Exploring the Dynamics of Physician Engagement in Healthcare

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ABSTRACT

An increasing number of physicians departing from the healthcare profession due to disengagement could cause a significant healthcare crisis. Middle and senior-level healthcare managers often lack physician engagement strategies to help avoid physician burnout. Grounded in the transformational leadership theory, the purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the engagement strategies healthcare middle and senior-level managers have used to help avoid physician burnout. Participants comprised seven middle and senior-level healthcare managers, with a minimum of five years of employee management experience who effectively used physician engagement strategies to help avoid physician burnout at a Central Pacific United States healthcare organization. Data were collected using semistructured interviews via telephone, reflective journal, and publicly available media and organizational documents. Thematic analysis was undertaken to analyze the data. The major emergent theme of the importance of developing meaningful relationships is discussed in this paper. A key recommendation for middle and senior-level healthcare managers is to display diligence and empathy to understand the goals of each physician. The research knowledge and findings may hold positive implications for positive social change as physicians play a crucial role in healthcare, and in contributing to addressing socioeconomic disparities for patients within the community, from their focus on treatment and on improving the health of patients.

Introduction

The engagement of physicians in professional life and service has become a strategic goal in many healthcare institutions (Perreira et al., 2018). The ever-changing healthcare environment and the need to increase safety while delivering quality care require a high level of physician engagement on a global scale. Physician engagement is a two-way communication initiative that requires both physicians and managers to work together (Kaissi, 2014). Healthcare managers can implement strategies to improve engagement outcomes for physicians, communities, and the organization. The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore successful strategies that middle and senior-level healthcare managers have used to increase physician engagement.

It is estimated that 10% of physicians serving in institutions as general practitioners and between 37% to 61% of specialists experience the effects of disengagement due to burnout (Underdahl et al., 2017). Healthcare organization leaders may realize that negative financial implications and public health concerns result if solutions cannot be found for organizational physician engagement issues. Healthcare organization leaders consistently battle high physician burnout (Collins et al., 2015). Although healthcare organization leaders recognize physician engagement issues, few have effective physician engagement strategies (Chokshi& Swensen, 2019). Physician disengagement may cause younger than older physicians to disengage in delivering clinical services to the burnout experienced and many simply walk away from the profession (del Carmen et al., 2019).

A Problem in Professional Healthcare Settings and Research Objectives

Over 40% of U.S. physicians experience burnout and feel disengaged (Owens et al., 2017). There is often a negative effect of physician disengagement on profitability in healthcare organizations. From the research, it was evident that some middle and senior-level healthcare managers lack engagement strategies to help avoid physician burnout. The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the engagement strategies enacted by successful middle and senior-level healthcare managers to help avoid physician burnout. The targeted population was comprised of seven middle and senior-level healthcare managers at a Central Pacific United States healthcare organization with successfully engaged physicians. It is common knowledge, that engaged physicians are more apt to demonstrate the better quality of care for patients, while also being fiscally responsible and contributing to the institutions' mission effectively.

Overarching Research Question

The overarching research question of this research was: What engagement strategies do middle and senior-level healthcare managers use to help avoid physician burnout?

Interview Questions

1. Based on your experience in your organization, what effect does physician engagement have on the organization as a whole?

2. How did you implement strategies for physician engagement to avoid burnout?

3. What key obstacles did you and your employees overcome to implement successful physician engagement strategies?

4. How did you overcome key obstacles to implement successful physician engagement strategies?

5. How did physicians respond to the strategies?

6. How did your organizational leaders measure the success of the implemented physician engagement strategies?

7. What strategies were the most effective for improving physician engagement?

8. What were the least effective physician engagement strategies, if any?

9. What additional information would you like to share about your successful physician engagement strategies?

Theoretical Underpinning and Grounding

Burns (1978) postulated the transforming leadership theory in its earliest forms, which Bass (1985) further expounded upon, later renamed as transformational leadership theory, and was found suitable to serve as the conceptual framework for this study. Bass expanded on the seminal work of Burns by identifying four components of transformational leadership, notably: individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, idealized influence, and intellectual stimulation. The postulations of the transforming leadership theory may indicate how leaders can influence employees to work toward common goals by motivating and encouraging positive employee behavior (Burns, 1978). Utilizing a transforming leadership style in the workplace could potentially cause positive changes in people's lives and improve organizational success (Burns, 1978). Transformational leadership theory as envisioned by Burns and Bass provided the lens through which strategies healthcare managers use to engage physicians were explored. Transformational leaders usually improve followers' engagement by changing work perceptions and helping followers grow the skill sets necessary for attaining organizational objectives(Burns, 1978); thus, transformational leadership theory was appropriate for this study as the underlying conceptual framework.

Potential Significance of the Research

The findings of this study may be of significance to middle and senior-level healthcare managers who strive to use strategies to improve physician engagement, patient safety, and organizational profitability during the transformation of healthcare delivery. Henson (2016) underscored the importance of engaging physicians to ensure they meet 21st century healthcare requirements. Middle and senior-level healthcare managers sometimes struggle to include physicians in addressing the changing demands of quality care while also identifying and addressing physicians' concerns (Love &Ayadi, 2015). Engaged physicians are found more patient care and quality conscious than nonengaged doctors about patients' daily life experiences and are often found crucial in improving the quality of patient care. Physician engagement has an impact beyond healthcare organizations and can extend to reach communities both locally and globally (Allen, 2017). Engaged physicians benefit healthcare organizations by lowering the costs of patient care (Perreira et al., 2018). Individuals in the community's healthcare providers serve, as well as members of the global community, benefit from affordable healthcare, which can be consequent to engaged and dedicated physicians (Perreira et al., 2018).

Potential Business Implications of the Study

There is a direct correlation between physician turnover rates and physicians who do not work at full capacity to help contribute to improving healthcare delivery (Shanafelt& Noseworthy, 2017). Middle and senior-level healthcare managers are often seen paying greaterattention to the increasing rates of physician disengagement (West et al., 2018). Many junior-level physicians leave the healthcare profession due to disengagement, which could cause a significant healthcare crisis (Owens et al., 2017).

With the transition from reimbursement options to limited options known as alternative payment models, middle and senior-level healthcare managers need physicians' knowledge, skills, and abilities to contain costs and increase and sustain profits (Siddiqi et al., 2017). The findings from this research can provide middle and senior-level healthcare managers with strategies for improving physician engagement, patient safety, and organizational profitability during the transformation of healthcare delivery.

Critical Review of Literature

From the literature review undertaken for this study, the different leadership styles and their correlation to employee engagement and burnout in business, specifically in the healthcare industry, appeared evident. The efforts in undertaking this literature review also revealed transformational leadership theory as the suitable construct used in the exploration of employee engagement, supporting and opposing leadership theories (servant leadership theory, employee engagement theory, and transactional leadership theory), and inferred correlations to physician engagement.

Leadership

Healthcare leadership is a challenge due to the ever-changing healthcare requirements of ensuring engaged employees are continuously delivering quality healthcare within regulatory guidelines (Belrhiti et al., 2018). The dynamic nature of healthcare perhaps requires a leadership style based on a unique style and behavior (Belrhiti et al., 2018). Belrhiti et al. (2018) emphasized not all styles and behaviors apply to all situations in organizational life, a point also emphasized by Al Khajeh (2018) and Madanchian et al. (2017). Although transformational leaders were considered visionaries in the mid-1980s, they were also perceived as with some limitations.

Leadership Theories

Many notable people have recognized the importance and effects of leadership theories on performance outcomes (Madanchian et al., 2017). The great man theory was one of the first recognized leadership theories (Ahmed et al., 2016). The great man theory was based on great leaders who developed naturally and were not manufactured (Madanchian et al., 2017). The great man theory, however, was only applicable to males, some deemed to be hereditarily equipped to be great leaders. The trait theory next became popular based on the focused behaviors of people with specific attributes (Madanchian et al., 2017). The trait theory presented that certain physical traits indicate the ability for leadership; in other words, leaders have a look at them and stand out from followers. Leadership theories evolved, with certain influences indicating how people perceived the concept (Ahmed et al., 2016). Over the years, researchers developed old theories into new ones. Each leadership theory has a unique use, focus, and influence on leadership styles.

Transformational Leadership Theory

Many researchers believe that transformational leadership is the most optimal leadership style for

contemporary times (Latham, 2014).Transformational leaders as those who believe in employees (Le, 2018). Transformational leaders promote innovation and welcome new opportunities to challenge the organizational status quo (Xenikou, 2017). Transformational leaders use a combination of intelligence, style, and personality to encourage followers to utilize individual talents to achieve success (Al-Sawai, 2013). Al-Sawai (2013) further expressed that transformational leaders look beyond tasks to inspire, motivate, and empower employees far beyond individual perceived potential.

Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership predominantly in organizational spheres, manifests with three behaviors: inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration (Asrar-ul-Haq& Anwar, 2018). Burns (1978) identified transactional leaders as those who provide rewards to followers depending on specific behavior outputs. Leaders around the globe and in all industries use transactional leadership. Transactional leaders, also known as managerial leaders, reward employees for meeting targets (Xenikou, 2017). Transactional leadership theory tends to be a one-size-fits-all approach that is not adaptive to sudden changes. Transactional leaders are also passive and only aim for correction when employees do not meet set standards.

Employee Burnout

As applied to the healthcare industry, Patel et al. (2018) defined burnout as a psychological feeling that can cause physicians to experience burnout and become overwhelmed, which can potentially affect overall functioning throughout a workday. Burnout has personal implications and can cause physicians to feel worthless and drained. Burnout has direct effects on a healthcare organization, as physicians can transfer this feeling to patients. In researching the cause of physician burnout, Patel et al. (2018) found many contributing factors, such as long days and specialty and on-call shifts.

Exhaustion is usually the reason for employee disengagement, which could result in burnout (Babenko, 2018).

Population and Sampling

A purposive sample was chosen for this study, based on the characteristics of the target population studied, and the objective of the study (Shokouhi et al., 2019). Researchers use this approach to collect data from selected participants who share experiences with the studied phenomena (Etikan&Bala, 2017). This sampling strategy helped to collect value-rich data with a limited amount of information in qualitative studies (Benoot et al., 2016) and was used in this study as well. Benoot et al. (2016) also suggested that researchers could save time and resources. Purposive sampling was suitable for this study because the aim was to explore the strategies of middle and senior-level healthcare managers who had successfully improved physician engagement. Qualitative research has different phases in which researchers can incorporate this type of method to investigate a broader area of research phenomenon (Sharma, 2017). Purposive sampling was chosen for this study to select managers within the organization who met the criteria in experience and quality of insight and information to explore the phenomenon with the requisite level of depth and detail.

Research Method, Design and Participant Selection

Researchers frequently use qualitative research to understandparticipants' perceptions of social conditions and to understand a phenomenon. Qualitative researchers may gain a deeper understanding of particular behaviors within a participant's environment. Aspects of scholarly inquiry include investigating and reporting information that introduces new ideas to the existing literature (Vuong& Napier, 2017). Researchers may accomplish this goal by invoking various methods and designs that require careful exploration beyond a cursory review (Levitt et al., 2017).

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore successful strategies that middle and senior-level healthcare managers have used to increase physician engagement. A case study design was ideally suited for this qualitative study. The target population was middle and senior-level healthcare managers located in the Central Pacific United States that had implemented successful strategies to engage physicians. The participation inclusionary requirements for this study's sample included: (a) holding the position of middle and senior-level healthcare manager, (b) five years of management experience, (c) having availability for post-interview member checking follow-up interview, and (d) must have evidence-based successful strategies in improving physician engagement. Purposive sampling was suitable for participant selection, which included an estimated seven participants, who participated in telephone interviews along with archival data document review.

Participants were selected based on their knowledge and experience for potential contributions of rich data. A sample of seven participating managers was potentially feasible and adequate for this study. van Rijnsoever (2017) reported that researchers try to base the number of participants on the premise that no new data will emerge by increasing the sample size.

The interviews with seven participants in this study were recorded, and a reflective journal was used to annotate the tone of voice and audible sense of emotion. Yin's five-phase analysis for qualitative case studies of the interview data is incorporated in this study's findings. All interviews were electronically transcribed, which created the data for later analysis. Each participant was provided a copy of the full transcript along with the interpretation of interview answers to ensure trustworthiness and validity. Thomas (2017) described member checking as an opportunity for researchers to ensure accurate interpretations from participant interviews. Birt et al. (2016) suggested transcript checking allows researchers and participants an opportunity to amend responses. I used member checking for all participants which were conducive to gaining an in-depth understanding of the successful strategies used by middle to senior-level healthcare managers from the Central Pacific organization.

Confidentiality was ensured by using coding techniques such as labeling each participant as P then followed by a number. To further ensure the privacy of participants, the assigned number to a participant did not represent the order the interviews were conducted in. Confidentiality was also ensured by following the guidelines recommended by theBelmont Report (Friesen et al., 2017) and used widely in research studies.

The first steps of the analysis process began with downloading all interview transcripts into the Atlas qualitative data analysissoftware. By using the software tools, the qualitative data collected was analyzed electronically which helped with the recognition of emerging themes. The key emergent theme discussed in this paper is the importance of developing meaningful relationships.

Data Analysis

An analysis of interview transcripts was conducted of the data collected from middle and senior-level healthcare managers' successful strategies for improving physician engagement. Researchers definitively conduct triangulation to demonstrate validity in qualitative research (Yin, 2017). Shoaib and Mujtaba (2016) defined triangulation to compare dissimilar but balancing data. Scholars conducting data triangulation combine multiple approaches to ensure the overall reliability of the results (Heesen et al., 2019). Data triangulation was used to confirm the data collected from participating middle and senior-level healthcare managers' semistructured interviews and the healthcare organization's archival data.

Data Saturation

Researchers achieve data saturation when no new data emerge from continued engagement with the same or additional participants (van Rijnsoever, 2017). Data saturation is the desired milestone in qualitative research for obtaining the most important ideas and themes (Weller et al., 2018). Data saturation occurs when interviews no longer provide new information. Researchers achieve greater detail and benefits from data collection when interviewees offer insight into the topic and can easily expand upon answers based on personal experiences (Wolff et al., 2018). Data saturation is not just about the end of new information but also about no longer identifying new codes that indicate the possibility of new themes (van Rijnsoever, 2017). Researchers do not need to conduct a predetermined number of interviews to achieve data saturation (Tran et al., 2017). Thus, interviews were conducted until no new themes emerged, and represented the achievement of collecting the optimal and maximum point of data pertinent to the fulfillment of the objectives of this study.

Key Emergent Theme: The Importance of Developing Meaningful Relationships

The key theme that emerged from the data analysis was the importance of developing meaningful relationships. Yeomans and FitzPatrick (2017) alluded that successful leaders understand how investing time into getting to know employees by building relationships helps to increase employee engagement. Alexander and Ruflin (2015) described how transformational leaders can draw out talents from healthcare providers increases engagement and helps avoid burnout. Burns (1978) initial description of transformational leadership focused on the relationship between the leader and the follower and the outcomes that could be achieved through this partnership if the relationship was meaningful. Middle and senior-level healthcare managers conveyed better responses received from physicians when meaningful approaches to relationships had been previously established based on (100%) of participant responses. This was evidenced as P3 stated, "putting faces to names and having a meaningful conversation during initial meetings made the difference when corrective changes needed to be made or feedback sessions were warranted to discuss deficiencies."

When managers develop relationships, it helps to show physicians their voices are being heard. P7 agrees with P3's understanding and believes holding weekly huddles is an important opportunity to cultivate meaningful relationships from identified concerns. P4 shared, "establishing relationships along with face-to-face discussions is necessary for the workplace and has helped physicians feel as if they were important." In agreement with P4, likewise, P5 stated,

"getting to know initially where subordinates' aspirations help to foster healthy relationships; there is an opportunity to connect." P1 noted that it is important to establish and maintain relationships with resident mentors to actively monitor the progress of residents, but also address concerns from the mentors and ensure they are engaged.

While the literature reviewed did not provide a solid definition of meaningful relationships, many physicians have their definition of what the term means and the actions that do not measure up. Middle and senior-level managers seeking ways to connect on a personable level should understand certain gestures may seem genuine but may do more harm than good to foster a meaningful relationship. According to P5, "donuts and juice" do not meet the definition of a meaningful relationship for most physicians. Another example of not meeting the definition of meaning relationships, provided by P5 was, "stopping by a physician's office at the end of the day and asking why they are still at work." P6 echoed the frustrations from P5 with an example of when organizational leadership does not want physicians working during their off time, but also expects that emails will be answered on the weekends, which is normally off duty. P2's perspective, having managed large to small groups of physicians, has understood that when managing physicians, the effectiveness of taking a few moments to ask questions of new or newly assigned physicians regarding their goals and expectations increases the physician's engagement level. Unlike P3 and P5, P2 expounds on the importance of the meaningful relationship by "asking about the physician's family and where they are from." Corresponding with P2's interpretation, P7 suggested, I let residents and staff know who I am as a person, and as a professional. I invest in the time to make the connections.

All participants in different ways expressed to have incorporated humanistic approaches to show compassion and concern, not only for the practitioner assigned to care for patients but also for the person, the human being, who simultaneously has their life issues and concerns to balance. Getting to know people and understanding their lack of engagement may not be a chronic personnel issue, but due to life concerns at present. The workweek for most employees in the United States is well beyond the outdated 40-hour model (Bartels et al., 2019). Therefore, middle and senior-level healthcare managers have to understand how physicians are constantly balancing personal with professional life. P2 explained, "physicians who have a new family member may be balancing as many tasks as they can and may not be able to handle additional duties."

This observation by management is easier to recognize when adequate time has been taken to get to know physicians and develop a working relationship. In comparison, P5 believed having direct engagement on a personal level and not treating physicians like they are "simply a metric" is an important aspect of a meaningful relationship.

P2 stated, "there is an advantage to getting to know people, developing those relationships, demonstrating that as a manager, there is more than just the professional expectations that are being considered. "Establishing meaningful relationships early on" makes for an easier task to pair organizational needs with personal interests. Qi et al. (2019) described the impact of inclusive leadership and the impact it has on employees. The authors voiced establishing meaningful leadership relationships has a direct effect on employee perceptions of the organization as well as their behaviors within the organization. All participants within

their own experiences described how opportunities to match personal interests with organizational needs become less of a burden because of the time and commitment invested early in the relationship. The following table represents the most discussed strategies used to establish meaningful relationships.

Table 1
Theme 1. Ways to Establish Meaningful Relationships

Participant Number	Face-to-face interaction (including feedback sessions)	Regularly scheduled meeting	Questionnaire	Inquiring about family
P1	X			
P2	X	X	X	X
P3	X	X		
P4	X	X		
P5	X		X	
P6		X		
P7	X	X		

I reviewed the organization's website and viewed archived videos attesting to the impact of relationships between current physicians and their mentors and how it has made a difference in their current practices. Information from residency programs was also reviewed for data supporting the information on how relationships can impact physician engagement.

There was consensus from all participants interviewed (100%) regarding the role of a transformational leader and the persona role of a physician's perception of their value to the organization when relationships are established early on. The participants in this study provided essential information regarding successful engagement used to help avoid physician burnout. The actions taken by the participants to elicit engagement aligns with the findings of Kellar et al. (2019), who surmised physician engagement is based on a myriad of factors that include work performed, organizational support, and personal desires to continue to practice medicine. Healthcare organizations cannot provide quality healthcare without understanding how relationships between management and physicians affect all involved stakeholders (Milliken, 2014).Although, many views found in the literature reviewed indicated that the term meaningful relationship has different meanings. All participants expressed having implemented strategies that first began with establishing their idea of meaningful relationships. Korejan and Shahbazi (2016) cautioned transformational leaders to invest in employee engagement otherwise the organization's future for global competitive advantage would be nonexistent. All participants relayed how relationships that are developed early on make a difference in future encounters.

Madanchian et al. (2017) described how leadership theories influence employee performance. Xu (2017) further described the importance of healthcare leaders' role in understanding and implementing effective leadership styles. As a result of implementing the right leadership style at the right moment,leaders would have more success with professional relationships with employees that would benefit the employee, manager, and organization. The participants are engaged in strategies to develop meaningful relationships as a means to increase employee engagement. Participants' strategy of developing meaningful relationships aligns with findings from Schwartz and Porath (2014) who suggested when transformational leaders can meet basic needs, employees will perform well. Developing meaningful relationships within the manager-physician relationship, as

demonstrated by the responses provided by the participants, has had an impact on medical outcomes for the patients and positive outcomes for the organization.

Transformational leadership starts with the leader (Northouse, 2016). Actions taken by the leader can potentially affect the engagement outcome of employees. The transformational leadership theory is exemplified when leaders infuse positivity into subordinates by assisting with identifying areas where change is needed, developing a plan, and executing the plans to implement the changes (Arif, 2018). Burns (1978) advocated in his findings how leaders who execute a transformational leadership approach when leading employees can have positive outcomes. The interviewed managers in this study described the positive outcomes as a result of getting to know the physicians under their supervision. Asrar-ul-Haw and Anwar (2018) endorsed the positive long-term benefits for organizations when transformational leadership techniques were utilized to improve engagement. Gozukara and Simsek (2019) described in their findings the facet of individualized considerations from the transformational leadership theory as actions managers can take that show employees are more than a number and are valuable to the team. The participants exercised this belief by taking interest in developing meaningful relationships with physicians. The exercise has provided results that demonstrate the strategy to develop relationships has improved engagement with physicians and therefore reduced burnout. Kotter (2001) identified how leaders can improve engagement by understanding what drives employees to be successful. Some of the participants conveyed how taking the time in getting to know physicians outside of their skill set can make a difference in productivity and profitability for the organization.

As Li et al (2018) mentioned, leadership and trust are important to the transformational leadership posture of any leader. Developing relationships has been proven in making a big difference when those hard-to-have conversations were necessary according to P2, P3, P4, P5, and P6. The efforts by middle and senior-level managers seemed to affect the perception of the physician in a more positive way when meetings for correction or critiques were needed.

The Potential Relevance of Study to Professional Staffing

When middle and senior-level healthcare managers develop meaningful relationships, encourage career progression and professional development opportunities, and foster a culture of understanding despite bureaucratic obstacles healthcare managers can reduce the organizational cost of medical errors and the negative financial effects of disengaged physicians. Medical errors can lead to costly lawsuits for healthcare organizations and potential death for patients. Medical errors are related to burnout and disengaged physicians (West et al., 2018). Shanafelt et al. (2017) discussed how managers fail to recognize the connection between physician engagement and organizational performance. Babenko (2018) expounded on the negative effects of physician engagement from burnout and exhaustion and what it costs the organization. If an organization is involved in litigation and has not taken measures to deal with employee engagement, there are also potentially negative consequences for the patients they serve, as well as the community. Employee disengagement can have negative financial implications. The loss in revenue prevents organizations from financial increases and potentially affects the organization's ability to provide quality care. This adverse action can potentially affect the financial stability of the

organization (Swensen et al., 2016). Bass (1985) alluded to employees working harder and being more motivated when trust, loyalty, respect, and admiration had been established. Li et al. (2019) findings suggested transformational leaders who can potentially increase trust in the manager-employee relationship can potentially increase employee engagement.

The findings from this study if judiciously used may afford middle and senior-level healthcare managers some ideas on how successful strategies can be implemented and the importance of these strategies on the organization. Further, middle and senior-level healthcare managers may use the findings to discover new strategies to improve engagement and help avoid physician burnout. The results from this study if utilized could serve to bolster leadership's involvement in the commitment to physician engagement of providing value-based healthcare while improving organizational competitive advantage. Healthcare organizations potentially could use revenue generated from engaged physicians to invest in modern medical equipment and technologies that may directly impact patients and the communities in which they live, according to results from Owens et al. (2017).The effects of increased engagement and avoiding physician burnout out has a global effect as well. Motyka (2018) described employee engagement as a global problem. Efforts to implement strategies to increase engagement and avoid physician burnout have the potential to affect the world's healthcare outcomes.

Engagement is an important aspect of any healthcare organization as it directly impacts productivity and profitability. Physician engagement can play an important role in an organization's productivity and profitability. Only 34% of US employees are engaged at work (Commons et al., 2018). Healthcare organizations cannot afford the astronomical cost of disengagement and therefore need actively engaged physicians. The current business problem is some middle and senior-level healthcare managers lack strategies to engage physicians to help to avoid burnout. Engagement is an ongoing business problem that requires continuous research according to the literature reviewed. There are many challenges, internally and externally, for managers to develop successful strategies, which can potentially help increase profitability, and productivity, and improve competitive advantage within the organization, local communities, and the global healthcare industry.

After the analysis of the data, three themes emerged: developing meaningful relationships, encouraging career progression and professional development opportunities, and fostering a culture of understanding despite bureaucratic obstacles, with four subthemes consisting of mentoring, communication, peer-to-peer support, and wellness. Middle and senior-level healthcare managers may use the findings from this study and the identified themes to assist with implementing strategies to improve engagement and help avoid physician burnout. The strategies used aligned with Burns' and later Bass' transformational leadership theory and constructs. The three themes and four subthemes align with the facets of individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, idealized influence, and intellectual stimulation. The results of this single case study align with previous and current literature, which includes the positive effects of implementing successful strategies in coordination with the right leadership style. The benefits for healthcare organizations to avoid physician burnout and improve engagement have a great impact.

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