement based on measurement usage. These differences could lead to organizations considering their employees engaged although they display behaviors leading to the opposite perception. While some employees are actively disengaged, others are personally accountable for the level of engagement they exhibit daily at work. This suggests that an individual's level of engagement toward an organization is not always a direct result of the job they perform, although that may come into play (Edward King, 2017).

Effective engagement is critical to an organization's success, regardless of its size, restrictions, or mission. The success of organizations, large and small, for-profit and not-for profit, government agencies, schools, and others, comes from engaged employees. Engaged employees want to understand the business, care to do the right things, own challenges, and prepare to be leaders of change. Engaged employees enhance performance, foster innovation, embrace change, and remain loyal. Engaged employees are captivated by their employer and committed to their organization, which leads to higher job performance, displays of positive behaviors, and lower turnover. By contrast, disengaged employees are likely to bring the opposite attributes to the workplace. Disengaged employees perform the minimum requirements of their job, resist change, intimidate others, create disruption, withhold information, display apathy, and sabotage teamwork. The reality for business is that each day an employee is disengaged negatively affects an organization's bottom line.

A disengaged employee does not start their employment with an organization thinking, "I cannot wait to be ineffective." Rather, disengaged employees arrive at work each day a splash lower than the corporate benchmark. Investment in gaining and engaging employees is investment in developing smart and talented individuals who will hold the knowledge, skills, and relationships needed for future success. If investment in engaging employees does not occur, a portion of the workforce starts to fade. Opportunities missed by disengaged employees create a trickle-down effect of non-engagement and disengagement. As employee disengagement increases, others who may have previously been engaged begin to disenfranchise. Disengaged employees tend to do just enough to stay globally employed, and many initially engaged employees reach out and adopt similar behaviors. If the downward spiral is not halted before too much time passes, engagement can be hard to recover.

7. The Role of Leadership in Engagement

Organizational leadership in the sector of Employee & Leadership Development is crucial to the employee engagement strategies within an organization. When the leadership team does not respect and care for the employees, retention problems were bound to spiral out of control. In the participating organization, this fact proved correct. However, in the past 5 years, there has been a change in the leadership team, the president was replaced with someone who truly cared for the employees and retention has been positive ever since. Within the organization, top leadership are the members of the organization who make the decision and provide resources to management. When leadership cares for the employees, this takes shape by providing managers the needed resources, trust, and support to satisfy employees' psychological needs. Without the support of top leadership, a manager's job to fulfill employees' needs can be extremely difficult. This came to light with an example given by Participant 1 of a time at a previous organization where the leadership team did not care for the employees. Frontline managers developed a clear plan to give employees clear objectives, but leadership was not supportive and failed to give the managers resources to reward those that deserved extra attention. This lack of support resulted in disengaging newly engaged employees and as a result, retention issues.

Wherever listening sessions were conducted, employees expressed that leadership needed to access opportunities to mutually invest in the employees and the organization. This sentiment illustrates how important it is for top leadership to provide resources down to management and nurture those relationships. Not having that support translates into the employees feeling disengaged and unrecognized which fosters a path of low retention and poor workplace morale. It became evident in the findings that a joint relationship between leadership and management is needed for employee engagement strategies to be effective and sustain. There will always be reasons that detract a manager's focus from employee engagement strategies. If there is open and honest communication between leadership and managers, it is more likely that these employee engagement strategies will remain implemented. By being open about the pressures a department is facing, it is expected that the organization wants to work as a team. This will help with accountability of the management team and assists with the flow of honest conversations (Simmons, 2018).

7.1. Leadership Styles and Their Impact

In today's challenging global competitive market, employee retention is among the biggest challenges organizations face. No other resources are as valuable to an organization as their workforce (Sareen Surabhi Agarwal, 2016). Employee retention pertains to the policies and practices that organizations use in promoting and preventing employees from leaving the organization. Retention of productive employees has become one of the main objectives of Human Resource Managers & top management. Thus, in order to maximize productivity and keep the organization competitive, it is essential to develop an understanding of the factors affecting employees' intentions to leave the job. The retention of skilled employees is crucial for an organization because high turnover rates increase recruiting and training costs, disrupt productivity and lead to reduced employee morale. Many factors affect employees' decisions to stay or leave an organization. However, none is more prominent than direct managers and their leadership style. Research shows that leaders drive organizations through challenges,

helping manage change, attract and train high-quality employees and ensure that businesses succeed. The skills and styles they use are extremely unique & inimitable; organizations need to understand the unique role their leaders play in retention. Every organization has a "culture" that is shaped by its leaders. There exists a gap between what people want and how they are being managed; unless organizations understand the role their leaders play in retention, a threat to their survival will exist. The research examined the different leadership characteristics and styles along with their influence on employees' intention to stay. Their findings provide further evidence of a positive relationship between managers' leadership style and employees' performance and retention. It implies that retention, performance, and leadership style are not distinct but instead should be aligned to business strategies to achieve higher employee motivation and morale.

7.2. Training Leaders for Engagement

The results of this study may contribute to business practices by increasing the understanding of the importance of employee engagement strategies in a work setting and how engagement levels affect retention. Engaged employees are valuable to an organization since they are committed to the company's success and are unlikely to leave an organization. Engaged employees act as ambassadors of the organization and exhibit positive work behaviors such as increased innovation and productivity. Engaged employees create a positive and motivating environment within an organization. Employee engagement strategies are specific activities or ways an organization attempts to engage its employees. Strategies and initiatives by management are not sufficient on their own to create an engaged workforce. If employee engagement techniques are not integrated into the business and accepted by the workforce, the organization's culture does not change, and the anticipated change in behavior will not happen. The themes that came out of the interviews indicated engagement was more than simple strategies. Theme 1, job fit impacts engagement. A common thought among participants was if employees do not have a job that fits their desires, skillset, or safety will not engage at work. Aging employees, employees transitioning from single-income families to dual income families, employees wanting to retire, and employees positioning themselves for moves internally all indicated that these changes in careers and lives will impact engagement. Theme 2, open and honest communication. Participants indicated that effective communication that is open, honest, and occurs numerous times every day positively impacts engagement. Employees wanting to approach supervisors with input, managers wanting candid quarterly meetings with top management, and communication enhancing trust were some examples discussed. Theme 3, employee engagement strategies are not something that a manager does one time. Many participants gave examples of strategies that have worked for them throughout their careers. Flexibility to meet the needs of employees, frequent and timely compliments, and teams gathering for joint coffee breaks were some themes on informal engagement strategies that were successful.

8. Technology and Employee Engagement

Technological advances offer prospects to enhance engagement and retention policies. Technology can improve retention pathways by providing managers with data through business intelligence tools that are analysed to plan retention strategies for their workforce

(Ann Dixon, 2016). Moreover, organisations provide few opportunities for employee engagement with new technology that could increase retention rates and organisational profitability. The retention of employees can be increased if organisations seek the views of their employees on technology enhancements within the workplace. Employees are increasingly dependent on technology, which is reshaping the workplace and transforming the way people live and work. In these times of technological advancement, new challenges are arising in the workplace to combat employee retention and organisational productivity. In an increasingly competitive environment where retention is an ever-increasing challenge, organisations need to introduce or modify technology in advance of competitors. The provision of new technologies assesses the 'fit' between technology and employee with the aim of better engagement through facilitating the required change in workplace technology. In addition to engagement with new technologies, this would confer a range of workplace retention benefits resulting from engagement including the commitment and retention of experienced employees. A novel workplace technology framework is proposed to increase retention through an ergonomic technology fit that can be implemented at both strategic and team levels in the workplace. A team implementation programme is discussed where it is proposed the role of team boundary objects would facilitate ongoing engagement with new technology. Since retaining talented employees is vital to sustaining organisational performance, the industry and managers will benefit greatly from understanding how to better engage employees with new technology to reduce the high turnover at senior and skilled technical levels and the resultant costs.

8.1. Digital Tools for Engagement

Digital tools for engagement have seen a major surge during the COVID-19 pandemic. The disruptions in the workplace encouraged organizations to adopt remote work for employees and managers. As organizations implemented remote work, employees had greater flexibility to switch between professional and personal locations. Businesses could afford savings on infrastructure, and employees gained savings on time and finances commuting. However, one of the biggest challenges that arose during the pandemic was with employee engagement (Malia Ulfig, 2019). Organizations tried to emulate in-person employee engagement through various digital social spaces. Guided workshops with employees to design their own community-building online conferences, utilizing creative tools and processes to actively engage employees, and designing a day-long, guided hackathon with customer event responses to build a design showcase were some of the ideas put into action that have proven successful.

The past decade has seen the meteoric rise of digital co-presence platforms, including instant messaging, online group collaboration, presentation sharing, and on-demand video and audio streaming capabilities. These platforms have ensured simple, worldwide communication and content exchange across organizations. These digital co-presence platforms were already introduced by organizations before the pandemic, and as organizations had to adopt remote work measures, leaders and employees rapidly built new communities and attended digital events on these platforms. The pandemic challenged organizations to think about how they could implement employee engagement activities aimed at strengthening employees' sense

of belonging and togetherness. However, as access to digital event tools was limited and interaction design knowledge was neither fully in place nor easily obtainable, organizations needed to learn faster.

In this journey, organizations noticed the gap between employees and leaders regarding participation at events, both on-site and digital. Employees emphasized cultivating the organization's culture, improving event dissemination, and reducing wasted time as some of the biggest challenges regarding event participation. Managers would perceive high employee participation rates at on-site events and great excitement post-event, while employees would mention fatigue and frustration regarding the company's events.

8.2. Impact of Remote Work on Engagement

The need for employment accommodation to protect employees from SARS-CoV-2 infection forced employers to introduce an urgent and radical change in the structure of work. The purpose of this study was to check whether pandemic-related changes in the organisation of work, reflected in remote, hybrid, or on-site work, impacted work engagement and interpersonal confirmation as a personal antecedent of this construct. The significance of the study is confirmed by the relatively scarce literature on the impact of work organisation on work engagement, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis of the dynamics of change in the factors shaping work engagement is an unrecognised area of research (Wontorczyk & Rożnowski, 2022). Huge changes in the situation of employees were an inspiration for modelling change in the mechanism of shaping work engagement in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. Involvement and work engagement have been used interchangeably in both scientific and everyday contexts, although, according to Kahn, there are considerable differences between the two concepts. Involvement is an evident and visible manifestation of work engagement, which is only a latent construct, not immediately expected to be manifested in observable acts (involvement). The study conducted in 2020 showed a significant decrease in work engagement in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (and the drastic changes it introduced in the organisation of work). The respondents claimed that the pandemic unfavourably and significantly affected the examined variables. The pandemic led to unique circumstances that were previously unknown; this degradation of personal antecedents of work engagement due to stressors stronger than previously experienced (contingent, radical) was not considered in the research.

9. Measuring Employee Engagement

Measuring employee engagement is an important step for organizations to better understand how they can invest in the development of their employees. Organizations can choose to measure engagement in many ways, such as through simple surveys or informal conversations. An aggregated value from multiple dimensions within a survey may overlook some important feedback or course of action, while focusing on the individual may not demonstrate how those metrics relate to the entire organization. A qualitative approach for direct extraction of feedback may provide greater insights in comparison to a quantitative approach with much broader measures. The outcome of the overall engagement feedback can then be used to decide which values to focus on (Edward King, 2017).

Measuring employee engagement can take many forms and is not standardized. Engagement can be measured in many different ways, with key components to gauge engagement commonly being morale, productivity, attendance, and retention. Morale can be directly measured through surveys and can indirectly be assessed through the observation of exit interviews, formal reviews, informal conversations, and through employee sentiment analysis. Productivity can also be measured through quantitative outcomes tied to performance, as those outcomes must have metrics to hold either managers or employees accountable to each goal. Attendance can include informal measures, such as how often employees take sick leave, or formal measures such as attendance tracking. Retention is one of the easiest measures to track, as it can be directly compared to overall retention across media and compared across timeframes. Employee engagement can focus on the lower-level aspects of the above metrics, such as conducting a wellbeing survey following a drop in morale metrics, or be broad, such as conducting a happiness survey to diagnose key factors of employee engagement.

9.1. Surveys and Feedback Mechanisms

Feedback mechanisms can both contribute to employee retention and give insight into the potential risks around retention. Conducting employee engagement surveys collects information about how employees are feeling and what might matter most to them in terms of retention efforts. Personal or team feedback sessions where opinions about the organization, leadership, or strategies can be shared will also have a positive impact. Employee engagement surveys, focus groups, or check-in meetings where employees can provide feedback to their manager help establish a trusting environment that lets employees feel supported and heard (Edward King, 2017).

Feedback systems with multiple options for employees to respond privately or anonymously can encourage feedback to be shared without concerns about repercussions. Lower scores on an engagement survey can identify areas for concern, while surprising findings on what employees value can indicate ways to positively impact retention. Regular check-ins and focused feedback sessions should balance a receiver-initiated process with scheduled interactions to provide both the bases for optimization and the level of inquiry appropriate to the level of resignation threat.

Engagement surveys conducted with an outsider vendor can provide professionally phrased questions along with benchmarks comparing scores with similar organizations. All leadership-level staff can participate in focus groups where employees' and leaders' priorities can be identified. Scheduled one-to-one monthly check-ins guarantee screening for resignations and discussion of employee concerns or improvement ideas. Engagement feedbacks scheduled quarterly provide an opportunity to share wins from the feedback process while reminding staff that their ideas are appreciated and respected.

9.2. Analyzing Engagement Data

Routine analysis of engagement data allows organizations to target actions that can have a positive impact on engagement. Engagement data should be examined using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. A simple frequency count on the open-ended reason items will yield statements that an analyst can begin to categorize. Coding of the reasons for leaving

variables can also be performed. If the data have been collected using a ten-point engagement scale, the average engagement score can be calculated and tested for statistical significance by department, demographic group, or business unit. For organizations that rely on existing survey instruments or trusted outside organizations when administering engagement measures, analyzing the same data that is returned is a challenge. The key to working with such data is to ensure that a clear understanding is gained of the way in which that organization is compared with others in the final reports (Edward King, 2017). Only then can comparative reports that assist in determining why engagement is higher in one area of the organization and lower elsewhere be created. Engaging employees is an investment in the organization's future. Structuring engagement strategies are important to incorporate portability throughout the organization. Portability recognizes that engagement strategies must be flexible, adaptable, and molded or shaped to fit the various departments and divisions within Ohio Safety. Due to differences in operations, employee groups, products, and services they could be individually tailored. Organizations may offer new internal technology resources, alternative work schedules, and training programs as engagement strategies. Portability allows organizations to act as facilitators where lower-level leaders generate their own execution of engagement strategies and develop their plans to drive engagement efforts. However, portable solutions must not compromise the overall organizational engagement strategy. Portability maintains that the top 1-5 efforts will impact engagement and should be uniform across the organization. If efforts are disposable and will not be measured, they no longer maintain the intention of being used as engagement strategies. They are more appropriately viewed as an injection of new ideas or tools to combat disengagement and don't adhere to the five-level engagement strategy framework.

10. Future Trends in Employee Engagement

Studies are consistently showing a potential strong link between employee engagement and retention (Edward King, 2017). Employers demonstrate engagement through offering rewards and recognition and career development opportunities. Organizations willing to invest time and money for training and upskilling their employees are securing their retention. When everyone is engaged, both the company and employee derive maximum value from each other. Employees own the end result and put their hearts into the work they do. Their passion builds network and creates advocates for the company. When the common goal is clearly understood by all staff, engagement blossoms. The performance sought by employers is not only achieved, it also alleviates costs associated with conductivity.

Employers are encouraged to find ways to engage and not only placate their employees. For instance, work-life balance and flexibility is increasingly becoming a part of employment contracts. With recent trends allowing people to work from anywhere at any time, it is understood by employers that there is one answer to work-life play human life would not exist without play. Organizations are seeking and modeling as a priority organizations that meet their mission in a significant fashion. This can be through philanthropic endeavors or in socially responsible guidelines. Ultimately employees are seeking organizations that are relevant to their values first, jobs in accordance with their strengths second, and flexibility for their lives third.

Focusing on employees, every human being has a core need to be heard and valued. Organizations that can listen to employee suggestions and feedback in a constructive and unbiased environment will ultimately retain talent. When undue preferences are created such as favoritism through friendship bias or discrimination, the toxic organizational culture can unravel inside company walls. Maintaining democracy and being vigilant of bias errors is paramount to retaining talent. Efforts that avoid real patronage and obsessions with individual preference are paramount.

10.1. Emerging Trends

Though engagement levels are a concern for all organizations, concerns may be higher in the future for those operating in industries and labor markets in which demand for talent is expected to outpace supply. Just-in-time capacity investments, especially when "just-in-time" refers to recruiting, onboarding, training and the like, tend to be inefficient as the organization shifts from a cycle of high to low demand for labor (as appears to be the case not only currently but also in historically cycles) (Edward King, 2017). Haphazard non-systematic engagement and retention strategies can be very detrimental when talent shortages become the norm. Organizations shifting now from creating a pulse with just-in-time on-demand programs and policies to more systematic and enduring processes (e.g. continuous listens, linking engagement results and retention metrics to individual decision making, substantial development opportunities) may benefit from the strategic advantage their more proactive engagement outcomes provide.

Human capital is a distinct organizational capability and an ongoing commitment to a specific talent pool (e.g. "any talented construction estimator") strengthens that capability and enhances sustainability, compared with human capital being thought of as a commodity to be bought (e.g. "any estimator," who happens to be talented). It should be noted that downsizing and corresponding employee disengagement having cascading effects is not unique to any industry or company (especially those in the construction sector), and there is no reason to expect that such a trajectory would be any more prevalent in the industries especially considered in this research than among organizations in general. However, among these industries there are many examples of just such trajectories, and the organizations experiencing such trajectories may be thoughtfully included in future research if for no other reason than to check if those empirically grounded perspectives apply to industries not historically known to exhibit such patterns.

There are many topics related to employee engagement in general and talent retention strategies in particular which cannot be explored in this research, either because attention and resource constraints make such explorations impossible now, or because such related topics are not as ripe as are those considered in this research. The strategic influence of employee engagement on talent retention has broad implications beyond those suggested by these research findings.

10.2. Predictions for the Future

The future direction of employee engagement research and its relation to employee retention, particularly in the area within the insurance industry, could possibly include areas of focus

that have not been addressed within this study. A greater understanding of the phenomena at large could present both an academic consideration of depth and practicality for companies to pursue in order to better understand how to best harness the potential of their employees in general and between different employees. There are a number of suggested possibilities for exploration.

Focusing in on the subject of the insurance industry alone could allow for answers to questions about how similar or different companies are within the same industry. Also, it might be worthwhile to explore what other companies of other industries are doing that the insurance industry could look to adopt within their own retention efforts. A further consideration of cross-strategies could either see companies attempting to adopt a noticeable retention strategy or create their own. Similarly, a focus of company size or location may allow for uncovering new understandings about how companies with different approaches all successfully retain the talent they have.

Consideration could also be placed into groups of key demographics such as age, length of service, or department within the organization. All groups have their own unique needs that could be worth focusing in on when developing a retention strategy. A focus on demographics of location, education, or even sex may also be relevant to uncovering new insights about different employees' perspectives and needs (Edward King, 2017).

11. Conclusion

Employee engagement, especially in the context of remote work arrangements, is an increasingly pressing issue for many organizations as a result of the changes brought about by the global COVID-19 pandemic (Naidu, 2018). In particular, it is becoming increasingly hard for organizations to establish employee engagement in widespread remote work arrangements. While some organizations had already begun adopting remote work arrangements prior to the pandemic, widespread adoption was novel for many organizations and many other platforms for managing remote work flourished in prominence as a result (Edward King, 2017). As organizations adjust to these new work arrangements and reconfigure this paradigm, it is imperative that they stay cognizant of employee engagement levels for both existing and new recruits. The work arrangement (particularly surrounding remote work arrangements) is likely to continually evolve in the future and organizations must be ready and properly equipped to manage the inherent issues brought about in the context of employee engagement. In addition, academic contributions on the topic of remote work-induced challenges to employee engagement, in particular, and management generally are scant and still developing.

The findings of this study should facilitate the next steps in these efforts. A comprehensive analysis of existing literature on the topic of employee engagement (focusing on challenges brought about by changing work arrangements, notably remote work arrangements) was conducted and subsequently synthesized into a structured literature review. In addition to compiling findings from extant literature, this review ultimately serves to systematically present the findings of this study and proposes future avenues for exploration in this rapidly advancing field of academic knowledge.

The results of this review reveal that a pervasive theme regarding employee engagement is the unique context dependent factors that must be accounted for. Both the challenges brought about by changing work arrangements and potential strategic responses are varied in nature due to a range of distinct employee and organizational characteristics. This suggests that although the analysis conducted in this study has broad implications and applicability, it is also tailored to the unique situation of the task force employee population and it is recommended that future research builds on this analysis with respect to additional employee populations.

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