Perception of Telework Models on Leadership Styles, Management Approaches, &

Employee Engagement in a Tertiary-Level Patient Health-Care Facility

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Organizational Leadership

June 2023

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The author has no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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DISSERTATION APPROVAL SIGNATURE PAGE

We hereby certify that this dissertation, submitted by Melanie H. Pinkett-Davis, conforms to acceptable standards and is fully adequate in scope and quality to fulfill the dissertation requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Acknowledgments

Matthew 17:20 states, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you" (*New International Version Bible*, 2011). I give the glory and honor to God, for without him, completing this journey would not have been possible. I thank my husband Curtis for his tireless support, unconditional love, and unparalleled patience throughout my journey. Curtis, you are a tremendous blessing in my life. Thank you for making it possible for me to fulfill this dream. I thank my daughters Morgan and Cassidy for their patience, understanding, and inspiration. I pray that you always know that all things are possible with God (Matt. 19:26). I thank my father Gregory for his unconditional love and for instilling this dream in me. My gratitude also goes to my mother Shirley and my sister Stacey for their tireless support and example of excellence. I thank my "sister friends," who remained present and supportive throughout this journey and for the gift of allowing me to see myself through their eyes. Kim, Stephanie, Jamarra, Joy, Radiah, Faith, Chana, Nichole, Cheryl, Chrissy, and Fatima this achievement is for all of us! Thank you all for your love, laughter, encouragement, and prayers.

Thank you to Dr. Katie Sanchez, my advisor, who propelled me to the finish line with encouragement. I thank my dissertation committee members, Dr. Simmons, Dr. Stowell, and Dr. Beadle, for providing insightful comments and support. I thank Dr. Marybeth Leavell for her ability to see me as a person deserving of her time, investment, and prayers. Thank you Dr. Stone for your inspiration. I thank Dr. Steve Lindauer for his time, confidence, and advisement. I extend my deepest gratitude to each participant for their willingness to participate in this study. Thank you for entrusting me with your stories.

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated the abrupt, widespread transition to telework models of health-care delivery. The major problem is that it is unknown how telework service models of delivery within a tertiary-level health-care facility influences leadership styles, management approaches, and employee engagement. This qualitative phenomenological study sought to collect, analyze, and interpret data from leaders supervising employees in health care following the abrupt transition to teleworking. NVivo 12 Plus facilitated the thematic analysis of data collected from semistructured interviews. Five themes emerged from the data: (a) *efforts to establish and lead in the context of the new reality*, (b) *significance of lived experiences*, (c) *importance of accountability systems*, (d) *communication with the team*, and (e) *significance of employees engaging with one another*. Further studies may include employees who have experienced an abrupt transition to teleworking to determine the influence of race on employee engagement of teleworking professionals in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

    Keywords: employee engagement, remote employees, health-care leaders, management, phenomenology, abrupt transition, tertiary health care, access to care, lived experiences

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

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In the United States, many employees have been seeking a work–life balance between their work-related responsibilities and satisfaction in their personal lives (D.-J. Lee & Sirgy, 2019). Challenges with achieving work–life balance have been leading to burnout (Raffi et al., 2020). Health-care providers are at increased risk for burnout secondary to the increased stressors uniquely present in the medical field (Privitera et al., 2018). Employees seeking to improve their work–life balance understand that attaining this balance plays a critical role in their well-being, including health, family, and overall life satisfaction (D.-J. Lee & Sirgy, 2019).

Many employees who telecommute (i.e., work remotely) can create opportunities for flexibility in their schedule, thus creating opportunities to use their valuable time and energy more efficiently (D.-J. Lee & Sirgy, 2019). Opportunities to telework also have served to increase employee engagement and long-term commitment to organizations (Sophie & Pierre-Yves, 2021). Subsequently, an increasing number of employees have been interested in teleworking and seeking employment with organizations able to offer this level of flexibility (Privitera et al., 2018). Despite employee interest in remote work, employers have been slow to respond, and the number of teleworking positions within organizations has increased only a little (Abrams, 2019).

Background of the Problem

In 2019, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported a new highly contagious virus called the coronavirus (Jernigan & CDC COVID-19 Response

Team, 2020). The virus, which first appeared in Wuhan, China, causes severe acute respiratory syndrome (Jernigan & CDC COVID-19 Response Team, 2020). COVID-19 spread rapidly throughout China and across multiple countries (Jernigan & CDC COVID-19 Response Team, 2020). On March 5, 2020, Larry Hogan, the governor of Maryland, announced the state's first positive cases of COVID-19 and declared a state of emergency (Thielen et al., 2020).

Public health experts determined the most effective strategy to prevent the spread of COVID-19 was teleworking (Fisher et al., 2020). Because of the presence of COVID-19-positive patients in Maryland, and guidance from the CDC, on March 13, 2020, Governor Hogan issued a proclamation, mandating that all nonessential personnel should work from home (Heo et al., 2020). Organizations seeking to adhere to the governor's proclamation sought to transition to telework models very quickly (Crockett et al., 2020). In a similar fashion, the pandemic led health-care providers to abruptly transition activities related to patient care from in-person to a telehealth modality (Crockett et al., 2020).

Before the state of emergency declaration, teleworking, also called telecommuting and remote work, was an important benefit in the workplace (Palumbo, 2020). Given this, telecommuting became an increasingly common benefit offered by employers (Palumbo, 2020). Technological advances and more widely available internet service provided opportunities for many professionals, including health-care providers, to telecommute as well (Aristodemou et al., 2021). Previous research has suggested that when seeking employment, health-care providers desire work–life balance (Vinci, 2021).

Between 2005 and 2015, the number of U.S. employees who telecommute increased by 115% (Abrams, 2019). In 2019, more than 26 million Americans, reflecting about 16% of the total workforce, were working remotely at least part of the time (Barrero et al., 2021). At that time, employees who were able to work from home were nonunion, highly educated, and often older (Abrams, 2019). Knowledge workers are employees able to work from home, including health-care providers (Drucker, 1999). The 2020 pandemic created a novel opportunity for health-care providers to engage in telemedicine (Sophie & Pierre-Yves, 2021).

Telemedicine, also referred to as telehealth, describes the process of employing telecommunication technology, audio, and video concurrently to support the provision of medical care (Kolb et al., 2021). Previous research has suggested that offering telehealth visits may present an opportunity for health care practitioners to decrease the frequency of patient no-shows, a known factor negatively affecting employee engagement (Gier, 2017). Missed medical appointments cost the U.S. health-care system an average of $150 billion annually (Gier, 2017). In addition to direct costs, missed appointments can make accessing medical care more difficult, can cause extended wait times, and can lead to compromised health care outcomes (Gier, 2017). Many studies have focused on the demographic factors of patients who miss scheduled medical appointments, but few studies have sought to learn more about the leadership approaches used by supervisors of health-care providers who are providing telehealth services within tertiary-level health-care facilities (Kolb et al., 2021).

Tertiary-level care describes the specialized health care provided in university-affiliated hospital settings for patients with uncommon and often severe health problems

(Flegel, 2015). Tertiary-level health care is available following the referral from a secondary health-care provider for diagnosis or treatment (Flegel, 2015). Many large tertiary-level U.S. hospitals house multiple outpatient programs with directors who function with a high level of autonomy (Sebastian & Hess, 2019). Directors are leaders with a high level of individual discretion in many areas, including their desired leadership approach (Sebastian & Hess, 2019). Given the commonalities that exist across tertiary-level outpatient programs, additional research would advance understanding of which leadership approaches are effective and what leadership approaches may serve to increase employee engagement.

Recruiting and retaining talented health-care professionals are among the primary goals of tertiary-level health-care organizations (Freed et al., 2017). Organizational leadership and employee engagement influence the success of recruitment and retention activities (Marufu et al., 2021). Due to the persistent shortage of pediatric specialist professionals, leaders in health-care organizations have frequently made recruitment one of their top priorities (Zhang et al., 2020). Leaders seeking to retain the professionals they have successfully recruited in their organizations are encouraged to take a proactive approach to maintain employee engagement (Chanana & Sangeeta, 2021). Employee engagement has been a significant factor in organizational success and maintaining a competitive workforce (L. Lee, 2019). Individuals also receive a direct benefit from being engaged in the workplace (Koon & Ho, 2021). Given this, leaders and managers should be mindful of how different leadership philosophies affect employee engagement (Meskelis & Whittington, 2020).

Beliefs about patient disengagement from the health-care process may influence employee engagement among health-care professionals (Medisauskaite & Kamau, 2019). Maintaining awareness of factors affecting employee engagement has been vital, given the influence that employee engagement and occupational stress have had on the health of medical providers as well as on patient outcomes (Medisauskaite & Kamau, 2019). Previous research conducted in 2019 found that 32.7% of medical doctors in the United Kingdom were experiencing burnout and psychiatric comorbidity and that 55.3% were experiencing a level of burnout best conceptualized as emotional exhaustion (Medisauskaite & Kamau, 2019).

Telecommuting has grown in popularity across businesses and health-care organizations; however, teleworking has created unique obstacles for supervisors in implementing leadership approaches while maintaining employee engagement within the organization (Galanti et al., 2021). Caillier (2013) explored the impact of teleworking on employees' organizational engagement within the federal government. The pandemic and subsequent state of emergency prompted the abrupt move to telehealth service modalities more broadly (Galanti et al., 2021). This current qualitative phenomenological study sought to collect, analyze, and interpret data from leaders supervising employees in a tertiary-level health-care facility following the abrupt transition to teleworking due to the COVID-19 pandemic to advance the understanding of how telework models of service delivery in this type of setting influence leadership styles, management approaches, and employee engagement.

Statement of the Problem

The problem this study sought to address is how the unknown working procedure of telework models of service delivery within a tertiary-level health-care facility would influence leadership styles, management approaches, and employee engagement. *Employee engagement* refers to the extent to which employees work and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally while completing their work (Aldabbas et al., 2023). The key drivers of employee engagement are (a) communication, (b) opportunities for team members to share their perspectives and ideas with senior managers, and (c) leaders' understanding that members of their teams remain invested and committed to the organization (Lartey & Randall, 2021).

Rationale

The purpose of this research was to bring better understanding to how telework models of service delivery within a tertiary-level health-care facility affect leadership styles, management approaches, and employee engagement. The purpose of using the qualitative phenomenological research approach was to bring better understanding to the lived experiences of directors, managers, and leaders who are leading newly teleworking clinical providers and administrative personnel. Recruited study participants included leaders with experience managing office-based, hybrid, and remote employees. The effectiveness of the leadership strategies commonly used for in-office team members when applied to supervise virtual team members is unknown (Greimel et al., 2023). Team members working remotely have fewer opportunities for informal interactions with their colleagues (Buomprisco et al., 2021). Supervisors who are seeking to support employee engagement and to provide effective leadership to remote employees may be interested in

gaining insight into the modifications needed to maintain the effectiveness of their

established leadership practices as they transition to supervising virtual employees

(Contreras et al., 2020).

Contribution of the Study

The core value of this qualitative phenomenological research is the contribution to

the literature on the effects of telework models of service delivery on leadership style,

management approaches, and employee engagement within a tertiary-level health-care

facility. Information obtained from participant interviews provided insight into leadership

approaches that promoted employee engagement and productivity. An additional goal is

to gain valuable insight into the practical management approaches that influence remote

employee engagement. Previous researchers established that organizational support and

employee work engagement positively affect creativity and productivity (Aldabbas et al.,

2023). Subsequently, productivity is a primary area of study for many organizational

directors, leaders, and supervisors (Aldabbas et al., 2023). Given the growth in the

number of teleworkers, understanding the most effective leadership strategies influencing

this group is critical (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2020).

The management techniques traditionally used for office-based employees may

come instinctively to effectively support teleworkers' demands efficiently (ILO, 2020).

However, traditional management techniques may not be successful in managing virtual

employees (Larson & DeChurch, 2020). The Organization for Economic Co-Operation

and Development (OECD, 2020) found that the COVID-19 pandemic was prompting an

unprecedented shift to telework on a large scale. Given the abrupt nature of the

unprecedented shift to telework on a large scale during the pandemic, leaders may have

sought to employee traditional in-office management strategies for virtual employees with minimal success (Larson & DeChurch, 2020).

The core goal of this current study was to make a meaningful contribution to the field by focusing on teleworking leaders to identify best practices. Another goal was to learn what management techniques might be most effective for leaders looking for managing and influencing virtual employee engagement. Finding out how leadership approaches and insights affect employee engagement was another aim of this study. This area of inquiry sought to identify positive implications for organizational sustainability through improved work–life balance for teleworking leaders. This knowledge expansion may boost the decision-making and strategic abilities of leaders, maximizing the efficacy of teleworking health-care professionals (Contreras et al., 2020).

Research Questions

The current study sought to understand how telework models of service delivery within a tertiary-level patient health-care facility impact leadership style, management strategies, and employee engagement. Additionally, the study aimed to learn more about the levels of perceived employee engagement among team members. Three research questions (RQs) steered this study:

- RQ1: What are leaders' perceptions of the impact of telework models of service delivery on leadership styles within a tertiary-level health-care facility?

- RQ2: What are leaders' perceptions of the impact of telework models of service delivery on management approaches within a tertiary-level health-care facility?

- RQ3: What are leaders' perceptions of the impact of telework models of service delivery on employee engagement within a tertiary-level health-care facility?

Process to Accomplish

This study used a qualitative phenomenological approach. Phenomenology is a philosophical approach that emphasizes the subjective lived experience of individuals and how they make sense of the world around them (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). To help identify recurring themes and patterns underlying research participants' lived experiences, this approach entails analyzing and interpreting the detailed descriptions provided by study participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Commonly used in psychology, nursing, and related fields, phenomenological research is used where it is crucial to understand the subjective experience of individuals in relation to a particular phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). One premise of the phenomenological research approach is the belief that the description of the experiences revealed by the study participants is generalizable to the experiences of other people who have encountered the phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Exploration of various qualitative research approaches occurred for use in the current research study. The approach to inquiry that emphasizes the study of stories or narratives is narrative research (Butina, 2015). Narrative research, rooted in the humanities and social sciences, seeks to understand the meaning and significance of people's experiences expressed via their stories (Butler-Kisber, 2010). To develop a collaborative narrative, researchers employ a narrative research approach often combining viewpoints from the life experiences of study participants with those of individuals leading the research project (Butina, 2015). For research aiming to obtain an unobstructed view of respondents' lives, narrative inquiry is not the ideal method (Butler-Kisber, 2010).

The grounded theory research design was also under consideration. Grounded theory, developed by Glaser et al. (1968), has become a leading qualitative approach used by several disciplines (Walsh et al., 2015). Researchers who use this approach collect data through interviews, observations, or documents (Koleva, 2023). Koleva's (2023) approach to data analysis includes a process of constantly comparing the data to one another and with the emerging theory. The goal of grounded theory research is to identify patterns, categories, and themes that are relevant to the RQs and grounded in the views of study participants (Ligita et al., 2019). Employing a grounded theory approach results in the development of a theory grounded in the data and provides a comprehensive and abstractive explanation of the phenomenon being studied (Makri & Neely, 2021). According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), the grounded theory research approach supports the development of an abstract concept of practice. In this regard, the grounded theory approach could have provided the context necessary to develop a deeper understanding of a new or innovative leadership approach that supports the engagement of teleworkers (Koleva, 2023).

For this phenomenological study, interview questions (IQs) were developed to gather data on a deeper understanding of supervisors' experiences in meeting the needs of in-office and virtual employees. The current study included interviewing 14 directors, managers, and leaders of remote and hybrid employees within a tertiary-level health-care facility. The participants met inclusion criteria secondary to their roles and responsibilities within the tertiary-level health-care facility. The one-on-one interviews occurred during scheduled 60-minute meetings, using a virtual meeting platform. Interviews were extended on an as needed basis at the request of study participants. The

participants conveyed consent for the audio and video recording of the interviews. During each interview, each participant answered 26 IQs and seven personal demographic questions (see Appendix F). Data transcription and analysis of the completed interview recordings occurred using NVivo 12 Plus, a privacy-protected, contemporary data storage management and analysis tool.

NVivo 12 Plus is an internationally noted software package for qualitative data analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). NVivo 12 Plus identified keywords, phrases, and themes associated with each of the RQs. The anticipated outcomes of using NVivo 12 Plus were the development of contextual themes, the ability to make comparisons across participants, and verification of findings across participants (Edwards-Jones, 2014). Study data is stored in alignment with Columbia International University's guidelines as well as Johns Hopkins University's Institutional Review Board guidelines and recommendations. Adherence to the guidelines included using the password-protected, Institutional Review Board compliant platform Safe Desktop for data storage for 7 years in alignment with Johns Hopkins Medicine Office of Human Subjects Research Institutional Review Board standards (Smithwright, n.d.).

Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this research was to gain a better understanding of how telework models of service delivery within a tertiary-level health-care facility affects leadership styles, management approaches, and employee engagement. A variety of different perspectives contributed to the understanding of employee engagement in the past. The personal engagement and disengagement theory of Kahn (1990), along with Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior, and the two-factor theory of Herzberg et al. (1959),

underpinned this current study's conceptual framework. Kahn suggested that experiences

sway engagement. Herzberg et al. posited that intrinsic or extrinsic motivational triggers

have an inverse influence on motivation when they are present. In contrast, Ajzen

illustrated the predictability of behavior. Chapter 2 provides a more robust overview of

the factors contributing to employee engagement. Because of the guidance provided by

Kahn, understanding how leaders interact with employees provides insight into their

productivity.

Definitions of Terms

This section provides clarification regarding the terms and phrases used in this

study. The terms clarified include acronyms, terms with special meanings, and other

common terms that have a particular meaning in the context of this study.

- *Employee disengagement:* Disengagement is the behavioral, cognitive, and

  emotional detachment from one's work, colleagues, and organization (Kahn,

  1990). Disengagement is a passionless work existence through which employees'

  work becomes meaningless to them, causing them to feel the experience of

  inequity and to believe they do not have any support or growth opportunities

  (Ayers, 2006).

- *Employee engagement:* Kahn (1990) defined employee engagement as

  employees' commitment and positive behaviors toward their work, colleagues,

  and organization. According to Leeds and Nierle (2014), Kahn's definition of

  employee engagement is most widely accepted. Engagement is a continual, all-

  inclusive, positive effect encompassing all interactions with the employee's

  environment (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008).

- *Extrinsic or intrinsic motivators:* The two-factor theory developed by Herzberg et al. (1959) provides insight into the extrinsic and intrinsic motivational factors for employees. Extrinsic factors are those such as the manifestation of the company's culture through the organization's policies, compensation, organizational strengths, supervision, and work conditions (Buble et al., 2014). In contrast, intrinsic factors are those such as professional advancement, workplace responsibility, the work itself, recognition, and achievement (Buble et al., 2014).

- *Leadership:* Hemphill and Coons (1957) described leadership as an individual's efforts to direct activities toward the completion of a shared goal.

- *Motivation:* An outcome of intrinsic or extrinsic influence is the effect on behavior (Herzberg et al., 1959). Secondary to an employee's motivation, behaviors serve to create movement toward personal goal attainment (Kahn, 1990). Motivation leads to employees' engagement in their work (Zigarmi et al., 2009).

- *Remote employees:* Remote employees refers to employees who are dispersed from their brick-and-mortar cohorts, are geographically scattered, and use technology to collaborate, communicate, coordinate, develop, and execute plans for producing products, goods, and services (Yarberry & Sims, 2021).

- *Telework:* Telework is an organizational practice through which employees can fully or partially work at home or in locations other than those occupied by most of their team members (Duxbury et al., 1998).

- *Traditional employees:* From a historical perspective, traditional employees are those who go to a designated place of work as compared to working remotely

(Barbuto et al., 2020). Traditional employees are those who share immediate

physical access and management, including adherence to colocation policies,

hierarchy, support, and work roles (Koehler et al., 2013).

- *Traditional office setting:* Traditional office setting and a brick-and-mortar

  workplace both refer to a physical location in which a team of coworkers

  assembles to conduct business and collaborate (Pinsonneault & Boisvert, 2001).

  This setting is the specific location, such as a corporate office, from which a

  group of colleagues gathers to carry out work-related activities as well as to

  collaborate (Malhotra et al., 2007).

Limitations & Delimitations

Study limitations are weaknesses that are beyond a researcher's control pertaining

to the selected research design, constraints of the selected statistical models, or other

factors (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). While limitations are outside of a researcher's

control, they may affect the design, results, and conclusions of a study (Theofanidis &

Fountouki, 2018). One limitation of qualitative studies relates to challenges with

replicating a study (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018).

Delimitations refer to the specific boundaries or limitations established by a

researcher to narrow down the scope of a study and define its parameters (Theofanidis &

Fountouki, 2018). Delimitations typically focus on the theoretical and conceptual

framework, RQs or variables of interest, and the study population (Theofanidis &

Fountouki, 2018). Delimiting the current study's scope allowed the development of the

study in a manageable and feasible manner.

A distinguishing factor for the participants in this study was the leaders' experiences supervising both in-office and teleworking team members within a tertiary-level health-care facility during an abrupt transition to remote work arrangements due to the pandemic. Leaders whose experience prior to the pandemic were solely on supervising in-office employees while being in the office themselves was an exclusion criterion for participation in this study. Leaders whose experience, prior to the pandemic, was solely based on supervising telework employees while teleworking themselves were not selected to participate in this study. This research focused on the adaptations made and the effectiveness of in-person leadership approaches following an abrupt transition to remote working arrangements. An additional area of focus pertained to the relationship between leadership styles and employee engagement.

The IQs, designed to elicit free expression from the leaders regarding their lived experiences in transitioning from an in-office leader to a remote leader of remote working staff within a tertiary-level health-care facility, supported data acquisition. The use of open-ended IQs supported the sharing of detailed descriptions that would further support the transferability of study outcomes. As the interviews occurred, the probing IQs ensured that each participant had the opportunity to convey core details and nuances of their lived experiences (Bazen et al., 2021). This step ensured that all the information conveyed, and the subsequent assigned meaning remained closely aligned with the phenomenological approach (Alase, 2017).

The limitations of this study have the potential to affect the study's transferability (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). One limitation was the small sample size (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). However, the sample size of the current study was in alignment with

expectations for qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Another limitation was the lack of control over the openness of the respondents to the IQs. Another restriction was how the COVID-19 outbreak affected distant work arrangements. Uncertainty regarding the duration of the pandemic and subsequent return-to-work arrangements were also a limitation of the study.

One of the goals of this current study was developing robust descriptions of each study participant's perceived leadership experience. Including this detailed information served to support efforts to achieve saturation of the data (Sebele-Mpofu, 2020). As efforts to further support transferability occurred, data saturation revealed recurring themes that were visible across the experiences of multiple participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Delimitations are generally in the control of a researcher and serve to refine the focus and define the boundaries of a study (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). The study participants were professionals working exclusively within a tertiary-level health-care facility in Baltimore, Maryland. Consideration for study participation did not include clinicians and administrative professionals working in primary- or secondary-level settings.

Study participants were limited to leaders employed within the same tertiary-level facility, meeting the established inclusion criteria. The transferability of the findings to leaders who do not work in health care but in other fields was another limitation of the study. Presenting study findings with a level of contextual clarity and robust descriptions of the phenomenon enables readers to assess the transferability of the findings to their own unique settings (Prosek & Gibson, 2021).

Chapter Summary

Leaders within tertiary-level health-care organizations face challenges in recruiting and retaining highly qualified health-care professionals (Hamid et al., 2014). The successful recruitment and retention of highly qualified health-care professionals are crucial for organizations to remain competitive as well as to support the organization's longevity (Buchan & Campbell, 2013). Given this, when possible, organizations should offer remote work options to health-care professionals seeking to improve their work–life balance (Shirmohammadi et al., 2022). Additionally, leaders should become acquainted with leadership styles that promote long-term employee engagement for both in-office and remote employees (Caniëls, 2023)

Kahn (1990) initially presented the concept of employee engagement. Kahn conceptualized employee engagement as an employee's positive disposition within the workplace. Employee engagement is evident in an employee's presence at work and affects the experiences of colleagues and consumers within the organization (Siddiqi, 2015). Ultimately, employee engagement has a direct impact on the financial performance of organizations (Babapour Chafi et al., 2021). Employee engagement becomes evident in employees' dispositions, in their level of energy exerted while completing responsibilities at work, their level of commitment, and their inclinations within the workplace (Siddiqi, 2015). Engaged employees are highly responsive, connected with their colleagues, and maintain a focus on completing their day-to-day responsibilities (Mohammed et al., 2022)

In the United States, the COVID-19 pandemic led to an unprecedented increase in the number of individuals engaged in teleworking (Golden & Veiga, 2005; OECD, 2020).

Engagement with fellow virtual team members necessitates they work together using electronic means because face-to-face interactions are limited due to their virtual work modality (OECD, 2020). Quite often, team members are working on interdependent teams reliant upon one another to achieve team goals (Malhotra et al., 2007). As teleworking increases, managers, supervisors, and directors face unique challenges as they try to effectively lead remote working staff members and maintain employee engagement within the organization (Dahlstrom, 2013). Previous researchers have found a relationship between telecommuters' job responsibilities and their levels of job satisfaction (Golden & Veiga, 2005). While previous research explored leadership approaches for government employees, little information is available about how the abrupt transition from in-office to hybrid and remote work models affects leadership styles, management approaches, and employee engagement within a tertiary-level health-care facility (Dahlstrom, 2013). Chapter 2 provides additional information regarding the evidence available from existing literature regarding employee engagement among teleworking employees and leadership strategies that have proved effective with this population.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter includes a summary of the literature search strategy, a reflection of the foundational theories for this study, and a review of the existing literature that applied to this study. The purpose of this qualitative research was to increase understanding of the experiences of leaders abruptly transitioning from in-office working models to hybrid or teleworking models by identifying recurring themes. The outcomes of this study might serve remote leaders by supporting future theory and practice development.

The literature search strategy included using Columbia International University's collection of databases, including EBSCO and ProQuest, to complete an extensive review of the literature. The Ovid interface, previously OvidSP, provided access to a range of databases, e-journals, and e-books. Additional searches using Google Scholar and the Taylor & Francis content platform occurred as well. The literature search resulted in 369 published references. The 369 references include 30 books and four dissertations. Peer-reviewed and nonpeer-reviewed journals comprise 87% of the total references. Of the total references, publication for 50% was within the previous 5 years. All selected references for usage directly related to the research topic. Keywords used to search for literature were *virtual teams*, *telework*, *telecommuting*, *remote worker*, *remote leader*, *employee engagement*, and *leadership in health care*. The principal topic points in this literature review include work engagement, leadership, virtual work, and virtual teams. Both the purpose statement and research questions guided the context of the literature review. Limited research was available on the effect of abruptly transitioning from an in-office work model to a remote working model (Burrell, 2020).

While the population of teleworking employees continued to rise in 2020, a limited amount of research was available to guide the applicability of traditional management techniques for teleworking employees (Esen, 2022). Before the COVID-19 pandemic, 78% of households reported having the capacity to be able to work from home, yet only 51% reported having the authorization from their employer to work entire days from home (Papanikolaou & Schmidt, 2020). According to prepandemic forecasts, 25% to 30% of the U.S. workforce was anticipated to be working from home multiple days a week by the end of 2021 (Lister & Harnish, 2019). Between 2019 and 2021, the number of employees working primarily from home tripled to as many as 48.3% of workers in some areas (Barrero et al., 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic triggered an unprecedented and unanticipated increase in the volume of employees engaged in teleworking (Katsabian, 2020). Given the urgent nature of this change and the host of logistical challenges involved, most leaders did not have adequate time to consider the implications of their leadership approach (Arunprasad et al., 2022). Leaders of teleworking teams have concerns about how social isolation can decrease job performance among their team members (Contreras et al., 2020).

Researchers have determined that teleworking has a positive impact on employee engagement (Park & Cho, 2022). Previous research has demonstrated that employee engagement is a critical factor for organizations as it directly affects profitability and revenue growth (Street et al., 2019). A 2023 Gallup poll estimated that in the United States, disengaged employees cost companies $450–$500 billion each year (Fechter, 2023). When considering all health-care positions, organizations lose an average of $50,000 per individual due to employee turnover (Lindquist, 2023). Street et al. (2019)

confirmed employee engagement as a concern for lower-level employees as well as for CEO-level executives.

Researchers have reflected on two contexts for remote work (Powell & Craig, 2015). The first context refers to employees who may or may not be members of the same team who work remotely (Powell & Craig, 2015). The second context refers to virtual teams of individuals working from different locations (Powell & Craig, 2015). While telework has become more common, this shift offers an opportunity for organizations to increase awareness of strategies for developing a telework framework (Mohammed et al., 2022). According to Van den Broek and Keating's (2011) 2006 survey of international telework policies, managers, professionals, and knowledge workers who participated in this study were most likely to telework because of their ability for autonomous work. Previous research revealed that managing virtual employees with traditional management techniques is ineffective (Sheridan, 2012). The COVID-19 pandemic led to a massive shift in the way people work and communicate, as many individuals and organizations turned to telecommuting or remote work as a strategy to maintain productivity while socially isolating themselves (Katsabian, 2020). According to research conducted with 229 human resources departments in 2020, approximately half of these organizations reported more than 80% of their employees engaging in remote work because of the COVID-19 pandemic (Katsabian, 2020). The sudden increase in the volume of teleworking employees expedited the need to provide supervisors, managers, and other leaders with evidence-based strategies for supporting the teleworking members of their team (Buomprisco et al., 2021).

Numerous organizations have trouble recruiting and retaining well-qualified team members (Leider et al., 2018). The significant number of baby boomers with extensive experience and expertise who are exiting the workplace due to retirement worsens this challenge (Leider et al., 2018). This current study sought to explore how telework models of service delivery within a tertiary-level health-care facility impact leadership style, management approaches, and employee engagement. This current research may provide an opportunity to advance the knowledge base of effective leadership strategies for leaders of teleworking teams.

The purpose of this current qualitative research was to increase understanding of the experiences of leaders abruptly transitioning from in-office models of work to hybrid or teleworking models on the leaders' management styles, leadership approaches, and employee engagement by identifying recurring themes. This study interviewed 14 leaders at the same tertiary-level health-care facility using 26 interview questions and seven personal demographic questions. The literature review established an understanding of effective baseline leadership techniques used in the traditional office setting and of how the techniques influenced employee engagement. The interview questions were incorporated within this study to collect data about the lived experiences of leaders as it pertained to how they interacted with their supervisees who were working in the office, how this varied from the patterns of interaction that were being used for virtual employees, and the impact that the interactions had on employee engagement.

Existing research provided robust information regarding effective management techniques known to influence employee engagement for traditional in-office employees (Mohammed et al., 2022). However, considerably few of the available research articles

addressed the area of employee engagement for remote workers. This completed

literature review reveals how many articles focused on management techniques that

influenced employee engagement in the traditional workplace. Evidence shows that

managing remote employees requires important attributes frequently taken for granted

while managing in-office teams (Phillips, 2020). Given the limited amount of research

available in this area, the productivity of remote employees, and the significant increase

in the number of employees who are teleworking because of the COVID-19 pandemic,

there was a need for this current study (Papanikolaou & Schmidt, 2020).

Foundational Theories

For this research, foundational theory refers to the primary theoretical tenets

identified as outcomes of the literature review for this study (Ravitch & Riggan, 2016).

Of note, some authors viewed the foundational theory and theoretical framework as being

analogous to the conceptual framework (Ravitch & Riggan, 2016). The foundational

theory framework of this study included the pivotal work of Kahn (1990), which

concentrates on role alignment and demonstrates how employees integrate themselves

with their jobs and how this integration influences their levels of engagement.

Consideration for the impact of leadership approaches on employee engagement, both

positive and negative, occurred (Duthler & Dhanesh, 2018). An additional area of focus

was on the importance of maintaining opportunities for the children seeking care within a

tertiary-level health-care facility to be able to do so without extensive wait times. The

availability of services within a tertiary-level health- care facility is dependent upon the

availability of health-care providers (Gordon-Lipkin et al., 2016). Given the level of skill

required to work within the setting in both a clinical and administrative role, employee

retention is a significant priority (Gesme et al., 2010). During the timeframe spanning April 2022 through July 2022, 29% of 2,349 surveyed hospitals reported immediate vacancies for health-care personnel positions (Wu et al., 2022). As many as 53% of clinicians and staff in health-care settings surveyed between 2013 and 2014 reported burnout while as few as 32% of clinicians and 35% of staff participating in the same survey reported having a high level of engagement (Willard-Grace et al., 2019).

Furthermore, a significant need for services to support children with developmental and behavioral conditions exists, as well as a shortage of health-care providers who can provide these services (Leslie et al., 2018). One-third of developmental–behavioral pediatricians surveyed in 2015 had planned to retire within the following 3 to 5 years (Leslie et al., 2018). Projections include comparable workforce shortages for nurse practitioners, starting in 2013, to continue through 2026 (Schell et al., 2015). Furthermore, estimates for the workforce shortage of child and adolescent psychiatrists ranged from 10% to 20% in 2015 (Bridgemohan et al., 2018). Given the tremendous demand for services and the importance of maintaining appropriate staffing levels to ensure access to early intervention services, members of leadership in the health-care field are compelled to work to support employee engagement and staff retention at all times (Gupta & Aileen, 2017). Existing team members possess internal knowledge, understanding, and skills acquired through both formal and informal learning (Jaskiewicz et al., 2015). Ultimately, this internal knowledge serves to further the organization's goal of providing easily accessible patient care while also positively influencing the organization's financial standing (Crockett et al., 2020). Factors such as anticipated retirements reflect the importance ensuring the sustainability of knowledge within the

organization (Gordon-Lipkin et al., 2016). While some define success by the attainment of financial capital, researchers have noted the importance of understanding human capital as well (Hoff et al., 2016). Human capital is the sum of employee knowledge and skills the organization can harness to achieve its mission and vision (Hoff et al., 2016).

The anticipated staffing shortage among developmental experts and the knowledge they possess presents significant cause for concern given the wide-ranging ramifications (Bridgemohan et al., 2018). Professional knowledge is an invaluable asset used by university-based medical professionals, community health-care providers, and others (Hoff et al., 2016). Developmental experts and the professional knowledge they possess are essential in the effort to advance the level of innovation, to expand upon the organization's vision, mission, and strategies, as well as to ensure exceptional levels of employee performance are maintained within the organization (Bibi, 2018). Leadership approaches, employee engagement, and employee burnout may directly affect the recruitment and retention of highly qualified medical team members (Bridgemohan et al., 2018)

Kahn (1990) explored how employees integrate with their work and environment given the level of empowerment and supervisory techniques they experience, such as through communication, conversations, and their ability to express ideas (Bhuvanaiah & Raya, 2015). Engaged employees invest emotionally in their work and are motivated to contribute to the success of the organization (Mone & London, 2018). Motivated employees are committed to their jobs and the organization's mission and values (Lemon, 2019). Motivated employees are willing to exceed expectations in their work (Lemon, 2019). Engaged employees tend to be more productive and effective in their work and are

often more likely to stay with the organization for a longer period (Lemon, 2019). The

literature reveals the powerful impact that engagement has on retaining employees,

increasing productivity, improving customer loyalty, advancing profitability, and

reducing absenteeism (Hickman & Robison, 2020).

This current study focused on teleworking employees and leaders traditionally

gathered in the same brick-and-mortar location of a tertiary-level health-care facility,

experienced in abruptly shifting to remote and hybrid work modalities. Kahn (1990)

posited that the concept of engagement is personal engagement or disengagement and

relates to individuals' ability to align themselves with their work, the environment, and

their interactions with colleagues. Much of the contemporary research focused on

individually driven efforts and extrinsic organizational or managerial techniques that

influence engagement (Bhuvanaiah & Raya, 2015). This current study focused on broad

concepts relating to the engagement of teleworking employees of a tertiary-level health-

care facility. The availability of teleworking as an employment option has increased the

levels of flexibility within the workplace (Lemon, 2019). Since the beginning of the

COVID-19 pandemic, the number of employees' teleworking has increased dramatically

(Mouratidis & Papagiannakis, 2021).

Work Engagement

Leaders and managers around the world seek to understand employee engagement

and the relationship between employee engagement and in-role performance, role

meaningfulness, and job characteristics (Han et al., 2021). While employee engagement

has appeared in the literature for many years, organizational leaders increased their focus

in this area in the 1990s (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014). Goffman (1961) posited the

relationship between employee engagement and employee disengagement as grounded in role theory. Employee engagement is evident in an unprompted commitment to fulfilling the expectations of an employee's assigned position while engaging in the physical behaviors required to meet the expectations of the employer (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014). This approach is in alignment with the assertions of Bennis (1966), who emphasized the necessity for employees to engage in their occupational tasks as well as with their organization.

The concepts presented by Kahn (1990) reflect the understanding of the relationship between employee engagement and the productivity of the organization. Eldor and Vigoda-Gadot (2017) presented employee engagement as encompassing both the psychological state and behavior of the employee. Engaged employees invest in their work and feel a sense of ownership and pride in their contribution to their organizations' goals (Lemon, 2019). A sense of purpose and meaningful work motivates engaged employees, as they are willing to put in extra effort to achieve success (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). The concept of work engagement is reflective of employees' positive dispositions toward their workplaces (Kahn, 1990). In addition to being psychologically present, engaged employees express themselves materially, cognitively, and emotionally within the workplace (Siddiqi, 2015). Kahn described employee engagement another way, referring to it as a worker's self-in-role. In this regard, engaged employees are not just fulfilling a set of job duties but are also actively expressing their unique talents, values, and interests within their work (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). The presence of this sense of connection and integration between the employees' identity and their work role leads to increased focus and attentiveness in the workplace (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008).

This idea of self-in-role suggests that employee engagement is not just a matter of external factors such as job design or management practices but also relies on employees' sense of autonomy and agency in their work (Kahn, 1990). By creating a work environment that allows employees to express their unique talents and values, organizations can help foster a greater sense of engagement and motivation among their workforce (Edmondson & Matthews, 2022).

Juevesa et al. (2020) found that highly committed employees perform positively for the organization, which positively influences the organization's overall success. Conversely, employees who are less committed to the organization tend to have lower job performance, which can negatively affect the organization's success (Juevesa et al., 2020). Given this and the other characteristics identified, committed employees are highly analogous to engaged employees (Juevesa et al., 2020). Previous researchers have also implied that engagement is reflective of the extent to which employees demonstrate commitment to someone or something in their organization, the level of effort they exert in their work, and the duration of their tenure with the organization because of that commitment (Kakkar et al., 2020). Researchers have asserted that commitment captures the individual's attachment or attitude toward an organization (Saks, 2019).

Kahn (1990) considered work engagement to be a manifestation of the various extent to which people interact with their role. Kahn identified three psychological conditions related to employee engagement. The first condition is the purpose that workers assign to their work role (Kahn, 1990). This reflects the psychological meaningfulness of the work (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014). The second factor, safety, refers to the psychological safety workers appreciate to make certain that their work does not

bring about an undesired reward (Kahn, 1990). Psychological safety focuses on the idea

of employees being able to relate to their role performances and having the necessary

resources to perform their jobs effectively (Nguyen, 2021). Kahn's definition of

psychological safety suggests that it is related to the employees' ability to engage with

their work in a meaningful way, while also feeling supported by their colleagues and

organization (Kim et al., 2020). When psychological safety is present employees have

more effective alignment with their sense of connection to, their perceived value in, and

their understanding of the impact of their job responsibilities in the workplace (Fu et al.,

2022). Researchers have determined that employees who feel that their work is

meaningful and who report feeling psychologically safe in the workplace, are able to be

psychologically available in the workplace (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014). Alignment with a

favorable organizational climate that meets the criteria outlined by Kahn (1990) enables

employees to feel more self-efficacious, hopeful, and satisfied with their lives. In this

regard, employee performance serves as an outcome of both employees' motivation and

their inherent talents or ability (Farina et al., 2018). The third factor noted by Kahn,

psychological availability, pertains to the importance of providing employees with the

necessary resources and opportunities to excel in their work so organizations can foster a

culture of engagement, productivity, and support (Amis & Janz, 2020). Leaders will serve

themselves well to remain aware that employees do not engage in their work roles

equally (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014). Goffman (1961) and Kahn noted that employees do

not invest equally in each role within the organization, echoing the findings of other

researchers (Francis & Keegan, 2020; Schaufeli, 2013). This notion aligns conceptually

with organizational psychologists' understanding that a difference may exist between an

employee's maximal performance and the employee's typical performance (Frankiewicz & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2020). This explains how employees' energy, level of involvement, and professional efficacy are used to represent their level of engagement (Bhuvanaiah & Raya, 2015). The degree to which employees engage with their work affects their behavior, effort, commitment, job performance, and productivity (Anitha, 2014). Research findings have indicated that leaders ought to address employee motivation and employees not working at their maximum potential (Tortorella et al., 2021). Well-informed leaders are aware that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors influence employee engagement (Delaney & Royal, 2017). Fully engaged employees experience added benefits in the workplace (Tortorella et al., 2021). Research shows that employees may perceive intrinsic motivation to be of greater value and subsequently may believe that intrinsic factors significantly influence employee engagement (Menges et al., 2017). Leaders hold the responsibility for understanding the most impactful motivators for members of their team (Newman & Ford, 2021). Engaging in this effort creates an environment maximizing employee engagement, resulting in desirable organizational outcomes (Riyanto et al., 2021).

Job Engagement

Saks (2006) conducted a first-of-its-kind investigation to make a clear delineation between job and organizational engagement (Saks et al., 2021; also see Vinarski-Peretz & Kidron, 2023). At the time, Saks's study was also the first to measure an array of antecedents and consequences of job and organization engagement. Saks accomplished this task by identifying 102 employees working in a wide array of fields in various organizations to complete a survey. The purpose of Saks's investigation was to test a

model of antecedents and outcomes of work and organization engagements based on social exchange theory. About 60% of the respondents were female with an average age of 34. The participants had been with their respective organizations for an average of 5 years while possessing an average of 12 years of work experience. The participants had been working in their current role for an average of 4 years.

Saks's (2006) findings indicate that a significant difference exists between job and organizational engagements. Job engagement and organizational engagement reflect two distinct and popular constructs for employee engagement (Saks, 2019). Findings also revealed that perceived organizational support predicts both job and organizational engagement (Saks, 2019). Each predictor also has distinct subcomponents resulting in the separate constructs being able to coexist without competing (Suhartanto & Brien, 2018). Job characteristics and procedural justice are the additional predictors of job engagement (Saks, 2019). Mediators for job and organizational engagement include relationships between job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intentions to remain within the organization, and behavioral aspects of employee engagement (Saks, 2019).

Researchers influenced by Kahn's (1990) original assertions regarding employee engagement evolved the concept further by developing a multidimensional model of literature on employee engagement (Fletcher & Robinson, 2013). In his later study, Saks (2006) incorporated a multidimensional approach consisting of three primary constructs to explain employee engagement. The three constructs include the needs–satisfying approach, the burnout–antithesis approach, and the satisfaction–engagement approach (Harter et al., 2002; Kahn, 1990; Maslach et al., 2001).

Many organizations seek to monitor and improve customer service outcomes that promote positive consumer experiences and customer loyalty (Siddiqi, 2015). Siddiqi (2015) sought to understand the attitude of service employees regarding work engagement and job crafting. For the purposes of Siddiqi's research, employee work engagement refers to a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterized by three key dimensions. The key dimensions include vigor, dedication, and engrossment in one's work (Siddiqi, 2015). Vigor refers to high levels of energy, mental resilience, and willingness to invest effort in one's work (Edmondson & Matthews, 2022). The concept of dedication as it relates to employee engagement refers to the sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge that employees experience in their work (Harter et al., 2002). Absorption refers to employees being fully engrossed in their work to the extent that they perceive time passing quickly during their workday, and employees reports finding it difficult to disengage from their work (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014). Employees with high levels of work engagement have better physical and mental health outcomes and a lower likelihood of burnout (Poulsen et al., 2014).

Employers can foster work engagement by creating a supportive work environment that values employee well-being, recognizes and rewards good work, and provides opportunities for growth and development (Siddiqi, 2015). One approach to achieve this goal is job crafting (Bakker et al., 2012). Job crafting is a process in which employees proactively modify their job tasks, relationships, and/or perceptions of their jobs to create a better fit between their job demands and personal preferences, strengths, and values (Dubbelt et al., 2019). Job crafting is a bottom-up approach in the sense that

the employee initiates the process, rather than the employer imposing the approach

(Harju et al., 2021).

Numerous factors contribute to the success of for-profit and not-for-profit

organizations. Research shows that engaged employees consistently display behavior that

is more productive, profitable, safer, and healthier, and they are less probable to leave

their employer (Fleming & Asplund, 2007; Wagner & Harter, 2006). The leader's ability

to build an environment that fosters work engagement among employees directly affects

the success of an organization (Kahn, 1990). Taking a proactive approach to building a

work environment that inspires and motivates employees to give their best can help

create a thriving and successful organization (Ahuja & Modi, 2015). As many factors

affect employee engagement, leaders are encouraged to identify the best combination of

factors to bring about effective employee engagement (Scott et al., 2021).

Leadership

A review of the available leadership research reflects the significant contribution

of effective leadership that yields positive outcomes within organizations. Leadership has

been valued from biblical times and is critical for organizational success (Irving &

Strauss, 2019). Over time, leadership studies have revealed the ability of effective leaders

to motivate team members, resulting in goal attainment, conveying inspiration, and

facilitating the attainment of organizational goals (Tummers & Bakker, 2021). The

acumen of leaders directly affects employee engagement (Kahn, 1990). Engaged leaders

who exhibit action readiness tend to be more passionate, energetic, and committed to

work, which can inspire their team members to feel the same way (Ahuja & Modi, 2015).

Action readiness refers to a state of preparedness, initiative, and proactive behavior

characterized by a sense of confidence, motivation, and eagerness to act (Metwally et al., 2019). Leaders exhibiting action readiness are more likely to take the lead in problem-solving, decision-making, and innovation, which can have a ripple effect on their team (Metwally et al., 2019). In addition, engaged leaders who exhibit action readiness are more likely to create a positive team climate by fostering open communication, collaboration, and trust (Ahuja & Modi, 2015).

Numerous scholars in the organizational leadership field have defined well-established leadership constructs available for managers (Wilson, 2016). The various constructs differ in their conceptualization of the role of managers as agents, servants, and partners (Vigoda-Gadot et al., 2013). Both psychological and sociological factors affect the viewpoints of the various leadership models (Aycan & Shelia, 2019). The constructs also differ in their understanding of the qualities, characteristics, and sources of motivation for managers (Lovelace et al., 2019). The leadership constructs also provide different perspectives on the relationship between managers and owners (Wilson, 2016).

In the work of Greenleaf (2002), the characteristics of steward leaders include an altruistic calling, emotional healing, wisdom, persuasive mapping, and organizational leadership. Factors affecting the leadership style of a steward leader include individual temperament, individual ability, the setting, organizational culture, unique obstacles, and vision (Gini & Green, 2014). The idea central to the concept of stewardship is service (Wilson, 2016). During biblical times, steward leaders were identified at an early age and groomed to understand steward leadership, to possess the knowledge base and skill set required to fulfill their designated role, and to have the self-management skills needed for

personal life choices that remained morally exemplary (Wilson, 2016). Character traits of

servant leaders can be found in biblical parables (Wilson, 2016). Jesus used the parable of

Zacchaeus to emphasize the importance of honesty (*New International Version Bible*,

2011, Luke 19:1–10). Additional teachings further illustrate the importance of

truthfulness and honesty in speech and the importance of keeping promises (Matt. 5:33–

37), while noting that dishonesty will always be discovered (Luke 12:1–3). The parable

of the talents highlights the importance of accountability (Matt. 25: 14–30; Luke 19: 11–

27). The parables of the two sons (Matt. 21:28–32), the shrewd manager (Luke 16:1–13)

and the wise and foolish builders (Matt. 7:24–27) teach about the importance of

intelligence and about responsibility for oneself and for others. Each attribute is an

essential characteristic for steward leaders today (Wilson, 2016). A prerequisite to

fulfilling the role of steward leader is one's submission to God's will for his or her life

(Rodin, 2013). This prerequisite was emphasized in Rodin's (2013) observation that

"appointment without anointment always led to disaster" in the Bible (p. 14). Knowing

that God's selection criterion is not grounded on the person who is the most suitable for

the appointment but rather the person deemed by God to be suitable for the task is

reassuring for steward leaders (Rodin, 2013). Similarly, Rodin summarized that God's

work is evident in leaders who trust him without question and those leaders who seek him

to guide all aspects of their lives. Biblical leaders must submit themselves to God and

through this submission, and with guidance from God, they are able to develop the heart

of the steward leader (Rodin, 2013).

     Many nonprofit leaders seek to follow a steward leadership model within their

organizations (Brinckerhoff, 2004). Leaders using a steward leadership approach seek to

place the long-term best interests of the members of their organization or their stakeholders ahead of any personal goals that may have served their self-interests (Hernandez, 2008). One key behavior exemplified by a steward leader within a nonprofit organization is maintaining a focus on the best interests of the organization and all stakeholders over the self-interests of the leader (Hernandez, 2008). Steward leaders find value in knowing the significance of their contribution to the overall good of the organization (Wilson, 2016). Steward leadership includes committing to the support of others (Hernandez, 2012). Some view stewardship as primarily a financial attitude (Kamer, 2018). This perspective continues to exist despite biblical Scripture reflecting stewardship in the arena of whole-life leadership (Kamer, 2018). The Christian faith provides a framework for virtues such as stewardship to serve as a central element (Moody & Achenbaum, 2014). Maintaining a focus on the well-being of others above individual needs is expected behavior of steward leaders (Kamer, 2018). The actions of stewards have positive ramifications for other people within the workplace who believe in them (Hernandez, 2012). Steward leaders relate to the individual's attitude toward others under the concept of affective mechanisms, which drive stewardship behaviors (Hernandez, 2012). Hernandez (2008) noted that leaders are obligated to serve not only as caretakers but also to set an example for future generations. Behaving with a high level of responsibility, while being mindful of the impact one's actions will have on those in the future, is another behavior expected of a steward leader (Kamer, 2018). The Apostle Paul reflected the whole-person focus of steward leadership when he taught the disciples the value of being able to give an account of the faithfulness of their actions while serving as good stewards (1 Cor. 12:12–13).

Mission-driven stewards are servants of society, seeking to employ their resources to advance the kingdom of God (Brinckerhoff, 2004). Mission-driven leaders are steadfast in their commitment to lead organizations with the goal of leveraging existing resources with the goal of maximizing the organization's effectiveness (Brinckerhoff, 2004). Steward leaders of not-for-profit organizations lead with humility to align the individuals in need with the services provided by their organization (Brinckerhoff, 2004). Steward leaders are relentless in their pursuit of innovation to seek the best possible long-term value of the organization (Brinckerhoff, 2004). Stewardship characteristics such as humility, integrity, and a desire for innovation enhance the leader's ability to lead the organization (Brinckerhoff, 2004). Steward leaders demonstrate integrity while remaining aligned with the expressed values of the organization (Brinckerhoff, 2004). Steward leaders operate as good financial managers who use basic tools and other measurement systems to make informed decisions (Hernandez, 2012). Steward leaders are mindful of the importance of being accountable and transparent to the organization they serve (Rodin, 2013). Good steward leaders value the importance of accuracy in their decision-making processes (Brinckerhoff, 2004). Additionally, steward leaders understand that gaining the ability to decide, and being committed to their decisions, are essential skills for effective leaders and critically important skills for stewards (Brinckerhoff, 2004).

Servant Leadership

Greenleaf (2002) framed servant leadership as a philosophy of leadership. According to Greenleaf, an innate desire to serve is the starting point for servant leadership. Following this, servant leaders aspire to lead (Heyler & Martin, 2018). According to Greenleaf, leaders will emerge from among the servants who have the

potential to do so. Ten characteristics are central to the development of servant leaders

(Wilson, 2016). Using Greenleaf's perspective, the first principle of servant leadership is

to listen.

One of the core skills of servant leaders is the ability to listen respectfully and

actively, as well as the ability to make wise decisions (Smith et al., 2018). Servant leaders

can focus on the desires of their group and can act on the information that they receive

(Kauppila et al., 2022). Servant leaders use this information to ensure that their decisions

are in alignment with the will of the group (Miao et al., 2021). The second characteristic

is that servant leaders' work to understand and empathize with those under their domain

(Wilson, 2016). The ability to heal others is the third characteristic that servant leaders

possess (Smith et al., 2018). In this regard, servant leaders can use their spiritual

discernment to provide targeted support and feedback to those under their leadership

(Miao et al., 2021). The fourth characteristic is that servant leaders maintain awareness of

themselves and of others (Wilson, 2016). This awareness enables servant leaders to

remain focused on the needs of those they are supporting, instead of focusing on their

own needs (Kauppila et al., 2022). The fifth characteristic is the ability to leverage

relationships and effective communication skills rather than positional authority

throughout the decision-making process (Wilson, 2016). Servant leaders do not use

authority to make decisions for others (Miao et al., 2021). The sixth characteristic is the

ability to see beyond present circumstances when problem-solving to employ a

conceptualizing perspective (Wilson, 2016). Servant leaders strive to maintain a broad

perspective (Wilson, 2016). The seventh characteristic refers to the capability to envision

viable solutions for any situation (Wilson, 2016). This capability reflects the presence of

spiritual discernment (Kok & Van Den Heuvel, 2019). The eighth characteristic is the ability to maintain trust and be a model steward (Wilson, 2016). Servant leaders seek to accomplish this goal as it is in the best interest of those who they are serving (Miao et al., 2021). The ninth characteristic is maintaining a vow to support the development of others (Wilson, 2016). Servants and leaders stand together as a model for people called to influence others to work toward the mission of God (Wilson, 2016).

Throughout Jesus's life, he led by providing service to others (Rodin, 2013) and by modeling and teaching discipleship to his followers (Dixon, 2021). Jesus's service to others included healing the sick, feeding the hungry, and teaching the gospel (Matt. 25:35–36, 40; Luke 22:27). This is evident in the 10th characteristic of servant leaders, which is working to create connections among people employed within the same institution (Wilson, 2016). Specific values are reflective of servant leadership. The first is to possess a level of selflessness that drives one to put the needs of others over his or her personal needs (Wilson, 2016). The second value held by servant leaders is to possess the level of humility needed to listen to and support others in need of spiritual restoration (Wilson, 2016). A third value for servant leaders is to possess insight and understanding of the influence of the external environment and the subsequent impact of the environment on a variety of factors (Wilson, 2016). Servant leaders also have charisma and dedication that draws others closer to them along their spiritual journey (Wilson, 2016). Finally, servant leaders have a relentless commitment to the care and keeping of the organization on behalf of the greater good (Wilson, 2016).

McGregor's Theory X & Theory Y

Previous research has indicated that in many circumstances, a shift to the virtual work setting necessitates a change in the leadership style through which managers increase their comfort level with managing employees who are out of sight (Greer & Payne, 2014). Researchers have found that some managers demonstrate resistance to approving telehealth arrangements because of the inability to observe their employees (Greer & Payne, 2014). This resistance to virtual work arrangements may negatively affect the ability of managers to be supportive of teleworking arrangements (Greer & Payne, 2014). McGregor's (1968) theory X and theory Y provide insight into managers' attitudes and assumptions of subordinates that contribute to the managers' ways of thinking (Eliyana et al., 2019). These two theories support two varying assumptions that influence decision-making in the workplace (Greer & Payne, 2014).

Theory X takes a pessimistic view of employee behavior in the workplace, whereas theory Y takes an optimistic view (Eliyana et al., 2019). Theory X assumes that employees are lazy, seek ways to avoid work, lack ambition, and avoid responsibility; the theory also suggests that employees find money and rewards as motivating factors for hard work (Güntner et al., 2021). Leaders aligned with theory X believe that employees need to be closely monitored and supervised to maintain productivity (Güntner et al., 2021). Theory Y is in stark contrast to theory X and assumes that employees want to work, strive to do a good job, and find that doing well at work serves as a strong motivator for them (Güntner et al., 2021). In addition, employees could be self-directed, responsible, creative, and resourceful (McGregor, 1968).

McGregor (1968) posited that traditional organizations have centralized decision-making, supervisor–subordinate hierarchies, and assumptions about human nature and motivation that shape managers' views of external controls of work. Kopelman et al. (2010) asserted that that evidence suggests that a great number of managers relate more to theory Y than to theory X. However, many managers have underlying concepts of theory X embedded in the managerial mindset that guides decisions, which is one of the reasons why change to a virtual work environment has faced such resistance (Kopelman et al., 2010). Kopelman et al.'s study participants relied on theory X assumptions and perceived close supervision and control of subordinates as a necessary means to achieve organizational goals.

Virtual work arrangements endorse autonomy and empowerment (Babapour Chafi et al., 2021). Supervisors may believe that a specific level of oversight is warranted for teleworking employees, but the employees themselves may feel that they are capable of successfully working independently and do not feel that close supervision is needed (D. E. Bailey & Kurland, 2002). This perspective is in alignment with McGregor's (1968) theory Y, which challenges the standpoint that employees cannot be self-directed and self-motivating.

The level of trust managers' have in employees may influence the managers' perception of the level of supervision needed (Pyöriä, 2011). Leaders also must have confidence that while they may be unable to observe their remote employees throughout the day, their employees are still fulfilling their work responsibilities (Garro-Abarca et al., 2021). The trust in the manager–employee relationship must be bidirectional (Alfehaid & Mohamed, 2019). In other words, as managers trust that remote employees

are fulfilling their job responsibilities, employees also trust that managers and their

colleagues are also completing their job responsibilities (Koehler et al., 2013). Working

remotely has created an opportunity for employees to gain improved problem-solving

skills (Wojcak et al., 2016). Research implies that while managers may engage in less

task-specific oversight, managers need to shift their focus to the outcomes of tasks related

to their employees' responsibilities (Wojcak et al., 2016).

Charismatic Leadership

Leaders who leverage their communication skills, persuasiveness, and charm to

influence others reflect a charismatic leadership style (Boerner et al., 2008). Earlier

models of charismatic leadership, such as Conger and Kanungo's (1987) model,

conceptualize charisma as an attribute based on followers' perceptions of their leader's

behavior. Stated differently, according to these models, charisma only exists in the eye of

the beholder (Conger & Kanungo, 1987).

Under the leadership of charismatic leaders, followers can anticipate their leader

emphasizing change during their communication with them (Waldman et al., 2004).

Additionally, charismatic leaders communicate both a vision and high-level expectations

to their followers (Waldman et al., 2004). Unlike other leadership theories, charismatic

leadership is notably useful in times of crisis and change (Waldman et al., 2004).

Charismatic leadership theory positively affects various aspects of employee behavior.

For example, the influence of charismatic leaders drives employees to become

intrinsically motivated to increase their performance, resulting in improved

organizational outcomes. Lovelace et al. (2019) have produced emerging literature that

has begun to explore the charismatic, ideological, and pragmatic (CIP) model of

leadership. The CIP model of governance possesses the eclectic approach to leadership, the underlying theoretical framework, and the established body of research needed to address the areas of difficulty while also making a meaningful contribution to perspectives on effective leadership (Lovelace et al., 2019). The key strengths of the CIP model were outlined by Lovelace et al. Disadvantages of charismatic leadership include an overreliance on the leader, a lack of clarity in the vision, and successors (Wegge et al., 2022).

Frontline Leaders

Organizational success is highly aligned with many factors including productivity, morale, and employee engagement (De-la-Calle-Durán & Rodríguez-Sánchez, 2021). As many as half of all Americans in the workforce are estimated to be partially or minimally engaged in the workplace (Saks, 2019). In 2022, the cost of disengaged employees in the United States cost around $350 billion (Kendall, 2023). Factors affecting organization productivity include low rates of employee retention, employee absenteeism, and low levels of employee engagement (De-la-Calle-Durán & Rodríguez-Sánchez, 2021). Frontline managers directly influence employee engagement (De-la-Calle-Durán & Rodríguez-Sánchez, 2021). Positively affecting employee engagement necessitates managers also be engaged in their work (Saks, 2019).

Various types and levels of leadership exist within organizations. Schwatka et al. (2019) affirmed that frontline leaders have direct contact with employees and are able to lead by example and motivate employees. Frontline leaders, also referred to as managers, are leaders who have direct involvement in the creation of a product or service, and perhaps most significantly, have the most direct involvement with the employees

(Schwatka et al., 2019). Frontline leaders have the most robust level of familiarity with frontline team members (Shum et al., 2018). Frontline leaders are responsible for assessing the performance of employees based on direct observation of their subordinates (Gorder, 2015). Frontline managers are ideally poised to influence the performance and well-being of their employees (Kujala et al., 2019). The relationship between frontline leaders and their subordinates facilitates a positive effect on an organization's ability to achieve desired outcomes (Kujala et al., 2019). Achieving desired organizational outcomes includes meeting established financial goals (De-la-Calle-Durán & Rodríguez-Sánchez, 2021). The U.S. economy loses $500 billion every year due to a lack of employee engagement (Kumar, 2022). Customer experience, organizational quality, and service quality directly correlate with employee engagement (Siddiqi, 2015).

In many organizations, the primary goal of the board of directors includes recruiting and retaining well-experienced leaders to achieve organizational goals (Stephens, 2013). Board members understand the significance of this responsibility as well as that effective leadership is essential for the sustained success of the organization (Landis et al., 2014). Recruitment and retention efforts are a continuous area of need, as are anticipated staffing transitions such as retirement and unanticipated staffing transitions due to staff turnover (Schmidt et al., 2013). Leaders need to develop a culture of workplace flexibility when they desire to attract and retain managers and leaders (Peltokorpi et al., 2015). Conceptually, the culture of workplace flexibility includes opportunities to engage in teleworking, flexible schedules, and many opportunities for employees' discretion in using their personal time (Kujala et al., 2019). Researchers have noted the significant role that motivation plays in engagement (Baltezarevic &

Baltezarevic, 2016; Bhuvanaiah & Raya, 2015). Furthermore, due to their relationship

with staff, frontline leaders create meaningful and lasting changes in the performance of

their team members (Cavazotte et al., 2021).

The focus of the work of Bhuvanaiah and Raya (2015) was to provide insight into

the critical process through which employees achieve engagement in the workplace. The

goal of the authors' inquiry was to learn more about the psychological process that

transpires as employees become engaged in the workplace (Bhuvanaiah & Raya, 2015).

Bhuvanaiah and Raya noted that in efforts to engage employees with the goal of

increasing employee performance output, employers should shift their emphasis from

monetary enhancements to psychological fulfillment (also see Kahn, 1990; Mone &

London, 2018). The study's outcomes revealed the significance of four essential

engagement initiatives including decision-making authority, leadership in driving

engagement through a process of motivation, empowerment to share ideas, and

opportunities to develop and use employee talent (Bhuvanaiah & Raya, 2015). The

outcomes also revealed the positive influence of work engagement and the presence of

job-crafting opportunities on customer satisfaction and loyalty among employees in the

retail banking setting (Bhuvanaiah & Raya, 2015). The literature endorses the notion that

how employees outline their roles or make changes to currently assigned job

expectations, which is the act of job crafting, has an undeviating effect on how employees

carry out their responsibilities within the workplace and their subsequent work

performance (Tims et al., 2015).

Origins of Virtual Work

Opportunities to engage in work away from a traditional work setting first became available in Germany in the 1960s and in the United States in the 1970s (Shipman et al., 2023). The availability of personal computing devices in the 1990s created an opportunity for teleworking to become scalable (Shipman et al., 2023). The terminology used to describe telecommuting includes telework, remote work, and distance work, as well as others (Allen et al., 2015). The wide variety of labels, definitions, and contexts within which teleworking occurs creates some difficulty for those seeking to thoroughly explore its origins (Shipman et al., 2023). Teleworking has created an opportunity for employees to work while being physically away from the brick-and-mortar office by using technology to access their work from disparate and remote locations (Cooke et al., 2014).

The tragic events of September 11, 2001, prompted Congressman Tom Davis to advocate for the importance of increasing opportunities for teleworking to be available due to the need for the nation to have the capacity to continue operating after a crisis has occurred (Shipman et al., 2023). The signing of the Telework Enhancement Act in December 2010 required state and federal agencies to develop a telework plan and the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (2016) to enhance agency efforts by developing guidance and consultation in the creation of teleworking plans. With the availability of federal guidance and the vast technological advances, the number of employees who are now able to work remotely has increased since 2021 (Galanti et al., 2021).

Researchers most commonly present their telework study outcomes in a format that focuses on the teleworkers themselves or that compares the experiences of

teleworkers with those who are not teleworking (Park & Cho, 2022). Given this, few

leadership models specifically provide the information needed to expand the knowledge

base of skills needed to be an effective teleworking leader (Park & Cho, 2022). Park and

Cho (2022) found an absence of research-based leadership guidance for teleworking

managers who supervise teleworking team members (Park & Cho, 2022). This absence is

unfortunate given the findings that experiences are slightly less positive for subordinates

of teleworking managers but not to such a substantive degree that adverse effects could

not be mitigated with training and awareness (Golden & Fromen, 2011).

        Many organizations can operate in a virtual context and implement virtual work

policies because of advancements that have occurred in technology (Shipman et al.,

2023). Many businesses have adopted concepts for telework, telecommuting, remote

work, and virtual work (Burrell, 2020). Dahlstrom (2013) argued that advancements from

early forms of information computer technology, such as telegraphs, telephones, and the

Internet, have enabled remote work arrangements to become more commonplace. Interest

in off-site work arrangements emerged in the United States during the 1970s (Leonardi et

al., 2010). Knowledge-intensive workers who are well-positioned to complete their

responsibilities while working remotely are interested in off-site work (Leonardi et al.,

2010).

        The movement of U.S. workers to more suburban areas in the 1970s resulted in

employees being more interested in opportunities to work away from the traditional

brick-and-mortar office setting (Garro-Abarca et al., 2021). Nilles et al. (1976) referred to

the concept of flexible work arrangements as telecommuting in the 1970s. Nilles et al.

conducted early research on telecommuting and the cost savings to the U.S. economy

resulting from reduced commuting. An additional outcome of teleworking was the

lessening of highway congestion (Pyöriä, 2011).

Although early research on telecommuting explored the potential economic

advantages provided to individuals, organizations, and society, the telework model

presents a means to increase employee productivity by minimizing workplace distractions

(Bourne & Forman, 2014). In the private sector, telework began to evolve and become a

viable solution for large numbers of individuals and organizations during the 1970s

(Gálvez et al., 2012). Previously, telework was considered a means to reduce city road

congestion, create new employment prospects for the disabled and other disadvantaged

members of society, increase employee productivity, reduce personnel-related costs, and

improve the quality of work–life balance for employees by increasing job satisfaction and

reducing stress (Gálvez et al., 2012).

Telework became a more commonplace employment option for U.S. federal

government workers in the 1990s (Joice, 2000). Congress passed legislation during this

period that mandated the use of telework practices in federal agencies (Caillier, 2013).

However, despite the perceived economic and environmental benefits, the use of the

telework model within the federal government failed to evolve as business scholars had

anticipated (Messenger, 2019). The growth in telework facilitates improvements in

information and communication technologies (Bentley et al., 2016). These advances have

enabled employees to access the office and their colleagues with the use of software and

technology platforms (Stiles & Smart, 2021). According to Harker Martin and

MacDonnell (2012), the outcomes of telework often focus on the employees' benefits,

including increased staff availability during peak hours of need, a reduction in workplace

distractions, improved levels of concentration, improved attendance, improved staff retention, and improved workplace.

Descriptions of Virtual Work Arrangements

Telework and telecommuting describe virtual work arrangements in early research and practice. Many organizations and researchers continue to use both terms today (Beckel & Fisher, 2022). Nilles et al. (1976) defined telecommuting as industry workers completing their work-related responsibilities by using electronic systems such as communications and computer technologies nearer their homes. Since Nilles et al. first defined telecommuting, many authors and scholars have defined and described the term in a multitude of ways. Contreras et al. (2020) presented a broader definition of teleworkers, described as employees who complete their work from home or another remote location by using technology that enables them to share completed work with the employer.

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Remote Workers

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Organizations seeking to recruit and retain leaders accomplish this goal in a cost-effective manner by offering comprehensive compensation packages with salary, benefits, and flexibility in the workplace (Kossek & Kelliher, 2023). Experienced job seekers desire a workplace that offers work–life balance (Greer & Payne, 2014). Remote working opportunities are most suitable for employees who are at the managerial and professional levels (Allen et al., 2015).

According to Greer and Payne (2014), 23% of the U.S. workforce performed some or all of their assigned work duties virtually in 2012. At that time in 2012, 38% of all telecommuting employees had a bachelor's degree or higher (Greer & Payne, 2014).

Lister and Harnish (2019) contended that at the time, the typical U.S. telecommuter was

49 years-old, college educated, and worked in a salaried, nonunion position. Lister and

Harnish found that from 2005 to 2009 telecommuters were primarily knowledge workers,

employed by companies with at least 100 employees. Lister and Harnish also found that

the majority of those teleworkers held management, professional sales, or office

positions. Lister and Harnish stated that approximately 316,000 disabled employees used

telework as an accommodation afforded by the Americans with Disabilities Act (2012)

each year from 2005 to 2009.

Benefits of Virtual Work

The availability of virtual work arrangements has increased in recent years. This

expansion has occurred as many organizations and individuals have recognized the

benefits for individuals, organizations, and society (Babapour Chafi et al., 2021). This

section further explores the benefits associated with each group.

Benefits of Virtual Work for the Organization

Improved productivity is a significant benefit for organizations that have

implemented the virtual work model (Smith et al., 2018). Bloom et al. (2015) conducted a

study in which researchers involved teleworkers in the call center of a Chinese travel

firm. Prior to the Bloom et al. study, supervisors acknowledged concerns regarding the

possibility that employees would have the opportunity to neglect their responsibilities

from home instead of truly working. The experiment provided the opportunity for

employees in a 16,000-person organization to volunteer in a randomized group to work

from the office or to work from home for 9 months (Bloom et al., 2015). Bloom et al.

found a 13% increase in the performance of the staff working from home. Furthermore,

9% of the performance increase related to a reduction in work breaks and a reduction in

sick days as both factors resulted in the employees working more hours per shift (Bloom

et al., 2015). Employees found that working from home enabled them to be in a quieter

work environment, resulting in their ability to complete 4% more calls per minute

(Bloom et al., 2015). In addition to improved work satisfaction, attrition rates among

home workers halved (Bloom et al., 2015). Despite this strong performance, home

workers' promotion rate based on performance declined (Bloom et al., 2015). Due to the

findings of the study, the organization permitted more employees to work from home

(Bloom et al., 2015). This change resulted in the work-from-home employees to nearly

double their performance (Bloom et al., 2015). The results confirmed greater productivity

for virtual workers because of their ability to engage in teleworking (Bloom et al., 2015).

Another study by Overmyer (2011) touted that telework has the potential to save the

federal government as much as $3.8 billion due to lower real estate costs, improved

employee attendance, increased employee retention, and lower electricity costs.

Many additional benefits are created for organizations when employees can

telecommute. For example, when unanticipated circumstances occur, such as the social

distancing requirements of the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations can maintain a high

level of functionality and significant operations (Greer & Payne, 2014). One additional

organizational benefit includes increased opportunities for organizations to compete in

global markets (Mukherjee & Narang, 2022). Organizations also benefit from needing

less office space as well as the costs associated with it (Greer & Payne, 2014). Retention

and turnover rates are also benefits for organizations with teleworking employees

(Jaakson & Kallaste, 2010; Stavrou & Kilaniotis, 2010). Organizations that can offer

teleworking options are also able to expand their recruitment pool exponentially (Jaakson & Kallaste, 2010). Finally, organizations have been able to create expanded employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities because of the availability of virtual employment options (Day & Burbach, 2011).

Benefits of Virtual Work for Individuals

Numerous researchers have determined that many employee-related benefits are associated with virtual work arrangements. Hilbrecht et al. (2013) explored whether and in what ways telework is associated with a reconfiguration or remixing of daily work, leisure activities, and family. Hilbrecht et al. interviewed 51 teleworkers employed within the same financial organization in Canada. The interviewees included a combination of employees who requested and received the opportunity to telework on a part-time basis as well as employees for whom teleworking was a condition of their employment (Hilbrecht et al., 2013). The employee-related benefits included improved work–life balance (Hilbrecht et al., 2013). Hilbrecht et al. identified three key themes relating to the intersections and interrelationships between work, family, and leisure. The themes include the relative devaluation of leisure, the significance of family, and being available for children all occurring in the context of the need to not only protect but also contain work time and space (Hilbrecht et al., 2013). The research revealed that gender and family stages are more influential in organizing daily life (Hilbrecht et al., 2013). Furthermore, the findings revealed that employees value the flexibility of telework (Hilbrecht et al., 2013). Additional benefits of telework for employees includes improved work–life balance (Hilbrecht et al., 2013), increased autonomy (Robertson & Vink, 2012), reduced absenteeism (Overmyer, 2011), a reduction in distractions (Baard &

Thomas, 2010), increased employee job satisfaction levels (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010),

increased employee morale (Caillier, 2013), and reduced employee work commute

(Flores, 2019).

Teleworking provides benefits for society as well (Atkinson, 2022). When

employees have the option to telecommute, they can reduce their carbon footprint, which

has significant positive effects on the environment (Moos et al., 2006). The COVID-19

pandemic compelled large segments of the workforce out of their workplaces and into

their homes to work (Williamson et al., 2020). Teleworking has presented positive

societal implications in the field of information technology, especially in businesses, to

create a viable work area from home (Williamson et al., 2020). The availability of

teleworking positions has created meaningful employment opportunities for workers who

live in rural areas (Overmyer, 2011). Teleworking has the potential to facilitate social

changes as well (Atkinson, 2022). The availability of teleworking has increased

employee morale and employee perceptions of leader credibility in organizations, which

may result in improved personal well-being for individuals, families, and healthier

communities (Breevaart & Bakker, 2018). Creating an environment where employees can

establish and maintain a healthy work–life balance tends to produce team members who

will be loyal, productive, and dedicated to fulfilling the organization's mission and vision

(Latham, 2014). Given the existing and anticipated staffing shortages among highly

qualified health-care professionals, supporting a healthy work–life balance may help

leaders overcome challenges associated with existing retention and recruitment efforts

(Xu et al., 2022). Tertiary-level health-care facilities seeking to maintain their ability to

make a meaningful contribution and provide high-quality patient care may consider

supporting work–life balance for their team members (Kowitlawkul et al., 2019).

Greer and Payne (2014) completed quantitative and qualitative survey data with

86 highly effective teleworkers and their respective supervisors to gain information

regarding challenges that may hinder effective teleworking and potential strategies for

overcoming those strategies. Greer and Payne's 2014 study identified semantic themes

representing categories of challenges and strategies that emerged from the qualitative

data. The study revealed strategies such as the use of advanced technology, striving for

extra productivity, task planning, and communicating with family (Greer & Payne, 2014).

Additional recommendations to managers of teleworking employees included the value

of becoming strategic leaders and the recommendation to achieve key performance

objectives through the implementation of flexible work arrangements to position

themselves to optimize their performance abilities (Greer & Payne, 2014).

Telework Strategies to Support Supervisors' Concerns

Directors, managers, and leaders in the clinical setting are seeking to influence the

effort exerted by clinicians and administrative personnel within a specific program or

department of an organization (Żołnierczyk-Zreda, 2020). Leaders have the authority to

change policies, systems, and procedures to affect the ability of other team members to

complete their work more efficiently (Żołnierczyk-Zreda, 2020). One area of exploration

for leaders seeking to positively impact supervisees includes exploring options for

implementing remote working arrangements in the workplace (Mello, 2007).

D. E. Bailey and Kurland (2002) completed an evaluation of telework research.

The goal of the inquiry was to answer three key questions: The first question was "Who

participates in telework?" (D. E. Bailey & Kurland, 2002). The second question was

"Why do they?" and the third question was "What happens when they do it?" (D. E.

Bailey & Kurland, 2002). The articles reviewed by D. E. Bailey and Kurland were

published prior to 2002. The findings indicated that the pool of teleworkers consisted

predominantly of male professionals and female clerical workers (D. E. Bailey &

Kurland, 2002). One notable finding was the managers' willingness to predict the factor

in determining which employees would telework (D. E. Bailey & Kurland, 2002). The

research also sought to gain a better understanding of employees' motivations for

teleworking (D. E. Bailey & Kurland, 2002). Considerations such as commute reduction

and family obligations were anticipated factors; however, neither was a factor (D. E.

Bailey & Kurland, 2002). Additionally, the study identified an association between the

reluctance of managers related to concerns about cost, control, a lack of perceived need,

and the failing of telework programs (D. E. Bailey & Kurland, 2002).

Following the implementation of work-from-home arrangements, managers were

able to support the success of employees (Mello, 2007). The findings of Koch and

Binnewies (2015) reflected the importance of supervisors understanding the significance

of demonstrating a good example of work–life friendly roles within the context of

boundary management. In an analysis of an important work–home segmentation behavior

that supervisors exemplify for their employees, the research used a multisource and

multilevel study to examine the importance of supervisors demonstrating a work–life

friendly role model (Koch & Binnewies, 2015). The research used a hierarchical linear

model, which found supervisors who engage in more visible separation of their work and

home lives are viewed by staff as being positive examples of work–life-friendly decision-

making (Koch & Binnewies, 2015). Additionally, supervisees of positive role models are more successful in their efforts to maintain work–life balance and report feeling less fatigue and lower levels of disengagement (Koch & Binnewies, 2015).

Predictors of Employee Engagement

Research completed by Tate et al. (2019) sought to align the construction of employee engagement and computer-mediated communication to explore their significance and applicability in the effectiveness and subsequent success of virtual teams. The study used the social exchange theory's theoretical foundation to describe employee motivation and employee satisfaction behaviors (Tate et al., 2019). Tate et al used a quantitative, nonexperimental explanatory design and two instruments to examine the relationship between computer-mediated communication competence and employee participation in telecommuting knowledge in the United States. The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale measured the dimensions of employee engagement (Tate et al., 2019). The computer-mediated communication computer model assessed the five aspects of computer-mediated communication, "namely expressiveness, attentiveness, efficacy, knowledge, and motivation" (Tate et al., 2019, p. 343). The study participants included a random sample of 134 teleworkers (Tate et al., 2019). Researchers gathered demographic information from the participants including years of service, education level, gender, and age (Tate et al., 2019). The findings of this study indicated that the most significant predictor of employee engagement is attentiveness (Tate et al., 2019). Additional predictors of employee engagement are expressiveness and motivation (Tate et al., 2019).

Leadership

Literature has shown leadership as valuable for centuries because of the understanding that leadership is a critical component of organizational success (Irving & Strauss, 2019). Countless studies over the years have demonstrated the role of leaders to inspire and motivate others to align with organizational goals (Tummers & Bakker, 2021). In the past, studies of the great man theory in the 1800s asserted that men who are born for greatness can accomplish organizational goals (Z. A. Khan et al., 2016). Carlyle (2019) asserted that great leaders are born rather than created, reflecting his belief that leadership traits are not learned, but are inherent. American philosopher Sidney Hook (1991) extended the work of Carlyle (2019), emphasizing the effect of the eventful man as compared to the event-making man. Later scholars reframed the work of Carlyle and Hook to embrace the broader notion that specific individual traits give life to an individual's leadership capabilities (Z. A. Khan et al., 2016).

Multiple theorists have embraced trait theory (Carleton et al., 2018). Trait theory asserts that emergent traits and effectiveness traits are fundamental components of leadership (Carleton et al., 2018). Heredity largely drives emergent traits such as attractiveness, intellectual capability, height, and level of self-confidence (Z. A. Khan et al., 2016). Effectiveness traits relate more closely to an individual's knowledge base and professional experience and personality traits leveraged to influence followers, including the leader's charisma (Z. A. Khan et al., 2016). Trait theory ultimately fails to explain the significance of specific traits emerging over time (Z. A. Khan et al., 2016).

Contingency theory reflects the value of leaders using an eclectic approach to managing remote staff as they seek to address presenting concerns through understanding

context and additional variables of the problem to develop a response for addressing the specific areas of need (Madlock, 2018). Leaders anchored in contingency theory have understood that no best or unique style of leadership can transcend all situations (Thompson & Glasø, 2015). Given this, the leader understands that what is effective in some situations could have no effects or even dysfunctional effects in others (Hossain & Saleh, 2016). Successful leaders are able to adjust their leadership approach to align with the needs of the group and any emerging circumstances and identify organizational goals (Vroom & Jago, 2007).

The transition that many organizations have made to shift from a product-based to a knowledge-based economy creates an opportunity for employees to be able to work while physically away from the office (Baltezarevic & Baltezarevic, 2016). Diverse and effective leadership strategies may help leaders influence followers to achieve predetermined goals and may assist in employee work–life balance (Koch & Binnewies, 2015). Some aspects of transformational leadership may support leaders who are seeking to establish and maintain high levels of employee engagement. Burns (1978) theorized that leadership behaviors can be transformational and focus on the needs of the followers. Burns believed that an array of qualities exist within a leader that influence followers and create trust in the relationship. Bass and Bass (2009) expanded on Burns's theory, suggesting that leadership behaviors can transform to fit a variety of situations. Benefits of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire introduced by Bass and Bass include an improved explanation of leadership behaviors (B. M. Bass & Avolio, 1995).

Transformational Leadership & Employee Engagement

Transformational leadership incorporates a multifaceted approach to an organization's culture and promotes innovation with employees to achieve identified goals (Çekmecelioğlu & Özbağ, 2019). Burns (1978) introduced transformational leadership as an approach capable of facilitating long-term change. Transformational leadership is an approach that causes change, positive or negative, within individuals and social systems (Milhem et al., 2019). A core component of transformational leadership as outlined by Burns is that transformational leaders encourage motivation, morale, and performance in a leader–subordinate relationship. Two dynamic forms of leadership established by Burns include transformational leadership and transactional leadership. Recently, researchers have defined transformational leadership as an approach that seeks to get followers to rise above their interests by altering their morale, ideals, interests, and values, motivating them to exceed expectations (Pieterse et al., 2009).

Transformational leadership creates a change in organizations and people to achieve a goal (Caillier, 2013). In contrast to the give-and-take relationship approach of transactional leadership, transformational leaders use a moral compass to enact cultural change within an organization, to inspire followers by connecting with their identity, and to strive toward a unified mission (Çekmecelioğlu & Özbağ, 2019). A fundamental function of transformational leadership is to stimulate innovation (Pieterse et al., 2009). Transformational leaders are able to leverage their charisma and influence to motivate followers to achieve established goals in the workplace (Nhat Vuong et al., 2023). Transformational leadership inspires the follower and aligns the goals of the employer and follower to achieve a common organizational objective (Nhat Vuong et al., 2023).

Organizations with transformational leaders embrace employee differences in a manner that is affirming and supportive (Milhem et al., 2019). Researchers have used the transformational leadership theory to develop and understand relationships between leaders and employees (Alwali & Alwali, 2022). This relationship has also affected employee engagement (Alwali & Alwali, 2022). Researchers have concluded that transformational leadership theory has been beneficial in efforts to explore the leadership strategies employed in the workplace that facilitate the emergence of productive employees (Milhem et al., 2019). Strong relationships with supervisees allow transformational leaders to achieve significant outcomes (Bakker et al., 2022).

Concept of Leadership as Relational

Transformational leadership theory has positively contributed to the emphasis on relationships in leadership (Bakker et al., 2022). Over the last century, a recurring aspect of leadership theories has been the importance of the relational aspect of leadership. After reviewing 20 studies published between 1925 to the present, Carter et al. (2015) concluded that leadership has always been relational. The research revealed definitions of leadership as a social process of mutual stimulation and influence (Carter et al., 2015).

Leading Virtual Teams

Increasingly, decentralized and globalized working practices in the public sector lead to the creation of virtual workspaces for employees, and virtual teams form in order to facilitate cross-cultural, organizational, and geographical collaboration to achieve common goals (Elyousfi et al., 202). Madlock (2018) determined that most of the previous research on leadership occurred in the context of a face-to-face environment. Some investigators have sought to apply existing leadership theories of leadership to

telework settings (M. R. Lee, 2021). Notably, the perspectives of organizations have been

an area of inquiry as well. Multiple researchers have sought to explore the benefits and

challenges of telework from the organization's perspective, including assessing

organizational outcomes and the challenges associated with managing teleworking

employees (Cooke et al., 2014).

Teleworking Employees

Previous researchers have sought to understand more about the perspectives of

employees who are teleworking (Kuruzovich et al., 2021; Madlock, 2018). The previous

explorations have resulted in a better understanding of the benefits and challenges that

are outcomes of the telework arrangement (Cooke et al., 2014). Three themes emerged

from Cooke et al.'s (2014) employee-focused telework research: the commonness of

telework, the commonalities of teleworkers, and the impact of teleworking on the work–

life balance of managers working from home. Of note, researchers have also explored the

concerns expressed by teleworkers because of their remote work arrangement

(Kuruzovich et al., 2021).

Many types of employment are suitable for telework. Research reflects a common

characteristic that employees who are allowed to telework are knowledge workers

(Bentley et al., 2016). Knowledge workers possess specialized knowledge to do their

work (Bentley et al., 2016). Bentley et al. (2016) sought to explore the experiences of 804

knowledge workers in the context of teleworker well-being. Using a sociotechnical

system approach, Bentley et al. sought to understand the impact of company support on

the well-being of teleworkers with an emphasis on teleworker support. Social isolation

mediates teleworker well-being, possibly due to a mismatch between individuals and

their environments, as well as differences between low-intensity teleworkers and hybrid teleworkers (Bentley et al., 2016). The study employed an online survey disseminated to teleworking employees among 28 organizations in New Zealand known to employ knowledge workers (Bentley et al., 2016). Findings revealed that increased job satisfaction and reduced psychological strain are associated with organizational social support and teleworker support (Bentley et al., 2016). A mediator between organizational support and the two outcome variables are social isolation and certain differences between hybrid and low-intensity workers (Bentley et al., 2016). This research has contributed to the field as it noted the importance of ensuring organizational and teleworker support is in place while also seeking to improve the attunement of the teleworking environment (Bentley et al., 2016). Researchers anticipate that this alignment will improve ideal telework outcomes (Bentley et al., 2016).

Gap in Literature

Despite the volume of articles reflected in this literature review, few researchers have explored the relationship between leadership style and employee engagement among teleworkers in a tertiary-level health-care facility. The existing literature is primarily focused on strategies for enhancing organizational outcomes and the disproportionate availability of teleworking for knowledge workers in contrast to those in entry-level positions. The existing literature also does not address the impact of an abrupt shift from in-office to telework on leadership styles, management approaches, and employee engagement. Another obvious gap in the literature to date that the current study sought to fill is the lack of research on modifications to leadership style among leaders whose employees are newly teleworking.

Chapter Summary

The personal engagement and disengagement theory developed by Kahn (1990) serves as a resource for leaders seeking to understand how employees' psychological and behavioral involvement in their work responsibilities may vary over time. Kahn outlined the states of employee engagement that consist of engagement, burnout, and disengagement. Employee engagement positively affects personal outcomes as well as organizational outcomes (Bennis, 1966). The two-factor theory developed by Herzberg et al. (1959) informs leaders of the extrinsic and intrinsic factors that motivate employees. Leaders seeking to establish and maintain high levels of employee engagement take intentional steps to positively influence extrinsic factors such as organizational culture, compensation, quality of supervision, and work conditions (Herzberg et al., 1959). As each employee's unique, idiosyncratic tendencies will influence what motivates them individually, leaders also attend to intrinsic factors such as workplace achievement, recognition, aligning the employee with the type of work that they find rewarding, opportunities for workplace responsibility, and alignment with opportunities for professional advancement (Buble et al., 2014). Leader attunement to both extrinsically and intrinsically motivating factors supports employee engagement and employee retention (Han et al., 2021). Bridgemohan et al. (2018) documented the correlation between leadership approaches, employee engagement, and employee burnout as each affects the recruitment and retention of highly qualified health-care workers.

The COVID-19 pandemic prompted the widespread abrupt transition from in-office to hybrid and remote work modalities (Katsabian, 2020). The pandemic also gave rise to "the great resignation" and "quiet quitting" as factors contributing to significant

labor force concerns (Formica & Sfodera, 2022). Historically, academic and tertiary-level health-care facilities have relied on engaged employees who willingly work after established work hours by responding to calls and emails and volunteering for additional work duties (Morrison-Beedy, 2022). Pandemic-related quarantine protocols resulted in employees facing high levels of uncertainty, increased caregiving demands, and increased levels of burnout (Omar et al., 2021). Park and Cho (2022) determined that access to telework positively affects employee engagement. Street et al. (2019) found that employee engagement is essential for organizational profitability and revenue growth. Boakye et al. (2021) identified leadership styles and management approaches as mediators influencing employee engagement. The literature review for this current study demonstrates the need for more research to expand understanding of how telework models of service delivery within a tertiary-level health-care facility impact leadership styles, management approaches, and employee engagement. This current phenomenological study exploring the experiences of leaders and assessing employee engagement sought to address this gap. Chapter 3 provides the design and methodology for this current research, seeking to understand the relationship between leadership style and employee engagement among workers in a tertiary-level health-care facility.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Health-care providers face unique stressors in the workplace influencing their mental health, work–life balance, and level of engagement in the workplace (Mihailescu & Neiterman, 2019). Leadership styles and work–life balance have also influenced employee engagement and subsequently the overall health of the organization (Berg, 2018). The purpose of this current qualitative phenomenological design was to increase understanding of the impact of abruptly shifting from in-office to hybrid and remote work modalities. This chapter provides comprehensive information regarding the research method and rationale for conducting a descriptive phenomenological study and the research questions (RQs) guiding this empirical investigation. The goal of conducting this study was to gain a more detailed understanding of how telework models of service delivery within a tertiary-level health-care facility impact leadership style, management approaches, and employee engagement.

Statement of the Problem

Historically, workplace teams have existed within the same physical location, enabling face-to-face communication and in-person meetings (Burrell, 2020). In contrast, virtual teams communicate with one another using technology to transcend the restrictions of not being in the same physical location at one time (Burrell, 2020). Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent stay-at-home orders in 2020, countless workers had to transition from in-office models of work to a telework model of work to maintain productivity while minimizing the risk of exposure to COVID-19 (Buomprisco et al., 2021). Similarly, directors, managers, and leaders pivoted to a telework modality without sufficient opportunity to prepare for the change in the work

modality (Leonardelli, 2022). Affected leaders did not have the opportunity to consider the impact that this change would have on their leadership approach (Valor-Segura et al., 2020). Organizations without preexisting telework policies, including infrastructure and technology, were ill-positioned for the change (Burrell, 2020). Little research exists regarding the impact of this shift on the leadership styles used to manage the needs of remote staff (Bendaly, 2020).

Supervisors seeking to support the needs of teleworking employees may instinctively seek to use and maintain management practices historically used for office-based employees (Lautsch et al., 2009). However, traditional management techniques may prove ineffective in managing virtual employees (Sheridan, 2012). Given the impact of employee engagement on organizational productivity, providing supervisors with information regarding the most effective leadership strategies for supporting virtual employees may positively impact overall organizational success (Galanti et al., 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic prompted an unprecedented shift to teleworking on a large scale (Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development, 2020). Given the rapid increase that occurred in the population of teleworkers in 2020, it is important to understand if different management techniques influenced this group of employees (Newman & Ford, 2021). The problem is that it is unknown how telework models of service delivery within a tertiary-level health-care facility impact leadership style, management approaches, and employee engagement. This current study analyzed qualitative data to learn what management techniques might be the most effective for leaders to manage and influence virtual employee engagement. The current study sought to make a meaningful contribution to the field, focusing specifically on the best

leadership practices of teleworking leaders within a tertiary-level health-care facility. The current study also sought to gain insight into the influence that leadership practices have on the leaders' perceptions of employee engagement. The current study also sought to learn of any positive implications for organizational sustainability through improved work–life balance for teleworking leaders and by increasing the strategic leadership capacity of leaders who can maximize their effectiveness with the telework population (Nuevo-Chow, 2021).

Additional information will assist in better understanding how telework models of service delivery within a tertiary-level health-care facility impact leadership styles, management approaches, and employee engagement (Raina, 2022). The recruited participants were identified for this current study because of their leadership roles and managerial responsibilities within their organizations. The qualitative phenomenological approach aligned with the intention to provide a greater understanding of the leadership changes that occur in the context of the lived experiences of directors, supervisors and leaders who are new to supervising teleworking staff (Behal, 2020).

Information obtained from interviewed participants provided indications of leadership approaches that yield ideal outcomes as indicated by employee engagement and employee productivity. The current study also sought to gain valuable insight into the practical management techniques that influence virtual employee engagement. Previous research found that employee engagement positively influences employee productivity (Aldabbas et al., 2023). Subsequently, productivity is a primary area of study for many organizational directors, managers, and leaders (Aldabbas et al., 2023). Given the growth

that has occurred in the telework population, understanding the most effective leadership strategies that influence this population is important (Mayo et al., 2009).

Research Method & Design

The process for deciding the proper research method for this study included consideration of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The inquiry and origin of the specific RQs guided the selection of the research design (King et al., 2021). Exploration of the use of a quantitative phenomenological approach in lieu of the qualitative approach occurred given the dominance of quantitative strategies for studying leadership over the past 100 years in the literature (Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019). Other researchers have asserted that the use of qualitative research has been the most appropriate method because of their belief that quantitative surveys and other quantitative approaches are impersonal, superficial, and do not result in an understanding of leadership phenomena (Parry, 2003). L. F. Bailey (2014) noted the last 2 decades as the timeframe in which the use of qualitative research finally established a firm footing, although he traced its origins back to psychologist Paul Felix Lazarfeld in 1925. After Carter et al. (2015) conducted their meta-analysis of leadership, researchers were encouraged to shift away from inflexible characteristics and behaviors of formal leaders whose actions were reliant upon situational constraints in favor of a focus on relational processes that interact with the embedded social context to provide more effective leadership. This recommendation for a modified leadership approach was an important finding as the key purpose of this current study was to bring better understanding to the impact that the March 2020 transition to teleworking has had on leadership styles, as well as on employee engagement. Prominent researchers exploring

the power dynamics in cross-functional teams used interviews to record the phenomenon of interest (Aime et al., 2014). Investigators seeking to understand the impact of the transition from an in-office work environment to a telehealth model may use a similar approach (Pyöriä, 2011).

The selection process for the research design included an assessment of the level of maturity and development of existing research on the designated topic. Additional factors that affected the selection process included the research problem, RQs, the research purpose, and the expected outcomes of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The exploration of suitable research designs resulted in the phenomenological qualitative design as the most suitable approach for this study. After considering all relevant factors, the selection process for this qualitative research design included exploration of qualitative designs such as grounded theory, case study, narrative, and ethnographies to determine the most appropriate for this study.

Researchers seeking to yield meaningful study outcomes applicable to either the practice or theory of a particular field must ensure that their study is rigorously conducted (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Consequently, researchers must have confidence in conducting an investigation and in the results of the study because of the applied nature of most social science inquiries (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Finn et al. (2022) reinforced the importance of this point by prompting other researchers to consider if the study's outcomes are trustworthy enough for a person to feel confident enough to formulate social policy or legislation.

Both qualitative and quantitative studies emphasize validity and reliability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). To achieve this goal, researchers must pay close attention to

the conceptualization of a study and how the data are collected, analyzed, and interpreted, as well as how the results are reported (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Intentional steps ensured that the current qualitative study had the qualities of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, as each works to create the scientific rigor that can substantiate the value of the qualitative design (O'Kane et al., 2021). M. Applebaum (2012) provided additional information regarding the value of descriptive phenomenological study design by noting that all science is systematic, methodical, general, and critical, and noting that these are all qualities that can be pursued in a qualitative study.

Several research designs were considered for the current study prior to making a determination. Grounded theory is considered a powerful, interpretive, and challenging methodology (Ligita et al., 2019). The grounded theory seeks to generate a theory explaining, predicting, or describing a phenomenon from data systematically obtained and analyzed using comparative analysis (Hood & Copeland, 2021). As the goal of this current research was to understand the phenomenon and not to develop theories as an outcome, grounded theory was not an appropriate research design.

Case study research examines an actual phenomenon within its surrounding environment in a scientific manner (Ridder, 2017). In this regard, a case study may consist of an individual, a collection of people, an organization, an event, an area of concern, or an atypical event (Farquhar et al., 2020). Case study investigators commonly triangulate data as a component of their data collection strategy to create a detailed case description (Ridder, 2017). Use of case study research would be appropriate for the goal to study the infrastructure of the organization, the company's policies, and procedures, or

the other systems in place to support teleworking efforts (Ridder, 2017). Future

researchers looking to expand the findings of this current study may consider using the

case study research design to understand what if any impact organizational supports and

organizational infrastructure have on leaders supervising newly teleworking employees

and subsequently employee engagement within the organization.

The current study also considered the narrative approach. *Narrative* is a word

used across an extensive assortment of contexts, and its meaning varies accordingly

(Dwyer & Emerald, 2017). The narrative approach includes a vast array of approaches,

which are context-centered, flexible, and reflective of individual lived experiences

(Dwyer & Emerald, 2017). Within the narrative approach, information gained from

participants undergoes data analysis (Dwyer & Emerald, 2017). The narrative research

approach is useful when exploring the interconnectedness of specific stories with

common cultural narratives (Prosek & Gibson, 2021). This current study included

interviews with supervisors and managers representing a heterogeneous group of

individuals. Given that the goals of this current study did not include seeking to create

stories about an individual's lived experience, as narrative inquiry is useful for

developing, the narrative approach was determined not ideal for this research question

(Prosek & Gibson, 2021).

Researchers using the ethnography research design immerse themselves in

another culture to understand daily life from the participants' perspectives (Seligmann &

Estes, 2020). Ethnography research design describes cultures, inclusive of group

characteristics such as values, beliefs, or ideas (Hayre et al., 2022). A detailed account of

the participants' lives in the context of the culture or group studied is an outcome of

ethnography (Eberle & Schnettler, 2019). In behavioral science, researchers often use

ethnographic interviews (De Fina, 2019). Given the outcomes of ethnography, it was not

appropriate for this study.

Research Design

As the goal of this study was to understand the lived experiences of supervisors

and managers whose supervisees have abruptly transitioned from in-office work to

teleworking, phenomenology was the best study design able to yield the desired

outcomes (Beck, 2021). A review of the existing literature revealed a postulation that

leaders use the same leadership approaches for in-office and teleworking employees

(Harker Martin & MacDonnell, 2012). However, Park and Cho (2022) identified

leadership challenges that are unique to supervisors and managers whose team members

are teleworking. Park and Cho also recommended that future investigators seek to

understand if supervisors' own teleworking experiences may affect how they supervise

their teleworkers. The conceptual framework from Chapter 2 of this current study served

to emphasize the relational aspects of leadership. Further research has illustrated the

positive and negative impact that leadership approaches have on employee engagement

and subsequently on access to tertiary-level health-care services for children with

developmental disabilities (Li et al., 2021). The phenomenological research design

proved to be ideal for the current study, given the identified research goals.

The RQs guiding this study sought to increase understanding of how telework

models of service delivery within a tertiary-level health-care facility impact leadership

styles, management approaches, and employee engagement. Qualitative research is more

appropriate when investigating the meaning attributed to a particular phenomenon by

those who are experiencing it (Beck, 2021). A phenomenological study was appropriate

for the current study because it facilitated understanding the unique changes occurring in

the leadership approach overseeing teleworking staff while also assessing employee

engagement (Mezmir, 2020).

The phenomenon explored in this study related to the impact that abruptly shifting

to telework has on leadership styles, management approaches, and employee

engagement. This phenomenon was the focal point of this qualitative study. Previous

researchers had explored the challenges of leaders managing employees who were

working remotely; however, little research exists regarding leaders within tertiary-level

health-care facilities who were supervising remote team members (Cavazotte et al.,

2021).

Participants

The current study included interviewing a total of 14 directors, managers, and

leaders of clinicians and administrative personnel who were providing and supporting the

provision of telehealth services in different programs within the same tertiary-level

health-care facility. Purposeful sampling was used for the participant selection process to

ensure recruited participants had direct lived experience with the phenomenon being

studied within the tertiary-level health-care facility (Luciani et al., 2019). Ravitch and

Carl (2021) asserted relational construct power dynamics may influence interviewer and

participant interaction. To address this concern, member checking and inclusion criteria

prevented interviews with study participants from occurring with their direct supervisor

for this current study.

The research literature and guidance from Columbia International University affirmed 14 participants to be sufficient for qualitative phenomenological research designs (Bowers et al., 2011). The respondents all had 5 years of experience or more in their supervisory roles. Study participants granted verbal consent to participate in this study, affirming understanding of the Institutional Review Board's (IRB) approved consent form. The participants included male and female leaders representing a variety of ages and professional backgrounds. The scheduled 60-minute, one-on-one virtual interviews occurred using the Microsoft Teams virtual meeting platform. Interviews were extended on an as needed basis at the request of study participants. The participants consented verbally to the audio and video recording of the interviews. The transcription feature was also active during the interviews. The interviews consisted of participants responding to seven introductory demographic questions and 26 interview questions (IQs).

Instrument

Throughout this study, the primary instrument for qualitative data collection and data analysis aligned with established research practices (Cohen et al., 2017). This approach created the opportunity for data acquisition, data analysis, and data interpretation (Wa-Mbaleka, 2020). Engagement between the interviewer and the respondent is a complex phenomenon (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Several factors affect the interaction between the interviewer and the respondent, such as personal attitudes, characteristics, orientations, and physical characteristics; these factors also affected the obtained data for this current study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). All interviews were conducted in a manner that was respectful, nonjudgmental, and nonthreatening (Merriam

& Tisdell, 2016). Throughout the interviews, efforts were used to establish a positive

rapport with each respondent while remaining neutral regarding the content conveyed

(Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The manner in which the interviews occurred proved useful

in yielding valuable data from the interviews for this current study (Merriam & Tisdell,

2016).

In the current study, the qualitative IQs served as the major instrument used to

collect data (Cohen et al., 2017). The protocol included seven introductory demographic

questions and 26 IQs intended to generate data needed to gain insight into the study's

three RQs. Table 1 reflects the alignment between the IQs and the RQs.

Table 1

Alignment of the Interview Questions & Research Questions

Interview questions (IQs)	Research question (RQ)
IQs 1–10	RQ1: What are the perceptions of the impact of telework models of service delivery within a tertiary-level health-care facility on leadership styles?
IQs 11–18	RQ2: What are the perceptions of the impact of telework models of service delivery within a tertiary-level health-care facility on management approaches?
IQs 19–26	RQ3: What are the perceptions of the impact of telework models of service delivery within a tertiary-level health care-facility on employee engagement?

Validity of the Instrument

Validity describes the process of assessing the fidelity or accuracy of findings

using the viewpoint of the study leader, the respondents, and/or the intended audience of

the research (Rose & Johnson, 2020). The concept of qualitative validity defined by

Creswell and Creswell (2018) refers to the process by which a researcher determines

whether the findings are accurate by using specific methods. Maintaining the validity of

this study occurred by giving careful attention to the study conceptualization and the

process for obtaining data, analyzing, interpreting, and presenting the data (Merriam &

Tisdell, 2016). Appendix F includes the IQs developed for data collection. Previous

researchers have considered it appropriate to use a tool developed by the researcher for

qualitative research that needs descriptive data (Cypress, 2017). As Creswell and

Creswell noted, qualitative reliability demonstrates consistency in the study of a leader's

approach across various researchers and different projects. Efforts to maintain validity

included attending to the current study's conceptualization, process for data collection,

analysis, and interpretation, and the approach used for presenting the study's findings

(Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability, and

confirmability produce high-quality findings able to contribute worthwhile meaning to

the field (O'Kane et al., 2021). The current study's pilot interview occurred with a

nonstudy participant. The recommendation of Ravitch and Carl (2021) to practice

answering study questions from the study participant's perspective assisted in further

enhancing understanding of what it is like to be the interviewee. Previous research has

shown that each previously stated approach strengthens content validity (Cypress, 2017).

Participant responses to semistructured IQs provided meaningful insight into each

participant's lived experience related to the phenomenon (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Phenomenological research requires powerful, credible, and evocative interviews

(Thomas, 2021). Research indicates the importance of investigators possessing

appropriate interview techniques, grounded in phenomenological philosophy (Thomas,

2021). This grounding, along with skills and focus, was essential to yield desired quality

of content from the interview (Thomas, 2021).

Journaling supported efforts to mitigate the negative impact that bias could have

had on the study included (Tufford & Newman, 2012). The IQs included clarifying

follow-up questions to solicit additional information as needed. Clarifying questions

ensured the full understanding of information conveyed by study participants in the

context of the respondent's authentic experience (Bevan, 2014).

Achieving content validity necessitated an intentional approach (Cypress, 2017).

Quantitative researchers maintain a strong emphasis on the validity of the construct,

criterion, the content of the interpretations of test scores, and the validity of experimental

and quasi-experimental methodologies (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Qualitative researchers

use a perspective not based on scores but based on the perspectives of other qualitative

researchers, study participants, study editors, and study reviewers (Creswell & Miller,

2000). Specific IQs developed for this qualitative phenomenological study served to elicit

robust descriptive data from the participants regarding their lived experiences (Singh,

2017). Efforts to support validity of the IQs included assuring the alignment of the IQs

with the conceptual framework during question development (Hamilton & Finley, 2019).

The RQs were reviewed by experts in the field who were able to ensure questions were

clear and necessary to elicit meaningful feedback regarding the phenomenon that were

included in the survey (Dikko, 2016). This step served to elevate the effectiveness of the

IQs and ensure the interview's ability to achieve the aim of the study (Castillo-Montoya,

2016). The participant selection process sought to identify leaders who met the inclusion

criteria. Qualitative researchers are encouraged to analyze their interview data shortly

after it is received study from participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Using this

approach enables researchers to recognize patterns, themes, or trends that are common

across multiple interviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Saturation has emerged as one of

the novel approaches employed by researchers seeking to demonstrate the quality and

credibility of their study (Sebele-Mpofu, 2020).

Member checking is one method for using respondents' perspectives to get their

assistance in evaluating the accuracy of the final depiction of their lived experiences

(Amin et al., 2020). Member checking to incorporate feedback from the participant in a

meaningful way was another tool for supporting study validity in this current research

(Ronkainen & Wiltshire, 2021). Previous research affirms the ability for the researcher to

decide when saturation occurs within a study (Amin et al., 2020).

Miles et al. (2015) noted that among phenomenological researchers, the issue of

validity relates to the skill set of the interviewer. Miles et al. noted indicators of validity

are inclusive of the interviewer's familiarity with the phenomenon, robust interview

skills, and the ability to build a good rapport during the interview. In the current study, all

interviews remained focused on the phenomena selected to support efficient use of time

and to minimize the risk of obtaining extraneous data (Hamilton & Finley, 2019).

Reliability of the Instrument

Taylor and Bogdan (1984) recommended addressing five items at the outset of

every interview. The first item is to ensure that the participant receives transparent

information regarding the purpose, intentions, and motives of the research study (Taylor

& Bogdan, 1984). The script outlining this information for the current study was included

in the submission for IRB approval. Each respondent received the same information prior

to any IQs during the interview. The second item in place before the interview began was a system for de-identifying the data provided by the respondent (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The third step is to ensure that the respondent confirmed receiving a written transcript from the interview with a request to confirm the content (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). The goal was for this member checking, or participant validation, to occur as a way to advance the trustworthiness of the results of the current study (Birt et al., 2016). Following completion of this step, in collaboration with the chair and committee members for the current dissertation, the study content was determined. The fourth step is to inform study respondents that participation is voluntary with no payment provided (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The fifth step is to ensure participants understand the logistics associated with the interview, which in the case of the current study included a mutually agreeable time for the recorded 60-minute interview to occur via a Microsoft Teams meeting (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As anticipated, subsequent interviews were unwarranted.

Research Procedures

This section provides information regarding the design of the research process, including participant recruitment and selection process, communication with participants, instruments of data collection, implementation plans, and the data analysis plan. Providing this information should enable future researchers to replicate this study's findings. The study participants were 14 leaders with experience serving as teleworking leaders of team members who were also teleworking. These criteria ensured that all participants were able to provide a meaningful contribution to the study secondary to their lived experiences with abruptly transitioning individuals under their supervision

from in-office to hybrid and remote work modalities. The voluntary recruitment efforts

included verbal announcements regarding the opportunity for study participation during

leadership meetings with follow-up emails to the same group disseminating the same

information. Qualifications for study participation included being in a leadership position

within a designated tertiary-level health-care facility, before February 1, 2020, and

possessing the continued responsibility for leading a remote working team.

The study recruitment script encompassed the procedures and protocol of the

study. Completion of the phone screening script occurred as needed to confirm that all

interested parties met the inclusion criteria for study participation. Following

confirmation of meeting study criteria, a time in alignment with the availability of each

study participant determined when each interview would occur. All participants provided

verbal consent for study participation prior to activation of audio, video, and transcription

features and email during the scheduled interview. A visual alert appeared reflecting the

activation of the video, audio recording, and transcription features. The interviews

consisted of asking open-ended questions concerning the phenomenon.

During the interviews, participants received additional opportunities to convey

information about their lived experiences to expand upon participant responses, not in

alignment with the information that the IQ was seeking to elicit. For example, if leaders

gave a response solely focused on the uncertainties related to the pandemic without

expanding upon their actions and decision-making processes as a leader, a follow-up IQ

served to prompt the participant to expand on their response (Arksey & Knight, 1999).

The follow-up question strategy decreased the likelihood of obtaining extraneous data

during the interview process (Thomas, 2021). Phenomenological analysis supported

flushing out the essence or core structure of the leadership phenomenon (Merriam &

Tisdell, 2016). The method of phenomenological reduction made it possible to reproduce

and reflect on the participants' experiences maintaining a neutral viewpoint to better

comprehend the substance of the experience. Emerging themes became more evident as

the interviews occurred (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Data collection occurred using a

consistent approach as each interview transpired, further supporting the trustworthiness

of the study (Poggenpoel & Myburgh, 2003). Uploading recordings to NVivo 12 Plus

occurred following the completion of each interview. NVivo 12 Plus is an internationally

noted software package for qualitative data analysis of words and phrases expressed by

participants to identify themes associated with each of the RQs (Edhlund & McDougall,

2018). The anticipated outcomes of the use of NVivo 12 Plus are the development of

contextual themes, the ability to make comparisons across participants, and the

completion of thematic analysis (Watkins & Walker, 2021).

Data Analysis Strategy

This section provides information regarding the design of the research process,

including the participant recruitment and selection process, communication with

participants, data collection instruments, implementation plans, and the data analysis

plan. Providing this information may enable future researchers to replicate this study's

findings. The RQs used for this study were as follows:

- RQ1: What are the perceptions of the impact of telework models of service

  delivery on leadership styles within a tertiary-level health-care facility?

- RQ2: What are the perceptions of the impact of telework models of service

  delivery on management approaches within a tertiary-level health-care facility?

- RQ3: What are the perceptions of the impact of telework models of service delivery on employee engagement within a tertiary-level health-care facility?

The IQs, including seven introductory demographic questions and 26 open-ended IQs, used during one-on-one interviews with 14 leaders in health care directed the data collection in this qualitative phenomenological study. The instrument developed was suitable for advancing understanding of how telework models of service delivery within a tertiary-level health-care facility impact leadership style, management approaches, and employee engagement, therefore addressing the three RQs.

Experiences shape leaders (Sahgal & Pathak, 2007). Scholars published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology* have conceptualized leadership theories from the last century to reframe leadership as an interpersonal phenomenon, impacted by a variety of social and emerging processes that involved formal and informal influence (Carter et al., 2015). Phillips (2020) found that managing others who are not working in the same physical location as the supervisor prompts leaders to develop new strategies for managing remote employees. Countless studies have supported the positive association between telework and increased productivity (Bloom et al., 2015). Given this, leaders transitioning from in-office to teleworking formats should focus on their employee engagement (Allen et al., 2013). Available research supports the understanding that employee engagement is essential for the success of any organization (Shahid, 2019). Employee engagement affects organizational performance, customer satisfaction, and financial success for organizations (Fairlie, 2011). Beauregard et al. (2019) observed that characteristics of an employee's manager directly contribute to a successful telework experience. Leaders are responsible for quickly adapting to supervising remote

employees with little time available for planning, reflecting on the effectiveness of their

leadership approach, as well as assessing employee engagement (Devine et al., 2021).

The next step was the process of transcendental phenomenological reduction, or

bracketing (Nicholls, 2019). Transcendental phenomenological reduction calls for study

investigators to elevate beyond the ego to access a new perspective thereby enabling

them to conceptualize a participant's experience as an authentic phenomenon (Kee,

2020). Patton (2015) noted that the transcendental–phenomenological reduction process,

referred to as bracketing of a participant's depiction of a phenomenon, consists of a

process to identify and categorize key phrases that are essential features of the

phenomenon. The practice of epoché or bracketing necessitates exploring the data to find

out the essence and meaning of the phenomenon in an intentional manner that assumes

that the viewpoints of participants remain self-reflective so they can recognize their

biases and can separate themselves from those biases (Nicholls, 2019).

Phenomenology consists of eliciting descriptions of an individual's lived

experience using open-ended questions (Pollard, 2018). Open-ended questions guide

structured phenomenological interviews (Weller et al., 2018). Research participants for

the current study were asked to describe their leadership approach for both on-site and

telework employees. The questions served to prompt the research participant to be

descriptive without needing to be reflective, as was recommended by M. H. Applebaum

(2014). The goal was to obtain a rich description from each of the current study's

participants regarding their experiences while avoiding engagement in a more interpretive

or therapeutic process that would prompt the participant to seek a deeper or hidden

meaning of their experience (Kee, 2020).

The current study participants were senior directors, managers, and other leaders who were responsible for supervising staff members who had transitioned from an in-office model to a remote working model for at least 12 months. The respondents represented leaders who were also working remotely for several days or more every week. The chosen criteria ensured that each respondent had a lived experience with the phenomena. At the time of the current study, participants were responsible for supervising employees working remotely on a full-time basis as well as those working remotely 2 to 3 days per week. Previous researchers have identified employees who work remotely 4 or more days per week as "high-intensity teleworkers" (Nagata et al., 2021, p. 912). This descriptor reflects the belief that working from home at a high intensity affects interpersonal dynamics, home office dynamics, and employees' sense of belonging (Bellé, 2014). Nagata et al. (2021), who sought to understand the impact of home-based telework on employee engagement, reported that their findings were unclear. The current study sought to understand more about the impact that leadership styles have on the level of engagement of teleworkers as well as the leadership style modifications made by leaders supervising teleworking employees.

Leaders from a variety of departments within the same tertiary-level health-care facility volunteered to participate in the current study, supporting efforts to maximize the transferability of the study outcomes. An additional approach used to strengthen the credibility of the study was to achieve saturation (LaDonna et al., 2021). Patton (2015) provided guidance on identifying the ideal purposeful sampling strategy. The strategies considered for this current study included maximum variation, criterion sampling, saturation, and snowball sampling (Patton, 2015). Palinkas et al. (2015) noted the

potential additional benefit of combined sampling strategies for researchers seeking to align themselves with current norms in qualitative research.

Maximum variation sampling is a form of purposeful sampling strategy in qualitative research and refers to the process of identifying a small number of participants while maximizing the diversity of the respondents (Farrugia, 2019). While the participants of this current study had comparable years of experience and comparable titles, the selected individuals represented a wide array of ages, professional backgrounds, and expertise. Criterion sampling is a type of purposeful sampling of cases on predetermined criteria such as scores on measures or other characteristics (Sandelowski, 2000). The cases or participants selected when using this approach must all meet the same core criteria (Sandelowski, 2000). According to Alase (2017), the selected participants should provide a better gauge and understanding of the overall perceptions among participants' lived experiences due to homogeneity. The current study adhered to the recommendation of Creswell and Creswell (2018) for all participants to possess a comparable lived experience of the phenomenon explored. The study participants had 12 months of experience serving as both in-office and teleworking leaders of remote working team members. This criterion ensured that all participants were able to provide a meaningful contribution to the study because of their lived experiences (Suri, 2011).

Snowball sampling is a participant recruitment approach in which the participants receive information about the opportunity to participate in the research study by a third party (Leighton et al., 2021). The snowball sampling approach is beneficial for investigators who do not have direct access to the pool of potential participants (Leighton et al., 2021). Professional network connections and social organizations are additional

options for accomplishing snowball nonprobability convenience sampling (Leighton et al., 2021). As recruitment targeted participants who met the established criteria and work within the same organization, the current study did not use snowball sampling criteria.

The necessary number of respondents for a phenomenological study is typically any number greater than nine (Guetterman, 2015). Researchers seeking to determine when additional study participants may be needed use specific strategies, particularly if participant attrition is an area of concern (Alase, 2017). Researchers have noted that determining the precise number of research participants for a phenomenological study is not possible using a formulaic manner (Suri, 2011). Determining the exact number of participants needed in a phenomenological study is challenging, as the answer depends on obtaining the needed information to describe the experience of the phenomenon as compared to a specific number of examples, as qualitative research would necessitate (Luciani et al., 2019). Given this, the sample size in qualitative studies is ever evolving and flexible and is not able to be determined by using a set criterion (Patton, 2015). The target sample size for the current study was 14 participants.

Martins (2008) completed a phenomenological study within the health-care system employing a purposive sampling strategy with 14 participants. Martins defined saturation as the point at which qualitative interviews cease to reveal new themes. Of note, Martins reported reaching saturation after 12 interviews, while going on to complete three additional interviews to confirm that no novel themes arose. The findings of previous researchers confirmed the anticipated outcome of being able to achieve saturation with a sample size of 14 interviews (Guetterman, 2015; Martins, 2008).

Saturation describes information redundancy (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Achieving saturation occurs when new themes or codes no longer emerge from the data being collected (Bazen et al., 2021). The 14 participants of this current study expressed a variety of recurring themes. The redundancy of themes was evident by the 12th interview. The confirmation that saturation was reached was reflected in the presence of recurring themes in subsequent interviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In the event that saturation would not be achieved by the 14th interview, study recruitment would have resumed.

The importance of identifying individuals able to make a rich contribution during the interview process influences participant selection criteria (Luciani et al., 2019). The initial requirements for participants in the current study were (a) being a leader who had been in charge of managing in-office staff, as well as (b) having 12 months of experience managing employees who had unexpectedly switched to teleworking. A tertiary-level health-care organization was the place of employment for all participants in the current study. The participants had at least 5 years of experience serving in a supervisory capacity. As English was the sole language of the IRB study team members, and all participants, all interviews occurred in English. Leaders who volunteered for study participation were also leaders known to be more forthcoming in their communication, which generated meaningful study outcomes.

Identifying emerging themes as the interviews occurred supported data integrity and interview quality (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Identifying emerging themes as the interviews occur also creates the opportunity to elicit follow-up questions leading to an in-depth understanding of participant responses, further supporting the trustworthiness of

the data (Poggenpoel & Myburgh, 2003). During the interview, participants received

additional opportunities to convey information regarding their lived experiences and to

expand upon their responses. For example, if a leader gave a response addressing the

uncertainties related to the pandemic without expanding upon their actions and decision-

making process as a leader, a follow-up question served to refocus the participant and to

expand upon the initial response (Arksey & Knight, 1999). The previously stated strategy

may decrease the likelihood of obtaining extraneous data during the interview process

(Thomas, 2021). Phenomenological analysis served to flush out the essence or core

structure of the leadership phenomenon (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The process of

phenomenological reduction guided the process of reproducing the lived experiences of

the participants so they could reflect on their experiences and maintain neutral viewpoints

to increase understanding of the essence of their experiences.

     Entry of each recording into NVivo 12 Plus occurred following the completion of

the respective interview. This internationally noted software package for qualitative data

analysis of words and phrases expressed by participants identifies themes associated with

each of the RQs (Sutopo, 2022). The anticipated outcomes of the use of NVivo 12 Plus

include development of contextual themes, the ability to make comparisons across

participants, and the development of a thematic analysis (Sutopo, 2022).

     Data collection for this study occurred with the use of open-ended IQs

administered one-on-one to recruited leaders employed within the same organization

representing a broad array of departments, programs, and areas of expertise. The

interviews occurred during a scheduled 60-minute meeting at a convenient time for each

participant using a secure Microsoft Teams account. Interviews were extended on an as

needed basis at the request of study participants. Interview recording occurred following the receipt of verbal consent from the study participants. The interviews began with obtaining demographic information about the participants' titles, years of service within the organization, profession, years of experience in the profession, length of teleworking of their supervisees, and length of time the participants had been teleworking.

The IQs in the current study served to create opportunities for participants to reveal details of their experiences relating to the shared phenomenon of abruptly transitioning from in-office leaders to leaders working virtually and supervising teleworking employees. Pilot interviews facilitated an opportunity to receive additional feedback on the IQs (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The use of pilot interviews provided the opportunity to reveal if any IQs revealed useless information and any additional questions that were beneficial to include in the study (Chegini et al., 2021).

Adherence to acceptable research practice includes restating and rephrasing IQs to provide study participants further clarity when needed (Chegini et al., 2021). This approach supported alignment with the established phenomenological interview method of employing descriptive and structural questions to grasp the essence of the experience or phenomenon as conveyed by the participant (Bevan, 2014). Follow-up questions assured full understanding of the participants' responses.

A key component of this approach relies on the conceptual framework of leadership as being relational and in this regard, affecting employee engagement (Park & Cho, 2022). Brinkmann and Kvale (2005) encouraged beginning researchers to avoid false assumption adoption because interviews are an opportunity for interviewers to increase their understanding of respondents' experiences through dialog and discussion.

The opportunity for content clarification is important in capturing the essence of the participants' experiences (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005). The alignment of the current research within the conceptual framework rested with the leadership styles, employee engagement, and behavioral outcomes as impacted by intrinsically and/or extrinsically defined experiences (Kahn, 1990).

Bevan (2014) completed an exhaustive review of the phenomenological interview method. According to Bevan's research, the phenomenological interview method provides a structure consisting of three primary domains: contextualization, capturing the phenomenon, and clarifying the phenomenon. The IQs for the current study maintained a focus on the leaders' lived experiences (Pienkos et al., 2022). The framework of this current phenomenological study instrument placed emphasis less on the IQ and more on the process of the interview to elicit the type of desired response (Thomas, 2021).

Bevan's (2014) recommendations created the blueprint of three structures incorporated throughout the current study's phenomenological reduction process. Epoché is the first step in the process of phenomenological analysis (Nicholls, 2019). Epoché is a Greek word that means to refrain from judgment and to try to see things in new ways, not the traditional and familiar ways of perception (Kidd, 2021). Epoché refers to the ability to put oneself in a state of mind whereby one is looking at the experience as though it were a new experience (Carr, 2021). Epoché refers to the importance of incorporating an agnostic perspective that does not bias one's view nor assume any hidden meaning (Nicholls, 2019). In this regard, descriptive/narrative questions are used to elicit a deeper understanding of the phenomena being explored (Bevan, 2014).

The second approach used in phenomenological reduction is a reflexive critical dialogue with the self (Bevan, 2014). Reflexive techniques support understanding of the influence that personal meanings have on the research process to prevent personal meanings from influencing the understanding of the studied phenomena (Layder & Giddens, 1988). Reflexive critical dialogue is comparable to bridling (Stutey et al., 2020). In this regard, bridling is both consistent with the essence of phenomenology and facilitates openness to the explored phenomena (Stutey et al., 2020).

The phenomenological interview serves as an opportunity to create an atmosphere for participants to convey their experiences directly with the interviewer as compared to the development of a survey to solicit information regarding lived experiences of participants (Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas (1994) encouraged the interviewer to initiate the encounter with the respondents by starting a social conversation and possibly a meditative exercise to create a comfortable and open environment. Within the framework of phenomenology, participants' perceptions, beliefs, and values shape their experience of the world, and as such, the experiences are central to understanding the essence of the phenomenon from the person's perspective who had experienced it (Nicholls, 2019).

Adherence to the phenomenological approach necessitates that the interviewer does not ask the participants to assess causality, beliefs, or explanations of their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The goal of phenomenological inquiry is to uncover the essence of a phenomenon as individuals experience it and to provide a rich nuanced understanding of human experiences (Emery & Anderman, 2020). The use of thoughtfully developed semistructured questions helped to maintain the focus of the interview on the leaders' lived experiences with the phenomenon of this current study

(Pienkos et al., 2022). The perspective that the emphasis is less on the IQ and more on the process of the interview to elicit the type of desired response is the grounding framework of this current phenomenological study (Thomas, 2021).

Validity describes the extent to which the participants' experiences with the phenomenon are accurately conveyed (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Validity also refers to the process of assessing the accuracy of study findings using the viewpoint of the study investigator, the study participants, and/or the intended audience of the research (Rose & Johnson, 2020). Qualitative validity refers to the degree to which a qualitative study accurately reflects the experiences and perspectives of the participants and is free from researcher bias or error (Rose & Johnson, 2020). Efforts to support validity within the current study included careful attention to the study conceptualization, how the data were obtained, analyzed, interpreted, and how the data was presented (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Cypress (2017) endorsed the use of an instrument for data collection developed specifically for use in the current study, deeming it appropriate for qualitative research seeking descriptive data. Shufutinsky (2020) further encouraged qualitative researchers to become proficient in employing use-of-self approaches to improve study outcomes and augment study credibility.

Establishing and maintaining study validity occurs by attending to the study's conceptualization, how the data are collected, analyzed, interpreted, and the approach used for presenting the study's findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This current qualitative study had the attributes of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, as each works to create the scientific rigor needed to substantiate the value of the qualitative design (O'Kane et al., 2021). A pilot interview occurred with a

leader who was not a study participant. Ravitch and Carl (2021) recommended study team members taking an opportunity to answer IQs in the role of a study participant to gain a broader perspective. Research has shown that each previously stated approach strengthens the study's content validity (Cypress, 2017).

The alignment of the approach with the RQs resulted in the attainment of meaningful access to each participant's lived experience related to the phenomenon (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Achieving powerful, credible, phenomenological research is critically important to conduct rich, evocative interviews (Thomas, 2021). Research indicates the importance of the study interviewer possessing appropriate interview techniques, grounded in phenomenological philosophy (Thomas, 2021). This grounding, along with skill and focus, was essential in yielding the desired quality of content from the interview (Thomas, 2021).

Efforts to establish content validity within this current study included several steps. Qualitative researchers use the perspectives of other qualitative researchers, study participants, study editors, and study reviewers to inform their research approach (Creswell & Miller, 2000). The current phenomenological study used IQs developed solely for use in this study. The use of a developed questionnaire is indicated when the goal is to elicit robust descriptive data from the participants regarding their lived experiences (Singh, 2017). Supporting validity in the developed questionnaire requires the completion of additional steps (Hamilton & Finley, 2019). A study team member and leader within the same tertiary-level health-care facility reviewed the IQs for the current study in the context of the RQs to ensure that the questions were clear and likely to elicit meaningful feedback regarding the experiences of the study participants (Dikko, 2016).

This IQ review served to elevate the effectiveness of the survey questions while affirming the survey's ability to achieve the aim of the study (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Miles et al. (2015) noted that among phenomenological researchers, the issue of validity relates directly to the skill set of the study investigator. Research has noted that indicators of validity include the interviewer having familiarity with the phenomenon, robust interview skills, and the ability to build a good rapport during the interview (Miles et al., 2015).

Member checking is one approach for assessing the accuracy of the developed representation of participants' lived experiences (Amin et al., 2020). The current study employed the use of member checking to incorporate feedback from the participants in a meaningful way (Ronkainen & Wiltshire, 2021). Investigators can decide when they have reached saturation within their studies (Amin et al., 2020).

The sources of data for this qualitative study were directors, managers, and leaders employed within the same nonprofit organization located in Baltimore, Maryland, with lived experience abruptly transitioning in-office teams to hybrid and remote modalities. All participants of the current study were forthcoming and detailed in communicating their experiences with the initial transition and subsequent efforts to lead their hybrid and remote working teams. The participants all served in a leadership capacity within a hospital-based organization grounded in a university affiliation. The hospital was committed to excellence while providing evidence-based care. The hospital was also home to a robust research operation. As anticipated, leaders receiving information regarding the current study were responsive and had a high level of interest in study participation.

The leaders selected to participate in this study had experience in transitioning from being an in-office supervisor of in-office employees to being a telework supervisor of telework employees. All participants had experience engaging in their leadership responsibilities remotely. Individuals who did not have the experience of being both an in-office and a telework leader were not able to participate in this study. The interviews occurred via a password-protected Microsoft Teams account using both video and audio formats. The Microsoft Teams recordings and all study-related data remained stored within the Secure Analytic Framework Environment (SAFE) Desktop, which is a virtual desktop platform (Smithwright, n.d.). SAFE Desktop provides a secure environment to store and analyze sensitive data (Smithwright, n.d.). The Johns Hopkins Medicine Office of Human Subjects Research IRB requires that all study related materials be stored using SAFE Desktop (Smithwright, n.d.). Each interviewee consented to recording the interview. Participant 2 was not able to access Microsoft Teams at the scheduled interview time. The meeting with Participant 2 transitioned to a password-protected Zoom account that did not have transcription, audio, or video recording capabilities.

Data collection for each participant except Participant 2 occurred during a one-time meeting scheduled at a time that was deferential to the participant's availability and recorded using Microsoft Teams. Participant 2's scheduled meeting occurred using Zoom. Data collection occurred over 8 weeks from May 18, 2022, to June 27, 2022. Data analysis occurred following each interview and prior to additional interviews occurring (Tufford & Newman, 2012). This bracketing approach is in alignment with the recommendations of Rolls and Relf (2006). Follow-up interviews were unnecessary, perhaps due to the careful efforts involved in the participant sampling process (Farrugia,

2019). Member checking created the opportunity for each participant to review the transcript and to provide feedback including recommendations for changes after the interview had occurred (Birt et al., 2016).

Intentional approaches served to support the goal of establishing consistency and repeatability in the current study (Ravn, 2023). Customized, semistructured IQs facilitated better understanding of the participants' experiences with leading and managing hybrid and virtual employees. Ravn (2023) recommended the framework of interpretive awareness when seeking to establish the reliability of qualitative phenomenological studies. Phenomenological reduction is accomplished using interpretive awareness (Jarzab, 2021). Phenomenological reduction seeks to ensure that the study acknowledges, confronts, and moves beyond the specific verbal and nonverbal content conveyed during the interview to reach a deeper understanding of the message being conveyed (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

This study used 26 IQs and seven personal demographic questions to gain information regarding the participants' experiences with the phenomenon (see Appendix F). The literature review served to establish effective baseline leadership techniques in the traditional setting and the impact that the specific techniques have on employee engagement. The IQs elicited information about the lived experiences of directors, managers, and leaders as it pertained to how they interacted with their supervisees who were working in the office, how this varied from the patterns of interaction that were being used for virtual employees, and the impact that the patterns had on employee engagement. A risk for potential bias occurs when researchers serve as both interviewer/data collector and data analyst (Birt et al., 2016). The use of participant

validation, also referred to as member checking, served to minimize the risk of researcher bias in this current study (Birt et al., 2016).

The narrative of employee engagement developed using the modified version of van Kaam's method of analysis (Moustakas, 1994). Preliminary grouping and listing were the initial outcomes of interview transcript assessment (Moustakas, 1994). The next step was to complete minimization and elimination by determining if a phrase contained vital information and by coding the phrase as an abstract term (Moustakas, 1994). After this, creating groups and themes of equal components occurred (Moustakas, 1994). The next step was to complete the finalization of groups and themes of equal components and refer to the raw data to verify the information (Moustakas, 1994). The fifth step was to create an individual textual narrative of the experience using direct quotes from interviews (Moustakas, 1994). Next, the development of individual organizational narratives based on the textual narrative of the experiences occurred (Moustakas, 1994). Following this, construction of a textural–organizational description occurred for each participant (Moustakas, 1994). Last, a combined narrative of implications and principles representing the experience was developed (Moustakas, 1994). The modified van Kaam method of analysis helped to identify central themes among interview participants (Moustakas, 1994). NVivo 12 Plus software was useful for advancing the understanding of trends and outcomes (Sutopo, 2022).

Ethical Issues

Considerations included anticipated ethical issues that may have arisen during this current qualitative study. For example, participants were informed verbally and in writing about their ability to decline to respond at any time as well as to withdraw from the study

at any time without consequences. Ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, and

privacy during the interview process as well as ensuring secure collection and storage of

data to protect the identities of participants was among the steps taken to prevent harm to

respondents secondary to their participation in the study (Hilbrecht et al., 2013).

Approved documents including Columbia International University's IRB approval letter

(see Appendix A), the Johns Hopkins Office of Human Subjects Research IRB approval

letter (see Appendix B), and the oral consent script (see Appendix E) are attached in the

noted appendices.

Nusbaum et al. (2017) offered guidance regarding the importance of informing

study participants of their rights as research participants. All participants of this current

study understood their rights as it related to the refusal of study participation as well as

the potential consequences of participating in the study (Husband, 2020). Participants

received written information regarding privacy protections during the data analysis

process and during publication (see Appendix E). The use of pseudonyms and the

redaction of identifying information further protected the respondent's identity (Husband,

2020).

Employing practices essential to conducting ethical research is critically

important to maintaining study validity (Husband, 2020). The use of dependable methods

yielded research that was consistent, credible, and accurate, serving to establish reliability

and validity in this current qualitative study (Angen, 2000). To ensure the validity of the

study, each study participant received information regarding the guidelines of the

research for protection of confidentiality and data (Singh, 2017). Consent for study

participation and for video recording was received in advance of the interview. All study

participants had the opportunity to ask clarifying questions regarding the study to ensure that each participant had a good understanding of the research opportunity they were engaging in.

The consent document explained the participants' right to withdraw from the study at any time (Nusbaum et al., 2017). Given the known education levels, literacy levels, and familiarity of study participants with research protocols, verbal consent was permissible for study participation (Nusbaum et al., 2017). However, after the participant had the opportunity to listen to the consent form, a read-aloud review of the role of the study, risks, and reconciliation of any remaining questions was completed. After each participant had the opportunity to receive a response regarding any questions that may have arisen, the participants gave verbal consent for the interview to proceed.

This study recruited participants who did not have any conflicts of interest. The participants were all members of senior leadership within the same organization reflecting an array of gender and age groups. Purposeful sampling supported recruitment of study participants who were supervising employees and working remotely themselves, essentially those who were living the phenomenon (Luciani et al., 2019).

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to fill up a gap in the literature regarding the experiences of leaders in a tertiary-level health-care facility who were experienced in abruptly transitioning from in-office to remote working arrangements and the subsequent impact on leadership styles, management approaches, and employee engagement. Interviews provided the opportunity to gain insight into leaders' perceptions, perspectives, and experiences regarding the transition to remote

work modalities. As the aim of the study was to explore the perspectives of leaders experienced in transitioning their teams to a remote working model, the phenomenological study design was the ideal approach. This chapter outlined the specific steps of completing the study. This chapter also provided information regarding the established population of participants, the context of the study, the sampling technique, the recruitment process, methods of data collection, and process for data analysis.

In Chapter 4, details of the common themes, categories, and groups from the thematic data analysis, as well as an organized summary of data results, are available. Chapter 4 also provides information regarding the participants' demographic data, a discussion of the data analysis process, and the resulting data from interviewing 14 teleworking leaders. Data analysis followed Moustakas's (1994) modified van Kaam phenomenological method. NVivo 12 Plus facilitated the analysis focused on addressing IQs and answers, eliminating information not pertinent to the topic of discussion (Sutopo, 2022). The participants' responses revealed central themes reflecting their lived experiences and perceptions. A description of the research setting, data collection, analysis process, an overview of the trustworthiness of the data, and the results of the analysis are available. Chapter 4 concludes with a summary of the findings.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS & RESULTS

The purpose of this qualitative research was to increase understanding of how telework models of service delivery within a tertiary-level health-care facility impact leadership styles, management approaches, and employee engagement. This study addressed the gaps in the knowledge base regarding the experiences of leaders in tertiary-level health-care facilities that experience an abrupt transition from in-office to remote working arrangements and the impact that leadership styles have on employee engagement. The population explored included directors, managers, and leaders within the same tertiary-level health-care facility. Research participants provided a deeper understanding of their perceptions regarding the impact of the abrupt transition from in-office to remote and hybrid work modalities on their leadership styles, management approaches, and employee engagement. The core problem this study sought to address is that it is not known how telework models of service delivery within a tertiary-level health-care facility impact leadership styles, management approaches, and employee engagement. This study contributes to current research on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent social distancing practices resulting in remote work models on leadership styles, management approaches, and employee engagement.

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research approach to explore the phenomenon of the leaders' lived experiences of abruptly transitioning from in-office to hybrid and remote work modalities. Before conducting this study, it was not clear how participants would describe their lived experiences of abruptly shifting from a business-as-usual model of leading teams working in offices to leading teams working remotely and in hybrid models. The problem is that it is not known how telework models of

service delivery within a tertiary-level health-care facility impact leadership styles, management approaches, and employee engagement.

The reason for this phenomenological study was to advance understanding of how telework models of service delivery within a tertiary-level health-care facility impact leadership style, management approaches, and employee engagement. Purposeful sampling supported the recruitment of participants who were able to aid in understanding the problem and answering the research questions (RQs). Semistructured interviews provided insights from the leaders' lived experiences with the abrupt transition from in-office to hybrid and remote work modalities. The following RQs guided this phenomenological study:

- RQ1: What are the perceptions of the impact of telework models of service delivery on leadership styles within a tertiary-level health-care facility?

- RQ2: What are the perceptions of the impact of telework models of service delivery on management approaches within a tertiary-level health-care facility?

- RQ3: What are the perceptions of the impact of telework models of service delivery on employee engagement within a tertiary-level health-care facility?

Descriptive Data

This chapter contains an in-depth explanation of the findings of the qualitative study, which includes a brief overview of the 14 study participants. All initial respondents possessed the leadership roles and leadership experience needed to participate in the study. The respondents' primary responsibilities spanned several settings within the organization including health care, research, and technology. The

participation criteria included serving in a leadership capacity before the COVID-19

pandemic.

Purposeful sampling supported the recruitment of participants with their lived

experiences being studied. All respondents had the leadership roles and leadership

experience needed to participate in the study. Specifically, all participants were leaders

experienced in abruptly transitioning from in-office to remote or hybrid models of work

due to COVID-19. The respondents' primary responsibilities spanned many settings

within the organization. The participation criteria included serving in a leadership

capacity before the COVID-19 pandemic. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of

Columbia International University approved flyers disseminated via email to recruit

potential study participants (see Appendix C). A phone screening confirmed participants'

alignment with inclusion criteria while also providing information regarding the purpose

of the study (see Appendix D). Participant interviews began with a review of the IRB-

approved oral consent script. Each participant provided oral consent to study participation

prior to activating the recording and transcription features on the video conferencing

platform (see Appendix E). Efforts to maintain confidentiality included removing each

participant's name and other identifying information from the transcript immediately

following the interview and replacing the identifying information with a chronological

participant number (i.e., Participant 1, Participant 2, etc.).

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent infection control procedures,

face-to-face interviews were not permissible. Leaders interested in study participation

received appointments for a telephone screening (see Appendix D). The phone screening

was optional for leaders known to meet study participation criteria and who did not have

questions regarding study participation. Verbalization of the oral consent script occurred at the onset of each interview following the exchange of brief salutations. All participants granted verbal consent for study participation and video conference recording with the transcription feature activated.

Following the interviews, 13 participants received the interview notes with identified themes and the transcripts for member checking. One participant received the notes with identified themes due to difficulty with the video conferencing software, resulting from the use of another video conferencing platform without transcription capabilities. The gold standard validity tool of qualitative research is member checking (Madill & Sullivan, 2018). Two participants provided additional information during the member-checking process; three reviewed the contents and affirmed accuracy; and the remaining participants acknowledged receiving the form and did not request edits.

Semistructured, one-on-one interviews ($N = 14$) were completed with directors, managers, and leaders experienced in abruptly transitioning supervisees from solely in-office to hybrid or exclusively teleworking due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Interviews lasted between 55 minutes and 1 hour, 59 minutes. Demographic information was part of data collection and consisted of gender, education, job title, number of years with the organization, number of years of leadership experience, volume of staff supervised, the volume of staff impacted by the leader's day-to-day decisions, and period of experience with the phenomenon. Study participants had 5 years to over 20 years of experience, with 86% of participants having 6 or more years of experience. The total volume of staff supervised by study participants varied significantly. Overall, 79% of study participants were responsible for leading teams of 21 people or more, while 36% of participants were

leading teams of more than 75 people. Given the diversity of services provided within the

organization, the study participants were employed in several position types including

clinical, clinical research, and administrative. Table 2 provides participant demographic

information.

Table 2

Participant Demographics

Study participant characteristics	*N*	%
Gender		
Female	13	92.86
Male	1	7.14
Education		
High school diploma	1	7.14
Bachelor of Arts degree	1	7.14
Bachelor of Science degree	1	7.14
Master of Business Administration degree	1	7.14
Master of Science degree	4	28.57
Master of Social Work degree	3	21.43
Doctor of Philosophy degree	3	21.43
Job title		
Manager	7	50.00
Assistant director	2	14.29
Director	4	28.57
Assistant vice president	1	7.14
Type of role		
Administrative	3	21.43
Clinical	5	35.71
Clinical and research	6	42.86
Number of staff impacted by decisions		
≤ 20	3	21.43
21–74	6	35.71
> 75	5	42.86
Years with organization		
3–5	2	14.29
6–10	3	21.43
11–15	2	14.29
16–20	1	7.14
21–25	1	7.14
26–30	1	7.14
31–35	3	21.43
36–37	1	7.14

Note. Some totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Transcript editing began on the identified interview transcripts immediately following interview completion. The original transcripts ranged from 30 to 68 pages each. Steps to prepare the data for analysis included correcting transcript errors, editing grammar, and removing repetitions. The edited transcription reflected a naturalized transcription or intelligent verbatim transcription to ease readability for member-checking purposes (Bucholtz, 2000; McMullin, 2023). This process aided in establishing and maintaining the current study's trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Microsoft Word and NVivo 12 Plus software supported data preparation efforts. The data provided for member checking ranged from 10 to 33 pages in length. Shorter member-checking documents reduced participant burden during the participant review process. Participant 2 was not able to participate in the interview using Microsoft Teams. The interview with Participant 2 occurred using a Zoom platform, which did not have transcription capability.

Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software, NVivo 12 Plus, was used to manage, organize, query, and structure data for subsequent analysis (Sutopo, 2022). An iterative approach facilitated the transition from theme description to understanding, explanation, interpretation, and conclusions. This approach served to distill the qualitative data from the complexity of the anticipated findings to clarify the key points of the phenomenon explored. The data reduction process revealed patterns and key themes.

Data Analysis

Data analysis and interpretation adhered to inductive data analysis methods aligned with phenomenology (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The current study's goal was to

increase understanding of the experiences of leaders abruptly transitioning from in-office models of work to hybrid models or telework models on the leader's management style, leadership approach, and employee engagement by identifying recurring themes. Data collection continued until achieving data saturation. Saturation confirmed that all applicable themes had emerged. Following this, a review of all transcripts served to identify the significant statements providing insight into how the participants experienced the phenomenon. Next, developing clusters of meaning from the significant statements facilitated the emergence of themes.

Bartholomew et al. (2021) provided a seven-stage model for analyzing qualitative phenomenological data. The first three stages include immersion in the data, reflecting on the data, and analyzing the data to support further categorization (Bartholomew et al., 2021). The fourth step comprises synthesizing and recombining data (Bartholomew et al., 2021). The fifth step includes relating the data to other work (Bartholomew et al., 2021). Following this, an additional step of reflecting to assess for the presence of additional details occurred (Bartholomew et al., 2021). The seventh step was the presentation, dissemination, and sharing of findings (Bartholomew et al., 2021). As these steps are not linear, recursion occurred when needed (Bartholomew et al., 2021). This process supported data exploration and making meaning of the data in alignment with established phenomenology data analysis practices (Bartholomew et al., 2021).

The purposeful sampling strategy approach supported the participant recruitment process. This approach provided the opportunity to ensure that all participants possessed the shared phenomenon of serving as leaders experienced in abruptly transitioning from in-office to hybrid or remote work modalities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The

research participants were all leaders within the same nonprofit organization dedicated to

supporting individuals with a wide array of developmental disabilities as well as acquired

brain and spinal cord injuries. The organization is comprised of an inpatient hospital,

over 25 outpatient specialized medical clinics, a therapeutic foster care program, a

network of nonpublic schools for students not able to be educated in the public school

setting, and innovative research programs. Given the diversity of services provided by the

organization, the participants varied in educational backgrounds, participant years of

experience in leadership, and number of supervisees. Table 1 provides the demographic

information for the 14 participants. Additional IRB protocols served to ensure that no

perception of undue persuasion influenced study participation.

The organization employs nearly 3,000 individuals working across multiple

campuses as well as those working remotely. Approved study recruitment flyers were

disseminated using established email distribution lists consisting of approximately 154

leaders within the organization (see Appendix C). Recruitment materials informed

recipients of the study goal to increase understanding of the impact of telework models of

service delivery within a tertiary-level health-care facility on leadership styles,

management approaches, and employee engagement. Leaders interested in study

participation had the opportunity to express interest via phone or email. All participants

elected to express interest via email.

The inclusion criteria for this study consisted of adult leaders working in the same

tertiary-level health-care facility and possessing direct lived experiences of abruptly

transitioning from in-office to hybrid or teleworking secondary to the COVID-19

pandemic. All participants consented to the audio and video recording with transcription

services activated throughout the interviews. Each study interview occurred in English. Study exclusion criteria included all children and adults without direct lived experience with the phenomena. The established criteria ensured that all participants were able to make a meaningful contribution to the study because of their direct lived experiences.

Fourteen leaders expressed interest in participating in the study via email. Prescreening confirmed that all interested participants possessed direct lived experience with the phenomenon explored. The telephone screening was available to ensure that interested leaders met the inclusion criteria (see Appendix D). The prescreening also provided potential participants with an introduction to the study. The potential participants also received information about the purpose of the study and information regarding the requirements for study participation. Potential participants also received details regarding the voluntary nature of study participation and management procedures for protecting their personal information throughout engagement with the study. The disclaimer also informed potential participants that study participation would have no impact on their employment within the organization or their ability to receive care within the organizations overseeing the study's IRB. All potential participants confirmed continued interest in participation and subsequently scheduled an interview time that was in alignment with the participant's availability. The prescreening questions were as follows:

- Were you responsible for leading in-office employees or trainees prior to February 2020?

- Were you responsible for transitioning your in-office employees or trainees to a hybrid and/or remote working model secondary to the COVID-19 pandemic?

- Would you be willing to participate in a recorded 1-hour videoconference interview regarding your experience supervising the transition from in-office to hybrid and/or telework models and employee engagement secondary to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Study participation criteria were included on flyers to solicit participation (see Appendix C). Inclusion and exclusion criteria were also included in the telephone screening script as reflected in Appendix D. Leaders known to meet study inclusion criteria and who responded affirmatively to all prescreening questions were scheduled for an interview. All 14 leaders interested in study participation met full inclusion criteria. Leaders provided information regarding their available days and times for the study interview to be scheduled. Interviews were then scheduled with information regarding the applicable videoconferencing information for the requested day and times.

Each interview began with greeting participants and thanking participants for their interest in study participation. Then, verbal review of the waiver of documentation of the consent script served to provide information regarding the purpose of the study, study procedures, and additional information needed. The waiver of documentation of the consent script is in Appendix E. Following the consent script reading, the participants provided verbal consent to participate in the study. Participant verbal consent proceeded activation of the recording and transcription features in the video conferencing software. The recording feature activation included visual notification to all participants reflecting that the recording and transcription had begun. The visual notification of recording and transcription was dismissible by each participant. The recording and transcription features remained activated through the completion of all interview questions (IQs)

including the participant having the opportunity to convey any remaining thoughts, feedback, or details regarding their experience with the phenomena. The IRB-approved IQs are in Appendix F. At the end of the videoconference call, the participants were each reminded that they would have the option of participating in member checking. An expression of appreciation for each participant's engagement preceded the ending of the interviews.

Fourteen semistructured, one-on-one interviews occurred with leaders experienced in abruptly transitioning supervisees from solely in-office to hybrid or exclusively teleworking due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants confirmed understanding that study participation and all responses were optional. This effort ensured that all participants understood that the contents were an accurate reflection of their perspectives of their lived experiences with the phenomenon. Throughout each interview, clarifying follow-up questions served to achieve an accurate understanding of the details conveyed by each participant. Efforts served to confirm the accuracy of contributing themes captured in each response. The primary objective of this study was to gain a better understanding of how telework models of service delivery within a tertiary-level health-care facility impact leadership styles, management approaches, and employee engagement. This current study also sought to advance understanding of the perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of teleworking models of service delivery within a health-care facility. The final objective pertained to seeking to gain insight into the experiences of directors, managers, supervisors, and other leaders abruptly transitioning from an in-office work model to a telework modality as it related to the supervisor's relationship with supervisees. Participants broadly reflected on two

groups of supervisees: health-care providers and organization team members serving in supportive capacities. The supervisors had experience transitioning to a hybrid or fully remote work model in March of 2020. The interviews occurred prior to July 1, 2022. At that time, no leaders reported that all of their team members had returned to fully in-office work models.

Interviews only exceeded the anticipated interview length when participants affirmed having additional content to share and their willingness to devote additional time to participate in the study. The average interview length was 79 minutes. The longest interview was 119 minutes. The shortest interview was 55 minutes. Following the completion of the IQs, all participants expressed additional thoughts as needed. Notations concerning participant effect and subtle themes occurred throughout all interviews.

The data collection process was in alignment with the plan provided in Chapter 3. Most interviews occurred as planned. All participants conveyed great interest and enthusiasm at having the opportunity to reflect on the phenomenon. Participant 2 had trouble with audio functionality within the Microsoft Teams platform during the interview. Subsequently, the interview transitioned to a second secure video conferencing platform, Zoom, which did not offer recording or transcription capabilities. Participant 2 received the interview notes with meeting themes identified to achieve member checking and to support data integrity.

Participants responded to open-ended IQs designed to elicit descriptive responses about the phenomenon. As the interviews progressed, consideration of responses provided at earlier points of the interview occurred, while also eliciting additional content from the participants. IQs were also repeated and rephrased as needed to ensure

participant understanding. The participants received opportunities to share details regarding the sustainability of early shifts in their management approach. Further exploration prompted study participants to consider how they may have responded to the phenomenon differently given the knowledge gained from their lived experience. As part of the member-checking process, participants received summaries of the interview and had the opportunity to provide feedback. One participant provided additional content. Following member checking, each transcript was loaded into NVivo 12 Plus for analysis.

A qualitative phenomenological analysis of the collected data was completed. The data obtained from the 14 participant interviews gave clarity to the RQs. The study goal was to advance understanding of how telework models of service delivery within a tertiary-level health-care facility impact leadership styles, management approaches, and employee engagement. The modified van Kaam's method of analysis identified emergent themes based on the participant's responses to the IQs (Moustakas, 1994). Analysis of the collected data revealed recurring themes reflected in the data.

Data analysis included assessing participant responses for seven purposes as indicated by the preliminary grouping and listing (Moustakas, 1994). Next, reduction and elimination by determining if a phrase contains vital and important information and coding the phrase as an abstract term was completed (Moustakas, 1994). After this, creating groups and themes of equal components occurred (Moustakas, 1994). This step refers to the steps to thematize the invariant constituents (Moustakas, 1994). The next step was to check the themes against the data, which included the finalization of groups and themes of equal components and referring to the raw data to verify the information (Moustakas, 1994). The fifth step was to create an individual textual narrative of the

experience, using direct quotes from interviews (Moustakas, 1994). Next, an individual

organizational narrative based on the individual textual narrative was created reflecting

experience (Moustakas, 1994). Following this, a textural–organizational description for

each participant was completed (Moustakas, 1994). This entailed the development of a

structured description (Moustakas, 1994). Lastly, development of a composite structural–

textural description occurred by combining the narrative of implications and principles

representing the experience (Moustakas, 1994). This step refers to a synthesis yielding a

comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Identification of

central themes among participants emerged with the help and use of Moustakas's (1994)

modified van Kaam method. The NVivo 12 Plus software proved useful for advancing

the understanding of trends and outcomes. The previously stated steps served to verify

themes, create textural descriptions, highlight reoccurring themes through composite

textural and structural descriptions, and merge descriptions to understand the

phenomenon based on participants' lived experiences (Moustakas, 1994).

     The initial step of the phenomenological reduction process used was epoché, also

referred to as bracketing (Zahavi, 2021). Epoché necessitated the setting aside of existing

preconceived judgments or biases related to the phenomenon (Zahavi, 2021). Critical

self-questioning occurred during the reflective process (Bevan, 2014). Critical self-

questioning advanced the focus on the phenomenon without inserting personal

knowledge, beliefs, or attitudes (Bevan, 2014). Epoché ensured the focus remained on the

leaders' lived experiences related to the abrupt transition from in-office to remote and

hybrid work modalities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. All direct personal experience

with the studied phenomenon was set aside for this study. Epoché helped to protect and

maintain an objective viewpoint. Dissemination of interview transcripts to the study

participants facilitated member checking. Data analysis adhered to the modified van

Kaam method of analysis to identify emergent themes based on the participants'

responses to IQs (Moustakas, 1994). The approach permitted the in-depth review of the

phenomenon as experienced by 14 directors, managers, supervisors, and leaders within

the same tertiary- level health-care facility. All seven stages of data analysis displayed in

Figure 1 reflect adherence to the seven steps of modified van Kaam's method of analysis.

Figure 1

Seven Stages of Data Analysis

Data Analysis
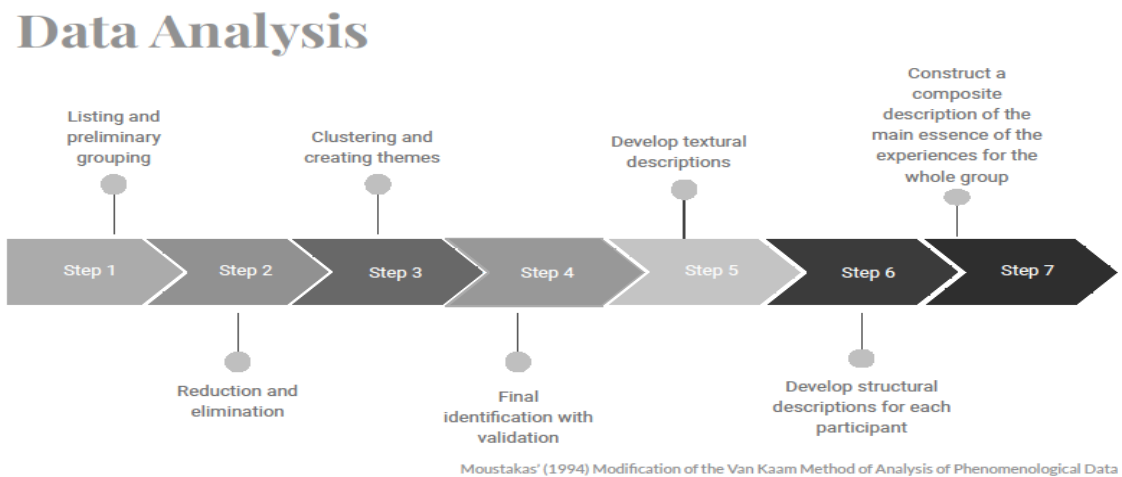
Note. From *A Transcendental Phenomenological Study of Professional, Working Mothers*

Who Persisted to Doctoral Degree Completion, by B. K. Bruscino, 2019, Publication No.

2280, Doctoral Dissertation, Liberty University, p. 111

(https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/doctoral/2280). Used with permission (see Appendix

H).

Step 1: Listing & Preliminary Grouping (Horizontalization)

Moustakas's (1994) modified van Kaam data analysis approach begins with bridling exercises, horizontalizing, and thematizing. Horizontalization is the process of laying out all the data for examination and treating each piece of data with equal weight (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The process includes highlighting any piece of data that speaks to the experience of the phenomenon while irrelevant statements are removed, which leaves only the textual meanings of the phenomenon, referred to as horizons (Moustakas, 1994). The horizons are then organized and clustered into themes, resulting in a full depiction of the phenomenon and its meaning (Moustakas, 1994).

For the current study, this first step of data analysis began with rereading and relistening to the video recordings of the interviews. This reorientation supported alignment with the participants' voices and words to best maintain alignment with the conveyed message. Information referenced during this stage also included descriptive notes, linguistic notes, and conceptual notes (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Descriptive notes contained a summary of the explicit meaning of what the participant conveyed. Linguistic notes included the context and manner in which the participants conveyed their actual statements. False starts or hesitations that indicated the participants were having trouble verbalizing the experience were some examples of this. Conceptual notes were questions or ponderings seeking better understanding of the topic of discussion.

Listing every significant and relevant expression from the interview transcripts expanded the understanding of the participants' lived experiences with the phenomenon aided to accomplish this task. Each expression, or horizon, received equal significance. Following this, removal of all unclear or repetitive horizons ensued. Distinct horizons

were clustered into thematic labels as the core themes of the experience through

deductive coding based on the IQs occurred. Themes were validated by cross-checking

them against the original transcript. Establishing individual textural and structural

descriptions by integrating the themes and subthemes resulted from the respective

participant's quotes. Horizontalization facilitated an in-depth understanding of the lived

experience shared by each participant. Horizontalization ensured equal weight of each

received statement in the interviews.

Step 2: Reduction & Elimination of Data

The second step involved reducing and eliminating data to essential ideas or

invariant constituents of the experience (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Data elimination

permitted the clustering of horizons of the data that remained available. Reviewing the

translated data prevented redundancy in the coded themes. This stage includes the

identification and subsequent removal of participant quotes that were not relevant to the

participants' lived experiences (Galinha-de-Sá & Velez, 2022). Participant statements

that were repetitive, vague, or overlapping were also eliminated (Moustakas, 1994). This

step of the phenomenological reduction describes the phenomena in textural language

(Moustakas, 1994). After the transcripts were reidentified, cleaned, and sent for member

checking, each transcript was uploaded to NVivo 12 Plus. Following this, establishing the

initial set of codes created organized the data into meaningful patterns from the initial

analysis. This step included data coding and clustering. Appendix G reflects the initial

codes, frequency of occurrence, and the descriptions of the codes.

Step 3: Clustering & Creating Themes

The process of clustering and creating themes consisted of finding connections and clustering experiential statements (Moustakas, 1994). The invariant constituents underwent organization into themes related to the participants' lived experiences regarding the impact of the abrupt transition from in-office to hybrid and remote work modalities on leadership styles, management approaches, and employee engagement. Following the elimination of repetitive statements, themes emerged from the data (Behal, 2020).

Step 4: Final Identification With Validation & Themes Checked Against the Data

An established criterion facilitated validation of the themes and those themes against participants' responses (Moustakas, 1994). The transcript reflected the established themes and the two were compatible. Themes not explicitly reflected in the transcript or deemed compatible were deleted (Behal, 2020).

Step 5: Develop Textural Descriptions

Creation of individual textual descriptions occurred after the codes verifying categories and themes from participant data were complete (Moustakas, 1994). In alignment with Moustakas's (1994) research, data from the interview transcripts were included in the individual textual descriptions. The individual textual descriptions conveyed the leaders' experiences with the abrupt transition from in-office to remote and hybrid modalities as it related to their leadership styles, management approaches, and employee engagement. The interview transcript excerpts reflected the significance of the participants' lived experiences with the phenomenon.

Step 6: Develop Structured Descriptions

The process of developing a structured description served to advance understanding of the participants' perceptions, feelings, and impacts of their experiences (Moustakas, 1994). Recurring themes emerged through the process of clustering similar sentiments expressed by the participants. Textural descriptions and imaginative variation led to the construction of individual structural descriptions. Imaginative variation was used to determine how participants' lived experiences occurred and then to create the structure.

Step 7: Construct a Composite Description for the Group

The development of the final synthesis of meanings and essences of the phenomenon occurred during this stage (Moustakas, 1994). A unified statement of the meaning of the phenomenon served to articulate the full narrative based on the participants' experiences (Moustakas, 1994). Table 3 illustrates the impact of the abrupt transition from in-office to hybrid and remote work modalities on leadership approaches, management styles, and employee engagement, organized by theme and RQ.

Table 3

Theme Name & Content Organized by Research Question

Theme	Theme content	Associated research question (RQ)
Establishing and leading in the new reality	• Perceived need for compassionate leadership approaches given profound levels of uncertainty • Leading while acknowledging the whole person, not just a focus on the work responsibilities of supervisees • Increased opportunities for them to engage in shared leadership practices among team members	RQ1
Significance of lived experiences	• Importance of emotional engagement • Need to act with urgency • Intrinsically motivated employees are as or more productive than they had been in person	RQ1
Importance of accountability systems	• Stain the corporate culture and reinforce the perception of leader trustworthiness • Understanding of mission, vision goals • Awareness of what we're doing and why • Managers with existing accountability systems maintained a confident awareness of the productivity of their supervisees	RQ2
Communication with the team	• Lost opportunities for the "hallway chats" for informal communication • Increased frequency of team and one on one meetings • Communicating with transparency • Working to establish and maintain trust • Developing replacement strategies for information communication with each team member	RQ3
Significance of employees' engagement with one another	• Engagement strategies implemented to influence virtual employee engagement • For staff that live alone, increased concerns regarding social isolation and subsequently their mental health	RQ3

Results

The completed data analysis revealed the perspectives of the 14 participants'

responses to the IQs. The results reflect an unbiased representation of the participants'

lived experiences and their perspective of the phenomenon. The content in the following

subsections reflects the outcomes of the data analysis organized in the context of the

RQs.

Research Question 1

RQ1 asked what the perceptions are of the impact of telework models of service

delivery within a tertiary-level health care-facility on leadership styles. Two themes

focusing on RQ1 emerged from IQ1 through IQ10. The IQs are available in Appendix F.

Theme 1: Establishing & Leading in the New Reality

The first theme pertained to *establishing and leading in the new reality*. IQ7

asked, "During the initial transition, describe your perspective on supporting staff

balancing multiple priorities including work responsibilities, family, community, and

others." Participant 1 said,

> I told my team that "We are going to make this transition. I know that there are
>
> some barriers, but right now, we're not going to worry about our productivity.
>
> What I want you to do is get yourself ready to make this transition and then start
>
> adding patients as best you can." I said, "We're all struggling through this," and
>
> … I didn't feel anyone took advantage of [the decrease in productivity
>
> expectations]. … I think it was more that they were like, "OK, she trusts me to …
>
> do this and be … as productive as I can [be]." … I think if I, [as the supervisor],
>
> had said or if the institute or the program had said, "We don't care if your kids are

home. You still have to meet this productivity [goal]," they would have felt that

this was an unreasonable expectation, and they would have become disengaged. I

think getting away from pushing [requiring] productivity showed … some respect

for their for positions and for them … [as] human beings.

IQ7 asked, "In reflection, what would you have done differently?" Participant 1 said,

I don't know that I would have done much differently. Maybe it would have been

beneficial to work more closely with the other manager and what our message

was and being aligned with [our program's full leadership team]. It probably

would have been nice to have some consensus and buy-in.

Participant 1 found that the management approach employed in seeking to establish and

lead in the new reality due to the abrupt transition would have been more effective had

they sought to have closer alignment with managers of comparable team members and

with the executive director prior to executing significant staffing decisions. The

participant felt that the lack of consistency regarding work location expectations may

have influenced morale negatively.

Theme 2: Significance of Lived Experiences

The second theme, related to RQ1's focus on the perceptions of the impact of

telework models of service delivery within a tertiary-level health-care facility on

leadership styles, was *the significance of lived experiences*. Many leaders noted the

importance of incorporating an understanding of the broader lived experiences of

supervisees experiencing the transition to remote and hybrid work modalities. Participant

5 said,

It can work … if people feel adequately heard and supported. … It could probably

work out very well. Again, [the] nature of the job always changes in certain roles

[and] require[s] certain types of demands. But if, first and foremost, you don't feel

supported, I just don't see how things can work, and I think part of that support

includes … the tangible things like making sure that you're equipping that

individual with the tools that they need to do their job. … But then, there's also …

that more emotional support standpoint, right, like understanding and setting

expectations and knowing [that] you can't always ask … employee[s] to disclose

… what's going on at home. They may or may not. But … as a supervisor, [it's

important to recognize] that we don't always know what other people are going

through—we just don't. And you can … always assume that there is something

else and that's the safest route to go. So, I think … that tangible but also

emotional support is probably so key … [in] supporting someone successfully

working from home. This includes the tangible things, tech [and other] items,

needed to do your job. Being mindful in the leadership approach. Providing

emotional support. Understanding we don't know [everything] they are dealing

with.

Participants 5, 4, and 7 reflected that staff feeling adequately heard and supported was

essential to supervisees being successful while working remotely. The participants

reported their perception of a direct relationship between their management approach and

employee performance. Participants also related management effectiveness with

establishing clarity surrounding the supervisees' roles and responsibilities. The

participants included examples such as listening to supervisees regarding the type of

equipment and technology needs they had while seeking to fulfill their work-related tasks. Participant 5 further noted,

> We don't want staff to harbor resentment out [of] the gate by being like, "You have to use your own computer or your own [phone to send text messages]." I think it's important to take that responsible role and say … instead of … keeping the lights in your office on and everything clean and supplying your desk supplies in office, we do the same thing at home to ensure that you have a good environment for you to have the tools needed to do your job. [I] think that's important.

Research Question 2

RQ2 focused on the perceptions of the impact of telework models of service delivery within a tertiary-level health-care facility on management approaches. IQ11 through IQ18 focused on RQ2. Appendix F shows all IQs. The resulting theme was *the importance of accountability and the importance of monitoring systems*.

Theme 3: Accountability/Importance of Monitoring Systems

Participants conveyed details related to their lived experiences related to the use of in-person management approaches with team members who abruptly transitioned from exclusively in-office to hybrid and remote work modalities within a tertiary-level health-care facility. The abrupt transition occurred because of the pandemic. The participants acknowledged the importance of being compassionate and understanding of the needs of supervisees. Participants with more formal leadership training emphasized the importance of having systems in place to support accountability.

IQ13 (see Appendix F) asked participants to describe their perception of the effectiveness of their management techniques for employees who are working in the office versus employees who are working in hybrid setting. Participant 7 noted,

I would say I probably feel more effective interpersonally with the [staff] who are in the office [because] I make rounds every day. … A lot of who I'm interacting with is our care team staff. We have a skeletal staff as I mentioned before. I make sure I'm down there wandering around, just chatting. I have the feedback that it really matters that someone on the leadership team is here ... especially when in the early days [there was so much concern about the risk of contracting COVID-19]. … I tell you, this is the cleanest place I've ever been. The transmissions are not happening here. It was never [a concern] about getting sick here, never. In the early days, I think a lot of people were worried that the workplace was dangerous.

Several participants reported feeling more confident in their management approaches with supervisees who have some time in the office as compared to those working fully remotely. The factors contributing to this perception included the length of time the supervisee had been working within the organization and secondary to this the presence of an established working relationship with the supervisee. Participants reported having hired additional staff members during the pandemic. Given this, some participants had some supervisees who had never had the opportunity to work in the office. Participant 1 shared the feeling that "the telehealth fully remote clinicians are the more seasoned clinicians." Given this, Participant 1 trusted clinicians to contact her when they had questions. Many participants echoed Participant 1's perspective on the relationship

between the supervisees' depth of experience in their jobs correlating with the managers' level of confidence in the supervisees' efficiency while working remotely.

Participant 7 described her perception of the effectiveness of her management techniques for employees who were working in the office versus employees who were working in a hybrid setting, stating,

> I think that the people who are hybrid definitely have more independence than prior to the pandemic. Both in terms of … what their day-to-day looks like, but also thinking about how they just manage issues that come up. I think a lot of them are just sort of handling it or maybe they are also talking to each other more. I think I used to get more questions because I was right there. Maybe. I don't know. Certainly, … [I] still get asked some questions, but I don't know that I get those quite as much. And I don't know what is leading to this. If it's sort of relying on each other more or the team is just sort of matured, and doesn't … have as many questions, but there probably is a little less of that drop-in problem-solving in the moment sort of thing. … I think the watching of the videotape sessions gave some information, but the [people] still [know] they're being recorded, so they may not exactly act as they would if they weren't being recorded. So that definitely adds an element or a factor variable that affects how they perform.

Research Question 3

RQ3 asked what the perceptions are of the impact of telework models of service delivery within a tertiary-level health-care facility on employee engagement. IQ19

through 26 focused on RQ3 (see Appendix F). The outcome of this analysis resulted in

two themes.

Theme 4: Communication With the Team

The fourth theme from RQ3 was *communication with the team*. Participants

shared about the impact of the lost opportunities for impromptu hallway conversations

with supervisees. The participants recognized that this change resulted in the potential for

some supervisees to feel not fully supported. The participants who described their

management approach as being more hands-off reported feeling less effective in

managing their remote supervisees. Participants also noted the perceived role of the

supervisees' integrity on work performance and the accuracy of information reported to

the supervisor. Participants with formal leadership training noted their perception of the

importance of having communication systems in place for periodically performing

alignment audits to ensure that virtual employees were aligned with the organization's

cultural values, the mission, and the vision. The participants reflected that following the

initial transition to remote work, information changed frequently. Efforts to ensure open,

timely, and efficient communication with supervisees included daily email summaries,

daily virtual huddles, and direct calls.

Theme 5: Significance of Employees Engaging With One Another

The fifth theme was *the significance of employees engaging with one another*.

Participants provided several examples regarding their intentional efforts to create

opportunities for team members to have informal communication and to maintain a close

connection with one another. Several participants identified this effort as being especially

important for supervisees who live alone and those known to not have a network of

friends or family members in the local area. All participants used strategies such as increased meeting frequency, scheduling one-on-one meetings and infusing time for informal conversations into staff meetings. Several leaders organized virtual baby showers, game nights and other themed events. Notably, several participants also reported their awareness of the additional efforts needed to maintain engagement with more introverted supervisees. Participant 11 explained,

> We did some virtual events. We did a [virtual] movie, and we did a virtual escape room. We came up with creative activities. And then when we were kind of like in the middle [of the pandemic], where we could be in person, we did a[n] activity tournament. … I've tried to be very consistently available, broadening my availability, adding on some extra things here and there. We're about to do something nice at the year end. I haven't figured out what it is; we're at the point now where we try to do something for whoever's here that day and something for everybody else, but the majority of people are not here. I would say my general feeling is we're not doing enough.

A recurring pattern of leaders using creative and innovative strategies to support employee engagement and still not feeling that their efforts were sufficient was evident throughout the study interviews. This pattern was in alignment with the participants' reports that they had sacrificed their personal self-care to be more available to their supervisees because of this abrupt transition. The sacrifices were evident in patterns such as making themselves available for calls and meetings outside of their traditional in-office work hours. Participants also reported encouraging supervisees to contact them using their personal cellular phones or home phones to reinforce their availability to

provide support as needed. Participants acknowledged feeling guilty about their sense of

job security as opposed to supervisees who felt doubtful about their employment because

their regular duties did not simply convert to remote work modes, which led to additional

efforts to retain staff. The most difficult experience voiced by participants related to the

process of deciding to furlough supervisees whose work responsibilities were not able to

transition to remote work modalities.

Chapter Summary

This qualitative phenomenological study intended to answer the three established

RQs. The participants provided informative responses to the semistructured IQs. The

responses assisted in advancing understanding of how telework models of service

delivery within a tertiary-level health-care facility impact leadership styles, management

approaches, and employee engagement.

The qualitative study entailed semistructured interviews with 14 participants who

responded to 26 open-ended IQs. Data analysis occurred in alignment with Moustakas's

(1994) modified van Kaam process. These implemented steps include horizontalization,

reduction and elimination, thematizing and clustering, theme verification, textural

descriptions identification, structural descriptions identification, and composite textural

descriptions, referred to as synthesis (Moustakas, 1994). The use of NVivo 12 Plus

supported the development of codes and themes from the interview data (Sutopo, 2022).

The data analysis revealed five dominant themes. Dominant themes identified included

the leaders' perspectives on *establishing and leading in the new reality*, *the significance*

of lived experiences, *the importance of accountability systems*, *communication with the*

team, and *the significance of employees engaging with one another*. Leaders identified a

contributing factor as the period of heightened social reckoning and protests about systemic racism in the United States that began in 2020 (Gordon, 2021). This chapter included an explanation of the steps used to analyze the data gathered during the participant interviews. Participant interviews created the opportunity to explore the RQs, and the participants' lived experiences. Chapter 5 includes a review of the study findings, conclusions, and implications of this study.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS & SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

This qualitative phenomenological study explored the impact of the abrupt transition from in-office to hybrid and remote work modalities on leadership styles, management approaches, and employee engagement. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the role of leaders became significantly more complicated. Dasborough and Scandura (2022) postulated that the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in leadership emerging as the most important area of study in 2021. Following the pandemic, expectations of leaders included understanding occupational health and safety rules and practices and making determinations regarding telecommuting and virtual teamwork, as well as additional factors that may ultimately shape the careers of employees who work under them (Dasborough & Scandura, 2022). Chapter 5 summarizes the current study including the purpose statement, research questions (RQs), methodology, population, and sample. Thematic analysis of in-depth participant interviews revealed common themes. The common themes led to theoretical, practical, and future implications and conclusions. Chapter 5 concludes with recommendations for future research on strategies for effectively managing remotely working employees within a tertiary-level health-care facility.

A limited amount of qualitative research has been conducted on the perceptions of leaders within a tertiary-level health-care facility on the impact that abruptly shifting from in-office to hybrid and remote work models has on leadership approaches, management styles, and employee engagement. To date, most qualitative research related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has focused on the viewpoint of the employee but has neglected to analyze the relationship from the perspective of the leader. In this

current study, semistructured interviews served to investigate the impact of abruptly

shifting from in-office to hybrid and remote work modalities on leadership approaches,

management styles, and employee engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic. By

understanding how leaders in tertiary-level health-care facilities abruptly transitioned

from in-office to hybrid and remote models of work, this study created opportunities for

identifying the most effective leadership approaches, management styles, and strategies

for enhancing employee engagement.

Summary of Study

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic demanded an abrupt transition from in-office

work models to hybrid and remote work modalities around the world (Contreras et al.,

2020). This study sought to bring understanding to how abruptly shifting from in-office

to hybrid and remote work modalities impacts leadership styles, management approaches,

and employee engagement within a tertiary-level health-care facility. As a global crisis,

the COVID-19 pandemic created unprecedented levels of fear and instability (Czeisler et

al., 2020). The perceived pandemic threats and psychological pressure caused by

profound uncertainty created significant challenges for leaders in the workplace

(Contreras et al., 2020). Given the predictive relationship between employee engagement,

leadership styles, and management approaches, and in light of the abrupt and

unprecedented transition that occurred, this study aimed to identify the impacts of

abruptly shifting from in-office to remote and hybrid work modalities on leadership

styles, management approaches, and employee engagement (Alam et al., 2022).

The purpose of this study was to make a positive contribution to the body of

existing literature on how telework models of service delivery within a tertiary-level

health-care facility impact leadership styles, management approaches, and employee engagement. The study included an extensive review of existing literature on leadership styles, management approaches, and employee engagement. The study aimed to understand the impacts of the abrupt transition to hybrid and remote work modalities from in-office models on the participants' leadership styles, management approaches, and employee engagement.

Many qualitative research designs exist. The current study selected the phenomenological approach as the most ideal research approach for gaining a better understanding of the phenomenon of abruptly transitioning from in-house to hybrid and remote work modalities on leadership styles, management approaches, and employee engagement. The RQs for this phenomenological study were as follows:

- RQ1: What are the perceptions of the impact of telework models of service delivery on leadership styles within a tertiary-level health-care facility?

- RQ2: What are the perceptions of the impact of telework models of service delivery on management approaches within a tertiary-level health-care facility?

- RQ3: What are the perceptions of the impact of telework models of service delivery on employee engagement within a tertiary-level health-care facility?

The research process used purposeful sampling to ensure the inclusion of participants who met the specific criteria based on leadership roles within the tertiary-level health-care facility and had their work modality impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The recruitment plan for this study included disseminating information using an email group for members of the leadership team within the tertiary-level health-care facility. Research flyers approved by the Columbia International University Institutional

Review Board included information regarding the study and the inclusion criteria for study participation, provided via the leadership email group as well as by making announcements during large leadership meetings.

Leaders who participated in the study voiced interest in survey participation by communicating their intention via email. Telephone screenings occurred as needed and one-on-one interviews were scheduled and occurred with the 14 study participants (see Appendix D). One participant requested a telephone screening and a video conference to learn more about the study before scheduling and subsequently completing the semistructured, one-on-one interview. Ultimately, all 14 leaders who communicated interest in study participation provided verbal consent and completed the entire study.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent infection control procedures that were set in place, face-to-face interviews were not permissible. A review of the Institutional Review Board-approved oral consent script occurred at the onset of each interview. The oral consent document informed participants of their ability to take a break and discontinue the interview at any time. Each participant provided oral consent to study participation prior to the activation of the recording and transcription features on the video conferencing platform (see Appendix E). Efforts to maintain confidentiality included removing each participant's name and other identifying information from the transcript immediately following the interview and replacing the identifying information with a chronological participant number (i.e., Participant 1, Participant 2, etc.).

The research design included efforts to support study validity. Steps taken to support validity included the dedication of careful attention to the study conceptualization, data collection, data analysis, data interpretation, and data presented.

Additional efforts to support the trustworthiness of the results included providing all study participants the opportunity to review and provide feedback on their transcripts and the themes identified from their content. This member checking and participant validation step served to further support study validity.

Thirteen interviews were completed virtually using Microsoft Teams software with the recording and transcription features activated. Participant 2 experienced technical difficulties with Microsoft Teams, leading the interview to be completed through Zoom. Recording and transcription services were not available on the Zoom platform. Interviews were scheduled in 1-hour time slots. Extended meeting times occurred as needed with the participants' consent. Following each interview, participants received a copy of their interview transcript and had the opportunity to review, edit, and approve their responses. Qualitative data analysis occurred using NVivo 12 Plus for the organization, storage, and analysis of the data. NVivo 12 Plus facilitated the analysis of data containing participants' responses to the interview questions (IQs). Employing NVivo 12 Plus supported thematic analysis of the interview data. Ultimately, data saturation occurred, and five themes emerged from the data. The themes were (a) *efforts to establish and lead in the context of the new reality*, (b) *the significance of lived experiences*, (c) *the importance of accountability systems*, (d) *communication with the team*, and (e) *the significance of employees engaging with one another*. Later sections of Chapter 5 outline and discuss the conclusions based on the findings presented in Chapter 4. Additionally, an exploration of the theoretical, practical, and future implications is included in Chapter 5. Chapter 5 concludes with recommendations for future research.

Conclusions & Discussion

The research design used in this study sought to advance understanding of the participants' experiences with the phenomenon. The three RQs facilitated understanding of the participants' experiences with the phenomenon. Accordingly, leaders within a tertiary-level health-care facility abruptly transitioned from in-office to remote and hybrid work modalities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The themes were (a) *efforts to establish and lead in the context of the new reality*, (b) *the significance of lived experiences*, (c) *the importance of accountability systems*, (d) *communication with the team*, and (e) *the significance of employees engaging with one another*.

The five themes emerged from the participants' lived experiences as leaders of teams that had abruptly transitioned from in-office to hybrid and remote work modalities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The themes indicated contributing factors related to the leaders' perceptions of the impact of the abrupt transition on their leadership approaches, management styles, and employee engagement. All participants had a combined 170 years of leadership experience and a combined 263 years of experience with the organization. As highly invested and experienced leaders within the organization, the participants were well-positioned to guide their teams during this significant transition. Overall, the identified themes contributed meaningful insights, leading to the development of frameworks available to support leaders within a tertiary-level health-care facility experiencing abrupt transitions in the work modality of team members.

Research Question 1

The first RQ sought to understand participants' perceptions of the impact of telework models of service delivery within a tertiary-level health-care facility on

leadership styles. The first theme that developed was *efforts to establish and lead in the context of the new reality*. Study participants shared that the process of establishing employees' capacity to effectively work from home included giving employees the hardware, software, and related network access they needed. The study revealed the need for a significant level of creativity and flexibility to translate the work responsibilities of some team members to a hybrid or fully remote modality. The additional aspect of Theme 1 related to the lived experiences conveyed related to the impact of additional life stressors affecting employees during the pandemic. Supervisors acknowledged their awareness of caregiving responsibilities and extended illnesses on employee engagement and overall employee wellness. Study participants were also impacted by their increased awareness of racial discrimination, racial trauma, and the subsequent impact on the mental health of their workers (Mollica & Fernando, 2020)

Theme 1: Establishing & Leading in the New Reality

The first theme, *establishing and leading in the new reality*, emerged based on the perspective of leading during this period of uncertainty. The study participants all faced challenging decisions in determining which of their supervisees served in a capacity that was generalizable to the hybrid or remote work setting. Leaders reported facing the challenging decision to determine which supervisees' roles and skill sets were not generalizable at the beginning of the pandemic. Leaders reported that this information guided decision-making to determine which individuals would remain actively employed. Furloughs were the only option for employees without generalizable roles. Leaders found this process to be a profoundly difficult and perspective-altering experience. Several participants mentioned that they had blotted out the memory of having to furlough team

members at the start of the pandemic. The participants spoke with candor and compassion

regarding their respective commitments to intentionally incorporating equity, diversity,

and inclusion efforts within their respective teams.

This study also revealed the steps taken by leaders seeking to translate

individuals' work roles, work responsibilities, and the existing workplace culture into

virtual work models. The health-care leaders reported increased opportunities to create

opportunities for shared leadership among team members. Leaders noted the importance

of being able to act with urgency, flexibility, and creativity during the period of

transition. Leaders sought to translate milestone celebrations including baby showers,

wedding showers, and other events virtually to sustain the departmental culture. Table 4

provides an overview of the descriptors used by participants to identify their respective

leadership styles during the abrupt shift from in-office to remote and hybrid work

modalities.

Table 4

Participants' Personal Descriptions of Their Own Leadership Style

Participant	Descriptor of leadership style
1	Visible, supportive, communicative, trusting, relational
2	Supportive, communicative, relational
3	Servant leadership
4	Compassionate leader
5	Realistic, humanistic approach
6	Reflective
7	Stewardship
8	Visible leader
9	Stewardship, listening, humor, responsive
10	Calm, relational approach
11	Providing reassurance, promoting vulnerability, relational
12	Optimistic
13	Supportive
14	Supportive

Theme 2: Significance of Lived Experiences

The second theme, *the significance of lived experiences*, emerged during the

leaders' reflections on the abrupt transition from in-office to hybrid and remote work

modalities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The leaders shared details regarding the

tremendous level of uncertainty that existed prior to COVID-19 tests and vaccines being

available. Researchers have studied several aspects of clinical leadership, employee

engagement, and retention due to newly implemented remote work models (Li et al.,

2021; Newman & Ford, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic caused significant disruption in

the workplace (Amis & Janz, 2020). Leaders recognized that their employees were

struggling with increased levels of anxiety because of risks related to their physical

health, difficulty maintaining a work–life balance, and fears related to their economic

insecurity. The leaders recognized that the female employees they supervised suddenly were thrust into the position of grappling with managing their full-time employment while caring for their children and other loved ones at home, as childcare centers and other organizations closed. The findings of Stefanova et al. (2023) confirmed a persistent gender imbalance related to household and parenting responsibilities among heterosexual families with female caregivers spending significantly more time on caregiving compared to male caregivers throughout the pandemic. Participants' reports were in alignment with research findings regarding the additional strain female employees faced and subsequent negative personal outcomes including burnout confronted by female employees (Stefanova et al., 2023).

Each participant also reflected on the impact of the racial pandemic on their management approaches, especially with supervisees from underrepresented populations. The leaders expressed the desire to support the mental health of their team members while effectively managing the expectations of their respective roles. The leaders consistently sought to extend their office camaraderie to the virtual workplace setting.

Research Question 2

The second RQ sought to bring understanding to participants' perceptions of the impact of telework models of service delivery within a tertiary-level health-care facility on management approaches. The third theme was *accountability/importance of monitoring systems* and reflected the participants' experiences as leaders of individuals who had abruptly transitioned from in-office to remote and hybrid work modalities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The study revealed the level of emphasis all leaders placed on

the importance of having reliable data and other indicators to enhance their ability to

understand the productivity level of their supervisees.

Theme 3: Accountability/Importance of Monitoring Systems

The study revealed that the leaders understood the importance of maintaining

accountability for the output of their respective teams during turbulent times. Leaders

with well-established systems for monitoring accountability seamlessly generalized the

system from the in-office to the hybrid and remote work modality. Leaders without well-

established accountability systems reported perceiving their management techniques for

managing hybrid and remote employees as less effective. Participants grappled with

reconciling the relative importance of enforcing and determining how to enforce in-office

levels of accountability and expectations during the global pandemic. Additional

participants sought to support the needs of the team members using a humanistic

approach. Participants used their professional judgment, as informed by the bandwidth of

their respective programs, to be as flexible as possible with members of their team. All

leaders identified trust as a significant factor in their perceived effectiveness in managing

remote employees.

Research Question 3

The third RQ sought to understand participants' perceptions of the impact of

telework models of service delivery within a tertiary-level health-care facility on

employee engagement. The fourth theme, *communication with the team*, emerged as a

significant factor for the leadership and management of newly transitioned hybrid and

remote employees. The study revealed the perceived importance of leaders maintaining

close communication with remote and hybrid employees following the abrupt transition

from in-office modalities.

Theme 4: Communication With the Team

The study revealed that the leaders dramatically increased the frequency and

varied the modality of their communication with team members. The COVID-19

pandemic generated fear and uncertainty leading to deteriorating psychological changes

in people all over the world (Omar et al., 2021). Bakioğlu et al. (2021) identified the

mediating relationship between intolerance of uncertainty, anxiety, depression, and stress

as related to positivity and the fear of COVID-19. Findings determined that reducing the

adverse mental health impact of the COVID-19 pandemic would occur by eliminating the

uncertainty that served to exacerbate fear of COVID-19 (Bakioğlu et al., 2021).

The participants recognized that the pandemic created amplified levels of stress

and depressive symptoms among employees. According to the participants, the abrupt

transition necessitated the reconsideration of previously embraced professional

boundaries of communication. The leaders' maintained awareness of the need for

flexibility to effectively meet the needs of their team members prompted the leaders to

pivot from the sole use of email and office phones during standard business hours for

communication to more routinely communicating with employees via home phone, cell

phone, and text messages at the employees' preferred times of the day.

Theme 5: Significance of Opportunities for Team Members to Have Informal Communication & Connection With One Another

The study participants provided insight regarding the perceived impact of the employee engagement strategies implemented virtually to facilitate opportunities for structured and unstructured events. The participants established a consensus regarding their perception that virtual social events were vital for sustaining employee engagement. The leaders also remained in alignment regarding their perception of the tremendous negative impact the pandemic had on employee morale, employee mental health, and employee engagement. The participants also agreed that employee engagement became a primary area of concern following the abrupt transition from in-office to hybrid and remote work modalities. Participant 8 said,

Yes, I think that, again, given the close quarters that we work in and the team approach, I think shifting to hybrid or shifting to telehealth completely was a huge change for us. And I think even myself, as well as some of the staff, found it very isolating. I mean, there were days and days and days that I would come to work and the only person I would actually see in person would be a nurse at 7:00 o'clock in the morning … [and] the screener and the security guard, and those would be the last people I would see at night, and I wouldn't see anybody during the day except on my screen. And so that for us is a huge change when you have a team of people working closely together. I think people found it very isolating. I think we tried to maintain engagement by having group meetings, by having group activities. You know, we weren't able to do many of the social events that we used to do, you know. A lot of dinners or happy hours or lunches or

celebrations of the interns last year, the end of the year, or all those kinds of

things were gone, and they're still essentially gone or done virtually, which most

of us don't like.

Participant 3 expressed that "maybe there is a physical element of walking in a room with

a bunch of your peers that you know and work with, and you're all part of a common

mission." This awareness became a driving factor in the decision-making process of each

participant. The participants were creative in their efforts to translate the social aspects of

the in-office setting to hybrid and virtual modalities. Participant 5 shared,

I will say that the department … made a really dedicated effort [a] couple months

into the pandemic, [to address concerns that] people were feeling very lonely, and

people were missing that in-office engagement. The department made a dedicated

effort to create a social media site for the department. … So we had a group with

a couple staff who volunteered to be the head of that social committee. The

committee would figure out different events. We had a landing page where you

could [learn about] clubs and interests. They created a reading club [and] an

outdoors club that came together. So, people who really liked to go on hikes in [a

given] area would post the places that they [are going]. Or they'd [communicate

in advance of whatever they were planning] to do. [People would then] meet and

walk the trail. They did a virtual paint night a couple times which was really fun.

And it was fun to have a couple of virtual happy hour type things that they put

together. [It was] cool because people could interact however they wanted to. No

one was forced or pressured to do anything. You could post a comment or say

something and contribute that way, or you could participate in a virtual event or

meet up at like an outdoor activity type thing.

The study participants influenced employees to participate in lighthearted communication

during a wide array of occasions. Some occasions related to significant personal and

milestone events. Other occasions occurred during virtual chat and coffee meetings to

engage in virtual games and more.

A shared experience reported by participants related to their deeper appreciation

for the influence of distinct employee personality traits and employee preferences on

patterns of employees engaging with one another. Participant 7 shared,

I think, generally speaking, people are comfortable seeking help [from] peers.

That appears to be more spontaneous, like in the moment. And less formal. And

that's definitely coming through. … People want more access to peer support

group supervision, unplanned and planned… [and] the spontaneous access that I

think lowers the threshold of difficulty for asking for help. This also depends on

your style. … I think we do have … several anxious people on our team who …

have no problem accessing me. But we have more … self-contained types, like

myself, … who aren't going to really come forward unless it's a biggie. … [I see]

… different learning styles, different emotional styles.

Participant 11 identified staff hesitancy to use vacation time because of their tremendous

commitment to the mission of the department. Participant 11 also recognized that

working tirelessly is not sustainable for a prolonged timeframe. This understanding

prompted Participant 11 to employ novel approaches for supporting healthy employee

engagement including modeling the use of vacation time and developing a kudos board.

Theoretical Implications

Several leadership theories provided a foundation for this study. These theories include servant leadership, steward leadership, Kahn's (1990) employee engagement theory, and the two-factor theory of Herzberg et al. (1959). The current study's findings provide additional insight regarding the theories that informed this study.

The central tenants of Greenleaf's (2002) model of servant leadership include the leader's desire to serve and the leader's desire to lead. The participants discussed the significance of the organization's culture in reinforcing their understanding of the importance of serving the individuals under their supervision while striving to be effective leaders. Most of the participants had received minimal formal leadership training. This was notable given the participants' extensive tenure and respective leadership roles. The participants reflected on the leadership style embodied by members of the organization's senior leadership team. The participants adhered strictly to the instructions provided as they discussed the significance of looking after the individuals who were under their respective supervision. The participants' responses reflected their eager adoption of the servant-based leadership approach despite most not being familiar with the body of research detailing Greenleaf's model of servant leadership. The participants expressed the profound benefit of their commitment to place a priority on the wellness of their supervisees as being beneficial throughout the evolution that occurred in their leadership styles, management approaches, and their lived experiences related to employee engagement, following the abrupt shift from in-office to hybrid and remote modalities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The participants reported that maintaining a

servant approach in their leadership practices positively influenced their perception of the

effectiveness of their leadership approaches and employee engagement.

Steward leaders seek to elevate the perceived best interests of the individuals

under their supervision over their own personal goals and self-interests (Brinckerhoff,

2004). The participants described their decision to make self-sacrifices as related to their

desire to support the best interests of their supervisees. Participants described their

decisions to be self-sacrificing as influenced by the unprecedented levels of fear and

uncertainty related to the pandemic. The participants described extending their workday,

declining opportunities to take time away from work, and decreasing the frequency of

their self-care activities to be more available to support the needs of team members. The

participants noted initially feeling confident about their decisions. Further reflection

consistently yielded a sense of regret about the extent of sacrifices they made.

Participants noted the unintended influence their self-sacrifices had on team members.

The participants understood the long-term importance of modeling self-care as an

approach to encouraging supervisees to care for themselves. The steward leadership

approach was an applicable framework given the existing organizational culture, the

leaders' temperaments, and the altruistic calling of the individuals working within the

specific tertiary-level nonprofit organization.

Leaders within nonprofit organizations embrace more participatory forms of

decision-making in addition to being value-driven (Wilson, 2016). This leadership

orientation is in alignment with the relational aspects of leadership and the personal

engagement theory from Kahn (1990). The relational aspects of leadership refer to how

leaders interact with and influence their followers (M. Khan et al., 2022). The responses

of the study participants reinforce the personal engagement theory from Kahn.

Participants understood the importance of establishing positive relationships with their

followers, demonstrating empathy and understanding, and creating an environment that

fostered engagement, motivation, and productivity (M. Khan et al., 2022).

The framework of the personal engagement theory from Kahn (1990) explains the

manifestation of individuals' engagement or disengagement in their work. According to

Kahn's theory, engagement occurs when individuals experience a sense of psychological

presence, meaningfulness, and safety in their work environments. This current study

extends the understanding of Kahn's framework by advancing understanding of how

individuals become engaged in the virtual workplace. This study is also significant in the

advancement of understanding regarding the importance of psychological safety,

meaningfulness, and safety in the work environment in the context of the virtual and

hybrid work modalities.

Responses of the study participants were also in alignment with Kahn's (1990)

framework of disengagement occurring when followers feel disconnected, unimportant,

and unsupported at work. The current study affirmed that disengagement occurred among

employees who were previously engaged in their work. This study extends understanding

of the importance of aligning engaged employees with resources, including employee

assistance programs. Study participants communicated their investment in fostering

engagement among their followers. The study participants were also intentional in their

efforts to create a positive work environment by providing feedback, recognition, and

opportunities for professional growth and development. The leaders provided clear

examples of the approaches used to build trust and credibility by demonstrating

authenticity, transparency, and consistency in their actions and decisions. The findings of this study extend Kahn's (1990) framework by advancing understanding of the relationship between creating a sense of belonging and commitment that drives engagement and productivity.

The two-factor theory of Herzberg's et al. (1959) presents factors that contribute to employee motivation in the workplace. Herzberg et al. suggested two types of factors that affect employee motivation and satisfaction, for instance, hygiene factors and motivators. Herzberg et al. asserted that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction exist along the same continuum. This current study extends the work of Herzberg et al. in that it recognizes the importance of leaders providing more than just basic needs for employees.

Practical & Future Implications

This study's findings exposed practical and future implications related to the lived experiences of leaders within a tertiary-level health-care facility experienced in abruptly transitioning from in-office to hybrid and remote work modalities due to the pandemic. The implications of this area of study relate to the impact of this abrupt shift on the leadership styles, management approaches employed by leaders, and employee engagement. The implications are also associated with the newly discovered leadership best practices revealed because of the abrupt transition. Technological advances have resulted in previously unimaginable opportunities for employees to work remotely (Aristodemou et al., 2021). The pandemic further prompted the most widespread and abrupt transition from in-office to remote and hybrid modalities (Sophie & Pierre-Yves, 2021). The abrupt shift also created an environment in which leaders needed to maintain stability in the context of significant levels of uncertainty (Chanana & Sangeeta, 2021).

The expanded presence of remote and hybrid work models necessitates the establishment of guidance for leaders of remote workers (Arunprasad et al., 2022). The participants of the current study discussed their feelings about their leadership role, the expectations of leaders within the organization, and the profound impact of uncertainty feelings on their leadership approach. The participants outlined their approach to incorporating their perception of the demands faced by supervisees into their decision-making. The participants reported using a whole-person approach when leading their respective teams. The participants understood the increased household demands, safety fears, and employment uncertainty supervisees were experiencing. This stance enabled the leaders to employ a compassionate leadership approach. The participants used an intentional approach to create opportunities for supervisees to engage in shared leadership practices among team members.

Freed et al. (2017) noted the significance of recruitment and retention for health care organizations. Organizational leadership and employee engagement are primary contributors to effective recruitment and retention (Marufu et al., 2021). The first practical implication of this study is reflected in the participants' responses regarding the importance of leading in a manner grounded in an emotionally engaging leadership model. The participants felt that this lens enabled them to understand the importance of acting with a level of urgency that aligned with the needs of supervisees. The participants had a shared perception that intrinsically motivated employees were able to maintain or increase their productivity while working remotely. The second practical implication of this study is that health-care leaders could recognize intrinsic motivation as an attribute that has success in teleworking employees.

A third practical implication is that the study participants' responses provided valuable insight into the perceived importance of having well-established systems for monitoring employee productivity. The participants with well-established systems in place viewed themselves as being more effective in leading their hybrid and remote working teams. The presence of accountability systems enabled leaders to identify deviations in a supervisee's productivity. The presence of the system increased the leaders' confidence as the objective data supported their ability to identify and address performance-related concerns in a prompt and targeted manner focused on specific concerns. Given this, health-care leaders should incorporate the findings of this study into current and future leadership practices aimed at supporting accountability when leading remote and hybrid teams.

Chanana and Sangeeta (2021) identified communication as essential for leaders seeking to maintain optimal levels of employee engagement. Communication must occur with the supervisor and the larger organization (Chanana & Sangeeta, 2021). The participants from the current study voiced a shared perspective regarding the importance of communicating with transparency. The participants intended to develop effective strategies for communicating vital information to each member of the team. The participants all reported using a purposeful approach to increase the frequency of communication with the full team, as well as on an individual basis. The fourth practical implication pertains to effective communication to support employee engagement among hybrid and remote working employees.

Galanti et al. (2021) identified social isolation as an important demand of remote work. The authors also noted the correlation between social isolation and productivity,

employee engagement, and workplace stress (Galanti et al., 2021). A growing need exists

to address the barriers and resources needed to maintain high levels of employee

engagement among remote and hybrid working employees (Galanti et al., 2021). The

participants from the current study discussed the significant concerns they felt following

the transition to remote and hybrid work modalities. The participants attributed concerns

to a lack of experience with managing remote employees. The participants' responses

specified their commitment to creating opportunities for team members to have informal

communication and make a connection with one another. Participants identified success

in supporting team members facing social isolation by creating opportunities for games,

virtual coffee conversations, and book clubs. The fifth implication is that as health-care

organizations seek to increase access to care, retain talented health-care providers, and

maximize organization efficiency, they should provide leaders with the findings of this

study to support success among remote and hybrid employees.

Strengths & Weaknesses

This qualitative phenomenological study sought to examine potential contributing

factors that positively affected employee engagement within a tertiary-level health-care

facility. The strengths of this study included the process, procedures, and strategies used

to ensure the validity, credibility, and reliability of the research. The qualitative

phenomenology approach enabled an analysis of the perceptions of leaders possessing the

lived experience of abruptly transitioning from in-office to hybrid and remote work

models related to their leadership styles, management approaches, and employee

engagement (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Moustakas, 1994).

The member-checking strategy used to review and validate the data collected ensured access to participants throughout the data collection phase (Birt et al., 2016). Member-checking also facilitated the opportunity to engage the participants prior to the data analysis phase, thus ensuring the accuracy of the themes and interpretation of the findings (Birt et al., 2016). Microsoft Teams software provided the video recording and transcription of the interviews, with the exception of Participant 2. The participants were able to review the data collected and the identified themes to guard against researcher bias. The participants examined their interview transcripts and confirmed the accuracy of the information provided. In addition, self-reflection and clarification of past experiences with the phenomena studied prevented prejudice and preconceived notions from influencing data analysis and findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Regular collaborations with the dissertation mentor ensured the process followed was ethical, credible, and unbiased (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The interview process was inclusive of rapport building to ensure the participants' comfortability in sharing their lived experiences responding to interview questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

A specific weakness of this study emerged during data collection. The research participants represent a largely homogenous group of leaders. The purposeful sampling recruitment approach ensured participants possessed direct lived experiences with the studied phenomenon. As study participation was voluntary, the population of participants was beyond the influence of this writer. The limited population pool prevented the opportunity to compare the responses across groups due to the homogeneity of participants.

Another weakness of the study was the lack of role diversity among study participants. The participants represented members of senior leadership roles such as managers, assistant directors, directors, and beyond. No participants were at the supervisor level, nor were they responsible for supervising entry-level positions. The absence of this group reflects the absence of valuable perspectives.

Recommendations for Future Research

In addition to using creative and innovative leadership techniques, organizations with engaged leaders have higher profitability (M. Khan et al., 2022). Significant changes in the external environment, such as changes in the work setting, increase levels of instability and uncertainty among employees (M. Khan et al., 2022). Effective leaders understand the relationship between work engagement, job satisfaction, and commitment to the organization (M. Khan et al., 2022). Future research surrounding the impact of abruptly transitioning from in-office to hybrid and remote work modalities on leadership approaches, management style, and employee engagement within a tertiary-level health-care facility from the perspective of the employee could be beneficial.

Participants in this current study included seasoned professionals well experienced in leading teams. Approximately 86% of study participants had 6 years or more of leadership experience. Around 89% of study participants were responsible for the day-to-day work of groups of 20 employees or more. If circumstances permitted, having participants from a wider variety of roles participating in the study would have been ideal.

The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent precautionary measures highlighted workplace inequities in the United States differentially affecting employees of color and

those from marginalized backgrounds (Kantamneni, 2020). This understanding reinforces the notion that workplace inequities contributing to declining limitations in office-based employment may primarily affect employees representing marginalized populations (Kantamneni, 2020). Having participants from a variety of racial and ethnic groups to ensure diverse perspectives to convey to future leaders' strategies for maintaining employee engagement and employee retention among employees in this group would be valuable.

Chapter Summary

This qualitative phenomenological study explored the impact of the abrupt transition from in-office to hybrid and remote work modalities on leadership styles, management approaches, and employee engagement. The objective of this study was to contribute to current research on the best practices for leading teams that have abruptly transitioned from in-office to hybrid and remote work modalities. The RQs for this phenomenological study were as follows:

- RQ1: What are the perceptions of the impact of telework models of service delivery within a tertiary-level health-care facility on leadership styles?

- RQ2: What are the perceptions of the impact of telework models of service delivery within a tertiary-level health-care facility on management approaches?

- RQ3: What are the perceptions of the impact of telework models of service delivery within a tertiary-level health-care facility on employee engagement?

The participants shared insights on their lived experiences of abruptly transitioning their supervisees from in-office to hybrid and fully remote modalities within a tertiary-level health-care facility. The themes that emerged during this study were (a)

efforts to establish and lead in the context of the new reality, (b) *the significance of lived experiences*, (c) *the importance of accountability systems*, (d) *communication with the team*, and (e) *the significance of employees engaging with one another*. The themes revealed multiple contributing factors that the participants experienced, which influenced the leaders' approaches to managing accountability, incorporating increased levels of flexibility in their leadership approaches, and integrating the understanding of supervisees' mental health into their management style.

The timing of this current study is significant given that remote work modalities in health care have become more widely accepted (Crockett et al., 2020). Health-care leaders may incorporate the findings of this study into current and future strategies for preparing leaders to lead remote teams. This study provides recommendations developed to assist health-care leaders seeking to lead teams by understanding the importance of establishing management approaches following an abrupt transition from in-office to hybrid and remote work modalities. The current study serves to advance understanding of the significance of lived experiences for all parties involved, outlining the importance of developing accountability systems, using innovative approaches to communicate with supervisees, and emphasizing the importance of creating opportunities for remote and hybrid workers to engage in informal communication with one another. The results of this study advance the existing body of knowledge about how telework models of service delivery within a tertiary-level health-care facility impact leadership styles, management approaches, and employee engagement. However, additional research would serve to advance understanding of this phenomenon from the perspective of the employees and their lived experiences. The findings may assist future health-care leaders seeking to

establish leadership development programs, as they understand the relationship between

leadership styles and management approaches with employee productivity, employee

retention, and employee engagement.

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Appendix A: Institutional Research Board Approval Notification

Institutional Research Board
Office of Institutional Research
(803) 807-5051
roxi.snodgrass@ciu.edu

CIU IRB   *Approval Notification*

To: Melanie Pinkett-Davis
From: Roxianne Snodgrass, IRB Chair
Subject: Protocol #204
Date: 11/02/2021

Congratulations, the protocol **The Perception of Telework Models on leadership Styles and Employee Engagement in a Tertiary level Patient Care Facility** has been approved by the IRB Chair under the rules for expedited review on **11/02/2021**.

The approval of your protocol has no expiration date and continuing review is not required. However, when you have completed work on this protocol, please inform the IRB and submit an electronic copy of the research abstract.

Other Reporting Requirements:
Changes in Research Protocol If during the conduct of the research you desire to make changes to the research plan as submitted in this protocol, you must seek approval for those changes using IRB Form E: Modification Form.
Adverse Events: If any study participants experience any adverse effects as a result of the study, you should use IRB Form F: Incident Report Form.
If needed, these forms are available in the Documentation Section of Axiom Mentor and should be completed and uploaded to the original protocol page.

The CIU IRB is here to help you with the logistics of following Federal Regulations governing human subject research. Our goal is to support your work as the principal investigator and ensure the ethical treatment of all study participants. Your questions and/or concerns are always welcome.

Best regards,

Roxianne Snodgrass, Ph.D.
IRB Chair
roxi.snodgrass@ciu.edu

☐Reply

☐Reply all

☐Forward

Appendix B: Institutional Research Board Application Approval

Office of Human Subjects Research
Institutional Review Boards

1620 McElderry Street, Reed Hall, Suite B-130
Baltimore, Maryland 21205-1911
410-955-3008
410-955-4367 Fax
e-mail: jhmeirb@jhmi.edu

JOHNS HOPKINS
M E D I C I N E

Date: May 4, 2022

APPLICATION APPROVAL

Review Type:	Expedited
Principal Investigator:	Steven Lindauer
Number:	IRB00313749
Title:	The Perception of Telework Models on Leadership Styles and Employee Engagement.
Committee Chair:	Richard Moore
IRB Committee:	IRB-3

Date of Approval: April 28, 2022

Date of Expiration: April 28, 2024

The JHM IRB approved the above-referenced Application.

Please note that the IRB made additional changes to your consent form(s) prior to approval. You may view the revised consent form(s) uploaded in the Written Consent section of the eIRB application. Click on View to the left of the document name, then click History and open the document with the name starting with 'irb_.' If you do not agree with these changes, submit a change in research application with a revised consent form(s). If you submit a change in research application, use the IRB's clean copy of the consent form(s) to make additional revisions. To maintain an accurate history in eIRB, do not delete the consent form(s). If you are making additional changes, use the Update button to upload your revised copy(ies).

To keep the JHM IRB application current we are assigning an Expiration Date as noted above. Prior to the expiration date, you will receive an email notification indicating that some action is required. If the Board has determined that a Continuing Review or Progress Report is required, you will need to submit Continuing Review or Progress Report prior to the expiration date. If the Board has determined that No Progress Report is required, you may run the administrative extend approval function.

IRB review included the following:

Use of an oral consent process.

Progress Report Required:

The Board determined that this research meets the criteria for submission of a Progress Report as an alternative to a Continuing Review Application. The Progress Report must be submitted using a Further Study Action and

selecting progress report at least 6 weeks prior to the expiration date. Please note, the Progress Report **must** be submitted prior to the expiration date shown on this notice. If the Progress Report is not submitted prior to the expiration date all activity must stop. Before any research activity can resume, you must submit the progress report.

Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.

Changes in Research: All proposed changes to the research must be submitted using a Change in Research application. The changes must be approved by the JHM IRB prior to implementation, with the following exception: changes made to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants may be made immediately, and promptly reported to the JHM IRB.

Unanticipated Problems: All unanticipated problems must be submitted using a Protocol Event Report.

If this research has a commercial sponsor, the research may not start until the sponsor and JHU have signed a contract.

The JHMIRB is constituted to meet the requirements of the Privacy Rule at section 45 CFR 164.512(i)(1)(i)(B) and is authorized and qualified to serve as the Privacy Board for human subjects research applications conducted by Hopkins' faculty members. The JHM IRB reviewed your request to waive or alter authorization for the above-referenced project. The IRB determined that all specific criteria for a waiver or alteration of authorization were met, as follows:
(A) The use or disclosure of protected health information involves no more than minimal risk to the privacy of individuals, based on, at least, the presence of the following elements;
    (1) An adequate plan to protect the identifiers from improper use and disclosure;
    (2) An adequate plan to destroy the identifiers at the earliest opportunity consistent with conduct of the research, unless there is a health or research justification for retaining the identifiers or such retention is otherwise required by law; and
    (3) Adequate written assurances that the protected health information will not be reused or disclosed to any other person or entity, except as required by law, for authorized oversight of the research study, or for other research for which the use or disclosure of protected health information would be permitted;
(B) The research could not practicably be conducted without the waiver or alteration; and
(C) the research could not practicably be conducted without access to and use of the protected health information.

Study documents:

Recruitment Materials:
FINAL_Lindauer_IRB00313749_Telephone Screening Script_04.28.22.doc
FINAL_Lindauer_IRB00313749_Research Study Recruitment Email and Slide_04.28.22.pptx
FINAL_Lindauer_IRB00313749_Research Recruitment Flyer_04.28.22.docx

HIPAA Form 4:
FINAL_Lindauer_IRB00313749_HIPPA 4 Form_04.28.22.doc

Supplemental Study Documents:

Additional Supplemental Study Documents:
Interview Questions 3-15-2022 final.docx
Approval for Study seeking to enroll KKI Faculty and Staff.pdf
Columbia International University IRB Approval

Protocol:
JHHeformA 4-27-2022.doc

Johns Hopkins Study Team Members:

Melanie Pinkett-Davis

Appendix C: Study Recruitment Flyers

Have you been a Leader throughout the Pandemic?

A research study is being conducted at Kennedy Krieger Institute to increase understanding of the experiences of Leaders abruptly transitioning from in-office models of work to hybrid or teleworking on the Leader's management style, leadership approach, and employee engagement.

We are recruiting adults who have been in a supervisory role prior to March of 2020. The participants must have experience transitioning supervisees to remote or hybrid work modality secondary to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The study includes:
- Telephone screening
- A single, recorded one-hour virtual interview
- Opportunity to review and respond to the interview notes

The telephone screening takes less than 15 minutes. The recorded interview occurs during a single, one-hour visit.

There are no medical benefits or significant risks to participating in this study.

There is no compensation for participation in this study.

If you would like to take part in this study, please contact Melanie Pinkett-Davis, MSW at **(443) 923-7562 or email: pinkettdavis@kennedykrieger.org**

Approved, _____

Steven Lindauer, Ph.D, Principal Investigator
Study number (IRB00313749)
Kennedy Krieger Institute, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine

Kennedy Krieger Institute
1750 East Fairmont Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21231
KennedyKrieger.org

Appendix D: Study Phone Screening

JOHNS HOPKINS
M E D I C I N E

Approved April 28, 2022

...ns Hopkins
Medicine Logo here upon approval.

Date: April 28, 2022
Principal Investigator: Steven Lindauer, Ph.D.
Application No.: IRB00313749

Telephone Screening Script

Protocol Title: The Perception of Telework Models on Leadership Styles and Employee Engagement.

Hello, I am Melanie Pinkett-Davis from the Department of Clinical Services at Kennedy Krieger Institute. I am contacting you because you contacted a study team member to express interest in the study in response to our ad.

The purpose of this research study is to identify recurring themes related to the impact of abruptly transitioning from in-office models of work to hybrid and/or teleworking on the Leader's management style, leadership style and on employee engagement.

The study involves the completion of a single, one-hour structured interview with a study team member. All participants must possess experience-supervising individuals who abruptly transitioned from in office to hybrid and/or solely teleworking secondary to the COVID-19 pandemic. Following the interview, all participants will have the option to review and provide feedback on the investigator's notes from the interview. No other participation is required after the interview has completed.

We are working on a Johns Hopkins-approved research study about the impact of abruptly transitioning from in-office models of work to hybrid and/or teleworking on the Leader's management style, leadership style and employee engagement.

Your participation in this phone call is completely voluntary.

May I ask you a few questions to help determine if you qualify for the study?

I will be collecting information about you during this phone call. Before I ask you the screening questions, I would like to tell you about what we will be doing with the information you give us.

Whether you join the study or not, the information collected today may be seen by researchers at Johns Hopkins, any sponsor of the study, and those responsible for oversight of the study. We try to make sure that the information we collect from you is kept private and used only for the research study we are discussing. If you do not agree to continue the phone call, it will not affect your current or future care at Johns Hopkins nor your employment at Kennedy Krieger Institute.

Were you responsible for leading in-office employees or trainees prior to February of 2020? (If yes, proceed to next question, if no, politely end the call).

Were you responsible for transitioning your in-office employees or trainees to a hybrid and/or remote working model secondary to the COVID-19 pandemic? (If yes, proceed to next question, if no, politely end the call).

JOHNS HOPKINS
M E D I C I N E

Approved April 28, 2022 ...ns Hopkins
Medicine Logo here upon approval.

Date: April 28, 2022
Principal Investigator: Steven Lindauer, Ph.D.
Application No.: IRB00313749

Are you working under the direct supervision of Melanie Pinkett-Davis? (If no, proceed to next question, if yes, explain that individuals working directly under the supervision of the study team interviewer is an exclusionary criteria for this study and politely end the call).

Would you be willing to participate in a recorded one-hour interview using videoconference regarding your experience supervising the abrupt transition from in office to hyrid and/or telework models and employee engagement secondary to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Your personal information will be kept if you choose not to enroll in the study or if you do not qualify to be in the study. The PHI will be retained to ensure that we do not contact you in the future regarding this study.

We have completed the telephone screening portion of our call.

- Do you have any questions?
- Do you think you would like to take part in this research?

If you are interested in participating, we will complete the oral consent process. Following consent, we would like to set up a time for you to complete the one-hour study visit.

Please contact Melanie Pinkett-Davis at 443-923-7562 or via email at pinkettdavis@kennedykrieger.org regarding any additional questions about the study. Steve Lindauer, Ph.D. is the principal investigator for this study.

Telephone Screening Script July 2019 Version 2

Appendix E: Oral Consent Script

JOHNS HOPKINS
M E D I C I N E
Approved April 28, 2022

Date: April 28, 2022
Principal Investigator: Dr. Steven Lindauer
Application No.: IRB00313749

WAIVER OF DOCUMENTATION OF CONSENT SCRIPT

Protocol Title: The Perception of Telework Models on Leadership Styles and Employee Engagement.

KEY INFORMATION

The purpose of this research study is to increase understanding of the impact abruptly changing from in office to hybrid and/or teleworking modality as on the management and leadership approaches used by Leaders. This study is also seeking to understand the impact of leadership styles on employee engagement.

Participants will agree to participate in a one-hour, recorded virtual interview with a member of the study team. During the structured interview, participants will respond to a series of interview questions, pertaining to three key areas of their experiences. Following the completion of the interview, no additional participation is required. However, participants will receive a summary of their responses and will have the option to provide feedback to the researchers.

The greatest risks of participation in this study include the possibility of boredom and mild fatigue during the interview and loss of confidentiality.

PURPOSE

You are being asked to take part in a research study. The purpose of this study is to gain information regarding the leadership approaches used by Supervisors to support the needs of employees who've newly transitioned to hybrid or virtual models for work. Researchers are also seeking information regarding leader's perceptions of employee engagement among virtual team members. You are being asked to participate given your experience in this area of study.

PROCEDURES

Researchers will be collecting information from you during the one-time, 60-minute recorded videoconference. The research interview questions will collect data about your lived experiences managing supervisees who abruptly transitioned from working in the office, to hybrid or fully virtual work modalities secondary to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following interview completion, you will have the opportunity to review and to provide the study team members with feedback regarding their notes from the interview.

> **Video recordings:**
> As part of this research, we are will create and use a video recording to help answer the research question. Any video recordings will not be used for advertising or non-study related purposes.

Page 1 of 3

Oral Consent Script- September 2019, Version 4

JOHNS HOPKINS
M E D I C I N E
Approved April 28, 2022

Date: April 28, 2022
Principal Investigator: Dr. Steven Lindauer
Application No.: IRB00313749

You should know that:
- You may request that the video recording stop at any time.
- If you agree to allow the video recording and then change your mind, you may ask us to destroy that recording. If the recording has had all identifiers removed, we may not be able to do this.
- We will only use this video recording for the purposes of this research.

RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

Interviews or questionnaires
You may get tired or bored when we are asking you questions or you are completing questionnaires. You do not have to answer any question you do not want to answer. You may also end the interview at any time.

Identifiable private information
There is the risk that information about you may become known to people outside this study. We try to make sure that the information we collect from you is kept private and used only for the research study we are discussing. Study team members will be adhering to all Johns Hopkins IRB established research protocols to protect your confidentiality. This includes storing all data in password formats.

BENEFITS
The probable benefits for the participant of the study are limited. It is possible that by engaging in the opportunity to reflect on the impact that shifting to teleworking the study participants will gain additional insight into their efforts to maintain employee engagement and their leadership style.

The probable benefit of this study for society relates to the improved understanding of leadership styles needed to support teleworking employees and approaches known to enhance teleworking employee engagement thus supporting organization goals.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION
You do not have to agree to be in this study. If you do not want to join the study, it will not affect your education or care at Johns Hopkins nor your employment at Kennedy Krieger Institute.

You can agree to be in this study now and change your mind later. If you wish to stop, please tell us right away. Leaving this study will not stop you from getting regular medical care nor your employment at Kennedy Krieger Institute.

PAYMENT
There is no payment for study participation.

COSTS
There sole cost for participation in this study pertains to the time needed for study participation.

JOHNS HOPKINS
M E D I C I N E
Approved April 28, 2022

Date: April 28, 2022
Principal Investigator: Dr. Steven Lindauer
Application No.: IRB00313749

HIPAA DISCLOSURE

We will collect information about you in this study. People at Johns Hopkins who are involved in the study or who need to make sure the study is being done correctly will see the information.

People at Johns Hopkins may need to send your information to people outside of Johns Hopkins (for example, government groups like the Food and Drug Administration) who need to make sure the study is being done correctly.

These people will use your information for the purpose of the study. Your authorization for the collection, use, and sharing of your information does not expire. We will continue to collect information about you until the end of the study unless you tell us that you have changed your mind. If you change your mind and do not want your information to be used for the study, you must contact the Principal Investigator by using the contact information provided in this document. Your cancellation will not affect information already collected in the study, or information that has already been shared with others before you cancelled your authorization.

We try to make sure that everyone who needs to see your information uses it only for the study and keeps it confidential - but, we cannot guarantee this.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Please contact co-investigator Melanie Pinkett-Davis at 443-923-7562 or via email at pinkettdavis@kennedykrieger.org regarding any additional questions about the study. Steve Lindauer, PhD, 443-923-7463, is the principal investigator for this study may also be contacted regarding any questions or concerns that may arise.

The IRB can help you if you have questions about your rights as a research participant or if you have other questions, concerns or complaints about this research study. You may contact the IRB at 410-502-2092 or jhmeirb@jhmi.edu.

Oral Consent Script- September 2019, Version 4

Appendix F: Demographic & Interview Protocol

Demographic Information Questions

Interviewer: "I will begin by asking you some questions about your role and responsibilities within the organization."

- How many years have you been with the organization?
- Tell me about your role within the organization?
- How long have you been in a leadership role?
- How many people are under your direct supervision?
- How many employees or trainees are impacted by your day-to-day decisions?
- How many years have you been in your current position?
- When did members of your team shift to hybrid/virtual work?
- Have changes to this work modality been made, since the initial shift occurred?
- What is your current title?

Interview Questions
Interviewer: "Now I will ask you some questions about your perception or thoughts related to your leadership experiences secondary to the Covid-19 pandemic."

1. What strategies did you use to prepare your staff to work remotely?
2. What are some of the barriers that you encountered when the shift first occurred?
3. What were some areas of urgency relating to the early transition to the model?
4. What do you think was the biggest challenge to getting staff to work remotely?
5. What strategies did you use to provide updates and information to supervisees?
6. What are some of the early changes that had to be modified?
7. During the initial transition, describe your perspective on supporting staff balancing multiple priorities including work responsibilities, family, community, and others?
   a. In reflection, what would you have done differently?
8. What are some of the challenges that you faced in accomplishing your team goals?
9. What steps did you take to ensure that your hybrid/virtual employees understand that you care about their performance?
10. How do you supervise the deliverables of your hybrid/virtual employees?

Interviewer: "I will now ask you questions about your experiences, your perceptions and about your observations during your time as a leader, throughout the pandemic":

11. What has been the difference in how you are managing hybrid/virtual employees as compared to your employees whom are working in the office full time?
12. What steps do you take to ensure virtual/hybrid team members fully understand their role, its importance, and the expected deliverables for which you are responsible?

13. What is your perception of the effectiveness of your management techniques for employees working in the office versus employees working in the hybrid/virtual work setting?
14. What changes did you make to supervise your virtual employees that did not work as expected?
15. What steps do you take to ensure that employees are productive?
16. To what extent do you feel that employee productivity may be predicted, based on the management techniques used in a hybrid/virtual setting?
17. What are your overall thoughts about employees working remotely?
18. What are your concerns about having employees whom are working virtually?

Interviewer: "Finally, I would like to ask you questions about employee engagement."

19. In your opinion, what does it mean for an employee to be engaged?
20. What steps do you take to ensure that your employees feel supported by you personally?
21. What indicators do you use to assess employee satisfaction?
22. What engagement strategies did you implement to influence hybrid/virtual employee engagement your department?
    a. What engagement strategies did you implement to keep your supervisees engaged with the organization?
23. Since the initial transition, have you felt the need to make changes to your strategies for maintaining employee engagement after transitioning to the hybrid/teleworking modality?
24. Since the pandemic began, do you have the perception or sense that supervisees engagement by management techniques have changed?
    a. (e.g., externally focused, such as money, or are they more engaged by techniques that are more internally focused, such as positive verbal praise)
25. Since the pandemic began, from your perspective, how has the impact of socialization, connectivity, development, or communication activities on employee engagement changed?
26. Since the pandemic began, from your perspective, what experiences negatively influence employee engagement, employee satisfaction, retention, and productivity?

Interviewer: "Thank you for sharing your responses. Would you like to share any additional thoughts or perspectives today?" Following the participant's response, thank the participant for their time. Inform the participant that they will receive a transcript for their review, returning feedback is optional and not required.

Appendix G: Initial Codes

Code	Instances	Descriptions
Significance of the perceived need for compassionate leadership	137	The participants expressed their perception of the need to provide compassionate leadership in the context of the tremendous uncertainty surrounding the transition to hybrid and remote work modalities
Perceived need for varied modalities of communication	96	The participants shared their experiences with the changes each made in an effort to establish and maintain effective communication with supervisees on both a one on one and group basis during the initial transition to hybrid and remote work modalities and for more sustain periods of time
Challenge	24	The participants' perceptions of the obstacles faced when transitioning supervisees to hybrid and remote work modalities secondary to the abrupt transition occurring
Perception of increase opportunities for supervisees to have improved work–life balance	18	The participants' perceptions of the unanticipated positive outcomes occurring secondary to transitioning supervisees to hybrid and remote work modalities
Perception of the impact on the leader's self-care	10	The participants expressed their lived experiences of the personal impact, and patterns of decision making that occurred secondary to leading a team through an abrupt transition from in office to hybrid and fully remote work modalities
Flexibility	16	The participants perceptions of the management attributes needed to effectively lead hybrid and remote supervisees
Job insecurity	19	The participants reflected on their lived experiences of seeking to lead in the context of concerns regarding job insecurity as exclusively remote models of patient care had not been previously experienced and unknowns existed regarding the sustainability of remote models of patient care
Importance of accountability systems	21	The participants shared their lived experiences of seeking to effective manage the work of supervisees engaged in hybrid and remote work modalities

Fears	14	The participants reflected on the significance of their lived experiences in the context the influence of pervasive amounts of fear present for themselves and their supervisees secondary to the health scares prompted by pandemic and increased racial social unrest
Perceived need to increase opportunities for socialization among team members	61	The participants shared their perceptions of the significance of opportunities for supervisees to have informal communication and opportunities connection with one another to support employee engagement

Perceived need to maintain transparency	35	The participants reflected on the tremendous amount of uncertainty and fear present, particularly prior to vaccines being available and the impact that this uncertainty had on their commitment to transparent communication with supervisees
Abrupt transition	16	Participants experienced the abrupt transition from in office to remote, and hybrid work modalities secondary to the COVID-19 pandemic and noted having no guidance for how to adapt their leadership style to the new circumstances
Employee	103	The participant's used the term employee to refer to the individuals under their direct supervision, inclusive of front line employees and those serving as managers of additional employees working under the leadership of the study participant
Activities	32	The participants described various efforts to engage supervisees in structured and semistructured opportunities to connect with one another using terminology such as communication activities, fun activity, social activity, and wellness activities
Work	84	The participants shared their perceptions of the work related performance of supervisees as related to work hours, availability of the resources needed to complete tasks, and the outcomes of employees' task completion

Appendix H: Permission for Table Use

M Gmail

Mel Davis <mpinkettdavis@gmail.com>

Transcendental Phenomenological Study
7 messages

Mel Davis <mpinkettdavis@gmail.com>   Sat, Jul 1, 2023 at 6:22 PM
To: brianne.bruscino@sunnyvaleisd.com

Good afternoon Dr. Bruscino,
   Thank you very much for your dissertation. I found your study to be incredibly inspiring. I am a working mother completing my dissertation. I would like to reprint Table 4.1 Data Analysis in my qualitative phenomenological study. Would you grant me permission to this this?

Thank you
Melanie

Brianne Bruscino <brianne.bruscino@sunnyvaleisd.com>   Sun, Jul 2, 2023 at 2:07 PM
To: Mel Davis <mpinkettdavis@gmail.com>

Afternoon,

Thank you for your compliments on my study. What is your study on? Moms completing their doctorates are a whole other level of amazingness!
Table 4.1. Data Analysis is actually adapted from Moustakas' (1994). You can use my reference section to get the specific book information. If you would like to use my exact table, I would have no problem with that, as long as you can provide me with your IRB approval. Also, I am currently in the process of changing jobs, so I have included my personal email, which will be guaranteed way to contact me. Have a wonderful day.

brianne1113@gmail.com

Dr. Brianne Bruscino
4th ELAR
Sunnyvale Intermediate School

[Quoted text hidden]

Mel Davis <mpinkettdavis@gmail.com>   Sun, Jul 2, 2023 at 2:28 PM
To: Brianne Bruscino <brianne.bruscino@sunnyvaleisd.com>
Cc: brianne1113@gmail.com

Good afternoon Dr. Bruscino,
   Thank you very much for responding to my email so quickly. I've conducted a phenomenological qualitative study on the impacts of the abrupt transition from in office to hybrid and remote work modalities on leadership styles, management approaches, and employee engagement. My personal experience as a leader during the pandemic influenced the focus of my study. My doctorate will be in organizational leadership.
   I greatly appreciate your support. I am interested in using the exact table from your dissertation. If you would be willing to share your table that would be wonderful. I think that the resolution on your table would far exceed the resolution from the online copy of your paper. I have attached by IRB from the university and from my workplace to this email.
Congratulations on your new job!
I wish you all the best
Melanie
[Quoted text hidden]

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2 attachments

📄 **JHH IRB Approval.pdf**
   95K

📄 **CIU IRB Approval.pdf**
   106K

Brianne Bruscino <brianne1113@gmail.com>   Mon, Jul 10, 2023 at 8:47 AM
To: Mel Davis <mpinkettdavis@gmail.com>

Morning,
Sorry for the delay. I was out of town last week. My external backup drive is giving me trouble and that is where it is stored. Hopefully,
I'll be able to get to it later today!
Dr. Brianne Bruscino
brianne1113@gmail.com

[Quoted text hidden]

Mel Davis <mpinkettdavis@gmail.com>   Mon, Jul 10, 2023 at 9:04 AM
To: Brianne Bruscino <brianne1113@gmail.com>

Good morning,
Thank you so much for the update. I completely understand.
I appreciate your efforts,
Melanie
[Quoted text hidden]

Brianne Bruscino <brianne1113@gmail.com>   Wed, Jul 12, 2023 at 11:34 AM
To: Mel Davis <mpinkettdavis@gmail.com>

Morning,

I've attached the table in a couple formats for you. Please let me know if these don't work. I finally found just the table in one of my
Google Drives.

Dr. Brianne Bruscino
brianne1113@gmail.com

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3 attachments

Table 4.1.jpg
40K

Table 4.1.png
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Table 4.1.pdf
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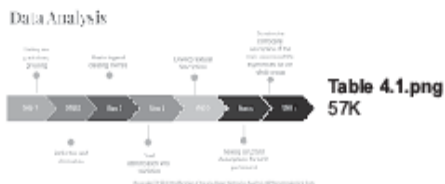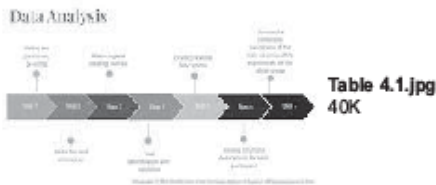
Mel Davis <mpinkettdavis@gmail.com>   Thu, Jul 13, 2023 at 11:46 PM
To: Brianne Bruscino <brianne1113@gmail.com>

Good evening Dr. Bruscino
 Thank you very much for providing the images. The figures are extremely helpful. .

I'm wishing you all the best,